

Requesting in Ukrainian: Native Speakers' Pragmatic Behaviour  
and Acquisition by Language Learners

by

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## **Abstract**

The ultimate goal of second/foreign language (SL/FL) teaching and learning is to develop communicative competence, in which particular importance is placed on pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence enables speakers to interpret and convey messages appropriately in a variety of communicative contexts. Despite its crucial role in communication, pragmatics has been largely overlooked in the SL/FL classroom. As such, the goal of this dissertation is to inform our understanding of the pragmatic behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian and to contribute to teaching and learning pragmatics by exploring Ukrainian speech acts of requests from different perspectives. The dissertation consists of three independent studies that explore: i) the requestive behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian, ii) the instructed acquisition of requests by second-year learners of Ukrainian at the post-secondary level, and iii) the learners' perceptions of their own acquisition of requests.

The first study investigates the strategies, structures, and linguistic realisation of speech acts of requests in accordance with the communicative situations in which they are used. The study demonstrates that speakers of Ukrainian employ direct, conventionally indirect, indirect, and combined strategies to formulate requests in various contexts. The choice of request strategies and substrategies, called structures, depends on a combination of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition as well as the type of communicative situation. These findings contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the requestive behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian. The obtained corpus of requests is used to develop instructional materials for a pedagogical intervention in the subsequent, second study.

The second study compares the effectiveness of three instructional approaches for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic competence, specifically, the ability of post-secondary

second-year learners of Ukrainian to formulate contextually appropriate requests. This research contends that explicit pragmatics-focused instruction supplemented with educational podcasts is the most effective for the acquisition of oral pragmatic ability at the level of request comprehensibility. The analysis also shows that the social variable of distance is both acquired and retained better than imposition, while the social variable of power is the most challenging for both acquisition and retention.

The third study examines the acquisition of pragmatic competence, targeted by the three instructional approaches in Study 2, from the learners' perspective. The obtained results are mixed. Overall, participants' perceptions of their ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests do not change significantly. This is due to insufficient practice. Learners also demonstrate an improved awareness of the importance of pragmatic competence and a strong desire to continue to learn about Ukrainian pragmatics. Participants identify role-play activities and structural exercises with podcasts as the most beneficial for the development of pragmatic competence.

This dissertation adds to the underexplored field of Ukrainian pragmatics and contributes to the improvement of its teaching and learning in the SL/FL classroom. This project also broadens the current research on the integration of technology, podcasting technology in particular, into SL/FL courses.

## **Preface**

This thesis is an original work by Olena Sivachenko. The research projects, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approvals from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Names “Requesting Behaviour of Native Speakers of Ukrainian,” No. Pro00041076, 07/08/2013, and “The Role of Podcasts in the Development of Pragmatic Competence in Ukrainian Second Language Classrooms,” No. Pro00024397, 1/10/2014.

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# Introduction

## 1 Introduction to the project

This project was motivated by the author's personal experiences of teaching a second-year course in Ukrainian as a foreign language at the post-secondary level. The author had ongoing encounters with students who formulated speech acts in Ukrainian that sounded unnatural in certain contexts. This came into sharp focus when students were role-playing a scenario in which their task was to order food in a restaurant. To ask for services, the majority of students used the request structure *Chy mozhu ia maty odnu kavu, proshu?/* 'Can I have one coffee, please?' Although this structure was correct from the point of view of grammar and vocabulary, it looked more like a direct pragmatic transfer from English, rather than a request structure that a native speaker would use. Further, the author noticed other frequent inaccuracies: the use of the informal *ty* [singular informal 'you'] instead of the formal *vy* [plural formal/respectful 'you'] to address a person of a higher social status, and the use of imperative structures to formulate high-imposition requests, to name a few. These inaccuracies revealed a deeper phenomenon at work: a gap in the students' ability to match the semantic sense and meaning of an utterance with a situational context (Kasper, 1997), known as pragmatic competence. This underdeveloped pragmatic competence could stem from a number of factors, among which the lack of authentic pragmatic input is often regarded as a primary factor (LoCastro, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). In language learning settings, particularly those where learners have very few opportunities for authentic pragmatic exposure, textbooks are commonly considered to be a main source of pragmatic knowledge (Vellenga, 2004). However,

importantly, foreign language textbooks have been criticized for being not always a reliable source of authentic pragmatic input. This paucity of pragmatic authenticity is usually linked to the heavy reliance of textbook authors on their language intuition rather than empirical evidence. Consequently, SLA researchers have frequently called for a research-driven approach to language resource development (LoCastro, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Olshtein & Cohen, 1990). At the same time, research on Ukrainian pragmatics, and speech acts of requests in particular, is rather scarce, and it generally does not provide a broad picture of how they function in actual communication.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge of requests is very important for language learners, as requests have very wide applications in every day interactions (Koike, 1989).

This project endeavours to add to the largely underexplored areas of Ukrainian pragmatics, Ukrainian SLA, and language pedagogy, and will proceed along two main lines of exploration: i) an investigation of the requestive behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian, and ii) an examination of the effectiveness of various instructional approaches for learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence, specifically the ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests. Notably, the second line of exploration examines the effectiveness of instructional approaches from two perspectives: learners' request performance and learners' perceptions of the acquisitional process. What follows is background information that informs the approaches used in this dissertation.

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<sup>1</sup> See Study 1 for more information.

## **2 Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Pragmatic competence as a component of communicative competence**

During the twentieth century, SLA and language pedagogy were influenced by a number of approaches, from Grammar Translation to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT emerged in the 1970s as a result of viewing language as a system for communication (Hymes, 1972), and since then it has dominated the SL/FL classroom.

The notion of communicative competence, central to the CLT approach, was introduced by American sociolinguist Hymes to define an ability to use language in a social context (Hymes, 1972). Hymes was responding to and criticizing Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence (1965). Hymes argued against the absence of social context in the concept of linguistic competence and its exceptional concentration on grammatical knowledge (Hymes, 1972). He also posited that a communicatively competent speaker needs to use the target language with both grammatical accuracy and situational appropriateness (Hymes, 1972).

The most significant and representative frameworks of communicative competence are the models offered by Canale and Swain (1980), Littlewood (1981), and Bachman (1990). The framework offered by Canale and Swain (1980), later modified by Canale (1983), is considered to be the most influential for language pedagogy (Jorda, 2005). It distinguishes between grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competencies (Canale & Swain, 1980). Though pragmatic competence is not directly mentioned by Canale, it is embedded in the notion of sociolinguistic competence, which embraces the social norms of language use (Canale, 1983). Social norms of language use determine if constructed utterances correspond to the social context and social roles of speakers.



Similar to Canale and Swain's (1980) model, Littlewood's (1981) framework implicitly includes pragmatic competence. Particularly, his framework distinguishes between pre-communicative, quasi-communicative, and communicative activities, in which the latter involves functional communicative activities and social interaction activities. Functional communicative activities direct learners towards performing a task, making use of the available language resources. Social interaction activities train learners to produce socially and contextually appropriate outputs. Although Canale and Swain's (1980) and Littlewood's (1981) frameworks implicitly include what we now call pragmatic competence, it was Bachman (1990) who first used the term.

Bachman (1990) suggested a more detailed framework that distinguishes between organisational and pragmatic competencies. Organisational competence relies on grammatical and textual competence. Grammatical competence involves knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, phonology, and graphology, while textual competence is responsible for the rhetorical organization of texts. Pragmatic competence deals with the relationship between the language and the language user, and is further subdivided into illocutionary and sociolinguistic competencies. Illocutionary competence addresses the relationships between utterances and the intentions of the speaker. Sociolinguistic competence involves sociolinguistic conventions that mediate appropriate language use. Thus, the sociolinguistic competencies of Bachman's (1990) and Canale and Swaine's (1980) models have a certain amount of overlap. Bachman's (1990) framework in particular has influenced studies on teaching and learning pragmatics, as it addresses pragmatic competence as one of the main components of communicative competence (Jorda, 2005). Hence, the main idea of this framework is that communicative competence cannot be achieved by focusing solely on the grammatical aspects of a language; rather, true

communicative competence results from the pedagogical overlap of grammar, language function, and context.

As a result, the relationship between communicative competence and pragmatics has started to draw the attention of SL/FL scholars and educators. Yet, the reality is that pragmatics is often overlooked in the SL/FL classroom. This is due, in part, to certain challenges faced by language instructors, a number of which will be discussed below.

## **2.2 Methodological aspects of teaching SL/FL pragmatics**

Over the last thirty years, many theorists and practitioners have emphasized the relationship between pragmatic competence and successful SL/FL communication (Ishihara, 2010). The following sections provide an overview of studies that address factors related to the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

### **2.2.1 The teachability of SL/FL pragmatics**

A number of researchers argue that a classroom environment does not facilitate the acquisition of pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kasper, 2001). These studies offer the following explanations: aspects of SL/FL pragmatics are hardly addressed in classroom communication, instruction generally sidesteps SL/FL pragmatics, and textbooks and course manuals include inauthentic materials, based mostly on authors' intuition about SL/FL pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kasper, 2001). Nevertheless, certain aspects of SL/FL pragmatics can be incidentally picked up by learners, even when these aspects are not the focus of instruction. The findings of two studies (Ohta, 1999; Tateyama & Kasper, 2008), which used the language socialization framework to examine the process of teaching Japanese as an SL, adds to our understanding of this phenomenon.

Particularly, Ohta (1999) found that adult learners of Japanese assimilated some expressions of alignment through interactional routines. Also, by examining recordings of naturalistic observations of classroom interactions, the author concluded that teacher-fronted interaction provided learners with very little chance for the production of expressions of alignment. It was only learner-learner interactions that created output opportunities.

Tateyama & Kasper (2008) investigated if a native-speaking class guest could facilitate the incidental learning of Japanese SL requests. The classroom observation revealed that guest-teacher and guest-learner interactions triggered mechanisms of producing SL requests and enriched students' requestive repertoire. Importantly, this conclusion seems to be relevant only to those students who participated in guest-learner interactions. The authors claim that during the session students were more attentive to the guest-teacher and guest-learner interactions. However, it remains unclear if this conclusion holds for those who did not participate in the guest-learner interactions. Overall, the findings of these two studies show that classroom environments can facilitate the incidental learning of SL pragmatics. In this vein, the question arises if classroom environments can facilitate instructed learning of SL/FL pragmatics as well.

Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) examined the effect of instruction on learning one conversational routine—the response to the question “Did you have a good weekend?”—by adult Australian learners of French. To check if the given conversational routine was teachable, the participants were administered a four-phase treatment involving awareness-raising, experiment, production, and feedback stages. The results were mixed. While the immediate post-test revealed participants' approximation to the level of native speakers, the delayed post-test showed that not all discourse elements were equally retained. The content of the talk seemed to have been learned and integrated into conversation more easily than the language form elements. The authors

attributed this to the fact that cultural elements are consciously controlled, whereas formal language elements need practice and thus depend more on the language proficiency of speakers. Importantly, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were similar, adding to the reliability of the overall findings. Although the instruction was only partially effective, the findings indicated that certain pragmatic features are teachable in the classroom. The following sections discuss the effectiveness of various instructional approaches for the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

### **2.2.2 The effect of different instructional approaches on the acquisition of pragmatic competence**

Most studies that compare instruction types choose a design with two or more treatment groups. In each group, pragmatic competence is usually acquired according to a specific instructional approach: either explicit vs. implicit or inductive vs. deductive.

*Explicit vs. implicit instruction.* The explicit-implicit approach to pragmatics-focused instruction is grounded in the Noticing Hypothesis, which aims to facilitate learners' noticing and understanding of the relationship between a language form and its communicative context (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001). Explicit instruction channels learners' attention to the target SL/FL pragmatic features through direct explanation and metapragmatic discussion, which are then followed by practice. In contrast to the explicit approach, an implicit approach excludes direct explanations in favour of providing learners with input and practice that are expected to trigger mechanisms of implicit noticing and understanding of certain pragmatic phenomena (Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Research examining the effectiveness of an explicit vs. implicit approach at the levels of pragmatic awareness and production shows a certain improvement in learners' pragmatic

competence according to both types of instruction. Explicit instruction, however, is more beneficial than implicit (Alcón, 2005; Duan & Wannaruk, 2010; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001). For example, Takahashi (2001) focused on the development of requests by Japanese learners of English. Additionally, the author examined whether the type of instruction influenced the learners' level of confidence when using the target speech acts. The findings reveal that learners who received explicit teaching clearly outperformed those who received the implicit instruction in terms of pragmatic competence and confidence. Also, self-reported data indicated that form-search and meaning-focus strategies were ineffective for learners to notice the target speech acts in the input. This finding is in line with Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis, which states that linguistic elements can become intake only if they are noticed (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001).

Tateyama (2001), however, presented somewhat contradictory results. The researcher investigated the effects of the two types of instruction for the acquisition of attention getters, expressions of gratitude, and apologies by beginning learners of Japanese. After an eight-week treatment, learners in two instructional conditions showed no statistically significant difference on multiple choice tasks (MCTs) and role-plays. The author explained these results by focusing on participants' individual differences. The background questionnaire showed that those learners who scored highest on MCTs and role-plays in the implicit condition were more motivated, had significant out-of-class target language exposure, and had a much higher academic standing as compared to their counterparts in the explicit condition. However, a qualitative analysis of the errors revealed that the explicit group participants were more successful on items which required higher formality of linguistic expression. Therefore, this study contends that explicit instruction

offers only a partial advantage for the learning of Japanese pragmatics compared to implicit instruction.

The reported advantage of explicit over implicit instruction raised a question about the sufficiency of using only input and practice, without any additional instructional assistance, to prove the effectiveness of the implicit approach (Kasper & Rose, 2002). As such, a number of studies used a combination of different techniques to re-examine the effectiveness of implicit teaching (Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005). Specifically, by incorporating input enhancement and recasts in the implicit condition, Martinez-Flor and Fukuya (2005) compared the influence of explicit and implicit instructions on learning head acts and downgraders in Spanish suggestions. The combination of the two techniques in the implicit instruction resulted in the substantial improvement of learners' pragmatic competence on post-tests compared to pre-tests, as well as significant gains compared to the control group. Apparently, these results account for the fact that the implicit instruction involved at least two cognitive processes: comprehension of an enhanced input and learners' comparison of the produced suggestions and appropriate target speech acts. Though this study showed substantial improvements in the implicit condition, the advantage of explicit over implicit instruction was nonetheless statistically significant. In the authors' opinion, the learners' mental representation of pragmatic knowledge became better organized and thus more easily accessible as a result of the explicit instruction.

Overall, the scholarly consensus appears to favour the explicit instruction of target pragmatics. As a result, the acquisition of pragmatic competence in the present dissertation is organized through an explicit pragmatics-focused instruction (see Study 2).

***Inductive vs. deductive instruction.*** The difference between deductive and inductive instructions lies in the way metapragmatic information is presented. The instruction is deductive

when learners are presented with metapragmatic information explicitly before practicing the target elements. In the inductive instruction, learners are provided opportunities for practice through which they are expected to arrive at certain conclusions about SL/FL pragmatics (Rose & Ng, 2001).

Studies investigating the effectiveness of the inductive and deductive approaches reveal positive results for both types of instruction (Rose & Ng, 2001; Takimoto, 2008). Specifically, the study by Rose and Ng (2001) investigated the effects of inductive and deductive instructions against a control condition in teaching ESL learners compliments and how to respond to them. Additionally, the authors examined how both types of instruction influenced learners' confidence in performing target speech acts. Data were collected through three instruments: confidence self-assessment, metapragmatic self-assessment, and discourse completion tasks (DCTs). The results demonstrated no differences across the three groups on the first two measures; however, the results on the DCTs showed a development in the syntactic aspects of compliments in both instructional conditions but not in the control group. Results for the responses to compliments on the DCTs were significantly higher for the deductive than the inductive group. These results could have stemmed from the participants' overall advanced language proficiency—either form of instruction could be beneficial. Also, one can assume that the syntactic form of compliments is easier to acquire than responses to compliments.

Takimoto (2008) revealed the equal effectiveness of inductive and deductive instructions on the learning of lexical and syntactic downgraders in requests by intermediate learners of English. Participants in three groups, one deductive and two inductive, outperformed their control group peers on the receptive and production tasks. However, participants in the deductive group showed a marked decrease on the follow-up listening test. The results of the test heavily

relied on memory to process and store information simultaneously. Given that inductive instruction accounts for more complex cognitive processes than deductive instruction, it is possible that inductive instruction more effectively facilitates the information processing of the target speech acts, storing them in longer term memory, though resulting in less ease of access.

Overall, the reviewed research points at promising results for both inductive and deductive instructions: learners can benefit from either. Therefore, researchers often advocate for a “co-constructed, rather than purely inductive or deductive” approach (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010:117). With this in mind, the current dissertation incorporates a combination of both approaches into the pragmatics-focused instruction presented in Study 2. Specifically, learners inductively discover pragmatic norms and then share their findings with the class. In this way, “the learning may take a deductive turn for those who have not discovered them [pragmatic norms] yet” (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010:117).

### **2.2.3 Assessment of pragmatic competence**

Finding effective ways to assess learners’ performance has always been one of the most challenging tasks for instructors and researchers. In spite of the growing attention to teaching SL/FL pragmatics, the interest of theorists and practitioners is normally centered around ways to develop pragmatic competence, rather than how to assess it (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). However, assessment can provide information about learners’ acquisition of pragmatic knowledge and skills. A number of measures of pragmatic competence assess both awareness and production. The most frequently used are: multiple choice tasks (MCTs), discourse completion tasks (DCTs), role-play scenarios, and recording of authentic speech. Each has their own advantages and disadvantages, which are discussed below.



**Multiple Choice Tasks.** This measure requires learners to read a description of a scenario and select the most appropriate utterance. MCTs are frequently used to assess pragmatic awareness (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Schauer, 2006a, 2006b). They are also reported as a possible indirect assessment of production, since they reveal one's ability to produce target elements through a projected ability (Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). This way of assessing production is relevant for low proficiency learners, who often have a limited vocabulary and undeveloped language skills. This may obscure learners' true level of pragmatic competence as determined by other measures such as DCTs or role-plays. The strongest advantage of MCTs is easy assessment within a short period of time, which certainly appeals to language instructors.

**Discourse Completion Tasks.** This assessment measure can be either written or oral. Written DCTs (WDCTs) require learners to read the written description of a scenario and write a response. In oral DCTs (ODCTs), the scenario description is presented either orally or in writing. Learners are required to respond orally and their responses are usually recorded. Since the latter requires special equipment, it is more complicated than WDCTs. Both WDCTs and ODCTs are reported to have certain common advantages and disadvantages. Principally, DCTs may not accurately capture the difference between what learners intended to say versus what they actually said (Demeter, 2007). The main advantage of DCTs is that they allow for the relatively easy collection of a large number of pragmatic samples. Also, they offer a great control of contextual and social variables: learners are literally forced to use target forms (Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

**Verbal reports.** This measure is often regarded as a form of introspection. It involves recording the verbalised thought process of participants during or immediately after completing a task (Gass & Mackey, 2000:25). Verbal reports are categorised into two major groups: self-observation and self-revelation reports. Self-revelation reports are usually referred to as 'think-

aloud' measures, in which participants report on their thought process while engaged in a task. In self-observation reports, learners comment on their thought process retrospectively. Self-observation reports normally follow other measures of pragmatic competence (Jourdenais, 2001), particularly DCTs. Verbal reports primarily aim to tap into learners' rationale for written or spoken pragmatic behaviour while producing an output (Gass & Mackey, 2000:25). Verbal reports provide information on the current state of learners' knowledge and therefore are often employed as measures of pragmatic awareness.

***Role-play scenarios.*** This assessment measure provides learners with a description of a scenario and then asks them to role-play with another participant. This interaction is normally video recorded. Role-plays can address many of the concerns posed by DCTs. Specifically, they potentially represent what learners would actually say in a naturally-occurring setting, since role-plays make it easier for learners to imagine themselves in a particular situation (Cohen & Olshtain, 1993). Moreover, they allow us to examine the full discourse context, the sequential organization of a discourse (Kasper & Dahl, 1991) and the non-verbal means of communication, which DCTs cannot offer. At the same time, role-plays are more open-ended than DCTs and thus cannot offer a strong control of the target elements. Additionally, as compared to DCTs, role-plays are more difficult to transcribe and code.

***Retrospective interviews.*** Role-plays are frequently supplemented by retrospective interviews that involve both fixed questions and probes, which are based on participants' responses during the role-play (Woodfield, 2010). The main aim of retrospective interviews is to clarify participants' answers and prompt them to report on the thoughts they had while role-playing. This instrument is also used to assess learners' pragmatic awareness.

*Recording of authentic discourse.* This measure offers the biggest advantage compared to other pragmatic measures. It allows us to assess what learners actually say. However, with naturally occurring speech, “it is practically impossible to collect large data sets of a given speech act in the same situational and interpersonal context” (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010:2269), as it is impossible “to ensure that the same context will be repeated even once” (Rintel & Mitchel, 1989:250).

As outlined above, a variety of measures can assess pragmatic competence. The choice of measure depends on what the instructor or the researcher intends to measure: awareness or production ability, speech act performance, or the sequential organization of a pragmatic discourse. Also, some measures, i.e., DCTs, roleplays, and authentic discourse, are actively used by researchers as data elicitation instruments in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics. With respect to this dissertation, Study 1 employs DCTs to collect request strategies and structures from native speakers of Ukrainian. This instrument was chosen for practical reasons: it allows the collection of a large number of request samples and controls contextual variables. Additionally, DCTs allow us to control demographic variables, i.e., to collect data from only native speakers of Ukrainian, which is a limitation for naturally occurring conversations as a data elicitation instrument.

Study 2 uses a combination of several pragmatic measures to assess learners’ pragmatic competence. DCTs and role-plays were chosen to assess learners’ request production. DCTs appropriately provide strong control of contextual and social variables, while role-plays permit the collection of participants’ data in settings that very much approximate natural-like interactions. Learners’ pragmatic awareness was assessed through self-observation verbal reports, and retrospective interviews, which followed the DCTs and role-plays, respectively.

Both measures prompt participants to reflect on their request structure choice. Additionally, retrospective interviews enable the researcher to ask participants for clarification as needed. As each data elicitation instrument has advantages and disadvantages, they should work best when combined. Ideally, this multilayered methodology enhances the reliability and validity of the collected data.

### **3 Organization of the dissertation**

This dissertation includes a general introduction, three individual studies, and a conclusion. These studies specifically focus on Ukrainian pragmatics, examining speech acts of requests from three different perspectives. Each study has its individual structure, list of references, and appendices.

Study 1 investigates request strategies and structures and the means of their linguistic realisation as employed by Ukrainian native speakers in various communicative contexts. The data are collected through online DCTs, which involve fourteen scenarios with various combinations of contextual and social variables. The corpus of elicited requests serves as a source of data for the development of instructional materials used in a pedagogical intervention in Study 2. The revealed peculiarities of native speakers' request strategies and structures, and the means of their linguistic realisation are used to formulate pedagogical recommendations, which are accounted for in the subsequent, second study.

Study 2 compares the effectiveness of two explicit pragmatics-focused instructional approaches for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic competence—specifically, the ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests by second-year learners of Ukrainian. The difference between the two instructional approaches is that one is supplemented with podcasting while the other is not. The podcasts are of two types: i) audio recorded conversations that

illustrate the functioning of pragmatic targets in context, and ii) audio recorded structural exercises, allowing students to practice the oral production of pragmatic targets with minimal or no supervision of the instructor. The effectiveness of the two explicit approaches is also compared against a control condition. The study employs a mixed methodology to assess learners' pragmatic ability through oral and written DCTs and role-play scenarios. Pragmatic awareness is assessed through verbal reports and retrospective interviews.

Study 3 examines the acquisition of Ukrainian requests, which were targeted by the two instructional approaches in experimental Study 2, from the learners' perspective. The learner's perspective is investigated through three focal areas: i) learners' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence, ii) learners' reflections on their own level of pragmatic competence, and iii) learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, including those that are supplemented with podcasts. The learners' perceptions are collected through two survey questionnaires administered before and immediately after the pedagogical intervention, and assessed quantitatively and qualitatively. The investigation of the learners' perspectives suggests what factors, along with instructional approaches, could contribute to the successful acquisition of requests in Ukrainian.

The concluding chapter offers a summary, a general discussion of the results of Studies 1, 2, and 3, and their overall implications. The reference section at the end of the dissertation contains a comprehensive list of cited scholarship.

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# Study 1

## Strategies and the linguistic realisation of requests by native speakers of Ukrainian

### 1 Introduction

When communicating with native speakers, learners are expected to be pragmatically competent, i.e., to use language forms according to the socio-cultural conventions of the target society. If learners fail to follow these conventions, their pragmatic errors may be interpreted as personal shortcomings, which may result in communication failure and negative perceptions of learners by native speakers. Pragmatic failures on the part of SL/FL learners may even lead to the creation of cultural stereotypes (Thomas, 1983). The central role in pragmatic competence is assigned to speech acts. Differences in the speech act performance of native speakers and language learners have been investigated in a number of studies on apologies (Hacking, 2008; Olshtain, 1989), compliments (Wolfson, 1983), expressions of gratitude (Hinkel, 1994), and requests (Hacking, 2008; Krulatz, 2012; Lee, 2005, 2011). Their overall findings highlight that learners even at a higher level of language proficiency differ from native speakers in the way that they formulate various speech acts. One possible reason lies with foreign language textbooks (LoCastro, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010).

Textbooks play a very important role for language learning, particularly in foreign language settings, where they serve as the main source of pragmatic input (Vellenga, 2004). However, a number of researchers report that textbooks do not always provide adequate pragmatic input (Gilmore, 2004; Grant & Starks, 2001; Salazar-Campilo, 2007; Uso-Juan, 2007).

The inadequacy of pragmatic input is often linked to the fact that textbook materials frequently rely heavily on authors' language intuition rather than the results of empirical research (LoCastro, 2003).

Of all speech acts, requests are particularly important to foreign language learners, since requests have very wide applications in daily communication (Koike, 1989). Though these speech acts have been researched extensively, particularly in the fields of interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics, requests in Ukrainian have received only modest attention. The few extant studies on Ukrainian requests have been conducted by Dorodnyh (1995), Nedashkivska (2004), and Balits'ka (2009). Dorodnyh (1995), for example, compares request strategies in American English, Russian, and Ukrainian in two scenarios, which do not represent the full variety of situations in which requests could be used. Nedashkivska (2004) incorporates pragmatics and discourse theories to investigate the use of positive and what she calls unnegative (with negative syntax but positive semantics) interrogative constructions that, among other speech acts, involve requests. Her analysis is based on a corpus of excerpts from contemporary Ukrainian films and American sitcoms, dubbed into Ukrainian. Balits'ka (2009) uses Ukrainian folk tales as her data source to analyze requests in the imperative form. Generally, the results of these studies do not provide a broad picture of how requests are employed by native Ukrainian speakers in real world communication. Therefore, this study investigates request strategies and structures, and the means of their linguistic realisation, as employed by Ukrainian speakers in various communicative contexts.

## **2 The speech act of requesting**

The speech act of requesting has been the focus of a number of empirical studies that investigate the language behaviour of native speakers from certain cultures (Balits'ka, 2009;

Bolden, 2017; Dong, 2006; Ervin-Tripp, 1976; Marcjanik, 2002; Mills, 1991, 1992; Nedashkivska, 2004), compare the language behaviour of native speakers across several cultures (Blum-Kulka, 1989; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Dorodnyh, 1995; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Kotorova, 2015; Lee, 2005; Lubecka, 2000; Ogiermann, 2009; Zinken & Ogiermann, 2013), and compare the language behaviour of native speakers and SL/FL learners (Dewaard, 2012; Frank, 2002, 2010; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2009; Koike, 1989; Krulatz, 2012; Lee, 2011; Moskala-Gallaher, 2011; Schauer, 2007; Trosborg, 1995). Generally, requests are viewed in terms of the Theory of Speech Acts, proposed by Austin (1962) and later extended by Searle (1969, 1975, 1979). According to this theory, requests are speech acts performed “by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. They may be very modest attempts as when I invite you to do it, or they may be very fierce attempts as when I insist that you do it” (Searle, 1979:13).

Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory (1987) advanced the research on requests by introducing the notion of face. This theory suggests that every member of a certain cultural community has a public image/face with negative (the desire to be free of imposition by other community members) and positive (the desire to receive approval from other community members) face wants. Since requests ask the hearer to do something for the speaker, they may interfere with the hearer’s freedom (threatening the hearer’s negative face wants), which may result in the hearer’s refusal to perform the action, and thus may threaten the speaker’s positive face wants. Consequently, requests are regarded as face-threatening acts (FTA), and in order to attend to mutually vulnerable face wants, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose strategies or patterns of language behaviour, corresponding to three levels of directness: i) direct, ii) conventionally indirect, and iii) indirect. In direct, or *bald on-record*, strategies, e.g., ‘Open the

window!,’ the propositional content of the request coincides with the speaker’s intention. Direct strategies convey only one meaning, expressed explicitly and unambiguously. In contrast, conventionally indirect, or *on-record*, strategies convey meaning, which can be perceived on at least two levels. For example, the question ‘Can you open the window?’ can be interpreted as an enquiry about the hearer’s ability to perform an action, or as a request, or both. In conventionally indirect strategies, the propositional content and the speaker’s intention are not entirely identical. For example, the actual speaker’s intention in the request ‘Can you open the window?’ can be as follows: ‘Can you open the window? And if you can, please do’. Consequently, conventionally indirect strategies are expressed explicitly, albeit they also include certain means of redress. The propositional or “surface” content in indirect or *off-record* strategies is different from the speaker’s true intention and is expressed implicitly. Such strategies are also referred to as hints and can convey more than one meaning. For example, the utterance ‘It is hot in the room’ can be interpreted either as a request to open the window or as a mere conversation starter. Therefore, in order to interpret such utterances correctly, the hearer requires considerable background knowledge of the interlocutor and the communicative context (Ervin-Tripp, 1976). In cases of extreme imposition on the hearer, the speaker may opt for a strategy of *not performing the FTA*. Brown and Levinson (1987) view these strategies as universal for all languages. They suggest that the more face-threatening an act, the more indirect the strategy that should be employed for the sake of politeness, thus positively correlating indirectness with politeness.

Empirical studies on requestive behaviour generally support Brown and Levinson’s (1987) categorization of FTA into three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect. One of the most influential research studies on requests is associated with the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989),

which compares the linguistic realisation of levels of directness in requests and apologies by native speakers of seven languages and three English language variants. The results of the project allowed for the development of a taxonomy of request structures, representing each level of directness. Though all the recorded request structures are ranked on a directness-indirectness continuum, the findings of the CCSARP studies claim that for some languages there is a positive correlation between indirectness and politeness, while for others there is not (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989: 23-24).

In the literature on request structures, there is a general understanding that native speakers of Dutch, English, French, and German prefer conventional indirectness and correlate it with politeness. However, the linguistic realisation and frequency of conventional indirectness at the level of subcategories (or structures in the current study) differ across the languages. Specifically, speakers of English and German strongly prefer interrogative constructions that refer to the hearer's ability and willingness to perform requests (Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Ogiermann, 2009). French speakers tend to question the hearer's ability to perform requests, while Dutch speakers formulate their requests by means of permission and willingness questions (Van Mulken, 1996).

Notably, in Slavic languages, specifically Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian, the research demonstrates a negative correlation between indirectness and politeness. These language cultures value pragmatic clarity and associate directness with honesty, rather than the "lack of concern for the hearer's face" (Ogiermann, 2009:191). The findings of Dorodnyh's (1995) comparative study demonstrate that, unlike American speakers of English, Russian and Ukrainian speakers rely heavily on direct strategies, particularly imperatives, in informal situations when they ask for a small favour. Russians and Ukrainians, when requesting more burdensome favours, tend to use

conventionally indirect structures. This indicates that the choice of strategies in these languages is determined by contextual factors, specifically, the degree of imposition and formality level of the situation.<sup>2</sup> Notably, his study shows that speakers of American English strongly prefer conventionally indirect structures in both scenarios.

With respect to Polish speakers, studies by Lubecka (2000), Marcjanik (2002), and Ogiermann (2009) point at the preference for conventionally indirect structures, among which ability questions are the most frequently used formulae. Importantly, these findings do not support Wierzbicka's (1985, 1991) extensively cited writings, which claim that Polish speakers rely heavily on imperatives. However, Wierzbicka's findings were later supported by the results of Zinken & Ogiermann's (2013) study. They found that native speakers of Polish prefer using imperatives in requesting an object from family or friends in domestic settings, specifically during meal times.

Research on Russian request strategies and structures is less consistent in its findings. The dominant role of direct strategies is recorded by Berger (1997, as quoted in Ogiermann, 2009), Bolden (2017), Brehmer (2000, as quoted in Ogiermann, 2009), Kotorova (2015), Krulatz (2012), Larina (2003, 2009), Lysakova and Veselovskaya (2008, as quoted in Kotorova, 2015), and Rathmayr (1994, as quoted in Ogiermann, 2009); the dominance of imperatives in informal encounters is reported by Dorodnyh (1995). However, Ogiermann (2009) arrives at quite contrary conclusions. She found a higher occurrence of conventionally indirect realisation of requests. At the same time, she argues that the number of imperative constructions in Russian far exceeds the number of imperatives in other languages, specifically, English and German.

Importantly also, Ogiermann's study confirms Mills' (1992) and Dong's (2006; 2010) claims

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<sup>2</sup> Dorodnyh views a situation as informal when interlocutors are of equal social status. When interlocutors are in unequal power relations, a situation is regarded as formal. The level of familiarity between interlocutors in both scenarios is high (1995).



that imperatives in Russian do not imply much imposition. As Ogiermann notes, the preponderance of conventionally indirect strategies in her data might have stemmed from the fact that her analysis was restricted “to a situation characterized by the frequent use of conventional indirectness” (2009: 211). She readily admits that other communicative contexts in a data collection instrument might yield “different strategy choices” (Ogiermann, 2009:211).

Notably, the existence of a strong correlation between various contextual factors and the choice of appropriate strategies and structures, and forms of their linguistic realisation, have been shown in a number of other research studies (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Fukushima, 2000; Nikula, 1996; Trosborg, 1995, to name a few). The most widely discussed and tested factors are the social variables of power, distance, and imposition, proposed by Brown and Levinson’s (1987) Theory of Politeness. According to this theory, power refers to the notion of “equality-inequality” in the relationship between interlocutors. This could be based on social status, social roles, and age, e.g., professor-student, employer-employee, parents-children, older-younger interlocutors. Distance involves the degree of familiarity between interlocutors, represented by the continuum “close people – absolute strangers.” Imposition implies the size and value of a requested favour. For Fukushima (2000), this depends on the time, effort, and financial and psychological pressure placed by the speaker on the hearer. The Theory of Politeness primarily argues that the greater the hearer’s power, the greater the distance between interlocutors, and the higher the degree of imposition of the request, the greater the threat to the concept of face, and, consequently, the more indirect the structure employed by the speaker. Further, this argument was extended by Nikula (1996), who claims that the higher the degree of social variables, the more mitigating devices are needed.

Notably, some researchers claim that factors other than social can influence the pragmatic behaviour of interlocutors. Specifically, Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) claims that along with the social factors of power, distance, and imposition, “context external” (e.g., the interlocutors’ rights and obligations) and “context internal” (e.g., a request goal and urgency) factors can determine the pragmatic choices of native speakers of Greek. This claim was further supported by Amelkina Dunn’s (2012) examination of the request realisation of Russian native speakers, which were used as a baseline to investigate pragmatic competence by American learners of Russian.

Regarding Ukrainian requests, only two known studies consider the correlation between contextual factors and the speaker’s choice of request strategies and structures, and the forms of their linguistic realisation. Specifically, the study by Dorodnyh (1995) demonstrates that the choice between direct and conventionally indirect strategies is heavily dependent on both the degree of imposition conveyed by a request and the power relationship between interlocutors. The study conducted by Nedashkivska (2004) revealed that the level of familiarity with one’s interlocutor and the communicative context are decisive factors for choosing between positive and unnegative interrogative requests. This current study aims to: i) investigate the frequency and distribution of direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect request strategies across various contexts, ii) classify the elicited request structures within each strategy, and study their relationship with social variables of power, distance, and imposition, and iii) examine the linguistic realisation of request strategies and structures.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Participants**

A total of 111 participants completed a two-part online survey questionnaire. The first part collected demographics, and the second part elicited pragmatics data (see section 3.2 for more details). There were 107 female and 4 male participants,<sup>3</sup> aged 18 to 21. All participants were full-time undergraduate students from the same Ukrainian university, at which Ukrainian was the primary language of instruction. The overwhelming majority of participants (92.81%) were from Central Ukrainian regions: Cherkasy (77), Kyiv (10), Zhytomyr (6), Kropyvnytsky (4), Poltava (3), Vinnytsia (2), Chernihiv (1). The rest of the participants were from the Southern Ukrainian regions of Zaporizhzhia (2) and Dnipro (2), the Western Ukrainian regions of Rivne (2) and Lviv (1), and the Eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk (1).<sup>4</sup> Importantly, though the questionnaire was in Ukrainian, three participants responded in Russian, and all three claimed that Ukrainian was not their native language. Additionally, two more participants noted that Ukrainian was not their native language, though they used it regularly. As native Ukrainian speakers are this study's focus, the answers from these five respondents were excluded from the analysis.

#### **3.2 Instrument and procedures**

The second part of the online survey questionnaire aimed to elicit requests produced by native speakers of Ukrainian through written discourse completion tasks (DCTs) in Ukrainian.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that the questionnaires were distributed to all students and of all genders. The researcher acknowledges the gender imbalance of the present results. However, at the time of data collection, the researcher had no control over the gender representation of the survey participants.

<sup>4</sup> These are non-administrative regional divisions of Ukraine used by the Kyiv Institute of Sociology in 2014 election polls.

Despite the criticism that DCTs are not able to elicit naturally occurring data (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005; Golato, 2003; Woodfield, 2008), a number of cross-cultural and interlanguage studies on speech acts continue to employ DCTs as a data elicitation tool (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Krulatz, 2012; Lee, 2005; Moskala-Gallaher, 2011; Ogiermann, 2009). In this study, DCTs were chosen as a data elicitation instrument as they offered a number of practical advantages. Specifically, DCTs permitted the collection of a large number of request samples, while controlling for contextual variables. Additionally, DCTs allowed us to control demographic variables, i.e., to select native speakers of Ukrainian, which is not possible when dealing with naturally occurring conversations.

The DCTs began with a general instruction: What would you say in the following situations? The instruction was followed by a detailed description of 14 scenarios in Ukrainian. These scenarios represent a broad variety of communicative contexts where requests can function, and are characterized by various combinations of low and high positions of social variables of distance, power, and imposition. After each description, participants were asked to write a request according to the provided scenarios. The designed scenarios included 14 communicative contexts, organized in four communicative blocks, as seen in the table below. Table 1.1 illustrates the distribution of the social variables of distance, power, and imposition across each scenario.

