

**INTEGRATIVE PRAGMATICS OF THE SPEECH ACT OF REQUEST:
FACE-SAVING MECHANISMS THROUGH THE INTERFACE OF PRAGMATIC
DEVICES**

**PRAGMÁTICA INTEGRATIVA DEL ACTO DE HABLA DE SOLICITUD:
MECANISMOS DE SALVAGUARDA DE LA IMAGEN A TRAVÉS DE LA
INTERFAZ DE LOS DISPOSITIVOS PRAGMÁTICOS**

**PRAGMÁTICA INTEGRATIVA DO ATO DE FALA DE UM PEDIDO:
MECANISMOS DE PRESERVAÇÃO DA FACE ATRAVÉS DA INTERFACE DE
DISPOSITIVOS PRAGMÁTICOS**

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Abstract: The article examines the speech act of a request through the lens of various pragmatic devices, highlighting how they interact to form a unified complex that functions as face-saving mechanisms. Based on an analysis of two extended interactions between a Student and a Teacher, the study shows that these devices not only correlate in function but also iconically reflect the seriousness of the request, with their accumulation signaling an increased level of face-threatening potential. The research identifies a correlation between several devices: framing a request as a dispreferred move with pre-sequences and side sequences that serve as external modifiers; violating the maxims of quantity, relevance, and clarity through these sequences, which trigger conversational implicatures; and using hedges and mitigators within the request or its modifiers, intensifying implicatures or activating new ones. Additionally, negative politeness strategies are employed through internal and external modifications, while the illocutionary force of the request is derived from implicatures as an indirect directive act. The study confirms that as the seriousness of a request increases, its conventionality diminishes, leading to more implicit or indirect forms of expression. In some cases, the request seems almost absent, requiring the addressee to exert additional cognitive effort to infer the speaker's intent. This implicature-based interpretation often arises from the external pragmatic modifiers justifying the request.

Keywords: speech act of request, implicatures, cooperative maxims, dispreferred move, negative politeness.

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Resumo: El artículo examina el acto de habla de una solicitud a través del prisma de diversos dispositivos pragmáticos, destacando cómo interactúan para formar un complejo unificado que funciona como mecanismos de salvaguarda de la cara. Basado en un análisis de dos interacciones extendidas entre un Estudiante y un Profesor, el estudio muestra que estos dispositivos no solo se correlacionan en su función, sino que también reflejan icónicamente la seriedad de la solicitud, con su acumulación señalando un aumento en el nivel de amenaza a la cara. La investigación identifica una correlación entre varios dispositivos: enmarcar una solicitud como un movimiento no preferido con pre-secuencias y secuencias laterales que funcionan como modificadores externos; violar las máximas de cantidad, relevancia y claridad a través de estas secuencias, lo que desencadena implicaturas conversacionales; y usar atenuantes y mitigadores dentro de la solicitud o sus modificadores, intensificando implicaturas o activando nuevas. Además, se emplean estrategias de cortesía negativa mediante modificaciones internas y externas, mientras que la fuerza ilocutiva de la solicitud se deriva de las implicaturas como un acto indirecto directivo. El estudio confirma que, a medida que aumenta la seriedad de una solicitud, disminuye su convencionalidad, lo que lleva a formas de expresión más implícitas o indirectas. En algunos casos, la solicitud parece casi ausente, lo que requiere que el destinatario ejerza un esfuerzo cognitivo adicional para inferir la intención del hablante. Esta interpretación basada en implicaturas suele surgir de los modificadores pragmáticos externos que justifican la solicitud.

Palabras clave: acto de habla de solicitud, implicaturas, máximas cooperativas, movimiento no preferido, cortesía negativa.