Table 1.1

*Distribution of Social Variables in DCTs*

Scenarios	Distance	Power	Imposition
Communicative block 1: On the street			
1. <i>Asking for time:</i> Ask a stranger in the street the time. The person is older than you.	large	unequal, low-high	low

Communicative block 2: Phone conversation

2. <i>Phone conversation 1:</i> You phone your close friend. Ask the person answering to call your friend to the phone. What would you say if his/her mother answers the phone, and this is the first time you have spoken with her?	large	unequal, low-high	low
3. <i>Phone conversation 2:</i> You phone your close friend. Ask the person answering to call your friend to the phone. What would you say if his/her mother answers the phone, and you know her well?	small	unequal, low-high	low
4. <i>Phone conversation 3:</i> You phone your close friend. Ask the person answering to call your friend to the phone. What would you say if his/her brother answers the phone, and you know him well?	small	equal, low-low	low
5. <i>Phone conversation 4:</i> You phone your close friend. Ask the person answering to call your friend to the phone. What would you say if his/her brother answers the phone, and this is the first time you have spoken with him?	large	equal, low-low	low

Communicative block 3: University

6. <i>Asking for a pen:</i> You are sitting next to your close friend. You have dropped your pen. You cannot reach it. Ask your friend to pick it up for you.	small	equal, low-low	low
7. <i>Borrowing notes:</i> You have missed a couple classes. You have a test soon. Ask your classmate (you barely know him/her) to borrow his/her notes for a couple days.	large	equal, low-low	high
8. <i>Borrowing notes:</i> You have missed a couple classes. You have a test soon. Ask your classmate (he/she is your close friend) to borrow his/her notes for a couple days.	small	equal, low-low	high
9. <i>Asking for repetition:</i> You are in class. Your professor just gave you homework. You are unsure if you understood him/her correctly. Ask the professor to repeat the task.	small	unequal, low-high	low

<i>10. Paper extension:</i> You cannot submit your paper on time. Ask your professor for an extension.	small	unequal, low-high	high
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Communicative block 4: Services

<i>11. Café:</i> You are at a student café. Ask the salesperson (you do not know him/her) for a coffee and two pieces of cake.	large	unequal, high-low	low
<i>12. Café:</i> You are at a student café. Ask the salesperson (you know him/her) for a coffee and two pieces of cake.	small	unequal, high-low	low
<i>13. Store:</i> You are at a convenience store. Ask for a loaf of bread, a bottle of milk, and a jar of coffee.	large	unequal, high-low	low
<i>14. Farmer's market:</i> You are at a farmers' market. Ask a salesperson for a kilogram of apples and two kilograms of pears.	large	unequal, high-low	low

As shown in Table 1.1, the DCTs contain scenarios with different combinations of the social variables. With respect to familiarity, the conversation in seven scenarios (1, 2, 5, 7, 11, 13, and 14) takes place between people who are not familiar with each other, and therefore, the (psychological) distance between them is large. The variable of distance between the interlocutors in the other eight scenarios (3, 4, 6, 8-10, and 12) is small, since in these scenarios they are well-acquainted.

The variable of power is represented by the equal and unequal social status of the interlocutors. In five scenarios (4-8), the interlocutors are peers, therefore having the same social status. In the other nine scenarios (1-3 and 9-14), the social status between interlocutors is unequal. The social status of the speaker is lower than that of the hearer in scenarios 1-3, 9, and 10. In scenarios 11-14, the speaker (customer) has more power than the hearer (salesperson); the speaker has a right to be served by the hearer, and the hearer is obliged to provide this service.

Imposition in the DCT scenarios is represented by high and low impositions of the speaker on the hearer. In scenarios 7, 8, and 10, the request is presented as something special;

these scenarios carry a high imposition on the hearer. In the other scenarios (1-6, 9, and 11-14), the degree of imposition is low. Importantly, in scenarios 11-14 (requests for service), the low degree of imposition is influenced by the fact that the speaker is entitled to the request, and the hearer is obliged to carry out the request.

#### **4 Theoretical Framework**

This study's theoretical framework is informed by Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy of requests. The taxonomy views requests from the sociopragmatic perspective, which, according to Leech (1983), is closely linked to the contextual appropriateness of speech acts. In her taxonomy, Trosborg recognizes requests as speech acts that consist of two parts: the head-act and peripheral elements. The former is considered the nucleus of the speech act, and serves to convey communicative intent independent of the other components of a request utterance. The function of peripheral elements is either to mitigate or intensify the communicative intent of requests. Trosborg's taxonomy is grounded in the directness-indirectness continuum proposed by Brown and Levinson's (1987) Theory of Politeness. Though this theory has been criticized for correlating indirectness with politeness, it should be noted that no language community has been found that lacks the directness-indirectness continuum (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989:47).

Following Brown and Levinson (1987), Trosborg categorizes requests into direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect. She argues that direct requests occur when the speaker states their communicative intent directly, without ambiguity. Within this category, she distinguishes between imperatives, ellipses, performatives, and obligations. Imperatives, along with elliptical forms, are considered to be the most direct structures, and therefore are viewed in many cultures as authoritative if unmodified, e.g., 'Open the door,' 'One coffee.' In performatives, the direct communicative intent is conveyed by such verbs as "ask, demand,

request, order,” which make such requests resemble an order, e.g., ‘I would like to ask you to open the window.’ In obligations, the speaker either exerts or refers to some outside authority by employing the modal verbs, like ‘should,’ ‘must,’ or ‘have to,’ e.g., ‘You should leave now.’

The speaker’s intentions in conventionally indirect requests are also expressed explicitly. However, with conventionally indirect requests, unlike direct requests, there is a certain degree of redress. Conventionally indirect requests involve structures that consider the speaker’s wishes and needs, as well as ability, willingness, permission, and suggestory formulae. Ability formulae are normally realized in the form of questions and involve modal verbs that pertain to the hearer’s ability to carry out a request. Ability formulae can refer either to: i) the hearer’s inherent capacities, mental or physical, e.g., ‘Can you open the window?’, or ii) “the external circumstances related to time, place, etc., of the action” (Trosborg, 1995:198), e.g., ‘Can you give me a ride?’

Willingness structures also take the form of questions and appeal to the hearer’s willingness to perform an action, e.g., ‘Will/would you open the window?’ Such structures “serve as compliance-gaining strategies” by communicating to the hearer that their compliance is not taken for granted (Trosborg, 1995:199).

In order to make a request, the speaker may also use permission formulae, e.g., ‘Is it ok if I borrow your pen?’ Such structures normally incorporate the speaker’s perspective and signal a shift in focus from the hearer as an agent of the action to the speaker as “a beneficiary or recipient of an activity” (Trosborg, 1995:199).

A conventionally indirect request can be also conveyed by suggestory, wish, and need formulae. The propositional meaning of suggestory formulae, e.g., ‘How about opening the window?’, is to check on the hearer’s cooperativeness “by inquiring whether any conditions exist



that might prevent the hearer from carrying out the action” (Trosborg, 1995:201). In wish, e.g., ‘I would like to borrow your pen,’ and need, e.g., ‘I need your pen,’ formulae, the speaker conveys a request by making their wishes and needs “the focal point of interaction” (Trosborg, 1995: 201).

In indirect requests, or hints, the speaker chooses opaque language in order not to express their communicative intentions explicitly. Hints always convey both surface-level and hidden meanings. For example, in the utterance ‘It is hot in the room,’ the speaker could actually be asking someone to open the window. In order to interpret such utterances correctly, the hearer requires considerable background knowledge of the interlocutor and/or routinized experience of using such structures in certain communicative contexts or with a certain social group (Trosborg, 1995).

## **5 Results**

The designed instrument elicited a total of 1,266 request head-acts, which were further organized and analyzed with respect to the following aspects of requestive behaviour: the level of directness of request strategies and the variety of structures used in each strategy. Figure 1.1 below presents the request strategies employed by native Ukrainian speakers according to the three levels of directness.

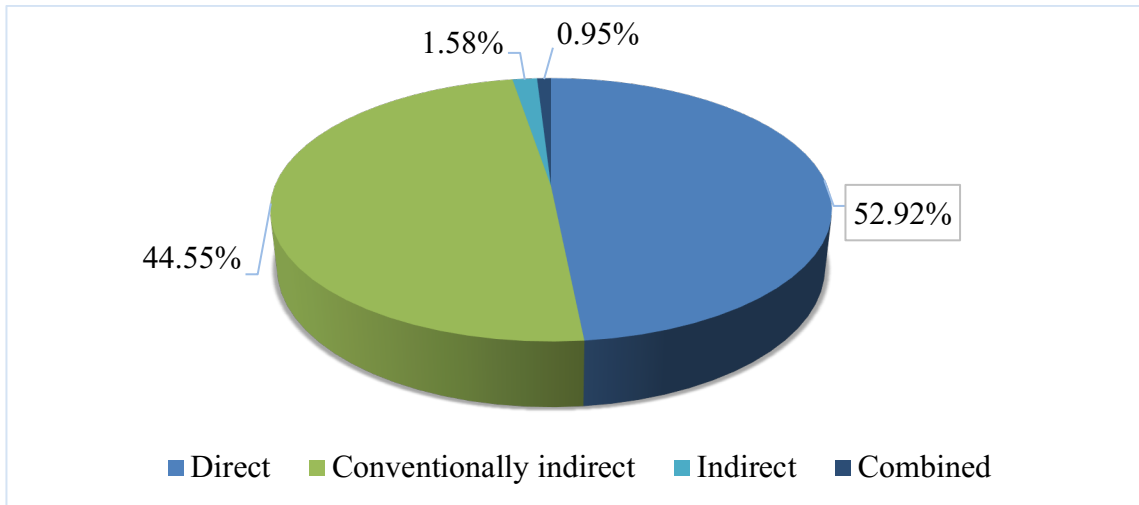


Figure 1.1. Distribution of request strategies (%)

As Figure 1.1 shows, native speakers of Ukrainian slightly prefer direct (52.92%) over conventionally indirect (44.55%) strategies. The least frequently used strategy is indirect (hints): it was employed in only 1.58% of requests. Importantly also, in 0.95% of instances a speaker combined several request structures to convey a single request.

According to the participants' data, the above mentioned strategies are represented by various request structures, summarized in Figure 1.2.

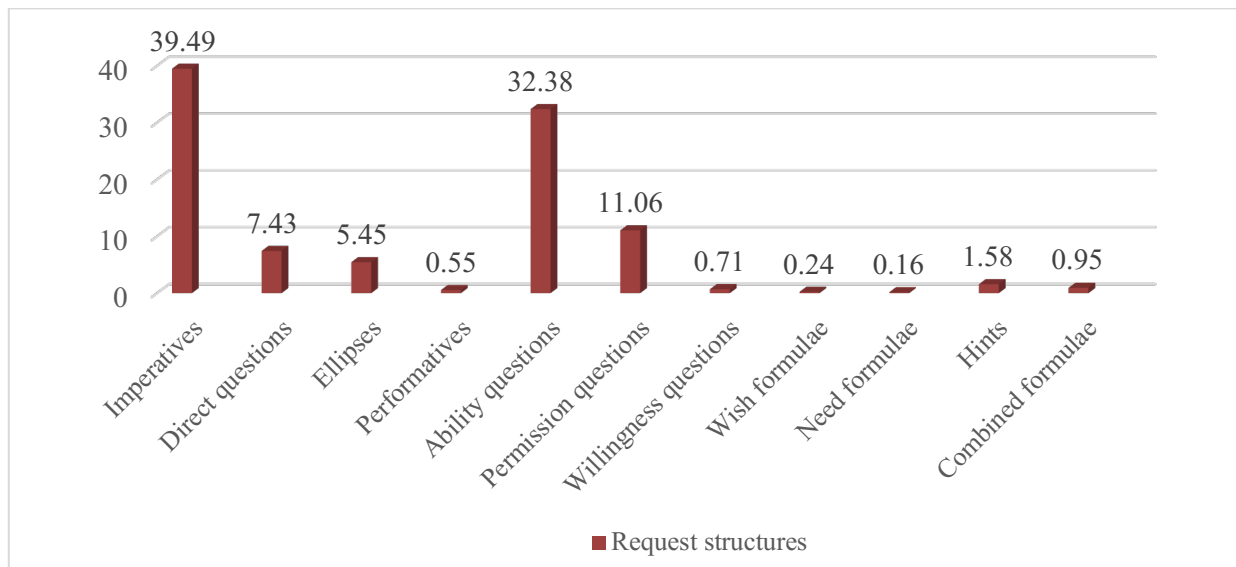


Figure 1.2. Distribution of request structures (%)

In Figure 1.2, direct strategies are represented by imperatives, direct questions,<sup>5</sup> ellipses, and performatives. Conventionally indirect strategies involve five structures: ability questions, permission questions, willingness questions, wish formulae, and need formulae. Also, two sub-categories of Trosborg's taxonomy (1995), namely, obligations and suggestory formulae, are not represented in the data. The indirect strategies or hints, and the combined strategies or combined formulae, are very few in number and do not form distinct subcategories.

## 5.1 Direct requests

Figure 1.2 shows that the most preferred direct request structure is imperative (39.49%), which is also the most preferred request structure overall. Importantly, only around 50% of participants provided responses to scenarios 11-14 (requests for services). In these responses, imperatives significantly prevailed. Therefore, it is probable that the number of imperatives recorded would have been even higher had all participants responded to these scenarios.

As mentioned above, imperative structures are most frequently observed in requests for services. These results echo Amelkina Dunn's (2012) findings on Russian requests. The researcher found that in instances when interlocutors are either equal in power or when the speaker is in a higher power position than the hearer, that imperative structures predominate requests for services. The present study revealed that requests for services are predominantly expressed by imperatives when addressed to unfamiliar interlocutors at a farmer's market (61.41%) and in a grocery store (59.65%), and less frequently to familiar (44.83%) and unfamiliar (39.34%) interlocutors in a student café. For example:<sup>6 7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Since Trosborg's taxonomy (1995) does not cover all of the structures found in the Ukrainian data, it was extended by a "direct question" subcategory, proposed by Mills in her study on Russian requests (1991).

<sup>6</sup> In order to showcase how Ukrainian requests are structured, the examples use the direct translation method.

<sup>7</sup> In examples here and elsewhere the following abbreviations will be used: i) *PL* to indicate the plural forms of the personal pronoun 'you' and corresponding verbal forms, ii) *SG* to indicate the singular forms of the personal

- (1) *Dobryi den'!* *Daite meni, bud' laska, bukhanku khliba, pliashku moloka ta banku kavu. Diakuiu.* 'Good day! Give<sub>PL</sub> me, please, a loaf of bread, a bottle of milk and a jar of coffee. Thanks.'
- (2) *Dobryi den'!* *Iak u vas spravy?* *Daite, bud' laska, kavu i dva tistechka. Duzhe vam diakuiu.* 'Good day! How are you? Give<sub>PL</sub> [me], please, a coffee and two cookies. Thank you very much.'
- (3) *Pryvit. Dai, bud' laska, kavu i dva tistechka.* 'Hi. Give<sub>SG</sub> [me], please, a coffee and two cookies.'

In the examples above, the imperative structures involve the verb *daty*/ 'to give' in the imperative mood. Unlike in English, imperatives in Ukrainian differ in person and number. A verb in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural normally refers to two or more people, or to a single person (the formal or respectful *vy* form) if interlocutors are unfamiliar or have unequal power. A verb in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (the informal *ty* form) signals familiarity or equal power relations between interlocutors. The plural form *daite*/ 'give' in example 1 indicates a large distance and unequal social status between interlocutors; according to the context, the speaker is in a high-power position to the hearer, and the interlocutors are unfamiliar. Examples 2 and 3 illustrate a request for services in a student café where interlocutors are also of unequal social status, though they are familiar with each other. In example 3, a small distance between interlocutors is conveyed both through the singular form *dai*/ 'give,' and the informal greeting *pryvit*/ 'hi.' Interestingly, in example 2, the respondent employs the plural form *daite*/ 'give,' and the formal greeting *dobryi den'*/ 'good day.' The only indicator of a small distance between interlocutors is the use of small talk<sup>8</sup> *Iak u vas spravy?*/ 'How are you?,' which in Ukrainian is normally restricted to conversations between familiar interlocutors. Such discrepancies in the participants' responses may signal the limitations of the instrument. As some participants noted, it was unclear if the

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pronoun 'you' and corresponding verbal forms, iii) *NEG* for syntactically negative but semantically positive structures, and iv) *DIM* for diminutive forms.

<sup>8</sup> According to Schauer (2007), small talk is an external modification device used to soften imposition on the speaker by establishing a rapport between interlocutors at the beginning of a request. Unlike in English, small talk in Ukrainian is not part of a greeting, and usually signals the speaker's genuine interest in the hearer's updates.

hearer (the sales person) is older, younger, or the same age as the speaker. Possibly, responses would have been more homogeneous if the scenario had provided them with more information about the hearer, specifically their age, which is one of the key factors in determining which form, informal (singular) *ty* or formal (plural) *vy*, should be employed.

Imperatives are also recorded to varying degrees in other communicative blocks. The highest proportion of imperative structures after request for services is observed in the communicative blocks *Phone Conversation* and *University*, specifically in requests to a friend: i) to pick up a pen (scenario 6, 75.47%), and ii) to invite a sibling to the phone (scenario 4, 66.04%). These scenarios are characterized by a low position for all three social variables. These results echo the findings of Dorodnyh's (1995) study on Ukrainian requests and on Bolden's (2017), Frank's (2002), and Dong's (2009) studies on Russian requests in which speakers rely heavily on imperatives when asking a close friend for a small favour. However, when one of the variables is in a high position, the proportion of imperatives goes down. The lower frequency of imperatives used in these scenarios is compensated for by the increased use of conventionally indirect structures, mainly ability questions. Therefore, the proportion of imperatives and ability questions are often inversely related. It is noteworthy that changes to the imposition level of a request affects the proportion of ability and imperative structures used. However, this change is not significant and the dominance of either formula remains the same. The change in the dominance of either ability or imperative formulae is observed only with an increase or decrease in distance or power, which confirms the results of Dorodnyh's (1995) study. Specifically, in his study, when distance and/or power are high, ability questions also prevail over imperatives, and vice versa.

Direct questions are the next most frequently used direct request structures (6.87%), which in the present data are recorded exclusively in requests for time (scenario 1). Below are the examples of the most typical requests for the time, presented in order from the least to the most frequently observed:

- (4) *Dobryi den'!* *Vybachte, bud' laska. Kotra zaraz hodyna?!* 'Good day! Excuse<sub>PL</sub> [me], please. What time [is it] now?'
- (5) *Dobryi den'!* *Vy mozhetе skazaty, kotra hodyna?!* 'Good day! Can<sub>PL</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> tell [me] what time [is it]?'
- (6) *Dobryi den'!* *Chy ne mohly b vy skazaty, kotra hodyna?!* 'Good day! And could<sub>PL, NEG</sub>you<sub>PL</sub> tell [me] what time [is it]?'
- (7) *Pereproshuiiu. Skazhit', bud' laska, kotra zaraz hodyna?!* 'Pardon [me]. Tell<sub>PL</sub> [me], please, what time [is it] now?'
- (8) *Vybachte, bud' laska. A chy vy ne pidkazhete, kotra hodyna?!* 'Excuse<sub>PL</sub> [me], please. And will you<sub>PL</sub> tell<sub>PL, NEG</sub> [me] what time [is it]?'

In examples 4-8, the speaker asks the hearer to provide information about the time. The request is conveyed by the direct question *Kotra hodyna?!* 'What is the time?,' which functions as a request head-act. In order to soften the imposition of this direct strategy, Ukrainian speakers use various mitigating devices. They involve greetings, e.g., *dobryi den'* 'good day' (examples 4-6), and alerters,<sup>9</sup> e.g., *vybachte/* 'excuse<sub>PL</sub> [me]' (example 8), *pereproshuiiu/* 'pardon [me]' (example 7). Of particular interest are alerters expressed by: i) ability (e.g., *vy<sub>PL</sub> mozhetе<sub>PL</sub> skazaty/* 'can you tell,' example 5; *chy ne mohly b vy skazaty/* 'could<sub>PL, NEG</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> tell [me],', example 6), ii) imperative (e.g., *skazhit'/* 'tell<sub>PL</sub> [me],', example 7), and iii) willingness (e.g., *a chy vy ne pidkazhete/* 'will you<sub>PL</sub> tell<sub>PL, NEG</sub> [me],', example 8) formulae. In Ukrainian, these formulae can take either the pre- or post-position to the head-act, though in the present data they are used exclusively initially. Their semantic function is to attract the hearer's attention and prepare them for the upcoming request. Such alerters are also reported in Mills' (1991) and

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<sup>9</sup> According to Sifianou (1999), alerters are internal lexical modification devices used to attract the hearer's attention and signal the upcoming request. Along with greetings, alerters constitute the group of attention getters.

Dong's (2006) studies on Russian requests, in which the imperative formula 'tell me, please [what time it is]' is frequently featured in the native Russian speaker data. However, the use of alerters in the form of ability and willingness formulae are reported neither by Mills (1991) nor Dong (2006). Additionally, such alerters in the Russian data are exclusively positive in form, while in the current Ukrainian data the majority of them contain the negative particle *ne* (examples 6 and 8). Importantly, the particle *ne* in the Ukrainian data does not carry the semantic meaning of negativity, but rather intensifies the mitigating effect of alerters. Also, requests for time are the only instances in the current study in which direct questions are employed. This may imply that direct requests are situationally specific.

In the current data, the group of direct strategies are also represented by elliptical structures (5.45%), which are almost exclusively observed in requests for services (scenarios 11-14). The most commonly used elliptical structures are presented below:

- (9) *Dobryi den'!* *Meni odnu bukhanuku khliba, pliashku moloka ta banku kavy. Diakuiu./*  
'Good day! [For] me a loaf of bread, a bottle of milk and a jar of coffee. Thanks.'
- (10) *Dobryi den'!* *Kilohram iabluk i dva kilohramy hrush, bud' laska./* 'Good day! A kilogram of apples and two kilograms of pears, please.'

Examples 9-10 demonstrate that elliptical structures can be of two kinds. In example 9, the ellipsis is constituted by the indirect object *meni/* '[for] me' and the several direct objects expressed by the nouns that denote the requested items. In example 10, the request consists of only direct objects. This construction may be formulated this way in an attempt to retain only new information, which is the direct object. According to Ervin-Tripp, this tactic is quite common "in situations where the necessary action is obvious" and it is necessary to specify "only new information" (Ervin-Tripp, 1976:30).

The employment of performatives is very marginal: they constitute 0.55% of all elicited request head-acts. Importantly, performatives in the current data are recorded only in the

*Services* and *University* communicative blocks. The examples below demonstrate typical performative formulae from the present data:

(11) *Dobroho dnia! Proshu daty meni odnu kavu i dva tistechka./* ‘Good day! [I am] asking to give me a coffee and two cookies.’

(12) *Ty zh use zapysuvala na leksiï? Todi ia v tebe viz'mu na dva dni konspekt, dobre? Diakuiu, sonechko./* ‘You<sub>SG</sub> wrote everything down at lecture? Then I will take your<sub>SG</sub> notes for two days, OK? Thanks, darling<sub>DM</sub>.’

As illustrated by the examples above, performative formulae in the current data incorporate the speaker-oriented perspective. The speaker orientation in example 11 is implemented by the verb *prosyty*/ ‘to ask’ in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular present tense, which is followed by the infinitive *daty*/ ‘to give.’ Importantly, only one participant employed these structures. The speaker perspective in example 12 is formulated through the personal pronoun *ia*/ ‘I’ and the perfective verb *vziaty*/ ‘to take’ in the first person singular future tense. According to Ogiermann (2009), the speaker orientation in Slavic cultures is normally avoided; the request could be seen as imposing and manipulative if the speaker assumes responsibility for the request’s outcome. This current analysis supports Ogiermann’s claims. The speaker-oriented perspective is observed in only 12.61% of head-acts that contain a reference to a person. At the same time, 86.83% of head-acts with reference to a person incorporate the hearer’s perspective, which in Slavic cultures implies less imposition. Moreover, the current analysis reveals that the speaker perspective is not only marginal but is also restricted to requests for large favours. Specifically, such constructions are observed in requests to the instructor for a paper extension (scenario 10), and in requests to familiar (scenario 8) and unfamiliar (scenario 7) peers for lecture notes. In these scenarios, getting the hearer to comply with the speaker’s request is paramount for the speaker. Interestingly, the imposition implemented by the speaker orientation in the request for lecture notes in example 12 is even enhanced by the verb *vziaty*/ ‘to take’ in the



future perfective. This only adds to the imposing tone of the request. However, this assertive tactic is softened by a number of mitigators: i) commitment seeker<sup>10</sup> *ty zh use zapysuvala na lektsii/* ‘you *SG* wrote everything down at lecture,’ ii) appealer<sup>11</sup> *dobre/* ‘OK,’ iii) address form in diminutive<sup>12</sup> *sonechko/* ‘darling,’ and iv) appreciator<sup>13</sup> *diakuii/* ‘thanks.’ Consequently, on the one hand, this tactic limits the opportunity for the hearer to avoid performing the action, and thus gives the speaker greater confidence that the request will be completed. But on the other hand, this tactic also allows the hearer not to feel too coerced to comply with the request.

## 5.2 Conventionally indirect requests

Conventionally indirect requests are the most diverse in the current data. They are represented by five request structures: ability questions, permission questions, willingness questions, wish formulae, and need formulae. The most frequently occurring conventionally indirect structure is based on the hearer’s ability to perform a request (see Figure 1.2, 32.38%). Ability questions are very typical in the *Phone Conversation* and *University* communicative blocks. They are not observed in requests for time and only a few examples are found in requests for services. Specifically, they were recorded in only three responses to *Services* scenarios. The most typical ability questions are formulated by the modal verb *mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ in the indicative and conditional moods.<sup>14</sup> The following examples illustrate the use of *mohty* in the conditional mood:

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<sup>10</sup> Commitment-seekers are external modifiers used to soften imposition by preparing the hearer for the request (Sifianou, 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Appealers are internal lexical modifiers used to soften imposition by seeking compromise with the hearer (Sifianou, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Diminutives are internal lexical modifiers used to soften imposition on the hearer. They are closely linked to the intimacy and familiarity between interlocutors (Sifianou, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Appreciators are external modifiers used to positively reinforce the request (Schauer, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> In the current data, the employment of the modal verb *mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ in the conditional mood is more frequent than in the indicative mood: 46.91% and 27.83%, respectively, in request structures that contain modality

(13) *Pereproshuiu, Liudmylo Viktorivno. Ia niiak ne vstyhaiu zdaty vchasno referat. Chy mohly b vy ioho pryiniaty cherez dva dni, bud' laska?/* 'Excuse me, Liudmyla Viktorivna. I am so behind in my schedule and unable to submit the term paper on time. Could<sub>PL</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> accept it in two days, please?'

(14) *Pryvit! A chy ne mih by ty meni daty konspekty na dekil'ka dniv? Ia propustyla kil'ka zaniat', a skoro kontrol'na. Ia obitsiaiu povernuty vchasno. Diakuiu. /* 'Hi! And could<sub>SG, NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> give me [your] notes for a few days? I missed a few classes, and the test is soon. I promise to return them on time. Thanks.'

Example 13 represents a request for a paper extension while example 14 is a request to borrow lecture notes from a familiar peer. Both examples show that ability questions in the conditional mood normally involve: i) interrogative particle(s) *a, chy*; ii) the modal verb *mohty/* 'can, to be able to,' in the conditional mood; iii) the conditional particle *b/ by*; and iv) the negative particle *ne* (example 14). With respect to the verb *mohty/* 'can, to be able to,' it can be used in either the grammatically singular form, e.g., *mih<sub>SG</sub>* (example 14) or the grammatically plural form, e.g., *mohly<sub>PL</sub>* (example 13). The latter is used to denote a respectful form of address to an unfamiliar interlocutor or an interlocutor of a higher social status.

The results demonstrate that requests with *mohty/* 'can' in the conditional mood are used exclusively in ability questions, and that their use depends upon social context. In requests for services, in which the speaker is in a higher power position, their use is very infrequent: once in a store and once at a market. However, when the hearer is in a higher power position, the proportion of these structures increases. Additionally, if a request to a hearer in a higher power position conveys high imposition, their use increases exponentially. This explains the low proportion of ability questions in the conditional in *Services* scenarios, which are characterized by a low imposition on the hearer; it is their job to comply with the request. Notably, ability questions in the conditional are used frequently in requests for big favours that are addressed to

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devices. Besides *mohty*, modality in Ukrainian requests is also expressed by the impersonal construction *mozhna/* 'is it possible,' which is used in 25.31% of the request head-acts. This construction will be addressed later in this section.

both interlocutors of a higher power position and peers (see example 14). This suggests that these request structures are particularly sensitive to the social variable of imposition. Such results echo earlier findings on Russian requests by Betsch (2003, as cited in Ogiermann, 2009). The researcher claims that ability questions using the modal verb ‘can’ in the conditional mood are employed preferably in situations to express a high-imposition request or to address a hearer of a higher social status.

The negative particle *ne* in ability questions in the conditional mood deserves special attention. This analysis demonstrates that these requests can be formulated by both syntactically positive and syntactically negative structures. These findings diverge from the research results of other Slavic languages, specifically Russian. Amelkina Dunn (2012), Dong (2006), Krulatz (2012), Larina (2009), Mills (1991), and Ogiermann (2009) report that ability questions in the conditional occur exclusively as syntactically negative structures, which allowed these researchers to consider the negative particle as an obligatory element of such formulae. In the current data, syntactically positive structures occur in only 1.82% of ability questions in the conditional. Their proportion in low-imposition requests, to call people to the phone for example, is slightly higher than in responses to other scenarios. In high-imposition scenarios, however, requests are formulated almost exclusively using syntactically negative structures. Therefore, it is possible to assume that in ability questions in the conditional, the negative particle *ne* functions as a mitigating device to soften the imposition on the hearer. If ability questions in the conditional do not contain *ne*, the softening effect normally tends to be conveyed by other mitigating devices. For instance, in example 13, the speaker uses the grounder<sup>15</sup> *ale ia niiak ne*

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<sup>15</sup> According to Sifianou (1999), grounders are external modifiers used to provide justifications and reasons for a request. Ogiermann considers them to be particularly efficient mitigating devices, since “explaining why it is necessary to impose on the hearer makes the request more plausible, and may thus increase his or her willingness to comply” (2009:206). Based on her Russian and Polish data, she also claims that when grounders are extended and

*vstyhaiu zdaty vchasno referat!* ‘I am so behind in my schedule and unable to submit the term paper on time’ and the politeness marker *bud’ laska!* ‘please’ to compensate for the absence of *ne* in their high-imposition request for a paper extension.

As mentioned above, the modal verb *mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ in ability questions is also used in the indicative mood. Such instances are recorded in 27.81% of head-acts that contain modality devices. When used in the indicative mood, *mohty/* ‘can, to be able’ in ability questions can be used either in the present (imperfective aspect) or in the future (perfective aspect) tense. The example below uses *mohty/* ‘can, to be able’ in the future tense:

- (15) *Iulechko, meni potribna tvoia dopomoha! Ia propustyla kil’ka zaniat’, i kospektiv nemaie, a do control’noï hotuvatysia treba. Ty zmozhesh daty meni svii konspekt na kil’ka dniv?!* ‘Iulechka<sub>DIM</sub>, I need your<sub>SG</sub> help! I missed a few classes, and [I have] no notes, and [it is] necessary to prepare for the test. Will you<sub>SG</sub> be able<sub>SG</sub> to give me your notes for a few days?’

The example above demonstrates the usage of *mohty/* ‘can, to be able’ in the singular future tense to request lecture notes from a familiar peer. These request structures are recorded in only 2.51% of ability questions in the indicative mood. The low proportion of these structures is most probably linked to the fact that *mohty/* ‘can, to be able’ in the future tense is also formulated in the perfective aspect, which views an action as a completed whole. According to Ogiermann (2009), the combination of the future tense and the perfective aspect conveys directness and some assertiveness, and therefore sounds quite imposing. This leaves the hearer little room to refuse. Current findings support this claim. Specifically, ability questions with the modal verb *mohty/* ‘can, to be able’ in the future perfective are recorded exclusively in requests for big favours, i.e., in requests for lecture notes to unfamiliar (one instance) and familiar (three

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detailed, reasons for requests become stronger and more sound, and requests are less likely to be rejected. This, in her opinion, accounts for the frequent use of grounders in requests for big favours. In the current data, grounders are also the most frequent external modification devices, particularly in requests where the hearer’s compliance to carry out the request is crucial for the speaker.

instances) peers, example 15. In these instances, the hearer's compliance is very crucial for the speaker. In order to make such structures less assertive, speakers of Ukrainian make use of various mitigators. For instance, the speaker in example 15 uses: i) a diminutive address form *Iulechka*, ii) a commitment seeker *meni potribna tvoia dopomoha* 'I need yours<sub>SG</sub> help,' iii) a grounder *Ia propustyla kil'ka zaniat', i konspekta nemaie, a do kontrol'noi hotuvatys` treba* 'I missed a few classes, and [I have] no notes, and [it is] necessary to prepare for the test,' and iv) a softening device,<sup>16</sup> expressed by a downtoning adverb *kil'ka* 'a few.'

The usage of *mohty* / 'can, to be able to' in the present tense is recorded in 97.48% of ability questions in the indicative mood and is particularly favoured when imposition on the hearer is low. The examples below illustrate these request structures in the order of most to least frequently used:

- (16) *Dobroho dnia. Ia podruha Natalii. Vy mozhetе poklykaty ii do telefonu?!* 'Good day. I am a friend of Nataliya. Can<sub>PL</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> call her to the phone?'
- (17) *Vybach, bud' laska. A mozhesh pidniaty moiу ruchku?!* 'Excuses<sub>SG</sub> [me], please. Can<sub>SG</sub> [you] pick up my pen?'
- (18) *Olena Mykhailivna, u mene do vas prokhannia. Chy ia mozhu zdaty referat u vivtorok cherez povazhnu prychnu?!* 'Olena Mykhailivna, I have a request to ask of you<sub>PL</sub>. Can<sub>SG</sub> I hand in the paper on Tuesday due to a valid reason?'
- (19) *Dobroho dnia. Tse telefonuie podruha Maryny Iulia. Maryna mozhe zaraz pidiity do telefonu?!* 'Good day. This [is] a friend of Maryna, Yulia, calling. Can<sub>SG</sub> Maryna come up to the phone now?'

As examples 16-19 demonstrate, ability can be directed at: i) the hearer (examples 16 and 17), ii) the speaker (example 18), and iii) the third person (example 19). When ability is directed at the hearer, *mohty* / 'can, to be able to' in the present tense is formulated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, the formal *vy* (*mozhetе*, example 16), or the singular, informal *ty* (*mozhesh*, example 17). These request structures occur in 78.79% of ability questions in the indicative mood and are the most frequently used. They are recorded in the communicative blocks *Phone Conversation* and

<sup>16</sup> Softeners are internal lexical modifiers used to "soften" the impositive nature of requests (Sifianou, 1999).

*University*. *Mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural is normally used in requests to an unfamiliar interlocutor or to a familiar non-peer interlocutor. *Mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular is used to address a familiar peer. Importantly, in their responses to scenario 5 (a request to call a person to the phone made to an unfamiliar sibling), native speakers of Ukrainian formulate their requests with *mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ both in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural and singular. A similar issue arose earlier in the participants’ responses to scenario 12. In this scenario, participants also employed both the singular and plural forms to request services from a familiar sales person at a student café. This discrepancy in responses to both scenarios 5 and 12 probably stems from insufficient information about the hearer’s age. As some participants noted, they did not know whether to address the interlocutor by the plural *vy* or the singular *ty*, as it was unclear if the hearer was older, younger, or the same age as the speaker. These comments suggest that in Ukrainian culture, the age of interlocutors is a decisive factor in whether the plural or singular form should be used in a request. Future studies would be well served to include the interlocutors’ ages in DCT scenarios.

When ability is directed at the speaker, *mohty/* ‘can, to be able to’ in the present tense is formulated in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, as illustrated by example 19. Such instances are observed in 15% of ability questions in the indicative mood. These structures are mainly observed in requests for a paper extension. In this case, getting the hearer (in this case, an instructor) to comply with the request is paramount for the speaker. These findings agree with the results of Ogiermann’s (2009) comparative study in which the researcher argues that the speaker’s perspective in requests is perceived as imposing and even manipulative in Slavic cultures, and therefore is often only reserved for requests for large favours (Ogiermann, 2009). At first, such a construction may seem too imposing to use when making a request of an instructor. The speaker-oriented

perspective formulated in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular is enhanced by the verb in the future perfective, which in turn only adds imposition to the request. However, this imposing tone is softened by a number of mitigators: i) a commitment seeker *u mene do vas prokhannia!* 'I have a request to ask of you,' and ii) a grounder *cherez povazhnu prychnu!* 'due to a valid reason.' These mitigators provide the hearer with room to manoeuvre and, if need be, to deny the request.

When ability is directed at a third person, *mohty!* 'can, to be able to' is formulated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, as illustrated by example 19. Such request structures occur in only 3.75% of ability questions in the indicative mood, and are used exclusively in the *Phone Conversation* scenarios. The use of these structures can be explained by the fact that the third person is actually the intended object of the request, and reference to them is rationalized by the communicative situation itself.

The use of the negative particle *ne* in ability questions in the indicative mood is worthy of discussion. Consider the following example:

- (20) *Pryvit! Mene ne bulo na dekil'kokh zaniattiakh i ia propustyla deiakyi material. Chy ne mozhesh ty meni daty svoi konspekty? A ia zavtra tobi vse povernu!* 'Hi! I was absent from several classes [I did not attend several classes], and I missed some material. Can<sub>SG,NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> give me your notes? And I will return everything tomorrow.'

The ability question in example 20 is employed to request lecture notes from a familiar peer and is the only syntactically negative ability question noted in the indicative mood. Interestingly, according to Amelkina Dunn (2012), Betsch (2003, as cited in Ogiermann, 2009), and Rathmayr (1994, as cited in Ogiermann, 2009), the negative particle *ne* in similar request structures in Russian is perceived as a mandatory component, an element that differentiates between ability requests and actual information seeking questions. These scholars claim that without the negative particle such questions may result in a potential positive response from the

hearer, ‘I can,’ which does not actually demonstrate a willingness to comply with the request. These results contradict the well-trodden argument in Russian linguistics that Ukrainian and Russian native speakers share common patterns of speech act behaviour (Rathmayr & Yasnitskaia, 2008:135). In Polish, too, syntactically negative ability questions are also infrequent. Marcjanik (1997) contends that these structures are rarely used in Polish because they imply a genuine doubt about the hearer’s ability to comply with the request. With respect to Ukrainian, this study does not provide enough evidence to support this Polish language claim, though further study is certainly warranted.

Permission formulae, used in 11.06% of elicited head-acts, are the next most frequently used conventionally indirect structure. They are observed in the majority of scenarios, except in requests for information and requests to a familiar peer to pick up a pen. The request for a paper extension received the highest proportion (38.48%) of these formulae. Consider the examples below:

- (21) *Allo Anatoliivno, mozhna meni, bud’ laska, zdaty referat cherez paru dniv, bo ia shche ne vstyhla ioho dorobyty?* ‘Alla Anatoliivna, [is it] possible [for] me, please, to hand in the paper in a few days, as I did not manage to finish it yet?’
- (22) *Ol’ho Dmytrivno, u mene vynykla nevelychka problemka. Tema moho referatu duzhe obiemna i ia ne vstyhaiu ioho zakinchty. Mozhna, bud’ laska, ia zdam referat cherez dva dni? Diakuiu vam!* ‘Ol’ha Dmytrivna, I’ve got a small<sub>DIM</sub> problem<sub>DIM</sub>. The topic of my paper is very broad, and I am not managing to finish it on time. [Is it] possible, please, [if] I hand in the paper in two days? Thank you<sub>PL</sub>!’

The examples above show requests for a paper extension, formulated by permission questions. They incorporate the modal word *mozhna*/ ‘[is it] possible,’ followed by: i) the direct object expressed by the personal pronoun ‘I’ in the Dative (example 21) or Nominative (example 22) case, and ii) the main verb in either the infinitive (example 21) or the future tense (example 22). In Ukraine, paper extensions are only granted for serious reasons, such as a documented health issue. Therefore, getting the hearer, i.e., the instructor, to comply with the request is the



paramount task for the speaker, i.e., the student. This request can be communicated in a number of ways. Specifically, example 22 illustrates the use of the speaker's perspective, which is perceived as manipulative in Slavic cultures (Ogiermann, 2009). Additionally, the respondent uses a detailed grounder *tema moho referatu duzhe obiemna i ia ne vstyhaiu ioho zakinchyty/* 'the topic of my paper is very broad, and I am not managing to finish it on time,' which makes the justification for the request very reasonable, and therefore the hearer is more likely to comply (Ogiermann, 2009). Also, example 22 illustrates the use of diminutives, which "soften" the imposing nature of face-threatening speech acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and requests in particular (Ogiermann, 2009; Sifianou, 1999). Notably, in example 22, the commitment seeker<sup>17</sup> *u mene vynykla nevelychka problemka/* 'I've got a small<sub>DIM</sub> problem<sub>DIM</sub>,' makes the following permission question sound like a request for something trivial and insignificant. Therefore, the request illustrated by example 22 can be viewed as particularly manipulative. However, its tone is mitigated by the politeness marker *bud' laska/* 'please,' the appreciator *diakuiu vam/* 'thank you<sub>PL</sub>,' and by the type of the employed request structure itself. Specifically, the modal word *mozhna/* '[is it] possible' makes the question sound like a request for permission, which softens the impositive and manipulative tone expressed by the above discussed modification devices. Such a tactic seems to be particularly effective in situations when the hearer's compliance is crucial. On the one hand, it leaves the hearer very little opportunity to refuse and therefore provides the speaker a greater probability that the desired action will be carried out. On the other hand, it allows the hearer not to feel too coerced to comply with the request.

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<sup>17</sup> Commitment-seekers are external lexical modification devices that prepare the hearer for the request (Sifianou, 1999)

Permission questions are also recorded in *Services* scenarios; imperatives and ellipses are the most common structures in the participants' responses to these scenarios. The examples below show the most typical permission questions in requests for services:

- (23) *Dobroho dnia. Mozhna meni kavu i dva tistechka, bud' laska?* 'Good day! [Is it] possible [for] me [to have] a coffee and two cookies, please?'
- (24) *Dobroho dnia. Mozhna, bud' laska, kavu i dva tistechka? Diakuiu!* 'Good day! [Is it] possible, please, [to have] a coffee and two cookies? Thanks!'
- (25) *Dobryi den'. Mozhna kilohram iabluk i dva kilohramy hrush, bud' laska?* 'Good day. [Is it] possible [to have] a kilogram of apples and two kilograms of pears, please?'

As examples 23-25 show, permission questions in requests for services involve the modal word *mozhna* 'is it possible,' followed by the optional indirect object *meni* 'for me' (example 23), and a few direct objects that indicate the requested items. Additionally, the requests for services incorporate a number of modification devices: i) a greeting, e.g., *dobroho dnia* 'good day' (examples 23-24) and *dobryi den'* 'good day' (example 25), ii) the politeness marker *bud' laska* 'please' (examples 23, 25), and iii) the appreciator *diakuiu* 'thanks' (example 24). Though permission questions are recorded in all scenarios of the communicative block *Services*, their distribution across *Services* scenarios is not even. Permission questions occur more frequently in responses to the student café scenarios (33.81%) compared to requests to sales people in a store (12.32%) and at a farmer's market (10.47%). Different "levels" of urgency may explain the difference in request structure preferences. Specifically, in a café, customers are normally not in a hurry, the atmosphere is more relaxed, and therefore lengthier permission questions are more favoured.

*Phone Conversation* is another communicative block in which permission questions are recorded. The most typical requests for people to the phone are illustrated by the examples below:

- (26) *Dobroho dnia! Tse Iana, podruha Tetiany. Mozhna poklykaty ii do telefonu?!*  
 ‘Good day! It is Iana, a friend [of] Tetiana. [Is it] possible to call her to the phone?!’
- (27) *Allo! Pryvit. A mozhna Aniu do telefonu?!* ‘Hello! Hi! [Is it] possible [to call] Ania to the phone?!’
- (28) *Dobroho dnia! Mene zvaty Iryna, ia podruha Kati. Chy mozhna pohovoryty z Kateiu?!* ‘Good day! My name is Iryna, I am a friend [of] Katia. [Is it] possible to speak to Katia?!’

As examples 26-28 show, permission questions in requests to call people to the phone involve the modal word *mozhna* ‘[is it] possible,’ followed by the infinitive of one of two verbs: *poklykaty* ‘to call’ (example 26) and *pohovoryty* ‘to speak’ (example 28). If the verb *poklykaty* ‘to call’ is used, it is always followed by an indirect object. The indirect object can be expressed either by a personal pronoun (example 26) or the name of a person (example 27) in the accusative case. Also, the use of the infinitive *poklykaty* ‘to call’ is optional and is quite frequently omitted, as in example 27. The infinitive *pohovoryty* ‘to speak’ (example 28) requires the preposition *z* ‘with’ and a noun or pronoun in the Instrumental case. These structures are very often supplemented by modificational devices that involve: i) alerters specific to phone conversations, e.g., *allo* ‘hello’ (example 27), ii) greetings, e.g., *dobroho dnia* ‘good day’ (examples 26, 28) and *pryvit* ‘hi’ (example 27), iii) small talk, e.g., *tse Iana, podruha Tetiany* ‘it is Iana, a friend [of] Tetiana’ (examples 26) and *mene zvaty Iryna, ia podruha Kati* ‘my name is Iryna, I am a friend [of] Katia’ (example 28), which includes a speaker self-introduction, and is observed mostly in phone conversations between unfamiliar peer and non-peer interlocutors. The distribution of permission questions in the *Phone Conversation* block stands out as the most even across all scenarios in the block as compared to other communicative blocks. However, their use is slightly higher in requests to call people to the phone if interlocutors are unfamiliar.

The rest of the conventionally indirect structures involve willingness, need formulae, and wish formulae, illustrated by the examples below:

- (29) *Dobryden'!* *A de vasha dotsia? Daste ii slukhavku?!* 'Good day! Is your<sub>PL</sub> daughter at home? And will [you] give<sub>PL</sub> her the phone?'
- (30) *Natus'!* *U mene ie odne prokhanniachko do tebe, meni potriben tvii konspekt na dva dni. Ia povernu.* 'Natusia<sub>DIM</sub>! I have one request<sub>DIM</sub> to you<sub>SG</sub>, I need your<sub>SG</sub> notes for two days. I will return [them].'
- (31) *Ty planuiesh s'ohodni chy zavtra hotuvatysia do kontrol'noi? Khochu v tebe poprosyty konspekty na kil'ka dnyv, bo ia propustyla kil'ka zaniat'.* *Dopomozhy, bud' laska.* 'Are you<sub>SG</sub> planning today or tomorrow to prepare for the test? [I] want to ask you<sub>SG</sub> for [your] notes for a few days, as I missed a few classes. Help<sub>SG</sub> [me], please.'

Example 29 illustrates the employment of a willingness question in a request to call someone to the phone. Such request structures occur very infrequently, in only nine (0.71%) instances.

The occurrence of need and wish formulae is even more infrequent: 0.24% and 0.16% of request instances, respectively. As examples 30 and 31 demonstrate, both formulae incorporate the speaker's perspective, which is a high-imposition tactic in Slavic cultures. According to Ogiermann (2009), this tactic is normally reserved for requests in which a positive outcome is of utmost importance for the speaker. Importantly, all need and wish formulae in the current data are recorded exclusively in high-imposition requests for lecture notes, which is in line with Ogiermann's claims (2009). Additionally, the speakers in these examples use modification devices in an attempt to elicit compliance from the hearers. Specifically, the use of the diminutive form of the word *prokhannia*/ 'request' (example 30) makes the structure sound like a request for something insignificant. The use of the expander<sup>18</sup> *dopomozhy, bud' laska*/ 'help [me], please' (example 31), however, portrays the speaker as desperate and intensifies the imposition on the hearer. At the same time, the high level of imposition, incorporated in the wish and need formulae in the examples above, is balanced by a number of softeners: i) the diminutive applied to the form of address *Nata* (example 30), ii) the commitment seeker *U mene ie odne*

<sup>18</sup> Expanders are external modifiers used to reinforce requests by the repetition or use of synonymous word combinations (Sifianou, 1999).

*prokhanniachko do tebe/* ‘I have one request<sub>DIM</sub> to you<sub>SG</sub>’ (example 30), iii) the considerator<sup>19</sup> *Ty planuiesh s’ohodni chy zavtra hotuvatysia do kontrol’noi?/* ‘Are you<sub>SG</sub> planning today or tomorrow to prepare for the test?’ (example 31), iv) the grounder *bo ia propustyla kil’ka zaniat’/* ‘as I missed a few classes’ (example 31), and v) the imposition minimizer<sup>20</sup> *Ia povernu/* ‘I will return’ (example 30). Therefore, examples 30 and 31 demonstrate a tactic that simultaneously incorporates some degree of imposition and grants the speaker some assurance that the request will be carried out, while also employing a number of “softeners” to make the hearer feel not too coerced to comply with the request. This tactic was presented earlier in the discussion of ability and permission structures. Therefore, the results of the analysis once again demonstrate that this tactic is used exclusively in requests for large favours when the degree of imposition is high and the hearer’s compliance is crucial for the speaker.

### 5.3 Indirect requests

Indirect requests, or hints, constitute the least frequently used request strategies: they occur in 1.58% of instances. This echoes the results of earlier studies by Krulatz (2012) and Mills (1993). In the current data, indirect requests are recorded in neither requests for time and services, nor in requests for lecture notes. They are, however, consistently used in all *Phone Conversation* scenarios. Interestingly, they are more common in phone conversations between familiar interlocutors than unfamiliar ones. This supports earlier claims by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Ervin-Tripp (1976) that indirect request strategies can be employed in instances in which interlocutors share knowledge of the situation. Specifically, according to

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<sup>19</sup> Considerators are external modifiers used to show consideration towards the hearer’s situation (Schauer, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Imposition minimizers are external modifiers used to decrease the imposition on the hearer (Sifianou, 1999). Specifically, in example 30, the speaker attempts to decrease the imposition by promising to return the lecture notes.

Ervin-Tripp (1976), hints are very frequent in groups in which members have some shared knowledge, e.g., families, friends, and colleagues. As a result of the high frequency of communication, hints very often become conventionalized forms of communication among members of these groups. However, a closer look at participants' responses in the current data allows us to see some similarities in the request tactics employed by interlocutors of different levels of familiarity. For example:

- (32) *Dobroho dnia, Nataliu Ivanovno. Yak vashi spravy? A Ilona zaraz vdoma?!* 'Good day, Natalia Ivanivna. How are your<sub>PL</sub> things? And [is] Ilona home now?'
- (33) *Pryvit, Tamila vdoma?!* 'Hi, [is] Tamila home?'
- (34) *Dobroho dnia. Ia podruha vashoi don'ky, Oksana. Vona zaraz vdoma?!* 'Good day. I am Oksana, a friend of your<sub>PL</sub> daughter. [Is] she home now?'

Examples 32 and 33 represent interactions between familiar interlocutors. At first glance, they fit well the "shared knowledge" condition identified by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Ervin-Tripp (1976). Interestingly, example 34, though representing a conversation between unfamiliar interlocutors, illustrates a very similar tactic. The caller in example 34 uses the indirect strategy *Vona zaraz vdoma?!* '[Is] she home now?' to talk to someone outside of their inner circle. By employing this strategy, the caller surely relies on the fact that the request act is very clear, and the hearer knows what must be done and who should do it. This implies that the hints in these examples are used as a conventionalized form of asking people to the phone, just as "Hi, how are you?" is used as a conventionalized greeting in English.

#### 5.4 Combined request structures

As Figure 1.2 demonstrates, in 0.95% of instances speakers use more than one structure to convey a single request. Combined structures are not recorded in requests for time and services; their use in responses to *University* scenarios are few and inconsistent (two occurrences

over five scenarios). The highest proportion of combined structures is recorded in *Phone Conversation* scenarios. Consider the most typical combined structures illustrated below:

- (35) *Dobroho dnia! Vybachte, bud' laska, shcho turbuii. Tse podruha vashoi dochky Natasha. (a) Ia b khotila pohovoryty z neiu. (b) Chy ne mohly b vy ii poklykaty?/* 'Good day! Excuse<sub>PL</sub> [me], please, that I trouble you. This [is] a friend [of] your<sub>PL</sub> daughter, Natasha. (a) I would like [to] talk to her. (b) Could<sub>PL,NEG YOUPL</sub> call her [to the phone]?'  
(36) *Allo! Z kym ia rozmovliaiu? (a) Meni potribno pohovoryty z [...]. (b) Mozha ii poklykaty do telefonu? Diakuii./* 'Hello! Who am I talking to? (a) I need [to] talk to [...]. (b) [Is it] possible [to] ask her to the phone? Thanks.'

The current analysis reveals that combined structures normally consist of two components. The first component is either a wish (example 35a) or a need (example 36a) formula. The second component involves either an ability (example 35b) or a permission (example 36b) question. Though need and wish formulae and ability and permission questions belong to the same category of conventionally indirect strategies, they convey different levels of imposition. Specifically, need and wish formulae incorporate the speaker's perspective which, as discussed earlier, is perceived as imposing in Slavic cultures. In contrast, ability and permission questions incorporate the hearer's orientation, which is regarded as non-imposing. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that ability and permission questions, when employed as the second component of a combined structure, function to mitigate the impositive communicative intent expressed by the first component of such structures.

This analysis allows us to describe Ukrainian request structures according to three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect. The group of direct requests consists of imperatives, direct questions, ellipses, and performatives. Conventionally indirect requests involve ability, permission and willingness questions, and wish and need formulae. Indirect requests, or hints, constitute a very small group and are predominantly used as a conventionalized way of asking people to the phone. In a small number of instances, speakers

employed a combination of two structures to convey a single request. The analysis also revealed that the frequency and distribution of request structures, and their linguistic realisation, depend on the interplay of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition, which are contextually determined. This initial research suggests that request structure preference is also mediated by situational factors, though additional research is required.

## **6 Discussion and pedagogical recommendations**

The analysis presented in the previous sections allows for discussion of the patterns of requestive behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian in a number of communicative contexts. Ukrainian requests were represented by eleven structures, realized at three levels of directness: direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect. These findings confirm the directness-indirectness continuum proposed by the Theory of Politeness. However, the analysis also revealed a small percentage (0.95%) of combined formulae, in which speakers used two structures to convey a single request. The infrequent use of these formulae, however, limits our ability to make generalized claims. Further investigation is warranted.

Generally, native speakers of Ukrainian prefer direct over conventionally indirect requests; imperatives are both the most frequently used direct structure and the most frequently used structure overall. This finding confirms both previous research on Ukrainian requests (Dorodnyh, 1995) and Slavic language requests more generally, specifically Russian (Bolden, 2017; Kotorova, 2015; Krulatz, 2012; Larina, 2003, 2009) and Polish (Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991; Zinken & Ogiemann, 2013). Regarding conventionally indirect requests, one-third of elicited structures were interrogative constructions that constituted inquiries about the hearer's ability to perform a request. Regarding indirect formulae, or so-called hints, the analysis demonstrated that



they were employed as conventionalized forms of asking a person to the phone, which allowed us to consider them as situation-specific.

The analysis also showed that the choice of request strategies by native speakers of Ukrainian was influenced by social factors. In instances where the variables of distance, power, and imposition were low, direct strategies were favoured. In instances where variables were in a high position, conventionally indirect strategies prevailed. This finding supported the main argument of Brown and Levinson's (1987) Theory of Politeness: a high degree of social variables necessitates the employment of more indirect structures for the sake of maintaining face. Additionally, the results indicated that the use of concrete request structures was also determined by the high or low position of social variables. Specifically, when the hearer was in a higher power position, participants gave a strong preference to conventionally indirect ability questions, using the modal verb *mohty/* 'can, to be able' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person present tense. Notably, the formal *vy* was used when a request was made to an unfamiliar interlocutor. When interlocutors knew each other and were of equal social status, ability questions with *mohty/* 'can, to be able' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular or imperative structures were employed. In responses to scenarios characterized by high power and imposition, permission questions were frequently used. The use of the modal word *mozhna/* '[is it] possible' made such structures sound like requests for permission, which mitigated the impositive tone of such requests, particularly when addressed to a person in a higher power position. When imposition, distance, and power were low, imperatives were preferred. Also, imperatives, along with ellipses, were strongly preferred in requests for services in formal situations in which the speaker was in a higher power position than the hearer.

In order to formulate high-imposition requests, native Ukrainian speakers tended to use ability questions in the conditional mood irrespective of the position of other social variables. These structures were both syntactically positive and negative, with the latter significantly outnumbering the former. Interestingly, ability questions in the indicative mood (normally to express low-imposition requests) were almost exclusively syntactically positive. These findings differed from other Slavic languages, specifically Russian, in which ability questions, both in the conditional and indicative moods, occurred exclusively as syntactically negative structures. As a result, researchers have considered the negative particle as an obligatory element that helps to differentiate between ability requests and actual information-seeking questions (Amelkina Dunn, 2012; Dong, 2006; Krulatz, 2012; Larina, 2009; Mills, 1991; Ogiermann, 2009). This current analysis suggested that the Ukrainian *ne* functions as a mitigating device to “soften” imposition requests. This finding undercuts the common argument in Russian linguistics about the similarity of Ukrainian and Russian language speech acts (Rathmayr & Yasnitskaia, 2008: 135). Indeed, Ukrainian possesses its own linguistic means of formulating speech acts that sometimes differ from other Slavic languages.

In cases where the hearer’s compliance to perform a request was particularly crucial for the speaker, Ukrainian speakers used linguistic tactics that would increase the probability that the hearer would comply with the request, while ensuring that the hearer did not necessarily feel compelled to comply. Linguistic means, which were used to convey imposition, involved the speaker’s perspective and very extended grounders. These means are perceived as imposing and manipulative in Slavic cultures (Ogiermann, 2009). In order to “soften” the high imposition of such requests, Ukrainians, in addition to the negative particle *ne*, used a number of other

mitigators: politeness markers, appreciators, considerators, grounders, appealers, commitment-seekers, and diminutives.<sup>21</sup>

Though the focus of the current study was exclusively on the social variables of power, distance, and imposition, the results of the analysis pointed to the influence of other situation-related factors on the use of request structures. Certain structures were preferred in certain communicative contexts irrespective of the high or low position of social variables. Specifically, direct questions were used almost exclusively in requests for information, while ellipses were recorded exclusively in requests for services. Imperative structures heavily dominated requests for services in a grocery store and at a farmer's market. Their use in requests for services in a café was lower, even though other social variables remained constant. Permission questions were the most evenly distributed structures across all phone conversation scenarios. Additionally, phone conversations stood out as the scenarios with the highest proportion of indirect strategies. Consequently, it is possible to assume that situation-specific factors also have an influence on the request structure preference of Ukrainian speakers, which warrants further investigation.

Overall, the current findings indicated that in Ukrainian, the choice of strategies and structures and the linguistic means of their realisation depend on an interplay of social and contextual factors rather than the degree of politeness that the speaker wants to convey. On the one hand, this contradicted the universality of the main argument of the Theory of Politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which states that indirectness and politeness are positively correlated. On the other hand, these findings confirm those of other researchers of Slavic language pragmatics, who argue that the Theory of Politeness is not necessarily applicable to Slavic cultures (Dong, 2006; Lubecka, 2000; Ogiermann, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991).

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<sup>21</sup> Modification devices were not the focus of the current study. Only those devices which contributed to the understanding of the functioning of certain request structures were highlighted in the current analysis.

Generally, the requestive behaviour of native Ukrainian speakers demonstrated a heavy reliance on a number of social and cultural norms. The knowledge of and adherence to such norms is pivotal for learners of Ukrainian, particularly when they communicate with native speakers. If learners fail to follow these norms, their pragmatic errors may be interpreted as personal shortcomings that result in communication breakdowns, negative perceptions of learners by native speakers, or even the creation of stereotypes about the SL/FL learner's culture (Thomas, 1983). As such, it is of paramount importance to teach sociolinguistic norms in the language classroom. The current analysis has generated a number of useful recommendations how to address Ukrainian requests in the SL/FL classroom.

First, topics such as *Shopping for Food* and *Eating Out* offer a natural context for introducing and practicing imperative and elliptical request structures. Suggested examples include:

- (1) *Dobryi den'!* *Daite, bud' laska, kavu i dva tistechka.* *Diakuiu./* 'Good day! Give<sub>PL</sub> [me], please, a coffee and two cookies. Thank you.'
- (2) *Dobryi den'!* *Odnu kavu i dva tistechka, bud' laska.* *Diakuiu./* 'Good day! One coffee and two cookies, please. Thank you.'

As example 1 illustrates, the core element of the imperative request structures is the verb in the imperative mood. Therefore, such request structures are also an excellent opportunity for learners of Ukrainian to operationalize their knowledge of this grammatical category. Also, these topics expose students to the sociolinguistic norms of how: i) to greet, e.g., *Dobryi den'!* 'Good day!'; ii) to thank, e.g., *Diakuiu/* 'Thank you'; and iii) to use politeness markers, e.g., *bud' laska/* 'please' in formal situations.

Second, requests for information can be particularly conducive to teaching learners of Ukrainian how to formulate direct questions and greetings, e.g., *Dobryi den'!* 'Good day,'

alerters, e.g., *vybachte*/ ‘excuse<sub>PL</sub> [me],’ and politeness markers, e.g., *bud’ laska*/ ‘please’.

Suggested examples include:

- (3) *Dobryi den’!* *Vybachte, bud’ laska. Kotra zaraz hodyna?!* ‘Good day! Excuse<sub>PL</sub> [me], please. What time [is it] now?’

Third, ability questions that request large favours can teach students about the formation and functioning of the Ukrainian modal verb *mohty*/ ‘can, to be able’ in the conditional mood. A suggested example being:

- (4) *Iulechko, meni potribna tvoia dopomoha! Ia propustyla kil’ka zaniat’, i konspektiv nemaie, a do kontrol’noi hotuvatysia treba. Chy ty ne mohla b daty meni svii konspekt na kil’ka dniv? Ia povernu./* ‘*Iulechka*<sub>DIM</sub>, I need yours<sub>SG</sub> help. I missed a few classes, and [I have] no notes, and [it is] necessary to prepare for the test. And could<sub>SG,NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> give me your notes for a few days? I will return.’

Scenarios that incorporate requests for large favours can also teach Ukrainian-culture-specific unnegative (negative in form but positive in meaning) constructions, which can be particularly challenging for English speakers (Nedashkivska, 2004). Additionally, these contexts offer an excellent opportunity to learn modification devices: i) address forms in the diminutive, e.g., *Iulechka*, ii) commitment-seekers, e.g., *meni potribna tvoia dopomoha!* ‘I need yours<sub>SG</sub> help,’ iii) grounders, e.g., *Ia propustyla kil’ka zaniat’, i konspekta nemaie, a do kontrol’noi hotuvatys’ treba!* ‘I missed a few classes, and [I have] no notes, and [it is] necessary to prepare for the test,’ iv) softeners, e.g., *kil’ka* / ‘a few,’ and v) imposition minimizers, e.g., *Ia povernu* / ‘I will return.’

Finally, communicative contexts that involve requests to invite people to the phone can illustrate the use of nouns and personal pronouns in the accusative and instrumental cases, which are incorporated in permission questions. Suggested examples include:

- (5) *Allo! Pryvit, Ivane. Yak u tebe spravy? A mozhna Aniu do telefonu?!* ‘Hello! Hi Ivan! How are things with you? [Is it] possible [to call] Ania to the phone?’

(6) *Dobroho dnia! Mene zvaty Iryna, ia podruha Kati. Vona vdoma? Chy možhna pohovoryty z neiu?!* ‘Good day! My name is Iryna, I am a friend [of] Katia. [Is] she at home? [Is it] possible to speak to her?’

These scenarios provide learners of Ukrainian insight into phone conversation etiquette involving the use of conventionalized indirect strategies, e.g., *Vona vdoma?!* ‘[Is] she at home?’ (example 5), as well as an array of modification devices: i) alerters, specific for phone conversations, e.g., *allo!* ‘hello’ (example 5); ii) formal, e.g., *dobroho dnia!* ‘good day’ (example 6), and informal, e.g., *pryvit!* ‘hi’ (example 5) greetings; iii) small talk, e.g., *Yak u tebe spravy?!* ‘How are things with you?’ (examples 5) and *mene zvaty Iryna, ia podruha Kati!* ‘my name is Iryna, I am a friend [of] Katia’ (example 6), which includes a speaker’s self-introduction; and iv) forms of address, e.g., *Ivane!* ‘Ivan’.

## 7 Conclusions and directions for future research

This study investigated strategies, structures, and the linguistic realisation of speech acts of requests used by native speakers of Ukrainian in various communicative contexts. This study drew on the Theory of Speech Acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1975, 1979) and the Theory of Politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The online Discourse Completion Tasks elicited 1,266 request utterances, the analysis of which relied on Trosborg’s (1995) taxonomy.

The analysis demonstrated that Ukrainians formulate requests by employing direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect strategies, thus supporting the directness-indirectness continuum proposed by the Theory of Politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, the analysis also revealed a small number (0.95%) of combined strategies, in which interlocutors employed two different strategies to convey a single request. The most frequently employed strategy was direct, which was represented by four structures: imperatives, direct questions, ellipses, and performatives. The most preferred direct structure, as well as the most preferred

structure overall, was imperative (39.49%). The conventionally indirect category involved ability, permission and willingness questions, and wish and need formulae. In 32.38% of instances, conventional indirectness was realized through ability questions, which were the most preferred conventionally indirect structure and the second most frequent structure overall. Indirectness in Ukrainian requests was realized through hints, which were recorded in a small number of instances (1.58%).

This study also revealed that the frequency and distribution of request strategies and structures, and their linguistic realisation, depend on the interplay of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition of a particular communicative context. Specifically, imperatives were commonly employed to formulate requests for services, particularly at the grocery store and farmer's market, and in contexts with a low position of the sociable variables of power, distance, and imposition. A change in the position of sociable variables from low to high resulted in a switch from direct strategies to conventionally indirect strategies. Indirect requests were recorded exclusively in phone conversations, which allows us to consider them as situation-specific. However, the results of the current study also hint at the existence of other factors related to the communicative context itself. Specifically, direct questions were predominantly used in requests for time, hints were used exclusively as conventionalized forms of Ukrainian phone etiquette, and permission questions were evenly distributed in responses to phone conversation scenarios. Although all social variables were held constant in all contexts, requests for services in a grocery store and at the farmer's market were dominated by imperatives and ellipses. Requests for services at a student café were mostly realized through permission questions. This calls for the further investigation of these factors—specifically how they affect the speaker's choices of

request strategies, structures, and the ways of their linguistic realisation, and how these factors interact with the social variables of power, distance, and imposition.

Another direction for future research is linked to the study's participants. This study was limited to undergraduate students from one university. Most participants were women and the prevailing majority were from Central Ukraine. As such, these findings may not be universally applicable to Ukrainian native speakers. Additional research could yield more generalizable conclusions if the sample included more men and was more geographically and socially diverse.

Another limitation was the choice to use written DCTs. These have been criticized in the pragmatics literature for being non-interactive (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005) and for their inability to elicit naturally occurring data (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2005; Golato, 2003; Woodfield, 2008). As pragmatics empirical research has recently shifted to collecting more interactive and more authentic language data, there is a demand for studies that use different data collection instruments, such as oral role-plays and the recording of naturally occurring conversations.

The data collection instrument also merits additional attention. The analysis of participants' responses revealed that the description of some DCT scenarios might have lacked sufficient contextual information, particularly the age of the interlocutors. In Ukrainian, this was a decisive factor in determining the appropriate linguistic means to formulate a request.

As mentioned earlier, this study focused on the strategies and structures embedded in request head-acts. Regarding the peripheral elements of requests, only those modification devices that contributed to understanding how certain request structures function were highlighted. Importantly, the findings demonstrated that some other devices can be essential for



the fulfilment of requests, which calls for additional and more detailed investigation of these request components.

In order to further our understanding of the pragmatic behaviour of native Ukrainian speakers, future research should focus on additional aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics, specifically other speech acts.

In conclusion, this study contributed to research on request structures in several ways. By investigating the requestive behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian, this study explored an under researched area in Slavic, specifically Ukrainian, scholarship. This was the first detailed account of the request strategies, structures, and the means of their linguistic realisation in various communicative contexts employed by native speakers of Ukrainian. The developed instrument allowed us to obtain a corpus of requests from across a variety of communicative contexts. This corpus can serve as a source of data for both instructors and authors of Ukrainian textbooks and other learning resources, which too often rely on the author's intuition about language forms rather than authentic language patterns. Careful attention to these features in language program design and textbook development may enhance pragmatic competence and thus prepare learners of Ukrainian for more successful communication with native speakers. Ultimately, the obtained results allowed us to formulate practical suggestions for introducing requests in Ukrainian language curricula.

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## **Study 2**

# **The role of podcasting in the acquisition of pragmatic competence by learners of Ukrainian**

### **1 Introduction**

For decades, communicative competence has been recognized as the ultimate goal of language learning. Several models have been proposed to describe communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Bachman, 1990; Thorne, 2005). In these models, particular importance is given to pragmatic competence—the ability to match the semantic sense and meaning of an utterance with a situational context (Kasper, 1997). In order to be an effective communicator in a second (SL) or foreign language (FL), learners require more than mere knowledge of its phonology, lexicon, and grammar. When speakers communicate verbally, they are expected to use language means (pragmalinguistic knowledge) according to contextual factors (sociopragmatic knowledge) that reflect social and cultural conventions accepted in the target language society (Thomas, 1983). On the one hand, learners' pragmalinguistic errors can hinder communication; however, these errors can be easily excused in an authentic setting. On the other hand, learners' inability to adhere to sociocultural norms, known as pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983), may be mistaken for their personal attitudes. This may result in negative perceptions of learners by native speakers, communication breakdowns, and even lead to the development of native-speaker stereotypes about the culture of SL/FL learners. Therefore,

mastering target language pragmatics is vitally important for SL/FL learners to communicate effectively.

Despite its crucial role in communication, pragmatics has been largely overlooked in the SL/FL classroom. Instructors tend to spend more class time on the language aspects that they deem more important: grammar and vocabulary. This poses challenges for FL learners because the classroom is the main source of language input and practice, key factors for the successful acquisition of pragmatic competence (Ishihara, 2010).

In conditions with limited opportunities for intercultural communication, the use of authentic audio/ video input in the language classroom has been reported to boost pragmatic knowledge (Rose, 1999). Audio/ video input exposes learners to pragmatic aspects of the target language and prepares them for effective intercultural communication. Podcasting—a relatively popular method of delivering and accessing audio and video files via the internet—exposes language learners to authentic speech. Additionally, podcasting has inherent features that seem particularly attractive to educators: opportunities for learners to get exposure to input anytime and anywhere while they are involved in other activities (Bolliger, Supanakorn, & Boggs, 2010). According to Ashraf (2009) and Abdous and others (Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009), these features offer a number of possibilities for educators to increase learners' time on task outside the classroom. For example, this technology allows educators to create exercises that can provide out-of-class opportunities for learners to practice their oral production skills, including oral pragmatic skills. However, the use of podcasting in language teaching and learning has not been actively researched. To date, experimental studies have mainly focused on the development of listening (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007) and pronunciation skills (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Lord, 2008), and their results point to the effectiveness of podcasts. Additionally, research that

has investigated the pedagogical potential of podcasts from students' perspective indicates that learners perceive podcasts as beneficial for improving other skills, in particular speaking skills (Chan, Chen, & Döpel, 2011; Li, 2010). This current study adds to this line of research by experimentally investigating the effectiveness of pragmatics-focused instruction supplemented with podcasts for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, specifically, the ability of learners of Ukrainian to formulate contextually appropriate requests.

## **2 Pragmatic competence as a component of communicative competence**

In the second half of the twentieth century, SL/FL pedagogy shifted from grammar translation and audio-lingual approaches to communicative competence models (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Bachman, 1990, Thorne, 2005). These models have progressively shifted the importance of pragmatics for language proficiency from the periphery to the core. As a result, the concept of communicative competence has gradually moved away from being described as mere knowledge of a language system, i.e., phonology, lexicon and grammar (Hymes, 1972), to emphasizing the connections between the language form and the social context, i.e., pragmatic competence (Thorne, 2005). Specifically, in Canale and Swain's (1980) model, later modified by Canale (1983), and Littlewood's (1981) model, pragmatic competence is described implicitly through the notion of sociolinguistic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983) and communicative activities (Littlewood, 1981). These refer to social norms of language use. Bachman's (1990) model was the first to mention the pragmatic component directly. Within this model, pragmatic competence is viewed as the relationship between utterances, their communicative functions, and the context in which these utterances are performed. Thorne (2005) goes even further by suggesting a shift in focus from communicative competence to intercultural competence. This new focus underscores the critical connection

between language and the socio-cultural norms of the target society by making pragmatics the essential element of language proficiency. This approach is a step forward compared to previous models in which pragmatics had a secondary or at best equal status with phonology, lexicon, and grammar.

The abovementioned models hold that pragmatic competence involves two distinct yet interconnected types of knowledge: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Following Leech, pragmalinguistic knowledge constitutes “the more linguistic end of pragmatics” (1983:11), which involves the pragmatic strategies and language means needed to convey language functions, such as to request, to apologize, and to compliment, to name a few. Therefore, pragmalinguistics is more closely connected with grammatical knowledge. Sociopragmatic knowledge constitutes “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983:10), and refers to the norms, rules, and conventions of situationally, culturally, and socially appropriate language use. This links sociopragmatics more directly to the social variables of power, psychological distance, and the degree of imposition that affect the choice of language resources (Thomas, 1983). Thus, in order to be pragmatically competent, language users need to be able to combine these two types of knowledge to achieve their intended communicative goal. This current study focuses on teaching learners of Ukrainian how to integrate both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge to formulate requests according to Ukrainian socio-cultural norms in a variety of contexts.

### **3 Acquisition of pragmatic competence**

Since the 1990s, pragmatic competence has gained an unequivocal recognition and the increased attention of researchers. This is evidenced by numerous publications that have appeared since the 1990s, with a great many studies focusing on different aspects of pragmatics

acquisition. Specifically, a number of empirical studies have investigated the teachability of pragmatics (Liddicoat & Crozet 2001; Lyster, 1993, 1994; Ohta, 1999; Rose, 2005; Silva, 2003; Tateyama & Kasper, 2008; Yoshimi, 2001). These suggest that pragmatics-focused instruction is both effective and necessary for language learners. In addition, much research has been conducted to determine the most facilitative ways to teach pragmatics (Alcón, 2005; Duan & Wannaruk, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Rose & Ng, 2001; Takahashi, 2001; Takimoto, 2008; Tateyama, 2001). This research reveals that explicit instruction is more effective for the development of pragmatic competence than implicit instruction. Recent decades have also seen a shift towards the integration of technology into teaching and learning pragmatics, and researchers have reported the positive effects of technologically enhanced instruction on the acquisition of various aspects of pragmatics (Cunningham, 2014; Furniss, 2015; Sykes, 2005, 2008; Vyatkina, 2007).

The aspects of pragmatics that have been researched extensively pertain to the acquisition of various speech acts, such as requests, apologies, refusals, complaints, compliments, suggestions, and expressions of gratitude, among many others (Cunningham, 2014; Duan & Wannaruk, 2010; Frank, 2002, 2010; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Moskala-Gallaher, 2011; Rose & Ng, 2001; Silva, 2003; Sykes, 2008; Tateyama, 2001; Trosborg, 1995; Yoshimi, 2001). One possible explanation for the scholarly focus on speech acts is that they provide a “window onto L2 grammar,” which allows researchers “to observe the learner’s developing ability to navigate social interactions linguistically” (Hacking, 2008:110).

In Slavic studies, few scholars have explored how learners acquire SL/FL pragmatics. Nearly all extant studies focus on the pragmatic awareness and production of Russian learners (Dewaard, 2012; Frank, 2002, 2010; Furniss, 2015; Hacking, 2008; Moskala-Gallaher, 2011;

Owen, 2001; Shardakova, 2005a, 2005b). Frank (2002), for example, compared the requestive behaviour of adult learners of Russian and Russian native speakers. The study revealed weak differences in the length of utterances and move choice, and large differences in the choice of modification devices. The study also found that learners often inappropriately used the 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference while addressing an interlocutor. Moskala-Gallaher (2011) used data from native speakers of Russian and native speakers of American English as a baseline to investigate the perception and performance of direct complaints by American learners of Russian at the intermediate and advanced levels. The findings highlight a strong English-language transfer in the learners' choice of complaint strategies and the linguistic means of their realization. Also, learners of both proficiency levels had difficulties adjusting complaint strategies to the social variables of distance and power. Hacking (2008) examined Russian learners' production of requests, apologies, and refusals, as rated by native speakers. Similar to Moskala-Gallaher (2011), Hacking (2008) reported a strong English-language transfer in terms of strategy choice and the linguistic means of its realisation. Also, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference in Russian was consistently difficult for learners. In order to address these gaps, Hacking (2008) proposed a series of classroom activities that explicitly targeted the acquisition of Russian requests, apologies, and refusals.

In contrast to the abovementioned studies, Frank's (2010) and Dewaard's (2012) research focused on learners' pragmatic awareness. Frank (2010) conducted retrospective interviews with participants of study abroad programs and found that when formulating requests, learners paid the most attention to grammatical and lexical accuracy and devoted much less attention to the appropriateness of utterances. Dewaard (2012) used perception tasks to examine learners'

perceptions of the Russian address pronouns *ty* and *vy*. The researcher demonstrated that pragmatic awareness and language proficiency are not necessarily correlated.

The studies by Owen (2001), Shardakova (2005a, 2005b), and Furniss (2015) are developmental. Owen (2001) investigated the role of study abroad programs for the acquisition of Russian requests, while Shardakova (2005a, 2005b) focused on the acquisition of apologies in a similar setting. Both authors reported that studying abroad had a positive effect on the acquisition of target speech acts regardless of participants' language proficiency. Furniss (2015) was the first to focus on the instructed acquisition of Russian pragmatics and the use of technology. The results demonstrated that explicit pragmatics-focused instruction, supplemented with web-based pedagogical practices, contributed to learners' pragmatic awareness of Russian routine formulae. However, scant research on the instructed acquisition of Slavic pragmatics has been conducted with respect to Ukrainian. This study is the first effort to investigate the effectiveness of explicit pragmatics-focused instruction, supplemented with podcasting technology, for the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

#### **4 Podcasting and its pedagogical potential**

In 2005, the New Oxford American Dictionary selected “podcasting” as its word of the year (Skira, 2006). This word denotes a new technological tool, referring to “any software and hardware combination that permits automatic downloading of audio files to an MP3 player for listening at user’s convenience” (Ashraf, 2009: 348). Users can easily download audio files, called “podcasts,” from websites to their gadgets, or they can subscribe to a podcasting service, called a “feed,” and automatically receive the latest episodes.

The idea of using audio and video media in language education is not new: instructors have long used formats such as vinyl records, cassettes, videotapes, CDs, and DVDs in

classrooms and language labs. When digital media emerged, “the provision of [...] media content for learners moved online through the use of websites, virtual learning environments, learning management systems, and podcasting” (Rosell-Aguilar, 2013:74). While it shares some features with older formats of audio-video media, podcasting offers new teaching and learning experiences. First, podcasts do not necessarily require the use of a specific device. They are easily downloaded to computers, tablets, MP3 players, or smartphones and can be accessed anytime and anywhere, offering students considerable flexibility. Second, podcasts are portable; once downloaded on digital media players, they can be listened to while walking, travelling by public transit, driving, or during down time, for example (Bolliger, et al., 2010; O’Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007).

Since podcasts “were designed originally to deliver audio content” (Chan, et al., 2011:33), their application in language pedagogy is “rooted in the tradition of using audio” (Abdous, Facer, & Yen, 2012:44), i.e., for the development of aural and pronunciation skills. Therefore, most studies reporting on the use of podcasts in language courses are associated with teaching listening and pronunciation. For example, Lord (2008) and Ducate and Lomicka (2009) investigated the effectiveness of podcasting on the development of pronunciation skills. In both projects, language learners first practised their pronunciation using recorded audio podcasts, then created their own podcasts. Each podcasting episode focused on a different pronunciation aspect in Spanish (Lord, 2008), German and French (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009), and was later published online for assessment. The participants’ pronunciation skills and attitudes were assessed before and after the projects. In Lord’s (2008) study, podcasts effectively contributed to the development of pronunciation skills, and were perceived positively by students. Although Ducate and Lomicka (2009) did not find statistically significant improvements in pronunciation,



their students viewed activities with podcasts positively. Specifically, learners recognized that podcasts involved creativity and allowed them to work on pronunciation at their convenience.

A number of publications report on the positive effects of podcasting on the development of listening skills (Chan, 2014; Li, 2010; McCarty, 2005; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007; Al Qasim & Al Fadda, 2013; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, 2013). The results of these studies indicate that incorporating podcasts into course curricula provides students an opportunity to listen to recorded input whenever and wherever convenient. This, in turn, results in an increased amount of time that students spend learning languages, which promotes their interest and engagement with their courses.

Though the above mentioned studies focus on teaching listening and pronunciation, participants unanimously claim that the use of podcasts also contributes to the development of their oral production skills. These findings are not surprising, as audio recordings are best suited to practicing aural comprehension (Facer, Abdous, & Camarena, 2009), and doing repetitive oral tasks can consequently improve oral production (Lord, 2008; Ducate & Lomicka, 2009). In addition, learners perceived podcasts as beneficial for improving speaking skills (Chan, et al., 2011; Li, 2010), and their knowledge of vocabulary (Facer, et al. 2009; Chan, et al., 2011) and grammar (Chan, et al., 2011). These findings motivated other researchers to explore the potential of podcasts for the development of skills other than listening and pronunciation, speaking skills in particular (Farangi, Nejadghanbar, Askary, & Ghorbani, 2015).