Resumo: O artigo examina o ato de fala de um pedido a partir de diversos dispositivos pragmáticos, destacando como eles interagem para formar um complexo unificado que funciona como mecanismos de preservação da face. Com base na análise de duas interações extensas entre uma estudante e um professor, o estudo mostra que esses dispositivos não apenas se correlacionam em sua função, mas também refletem iconicamente a seriedade do pedido, sendo que sua acumulação indica um aumento no nível de ameaça à face. A pesquisa identifica uma correlação entre diferentes dispositivos: enquadrar o pedido como um turno não preferido com pré-sequências e sequências laterais que funcionam como modificadores externos; violar as máximas de quantidade, relevância e clareza por meio dessas sequências, o que desencadeia implicaturas conversacionais; e o uso de atenuadores e mitigadores dentro do pedido ou de seus modificadores, intensificando implicaturas ou ativando novas. Além disso, são empregadas estratégias de cortesia negativa por meio de modificações internas e externas, enquanto a força ilocucionária do pedido é derivada das implicaturas como um ato diretivo indireto. O estudo confirma que, à medida que aumenta a seriedade de um pedido, diminui sua convencionalidade, levando a formas de expressão mais implícitas ou indiretas. Em alguns casos, o pedido parece quase ausente, exigindo que o destinatário realize um esforço cognitivo adicional para inferir a intenção do falante. Essa interpretação baseada em implicaturas geralmente emerge dos modificadores pragmáticos externos que justificam o pedido.

Palavras-chave: ato de fala de um pedido, implicaturas conversacionais, máximas conversacionais, turno não preferido, cortesia negativa.

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most rapidly expanding and dynamic fields within linguistics is pragmatics, which focuses on the study of meaning in context and the ways in which language users convey and interpret intended messages. A central and highly debated question in pragmatics research concerns the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in inferring implicatures.

Implicature, as a core concept in pragmatic theory, represents an essential mechanism that enables interlocutors to bridge the gap between the explicit, literal meaning of an utterance and the implicit, intended meaning that underlies it. The inherently logical nature of implicatures implies that their interpretation relies not only on linguistic input but also on the application of logical reasoning, contextual cues, and the interpreter's encyclopedic knowledge. This includes cultural understanding and cognitive ability to draw inferences consistent with established linguistic and logical principles (Holtsova, 2019).

The speech act of requesting has been well studied in the scientific literature, primarily in terms of its structure – its core and peripheral components. In the realm of pragmatics, researchers unanimously agree that a request constitutes a directive act, whether direct or indirect, and as such, it may pose a threat to the negative face of the addressees, as it encroaches on their personal domain, their "desire to be unimpeded in one's actions" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 13). This perspective serves as the pragmatic foundation for the particular attention researchers give to internal and external modifiers of requests, which can be present in both the core and periphery, functioning to mitigate, reinforce, or justify the request, thus softening the face-threatening nature of the act for the addressee (Halupka-Rešetar, 2014; Huschová, 2019; Leech, 2014; Siemund, 2018).

At the same time, aside from studies addressing the interface between politeness and speech acts (Alzebaree & Yavuz, 2017; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Khafaga, 2024; Leech, 2014; Siemund, 2018; Trosborg, 1995; Zalmetri, 2024), there is, to the best of our knowledge, a lack of research in pragmatics that examines the interaction and interdependence of various pragmatic phenomena in the act of requesting.

This is despite the fact that the delicate and face-threatening nature of a request makes it an ideal "candidate" for identifying correlating pragmatic devices. In this context, the external modifiers described in the literature can be viewed from a conversation-analytic perspective as markers of non-preferential acts, structurally complicated by pre-sequences, side sequences, mitigators, hedges, and so on. In turn, lexical and syntactic complexities are predictably correlated with violations of Grice's maxims and simultaneously mark strategies of negative politeness – such as evasive, hedged politeness aimed at reducing imposition and distancing, which serve to redress the addressee's face. On the other hand, violations of cooperative maxims trigger conversational implicatures, conveying the face-threatening act of politeness in an implicit form.

This integrative perspective, to the best of our knowledge, is innovative in pragmatic research, contributing to the new pragmatic issues of pragmatic attraction and multifaceted pragmatics (Kravchenko & Blidchenko-Naiko, 2020; Kravchenko, & Zhykharieva, 2020).