The benefits of podcasting for the development of speaking skills were investigated by Farangi and others (Farangi, et al., 2015). They conducted a study with 60 Iranian upper-intermediate learners of English. The students' speaking skills were assessed before and after the pedagogical intervention, which involved one control and two experimental groups. In the first

experimental group, podcasts were offered as a source of input and served as a stimulus for further in-class discussion. In the second experimental group, learners were required to prepare podcasts themselves and upload them online to be listened to and discussed with their peers during class. The results showed that learners in the student-made podcast group outperformed those in other groups in their speaking skills. Moreover, the results support the claim that podcasting technology has the pedagogical potential to effectively promote the acquisition of different skills if instructors adapt the technology to instructional objectives (Abdous, et al., 2009:89).

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that there is a growing interest in the potential of podcasting for language teaching and learning. Most of these studies focus on the role of podcasting technology for the development of listening and pronunciation skills. The effectiveness of podcasts for the development of production skills is only beginning to emerge. To date, only one study has explored the effectiveness of podcasts for the development of speaking skills (Farangi, et al., 2015). The current study seeks to broaden this line of research by investigating the effectiveness of podcasts, incorporated into pragmatics-focused instruction, for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, specifically, the ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests.

## **5 Theoretical perspectives of using podcasts for the acquisition of pragmatic competence**

In the current study, the acquisition of pragmatic competence is conceptualized in two cognitive frameworks: the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 1998, 2005). These hypotheses refer to different stages in the

acquisition of target language forms. Schmidt's framework emphasizes the need for learners to attend to input, specifying that input turns into intake only if learners are consciously aware of "linguistic forms, functional meanings, and the relevant contextual features" (Schmidt, 1993: 35). This framework recognizes two levels of awareness: noticing and understanding. Noticing is linked to registering the occurrence of a certain language form in a certain context, while understanding implies "recognition of a certain general principle, rule or pattern" (Schmidt, 1993: 26). In this sense, the acquisition of pragmatic competence takes place when learners are consciously aware of which language form (pragmalinguistic information) should be used in which communicative context (sociopragmatic information). Therefore, the Noticing Hypothesis calls for activities that explicitly focus on pragmatic targets rather than those that merely expose students to input that incorporates these targets.

While awareness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic information plays a significant role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence, it does not necessarily guarantee that learners will be able to produce target forms in a pragmatically appropriate manner. Output opportunities may stimulate the development of both pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability, as learners' attempts to produce output may push them to attend to input (Swain, 2005). For example, when learners experience difficulty producing a target form, they may turn to input as a source for the knowledge that they lack (Swain, 1998). Consequently, producing output promotes learners' awareness of target forms and their appropriate use.

Notably, the effectiveness of output practices is strongly linked to the feedback that learners receive on produced target forms. According to Swain (1995), feedback provides learners with information on how successful their output attempt was. This gives learners an opportunity to reflect on the language forms employed and to modify them as needed. When

learners modify their responses, positive developmental processes are triggered: learners are “pushed” to produce more comprehensible, accurate, and appropriate output (Swain, 1995). This in turn results in quicker reaction times and higher accuracy of produced target forms, otherwise known as automaticity (DeKeyser, 2007). Therefore, output opportunities may facilitate the operationalization of newly obtained pragmatic knowledge and further the acquisition of target forms. As such, the current study views pragmatic competence as the ability to operationalize pragmatic awareness, i.e., pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, in interaction.

Regarding language teaching, the Noticing Hypothesis and the Output Hypothesis translate into explicit pragmatics-focused instruction. This instruction channels learners’ attention to target pragmatic features through direct explanations and metapragmatic discussions, followed by practice (Kasper & Rose, 2002). As mentioned in the previous sections, explicit instruction proved more effective for the acquisition of pragmatic competence than implicit instruction (Alcón, 2005; Duan & Wannaruk, 2010; Martinez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001). A growing body of research also underscores the role of explicit instruction supplemented with technology for the teaching and learning of pragmatics, particularly with respect to audio/ video materials and computer-mediated tools. Specifically, researchers claim that the use of an audio/ video recorded situational context offers multi-sensory input, which can serve as a source of pragmatic information and as a stimulus for metapragmatic discussions. This further contributes to the development of pragmatic awareness (Alcón, 2005; Armstrong, 2008; Fujioka, 2003, 2004). The effectiveness of explicit instruction supplemented with computer-mediated tools has mainly been studied with regard to the acquisition of pragmatic ability through various computer-mediated communication modes, such as internet-based activities (Furniss, 2015; Sykes, 2005; Vyatkina, 2007), synthetic immersive environments

(Sykes, 2008), and telecollaboration (Cunningham, 2014; O’Dowd, 2006), to name a few. However, to the best of our knowledge, supplementing explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasting has not yet been explored.

The incorporation of podcasting into the teaching and learning of pragmatics can be beneficial. Podcasting can provide learners with access to aural input, which contains models of pragmatic target use (pragmalinguistic information) in certain communicative contexts (sociopragmatic information). This may trigger the noticing and understanding of how these targets function in oral interaction. Also, podcasting allows instructors to create audio recorded productive exercises that can provide learners with an opportunity to operationalize their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge orally. Such exercises may involve various structural tasks, including multiple-choice tests, Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs), and role-play prompts.<sup>22</sup> The structure of these exercises may involve the following components: a task (a description of a communicative context and instructions on what to do), an example (how to do it), and content. Each content component is supplemented with two pauses and an audio recorded key. During the first pause, learners produce the required output according to the example, then compare their answer with the recorded key. During the second pause, students produce the modified output. Such exercises trigger a number of cognitive processes: awareness of the target form (specified in the example) and its appropriate use (according to the context specified in the task), formulating the target form (during the first pause), checking the output against the feedback (the audio recorded key), and modifying the target form (during the second pause). Checking and modifying processes are particularly important for the acquisition of pragmatic ability. Checking with the key enables learners to notice what they can or cannot say and what should be said instead “to convey the same intention under the same social condition” (Doughty,

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<sup>22</sup> For more detailed information on these tasks, see Cohen (2010).

2001: 225). Modifying directs the learners' attention to the target form, makes it salient and creates a condition for its acquisition (Swain, 1995).

As mentioned in the previous section, podcasts offer new learning experiences: once exercises with podcasts are downloaded on a digital media player, learners can practice their oral pragmatic production skills at their convenience (Bolliger, et al., 2010). This provides opportunities for learners to increase time on task, particularly in out-of-class environments, which contributes to the promotion of automaticity and the operationalization of newly acquired pragmatic knowledge. This, in turn, further promotes the acquisition of target structures, and possibly results in better retention of pragmatic ability.

## **6 Research questions**

Based on the reviewed literature and the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

*Research question 1:* Which instructional approach (zero pragmatics-focused, explicit pragmatics-focused without podcasts, explicit pragmatics-focused with podcasts) is most effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic ability?

The formulated research question will be explored by addressing the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1.1: the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts will be more effective for the acquisition and retention of oral pragmatic ability as compared to the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts.

Hypothesis 1.2: both explicit pragmatics-focused instructions with and without podcasts will be more effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic ability as compared to the zero pragmatics-focused instruction.

Regarding Hypothesis 1.2, the rationale for the control condition, or the zero pragmatics-focused instruction in this case, is to allow the investigator to assess whether post-test and delayed post-test results are in fact the results of the explicit pragmatics-focused instructional treatments.

*Research question 2:* How does pragmatic awareness (in terms of social variables of power, distance, and imposition) change based on interventional instructional treatments?

Hypothesis 2.1: the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts and the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts will be similarly effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic awareness.

Hypothesis 2.2: both explicit pragmatics-focused instructions with and without podcasts will be more effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic awareness as compared to the zero pragmatics-focused instruction.

With respect to Hypothesis 2.1, please note that both explicit pragmatics-focused instructions, without and with podcasts, incorporate similar metapragmatic activities and therefore might contribute to the acquisition of pragmatic awareness in a similar way.

## **7 Study design and procedures**

The researcher recruited ten participants. Therefore, the study used a pre-test-post-test repeated-measures design, which allows for detecting a treatment effect size even with a small sample size (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2010). According to the design, the same participants of an existing group of university students were exposed to a series of different instructional treatments/ conditions and tested on the dependent variables (pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability) before and after the pedagogical intervention (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2000) (see Appendix A for more information on experimental procedures). All participants were

asked to complete a background questionnaire, a pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test. The delayed post-test was administered 45 days after the post-test.<sup>23</sup> This procedure allowed the researcher to minimize the impact of participants' memory on the experiment outcomes (subjects could be learning from tests rather than treatments) (Creswell, 2009). In this context, two different tests were designed, Test A (see Appendix D) and Test B (see Appendix E). Participants were administered Test A as pre- and delayed post-tests, and Test B as a post-test. Within the period between the post-test and the delayed post-test, target pragmatic forms were not addressed in the Ukrainian language course.

## 7.1 Target pragmatic forms

Study 1 identified the most frequently used request structures by native Ukrainian speakers. In Study 2, these structures were selected as instructional foci for three instructional treatments, and they are detailed in the table below.

Table 2.1

### *Instructional Target Request Forms*

Treatments	Topics	Target request structures	Examples <sup>24</sup>
1.	Talking on the phone	Permission questions	1. <i>Mozhna</i> (noun in the accusative case) <i>do telefonu?</i> ' [Is it] possible [to call] (noun in the accusative case) to the phone?'  2. <i>Mozhna pohovoryty z</i> (noun in the instrumental

<sup>23</sup> In addition to the objectives outlined in the previous sections, the goal of the current dissertation was to investigate learners' perceptions about the importance of learning Ukrainian pragmatics and the effectiveness of instructional practices, including podcasting, for the acquisition of pragmatic competence. As such, participants were also administered pre- and post-treatment questionnaires, the results of which are discussed in Study 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>24</sup> In examples here and elsewhere the following abbreviations are used: i) *PL* for the personal pronoun 'you' in plural and verbal forms in plural, ii) *SG* for the personal pronoun 'you' in singular and verbal forms in singular, iii) *NEG* for syntactically negative but semantically positive structures, iv) *MAS* for masculine gender of verbal forms in the conditional mood, and v) *FEM* for feminine gender of verbal forms in the conditional mood.



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			case)?/ ‘[Is it] possible to talk to (noun in the instrumental case)?’
		Positive ability questions in the present tense	<p>1. <i>Vy mozhetе poklykaty</i> (noun in the accusative case) <i>do telefonu?</i>/ ‘Can<sub>PL</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> call (noun in the accusative case) to the phone?’</p> <p>2. <i>Ty mozhesh poklykaty</i> (noun in the accusative case) <i>do telefonu?</i>/ ‘Can<sub>SG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> call (noun in the accusative case) to the phone?’</p>
2.	Asking for a favour	Negated ability questions in the conditional mood	<p>1. <i>Vy ne mohly b</i> (infinitive) ... ?/ ‘Can<sub>PL NEG</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> (infinitive) ... ?’</p> <p>2. <i>Ty ne mih by</i> (infinitive) ... ?/ ‘Can<sub>SG MAS NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> (infinitive) ... ?’</p> <p>3. <i>Ty ne mohla by</i> (infinitive) ... ?/ ‘Can<sub>SG FEM NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> (infinitive) ... ?’</p>
3.	Services	Direct structures (imperatives)	<p>1. <i>Daite meni</i> (noun(s) in the accusative case), <i>bud’ laska.</i>/ ‘Give<sub>PL</sub> [me] (noun(s) in the accusative case), please.’</p> <p>2. <i>Dai meni</i> (noun(s) in the accusative case), <i>bud’ laska.</i>/ ‘Gives<sub>SG</sub> [me] (noun(s) in the accusative case), please.’</p>
		Direct structures (ellipses)	(Noun(s) in accusative), <i>bud’ laska.</i> / (Noun(s) in the accusative case), please.’

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As shown in Table 2.1, the first instructional treatment was organized around the topic *Talking on the phone*. The pragmatic targets were permission questions and positive ability questions with the modal verb *mohty*/ ‘can, to be able’ in the present tense (for more details on instructional request targets see Appendix B). Permission questions were represented by two constructions: i) *Mozhna* (noun in the accusative case) *do telefonu?*/ ‘[Is it] possible [to call] (noun in the accusative case) to the phone?’, and ii) *Mozhna pohovoryty z* (noun in the instrumental case)?/ ‘[Is it] possible to talk to (noun in the instrumental case)?’ These two

constructions can be used in both formal and informal situations interchangeably. Ability questions also involved two constructions: i) *Vy mozhetе poklykaty* (noun in the accusative case) *do telefonu?!* ‘Can<sub>PL</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> call (noun in the accusative case) to the phone?’ (used in formal situations), and ii) *Ty mozhesh poklykaty* (noun in the accusative case) *do telefonu?!* ‘Can<sub>SG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> call (noun in the accusative case) to the phone?’ (used in informal situations). These permission and ability questions illustrate the same function of the accusative and instrumental cases involving personal nouns: to request for people to the phone. This shared function motivated the researcher to use these structures as instructional targets for treatment 1, which focus was entirely on grammar, specifically personal nouns in the accusative and instrumental cases.

In the second instructional treatment, organized around the topic *Asking for a favour*, participants were taught to formulate interrogative ability structures with the negated modal verb *mohly!* ‘can, to be able to’ in the conditional mood to make high-imposition requests (for more details on instructional request targets see Appendix B). These request structures were represented by three constructions: i) *Vy ne mohly b* (infinitive) ... ?/ ‘Can<sub>PL NEG</sub> you<sub>PL</sub> (infinitive) ... ?’ (used in formal situations), ii) *Ty ne mih by* (infinitive) ... ?/ ‘Can<sub>SG MAS NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> (infinitive) ... ?’ (used in informal situations, when the hearer is male), and iii) *Ty ne mohla by* (infinitive) ... ?/ ‘Can<sub>SG FEM NEG</sub> you<sub>SG</sub> (infinitive) ... ?’ (used in informal situations, when the hearer is male).

The third treatment was organized around the topic *Services*, during which participants learned how to make requests for services by means of direct structures (for more details on instructional request targets see Appendix B). Direct structures were represented by two imperative and one elliptical constructions. The direct imperative constructions were: i) *Daite*

*meni* (noun(s) in the accusative case), *bud' laska./* 'Give<sub>PL</sub> [me] (noun(s) in the accusative case), please' (used in formal situations), ii) *Dai meni* (noun(s) in the accusative case), *bud' laska./* 'Give<sub>SG</sub> [me] (noun(s) in the accusative case), please' (used in informal situations). The elliptical construction was: (noun(s) in accusative), *bud' laska./* (noun(s) in the accusative case), please.' The elliptical construction differs from the direct imperative constructions by the omission of the verb in the imperative mood, which permits the use of this structure interchangeably in both formal and informal contexts.

Overall, in each instructional treatment, participants were exposed to different instructional targets, i.e., request structures.<sup>25</sup> Each instructional target differed from the others in terms of its structure, linguistic means, and the communicative context in which it was used. Consequently, the three instructional treatments were independent, thus reducing the possible issue of order effect. On the one hand, this provides the rationale for choosing a repeated-measures design for the current study.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, the difference between the instructional targets in their structure and linguistic means could be a confounding variable that can complicate the analysis: some structures may be more challenging for acquisition than others. This calls for further investigation.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Each instructional treatment involved two classes. In treatments 2 and 3, the first class focused predominantly on the grammar of the request targets, while the second class was devoted to the functioning of these targets in particular communicative contexts (for more information see Appendix B). The instructional target in each of these two treatments was a single request structure. In treatment 1, the instructional focus was entirely on grammar. Therefore, in treatment 1, two instructional targets were taught—one for each class.

<sup>26</sup> In the literature, repeated-measures design is regarded as powerful, as an effect size can be detected with fewer participants (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2010). Therefore, it is often used in studies with a small sample size. Despite this clear benefit, the design has some limitations. The biggest issue is order effects, which are differences in results that are due not to the effectiveness of instructional treatments, but to the order of administered instructions. Specifically, participants' pragmatic ability may gradually improve from one instructional treatment to another, resulting in the highest scores after the last treatment, no matter the order of administered instructions.

<sup>27</sup> Participants' perceptions of the difficulty of instructional targets for acquisition are addressed in Study 3 of this dissertation.

## 7.2 Pedagogical intervention

As mentioned previously, an existing group of students who were taking a second-year Ukrainian course was exposed to three instructional treatments. Each instructional treatment consisted of two consecutive 50-minute lessons, conducted by the researcher, who was not the regular instructor of the course. The three instructional treatments incorporated different instructional approaches, detailed in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2

*Structure of Pedagogical Intervention*<sup>28</sup>

Treatments	Instructional approaches	Instructional foci	Topics	Target request structures	Contextual factors
1.	Zero pragmatics-focused instruction	Grammar: nouns in the accusative and instrumental cases	Talking on the phone	Permission questions and positive ability questions in the present tense	Low imposition, power (equal, low-high), distance (low, high)
2.	Explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts	Request structures, contextual factors	Asking for a favour	Negated ability questions in the conditional mood	High imposition, power (equal, low-high), distance (low, high)
3.	Explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts	Request structures, contextual factors	Services	Imperatives and ellipses	Low imposition, power (equal, high-low), distance (low, high)

As shown in Table 2.2, the first treatment was a control condition and incorporated zero pragmatics-focused instruction. The instruction was organized around the topic *Talking on the*

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix B for more details on instructional procedures.

*phone*, during which learners were taught permission questions and positive ability questions in the present tense (for more details on instructional request targets see Table 2.1 and Appendix B). Importantly, the target request forms were not addressed directly in this treatment: the focus of the instruction was entirely on the use of nouns in the accusative and instrumental cases. All the scenarios in this treatment represented situations with a low level of imposition; levels of distance ranged from low to high. With respect to power, interlocutors were either of equal social status, or the hearer was in a higher power position than the speaker.

The second instructional treatment was organized around the topic *Asking for a favour*, and its objective was to teach participants how to make high-imposition requests by means of negated ability questions in the conditional mood (for more details on instructional request targets see Table 2.1 and Appendix B). These structures were taught through explicit pragmatics-focused instruction. Unlike the zero pragmatics-focused instruction in treatment 1, the explicit instruction included metapragmatic explanations and discussions. Through these discussions, learners were made consciously aware of which pragmalinguistic forms should be used in accordance with given sociopragmatic factors. The rationale for this approach is that pragmatic information often remains unnoticed by learners unless it is directly addressed (Schmidt, 1993). The metapragmatic explanations and discussions focused on both pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic factors. The latter concerned the effect of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition on the choice of the language form of a request. Specifically, all scenarios in treatment 2 involved situations with a high level of imposition, and from low to high levels of power and distance. Importantly, the hearer was either of equal or higher social status than the speaker. With respect to pragmalinguistic forms, metapragmatic explanations and discussions

focused on request structures and a number of internal syntactic modifiers: interrogatives, the grammar category of the person, modal verbs, the conditional mood, and negation.<sup>29</sup>

In the third treatment, the topic *Services* was used as a context to teach participants direct structures to make requests for services (for more details on instructional request targets see Table 2.1 and Appendix B). The communicative contexts of the topic *Services* were characterized by low imposition and from low to high distance between interlocutors. The speaker was either in an equal or a higher power position compared to the hearer. Similar to treatment 2, this treatment also incorporated explicit pragmatics-focused instruction; however, it was additionally supplemented with podcasting. It is necessary to mention that during the first and second instructional treatments, the input, instructions, and content of exercises were in the written mode, while students answered orally in class. During class sessions, the error correction was done orally by the researcher; during home exercises,<sup>30</sup> students verified their written answers with a written key. Contrary to treatments 1 and 2, the input, the task, and content of the in-class and, importantly, the home structural exercises in treatment 3 were audio recorded.<sup>31</sup> While doing such exercises, students followed audio recorded instructions. After producing output orally, they verified their answers with audio recorded correct variants and produced modified instructional targets. Therefore, working with podcasts allowed students to get more aural exposure to the target language and to maximize their oral practice of requests in the out-of-class setting.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> While internal lexical and external modifiers were not the foci of the instructional treatments, the researcher used the results of Study 1 to create authentic-like input for all three instructional approaches.

<sup>30</sup> The interval between classes was one week. During treatment 3, participants were encouraged to do each structural exercise with podcasts at home as many times as possible, but at least once every day.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix C for sample audio scripts of exercises with podcasts.

<sup>32</sup> Before the third instructional treatment, participants received brief training about how to work with podcasts.

### **7.3 Testing instruments and data collection procedures**

The data in this study were collected through pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests (see Appendices A, and D-E). Each test aimed to assess: i) pragmatic ability by means of Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) and role-plays, and ii) pragmatic awareness through verbal reports and retrospective interviews (see Appendix A for more information on data collection procedures).

The DCTs were in two modes: oral (ODCTs) and written (WDCTs). In WDCTs, participants were asked to read descriptions of scenarios, after which they were prompted with a question that they had to answer in writing: What would you say in each situation? Unlike WDCTs, instructions and the descriptions of scenarios in ODCTs were presented aurally, and the participants' responses were audio recorded. Both ODCTs and WDCTs consisted of three open-ended DCTs, in which each task aimed to elicit a request structure that was addressed in one of the three treatment conditions. The scenarios and the interlocutors' roles in ODCTs and WDCTs across Test A and Test B differed, but the patterns of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition remained unchanged (see Appendices D-E).

The rationale for using both ODCTs and WDCTs was to balance the advantages and disadvantages of the two modes. Specifically, the written mode normally provides participants with more "preparation" time for request production, which can result in more accurate and appropriate request utterances, as compared to the oral mode. Performance on ODCTs may reflect not only participants' pragmatic ability, but the development of their speaking skills as well. Moreover, ODCTs yield responses that more accurately represent what participants would actually say in a natural setting. In general, both ODCTs and WDCTs offer good control of

variables (i.e., participants are almost “forced” to produce the target forms) (Keshavarz, Eslami, Ghahraman, 2006) and are easier to transcribe and code, as compared to, for example, role-plays.

At the end of each WDCT, participants were asked to provide verbal reports on their choice of a request structure and the linguistic means of its realisation. This instrument was used to assess the participants’ pragmatic awareness.

Tests A and B next consisted of four role-play scenarios (see Appendices D-E) in which one scenario represented a communicative context addressed in instructional treatment 1 (asking for a person on the phone), one scenario in instructional treatment 3 (request for services), and two scenarios in instructional treatment 2 (high imposition requests). Importantly, the patterns of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition for the scenarios representing instructional treatments 2 and 3 were the same across tests A and B but differed for treatment 1 scenarios. Specifically, in test A participants were offered to role-play a situation in which the speaker (caller) and the hearer (friend’s sibling) were in equal power positions. In test B, the hearer (friend’s parent) was in a higher power position than the speaker. In both tests the other social variables were held constant: low imposition and a small distance between interlocutors. The two scenarios representing instructional treatment 2 in tests A and B were similar in terms of high imposition and low distance but differed with respect to power. The treatment 3 scenario was characterized by low imposition, large distance, and a high-power position for the speaker (customer) as compared to the hearer (sales person).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Please note that during the data collection, some participant pairs chose to role-play fewer than four suggested scenarios. This precluded the feasibility of comparing the participants’ performance before and after the pedagogical intervention. Nevertheless, analysis of the role-play data revealed confounding variables that could affect the study results (for more about the variable see section 8.1.2). Therefore, the role-play data were not removed from the analysis; however, any findings on the role-plays were regarded as tentative.



Participants worked in pairs to study the scenarios and to prepare and present their role-plays. These were video-recorded. In order to approximate natural interaction, role-plays were open-ended, which means that neither turn-taking, nor response sequencing, nor negotiation of meaning were prompted (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Role-plays were chosen as a data collection instrument based on the assumption that they allow us to solve some of the issues that DCTs have; they make it easier for learners to imagine themselves in a particular communicative situation, and therefore this instrument facilitates the elicitation of request utterances that very closely resemble those produced in an authentic setting (Demeter, 2007).

Each role-play was followed by a semi-structured retrospective interview. During the interview, participants were prompted by two questions: What did you say to make the request described in the given scenario? Why did you say it? In accordance with Schmidt's framework (1990, 1993, 2001), the aim of the questions was to assess the participants' pragmatic awareness. When necessary, the researcher also asked participants some clarifying questions: What factors were you paying attention to while saying so? What were you planning to say? Was it different from what you actually said? Do you think native Ukrainian speakers would formulate a request in the same way? Why, or why not?

Overall, the use of a multilayered methodology allows for a balance between the advantages and disadvantages of the pragmatic data elicitation instruments. In turn, this approach enhances the reliability and validity of the obtained data.

## 7.4 Participants

The study involved 10 undergraduate students,<sup>34</sup> five male and five female. The analysis of the participants' demographics revealed that eight out of ten participants communicated in Ukrainian with their families to varying degrees.<sup>35</sup> The other two participants were Ukrainian FL learners; one of these two was a native speaker of another Slavic language. Participants were enrolled in one section of a second-year Ukrainian language course, second semester. This level was chosen for this pedagogical intervention based on the results of Langer's (2011) study, in which the pragmatic ability of second-year learners of Spanish, as compared to first-, third- and fourth-year students, improved the most. As such, Langer concluded that learners at this level are particularly receptive to acquiring pragmatics, as they already have enough linguistic competence to communicate yet still have difficulties in communicating appropriately in accordance with a communicative context.

## 8 Data analysis and results

The collected data are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative and qualitative data elicited by the DCTs and the qualitative data collected through role-play scenarios are analyzed to answer RQ 1. The qualitative data elicited by verbal reports and retrospective interviews are analyzed to answer RQ 2. By using both methods of analysis, this study investigates changes in the participants' requestive behaviour before and after the

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<sup>34</sup> The small sample size was counterbalanced by the employed repeated-measures design, which allows an effect size to be detected with fewer participants (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> The researcher acknowledges that the eight participants who communicated in Ukrainian with their families might be regarded as heritage learners. Please note that Study 2 was not planned to focus on this type of learners. However, at the time of recruitment, the researcher had no control over representation of learner types among participants in the study.

pedagogical intervention. Specifically, the analysis looks for changes in the participants' pragmatic ability and pragmatic awareness from the pre- to post- and delayed post-tests across three instructional treatments. In this way, the study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of instructional approaches incorporated into the instructional treatments: the zero pragmatics-focused instruction, the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts, and the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts.

## **8.1 Research Question 1: Which instructional approach (zero pragmatics-focused, pragmatics-focused without podcasts, pragmatics-focused with podcasts) is most effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic ability?**

In order to investigate which of the employed instructional approaches is most effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic ability, the quantitative and qualitative data elicited by oral and written DCTs, and the qualitative data elicited by role-play scenarios on the pre-, post- and delayed post-tests are compared.

### **8.1.1 Quantitative analysis: Results**

The quantitative data elicited by the DCTs is evaluated by five (two female and three male) raters, all native Ukrainian speakers.<sup>36</sup> They assess the participants' pragmatic ability by two measures—the comprehensibility and appropriateness of produced requests (see Appendix F).

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<sup>36</sup> Two of the raters were graduate students in Ukrainian literature, one was a postdoc in mechanical engineering, one was a research associate in history, and one was an IT engineer.

Specifically, the comprehensibility and appropriateness of each request utterance is assessed on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (not comprehensible/ not appropriate at all) to 3 (completely comprehensible/ appropriate). Appropriateness is assessed based on the participants' ability to produce request utterances in accordance with the social variables of power, distance, and imposition of given communicative contexts, as covered by three instructional treatments.

The first step in the analysis is to measure interrater reliability by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The results of the reliability estimates demonstrate that correlation coefficients between the raters' scores on the comprehensibility and appropriateness of requests are acceptable for tasks 1, 2, 3 on both WDCTs and ODCTs on pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests, as they are all above .7 value (see Appendix G). This allows us to proceed to the next stage of the analysis.

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) demonstrate three general tendencies: i) an increase in mean scores for both comprehensibility and appropriateness from the pre- to the post-test, ii) a decrease in mean scores for both comprehensibility and appropriateness from the post- to the delayed post-test, and iii) differences in mean scores for both comprehensibility and appropriateness on the pre-, post- and delayed post-tests across three instructional approaches (see Appendix H).

In order to investigate whether the changes and differences in mean scores are statistically significant, a two-way repeated-measures ANOVA<sup>37</sup> (time by instruction) is conducted for the comprehensibility and appropriateness of requests elicited by the WDCTs and ODCTs, respectively.

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<sup>37</sup> The results of the Pearson correlation show that the correlation coefficients between comprehensibility and appropriateness measures on both WDCTs and ODCTs on the pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests are generally not high (see Appendix I), which allows to assume that the two measures are not strongly correlated. Based on this, the univariate ANOVA is used for the current analysis.

The univariate ANOVA involves three levels for the factor “time” and three levels for the factor “instruction.” The time factor indicates the time points when participants took the pre-, post- and delayed post-tests. The instruction factor denotes the three instructional approaches, namely, the zero pragmatics-focused instruction (control condition), the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts, and the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts, which on the tests are represented by tasks 1, 2, and 3, respectively. The overall alpha level is set at .05. However, with four comparisons (for appropriateness and comprehensibility scores on both ODCTs and WDCTs), the *p*-value is adjusted. Specifically, .05 has been divided by four (the number of comparisons), resulting in a *p*-value of .0125.

The two-way repeated-measures ANOVA reveals that the interaction between time and instruction factors is not statistically significant. With respect to the main effect for the time factor, it is statistically significant for the comprehensibility scores on ODCTs<sup>38</sup> ( $F(2, 18)=7.054$ ,  $p=.005$ ) and WDCTs ( $F(2, 18)=18.476$ ,  $p=.000$ ), and for the appropriateness scores on ODCTs ( $F(2, 18)=13.389$ ,  $p=.000$ ) and WDCTs ( $F(2, 18)=19.390$ ,  $p=.000$ ). The main effect for the instruction factor is only marginally significant and only on the comprehensibility scores on ODCTs ( $F(2, 18)=5.213$ ,  $p=.016$ ).

The above results signal that participants’ pragmatic ability changes from the pre- to the delayed post-tests. In order to investigate how it changes, a trend analysis for appropriateness and comprehensibility scores on the ODCTs and WDCTs is conducted. The results demonstrate statistically significant linear and quadratic trends for both measures on all tasks, though the quadratic trend is more prominent (see Appendix J). This indicates that pragmatic ability

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<sup>38</sup> The evaluations of the assumptions of independent observations are satisfactory. The normality checks show that some observations are not normally distributed. However, the fact that ANOVA is robust to normality violations allows us to proceed further with the analysis. The sphericity checks reveal a violation for the interaction factor between the time and the instruction on the comprehensibility scores on ODCTs. Consequently, an adjustment has been made to correct the within-subjects effects test by means of Greenhouse-Geisser estimates (Field, 2013).

increases from the pre- to the post-test and decreases from the post- to the delayed post-test. Consequently, all three types of instruction work in a similar way with respect to the development and retention of the participants' pragmatic ability. According to the above ANOVA results, the difference between the effects of the three instructions on the development and retention of pragmatic ability is observed only with respect to the comprehensibility of *orally* produced requests. In order to investigate which instructional approach is most effective, a follow-up analysis is conducted.

The Pairwise comparisons (see Appendix K) demonstrate that none of the three instructional approaches contributes to a statistically significant increase from the pre-test to the post-test on the comprehensibility scores on the ODCTs. Importantly, with respect to the instruction with podcasts, a closer look at the ODCT comprehensibility scores reveals that these scores were high even before the pedagogical intervention: 14.3 out of 15, thus leaving very little room for improvement. Therefore, even when the post-test mean score reaches its maximum value, which is 15, the comparison of pre- and post-test does not demonstrate a statistically significant difference. Additionally, this instruction accounts for the highest ODCT comprehensibility scores not only on the pre-, but also on the post- and the delayed post-tests, as compared to other instructional approaches. The comparison of the post- and delayed post-tests show some decrease in ODCT comprehensibility scores, though it is not statistically significant for the instruction with podcasts.

With respect to the appropriateness of produced requests, the quantitative analysis reveals no statistical difference in the effectiveness of the three instructional approaches. However, descriptive statistics (see Appendix H) highlight that requests for people to the phone (zero

pragmatics-focused instruction) have somewhat higher appropriateness scores on post- and delayed post-test ODCTs and WDCTs.

Overall, the results of the quantitative analysis of the WDCTs and ODCTs only partially support Hypothesis 1.1. Specifically, the pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts proves to be the most effective for the development and retention of oral pragmatic ability, though only with regard to the comprehensibility of orally produced requests. In other respects, the difference in the effectiveness between the three instructional approaches is not statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 1.2 is rejected.

### **8.1.2 Qualitative analysis: Results**

The qualitative evaluation of the requests elicited by the WDCTs, ODCTs, and role-play scenarios<sup>39</sup> is informed by the taxonomy of Ukrainian requests presented in Study 1 of the current dissertation. This taxonomy recognizes requests as speech acts that consist of the head-act and peripheral elements.<sup>40</sup> The analysis of the elicited request utterances comprises several stages: i) identifying request head-acts within the participants' responses, ii) coding them according to the taxonomy presented in Study 1, and iii) comparing them in terms of strategies, structures, and linguistic means of their realization from the pre- to post- and delayed post-tests across three instructional approaches.

***Pre-test results.*** The analysis of requests elicited on the pre-test reveals that most participants rely largely on their language intuition and transfer from the English language when

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<sup>39</sup> Please be advised that during the data collection, some participant pairs chose to role-play less than four suggested scenarios, which totalled 27 out of the expected 60 role-plays. Consequently, it is not possible to compare the performance of all participants on all communicative contexts before and after the pedagogical intervention. Therefore, any findings on role-plays are regarded as tentative.

<sup>40</sup> The head-act is the nucleus of a speech act and serves to convey communicative intent independently of its peripheral elements, which are considered optional for realizing a request (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995).

making requests in Ukrainian, which often results in low appropriateness of formulated requests.

For example:

(1) *Chy mozhu ia hovoryty do Khrystyny?/ 'Can I speak [sic] to Khrystyna [sic]?'<sup>41</sup>*

As the example above shows, the request is formulated by means of an ability question. The question contains the imperfective verb *hovoryty*/ 'to speak' instead of the perfective *pohovoryty*, as well as the preposition *do*/ 'to' with the personal noun *Khrystyna* in the genitive case instead of the preposition *z*/ 'with' with the personal noun in the instrumental case. This makes the structure sound more like a direct translation from English rather than an expected request in Ukrainian. On the pre-test, such instances are not infrequent in the elicited data. Additionally, the ability question in example 1, similar to almost all ability questions on the pre-test, is formulated in the first person singular. Normally, the speaker-oriented perspective is regarded as a common way of making a request less imposing, particularly in English (Ogiermann, 2009). In Ukrainian, however, this orientation is perceived as imposing and manipulative, and is generally avoided by native speakers (as discussed in Study 1). Similarly, this imposing orientation is observed by Amelkina Dunn (2012), who compares the requestive behaviour of American learners of Russian and native speakers of Russian. The results underscore the importance of addressing the differences in meaning attested to the request orientations in Anglo-American and Slavic cultures in the classroom.

English language transfer is also observed in the participants' use of indirect request strategies, or hints. For example:

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<sup>41</sup> In order to showcase how Ukrainian requests are structured by the learners, direct translation is used in the examples. The italicized abbreviation [sic] is used to indicate a mistake.



- (2) A: *S'ohodni ia buduchy maiu hosti. I ia teper bihaiu na kukhni i ia ne maiu bahato chasu.* / 'Today, I will[sic] being[sic] have guests. And now I am running in[sic] the kitchen, and I have no much time.'
- B: *Ty khochesh shchob ia dopomahaiu?!* / 'Do you want that I am helping[sic]?'  
 A: *Tak.* / 'Yes.'  
 B: *Dobre.* / 'Good.'

The exchange in example 2 shows that participant A uses a hint to request help by emphasizing the urgency of the situation. In the follow-up retrospective interview, the participants explain their choice of the indirect strategy as follows: participant A wanted to sound polite by not putting too much pressure on participant B. Such an explanation demonstrates that the participants correlate indirectness with politeness. This strategy according to Wierzbicka (1991), reflects Anglo-American cultural values. Additionally, excerpt 2 contains several errors, some of which hinder the comprehensibility of the utterances. The sentence *S'ohodni ia buduchy maiu hosti* / 'Today, I will[sic] having[sic] guests' suggests that participant A is directly translating the construction 'I will be having guests' into Ukrainian. This attempt is not very successful: the meaning of the sentence is unclear. In the following sentence, participant A uses the preposition *na* / 'on, in' to denote the location of the action. Though the use of the preposition *na* / 'on, in' in the word combination *bihaty na kukhni* / 'to run in[sic] the kitchen' is erroneous, the sentence is still comprehensible. In the given context, the preposition *po* / 'about, around' would be more appropriate. Similarly, the sentence *Ty khochesh shchob ia dopomahaiu?!* / 'Do you want that I am helping[sic]?' contains grammatical errors; however, they do not hinder the communicative intent of the utterance, which is to clarify the indirect request formulated by participant A in the previous utterance. In this sentence, the verb *dopomahaty* / 'to help' is used in the present imperfective instead of the expected past perfective.

The appropriateness of requests on the pre-test is often affected by the participants' inability to match linguistic means with the appropriate formality register. For example:

(3) *Dai meni olivets' / 'Give<sub>SG</sub> me a pencil.'*

This example illustrates a request to an unfamiliar person for services. The request incorporates an imperative structure in which the verb *daty/* 'to give' is used in the imperative mood. Unlike in English, imperatives in Ukrainian take on different endings depending on a person and number. A verb in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (the *vy* form) is normally used to refer to two or more people, or to a single person if interlocutors are unfamiliar and/ or they are in unequal power positions. Notably, the verb *daty/* 'to give' in the example above is used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (the *ty* form), signalling familiarity and/ or equal power relations. In the given context, this form is inappropriate. The follow-up verbal report reveals that the participant's choice of the *ty* form was determined entirely by their language intuition. The choice of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular form may signal the participant's lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge.

The comprehensibility of requests on the pre-test is affected by a number of errors, pertaining to both grammar and vocabulary, as illustrated by example 2 above. Consider the following examples:

(4) *Pryvit! Chy mozhna hovoryty z Pavlem? / 'Hi! [Is it] possible to speak to Pavlo [sic]?'*

(5) *Daie meni tvii brat, proshu. / '[He] is giving [sic] me your<sub>SG</sub> brother [sic], please.'*

Both examples illustrate requests for people to the phone. In example 4, the participant uses the imperfective verb *hovoryty/* 'to speak' instead of the perfective *pohovoryty*, and the personal noun in the instrumental case displays an erroneous ending *-em* instead of the correct *-om*. These grammatical errors do not interfere with request clarity and are observed in almost all responses on the pre-test. In example 5, the verb *daty/* 'to give' is used in the present tense, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, instead of the imperative mood, which makes the utterance sound more like a statement rather than a request. In addition, the participant uses the verb *daty/* 'to give' to call somebody to the phone, which sounds very much like a direct transfer from English, making the

communicative intent unclear. In Ukrainian, the verb *poklykaly*/ ‘to call’ in this situation would be more appropriate. Importantly, on the pre-test, the errors that hinder the communicative intent of requests, as illustrated in example 5, occur frequently. Also, they are more frequently observed in the participants’ responses on the ODCTs and role-plays than on the WDCTs, which may indicate that participants lack sufficient oral practice.

**Post-test results.** The comparison of the elicited requests before and after the pedagogical intervention reveals an increase in the participants’ performance with respect to both the comprehensibility and the appropriateness of formulated requests. Regarding comprehensibility, two groups of requests are the most comprehensible: orally produced requests for services (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts) and written requests for people to the phone (zero pragmatics-focused instruction). Importantly also, when comparing these two groups of requests, orally produced requests for services contain far fewer errors than written requests for people to the phone. The least comprehensible are requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts), particularly those elicited by ODCTs. Participants make both grammatical and lexical errors, many of which significantly hinder the requester’s communicative intent. On the whole, requests elicited by post-test WDCTs are more comprehensible than by post-test ODCTs. Requests for services in which responses to ODCTs are more comprehensible than to WDCTs constitute the exception.

Regarding the appropriateness of requests, requests for people to the phone (zero pragmatics-focused instruction) are rated the highest, particularly those elicited by WDCTs. For example:

(6) *Mozhna Oksanu do telefonu?!* ‘[Is it] possible [to call] Oksana to the phone?’

This example completely corresponds to the instructional targets in terms of both appropriateness and comprehensibility.

With respect to requests for services (pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts), only one instance is recorded where participants formulate an oral request for services by means of a structure different from instructional targets. The raters perceive this request as completely inappropriate for the given context, which significantly lowers the average appropriateness score for this instructional approach. In responses to WDCTs, students employ exclusively instructional targets, which are direct imperatives and ellipses. However, appropriateness scores of several written requests are lowered by the use of the informal *ty*, which is considered inappropriate to use to address an unfamiliar person. The inability of participants to match the linguistic form to the formality register is even more apparent during the role-plays. For example:

- (7) A: *Dobryi den'. Proshu dai meni kavu.*/ 'Good day. Please give**SG** me coffee.'  
B: *Khvylynochku. Tut vashi kava.*/ 'One minute. Here is your**PL** [*sic*] coffee.'  
A: *Diakuiu. I shche odyn kusochku tort.*/ 'Thank you. And one more piece[*sic*] cake[*sic*].'  
B: *Kievs'koho?!* 'The Kyiv cake?'  
A: *Tak.*/ 'Yes.'  
B: *Dobre. Tut-vo tvij tort.*/ 'Good. Here is your**SG** cake.'  
A: *Skil'ky z mene?!* 'How much do I owe?'  
B: *Z vas 13 hryven'.*/ 'You**PL** owe 13 hryvnia.'

The employment of the imperative *Proshu dai meni kavu*/ 'Please give**SG** me coffee' and elliptical *I shche odyn kusochku tort*/ 'And one more piece[*sic*] cake[*sic*]' structures illustrated in this example correspond entirely to the instructional targets (excluding the grammatical errors). However, this example also demonstrates that participants are using the informal *ty* (singular) and the formal *vy* (plural) forms inconsistently. In the request *Proshu dai meni kavu*/ 'Please

*gives<sub>SG</sub>* me coffee,’ participant A uses the imperative verb *daty/* ‘to give’ in the informal *ty* form, which does not correspond to the formality of the situation. At the same time, participant B constantly switches between the formal *vy* (e.g., *vashi kava/* *your<sub>PL</sub>*[sic] coffee,’ z *vas 13 hryven/* ‘*you<sub>PL</sub>* owe 13 hryvnia’) and the informal *ty* forms (e.g., *tvii tort/* ‘*your<sub>SG</sub>* cake’). During the follow-up retrospective interview, these participants corrected themselves and noted that their formality register alternation stemmed from a lack of practice.

Requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts) incorporate the fewest instructional targets. Additionally, a few requests to a friend incorporate the formal *vy* form, which raters perceive as completely inappropriate. Taken together, these demonstrate the lowest appropriateness scores on the post-test across the three communicative contexts.

A closer qualitative look at the data allows us to identify possible reasons for the highest appropriateness scores on requests to call people to the phone (zero pragmatics-focused instruction), as compared to requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts) and requests for services (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts). The analysis shows that such results might be attributed to the peculiarities of the request structures addressed in this instructional treatment. Requests for favours and requests for services are formulated by ability questions and imperatives respectively, in which participants have to differentiate between formal and informal situations and apply either the informal *ty* or the formal *vy* form. Analysis of the after-intervention data indicates that participants often mix up these forms, which affects the appropriateness level of requests. When formulating requests to call people to the phone, participants particularly favour permission questions that are

impersonal. Therefore, they do not have to choose between the *ty* and the *vy* forms, which results in fewer “appropriateness” errors, yielding higher appropriateness scores.

It is peculiar that requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts) receive the lowest appropriateness scores. Note that on the pre-test, participants formulate requests by means of direct imperatives, permission questions, and positive ability questions in the present tense. These structures are also instructional targets in the zero pragmatics-focused instruction and the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts. During these instructional treatments, participants continue to work on formulating these structures, thus enhancing their pragmalinguistic skills regarding these structures. The explicit instruction without podcasts focuses on negative ability questions in the conditional mood. No examples of this were recorded on the pre-test; this structure is entirely new to learners. This may be the reason why the appropriateness of requests for favours is lower as compared to other requests types.

***Delayed post-test results.*** The comparison of the elicited requests immediately after the intervention and 45 days later reveals a general decline in the participants’ requestive performance, which is linked to both the comprehensibility and appropriateness of formulated requests. With respect to comprehensibility, the degree of decline varies across the three communicative contexts. Similar to the post-test results, oral requests for services (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts) again stand out as the most comprehensible. On the post-test, only two minor grammatical errors are recorded in the elicited structures, which are instantly corrected by participants themselves. On the delayed post-test, requests for services contain a few more grammatical errors. These errors are minor and do not interfere with request clarity. In contrast, requests to call people to the phone (zero pragmatics-focused instruction) and

requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts) contain comparatively more errors, including those that hinder the communicative intent of the requests.

The decline in the appropriateness of the participants' requests is attributed to a number of factors, which vary across communicative contexts. The decreased use of structures that correspond to instructional targets is observed in requests in all three communicative contexts. Importantly, requests for services (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts) incorporate instructional targets the most, particularly in oral requests. However, their degree of appropriateness is significantly lowered by the use of the informal *ty* form to address an unfamiliar interlocutor. This tendency is also observed on the post-test. Similar to post-test results, participants recognize such errors and correct themselves during retrospective interviews.

Requests for people to come to the phone (zero pragmatics-focused instruction) incorporate fewer instructional targets as compared to the requests for services. However, their degree of appropriateness is on average higher. Similar to post-test results, participants prefer impersonal permission questions, e.g., *Mozhna Oksanu to telephonu?!* '[Is it] possible [to call] Oksana to the phone?,' in which pragmalinguistic form does not depend on the formality register.

With respect to requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts), the appropriateness is affected by a significantly high number of structures that diverge from instructional targets. The inappropriate and inconsistent usage of *ty* and *vy* forms also lowers the degree of appropriateness. In most cases, participants recognize their errors and correct themselves, as seen in the retrospective interview data. Participants' divergence from the instructional targets is unintentional and is due to a lack of practice. However, in some cases, participants purposefully use structures different from instructional targets. For example:

(8) Interviewer: During your roleplay, you used [quotes the used structure]. Are there any other structures that could be used in this situation?

Participant: Yes, [provides the structure that fully corresponds to the instructional target].

Interviewer: Why did you use [quotes the structure, used during the roleplay] instead of [quotes the structure, provided by the participant during the interview]? Are there any reasons?

Participant: It feels more natural to me.

In interview exchange 8, the participant clearly shows awareness of the structure addressed during the instructional treatment. However, they choose the structure with which they are more comfortable, which signals that the learner's divergence from the instructional targets is intentional. Research indicates that learners' cultural affiliation, i.e., the sense of who they are and their attitude to the target culture, can affect how they use the target language (Ishihara, 2006; LoCastro, 2003). Learners may consciously choose not to behave linguistically like native speakers in order to accentuate their own personal identity. This resistance in adhering to SL/FL pragmatic norms is called "learner subjectivity." The excerpt in example 8 demonstrates that the way the participant expresses themselves is influenced by their subjectivity, and does not correlate with the (in)effectiveness of the instructional approach.

Overall, the results of the qualitative analysis echo the quantitative results: the three instructional approaches contribute similarly to the development of the students' pragmatic ability. Specifically, both the appropriateness and comprehensibility of requests increase from the pre- to the post-test, and then somewhat decrease from the post- to the delayed post-test. Qualitative differences in the effect of the instructional approaches on the development of pragmatic ability with respect to appropriateness and comprehensibility are noticeable. Specifically, the pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts contributes the most to the comprehensibility of orally-produced requests. Namely, requests for services contain much fewer errors as compared to other requests, and these errors do not hinder the request clarity. The zero



pragmatics-focused instruction contributes the most to the request appropriateness. Finally, the qualitative analysis allows us to discover a potentially confounding variable, i.e., learner subjectivity, which along with the type of instructional approach might account for the participants' choice of request structures.

## **8.2 Research Question 2: How does pragmatic awareness (in terms of social variables of power, distance, and imposition) change based on the interventional instructional treatments?**

Two instruments were used to study how the three instructional approaches contribute to the development of pragmatic awareness: verbal reports and retrospective interviews. In verbal reports, which followed each WDCT scenario, participants were asked to explain their choice of request structure and its linguistic means of realisation.<sup>42</sup> Retrospective interviews<sup>43</sup> with participants were conducted by the investigator immediately after each role-play scenario. Their objective was to learn about their request structure choice. The collected data provide insight into how the participants' pragmatic awareness changes during the pedagogical intervention.

In the present study, the development of pragmatic awareness was part of only two instructional approaches: the pragmatics-focused instructions with podcasts (request for services) and without podcasts (requests for favours). The two approaches incorporated metapragmatic explanations and discussions, which aimed to make learners consciously aware of which pragmalinguistic forms should be used in accordance with which sociopragmatic factors. The focus of the zero pragmatics-focused instruction was primarily on grammar.

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<sup>42</sup> All participants completed all verbal reports: 90 in total.

<sup>43</sup> As mentioned before, during the data collection, some participant pairs chose to role-play less than four suggested scenarios. Therefore, the number of interviews, which followed the role-play of each scenario, was 27 out of expected 60. Consequently, conclusions from the interview data are only tentative.

**Pre-test results.** The analysis of verbal reports and retrospective interviews demonstrates that before the pedagogical intervention participants generally have undeveloped pragmatic awareness. For example:

- (9) I am really just guessing as to how to ask.
- (10) I answered it in the way I would have in English.

Example 9 demonstrates that the participant uses their language intuition to explain their request choice. In example 10, the participant explains their request choice based on English-language transfer.

Additionally, in some comments, participants explain their request preferences, as shown in the following examples:

- (11) *Ty* instead of *vy* form is used because they are siblings and therefore are familiar.
- (12) I used *ty* because one [interlocutor] is younger, and it is OK to address her like that.

Examples 11 and 12 indicate that some participants are aware of the social variables of distance and power. Importantly, the “power” variable (example 12) is attributed only to the interlocutors’ age. Other power components, specifically social status, are not recorded in the data. Additionally, the reference to the interlocutors’ power is found in only two comments, while distance, specifically the level of familiarity between interlocutors, is mentioned in seven out of 30 comments on the verbal reports. Importantly, there is no mention of these or any other social variables in retrospective interviews. Therefore, these data suggest that before the pedagogical intervention, participants’ pragmatic awareness is quite limited.

**Post-test results.** The analysis of the post-test results reveals participants’ increased pragmatic awareness. When commenting on formulated requests for favours and requests for services specifically, participants demonstrate awareness of all three social variables addressed in the instructional treatments: distance, power, and imposition. The most frequently commented

variable is distance. Participants tend to explain their use of the informal *ty* or the formal *vy* in terms of high or low levels of familiarity between interlocutors, respectively. This variable is mentioned in eight out of ten verbal reports and all three retrospective interviews about requests for favours. With respect to requests for services, this variable is commented on in six verbal reports and two out of three interviews.

The second most commented social variable is imposition. It is most frequently mentioned in the participants' comments regarding requests for favours. Specifically, in five verbal reports and three interviews, participants explain the use of the negated ability question in the conditional mood in terms of the significance of requested favours and the high level of imposition of the speaker on the hearer. Also, one participant associates the employed *vy* form with the high level of request imposition rather than with the interlocutors' social status or psychological distance between them, which is erroneous. In three verbal reports and two interview comments on requests for services, participants indicate that their choice of the direct structure is conditioned by low imposition on the hearer.

The least frequently mentioned variable is power. In verbal reports, when commenting on requests for favours, only three participants relate the use of the *ty* form to the equal social status of the interlocutors. In retrospective interviews, participants comment on this variable only once. With respect to requests for services, power is mentioned only in one verbal report and in one interview comment, as in example 13:

(13) I agree with the use of the *daite/* 'give $PL$ ' form because it is my job to serve. It is not a favour, it is required of me to do so.

In example 13, the participant notes that they used the imperative structure in the plural, formal *vy* form, since it is the hearer's (i.e., the sales assistant's) job to comply with the speaker's

request. In this way, the participant implicitly relates their choice to the speaker's higher power position compared to the hearer's.

In their verbal reports, two participants refer to direct imperative and elliptical structures as commands rather than requests. Such a perception possibly stems from the major Anglo-American cultural principle of "polite pessimism," according to which the use of direct structures, particularly imperatives, is restricted mostly to commands (Wierzbicka, 1985). Also, two participants indicate that they use the negated ability question in the conditional mood to express politeness in requests for favours. Finally, several participants comment on their request structure choices based entirely on their language intuition. Such comments are more frequent with requests for services than with requests for favours.

***Delayed post-test results.*** The analysis of the delayed post-test verbal reports and retrospective interviews indicates a slight decrease in the participants' pragmatic awareness compared to the post-test results. The most commented variables, similar to the post-test results, are distance and imposition, but their frequency distribution is situation-specific. When commenting on requests for services, participants focus on the social variable of distance. Similar to the post-test results, in six out of ten verbal reports, and in two out of four interviews, participants indicate that they used the *vy* form because of a low level of familiarity between interlocutors. In two verbal reports, the *vy* form is associated with a high level of formality of the situation, in which a low level of familiarity and an unequal social status are intertwined. Also, one participant notes that using *vy* is a sign of politeness. In four verbal reports and two interviews, participants link the imperative structure with the low imposition of requests for services. Interestingly, one of the participants specifies that since it is a low-imposition request, there is "no need to be overly polite." Another participant in their verbal report explains the use

of the imperative structure in terms of power relations between interlocutors, emphasizing the fact that it is the hearer's job to comply with the speaker's request. In one interview, participants explain their request structure choice based on English-language transfer.

Regarding requests for favours, the most commented variable is the degree of imposition: participants mention it in three verbal reports. Additionally, participants in two verbal reports and in all three interviews implicitly indicate that it was the degree of imposition that affected their structure preference. Participants note that negated ability questions in the conditional mood are the structures that should be used when asking for favours. Psychological distance is the next most frequently mentioned variable. In five verbal reports and one interview, participants explain their choice of the *ty* and *vy* forms in terms of degree of familiarity. Power is the least commented variable. It is mentioned in one verbal report and two interviews. For example:

(14) I used *ty* [form] because we are roommates and are on the same level of social status.

(15) It is your professor, and you refer to him as *vy* because it is this type of relationship.

In both examples above, participants correctly identify power relations between interlocutors, expressed by the informal *ty* and the formal *vy* forms. In example 14, they comment on power relations directly. Example 15 demonstrates an indirect reference to the power variable. Additionally, in one retrospective interview (see example 8, section 6.1.2) participants demonstrate their pragmatic subjectivity. Though they purposefully use the structure that feels more natural to them, they demonstrate full awareness of the structure that best fits the context in accordance with the received instruction.

As mentioned before, the focus of the zero pragmatics-focused instruction was not on developing and retaining pragmatic awareness. However, verbal reports and interview comments on requests to call people to the phone reveal interesting results that require special attention. On

the pre-test, as in reports and interview comments on requests for favours and services, participants demonstrate quite limited pragmatic awareness. Nine out of ten participants explain their request choices in terms of language intuition and English-language transfer. One participant speaks only about the level of familiarity and the age difference between interlocutors as the factors that determined their request structure choice. In the literature, it has been argued that simple, not prolonged, exposure to the language is insufficient for learners to start noticing the contextual factors and pragmatic functions of the target forms (Schmidt, 1993). Since requests to call people to the phone were the targets of the instruction with no focus on pragmatics, it was expected that the participants' pragmatic awareness about these requests would not change during the pedagogical intervention. However, the analysis of the participants' comments reveals an increase of pragmatic awareness on the post-test, followed by a slight decrease on the delayed post-test. Psychological distance is the most commented social variable, which four participants use to explain the use of either the *vy* or *ty* form on the post-test. Three participants explain the employment of *vy/ ty* forms in terms of power. Participants specifically address differences in age (two comments) and social status (one comment) between interlocutors. One participant also comments on the low level of imposition of the posed request. Such findings indicate that participants became aware of these aspects through the other two instructional approaches that explicitly focused on request pragmatics. Therefore, there is a probability of interaction between the three instructional approaches.

Overall, the participants' pragmatic awareness changes during the educational experiment; it increases from the pre- to the post-test, and slightly decreases from the post- to the delayed post-test. Importantly, when learning how to make requests for favours, participants develop an awareness of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition to a greater

extent than during the acquisition of requests for services. However, with respect to the retention of awareness of these variables, it is vice versa: the participants' sociopragmatic knowledge of request for services is retained better than requests for favours. This signals that the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts and the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts are not equally effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic awareness. This allows us to reject Hypothesis 2.1. However, it is necessary to remember that both pragmatics-focused instructional approaches, with and without podcasts, incorporated similar metapragmatic activities targeting the acquisition of pragmatic awareness. The difference between the two approaches was in the different communicative contexts incorporated in each instruction. Specifically, the contexts of the two approaches highlighted different degrees of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition. Therefore, the type of communicative context may indeed have had an effect on the acquisition and retention of pragmatic awareness.

Additionally, these findings point out that awareness of the social variable of distance is both acquired and retained better than imposition. Awareness of the social variable of power is the most difficult to acquire and retain. Also, even after the pedagogical intervention, participants continue to refer to indirect structures as more polite than direct ones; students perceive imperative structures as commands rather than requests. This highlights a gap in the participants' pragmatic knowledge and calls for the attention of educators.

Finally, after the intervention, participants demonstrate surprisingly high pragmatic awareness when explaining their choice of structures to request people to the phone. Notably, these structures were targeted by the zero pragmatics-focused instruction, and such findings allow us to reject Hypothesis 2.2. Since this instructional approach focused exclusively on grammar, there is a high probability of transfer of the pragmatic knowledge that participants

obtained during the explicit pragmatics-focused instructions with and without podcasts. This, in turn, signals an interaction between the three instructional approaches in terms of pragmatic awareness, which necessitates a cautious interpretation of the results regarding the effectiveness of any of the instructional approach.

## **9 Discussion**

This study compared the effectiveness of three instructional approaches for the acquisition of pragmatic competence. By conceptualizing the acquisition process in the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 1998, 2005), the study viewed pragmatic competence as an ability to operationalize pragmatic awareness, comprising pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge, in production. Therefore, the research focus was on the effectiveness of instructional approaches for the acquisition of both pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability.

The above analysis invites a discussion of the findings in terms of the proposed research questions. The first question asked which instructional approach (zero pragmatics-focused, explicit pragmatics-focused without podcasts, explicit pragmatics-focused with podcasts) is most effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic ability. The quantitative analysis of written and oral DCTs demonstrated that the three instructional approaches had a similar effect on the acquisition and retention of the participants' pragmatic ability, albeit only with respect to the production of requests in writing. Regarding oral production, this analysis revealed a difference between the three instructional approaches. Based on the aural and oral nature of the exercises with podcasts (see section 3), it was initially hypothesized that the instruction with podcasts would particularly facilitate the development of oral pragmatic ability. The obtained results only partially supported the initial hypothesis. The pragmatics-focused instruction with



podcasts contributed most to the acquisition and retention of oral pragmatic ability, though only at the comprehensibility level.

These results enable us to sketch a possible process for the acquisition of oral pragmatic ability by means of podcasts. Most probably, the presentation of instructional targets through audio recorded situational contexts offered participants a sensory input, which served as a source of pragmatic information (Alcón, 2005; Armstrong, 2008; Fujioka, 2003, 2004; Martinez-Flor, 2007). Specifically, through the audio recorded input, participants could notice the occurrence of certain models of pragmatic target use (pragmalinguistic information) in certain communicative contexts (sociopragmatic information), which could further lead to the understanding “of a certain general principle, rule or pattern” (Schmidt, 1993: 26). This, in turn, would lead to the overall acquisition of pragmatic awareness.

While pragmatic awareness plays a significant role in the acquisition of pragmatic competence, it does not automatically translate into the learners’ ability to formulate target forms in a pragmatically appropriate manner (Swain, 2005). This emphasizes the importance of output practice. Notably, along with aural input, the podcasting technology allowed us to create structural exercises that provided participants with an opportunity for oral output practice. The exercises were developed in such a way that they could trigger a number of cognitive processes that contributed to the acquisition of both pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability. For example, a task, which described the communicative context and provided instructions, and an example were designed to stimulate awareness of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. These exercises might have allowed participants to formulate orally pragmatic targets, check their answers with audio recorded keys, reflect on their output, and modify it accordingly if needed. When comparing their responses with the key, learners were “pushed” to

notice what they could or could not say and what needed to be said in the given communicative context (Doughty, 2001). The reflection phase aimed at channelling the learners' attention back to the target form in the input; the modification phase stimulated learners to produce more comprehensible, accurate, and appropriate output, thus making the target form salient and creating a condition for its acquisition (Swain, 1995).

Podcast technology may also have enabled learners to download exercises on their digital media players and to focus on pragmatic targets at their convenience (Bolliger, et al., 2010; Thorne & Payne, 2005). This may have created opportunities for learners to practice the oral production of pragmatic targets outside the classroom, and could consequently lead to the increase of the learners' time on task. Educational research reports that time devoted to language learning outside of class improves language performance (Chang & Read, 2006). Therefore, the instructional approach with podcasts could explain the participants' more comprehensible and accurate responses and the higher post-intervention scores on oral tests. However, any conclusions about the benefits of structural exercises with podcasts for the acquisition of oral pragmatic ability are speculative, as no information about the actual psycholinguistic processes involved in the work with such exercises is available.

Regarding the appropriateness of produced requests, no instructional approach stood out as most effective for the acquisition of pragmatic ability. The quantitative analysis revealed no statistical difference in the effectiveness of the three instructional approaches. Descriptive statistics, however, revealed that the zero pragmatics-focused instruction had a slightly larger post-interventional effect on the appropriateness of produced requests as compared to other approaches. These findings are somewhat surprising because pragmatics was not the focus of this instruction. A closer qualitative look at the data revealed that such unexpected results could

probably be attributed to the grammatical structure of permission questions acquired by participants during this instruction. They appeared to be less challenging from the point of view of the appropriateness of their use. Specifically, permission questions, unlike the rest of the instructional targets, have the same structure for contexts with different distance and power relations between interlocutors. In order to formulate other request structures, participants first had to determine the interlocutors' social status and assess their level of familiarity. Then, they had to choose a structure either with the informal *ty* or the formal *vy* form. The analysis of the after-intervention data indicated that participants quite often confused these forms, particularly on the delayed post-test, which resulted in more appropriateness errors and consequently lower appropriateness scores. These results echo the findings of earlier studies investigating the acquisition of pragmatic competence by learners of Russian (Dewaard, 2012; Frank, 2002; Moskala-Gallaher, 2011). Specifically, researchers observed that the Russian system of address with respect to 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference was particularly difficult for learners. This study indicates that differentiating between the formal *vy* and the informal *ty* is difficult for learners of Ukrainian as well. This is because the English language, unlike some Slavic languages, has only one 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference, i.e., 'you' for both formal and informal situations. Importantly, during retrospective interviews, when the incorrect use of *ty/vy* forms was brought to the participants' attention, participants corrected themselves and noted that their formality register error was the result of a lack of practice.

Another factor that might have impacted the appropriateness scores was the participants' subjectivity or intentional divergence from the target pragmatic norms (Ishihara, 2010). Qualitative analysis of retrospective interviews revealed that some participants consciously chose not to adhere to the instructional targets. Instead, they indicated that they opted for structures

with which they felt more comfortable. As Ishihara (2010) and LoCastro (2003) aptly note, the linguistic behaviour of some learners reflects their desire to accentuate their own identity. Therefore, their choice of pragmatic targets is not associated with the (in)effectiveness of instructional approaches.

Based on the above, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of the confounding variables that, along with instructional approaches, might have affected the results of the current study. This warrants cautious interpretation of these results.

The second research question investigated how pragmatic awareness changed during and after the pedagogical intervention. As mentioned before, two of the three instructional approaches aimed at the acquisition of pragmatic competence, including pragmatic awareness. Specifically, the pragmatics-focused instructional approaches with and without podcasts incorporated metapragmatic explanations and discussions through which learners were made consciously aware of which pragmlinguistic forms should be used according to the sociopragmatic factors of power, distance, and imposition. These approaches were based on Schmidt's (1993) claim that pragmatic information often remains unnoticed by learners unless addressed directly.

The qualitative analysis of verbal reports and retrospective interviews revealed that the participants' pragmatic awareness changed over the period of the educational experiment: it increased from the pre- to the post-test, and slightly decreased from the post- to the delayed post-test. Interestingly, the analysis also demonstrated that the two pragmatics-focused instructional approaches had different effects on the acquisition and retention of pragmatic awareness. Specifically, when acquiring requests for favours (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts), participants developed an awareness of the social variables of distance,

imposition, and power to a greater extent than during the acquisition of request for services (explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts). However, regarding the retention of pragmatic awareness, explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts that targeted requests for services seemed to be more facilitative. Given that both instructional approaches incorporated very similar metapragmatic activities, these results can be explained by the communicative contexts, rather than the type of instructional approach. Therefore, it is possible to assume that certain social contexts better facilitate the development of pragmatic awareness of certain social variables. This initial claim warrants further investigation.

Additionally, during the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with and without podcasts, the awareness of the social variable of distance was both acquired and retained better than the social variable of imposition. The retention and acquisition of the social variable of power appeared to challenge learners the most. Interestingly, a study on the acquisition of pragmatic competence by American learners of Russian also reports on the difficulties that participants have when correlating pragmatic targets with the social variable of power (Moskala-Gallaher, 2011). These results might be linked to the different meanings that the social variable of power represents in Anglo-American and Slavic cultures.

## **10 Limitations and suggestions for future research**

The findings of this study are suggestive rather than conclusive, and a number of limitations may be pointed out. First, a special note about the study participants needs to be made. The analysis of the participants' demographics showed that eight of ten students communicated in Ukrainian in their families to varying degrees, which explains why certain instructional targets were used by participants even before the pedagogical intervention. It should be noted that this study was not planned to focus on this type of learners. However, at the time of

recruitment, the researcher had no control over representation of learner types among participants. Therefore, it is desirable to conduct future research in which this variable is controlled. Additionally, this study had a small sample size. The effect of this limitation was balanced by the employment of a repeated-measures design; however, the generalization of the results to a wider population of SL/FL learners may not be feasible. Also, as this study revealed, not all learners wished to approximate the pragmatics of native speakers. This opens up another line of inquiry: how students can learn and adhere to the pragmatic norms of the target language without coercion.

Another limitation concerned the study design. The repeated-measures design was chosen due to its ability to detect an effect size even with a small number of participants (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2010). Each instructional treatment exposed participants to request targets that differed from one another in terms of their structure, linguistic means, and the communicative contexts in which they were used. This allowed the researcher to assume that the instructional treatments were independent, thus reducing the possible issue of order effects. However, the analysis of verbal reports and retrospective interviews revealed that the three instructional approaches interacted with one another with respect to pragmatic awareness. Specifically, participants used the sociopragmatic knowledge received during the pragmatics-focused instruction with and without podcasts to explain their pragmatic performance in the communicative contexts to which they were exposed during the zero pragmatics-focused instruction. Therefore, further studies are needed in which this confounding variable is controlled. This can be achieved by incorporating an independent-measures design, in which the same instructional targets will be taught to several groups of participants, each group receiving a treatment, which incorporates a different instructional approach.

Finally, the differences between the instructional targets in terms of their levels of complexity for acquisition might have affected the study results. The analysis of the pre-test revealed that the instructional targets incorporated into the zero pragmatics-focused instruction and the pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts were familiar to participants before the intervention. At the same time, structures addressed in the pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts were completely new and therefore might have been more challenging for acquisition than other structures. This methodological constraint can also be removed by the incorporation of an independent-measures design. Also, it would be valuable to conduct similar studies in other languages to see how those results correlate with the current findings. An important aspect would also be to study the learners' opinion of the effectiveness of podcasts for the development of pragmatic competence. This research angle may improve our understanding of learners' needs regarding FL pragmatics and the degree to which podcasting is useful for satisfying some of them. These are just a few possible avenues of future research suggested by this study.

## **11 Conclusion**

This study reported on the pedagogical potential of podcasting for the acquisition of pragmatic competence by second-year learners of Ukrainian. It contributed to the underexplored area of the instructed acquisition of Ukrainian language pragmatics in general, and the use of technology in particular. The study used a pre-test-post-test repeated-measures design to compare the effects of three instructional approaches (zero pragmatics-focused instruction, explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts, and explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts) on the acquisition and retention of pragmatic competence. Building on the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995,

1998, 2005), pragmatic competence was examined through two focal areas: learners' pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests. Pragmatic ability was assessed by two measures: comprehensibility and appropriateness. The assessment of the learners' pragmatic awareness and ability was studied quantitatively and qualitatively. The use of both methodological angles allowed us to investigate not only whether the administered instructional approaches contributed to the acquisition and retention of pragmatic competence, but also to examine how learners' pragmatic competence changed during the pedagogical intervention.

The results of the study demonstrated that both pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability increased from the pre- to the post-test, and then slightly decreased from the post- to the delayed post-test. The examination of the learners' pragmatic awareness showed that the social variable of distance was both acquired and retained better than imposition, while the social variable of power was the most challenging for both acquisition and retention. Additionally, the results indicated that certain social contexts might be more facilitative of acquiring pragmatic awareness of certain social variables.

The quantitative analysis of the learners' pragmatic ability demonstrated that the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts was the most effective for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic ability, but only at the level of comprehensibility of oral requests. Regarding the appropriateness of orally produced requests, the difference in the effectiveness between the instructional approaches was not statistically significant. However, qualitative results revealed that these "appropriateness" results stemmed from confounding variables associated with the grammatical structure of instructional targets and the participants' subjectivity rather than the (in)effectiveness of instructional approaches. Therefore, compared to



the other two instructional approaches, the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts can be considered more effective for the acquisition and retention of oral pragmatic ability.

The application of podcasts in language teaching and learning has been strongly associated with the tradition of using audio for the development of listening and pronunciation skills (Abdous, et al., 2012). The current study supports some previous research: podcasting technology, when adapted for instructional purposes, has the potential to effectively promote the acquisition of a number of skills, including speaking (Abdous, et al., 2009; Farangi, et al., 2015). As we are currently observing a shift in language teaching and learning to an online environment, including distance- and blended-learning language courses, podcasting offers learners an option to practice their oral production skills outside of class. Overall, it is possible to conclude that podcasting undoubtedly has the potential to offer new language teaching and learning experiences. It is hoped that this study will motivate other researchers to further explore the educational benefits of integrating podcasting technologies into language courses.

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## Appendix A: Experimental procedures

Table 2.3

### *Stages of Educational Experiment*

Stages	Contents
1. Background questionnaire	Questions on participants' demographics.
2. Pre-test (Test A)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> <li>● Task 2 (corresponds to instructional treatment 2);</li> <li>● Task 3 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Verbal reports (after each WDCT, participants were prompted to explain their choice of request structure).</li> <li>3) Oral discourse completion tasks (ODCTs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> <li>● Task 2 (corresponds to instructional treatment 2);</li> <li>● Task 3 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).</li> </ul> </li> <li>4) Role-play tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> <li>● Tasks 2-3 (correspond to instructional treatment 2);</li> <li>● Task 4 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).<sup>44</sup></li> </ul> </li> <li>5) Retrospective semi-structured interview (after each role-play, participants were prompted with a series of questions to explain their choice of request structures and the linguistic means of their realisation).</li> </ol>
3. Instructional treatment 1	<p>Instructional approach: Zero pragmatics-focused instruction.</p> <p>Topic: Talking on the phone.</p> <p>Request structures: Permission questions and positive ability questions in the present tense.</p> <p>Grammar: Personal names in the accusative and instrumental cases.</p> <p>Instructional foci: Personal names in the accusative and instrumental cases.</p>

<sup>44</sup> WDCT, ODCT and role-play tasks were offered to participants in a random order.

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4.	Instructional treatment 2	<p>Instructional approach: Pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts.</p> <p>Topic: Asking for a favour.</p> <p>Request structures: Negated ability questions in the conditional mood.</p> <p>Grammar: Modal verb <i>mohty/</i> ‘can, to be able to’ in the conditional mood.</p> <p>Instructional foci: Modal verb <i>mohty/</i> ‘can, to be able to’ to formulate negated ability questions in the conditional mood; social factors of distance, power, and imposition.</p>
<hr/>		
5.	Instructional treatment 3	<p>Instructional approach: Pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts.</p> <p>Topic: Services.</p> <p>Request structures: Imperative and elliptical formulae.</p> <p>Grammar: Verbs in the imperative mood.</p> <p>Instructional foci: Verbs in the imperative mood to formulate imperative request formulae; elliptical formulae; social factors of distance, power, and imposition.</p>
<hr/>		
6.	Post-test (Test B)	<p>1) Written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> <li>● Task 2 (corresponds to instructional treatment 2);</li> <li>● Task 3 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).</li> </ul> <p>2) Verbal reports (after each WDCT, participants were prompted to explain their choice of a request structure).</p> <p>3) Oral discourse completion tasks (ODCTs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> <li>● Task 2 (corresponds to instructional treatment 2);</li> <li>● Task 3 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).</li> </ul> <p>4) Role-play tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> <li>● Tasks 2-3 (correspond to instructional treatment 2);</li> <li>● Task 4 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).</li> </ul> <p>5) Retrospective semi-structured interview (after each role-play, participants were prompted with a series of questions to explain their choice of request structures and linguistic means of their realisation).</p>
<hr/>		
7.	Delayed post-test (Test A)	<p>1) Written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);</li> </ul>

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- Task 2 (corresponds to instructional treatment 2);
  - Task 3 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).
  - 2) Verbal reports (after each WDCT, participants were prompted to explain their choice of a request structure).
  - 3) Oral discourse completion tasks (ODCTs):
    - Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);
    - Task 2 (corresponds to instructional treatment 2);
    - Task 3 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).
  - 4) Role-play tasks:
    - Task 1 (corresponds to instructional treatment 1);
    - Tasks 2-3 (correspond to instructional treatment 2);
    - Task 4 (corresponds to instructional treatment 3).
  - 5) Retrospective semi-structured interview (after each role-play, participants were prompted with a series of questions to explain their choice of request structures and linguistic means of their realisation).
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## Appendix B: Instructional procedures

### Treatment 1 (Lesson 1 and 2)

Instructional approach: Zero pragmatics-focused instruction.

Topic: Talking on the phone.

Request structures: Permission questions and positive ability questions in the present tense.

Grammar: Personal names in the accusative and instrumental cases.

Instructional focus: Personal names in the accusative and instrumental cases.

Table 2.4

*Generalized Structure of Lessons 1 and 2*<sup>45</sup>

	Stage	Objectives	Procedures	Interactions
1.	Warm-up	- to introduce s-s into the topic	I-r asks s-s to describe a picture, which depicts people talking on the phone. By means of questions, I-r tries to connect the lesson topic with the life and language experience of s-s	I-r (instructor) – S-s (students)
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> Look at the photos and discuss the questions below.<sup>46</sup></p> <p>Що роблять люди на фото? Як ви думаєте, що вони говорять один одному? Які типові «телефонні» фрази українською мовою ви знаєте? Що ви говорите, коли ви питаєте, хто телефонує? Що ви говорите, коли ви просите покликати когось до телефону?</p> <p>(What are the people in the photo doing? What do you think they are saying to each other? What typical telephone phrases in Ukrainian do you know? What do you say when you ask who is calling? What do you say when you ask to speak to someone?)</p>				
2.	Pre-reading	- to help s-s anticipate the topic, vocabulary, and grammar of the texts	S-s read through the suggested phone conversations and find the answers to the questions	Individual work

<sup>45</sup> The structure and activities of Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 are very similar. Therefore, they are presented in generalized Table 2.4.

<sup>46</sup> Tasks in treatment exercises were both in Ukrainian and English, while the content of exercises was in Ukrainian.

Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> Svitlana, Maksym, and Oleh are making phone calls. a) Read through the phone conversations and answer the question: «Чому телефонує Світлана? Максим? Олег? (Why is Svitlana calling? Maksym? Oleh?).				
3.	Comprehension check	- to check s-s' general and detailed understanding of the dialogues	S-s discuss answers to the general understanding questions in the pre-reading activity in a)	Pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s read the dialogues again and discuss answers to the detailed understanding questions	Pair work, I-r – s-s
Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> b) Work in pairs. Read the phone conversations again and answer the questions below.				
4.	Introduction of new grammar	- to introduce new grammar: Personal names in the accusative (Lesson 1) or instrumental (Lesson 2) case	S-s supply the endings of personal names in accusative/instrumental in the suggested table, using the texts of the phone conversations in the reading activity	Pair work
			S-s discuss the endings of personal names in accusative/instrumental	Pair work, s-s - whole class
Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> a) Work in pairs. Read through the phone conversations from <i>Exercise X</i> again and supply the missing endings of the nouns in the table <sup>47</sup> below.				
b) In pairs, discuss the endings of personal names in the accusative/instrumental case, using the table above.				
c) Share what you have learned with your class.				
5.	Focus on new grammar	- to practice new grammar through structural exercises	S-s do a series of structural exercises, following a pattern	Individual and pair work, I-r – s-s
		- to practice new grammar in interaction	S-s do a series of productive speaking exercises	Pair and group work
Example 1 (structural exercise):				

<sup>47</sup> The table contains personal names in the accusative/instrumental case with some endings missing.



*Exercise.* Ask the following people to the phone, following the pattern.

Pattern: Марина. → Можна Марину до телефону?/ ‘[Is it] possible [to ask] Maryna to the phone?’<sup>48</sup>

Example 2 (productive speaking exercise):

*Exercise.* a) Work in pairs. Prepare the role-play of the situations, suggested below. Follow the pattern.

Pattern: - Алло!/ ‘Hello!’

- Добрий день./ ‘Good day.’

- Добрий день./ ‘Good day.’

- А можна Сергія до телефону?/ ‘[Is it] possible [to ask] Serhii to the phone?’

- Звичайно. Хвилиночку. Сергію, тебе до телефону!/ Sure. Just a minute. Serhii, somebody is calling for you!

b) Present your role-plays to the class.

6.	Home assignment	- to practice new grammar	S-s do a series of structural exercises	Individual work
			S-s do a series of written productive exercises	Individual work

Example 1 (structural exercise):

*Exercise.* Open the brackets and put the personal names in the instrumental case.

Pattern: Можна поговорити з \_\_\_\_\_ (Оксана)? - Можна поговорити з Оксаною?/ ‘[Is it] possible to speak with \_\_\_\_\_ (Oksana [nominative case])? - ‘[Is it] possible to speak with Oksana (instrumental case))?’

Example 2 (productive exercise):

*Exercise.* What would you say in the following situations?

## Treatment 2 (Lesson 3 and 4)

Instructional approach: Pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts.

Topic: Asking for a favour.

Request structures: Negated ability questions in the conditional mood.

Grammar: Modal verb *mohty*/ ‘can, to be able to’ in the conditional mood.

<sup>48</sup> The content of the exercises in the treatment materials was in Ukrainian only. Here, the direct translation into English in the content of exercises is used for illustration purposes.

### Lesson 3.

Instructional focus: Modal verb *mohty*/ 'can, to be able to' to formulate negated ability questions in the conditional mood.

Table 2.5

#### Structure of Lesson 3

	Stage	Objectives	Procedures	Interactions
1.	Warm-up	- to introduce s-s into the topic	I-r asks s-s to describe a picture, in which one person asks another for a favour. By means of questions, I-r tries to connect the lesson topic with the life and language experience of s-s	I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> Look at the photo and discuss the questions below.</p> <p>Що роблять люди на фото? Як ви думаете, що вони говорять один одному? Як можна сформулювати прохання українською мовою? Як можна попросити про велику послугу? (What are the people in the photo doing? What do you think they are saying to each other? How can one formulate requests in Ukrainian? What do they say when they ask for big favours?)</p>				
2.	Pre-reading	- to help s-s anticipate the topic, vocabulary, and grammar of the dialogues	S-s read through the suggested conversations and find the answers to the questions	Individual work
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> Sashko and Olha are university students. a) Read through the following conversations and answer the question: «Куди їдуть Сашко та Ольга? (Where are Sashko and Olha going?).</p>				
3.	Comprehension check	- to check s-s' general and detailed understanding of the dialogues	S-s discuss answers to the general understanding questions in the pre-reading activity	Pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s read the dialogues again and discuss answers to the detailed understanding questions	Pair work, I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> b) Work in pairs. Read the conversations in a) again and answer the questions below.</p>				

4.	Introduction of new grammar	- to introduce modal verb <i>mohty</i> / 'can, to be able to' to formulate negated ability questions in the conditional mood	S-s supply the endings of the verb <i>mohty</i> in the suggested table, using the texts of the conversations in the reading activity	Pair work
			S-s discuss the endings of the verb <i>mohty</i>	Pair work, s-s – whole class

Example:

*Exercise.* a) Work in pairs. Read through the conversations from *Exercise X* and supply the missing endings of the verb *mohty* in the table below.

b) In pairs, discuss the endings of the verb *mohty* in the conditional mood, using the table above.

c) Share what you have learned with your class.