Thus, the novelty of this article lies in the integrative pragmatic approach, which allows for demonstrating how situations associated with various request acts are conveyed through a complex of pragmatic devices that regularly correlate with each

other, as they all function as face-preserving devices. The number of devices and their accumulation presumably iconically correspond to the level of the request's seriousness and, consequently, the level of threat to both the addressee's and the speaker's face (in the case of refusal). The paper puts forth the hypothesis that the seriousness of a request inversely affects its level of conventionality: the higher the level of seriousness, the less conventional the request's formulation becomes, to the point where the request itself – its core – may seem absent, with the addressee inferring its content with additional cognitive effort.

2 THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 PRAGMATIC STUDIES OF REQUEST AND REQUEST MODIFICATION

The theoretical basis of the article encompasses studies that demonstrate the extent to which the issue of request acts has been explored, as well as the relatively scarce works addressing the problem of regular correlations of pragmatic devices in specific communicative situations. The majority of research focuses on the formal-structural characteristics of the request act and its pragmatic modifiers (Leech, 2014, p. 160), that is, the lexico-grammatical devices that increase the complexity and optionality of requesting speech acts. Scholars identify the core, or head, of the act as “the minimal unit which can realize a request”, and its periphery (Reiter, 2000, p. 127), which helps in decreasing face-threatening conditions (Alcón Soler et al., 2005; Reiter, 2000; Trosborg, 1995), associated with this directive speech act.

Particular attention is paid to internal (included within the request itself) and external (included in the context of its utterance) modifiers. Internal modifiers are thoroughly examined in terms of their classification, divided into syntactic devices (interrogative and declarative structures, if-clauses, conditional forms of modals, negated structures, or past and progressive verb forms) and lexical means (softeners, the politeness marker “please”, or fillers) (Halupka-Rešetar, 2014, p. 36; Leech, 2014, pp. 165, 170–171; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Siemund, 2018, p. 165). External modifiers are used in the context into which the request is “embedded” (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008, pp. 115–116) and are classified into groups such as grounders, preparators, disarmers, imposition minimizers, and apologies. These devices inform the addressee about the intention to make the request, justify it, or preemptively disarm the addressee, making refusal difficult (Halupka-Rešetar, 2014; Alcón Soler et al. 2005; Reiter, 2000; Leech, 2014).

At the same time, the justification of modifiers in the pragmatic format remains local and situational. Focusing more on their classifications and structural position, researchers only mention that external modifiers help redress the imposition of requests by modifying their illocutionary force indirectly (Huschová, 2019, p. 55), thus implying a connection between a particular negative politeness strategy and the modification of the illocutionary force of the act. The insufficient pragmatic rationale for request modifiers, due to an exaggerated focus on their formal-structural and classificatory aspects, may be explained by the fact that modifiers are traditionally considered pragmatic devices. In reality, they are lexical and syntactic means through which various “properly” pragmatic devices are realized – such as conversational and conventional implicatures, direct and indirect acts, and others.

In studies with a pragmatic orientation, the pragmatics of a request has been primarily examined in terms of its speech act characteristics (Alzeebaree, & Yavuz, 2017; Blum-Kulka, & Olshtain, 1984; Khafaga, 2024; Siemund, 2018; Trosborg, 1995; Zalmetri, 2024). Leech (2014, p. 162), in particular, argues that “please” may be seen

as an illocutionary marker rather than a politeness marker. Through the lens of speech act theory, the request was analyzed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), as well as within the taxonomy of request strategies developed by Trosborg (1995), which includes indirect, conventionally indirect, and direct request strategies. The indirect illocutionary force of implicit requests has also been studied by Siemund, (2018, p. 54) and others. Some studies of the act of request were conducted in a conversational-analytical perspective (Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014; Flores-Salgado & Castineira-Benitez, 2018). In the aspect of the interaction of various pragmatic devices, most closely associated with the objectives of the article, the request has been studied through the frameworks of politeness and speech acts (Almathkuri, 2021; Blum-Kulka, 1987; Uso-Juan, 2010, and others), taking into account the relationship between the variation in the directness and indirectness of the act and contextual variables, such as dominance and social distance.