5.	Focus on new grammar	- to practice modal verb <i>mohty</i> / 'can, to be able to' to formulate negated ability questions in the conditional mood	S-s do a series of structural exercises	Individual and pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s do a series of productive exercises	Pair and group work

Example 1 (structural exercise):

*Exercise.* Make as many requests for favours as possible, using the table below.

Example 2 (productive exercise):

*Exercise.* You are in need of favours. In pairs, ask and respond to each other's requests for favours, using the suggested prompts.

6.	Home assignment	- to practice modal verb <i>mohty</i> / 'can, to be able to' to formulate negated ability questions in the conditional mood	S-s do a series of structural exercises	Individual work
			S-s do a series of productive exercises	Individual work

Example 1 (structural exercise):

*Exercise.* Change the following requests according to the patterns.

Pattern A: Оксано, ви не могли б закрити вікно? - Оксано, ти не могла б закрити вікно?/  
 'Oksana, could **PL NEG** you **PL** close the window? - Oksana, could **SG FEM NEG** you **SG** close the window?'

Pattern B: Петре, ви не могли б дати мені пораду? - Петре, ти не міг би дати мені пораду?/  
 'Petro, could **PL NEG** you **PL** give me advice? - Petro, could **SG FEM NEG** you **SG** give me advice?'

Example 2 (productive exercise):

*Exercise.* Help the people in the pictures below make requests for favours, using the suggested prompts.

#### Lesson 4.

Instructional foci: Negated ability questions in the conditional mood, social factors of distance, power, and imposition.

Table 2.6

#### Structure of Lesson 4

	Stage	Objectives	Procedures	Interactions
1.	Warm-up	- to activate s-s' knowledge about requests for favours, which s-s learned in the previous class	I-r initiates the discussion of pictures which describe situations of requests for favours	I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> a) Look at the photos and discuss the questions below.</p> <p>Що роблять люди на фото? Як ви думаєте, що вони просять/ хочуть попросити? Як можна сформулювати ці прохання українською мовою? (What are the people in the photos doing? What do you think they are asking/would like to ask about? How can one formulate these requests in Ukrainian?)</p>				
2.	Pre-reading	- to help s-s anticipate the topic, vocabulary, and grammar of the texts	S-s read through the suggested conversations and find the answers to the questions	Individual work
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> b) Work in pairs. Read through the following conversations again and match them with the photos in a).</p>				
3.	Comprehension check	- to check s-s' general and detailed understanding of the dialogues	S-s do the task in a), which objective is to check s-s' general understanding of the texts	Pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s read the dialogues again and discuss statements. The objective of the activity is to check s-s' detailed understanding of the dialogues	Pair work, I-r – s-s

<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> c) Work in pairs. Read the conversations again and discuss whether the following statements are true or false.</p>				
4.	Focus on sociopragmatic information	- to draw s-s' attention to social factors of power, distance, and imposition of the contexts where requests for big favours are used	Through the discussion of the conversations in the previous exercise, I-r channels s-s' attention to the social factors of power, distance, and imposition	Pair work, I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> a) Work in pairs. Read through the conversations in <i>Exercise ...</i> again and underline all request constructions.</p> <p>b) In pairs, discuss the following contextual factors of each conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- familiarity of interlocutors (How familiar are they: very familiar – total strangers?);</li> <li>- social status of interlocutors (Are they of equal or unequal social status?);</li> <li>- degree of imposition of the formulated request (Is it low or high?)</li> </ul> <p>c) Share your ideas with the class.</p>				
5.	Metapragmatic explanation	- to raise s-s' pragmatic awareness about language means of realisation of requests for favours in accordance with social factors of power, distance, and imposition	I-r summarizes the information about pragmatic features, indicated by s-s during the previous lesson stage. If necessary, I-r adds information about language means of realisation of requests for favours in accordance with social factors of power, distance, and imposition	I-r – s-s
6.	Focus on pragmatic features	- to practice new pragmatic features	S-s do a series of exercises, where they discuss the choice of linguistic means of realisation of requests for favours in accordance with the target social factors	Individual and pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s do a series of productive speaking exercises	Pair and group work
<p>Example 1 (metapragmatic discussion, productive speaking exercise):</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> a) Work in pairs. Indicate the differences in the social status of the interlocutors, their level of familiarity (or psychological distance between them), and level of the imposition of the</p>				

formulated requests.

Pattern: Оксано, ти не могла б закрити вікно?/ 'Oksana, could *SG FEM NEG* you *SG* close the window?'

Social status: Speaker (High  Low )

Hearer (High  Low )

Familiarity (High  Low )

Imposition (High  Low )

b) Work in pairs. Develop the requests in a) into conversations and prepare a role-play.

c) Present your role-plays to the class.

7.	Home assignment	- to practice new pragmatic features	S-s do a series of structural exercises	Individual work
			S-s do a series of productive exercises	Individual work

Example 1 (structural exercise):

*Exercise.* Read the following conversations and underline the most appropriate request structures.

Example 2 (productive exercise):

*Exercise.* How would you formulate your requests in the following situations?

### Treatment 3 (Lesson 5 and 6)

Instructional approach: Pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts.

Topic: Asking for services.

Request structures: Imperative and elliptical formulae.

Grammar: Verbs in the imperative mood.

#### Lesson 5.

Instructional focus: Verbs in the imperative mood to formulate imperative request formulae; elliptical formulae.

Table 2.7

*Structure of Lesson 5*

	Stage	Objectives	Procedures	Interactions
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1.	Warm-up	- to introduce s-s into the topic	I-r asks s-s to describe pictures, in which one person asks another for small favours/ services. By means of questions, I-r tries to connect the lesson topic with the life and language experience of s-s	I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> Look at the photos and discuss the questions below.</p> <p>Що роблять люди на фото? Як ви думаєте, що вони говорять один одному? Як можна сформулювати ці прохання українською мовою? Як можна попросити про невелику послугу/ послуги? (What are the people in the photos doing? What do you think they are saying to each other? How can one formulate these requests in Ukrainian? What do they say when they ask for small favours/services?)</p>				
2.	Introduction	- to activate the topical vocabulary that s-s might know	S-s discuss the objects in the pictures	Pair work, I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> a) What are the objects in the photos below? Match the photos on the left with the words on the right.</p>				
3.	Pre-listening	- to help s-s anticipate the topic, and vocabulary of the dialogues	S-s listen to the suggested dialogues and find out which objects in a) are requested for in each dialogue	Individual work
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> b) Listen to the conversations. What is the purpose of each conversation? What is requested in each conversation? Check the items in a) that are requested in each conversation.</p>				
4.	Comprehension check	- to check s-s' general and detailed understanding of the dialogues	S-s discuss answers to the general understanding questions in a)	Individual work, I-r – s-s
			S-s listen to the dialogues again and discuss statements. The objective of the activity is to check s-s' detailed understanding of the dialogues	Individual work, pair work, I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> c) Work in pairs. Listen to the conversations again and discuss whether the following statements are true or false.</p>				
5.	Introduction of	- to introduce new	S-s supply the endings of the	Pair work

	new grammar	grammar: Verbs in the imperative mood to convey imperative requests	verbs in the imperative mood in the suggested table, using the texts of the conversations in the listening activity	
			S-s discuss the endings of the verbs in the imperative mood	Pair work, I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> a) Work in pairs. Go to <i>Script ...</i> and read through the conversations from <i>Exercise ...</i>. Supply the missing endings of the verbs in the imperative mood in the table below.</p> <p>b) In pairs, discuss the endings of the verbs in the imperative mood, using the table above.</p> <p>c) Share what you have learned with your class.</p>				
6.	Focus on new grammar	- to practice verbs in the imperative mood to convey imperative requests through structural exercises	S-s do a series of structural exercises	Individual and pair work, I-r – s-s
<p>Example 1 (structural exercise with podcasts):</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> Follow the instructions in <i>Audio File ...</i>.<sup>49</sup> If necessary, go to <i>Script ...</i>.</p>				
7.	Introduction of new request formulae	- to introduce elliptical formulae	S-s listen to dialogues and indicate request constructions that they hear in the provided table	Individual work
			Through the discussion of the request constructions in the dialogues, I-r channels s-s' attention to the structure of imperative and elliptical request formulae	I-r – s-s
<p>Example:</p> <p><i>Exercise.</i> a) Listen to the conversations and indicate the request constructions you hear in the table below.</p> <p>b) What is the difference between the request constructions?</p>				
8.	Focus on new request formulae	- to practice imperative and elliptical request formulae	S-s do a series of structural exercises with podcasts	Individual work, I-r – s-s
			S-s do a series of productive speaking exercises	Pair and group work

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix C for the example of the audio scripts of a structural oral exercise with podcasts.



Example 1 (structural oral exercise with podcasts):

*Exercise.* Follow the instructions in *Audio File ...* . If necessary, go to *Script... .*

Example 2 (productive speaking exercise):

*Exercise.* a) Let's play a Recipe Game! Work in groups of 4-5. You receive a recipe for a dish and a set of cards with your dish "ingredients" on them. Match your dish recipe with the "ingredients" that you have. Trade the missing "ingredients" with other groups, following the pattern.

Pattern: - У вас є буряки?/ 'Do you have beet-roots?'

- Так, є./ 'Yes, we do.'

- Дайте один буряк, будь ласка./ 'Give one beet-root, please.'

Один буряк, будь ласка./ 'One beet-root, please.'

- Ось, будь ласка./ 'Here you are.'

- Дякую./ 'Thank you.'

b) When you have all the "ingredients", read the recipe of your dish to the class. Let your classmates guess the dish.

9.	Home assignment	- to practice imperative and elliptical request formulae	S-s do a series of structural exercises	Individual work
			S-s do a series of productive exercises	Individual work

Example 1 (structural oral exercise with podcasts):

*Exercise.* Follow the instructions in *Audio File ...* . If necessary, go to *Script ... .*

Example 2 (productive oral exercise with podcasts):

*Exercise.* Follow the instructions in *Audio File ...* .<sup>50</sup> If necessary, go to *Script ... .*

## Lesson 6.

Instructional foci: Imperative and elliptical formulae, social factors of power, distance, and imposition.

Table 2.8

### Structure of Lesson 6

	Stage	Objectives	Procedures	Interactions
1.	Warm-up	- to introduce s-s into the topic	By means of questions about grocery shopping, I-r tries to connect the lesson topic with the life and language experience of s-s	I-r – s-s

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix C for the example of the audio script of a productive oral exercise with podcasts.

Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> Where do you go shopping for food? What do you usually buy? Match the grocery items on the left and the places where you can buy them on the right.				
2.	Pre-listening	- to help s-s anticipate the topic, vocabulary, and grammar of the texts	S-s listen to the suggested conversations and find the answers to the questions	Individual work
Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> a) Bohdan and Oksana, two Ukrainian fellow-students, are shopping. Where is Bohdan shopping? And Oksana? Listen to the conversations and indicate the correct option.				
3.	Comprehension check	- to check s-s' general and detailed understanding of the dialogues	S-s do the task in a), which objective is to check s-s' general understanding of the dialogues	Pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s listen to the conversations again and do the task in b), which objective is to check s-s' detailed understanding of the texts	Pair work, I-r – s-s
Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> b) Listen to the conversations again and indicate which items from <i>Exercise ...</i> Bohdan and Oksana bought.				
4.	Focus on sociopragmatic information	- to draw s-s' attention to social factors of power, distance, and imposition of the contexts where requests for small favours and services are used	Through the discussion of conversations in the previous exercise, I-r channels s-s' attention to the social factors of power, distance, and imposition of the contexts where requests for small favours and services are used	Pair work, I-r – s-s
Example:				
<i>Exercise.</i> a) Work in pairs. Go to <i>Script ....</i> Listen and follow along with the conversations in <i>Exercise ...</i> again, underlining all request constructions.				
b) In pairs, discuss the following contextual factors of each conversation:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- familiarity of interlocutors (How familiar are they: very familiar – total strangers?);</li> <li>- social status of interlocutors (Are they of equal or unequal social status?);</li> <li>- degree of imposition of the formulated request (Is it low or high?)</li> </ul>				
c) Share your ideas with the class.				

5.	Metapragmatic explanation	- to raise s-s' pragmatic awareness about language means of realisation of requests for small favours and services in accordance with social factors of power, distance, and imposition	I-r summarizes the information about pragmatic features, indicated by s-s during the previous lesson stage. If necessary, I-r adds information about language means of realisation of requests for small favours and services in accordance with social factors of power, distance, and imposition	I-r – s-s
6.	Focus on pragmatic features	- to practice new pragmatic features	S-s do a series of exercises, where they discuss the choice of linguistic means of realisation of requests for small favours and services in accordance with the target social factors	Individual and pair work, I-r – s-s
			S-s do a series of productive oral exercises	Pair and group work

Example 1 (metapragmatic discussion, productive speaking exercise):

*Exercise.* a) In pairs, read through the conversations below. Are the suggested request structures appropriate for the given contexts? Why? Why not? If not, which structures would be appropriate? Why?

b) Listen and check.

c) In pairs, prepare the role-play of the situations.

d) Present your role-plays to the class.

Example 2 (productive oral exercise with podcasts):

*Exercise.* Follow the instructions in *Audio File*. If necessary, go to *Script X*.

7.	Home assignment	- to practice new pragmatic features	S-s do a series of structural oral exercises with podcasts	Individual work
			S-s do a series of productive oral exercises with podcasts	Individual work

Example 1 (structural oral exercise with podcasts):<sup>51</sup>

*Exercise.* Follow the instructions in *Audio File* .... If necessary, go to *Script* ... .

Example 2 (productive oral exercise with podcasts):

*Exercise.* Follow the instructions in *Audio File* ... If necessary, go to *Script* ... .

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix C for the example of the audio script of a structural oral exercise with podcasts.

## Appendix C: Sample audio scripts of exercises with podcasts

### Sample audio script of a structural oral exercise with podcasts

[voice 1]: Make the suggested formal requests informal. Then listen to the correct variant. Check and modify your answer if necessary. Pattern:

[voice 2]: Сідайте, будь ласка [beep].

[voice 3]: Сідай, будь ласка.

[voice 2]: Сідай, будь ласка [beep].

[voice 1]: Now you do the same.

1. [voice]: Сідайте, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Сідай, будь ласка [beep] – [pause].
2. [voice]: Принесіть журнал, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Принеси журнал, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].
3. [voice]: Дайте маркер, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Дай маркер, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].
4. [voice]: Ідіть до дошки, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Іди до дошки, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].
5. [voice]: Говоріть голосніше, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Говори голосніше, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].
6. [voice]: Принесіть зошит, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Принеси зошит, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].
7. [voice]: Повторіть, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Повтори, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].

8. [voice]: Відчиніть вікно, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Відчини вікно, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].
9. [voice]: Зачиніть двері, будь ласка - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Зачини двері, будь ласка - [beep] – [pause].

### **Sample audio script of a productive oral exercise with podcasts**

[voice 1]: Make direct requests according to the suggested scenarios. Then listen to the correct variant, check and modify your answer if necessary. Pattern: The instructor enters the classroom and asks the students to sit down. What would he say? [beep]

[voice 2]: Сідайте, будь ласка.

[voice 1]: Сідайте, будь ласка [beep]

[voice 2]: Сідайте, будь ласка.

[voice 1]: Now you do the same.

1. [voice]: The instructor enters the classroom and asks the students to sit down. What would he say? - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Сідайте, будь ласка – [beep] – [pause].
2. [voice]: It's getting cold in the room, ask your sister to close the window. What would you say? - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Зачини вікно, будь ласка – [beep] – [pause].
3. [voice]: You are in the waiting room. There are many people in it. It is stuffy. Ask the person sitting near the window to open it. What would you say? - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Відчиніть вікно, будь ласка – [beep] – [pause].
4. [voice]: You have dropped your phone on the floor. You cannot reach it. Ask your classmate to give it to you. What would you say? - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Подай телефон, будь ласка – [beep] – [pause].

5. [voice]: Your brother has just had his photo taken. You want to see it. Ask him to give the photo to you. What would you say? - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Покажи фото, будь ласка. Я хочу подивитися – [beep] – [pause].
6. [voice]: You are at a café. Order one coffee. - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Дайте одну каву, будь ласка./ Одну каву, будь ласка – [beep] – [pause].
7. [voice]: You are at the market. Ask for one kilogram of apples. - [beep] - [pause] - [voice]: Дайте один кілограм яблук, будь ласка./ Один кілограм яблук, будь ласка– [beep] – [pause].

## Appendix D: Test A (pre- and delayed post-tests)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 1.** Listen and follow along with the scenarios. What would you say in each of them?

Respond in Ukrainian orally. You will be given 30 seconds to make your request. Your answer will be audio recorded.

1. Ви у кафе. Попросіть офіціанта принести вам один сік (*You are in a café. Ask the server for a juice*).
2. Ви телефонуєте своїй колезі. До телефону підходить її чоловік. Попросіть його покликати до телефону вашу колегу (*You are calling your colleague. Her husband answers the phone. Ask him to call the colleague to the phone*).
3. У вас дуже важлива зустріч. Попросіть вашого викладача дозволити вам піти з заняття раніше (*You have a very important meeting. Ask your professor to let you leave class early*).

**Task 2.** Read the scenarios. What would you say in each of them? Respond in Ukrainian in writing. Also, in the provided space, explain in English your choice of the request structure.

1. Ви телефонуєте своєму другу. До телефону підходить його молодша сестра. Попросіть її покликати до телефону вашого друга (*You are calling your friend. His younger sister answers the phone. Ask her to call your friend to the phone*). \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Please explain why you requested in the way you did. What were the factors that influenced your response?* \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Ваша молодша сестра робить завдання з математики. У неї виникають проблеми. Вона просить допомогти їй з завданням. Ви зайняті. Що вона вам скаже? (*Your younger sister is doing her math assignment. She is having some problems with it. You are busy. What would she say to you?*) \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please explain why you requested in the way you did. What were the factors that influenced your response?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Ви купуєте олівець у відділі канцелярських товарів. Попросіть у продавця один олівець (*You are buying a pencil at the office supplies department. Ask the sales assistant for one pencil*). \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please explain why you requested in the way you did. What were the factors that influenced your response?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Task 3.** Work with your partner. You are given 3 minutes to prepare and then to role-play the suggested scenarios. Immediately after the role play, you will be asked a few questions about your choice of request structures. Your role-play and the interview will be video recorded.

### **Scenario 1**

**Student A**



Ви на ринку. Ви хочете купити один вид (ваш вибір) овочів і один вид фруктів. Попросіть продавця дати вам ці овочі і фрукти (*You are at a farmers' market. You want to buy one kind (your choice) of vegetable and one kind of fruit. Ask the salesperson to give you these fruits and vegetables*).

### **Student B**

Ви на ринку продаєте овочі і фрукти. Покупець хоче купити овочі і фрукти. Дайте покупцю ці овочі і фрукти (*You are selling fruit and vegetables at a farmers' market. A customer wants to buy some vegetables and fruit. Give the customer their groceries* ).

## **Scenario 2**

### **Student A**

Ви телефонуєте другу/ подрузі. До телефону підходить брат/сестра вашого друга/подруги. Ви просите покликати вашого друга/ подругу до телефону. Брат/ сестра кличе вашого друга/ подругу до телефону (*You are calling your friend. His/her brother/sister answers the phone. Ask him/her to call your friend to the phone. The brother/sister calls your friend to the phone*).

### **Student B**

Телефонує друг/ подруга вашого брата/сестри. Друг/ подруга просить вас покликати вашого брата/сестру до телефону. Ви кличете вашого брата/сестру до телефону (*Your brother's/sister's friend is calling. You answer the phone. The friend asks you to call your brother/sister to the phone. You call your brother/sister to the phone*).

## **Scenario 3**

**Student A**

Ви подаєтеся на стипендію. Попросіть вашого викладача дати вам рекомендаційного листа (*You are applying for a scholarship. Ask your professor for a recommendation letter*).

**Student B**

Ви викладач університету. Ваш студент подається на стипендію. Він/ вона просить дати йому/ їй рекомендаційного листа (*You are a university professor. Your student is applying for a scholarship. He/she is asking you for a recommendation letter*).

**Scenario 4****Student A**

До вас мають прийти гості. Зараз ви готуєте на кухні, але у вас дуже мало часу. Попросіть вашого сусіда/ сусідку по квартирі допомогти вам готувати (*You are having some guests over tonight. You are currently cooking but are very pressed for time. Ask your roommate to help you with the cooking*).

**Student B**

До вашого сусіда/ сусідки по квартирі мають прийти гості. Зараз він/ вона готує на кухні, але у нього/ неї дуже мало часу. Він/ вона просить вас допомогти готувати (*Your roommate is having some guests over tonight. He/she is currently cooking but is very pressed for time. He/she asks you to help him/ her with the cooking*).

## Appendix E: Test B (post-test)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 1.** Listen and follow along with the scenarios. What would you say in each of them?

Respond in Ukrainian orally. You will be given 30 seconds to make your request. Your answer will be audio recorded.

1. Ви у кафе. Попросіть офіціанта принести вам каву (*You are in a café. Ask the waiter for a coffee*).

2. Ви телефонуєте своєму одногрупнику. До телефону підходить його мама. Попросіть її покликати до телефону вашого одногрупника (*You are calling your classmate. His mother answers the phone. Ask her to call your classmate to the phone*).

3. Ви у класі. Ви не зрозуміли новий матеріал. Після заняття попросіть вашого викладача пояснити матеріал ще раз (*You are in class. You did not understand the new material. After class, ask your instructor to explain it once again*).

**Task 2.** Read the scenarios. What would you say in each of them? Respond in Ukrainian in writing. Also, in the provided space, explain in English your choice of the request structure.

1. Ви купуєте ручку у відділі канцелярських товарів. Попросіть у продавця одну ручку (*You are buying a pen at the office supplies department. Ask the sales assistant for one pen*).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Please explain why you requested in the way you did. What were the factors that influenced your response?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Ви дуже хворі. Попросіть вашу сусідку/ сусіда по кімнаті піти у магазин і купити для вас продукти (*You are very ill. Ask your roommate to do some grocery shopping for you*).

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*Please explain why you requested in the way you did. What were the factors that influenced your response?* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Ви телефонуйте своєму другу. До телефону підходить його молодший брат. Попросіть його покликати до телефону вашого друга. (*You are calling your friend. His younger brother answers the phone. Ask the brother to call your friend to the phone*).

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*Please explain why you requested in the way you did. What were the factors that influenced your response?* \_\_\_\_\_

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**Task 3.** Work with your partner. You are given 3 minutes to prepare and then to role-play the suggested scenarios. Immediately after the role play, you will be asked a few questions about your choice of request structures. Your role-play and the interview will be video recorded.

### Scenario 1

#### **Student A**

Ви у кав'ярні. Заовте одну каву і тістечко (*You are in a café. Order a coffee and a pastry*).

**Student B**

Ви працюєте у кав'ярні. Відвідувач замовляє одну каву і тістечко. Дайте відвідувачу те, що він/вона замовила (*You work in a café. A customer is ordering a coffee and a pastry. Give the customer what he/she requests*).

**Scenario 2****Student A**

Ви їдете на конференцію у Львів. Попросіть вашого друга/ подругу відвезти вас в аеропорт (*You are going to Lviv for a conference. Ask your friend to take you to the airport*).

**Student B**

Ваш друг їде на конференцію у Львів. Він просить відвезти його в аеропорт. Ви погоджуєтесь і обговорюєте деталі (*Your friend is going to Lviv for a conference. He/she is asking you to take him/her to the airport. You agree to give him/her a ride and discuss details*).

**Scenario 3****Student A**

Ви телефонуєте одногрупнику/одногогрупниці. До телефону підходить його/ її мати/ батько. Ви просите покликати вашого одногрупника/ вашу одногрупницю до телефону. Мати/ батько каже, що його/ її немає вдома (*You are calling your classmate. His/her mother/father answers the phone. Ask her/him to call their son/daughter to the phone. Their mother/father responds that he/she is not at home*).

**Student B**

Телефонує одногрупник/одногрупниця вашого сина/ вашої доньки. Він/ вона просить вас покликати сина/ доньку до телефону. Ви відповідаєте, що його/ її немає вдома (*Your son's/ daughter's classmate is calling. You answer the phone. The friend asks you to call your son/ daughter to the phone. You respond that your son is not at home*).

**Scenario 4****Student A**

Ви викладач університету. Ваш студент(ка) хоче вступати до магістратури. Він/ вона просить дати йому/ їй рекомендаційного листа (*You are a university professor. Your student is applying to grad school. He/she is asking you for a recommendation letter*).

**Student B**

Ви хочете вступати до магістратури. Попросіть вашого викладача дати вам рекомендаційного листа (*You want to apply to grad school. Ask your professor for a recommendation letter*).

## Appendix F: Assessment rubrics

### Test A (pre-test, delayed post-test)

Student # \_\_\_\_\_

Rater's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this assessment sheet to evaluate degrees of contextual/situational appropriateness of requests in Ukrainian. Please use your intuition and evaluate each provided utterance for all ten situations on a four-point scale from 0 to 3, using the three questions.

<b>Oral Answers</b>																		
1. Read the situation below. 2. Listen to respondent's answer. 3. Evaluate respondent's answer, using the given questions.																		
<b>1.</b>	Ви у кафе. Попросіть офіціанта принести вам один сік ( <i>You are in a café. Ask the server for a juice</i> ).	<b>1. How comprehensible is the answer?</b> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>completely incomprehensible</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>completely comprehensible</td> </tr> </table> <b>2. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>completely inappropriate</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>completely appropriate</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely inappropriate			completely appropriate
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>															
completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible															
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>															
completely inappropriate			completely appropriate															
<b>2.</b>	Ви телефонуєте своїй колезі. До телефону підходить її чоловік. Попросіть його покликати до телефону вашу колегу ( <i>You are calling your colleague. Her husband answers the phone. Ask him to call the colleague to the phone</i> ).	<b>1. How comprehensible is the answer?</b> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>completely incomprehensible</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>completely comprehensible</td> </tr> </table> <b>2. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>completely inappropriate</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>completely appropriate</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely inappropriate			completely appropriate
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>															
completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible															
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>															
completely inappropriate			completely appropriate															
<b>3.</b>	У вас дуже важлива зустріч. Попросіть вашого викладача дозволити вам піти з	<b>1. How comprehensible is the answer?</b> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>												
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>															

	заняття раніше ( <i>You have a very important meeting. Ask your professor to let you leave class early.</i> )	completely incomprehensible	completely comprehensible
<b>2. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>			
0                      1                      2                      3			
		completely inappropriate	completely appropriate
<b>Written Answers</b>			
1. Read the situation below.			
2. Read respondent's answer (on separate sheets of paper).			
3. Evaluate respondent's answer using the given questions.			
1.	Ви телефонуйте своєму другу. До телефону підходить його молодша сестра. Попросіть її покликати до телефону вашого друга ( <i>You are calling your friend. His younger sister answers the phone. Ask her to call your friend to the phone.</i> )	<b>1. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>	
		0                      1                      2                      3	
		completely incomprehensible	completely comprehensible
<b>2. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>			
0                      1                      2                      3			
		completely inappropriate	completely appropriate
2.	Ваша молодша сестра робить завдання з математики. У неї виникають проблеми. Вона просить допомогти їй із завданням. Ви зайняті. Що вона вам скаже? ( <i>Your younger sister is doing her math assignment. She is having some problems with it. You are busy. What would she say to you?</i> )	<b>1. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>	
		0                      1                      2                      3	
		completely incomprehensible	completely comprehensible
<b>2. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>			
0                      1                      2                      3			
		completely inappropriate	completely appropriate
3.	Ви купуєте олівець у відділі канцелярських товарів. Попросіть у продавця один олівець ( <i>You are buying a pencil at the office supplies department. Ask the sales</i>	<b>1. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>	
		0                      1                      2                      3	
		completely incomprehensible	completely comprehensible



	<i>assistant for one pencil).</i>	<b>2. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>
		<b>0</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> completely                      completely inappropriate                      appropriate

**Test B (post-test)**

Student # \_\_\_\_\_

Rater's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this assessment sheet to evaluate degrees of contextual/situational appropriateness of requests in Ukrainian. Please use your intuition and evaluate each provided utterance for all ten situations on a four-point scale from 0 to 3, using the three questions.

<b>Oral Answers</b>		
1. Read the situation below. 2. Listen to respondent's answer. 3. Evaluate respondent's answer, using the given questions.		
<b>1.</b>	Ви у кафе. Попросіть офіціанта принести вам каву ( <i>You are in a café. Ask the waiter for a coffee</i> ).	<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>0</b>                      <b>1</b>                      <b>2</b>                      <b>3</b>  completely                      completely  incomprehensible                      comprehensible </div> <b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>0</b>                      <b>1</b>                      <b>2</b>                      <b>3</b>  completely                      completely  inappropriate                      appropriate </div>
<b>2.</b>	Ви телефонуєте своєму одногрупнику. До телефону підходить його мама. Попросіть її покликати до телефону вашого одногрупника ( <i>You are calling your classmate. His mother answers the phone. Ask her to call your classmate to the phone</i> ).	<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>0</b>                      <b>1</b>                      <b>2</b>                      <b>3</b>  completely                      completely  incomprehensible                      comprehensible </div> <b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b> <div style="text-align: center;"> <b>0</b>                      <b>1</b>                      <b>2</b>                      <b>3</b>  completely                      completely  inappropriate                      appropriate </div>
<b>3.</b>	Ви у класі. Ви не зрозуміли новий	<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>

	<p>матеріал. Після заняття попросіть вашого викладача пояснити матеріал ще раз (<i>You are in class. You did not understand the new material. After class, ask your instructor to explain it once again</i>).</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely incomprehensible</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely comprehensible</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely inappropriate</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely appropriate</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible	<b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely inappropriate			completely appropriate				
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>																							
completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible																							
<b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>																										
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>																							
completely inappropriate			completely appropriate																							
<p><b>Written Answers</b></p> <p>1. Read the situation below. 2. Read respondent's answer (on separate sheets of paper). 3. Evaluate respondent's answer using the given questions.</p>																										
<p><b>1.</b></p>	<p>Ви купуєте ручку у відділі канцелярських товарів. Попросіть у продавця одну ручку (<i>You are buying a pen at the office supplies department. Ask the sales assistant for one pen</i>).</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely incomprehensible</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely comprehensible</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely inappropriate</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely appropriate</td> </tr> </table>	<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible	<b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely inappropriate			completely appropriate
<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>																										
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<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>																							
completely inappropriate			completely appropriate																							
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p>Ви дуже хворі. Попросіть вашу сусідку/сусіда по кімнаті піти у магазин і купити для вас продукти (<i>You are very ill. Ask your roommate to do some grocery shopping for you</i>).</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely incomprehensible</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely comprehensible</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely inappropriate</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely appropriate</td> </tr> </table>	<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible	<b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely inappropriate			completely appropriate
<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>																										
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>																							
completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible																							
<b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>																										
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>																							
completely inappropriate			completely appropriate																							
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p>Ви телефонуєте своєму другу. До телефону підходить його молодший брат. Попросіть його покликати до телефону вашого друга. (<i>You are calling your friend. His/</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td colspan="4"><b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">completely incomprehensible</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">completely comprehensible</td> </tr> </table>	<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible												
<b>3. How comprehensible is the answer?</b>																										
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>																							
completely incomprehensible			completely comprehensible																							

	<i>her younger brother answers the phone Ask the brother to call your friend to the phone).</i>	<b>4. How contextually/situationally appropriate is the answer?</b>			
		<b>0</b> completely inappropriate	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> completely appropriate

## Appendix G: Interrater reliability estimates

Table 2.9

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Estimates for Each Test Task*

Test	Pragmatic ability measures	Tasks on pre-test			Tasks on post-test			Tasks on delayed post-test		
		#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3
WDCT	Comprehensibility	.989	.983	.991	1.000	.853	.813	.990	.987	1.000
	Appropriateness	.938	.978	.971	1.000	.995	1.000	.949	.986	1.000
ODCT	Comprehensibility	.989	.983	.991	1.000	.853	.813	.990	.987	1.000
	Appropriateness	.937	.978	.971	1.000	.995	1.000	.949	.986	1.000

## Appendix H: Descriptive statistics

Table 2.10

*Descriptive Statistics for Comprehensibility and Appropriateness Scores*

Instructional approaches	Tasks	Pragmatic ability measures	Pre-test		Post-test		Delayed post-test	
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Zero pragmatics-focused instruction	WDCTs	Comprehensibility	9.500	1.714	15.000	.000	13.500	1.392
		Appropriateness	10.400	1.222	14.600	.400	13.100	.948
Pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts	ODCTs	Comprehensibility	6.200	1.245	12.300	1.367	9.300	1.758
		Appropriateness	8.500	1.579	14.800	.200	12.800	1.583
Pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts	WDCTs	Comprehensibility	9.400	1.284	13.300	.746	11.400	1.558
		Appropriateness	7.800	1.153	11.800	1.737	10.600	1.470
Pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts	ODCTs	Comprehensibility	8.800	1.781	13.000	1.483	10.200	1.890
		Appropriateness	6.200	1.245	12.300	1.367	9.300	1.758
Pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts	WDCTs	Comprehensibility	10.000	2.196	14.600	.163	14.300	.517
		Appropriateness	6.400	1.335	13.500	1.500	11.500	1.675
Pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts	ODCTs	Comprehensibility	14.300	.335	15.000	.000	14.700	.300
		Appropriateness	7.500	1.839	14.500	.500	12.000	2.000

## Appendix I: Correlation coefficients between comprehensibility and appropriateness measures

Table 2.11

*Correlation Coefficients Between Comprehensibility and Appropriateness Measures on WDCTs*

			Appropriateness					
			Pre-test			Post-test		
			#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3
Compre hensibil ity	Pre-test	#1	.833*					
		#2	.787*					
		#3	-.129					
	Post- test	#1	.000					
		#2	.605					
		#3	-.272					

Table 2.11

*Continued*

			Appropriateness		
			Delayed post-test		
			#1	#2	#3
Comprehen sibility	Delayed post-test	#1	.459*		
		#2	.245*		
		#3	.006		

\*. Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2.12

*Correlation Coefficients Between Comprehensibility and Appropriateness Measures on ODCTs*

			Appropriateness					
			Pre-test			Post-test		
			#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3
Compre hensibil ity	Pre-test	#1	.833*					
		#2	.787*					
		#3	-.129					
	Post- test	#1				.000		
		#2			.605			
		#3			-.255			

Table 2.12

*Continued*

			Appropriateness		
			Delayed post-test		
			#1	#2	#3
Comprehen sibility	Delayed post-test	#1	.114		
		#2	.430		
		#3	.006		

\*. Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix J: Trend analysis

Table 2.13

### *Trend Analysis*

Tasks	Pragmatic ability measures	Trend	$F(df)$	Sig.
WDCTs	Comprehensibility	Linear	$F(1, 9) = 12.085$	.007
		Quadratic	$F(1, 9) = 39.932$	.000
	Appropriateness	Linear	$F(1, 9) = 13.845$	.005
		Quadratic	$F(1, 9) = 29.268$	.000
ODCTs	Comprehensibility	Linear	$F(1, 9) = 5.449$	.044
		Quadratic	$F(1, 9) = 9.098$	.015
	Appropriateness	Linear	$F(1, 9) = 10.205$	.011
		Quadratic	$F(1, 9) = 16.392$	.003

## Appendix K: Pairwise comparisons

Table 2.14

### *Pairwise Comparisons*

Instructional approaches	Tasks	Pragmatic ability measures	Pre-test vs post-test	Post-test vs delayed post-test
Zero pragmatics-focused instruction	WDCTs	Comprehensibility	$p = .011$	$p = .309$
		Appropriateness	$p = .014$	$p = .048$
	ODCTs	Comprehensibility	$p = .107$	$p = 1.000$
		Appropriateness	$p = .040$	$p = .250$
Pragmatics-focused instruction	WDCTs	Comprehensibility	$p = .008$	$p = .158$
		Appropriateness	$p = .106$	$p = .168$
	ODCTs	Comprehensibility	$p = .056$	$p = .123$

without podcasts		Appropriateness	$p = .015^*$	$p = .071$
Pragmatics- focused instruction with podcasts	WDCTs	Comprehensibility	$p = .068$	$p = .560$
		Appropriateness	$p = .002^*$	$p = .104$
	ODCTs	Comprehensibility	$p = .066$	$p = .343$
		Appropriateness	$p = .009^*$	$p = .273$



## **Study 3**

# **The acquisition of pragmatic competence in Ukrainian: Learners' perceptions<sup>52</sup>**

### **1 Introduction**

SL/FL learners usually have preconceptions about language learning, which undoubtedly influence how they approach the material (Horwitz, 1987a, 1987b). By investigating these preconceptions, scholars can develop strategies and approaches to best meet the expectations and needs of SL/FL learners.

Scholars have spent considerable effort across multiple languages investigating learners' perceptions of SL/FL language learning. A number of valuable studies examine perceptions of learners of English (Cotterall, 1995; Horwitz, 1987 a, 1987 b; Sakui & Gaies, 1999; Sauvignon & Wang, 2003; Tumposky, 1991; Wen & Johnson, 1997), Spanish (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Ewald, 2004; Lord, 2008), German (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009), and Japanese (White, 1999). However, little is known about learners' perceptions of learning Slavic languages, particularly Ukrainian. Therefore, this study adds to the field by investigating learners' perceptions of acquiring pragmatic competence. Specifically, the study concentrates on learners' perceptions of i) the importance of acquiring pragmatics, ii) their own pragmatic competence, and iii) the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices, including those that incorporate podcasts.

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<sup>52</sup> In this study, the effectiveness of the interventional pedagogical practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, the measurement results of which were reported in Study 2 of the current dissertation, is discussed from the learners' perspective.

In order to explore these topics, this study builds on previous research on learners' perceptions of pragmatics-focused instructional practices and instructional practices that use podcasts as a language learning tool.

## **2 Learners' perceptions of pragmatics-focused instructional practices**

Learners' perceptions of learning pragmatics have been explored in several language settings, mainly regarding instructional practices. Olshtein and Cohen (1990) surveyed participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of explicit instruction on the acquisition of English apologies by native speakers of Hebrew. The results of the survey indicated that participants placed the highest value on metapragmatic practices, which include instructor's commentaries, information sheets, and classroom discussions. The researchers cautioned that their results may not be generalizable; though this group of learners preferred the explicit presentation of materials, perceptions of instructional practices may be different with different participants. Nonetheless, participants recognized the instructional value of role-play activities and audio recordings. In addition to the written survey, participants also provided oral feedback. The results demonstrated a significant shift in the participants' pragmatic awareness, especially as before the experiment participants had only a vague knowledge of speech acts in general and apologies in particular. According to Olshtein and Cohen (1990), the increase of pragmatic awareness resulted in the participants' improved apologetic behaviour.

Similar to Olshtein and Cohen (1990), Lyster (1993) focused on participants' evaluations of instructional practices, identified as functional-analytic teaching, on the pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence of French immersion school students. Participants were asked to rate instructional practices and assess their progress in the acquisition of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns at different formality levels. Overall, the data analysis revealed that participants did not find the

materials difficult. Also, the majority of learners ranked role-plays as both the most effective and most interesting activities; structural exercises and discussions were rated the lowest. Learners found discussions to be the least applicable and least beneficial activity, though structural exercises were seen as the most effective for language acquisition. Overall, participants noted that the suggested pedagogical practices contributed to the acquisition of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns at different formality levels, which helped them to use French more confidently overall.

Tateyama's (2001) study compared the effects of explicit and implicit instructions on the acquisition of attention getters, expressions of gratitude, and apologies by beginning learners of Japanese. Participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of these two approaches were collected through self-reports and structured interviews. Generally, the data showed that students enjoyed learning speech acts. They provided positive comments about both explicit and implicit instructions. However, only a small number of those in the implicit group were satisfied with their instruction; most preferred the explicit way of learning. In the explicit group, a sizeable majority indicated that the instructor's explicit explanations about the target speech acts were crucial for their acquisition. Also, participants emphasized the instructional value of video clips that provided the context of how target forms function in Japanese.