At the same time, when analyzing the connection between politeness and directive acts, researchers overlook other aspects of correlative pragmatics. We were unable to find any mention that internal modifiers mark redundant information, while external modifiers signal topic deviation, thereby violating Grice's maxims. Additionally, it is not noted that all external modifiers preceding the request can be grouped under the umbrella term of pre-sequential moves within conversation analysis, etc.

2.2 CORRELATIVE PRAGMATICS AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES

The issue of the interaction between various pragmatic phenomena is one of the least studied in pragmatics. In this vein, the relationship between conventional implicatures and performatives has been addressed in the works of Grice (1989), as well as in studies by Bach (2012) and Rieber (1997). Karttunen and Peters (1979) demonstrate the correspondences between conventional implicatures and presuppositions. Searle notes that the illocutionary inference procedure relies on the Gricean inferential model (Karttunen & Peters, 1979, pp. 31-32). Kravchenko (2017a) defines correlative connections between the illocution of direct speech acts, conventional implicatures, and semantic presuppositions, as well as between the illocution of indirect speech acts, conversational implicature, and pragmatic presupposition, determined by the coincidence of their triggers and inference procedures (Kravchenko, 2017b). The researchers attempted to identify multifaceted pragmatics based on the material of the speech act of justification (Kravchenko & Blidchenko-Naiko, 2020) and in post-Soviet jokes (Kravchenko & Pasternak, 2018), as well as in the explanation of such a phenomenon as sign-like pragmatic devices (Kravchenko & Zhykharieva, 2020). In the latter case, several conclusions made by the researcher hold significant theoretical and methodological value for our study, namely, that the correlation of pragmatic devices is due to their role as indices of the same connotated attribute of the situation – specifically, the connotations of awkwardness and embarrassment – as well as the fact that different pragmatic phenomena are based on the same linguistic markers (op. cit., p. 70) and that one pragmatic device may trigger the other(s) (op. cit., p. 71).

Thus, the reviewed studies provide the theoretical and methodological foundation for the present research. While previous scholarship has extensively examined request modification, politeness strategies, and indirectness, considerably less attention has been paid to the systematic interaction of multiple pragmatic phenomena within a single requestive act. In particular, the correlation between

negative politeness strategies, conversational implicatures, violations of cooperative maxims, pre-sequential organization, and structurally non-preferential speech moves remains underexplored. Accordingly, the present study adopts an integrative pragmatic framework aimed at identifying the set of pragmatic devices that regularly correlate with one another in institutional requestive interaction between teacher and student, as well as establishing the relationship between the degree of request implicitness and the accumulation of pragmatic devices.

2.3 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

Based on the integrative pragmatic framework outlined above, the article employs a comprehensive analytical methodology that combines conversation analysis, speech act theory, Gricean pragmatics, and politeness theory in order to examine the interaction of pragmatic devices within implicit requestive acts.

The conversation-analytic method is applied in two perspectives: (a) in the context of preferential and dispreferred speech turns (Battistella, 1996; Kravchenko & Blidchenko-Naiko, 2020; Levinson, 1983), pre-sequences, and side sequences (Jefferson, 1972; Schegloff, 1980, 2007); (b) within the framework of speech act theory, with a focus on distinguishing direct and indirect acts (Searle, 1975), since requests, like other types of directives, are often presented in the form of indirect, implicit acts, which reduce the level of face-threatening risk to the interlocutor.