The above noted studies were only partially focused on students' perceptions of particular instructional practices. Pearson's (2006) research, however, solely investigated students' perceptions of pragmatics-focused instruction, including apologies, directives, and suggestions among others, for Spanish-language students. The survey questionnaires asked students about the levels of difficulty and their interest in certain instructional practices, and the ways in which those practices facilitated the acquisition of communicative competence. The surveys revealed that instructional practices, overall, were perceived positively. Specifically, students assessed

them as suitable for their language proficiency level. However, some participants had difficulties comprehending videos. Interestingly though, students reported that the proposed practices were only mildly interesting while simultaneously reporting that they contributed both to the acquisition of the target speech acts and the Spanish language overall.

In summary, the above reviewed studies demonstrated that participants perceived pragmatics-focused instructional practices positively. Although these practices varied across the studies, certain patterns can be observed. First, learners showed a clear preference for explicit instructional practices (Olshtein & Cohen, 1990; Lyster, 1993; Tateyama, 2001). Second, exposure to target speech act structures in context through written texts and videos was particularly useful for the acquisition of pragmatics (Lyster, 1993; Tateyama, 2001). Finally, participants placed a high value on structural exercises (Olshtein & Cohen, 1990) and role-play activities (Olshtein & Cohen, 1990; Lyster, 1993) for learning pragmatics.

### **3 Learners' perceptions of podcasting as a language learning tool**

Over the past two decades, computer-assisted language learning has increasingly been integrated into the SL/FL classroom. One of these technologies, podcasting,<sup>53</sup> has been attracting the attention of educators and language pedagogy researchers. In the present study, podcasting is viewed as a technological tool, referring to “any software and hardware combination that permits automatic downloading of audio files to an MP3 player for listening at the user’s convenience” (Ashraf, 2009: 348). The attention of educators to this technology was largely prompted by the increased popularity of podcasts among students, widely reported in literature:

Walk across any university campus today and you will find students using iPods to listen to their favourite songs on their way to class. What if, instead of listening to music, they

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<sup>53</sup> See Study 2 of the current dissertation for more on podcasting as a learning tool.

could listen to Italian music, French vocabulary, or Spanish grammar? (Facer, Abdous, Camarena, 2009:340).

The popularity of podcasts among students has motivated educators and researchers to study the educational potential of this technology. Not only can students listen to audio files, podcasting offers students the added benefits of flexibility and portability. Flexibility allows students to engage with podcasts at their own pace and time, while portability allows students to download podcast files on a mobile device and listen to them while “completing day-to-day non-academic activities” (Bolliger, Supanakorn, & Boggs, 2010:721). The ideas on how to use these and other podcast features in language teaching and learning were the objective of several research works, particularly earlier studies. Specifically, Godwin-Jones (2005), Thorne and Payne (2005), and Stanley (2006) suggested that podcasts could serve as a source of speech samples and offered a number of ways to use them as supplementary listening materials to language textbooks. Additionally, Meng (2005) and Stanley (2006) emphasized the possibly beneficial role of student-produced podcasts for the development of both aural and oral skills.

In later studies, the degree to which podcasting could be integrated into language learning was very much governed by students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the technology. The results of such studies generally confirmed that some of the claimed benefits were true. Specifically, the benefits of podcasting were reported in Lord’s (2008), and Ducate and Lomicka’s (2009) studies, in which participants used the technology to produce and upload recordings for assessment. Along with the experimental examination of the role of podcasts for the development of pronunciation skills, both studies also looked at the effectiveness of the technology from the students’ perspective. Specifically, they examined how learners’ perceptions of target language pronunciation changed and how learners viewed podcasting as a means of honing their pronunciation skills. In both studies, Elliott’s (1995) Pronunciation Attitude

Inventory was administered before and after the treatments to assess the participants' perceptions of pronunciation. Additionally, after the treatments, participants were asked to answer a series of closed- and open-ended questions, aimed at eliciting their perceptions of the podcasting projects. According to the results of the quantitative analysis in the study by Lord (2008), participants developed a positive perception of the importance of correct pronunciation, while in the study by Ducate and Lomicka (2009) no statistically significant difference was observed. Nevertheless, an analysis of the open-ended questions in Ducate and Lomicka's (2009) study revealed that participants had positive perceptions of the importance of pronunciation and felt that their pronunciation improved as a result of podcast use. Additionally, participants in Lord's (2008) study indicated that their participation in the podcasting project improved both their pronunciation and their overall communication skills in Spanish. Participants in both studies reported that they enjoyed participating in the podcasting projects.

Regarding the development of listening skills, Chan (2014), Facer, et al. (2009), Li (2010), McCarty (2005), O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007), Al Qasim and Al Fadda (2013), and Rosell-Aguilar (2007, 2013) all reported the benefits of using podcasts. Specifically, the results of the attitude surveys in these studies demonstrated that enabling learners to listen to the recorded input at their convenience contributed to the development of their listening skills, allowed them to be in control of learning, and promoted their interest and engagement with the courses. In addition, participants indicated that the use of podcasts helped them to acquire vocabulary (Facer, et al., 2009; Chan, Chen, & Döpel, 2011) and grammar (Chan, et al., 2011), and to develop speaking skills (Chan, et al., 2011; Li, 2010).

Overall, the overview of research on learners' perceptions of podcasting as a tool for language learning indicates that this technology could be beneficial for the development of

pronunciation, speaking, and listening skills, and for the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. This present study seeks to advance the existing line of research by investigating learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of podcasts for the acquisition of pragmatic competence.

## **4 Research Questions**

The research questions that guide the present study are:

1. What are learners' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatics? How do these perceptions change as learners gain experience in request strategies?
2. How do learners' perceptions of their level of acquisition of pragmatic competence change during the pedagogical intervention?
3. What are learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence in general and of practices supplemented with podcasts in particular?

## **5 Methodology**

### **5.1 Participants and study design**

The participants<sup>54</sup> were ten undergraduate students (five male and five female) enrolled in a second-year Ukrainian language course, second semester. Eight of the ten participants used Ukrainian to communicate at home to varying degrees. One participant was born in Ukraine and came to Canada at the age of six, while another indicated that they were speakers of another Slavic language.

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<sup>54</sup> The same subjects participated in the experimental study investigating the effectiveness of pragmatics-focused instruction supplemented with podcasts for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, the results of which are discussed in Study 2 of the current dissertation.

The study incorporated a pre-test-post-test repeated-measures design, in which the same participants of an existing academic group of students received three consecutive instructional treatments (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2000), conducted by the researcher. The treatments<sup>55</sup> were organised around three topics: i) *Talking on the phone*, ii) *Asking for a favour* and iii) *Services*. Each topic was used as a context to teach one of three request structures, specifically, permission questions, ability questions, and imperative formulae. Each structure within each topic was taught by means of one of three instructional approaches: zero pragmatics-focused instruction, pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts, and pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts.<sup>56</sup> During the first instructional treatment, pragmatic targets were presented implicitly, while the instructional focus was on grammar. During the second and third treatments, requests were taught explicitly with metapragmatic explanations and discussions. Importantly, the third instructional treatment involved podcasts. The podcasts were of two types: i) audio recorded conversations that illustrated the functioning of pragmatic targets, and ii) audio recorded structural exercises. The structure of such exercises involved the following components: a task (a description of a communicative context and instructions on what to do), an example (how to do the task), and content, in which each item was supplemented with two pauses and an audio recorded key. During the first pause, learners produced the required output then compared their answer with the key.<sup>57</sup> During the second pause, they modified their output.

The ultimate goal of all three instructional treatments was for students to acquire pragmatic competence, i.e., the ability to match language forms (in this case request structures)

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<sup>55</sup> More information about the organisation of the pedagogical intervention, instructional approaches incorporated into the treatments, and instructional targets are in Study 2 of the current dissertation.

<sup>56</sup> In addition to the current study objectives stipulated in the previous sections, one of the objectives of this dissertation is the experimental examination of the effectiveness of pragmatics-focused instruction supplemented with podcasts for the acquisition of pragmatic competence in Ukrainian, which is discussed in Study 2 of the current dissertation.

<sup>57</sup> In certain structural exercises, participants' task was to formulate requests according to suggested scenarios. In instances where several instructional targets were appropriate, the keys provided all output options.



with the social and cultural norms of the target-language society (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Bachman, 1990). In the current study, pragmatic competence is conceptualized in two cognitive frameworks: the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 1998, 2005).<sup>58</sup> According to these frameworks, the acquisition of pragmatic competence occurs through the development of pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability. Following Schmidt (1993), pragmatic awareness is linked to the registering and understanding of the general principles, rules, or patterns of certain language forms in certain contexts. These are defined by the social variables of power, distance, and imposition.<sup>59</sup> Pragmatic ability is thus seen as the ability to produce target forms in a contextually appropriate manner (Swain, 1998, 2005).

## **5.2. Data collection instruments and procedures**

In order to investigate the learners' perceptions of the importance of learning pragmatics, their level of pragmatic competence, and the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices, all participants were administered two survey questionnaires: pre-survey and post-survey (see Appendices B and C). The questionnaires, adopted from Lyster (1993) and Pearson (2006), were administered before (pre-survey) and immediately after the intervention (post-survey). On average, participants spent 5-7 minutes completing the pre-survey and 10-12 minutes on the post-survey questionnaire, as the latter consisted of more questions than the former. Also, the post-survey contained more open-ended questions, which normally require more time to answer.

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<sup>58</sup> For more information, please see Study 2 of the current dissertation.

<sup>59</sup> For more information on social variables, please see Study 1 of the current dissertation.

The pre-survey contained eight closed-ended and two open-ended questions. The questions were designed to survey the participants' perceptions in three areas: i) learners' perceptions of the importance of Ukrainian pragmatics (questions 1-3), ii) learners' perceptions of their pragmatic ability (question 4), and iii) learners' perceptions of podcasting technology (questions 5-10). Specifically, with respect to the third area, participants were asked if they owned a device to play podcasts, how knowledgeable they were with the technology, their prior experience with the technology in other courses, and their perceptions about using the technology to learn Ukrainian. The post-survey had three closed-ended and eleven open-ended questions organized around three areas: i) learners' perceptions of the importance of Ukrainian pragmatics (1, 2, and 14), ii) learners' perception of their pragmatic awareness (3 and 4) and ability (10), and iii) learners' perceptions of the interventional instructional practices (5-9 and 11-13).

### **5.3. Data analysis procedures**

The survey questionnaires elicited quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected through closed-ended questions that consisted of positively worded statements to which participants responded using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (not at all true/ important/ knowledgeable) to 3 (very true/ important/ knowledgeable). The collected quantitative data were used to conduct statistical analyses by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v.23. The statistical analyses included a series of nonparametric one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank tests and nonparametric two-related-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. The alpha level was set at .05.

Before the statistical analyses were carried out, a perception score for each answer to a closed-ended question was identified by assigning 0 to "not at all true/ important/

knowledgeable” responses, 1 to “somewhat true/ important/ knowledgeable,” 2 to “true/ important/ knowledgeable,” and 3 to “very true/ important/ knowledgeable” responses, respectively. In order to perform one-sample tests, a hypothesized minimum perception criterion (1.5) was defined as Median to represent the middle of the ordinal scale, which served as a boundary between participants’ positive and negative perception of certain aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics and instructional practices. Specifically, in order to demonstrate positive perception of the suggested statements, participants were expected to reach at least 1.5 minimum perception criterion overall on closed-ended questions.

The qualitative data were elicited by open-ended questions. This analysis began by examining the collected data and identifying emerging themes, which were used as categories for organizing the data sets. Following Huberman and Miles (1994), the next stage of the analysis was to construct matrices to reduce the number of categories and to display the data in a more organized manner. Importantly, responses that contained several themes were recorded in several categories.

## **6 Results**

### **6.1 Research question 1: What are learners’ perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatics? How do these perceptions change as learners gain experience in request strategies?**

Learners’ perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence are explored by investigating: i) their desire to acquire pragmatic competence in Ukrainian, ii) their perceptions of the importance of pragmatic competence in general, and iii) their perceptions of

the importance of pragmatic knowledge for successful target language communication, compared to the importance of acquiring vocabulary and grammar.

These perception components are assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data elicited by questions 1-3 on the pre-survey (see Appendix B) and by questions 1-2 on the post-survey (see Appendix C) are analyzed through a series of one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. The results are in the table below.

Table 3.1

*Summary Statistics of Learners' Perceptions of the Importance of Acquiring Pragmatic Competence*

Questions	Median		Standard Deviation		Significance Level	
	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Pre-survey	Post-survey
1. The acquisition of pragmatic competence <sup>60</sup> (ability to apologize, refuse, request, etc., in accordance with a certain communicative situation) in Ukrainian is important to me	3.00	3.00	.52	.42	.004*	.003 *
2. The acquisition of pragmatic competence in Ukrainian is as important to me as learning vocabulary and grammar	2.00	3.00	.57	.52	.052	.004 *
3. I want to learn how to request, etc., in Ukrainian the way native speakers do	3.00	-	2.5	-	.009 *	-

<sup>60</sup> Before administering the pre-survey, pragmatic competence was explained to participants as an ability to use language, e.g., to apologize, refuse, request, etc., appropriately in accordance with a certain communicative context.

\* Perception is statistically significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 3.1, participants on both pre- and post-surveys show a statistically significant positive perception of the importance of learning pragmatics (question 1).

Specifically, the medians for perception scores are high on both surveys, and these results are statistically significant, with  $p < .05$  in both cases.

The follow-up nonparametric two-related-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test reveals no statistically significant changes when comparing this perception before and after the pedagogical intervention:  $z = -.816, p = .414$ . A possible reason for the absence of changes is attributed to the participants' high perception scores of the importance of learning pragmatics on the pre-survey. Interestingly, these results somewhat differ from the findings of Olshtein and Cohen (1990) who observed that before the treatment, participants did not perceive the role of speech acts as important for successful communication. Table 3.2 presents current participants' individual scores, shedding light on the results of the statistical analysis presented above.

Table 3.2

*Individual Scores on Questions 1, 2, and 3 of Pre- and Post-surveys*

Participants	Individual scores (question 1)		Individual scores (question 2)		Individual scores (question 3) <sup>61</sup>
	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Pre-survey
	1.	3*	3	2	3
2.	2	3	2	2	2
3.	2	3	2	3	1
4.	3	3	2	3	3
5.	3	3	1	3	3

<sup>61</sup> The assessment of the participants' desire to learn Ukrainian after the intervention was assessed qualitatively. The analysis of the respondents' responses is presented further in this section.

6.	2	3	1	2	3
7.	3	3	2	3	3
8.	2	2	2	2	2
9.	3	2	2	2	2
10.	3	3	3	3	3

\* Individual perception scores from 0 to 3, assigned for each answer to a closed-ended question

Regarding question 1, the results presented in Table 3.2 reveal that three (2, 3, and 6) of the ten participants show an improved, more positive perception of the importance of learning pragmatics by the end of the intervention. One participant shows a more negative perception of the importance of learning pragmatics (9) and six participants (1, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10) show no change in perception. Importantly, five of these six participants (1, 4, 5, 7, and 10) indicate strongly the importance of learning pragmatics even before the intervention. As the participants' demographics show, four participants (1, 5, 7, and 10) speak Ukrainian at home and communicate with native speakers regularly, and one participant (10) occasionally visits the target language country. Most probably, the participants' regular exposure to the target language and their communication experience contributed to their high perception scores on the pre-survey.

Participant's responses to the post-survey open-ended questions also indicate some positive change in their perception of pragmatics. Consider the following examples of participants' comments:

- (1) I was never really taught about cultural ways of speaking Ukrainian. It was very useful and I'm sure it will prove very useful in future studies.
- (2) I learned that pragmatic skills are important, and they account for cultural differences.
- (3) I enjoyed everything we learned. Overall, I now have a greater appreciation for the need and value of Ukrainian pragmatics.

The comment in example 1 suggests that pragmatics has not been addressed in the course. The participant also indicates that the experimental lessons helped them realize its importance. The positive effect of experimental education on the participants' perception of the value of pragmatics is also illustrated by examples 2 and 3. Overall, the examples above demonstrate that the pedagogical intervention contributed to the participants' awareness of the role that pragmatics plays in effective communication in the target language.

Notably, when asked to evaluate the importance of learning pragmatics as compared to grammar and vocabulary, the participants' perceptions on the pre-survey are not statistically significant. Post-survey results, however, are statistically significant (see Table 3.1, question 2). The follow-up nonparametric two-related-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test, used to compare perception scores before and after the pedagogical intervention, reveals statistically significant results:  $z = -2.111$ ,  $p = .035$ . This indicates that participants' perception of the importance of learning pragmatics, as compared to grammar and vocabulary, changed over the course of the pedagogical intervention.

The examination of individual scores (see Table 3.2, question 2) shows that after the intervention a more positive perception is demonstrated by six (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) of the ten participants. The rest of the participants (2, 8, 9, and 10) show no change in perception, while one participant (10) shows the highest perception even before the educational experiment. Importantly, the same participant shows the highest perception before and after the experiment on question 1 as well. The participant's demographic information reveals that they receive regular exposure to Ukrainian at home and via communication with native speakers. This individual was also born and attended primary school in Ukraine. These factors certainly explain this participant's consistently high scores for the importance of language pragmatics.

Participants' desire to acquire pragmatic competence in Ukrainian is assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Participants' desire before the pedagogical intervention is assessed quantitatively; the analysis demonstrates statistically significant high results (see Table 3.1, question 3). A closer look at individual results reveals that the highest pre-survey scores again belong to the participants who regularly communicate in the target language, specifically, participants 1, 4, 5, 7, and 10 (see Table 3.2, question 3).

Participants' desire to learn Ukrainian pragmatics after the intervention is assessed quantitatively and qualitatively (see Appendix C, question 14: "Which aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics, e.g., addressing people, apologizing, refusing, making an invitation, etc., are you interested in learning?") The analysis of the post-survey shows that all ten respondents express a desire to continue learning about various Ukrainian speech acts. Specifically, respondents demonstrate their interest in learning how to apologize ( $n=5$ ), refuse ( $n=3$ ), to make invitations ( $n=3$ ), and to address people formally ( $n=2$ ). Three respondents state that they wish to learn all speech acts that would help them in social interactions. Less frequently cited aspects of pragmatics include promising ( $n=1$ ), greeting ( $n=1$ ), and meeting people ( $n=1$ ) formally. On the one hand, it is quite surprising to see such aspects as addressing, greeting, and meeting people on the "wish-list" of second-year language learners. On the other hand, the majority of respondents learned Ukrainian at home through usually informal interactions. Using the language formally is often challenging for such learners, which can explain their particular interest in the functioning of Ukrainian speech acts in formal situations.

Based on the above, some change was recorded in learners' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence. Importantly, this change pertained only to their perception of the importance of pragmatics as compared to vocabulary and grammar. Their perception of



the importance of pragmatics overall was significantly high even before the intervention. Therefore, the instructional treatments overall contributed to the learners' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence for successful communication in the target language, as well as their motivation to learn other aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics.

## **6.2 Research question 2: How do learners' perceptions of their level of acquisition of pragmatic competence change during the pedagogical intervention?**

In the current study, pragmatic competence involves pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability, as outlined above. Pragmatic awareness is linked to the registering and understanding of general principles, rules, or patterns of occurrence of certain language forms in certain contexts (Schmidt, 1993). Pragmatic ability is seen as an ability to produce target forms in a contextually appropriate manner (Swain, 1998, 2005). Therefore, the current assessment of the participants' perceptions of their level of acquisition of pragmatic competence focuses on both pragmatic awareness and ability, and is studied both quantitatively and qualitatively. The data on pragmatic awareness are elicited by open-ended questions 3 and 4 on the post-survey, which asked: "What is the most important thing that you learned in the experimental lessons? What did you learn about social and cultural norms of making requests in Ukrainian?" (see Appendix C). In their responses, all participants demonstrate awareness of social and cultural norms of requesting in Ukrainian, for example:

- (4) I learned a lot! Before I just knew about the importance of *ty* [informal singular 'you'] and *vy* [formal plural 'you'] in a conversation. I now know about the importance of distance and imposition when speaking in Ukrainian.
- (5) They [request structures] are tied to the status or the relationship one has with the person they are requesting something from.

- (6) There are certain differences when speaking to people with different status.
- (7) I learned to be careful with *vy* and *ty* forms. There is also a difference between requests for small and big things.

In examples 4-7, participants note the various contextual factors that need to be accounted for in order to formulate requests appropriately. Specifically, they mention the social variables that were the focus of the interventional instruction:<sup>62</sup> i) power (examples 4-6), ii) psychological distance between interlocutors (examples 4 and 5), and iii) degree of imposition (examples 4 and 7). Overall, the comments above signal that the pedagogical intervention contributed to the participants' awareness of the social factors of power, distance, and imposition, and the need to account for them when formulating culturally appropriate requests in Ukrainian.

The elicited data on pragmatic ability is also studied both quantitatively and qualitatively. On the pre-survey, the data are elicited by closed-ended question 4: "I am confident I can apologize, refuse, request, etc., in Ukrainian in the way native speakers do" (see Appendix B). A one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test reveals that before the intervention participants demonstrate a marginally significant, low confidence in their abilities to produce Ukrainian speech acts:  $Mdn= 1$ ,  $SD= .82$ ,  $p= .050$ .

On the post-survey, the data are elicited by open-ended question 10 ("After learning how to request in Ukrainian, how comfortable and confident do you feel about making requests? What questions do you still have?") The results of the qualitative analysis of the participants' responses are organized into the categories presented in the table below.

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<sup>62</sup> For more details see Study 2 of the current dissertation.

Table 3.3

*Participants' Perception of Their Level of Confidence in Producing Requests*

Perception of confidence level	Number of answers
Very confident	2
Confident	2
Somewhat confident	6
Not at all confident	0

Furthermore, the data are analyzed quantitatively by assigning a value to each category: 3 to the “very confident” category, 2 to “confident,” 1 to “somewhat confident” and 0 to “not at all confident,” respectively. Also, a hypothetical minimum confidence criterion (1.5) is defined, which represents the middle of the ordinal scale and serves as a boundary between participants’ perception of their confidence level. A one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test does not show any statistically significant results:  $Mdn= 1.00$ ,  $SD= .84$ ,  $p= .957$ , which means that participants overall do not feel confident producing Ukrainian requests.

To observe any possible changes in the participants’ confidence in producing requests during the pedagogical intervention, a nonparametric two-related-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test is conducted. Though the test does not reveal a statistically significant effect for the experimental instruction on the participants’ confidence level ( $z= -1.298$ ,  $p= .194$ ), some improvement on individual scores can be observed. See Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4

*Comparison of Individual Scores of Participants' Confidence Level Before and After the Intervention*

Participants	Individual scores	
	Pre-survey	Post-survey
1.	1	1
2.	1	1
3.	1	1
4.	1	1
5.	0	2
6.	1	1
7.	1	2
8.	1	3
9.	0	1
10.	3	3

In Table 3.4 above, the individual scores of participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 10 do not change. However, an increase in perception scores can be seen for participants 5, 7, 8, and 9. Importantly, there are no recorded changes on the individual scores of participant 10, as their perception of confidence level is already the highest on the pre-survey. This high result before the intervention can again be explained by the fact that the participant was born and attended primary school in Ukraine and communicates with native speakers on a regular basis.

The absence of changes in confidence levels of certain participants could stem from the insufficient practice that they had during the intervention. This is recorded in their responses to the second part of question 10: “After learning how to request in Ukrainian, how comfortable and confident do you feel about making requests?” and “What questions do you still have?” (see Appendix C). For example:

- (8) The way the classes were structured required us to use the request strategies. This helped me build my confidence. All that is required is more practice.
- (9) I am somewhat comfortable. I just need more practice.

In the comments above, the participants indicate that the pedagogical intervention contributed to their confidence in formulating requests and that more practice of the target structures would result in more confidence in their pragmatic ability.

Overall, participants reported that the interventional instruction contributed to their pragmatic awareness. With respect to pragmatic ability, the instruction was less effective. Save for a few participants, the perception of pragmatic ability did not change significantly over the period of the intervention. Also, participants reported that more practice would enhance their pragmatic ability.

### **6.3 Research question 3: What are learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence in general and of practices supplemented with podcasts in particular?**

This section reports on how learners perceive the effectiveness of interventional instructional practices, focusing on the following areas: i) learners' familiarity with podcasting, ii) the effectiveness of pedagogical practices with podcasts for learning how to request, and iii) the overall effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices for learning how to request.

#### **6.3.1 Learners' familiarity with podcasting**

Learners' familiarity with podcasting is assessed by an analysis of quantitative and qualitative data elicited by questions 5-8 on the pre-survey (see Appendix B). The assessment

determines participants' "podcast literacy" prior to the intervention. The analysis of responses to question 5 (see Appendix B) demonstrates that nine of the ten participants own a portable device to play MP3 files. These include tablets, smart phones, and computers.

Regarding perceived familiarity with podcasting technology (questions 6-8), a one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank test shows that the participants' level is significantly lower than the 1.5 minimum perception criterion:  $Mdn = .80$ ,  $SD = .919$ ,  $p = .041$ . This signals that participants do not consider themselves familiar with the technology. This result contradicts claims that podcasts are increasingly popular among students (Facer, et al., 2009; EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, 2006). This discrepancy is probably due to participants not fully understanding the difference between the terms "podcasting" and "educational podcasting." Specifically, during the intervention, some participants noted that on the pre-survey they assessed their familiarity not with podcasting in general but with educational podcasting specifically. The responses to the follow-up open-ended questions 8 and 9 reveal that only two students had prior experience with educational podcasting. Both participants claim that podcasts only "somewhat contributed" to their progress in those courses. As such, the researchers decided to conduct a brief training session for participants on how to work with podcasts.

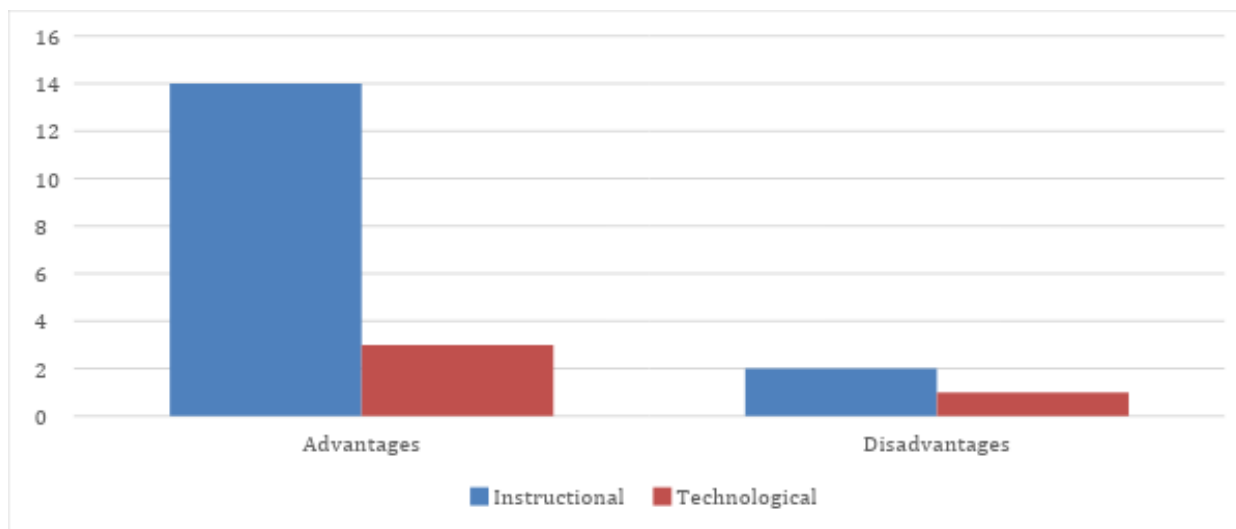
### **6.3.2 The perceived effectiveness of pedagogical practices with podcasts**

Participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of pedagogical practices with podcasts were assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The post-survey included a series of closed- and open-ended questions, which allowed collection of the learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of pedagogical practices with podcasts.<sup>63</sup> Post-survey question 11 ("How did podcasts help you

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<sup>63</sup> Exercises with podcasts were incorporated into the third instructional treatment, which focused on learners' acquisition of request structures (imperatives and ellipses) for services. In this treatment, participants were introduced to target forms through audio recorded dialogues, while in previous treatments the context with target

learn about making requests? What were the biggest disadvantages and advantages of the activities involving podcasts?") elicited 20 comments. Seventeen comments pertained to the advantages and three comments to the disadvantages of exercises with podcasts, whose pedagogical objective was to support the acquisition of pragmatic competence. The comments were further organized around two emerging podcast features: instructional and technological. The results of the analyses are summarized in the figure below.



*Figure 3.1.* Participants' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of exercises with podcasts.

Figure 3.1 demonstrates that the advantages and disadvantages of podcasts are distributed differently in terms of their instructional and technological features. Podcast advantages mostly pertain to their instructional features ( $n=14$ ), while advantages regarding their technological features are mentioned less frequently ( $n=3$ ). Podcast disadvantages are noted with regard to both instructional ( $n=2$ ) and technological ( $n=1$ ) features as well, though they are commented on much less frequently ( $n=3$ ) as compared to the advantages of podcasts ( $n=14$ ).

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forms was presented in written dialogues. Additionally, in this treatment, structural exercises were also offered in aural mode. Please refer to Study 2 for more information on the structure of these exercises.

The perceived instructional advantages of podcasts are associated with their ability to: i) present pragmatic targets in context ( $n=3$ ), ii) provide opportunities to practice pragmatic targets orally ( $n=7$ ), and iii) to obtain immediate feedback on the output ( $n=4$ ). With respect to the ability of podcasts to present target pragmatic structures in context ( $n=3$ ), participants mention the following:

- (10) They [podcasts] helped me hear how people in conversations use the structures we were learning about.
- (11) The podcasts were very useful, being able to hear how the requests should be made in practical contexts.

Examples 10-11 demonstrate that podcasts helped participants hear how instructional targets function in interaction. Therefore, the participants' comments point at the effectiveness of podcasts for recreating contexts and showcasing how requests are used.

Participants also perceive podcasts as an effective tool for practising target structures orally ( $n=7$ ), for example:

- (12) Advantages were many. Having [the] ability to listen and repeat was very helpful and practical as it helped me to mimic the way in which native speakers request.
- (13) They [podcasts] really helped with proper pronunciation. I cannot think of any disadvantages.
- (14) Repetition of structures in a comfortable for me environment, where I'm not shy to speak and make an error.
- (15) It is convenient to be able to listen to the podcasts and to be able to repeat what is being said or to come up with your own answers and then hear if you are correct or not.

The examples above demonstrate that the respondents recognize the instructional potential of podcasts for practicing the production of requests orally, which in turn leads to the enhancement of their listening, pronunciation, and speaking skills. Specifically, the participants stress that podcasts enabled them to listen to and repeat after recordings at their convenience (examples 12, 14, and 15), and produce their own output (example 15). Additionally, example 15



points at the ability of podcasts to provide immediate feedback. This feature is commented on by other participants ( $n=3$ ) as well, for example:

(16) Recorded replies helped me check my own answers.

(17) The recorded practice [helped] as I was forced to think quickly and got immediate feedback on how I answered.

In examples 16 and 17, as well as example 15 above, participants indicate that exercises with podcasts allow them to produce a request orally and then check it against a recorded key. This exercise phase aimed to encourage learners to reflect on their output and modify it, if needed, according to the provided key. According to Swain (1995), modified responses trigger positive developmental processes, which result in more comprehensible, accurate, and appropriate output. This, in turn, promotes automaticity, i.e., a lower reaction time and higher accuracy of target forms (DeKeyser, 2007), which leads to the operationalization of newly obtained pragmatic knowledge, and eventually to the acquisition of target forms. Therefore, in the conditions where learners practice their oral production skills on their own, when there is no one to correct their errors, a recorded key becomes particularly important from the instructional perspective. Therefore, exercises with podcasts can be used as tools for the individualised oral practice of instructional targets, including, though not limited to, request structures.

Along with advantages, respondents also report on instructional disadvantages of podcasts (see Figure 3.1 above). They involve: i) the repetitiveness of exercises with podcasts ( $n=1$ ), ii) the inability of podcasts to provide visual support for learning ( $n=1$ ), and iii) immediate feedback ( $n=1$ ). Of particular interest is a comment presented below.

(18) I liked them [podcasts] because we could practice whenever, but there was no one to correct me when I was wrong. [It] got a bit repetitive after a while.

In example 18, the respondent notes that structural exercises with podcasts do not provide immediate feedback. Notably, this is contrary to the participants' comments, illustrated by

examples 15-17 above, which write about the potential of podcasts to provide immediate feedback. Specifically, learners mention that exercises with podcasts allow them to formulate a request orally, and then check it against a recorded key. This stimulates learners to reflect on their output, and then modify it if required. Perhaps the outlying respondent did not pay attention to the recorded key and probably skipped the reflection and modification parts of the exercise. As a result, exercises with podcasts may not have served their educational objectives for the respondent. In order to mitigate against this in the future, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of working through all the phases (i.e., comparison with the key, reflection, and modification) during the pre-intervention training on how to work with podcasts. Additionally, in example 18, the participant also comments on the repetitiveness of structural exercises, which they view as a disadvantage. This calls for a more careful selection of the formats of exercises with podcasts, as well as their wider variability.

As presented in Figure 3.1, advantages and disadvantages of podcasts are also technology-related. The only noted disadvantage is seen in “[...] not enough pause time for responses in homework podcasts” ( $n=1$ ). This comment refers to the format of some structural exercises that should be performed orally. Mainly, the tasks with podcasts require participants to produce certain request structures during pauses in the recording. These pauses may have been too short—a problem that can be easily rectified in the materials design phase.

The reported technological advantages relate to two podcast features, i.e., portability and flexibility,<sup>64</sup> which are of particular importance to the current study. One of the objectives of developing exercises with podcasts and integrating them into pragmatics-focused instruction was to increase students’ time on-task, particularly out of class at students’ convenience. As the

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<sup>64</sup> Following Bolliger and others (2010), the portability of podcasts allows students to download podcast files on a digital media player and listen to them while multitasking. Flexibility of podcasts enables students to learn at their convenience.

current analysis shows, the perception of these features changes over the period of the intervention. Specifically, on the pre-survey (see question 10, Appendix B), respondents note the portability of podcasts; some participants express their desire to work with podcasts while travelling or commuting ( $n=4$ ), during intervals, breaks, free time ( $n=4$ ), or while exercising ( $n=3$ ). Yet, the majority of the comments ( $n=9$ ) point out that participants were planning to do these exercises only while studying. For example:

- (19) Of course [working with podcasts] in a quiet area, because when you are in a noisy one, and you would like to hear the words clearly, you would love to increase volume, which damages hearing, and most likely not clear words.

Example 19 details an ideal learning environment in which to use podcasts, with a particular emphasis on the quietness of the study area.

The reported technological advantages of podcasts on the post-survey differ from those from the pre-survey. Specifically, no one comments on the portability feature of podcasts: none of the participants mention that they worked with podcasts while multitasking, as some of them anticipated before the intervention. With respect to flexibility, only two participants note that podcasts allowed them to practice orally at their convenience (see examples 14 and 18 above), and thus be in control of their learning.

Before the intervention, participants were instructed to listen to podcasts at their convenience while engaged in other activities, and to work with each podcast exercise at least once a day for a week. It was hypothesized that the more time spent by participants on exercises with podcasts the higher the scores on the post-test pragmatic ability test. However, the responses to questions 8 (“How often did you listen to podcasts outside the classroom?”) reveal that students did not do it as often as they were instructed. Five participants indicate that they worked with podcasts “a few times” ( $n=5$ ). A few respondents write that they listened to the

podcasts “not often” ( $n=1$ ) and “rarely” ( $n=1$ ). One participant mentions that they listened to podcasts during the week, though they do not indicate the exact amount of time spent on the tasks. Two participants indicate that they never listened to the podcasts outside of class. These results could be explained by the short duration of the instructional treatment, two classes over two weeks. As Edirisingha (2007, as cited in Edirisingha, Rizzi, Nie, & Rothwell, 2007) aptly notes, learners require time to become accustomed to technology; over time learners tend to use technology more frequently (Edirisingha, 2007, as cited in Edirisingha, et al., 2007).

Also noteworthy is that all participants indicate that they only accessed the podcasts from a computer (see question 9, Appendix C). This tendency to listen to podcasts on computers rather than on digital players confirms findings from other studies (Edirisingha, et al., 2007; McKinney, Dyck, & Luber, 2009; Lee, Miller, & Newnham, 2009; Lonn & Teasley, 2009). In the current data, “habit” and “ease of access” determine the participants’ device choice. Specifically, three participants write that they only used their computers for these activities because they always used their computers for homework. Four participants respond that accessing the audio files was most convenient on a computer. Two participants found it difficult to play podcasts on other devices. This indicates that the students’ choice of digital device is strongly determined by their pre-established learning habits. Possibly with time, students’ approaches to using educational podcasting could change.

Overall, participants perceived the interventional practices with podcasts as contributing to their acquisition of requests. Importantly also, the analysis revealed that participants did not take advantage of the portability and flexibility of podcasts. We can speculate that they were unprepared to use educational podcasts in similar ways as non-educational podcasts. With the growth in the number of courses incorporating podcasts, and mobile digital devices becoming a

more popular method of accessing online learning resources, there is a chance that students will use the portability and flexibility of podcasts more extensively in the future: to listen to educational podcasts in the way they listen to non-educational podcasts, i.e., at their convenience while involved in other activities.

### **6.3.3 The perceived overall effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices**

To assess learners' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of pedagogical practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, the post-survey data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In assessing classroom and homework activities (question 12: "Which classroom and homework activities contributed most to your skills of making requests in Ukrainian?"), the majority of comments particularly highlight the effectiveness of two pedagogical practices: role-plays of suggested situations ( $n=5$ ) and structural exercises with podcasts ( $n=5$ ). For example.

- (20) The chance to speak orally when we acted out situations in a practical manner.
- (21) The podcasts were very useful, being able to hear how the requests should be made, as well as listening to the dialogues and acting out with classmates.
- (22) I think the recorded repetitive exercises helped me the most, I am a mechanical learner.

Examples 20 and 21 demonstrate that participants perceive role-play activities as providing them with an opportunity to practice target structures in conversations. These results are in line with Olshtain and Cohen's (1990) and Lyster's (1993) studies, in which participants attach particular importance to role-play tasks as tools to acquire target pragmatic formulae. Additionally, participants also emphasize the effectiveness of exercises with podcasts (21 and 22). Notably, these comments ( $n=5$ ) were obtained in response to question 12 (see Appendix C), which does not focus specifically on exercises with podcasts, but rather on interventional

practices overall. This may signal that learners see the particular pedagogical potential of these exercises for the acquisition of requests.

Other participants' comments relate to the effectiveness of listening to recorded dialogues ( $n=2$ ) and doing structural exercises overall ( $n=3$ ), not just those incorporating podcasts. Notably, the value of structural exercises is also recognized in Lyster's (1993) study: participants rate them the highest for contributing to the acquisition of target pragmatic forms, though they find them the least interesting. Additionally, one current participant sees the value in matching exercises, in which learners have to match various situational contexts with the most appropriate request structures. One participant notes that all proposed activities facilitated learning how to request in various communicative contexts.

In their response to question 13 ("What suggestions do you have for improving the lessons about making requests?"), a number of participants ( $n=4$ ) perceive the interventional practices as requiring no improvement. Other participants suggest teaching all Ukrainian language classes this way ( $n=1$ ), and to increase the frequency of such classes ( $n=1$ ). One participant asks for more examples of requestive situations, while two participants would like more role-play practice. However, one participant prefers individualised instruction. Importantly, this same participant favours structural exercises with podcasts, saying that these activities allow them to practice target structures orally in a comfortable atmosphere, where they are not afraid to speak and make errors (see example 14 above). This alludes to the potential of these pedagogical practices to accommodate learners with various learning styles and needs.

Importantly, one student suggests not using educational podcasts at all. A closer look at this participants' responses to other questions reveals that their rather negative perception of podcasts might stem from technological issues that they faced.

Along with technological issues, some participants comment on a number of other challenges, elicited by post-survey questions 6 (“What aspects of the lessons and homework did you find most challenging? Why?”) and 7 (“What difficulties did you experience during the tests? Why do you think you experienced them? How could those difficulties have been eliminated?”). Regarding lesson and homework challenges, students’ comments fall into three groups: no challenge ( $n=2$ ), comprehension of input ( $n=1$ ), and operationalisation of obtained knowledge in actual speech ( $n=11$ ). Specifically, two participants, who speak Ukrainian at home, find the suggested exercises easy:

(23) Not too much of the assignment was challenging, rather it was pretty straightforward. I have been brought up with Ukrainian being my first language, so I had a good understanding of the language.

One participant mentions the difficulty in comprehending the input. For example:

(24) [...] Overall, the lessons were well-planned, just sometimes it was difficult to understand the recorded dialogues.

Notably, the prevailing majority of the challenges are linked to the operationalization of obtained knowledge in actual speech ( $n=11$ ), which can be eliminated with more practice. For example:

(25) It was difficult to come up with a conversation on the spot for a situation when you are just learning the rules of conversation and are not very familiar with conversational phrases.

(26) I found the requests very challenging. Mostly pronunciation and remembering little grammatical quirks of the requests. I have many difficulties grasping grammar in Ukrainian, so it is not a huge shock that it was difficult. As well, I have difficulty with vocabulary.

(27) The endings of verbs with different ‘you’ forms. Not used to it yet.

(28) [...] The structure *dai/ daite* [‘to give’ in imperative singular and plural forms] was challenging.

Examples 25-28 demonstrate that participants experience a number of challenges when applying their acquired knowledge. Role-playing is particularly difficult for learners when they

do it on the spot (example 25). Difficulties stem from a lack of control over vocabulary (examples 25 and 26), pronunciation (examples 26), and grammar (examples 26-28). Specifically, participants struggle with verb conjugations (example 27) and remembering correct vocabulary (example 25). Also, participants indicate that some request structures are particularly challenging to acquire (example 28). This calls for further investigation.

The assessment of the participants' perceptions of the difficulty of acquiring request structures is performed quantitatively. The data elicited by closed-ended question 5 ("How would you rate the request structures learned during the classes?," see Appendix C) are analyzed through a series of one-sample Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, with the minimum perception criterion (1.5) representing the middle of the scale and indicating the boundary between the participants' perceptions of the structures as "difficult" (below 1.5) or "not difficult" (above 1.5). The results of the tests are presented in the table below.

Table 3.5

*Summary Statistics for Difficulty of Request Structures for Acquisition*

Structures	Median	Standard Deviation	Significance level
Permission questions ( <i>Mozhna [name] do telefonu?!</i> ' [Is it] possible [to call] [name] to the phone?, ' <i>Mozhna pohovoryty z [name]?!?</i> ' [Is it] possible to speak to [name]?'	3.00	.52	.004*
Ability questions with the modal verb <i>mohty!</i> 'can, to be able to' in the conditional mood ( <i>Vy ne mohly b ...?!</i> 'Could <sub>PL NEG</sub> YOU <sub>PL</sub> ...?,' <i>Ty ne mohla by ...?!</i> 'Could <sub>SG NEG FEM</sub> YOU <sub>SG</sub> ...?,' <i>Ty ne mih by ...?!</i> 'Could <sub>SG NEG MAS</sub> YOU <sub>SG</sub> ...?'	2.00	.79	.305
Direct formulae ( <i>Daite meni odyn ... ./</i> 'Give <sub>PL</sub> me one ..., ' <i>Dai meni odyn ... ./</i> 'Gives <sub>SG</sub> me one ..., ' <i>Odyn .../</i>	2.00	.88	.222



‘One ... .’

\* Perception is statistically significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3.5 demonstrates that the acquisition of permission questions is perceived as “not difficult.” The perception of the rest of the structures as “not difficult” is not statistically significant.

In order to compare the participants’ perception of the difficulty of three groups of structures, a nonparametric two-related-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test is conducted. The test shows a statistically significant difference in the participants’ perception of permission questions and ability questions in the conditional mood ( $z = -2.530, p = .011$ ), and permission questions and direct formulae ( $z = -2.111, p = .035$ ). However, the difference in the participants’ perception of ability questions in the conditional mood and direct formulae is not statistically significant ( $z = -.577, p = .05$ ). In other words, participants perceive the difficulty of ability questions and direct formulae somewhat similarly. Considering the results of the above mentioned one-sample tests, overall participants perceive permission questions as easier to acquire than ability questions in the conditional mood and direct formulae.

The challenges associated with the tests somewhat mirror the difficulties that most participants experienced while performing lesson and homework tasks: the operationalization of obtained knowledge in actual speech ( $n=7$ ). For example:

(29) Recalling the way in which native speakers requested items was challenging. I often find I revert to the Canadian way, or ways in which I am most used to requesting things. These could be eliminated by further practising the structures we learned in class.

In example 29, the participant indicates that the biggest challenge for them was choosing the most contextually appropriate target structure. The participant also overtly states that more practice would ameliorate this problem.

Among other challenges, participants mention the strong influence of the English language ( $n=2$ ), insufficient time during the test ( $n=2$ ), no review of vocabulary before the test ( $n=2$ ), and too much time between the experimental lessons ( $n=1$ ) that resulted in forgetting previous learning. Given the fact that a one-week interval between the classes was specifically offered for participants to do exercises to practice requests at home, there are chances that this particular learner did not complete home assignments.

However, despite challenges, participants also comment on their improvement during the intervention. For example:

- (30) Creating dialogues when the script was taken off the board [was challenging]. This forced us to think on the spot and under pressure to get our point across. Although, this was the hardest, it was the most rewarding as it simulated a real-life experience.

Example 30 demonstrates that the participant had some challenges acquiring Ukrainian pragmatics. Nevertheless, they found the intervention rewarding and relevant for improving their real-world communication skills.

In summary, the results of the analysis indicate that participants perceived a number of advantages and disadvantages associated with the interventional pedagogical practices for the acquisition of Ukrainian request structures. The majority of participants viewed role-plays as the most challenging and the most effective as they provided them an opportunity to operationalize their newly obtained knowledge. Along with role-plays, the pedagogical potential of structural exercises with podcasts was also recognized. Specifically, these exercises afforded students the opportunity for oral output, while obtaining immediate feedback. Students could then reflect and modify their oral responses against a key. In relation to this, podcasts can be used in self-directed, out of class learning. As noted above, podcasts are generally recognized for their ability to provide learners with opportunities to learn at their own pace and time, even while performing

other tasks. However, in the current analysis, the portability and flexibility of podcasts were not extensively mentioned by participants. Finally, in the participants' view, the interventional pedagogical practices contributed both to the acquisition of the target request structures and to the development of communicative competence in Ukrainian overall.

## **7 Summary and discussion of results**

This section summarizes and discusses the aforementioned results in the framework of the stated research questions. The first question concerned learners' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence. Individual learners usually approach learning languages differently; this depends on a number of factors. One such factor is the importance that learners attach to the instructional targets—in this case request structures, which “can play a beneficial role in improving non-native speech act behaviour” (Olshtein & Cohen, 1990:56). The current analysis revealed that the majority of the participants on pre- and post-surveys showed a statistically significant positive perception of the importance of learning pragmatics. Interestingly, the results somewhat differ from the findings of Olshtein and Cohen (1990), who observed that before the intervention, participants' perceptions of the importance of learning pragmatics were quite low. Learners had but a vague knowledge of speech acts and their role in successful communication. The current results could stem from the fact that the majority of the participants communicated with native speakers of Ukrainian regularly. Their communication experience likely contributed to their high pragmatic awareness prior to the treatments. Another potential explanation is that the terms used in the questionnaire, including “pragmatic competence,” were explained to participants.<sup>65</sup> These factors, either alone or in combination,

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<sup>65</sup> As mentioned before, the term “pragmatic competence” was explained to participants as “an ability to apologize, refuse, request, etc., in accordance with a certain communicative situation” (see Appendices B and C).

could have resulted in the participants' high perception scores even on the pre-survey. This could explain no statistically significant changes in perceptions before and after the pedagogical intervention. However, when asked to evaluate the importance of learning pragmatics compared to grammar and vocabulary, the participants' perception was not statistically significant on the pre-survey, though results were statistically significant on the post-survey. Such differences in perceptions on pre- and post-surveys can be attributed to the fact that pragmatics is largely underrepresented in language courses, with respect to both input and practice. As Hassall (2008) aptly notes, very often in classroom settings, the instructional focus is on clarity and accuracy (pragmalinguistic information) rather than appropriateness (sociopragmatic information), particularly when considering lower-level learners. Such instructional priorities consequently affect learners' priorities. Learners regard clarity and accuracy as indispensable to successful communication and continue to undervalue appropriateness even when formulating culturally and socially sensitive language forms, like speech acts. The current findings highlight that when instruction focuses on sociopragmatics, learners' priorities change. Additionally, all participants expressed interest in continuing to learn various aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics, with apologies, refusals, and invitations being the most preferred constructions. Therefore, the instructional treatments were viewed as beneficial to the participants' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence and contributed to their interest in learning other aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics, specifically other speech acts. These findings concur with the scholarly consensus (Hassall, 2008; Matsumura, 2001, 2003; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose, 2005; Silva, 2003; Tateyama, 2001) and further underline the importance of integrating pragmatics into language curricula.

Additionally, the current results demonstrated that emphasizing the applicability and role of instructional targets in actual interactions contributed to the learners' interest in learning more about them. This is vitally important, since interest is directly linked to motivation, which is often considered an "academic enabler" (Linnernbrink & Pintrich, 2002: 314) and a "key learner variable because without it, nothing much happens" (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002: 172).

The second research question concerned learners' perceptions of their level of acquisition of pragmatic competence. In order to answer this question, this study focused on two components of pragmatic competence: pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability. Regarding the former, participants demonstrated an awareness of the social factors addressed in the instructional treatments and how these factors determine which request structure best fits a certain communicative context. On both the pre- and post-survey, participants had a low opinion of their pragmatic ability. A quantitative analysis pointed out that participants' perceptions of their pragmatic ability, save for a few cases, did not change significantly during the intervention. A qualitative examination revealed that this result stemmed from inadequate practice. Participants linked more practice time to better developed pragmatic skills. Therefore, from the participants' perspective, the acquisition of target request structures was only partly accomplished, and only with respect to pragmatic awareness. The acquisition of the target request structures with respect to pragmatic ability was incomplete. Participants reported that this could be solved by further practice. However, these results should be interpreted cautiously. As mentioned above, the assessment of the participants' perceptions of their pragmatic ability involved comparing quantitative data, elicited by the pre-survey, and qualitative data, elicited by the post-survey. This may raise concerns regarding the reliability of the testing instruments. However, in order to compare the participants' perceptions before and after the intervention, the

post-survey qualitative data were converted into quantitative values for further quantitative analysis. Therefore, this limitation should have little impact.

The third research question concerned the learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of interventional instructional practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence. On the whole, participants recognized the pedagogical value of the instructional practices and suggested incorporating the format of experimental lessons into the course curriculum. Importantly, participants attached a particular value to instructional practices incorporating podcasts, saying that they contributed not only to the acquisition of pragmatic competence, but also to the development of grammatical, listening, pronunciation, and interactional skills. These results are in line with other findings that report on learners' positive perceptions of the effectiveness of podcasting for the acquisition of grammar (Chan, et al., 2011) and the development of listening (Chan, 2014; Facer, et al., 2009; Li, 2010; McCarty, 2005; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2007; Al Qasim & Al Fadda, 2013; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007, 2013), pronunciation (Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Lord, 2008), and speaking skills (Chan, et al., 2011; Li, 2010).

Role-plays and structural exercises contributed the most to students' ability to formulate requests in Ukrainian. Notably, these findings concur with previous studies that investigated learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of pragmatics-focused practices. Similar to Lyster's (1993) and Olshtein and Cohen's (1990) studies, participants in the current study valued role-plays because they provide opportunities to practice target structures in conversations, thus, preparing learners for real-life interactions in the target language. At the same time, participants described role-play activities as the most challenging because they had to apply this newly acquired pragmatic knowledge in interaction. It was particularly difficult for learners to operationalize their new knowledge while also controlling vocabulary, grammar, and

pronunciation. Ability questions in the conditional mood and direct formulae particularly challenged students, especially compared to permission questions. This calls for the thoughtful attention of educators. Teaching and learning materials need to consider the levels of difficulty of acquiring various request structures; the incorporation of such structures into course curriculum should be scaled from the easiest to the most challenging. Based on these current results, permission questions need to be taught before ability questions in the conditional mood and direct formulae.

Participants in the current study, along with participants in Lyster's (1993) study, recognized the effectiveness of structural exercises for practicing instructional targets. However, importantly, the majority of the current participants' comments concerned the structural exercises that incorporated podcasts. Participants appreciated such exercises as they enabled them to practice the target request forms orally. This practice eventually improved learners' pronunciation and speaking skills. Learners particularly appreciated the immediate feedback provided by structural exercises with podcasts in the form of a recorded key, which enabled learners to modify their output accordingly, when needed.

The current study hypothesized that structural exercises with podcasts could facilitate learners to practice oral production skills on their own. Specifically, exercise phases, such as a recorded key, offered students the chance to modify their output. This, in turn, could trigger positive developmental processes, resulting in more comprehensible, accurate, and appropriate output (Swain, 1995). In addition, such exercises could promote automaticity, i.e., a lower reaction time and the higher accuracy of target forms (DeKeyser, 2007). This leads to the operationalization of newly obtained pragmatic knowledge, and eventually to the acquisition of target forms. The results of the current analysis support the initial hypothesis: participants

recognized the pedagogical potential of structural exercises with podcasts for practicing oral production of request structures, particularly in the out of class setting. Therefore, these findings reinforce the claims of Abdous, Camarena, and Facer (2009) and Farangi, Nejadghanbar, Askary, and Ghorbani (2015), who collectively argue that podcasting technology, when adapted for instructional purposes, has the potential to effectively promote the acquisition of a number of skills, including oral production skills.

Podcasts can also present pragmatic targets in context; this is another of their advantages. These findings echo the results of previous studies by Tateyama (2001), Olshtain and Cohen (1990), and Lyster (1993). Specifically, in Lyster's (1993) study, participants found that reading novel excerpts with dialogues and discussing the use of target pragmatic routines were the most beneficial activities. In Tateyama's (2001) and Olshtain and Cohen's (1990) studies, participants attached particular importance to video clips and audio recordings respectively, commenting that they helped them understand how target pragmatic forms were used in authentic interactions. Similarly, current participants recognized the effectiveness of podcasts for recreating contexts and showcasing how requests are used in specific contexts.

Other study results, related to podcasts, revealed that even though almost all participants owned portable devices to play MP3 files, they used computers to listen to and to do structural exercises with podcasts outside the class. These findings varied from the initial assumption that students will use educational podcasts in the way that they use non-educational podcasts, i.e., at their convenience while multitasking. This assumption was largely motivated by numerous non-academic articles that cite both the increased ownership and popularity of podcasts among students. These articles pushed us to believe that podcasts could be easily converted into educational "anytime-anywhere" tools (EDUCASE Learning Initiative, 2006). However, this



assumption was supported neither by the current study nor other studies (Edirisingha, et al., 2007; McKinney, et al., 2009; Lee, Miller, & Newnham, 2009; Lonn & Teasley, 2009). Similar to the studies above, in this study the most commonly cited reason for preferring computers over digital media players was pre-established learning habits. Additionally, the current results demonstrated that participants did not work with podcasts out of class as often as they were instructed. Such results are consistent with the findings of other studies that explored the pedagogical potential of podcasts. Specifically, Edirisingha and others (2007) noted that only 50% of their participants worked with podcasts regularly. They suggested that learners require time to get accustomed to the technology, and that with time they could be more willing to listen to educational podcasts in the way they listen to non-educational podcasts (Edirisingha, 2007, as cited in Edirisingha, et al., 2007). Given that the instructional treatment incorporating podcasts lasted only two weeks and involved only two classes, these claims seem to be applicable to the current study as well.

## **8 Limitations and directions for future research**

The presentation of research findings necessitates the discussion of potential limitations, which, at the same time, can be an incentive for future research. First and foremost, the number of study participants was limited, which precludes the generalization of the results beyond the given project. Therefore, a larger data sample should be used in future studies.

The use of a single data collection method may be another limitation. While survey questionnaires allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data collection, the participants' responses to open-ended questions did not always yield extensive commentaries. This issue could be addressed by individual post-survey interviews that would clarify the participants' responses and provide additional insights into their perceptions.

Another limitation concerned the use of podcasts themselves. The initial idea was that podcasts would increase students' time-on-task, particularly outside of class, due to their flexibility and portability. It was expected that podcasting technology would allow students to download recorded dialogues and structural exercises on their digital media players to listen to and practice their oral pragmatic ability at their convenience (the flexibility feature) while involved in other activities (the portability feature) (Bolliger, et al., 2010). However, the results of the post-survey demonstrated that the students' work with podcasts was strongly determined by their pre-established learning habits. Specifically, they exclusively used laptops to access audio files and only worked with them during study time. Indeed, learners normally require time to get accustomed to technology (Edirisingha, 2007, as cited in Edirisingha, et al., 2007). As the current instructional treatment incorporating podcasts lasted only two classes, future research should consider a similar, though longitudinal, study. Participants did recognize the value of podcasts, particularly their ability to present instructional targets in context and the opportunities they provided for oral practice and immediate feedback. With more exposure to podcasting, learners would be able to see more benefits associated with this technology.

Another focus for future research might be comparing learners' and instructors' perceptions and attitudes regarding various instructional practices for the acquisition of pragmatics. This comparative study would aim to identify possible similarities and differences in learners' and instructors' perceptions of pragmatics-focused instruction. Better understanding the ways in which learners and educators approach pragmatics-focused instruction would be very important for educators. Specifically, such knowledge can assist in determining pedagogical priorities for the learning and teaching of pragmatics, which would inform lesson plans and the development of instructional materials.

## 9 Conclusion

This study investigated learners' perceptions of acquiring pragmatic competence in Ukrainian. Specifically, the study concentrated on examining learners' perceptions of: i) the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence, ii) their level of pragmatic competence, and iii) the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices, including those that incorporate podcasts. Drawing on the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 1998, 2005), pragmatic competence in this study included both pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability. In order to explore the three lines of research, the study incorporated a pre-test/ post-test design. Participants completed a pre- and post- survey that consisted of both closed- and open-ended questions. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data.

The results of the analysis were encouraging as learners recognized the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence and were motivated to continue learning various aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics. The analysis of the learners' perceptions of their level of acquisition of pragmatic competence allowed us to determine that participants viewed the interventional instruction as contributing to their pragmatic awareness. The participants' perception of their pragmatic ability, with the exception of a few, was low both before and after the intervention. As such, participants stressed the need for more practice to enhance their pragmatic ability. Additionally, the results indicated that the interventional instructions, particularly the instruction incorporating podcasts, facilitated both the acquisition of pragmatic competence and contributed to the development of other skills: grammatical, listening, pronunciation, and interactional. Importantly, participants attributed their improvement to the effectiveness of pedagogical practices, specifically role-plays and structural exercises with podcasts. Role-play activities

already have an established reputation for contributing to the acquisition of pragmatic competence (Lyster, 1993; Olshtein & Cohen, 1990). However, to the best of our knowledge, this study was the first to examine the effectiveness of structural exercises with podcasts as a tool for practicing oral output, specifically request structures. The results were positive, and many participants complimented such exercises for their ability to provide opportunities for oral practice and immediate feedback. This enables to recommend structural exercises with podcasts as an effective tool to practice oral output for language courses with minimal or no supervision from instructors, e.g., blended and distant/ online courses. Importantly, the results of the analysis revealed that the way participants approached exercises with podcasts was strongly determined by their pre-established learning habits. Specifically, participants worked on them using computers only, and exclusively during their study time. This signals that, in spite of the popular belief, today's students may not be as willing as we think to use educational podcasts in the way that they use non-educational podcasts. If educators choose to integrate this technology into language courses, they may need to educate their students about the benefits of educational podcasting and how to utilize this technological tool to facilitate language learning.

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## Appendix A: Background Questionnaire

Please read and fill in the questionnaire below. The provided information will be used only for the given study and will be kept confidential.

1. *Your Name:* \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. *Gender:*             MALE                                       FEMALE
  
3. *Where were you born?* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *If you were born in Ukraine, at what age did you come to Canada?* \_\_\_\_\_
5. *Did you take a Ukrainian course:*
  - in elementary school?
  
  - in middle school?
  
  - in high school?
  
  - at university ( UKR [course number]       UKR [course number])?
  
  - abroad (Ukraine)?
  
6. *How often do you speak Ukrainian with your:*
  - parents:  Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always
  
  - siblings:  Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always
  
  - grandparents:  Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always
  
  - other relatives:  Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always
  
  - friends from Ukraine:  Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always
  
  - friends from Canada:  Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always
  
  - others (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
    - Never     Rarely     Sometimes     Often     Always

7. *How often do you:*

- watch television/ movies in Ukrainian?

Never    Rarely    Sometimes    Often    Always

- listen to radio/ CDs in Ukrainian?

Never    Rarely    Sometimes    Often    Always

8. *Have you ever visited Ukraine? If yes, indicate the year and the length of your stay.*

9. *Is Ukrainian your major/ minor?*    Yes    No

10. *Why are you taking UKR [course number]?* \_\_\_\_\_

11. *Are you planning to use Ukrainian in the future? If yes, how?* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Pre-treatment Survey Questionnaire**

Your name:

---

Please read the following statements and choose the response which best corresponds to your perceptions.

1. In order to maintain successful communication with native speakers of Ukrainian, the acquisition of pragmatics competence in Ukrainian (ability to apologize, refuse, request, etc., in accordance with a certain communicative situation) is important to me

very true    true    somewhat true    not at all true

2. The acquisition of pragmatics competence in Ukrainian is as important to me as learning vocabulary and grammar

very true    true    somewhat true    not at all true

3. I want to learn how to apologize, refuse, request, etc., in Ukrainian the way native speakers do.

very true    true    somewhat true    not at all true

4. I am confident I can apologize, refuse, request, etc., in Ukrainian in the way native speakers do.

- very true    true    somewhat true    not at all true

5. Do you currently own a portable device that can be used to play MP3 files?

- yes    no

If yes, specify which one \_\_\_\_\_

6. How knowledgeable are you about podcasting technology?

- very knowledgeable    knowledgeable    somewhat knowledgeable    not at all knowledgeable

7. How many classes have you had that provide audio files that you could download and use on your MP3 player? \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you have taken such courses, how much did podcasting contribute to your progress in that course?

- very much contributed    contributed    somewhat contributed    not at all contributed  
 N/A

9. What was the biggest strength and the biggest limitation of the MP3 files in that course?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. If Mp3 files were offered as a Ukrainian 212 course resource, during what circumstances would you be most likely to use them?

- while studying    while traveling or commuting    while exercising    during down time  
(e.g., in between classes, waiting for a bus)    other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Post-treatment Survey Questionnaire

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. In order to maintain successful communication with native speakers of Ukrainian, the acquisition of pragmatics competence in Ukrainian (ability to apologize, refuse, request, etc., in accordance with a certain communicative situation) is important to me

- very true    true    somewhat true    not at all true

2. The acquisition of pragmatics competence in Ukrainian is as important to me as learning vocabulary and grammar

- very true    true    somewhat true    not at all true

3. What is the most important thing that you learned in the experimental lessons? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did you learn about social and cultural norms of making requests in Ukrainian?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you rate the request structures learned during the classes:

а) Можна поговорити з [ім'я]?/ Можна [ім'я] до телефону?

- very difficult    difficult    somewhat difficult    not at all difficult

б) Ви не могли б ...?/ Ти не могла би ...?/ Ти не міг би ...?

- very difficult    difficult    somewhat difficult    not at all difficult

в) Дайте мені один ... ./ Дай мені один ... ./ Один ... .

- very difficult    difficult    somewhat difficult    not at all difficult

6. What aspects of the lessons and homework did you find most challenging? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What difficulties did you experience during the tests? Why do you think you experienced them? How could those difficulties have been eliminated? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. How often did you listen to podcasts outside the classroom? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which devices did you use to listen to podcasts outside the classroom? Which of them were the most convenient for you? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. After learning how to request in Ukrainian, how comfortable and confident do you feel about making requests? What questions do you still have? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How did podcasts help you learn about making requests? What were the biggest disadvantages and advantages of the activities involving podcasts? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Which classroom and homework activities contributed most to your skills of making requests in Ukrainian? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13. What suggestions do you have for improving the lessons about making requests? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Which aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics, e.g., addressing people, apologizing, refusing, making an invitation, etc., are you interested in learning? What would you like to know about them? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Conclusion

## 1 Introduction

Pragmatic competence is an essential component of language proficiency, which includes "the knowledge of language functions, of sociolinguistic rules of appropriateness, and of cultural references and figurative language" (Bachman, 1990:98). It enables speakers to interpret and convey messages appropriately in a variety of communicative contexts. However, research shows that second/foreign language (SL/FL) learners, even those at a high level of language proficiency, demonstrate underdeveloped pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Kasper, 2001). This is because most SL/FL instruction focuses mainly on grammar and vocabulary, while the intricacies of pragmatics are often overlooked in language instruction. Additionally, SL/FL resources tend to incorporate an oversimplified and often unreal version of target language pragmatics. The lack of language authenticity in these resources is rooted in the heavy reliance of developers on their intuition about the language, rather than empirical evidence from target languages. Therefore, a number of researchers advocate for the development of teaching and learning resources based on empirical pragmatic data (LoCastro, 2003; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Olshtein & Cohen, 1990). As Ukrainian pragmatics remains underexplored, this dissertation adds to the field by investigating the requestive behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian. Additionally, with the increased use of technological applications for teaching pragmatics (Cunningham, 2014; Furniss, 2015; Sykes, 2005, 2008; Vyatkina, 2007), this dissertation broadens the current research on the integration of technology, in particular



podcasting technology, into pragmatics-focused instruction both in and out of the classroom. These aspects were addressed in three independent studies, summarized below.

## **2 Summary and overview**

This dissertation explored Ukrainian pragmatics, specifically, the speech act of requests, from three different perspectives: i) the requestive behaviour of Ukrainian native speakers, ii) the instructed acquisition of requests by learners of Ukrainian, and iii) learners' perceptions about their own acquisition of requests. The first study served as a starting point of the inquiry.

The corpus of requests obtained from Study 1 guided the preparation of instructional materials for the second study. Study 2, experimental in nature, investigated the effectiveness of instructional approaches for the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Specifically, the second study addressed the ability of learners to formulate contextually appropriate requests in Ukrainian. The third study presented the analysis of the learners' perceptions. The results informed our understanding of the learners' expectations and needs, as well as how to address them with respect to the acquisition of pragmatic competence, particularly speech acts of requests.

### **2.1 Study 1**

Study 1 investigated the pragmatic behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian by examining the strategies, structures, and linguistic realisation of speech acts of requests according to specific communicative contexts. This study defined requests in terms of the Theory of Speech Acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1975, 1979), as speech acts which are performed “by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (Searle, 1979: 13). The data were collected through online Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs), which represented 14 communicative

scenarios with different combinations of the social variables of power, distance, and imposition. The developed DCTs elicited 1,266 request head-acts from 111 undergraduate students from a Ukrainian university. All were native speakers of Ukrainian. The elicited head-acts were analyzed using Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy, which considers requests from the point of view of their contextual realisation.

This study relied on one of the original theories in pragmatics, specifically the Theory of Politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to this theory, all requests can be categorized as either direct, conventionally indirect, or indirect. The researchers suggest that the more imposing and face-threatening an act, the more indirect the employed strategy should be for the sake of politeness. The main result from the present study was that the correlation between indirectness and politeness of request strategies might not hold true for the Ukrainian language. Therefore, Study 1 confirmed findings from a number of previous research works, particularly on other Slavic languages, whose authors claim that Brown and Levinson's approach reflects the values of Anglo-American rather than Slavic culture (Dong, 2006; Lubecka, 2000; Ogiermann, 2009; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991).

Notably, despite this criticism of the Theory of Politeness for correlating indirectness with politeness, no language community has been found in which requests lacked the directness-indirectness continuum (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). The results of the current study supported this claim: speakers of Ukrainian employed direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect strategies to formulate requests in various communicative contexts. Importantly also, in a small percentage of instances, native speakers of Ukrainian employed a combination of two structures to convey a single request. The first component of such combined strategies was normally expressed by a more direct and/or "imposing" construction compared to the second

component. The second component functioned to mitigate the impositive intent of the first component. This tactic was favoured when the hearer's compliance was crucial to the speaker. On the one hand, the first more "imposing" component increased the probability that the hearer would carry out the desired action. On the other hand, the second "mitigating" component allowed the hearer not to feel overly compelled to comply with the request.

Another key argument posed by the Theory of Politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) is that the choice of request strategy, i.e., direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect, is determined by the contextual factors of power, distance, and imposition. According to this theory, the higher the position of these variables, the more indirect the structures should be used. Study 1 lent support to this argument: more direct strategies were favoured by native Ukrainian speakers in instances where the variables of power, distance, and imposition were in a low position, and vice versa. Specifically, direct strategies, imperatives in particular, were most common in informal contexts characterized by a low position for the social variables of power, distance, and imposition. Similar results are found in Dorodnyh's (1995) study, which documented the dominance of imperatives in informal encounters in Ukrainian. In situations with social variables in a high position, native speakers in both Dorodnyh's and the present study tended to switch to conventional indirectness.

The analysis also revealed instances in which speakers of Ukrainian used the same request strategies in communicative contexts where social variables were in different positions. Specifically, imperatives and ellipses dominated requests for services between both familiar and unfamiliar speakers, particularly at the grocery store and farmer's market. Additionally, indirect requests, or hints, were used exclusively in phone conversations with both high and low positions for the social variables of power and distance. As such, we can consider the use of these indirect

structures as situation-specific, conventionalized forms of Ukrainian phone etiquette. Such findings may indicate that requestive behaviour in Ukrainian can be determined not only by the social variables of power, distance and imposition, but by other factors as well, e.g., the communicative situation. This assumption merits further study.

In summary, Study 1 enabled us to understand the peculiarities of pragmatic behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian. Specifically, the study informed us about the strategies, structures, and the linguistic realisation of requests in Ukrainian according to the communicative contexts in which they were used. Additionally, the obtained request corpus served as a source of empirical pragmatic data that was used to prepare instructional materials for Study 2. Finally, the results of Study 1 allowed us to suggest ways to integrate various request structures into the Ukrainian language curriculum.

## **2.2 Study 2**

Pragmatic competence has been recognized as an integral component of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Thorne, 2005). However, even “advanced learners show differences from target-language pragmatic norms” (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001:14). Researchers have pointed out that learners’ pragmatic divergence stems from the fact that in SL/FL classrooms pragmatics is not as large a focus of instruction, especially compared to grammar and vocabulary, which are often deemed more important by instructors (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010). Such instructional approaches influence learners’ priorities: learners normally regard the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary as more important to successful communication in the target language and as a result are often unaware of the importance of culturally appropriate communication (Hassall, 2008). Therefore, the need for pragmatics-focused instruction has been continually emphasized, and research in this area points out that this

type of instruction is both necessary and effective (Liddicoat & Crozet 2001; Rose, 2005; Silva, 2003; Tateyama & Kasper, 2008; Yoshimi, 2001). Study 2 advanced this line of research by investigating the effect of explicit pragmatics-focused instruction, supplemented with educational podcasts, on the acquisition of pragmatic competence. Thus, the study contributed to the overlooked area of the instructed acquisition of Ukrainian language pragmatics in general, and the use of technology in pragmatics-focused instruction in particular.

The study used a pre-test-post-test repeated-measures design to compare the effectiveness of three instructional approaches for the acquisition and retention of pragmatic competence by 10 second-year learners of Ukrainian from a North American university. The three instructional approaches were zero pragmatics-focused instruction, explicit pragmatics-focused instruction without podcasts, and explicit pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts. Building on the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990, 1993, 2001) and the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1995, 1998, 2005), this study viewed the acquisition of pragmatic competence as a process that includes both the development of pragmatic awareness and pragmatic ability. Learners' pragmatic awareness was assessed qualitatively, while their pragmatic ability was assessed quantitatively and qualitatively by two measures: comprehensibility and appropriateness. The use of both quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches allowed us to investigate if instructional approaches contributed to the learners' acquisition and retention of pragmatic competence and how this changed during the pedagogical intervention.

The qualitative examination of the learners' pragmatic awareness demonstrated that the social variable of distance was both acquired and retained better than imposition. The social variable of power was the most challenging for both acquisition and retention. Additionally, by including a qualitative analysis, we were able to detect instances of the learners' subjectivity, or

intentional divergence from the target pragmatic norms (Ishihara, 2010). These occurred when learners consciously chose to express themselves in their own way in order to demonstrate their own identity. Such findings call for further study on how learners can be taught the pragmatic norms of the target language society without forcing them to adhere to those norms.

Another finding from this study was that the explicit pragmatics-focused instruction supplemented with educational podcasts stood out as the most effective approach for the acquisition and retention of oral pragmatic ability at the level of request comprehensibility. At the level of request appropriateness, the difference in the effectiveness of the instructional approaches was not statistically significant. Importantly, the qualitative analysis allowed us to identify a number of confounding variables that likely affected the “appropriateness” results. These variables involved the experimental design and grammatical structure of the instructional targets. However, any claims regarding the effect of these variables on the study outcomes are speculative and call for further investigation.

It is difficult to relate these results to previous research since, to the author’s knowledge, this is the only study that has explored the effect of podcasting on the acquisition of pragmatic competence. However, these results indicated that exercises with podcasts are effective tools for oral practice of instructional targets, including request structures.

### **2.3 Study 3**

The idea of integrating podcasting into pragmatics-focused instruction was motivated by positive results from a growing body of research examining the effectiveness of this technological tool for the development of a number of skills, particularly speaking (Chan, Chen, & Döpel, 2011; Farangi, Nejadghanbar, Askary, & Ghorbani, 2015; Li, 2010). As such, podcasting was used to develop structural exercises that offered opportunities for oral output

practice. These exercises were integrated into explicit pragmatics-focused instruction that targeted the acquisition of pragmatic competence. The effectiveness of this and the two other instructional approaches was measured through participants' performance on pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests, presented in Study 2. However, Study 3 focused on the acquisition of pragmatic competence from the learners' perspective. The learners' perspective was explored through three focal areas: i) learners' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence, ii) learners' personal reflections on their own level of pragmatic competence, and iii) learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of interventional pedagogical practices, including those supplemented with podcasts.

Two survey questionnaires were designed and used to collect quantitative and qualitative data before and immediately after the pedagogical intervention. The results of the data analysis demonstrated that the pedagogical intervention had inconsistent effects on the learners' perceptions. On the one hand, participants' perceptions of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence improved. They also showed a strong interest and desire to learn more about various aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics. Such results indicated that the interventional practices contributed to the learners' motivation, which is an "academic enabler" (Linnernbrink & Pintrich, 2002: 314) without which "nothing much happens" (Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002: 172). On the other hand, the participants' perceptions of their ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests did not change significantly, save for a few students. Qualitative analysis of the participants' reflections indicated that the lack of change stemmed from insufficient practice of the target structures during the pedagogical intervention.

Learners acknowledged the pedagogical value of instructional practices for the acquisition of pragmatic competence. This acknowledgment also extended to other skills,

notably grammar, listening, pronunciation, and interactional skills. Learners emphasized the particular effectiveness of role-play activities and educational podcasts. Specifically, participants reported on the effectiveness of podcasts for recreating communicative contexts that illustrated how requests functioned in interactions, thus contributing to the line of research that advocates for this technology as a source of audiovisual input (Godwin-Jones, 2005; Thorne & Payne, 2005; Stanley, 2006). In addition, participants perceived structural exercises with podcasts as an effective tool for practising request structures orally, which enhanced their pronunciation and speaking skills. Learners also emphasized the ability of podcasts to provide immediate feedback on their output. They viewed this feature as particularly important when they were practicing their oral pragmatic skills on their own, with no one to correct their errors. Also, participants mentioned that exercises with podcasts allowed them to practice instructional targets orally at their convenience, and thus be in control of their learning. This finding dovetails nicely with early publications on educational podcasts, which claim that this technology offers new learning experiences: learners can listen to the input anytime and anywhere on their digital media players while multitasking (Bolliger, Supanakorn, & Boggs, 2010; Thorne & Payne, 2005). However, the current analysis revealed that participants did not actively take advantage of the portability and flexibility of podcasts. The degree to which participants worked with podcasts was strongly determined by their pre-established learning habits. They listened to them only on their computers during their study time. This result may stem from the fact that learners usually require time to get accustomed to new technology (Edirisingha, 2007, as cited in Edirisingha, Rizzi, Nie, & Rothwell, 2007). It is reasonable to assume that with more time and regular exposure to educational podcasts, learners might be more willing to consume them in ways



similar to consuming commercial podcasts, i.e., anytime and anywhere, while involved in other activities.

Overall, the findings from Study 3 strengthened the claim expressed in Study 2; exercises with podcasts can contribute to the acquisition of oral pragmatic ability. Additionally, these findings enforced the argument that podcasting technology has the pedagogical potential to effectively promote the acquisition of various skills, including speaking skills, if properly adapted to instructional purposes (Abdous, Camarena, & Facer, 2009; Farangi, et al., 2015).

### **3 Concluding remarks**

With the continually reported lack of focus on pragmatics in existing language teaching and learning resources, the challenge of developing pragmatics-focused material very often falls on instructors. Rather than developing context samples that illustrate the functioning of pragmatics targets, instructors are encouraged to use research-informed data (Ishihara, 2010). Study 1 is the first detailed account of request strategies and structures and the means of their linguistic realisation in various communicative contexts employed by native speakers of Ukrainian. The obtained corpus of requests also served as a source of data for the development of instructional materials for the pedagogical intervention in Study 2. Additionally, based on the revealed peculiarities of requesting in Ukrainian, the results of the first study allowed to propose recommendations for educators how to incorporate requests into Ukrainian language courses. These recommendations were accounted for in the subsequent, second study.

Study 2 investigated the effectiveness of instructional approaches for the acquisition of pragmatic competence, specifically, the ability to formulate contextually appropriate requests in Ukrainian. The analysis concluded that explicit pragmatics-focused instruction supplemented

with educational podcasts is the most effective for the acquisition of oral pragmatic ability at the level of request comprehensibility.

However, while the results of Study 2 displayed a trend in favour of instruction with podcasts, Study 3 revealed that these findings were largely inconclusive. Specifically, the investigation of learners' perceptions in Study 3 indicated that, overall, participants did not feel confident formulating requests in Ukrainian. As voiced by participants, this lack of confidence stemmed from the insufficient amount of practice that they received during the intervention. This suggests that additional longitudinal studies would be valuable.

The results of Study 3 were encouraging in the sense that learners demonstrated an improved awareness of the importance of acquiring pragmatic competence for successful communication and expressed a desire to learn more aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics. This can serve as an impetus for educators to integrate pragmatics into language courses.

Additionally, the third study allowed us to identify the most effective pedagogical practices for the acquisition of Ukrainian requests. Those involved role-play activities and structural exercises with podcasts. Exercises with podcasts were viewed as particularly helpful as they provided learners with flexible opportunities for individualized oral production practice of pragmatic targets. These results also reinforced the argument that podcasting has the potential to “effectively promote the acquisition of different language skills if instructors adapt and use the technology for a variety of instructional purposes” (Abdous, et al., 2009:89).

Overall, this dissertation, consisting of three independent studies, contributes to our understanding of specific aspects of Ukrainian pragmatics, i.e., the speech acts of requests, and the improvement of their teaching and learning. The results of this project could be used by other researchers, instructors of Ukrainian, and textbook authors. It is also hoped that this exploratory

inquiry will motivate other investigators to further the largely overlooked areas of Ukrainian pragmatics, Ukrainian SLA, and language pedagogy. This should include the investigation of more aspects of the pragmatic behaviour of native speakers of Ukrainian, with respect to other speech acts in particular. Also, as mentioned in Study 2, further research is necessary to corroborate the effectiveness of the pragmatics-focused instruction with podcasts through a different research design, specifically an independent-measures design. Lastly, a longitudinal study is needed to determine if a relationship exists between the amount of time learners are exposed to educational podcasts and their willingness to use educational podcasts in similar ways to how they use non-educational podcasts, anytime and anywhere, while multitasking.

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