Preferential speech turns are expected, unmarked, and structurally simple, while dispreferred turns are marked and structurally complex, reflecting the delicacy or psychological discomfort of a given speech situation (Robinson, Bolden, 2010). The act of requesting is one such dispreferred turn. Markers of non-preferentiality include the complexity of the act through hedges, apologies, self-corrections, false starts, hesitation markers, and pre-sequential speech turns. "Pre-sequences" (Schegloff, 2007) represent a certain deviation from the subsequent (main) topic of dialogue and are used to create a positive communication atmosphere or to probe the situation before formulating a request, advice, invitation, etc. This type of speech turn is employed to build and maintain positive face, as well as to foresee and avoid face-threatening actions when expectations are not met, and awkward situations may arise (Goffman, 1967). Schegloff notes that "pre-sequences" represent a variety of "recurrent types of turns that are heard as prefiguring a particular possible type of turn next; there are 'pre-requests,' 'pre-announcements,' 'pre-offers,' and others" (Schegloff, 1980, p. 114). A side sequence is an insertion of utterances that seem irrelevant to the ongoing activity and deviate from the main topic (Jefferson, 1972, p. 294). Non-preferential speech moves are often combined with the use of indirect speech acts, through which, according to J.R. Searle (1979, p. 31-32), "the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer".

In line with the research objectives, the method based on Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975; 1989) focuses on how indirect requests violate one or more maxims of cooperation: the maxim of quantity – providing the amount of information that is the most optimal in the context of interaction between professor and student; the maxim of quality – sincerity and truthfulness; the maxim of relevance – logical cohesion and coherence; and the maxim of manner – clarity, unambiguity, and brevity. A key component of this method is the extraction of conversational implicature, triggered by the violation of a maxim, which in our case could represent

the implicit content of the request. According to Grice (1975, p. 50), a process of inferring a conversational implicature involves its calculability based on the maxim' flouting with considering the cooperative principle, shared language code, background knowledge and the linguistic context of usage.

The use of a method rooted in politeness theory is justified by the fact that requests are face-threatening acts, as they limit the addressee's freedom of action. Since the article focuses on indirect acts, which are manifestations of negative politeness – minimizing imposition – the method includes the classification of negative politeness strategies and their linguistic markers. The traditional taxonomy, proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), includes 10 strategies: Be conventionally indirect; Question, hedge; Be pessimistic; Minimize the imposition; Give deference; Apologize; Impersonalize; State the FTA as a general rule; Nominalize; Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not incurring (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 131). A component of the method, used in the paper, involves identifying contextual factors that work together to determine the degree of implicitness of the request and the accumulation of its underlying pragmatic devices. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the three contextual variables influence the level of politeness: Social Distance that refers to the degree of familiarity or closeness between the speaker and the hearer: the greater the social distance, the more politeness is typically required; Power that relates to the relative authority of the speaker over the hearer: the speaker may use more polite language to show respect to the hearer if he has more power; Rank of Imposition associated with the perceived severity or intrusiveness of the request or action: the higher the imposition, the more polite the language tends to be.

The analytical procedure combines the above-mentioned pragmatic approaches into an integrative multilevel framework for examining implicit requests in institutional interaction. The analysis proceeds from macro-contextual factors toward micro-pragmatic mechanisms and focuses on how different pragmatic devices interact in the production of face-saving indirect requests.

First, the institutional and social context of interaction is identified, including the participants' roles, institutional asymmetry, degree of social distance, and seriousness of imposition in order to determine the potential threat to the interlocutors' negative face. Second, the request is analyzed as a direct or indirect directive act and as a preferred or dispreferred conversational move characterized by varying degrees of structural and pragmatic complexity. Third, the analysis examines the organization of external modifiers, including pre-sequences, side sequences, apologies, and justifications, as well as internal modifiers such as hedges, mitigators, downtoners, and generalizers.

The next stage focuses on identifying violations of Grice's cooperative maxims at both the macro-structural and micro-semantic levels. Particular attention is paid to how redundant, irrelevant, or excessively detailed information contributes to the generation of conversational implicatures and increases the implicitness of the request. The analysis further examines how these violations correlate with negative politeness strategies and function as mechanisms of face preservation.

Finally, the procedure evaluates how the accumulation of correlating pragmatic devices reflects the degree of imposition associated with the request. Special attention is paid to cases in which the seriousness of imposition leads to the reduction or complete absence of the request head act, so that the request content must be inferred exclusively through conversational implicatures derived from peripheral modifiers and contextual cues.

The research material consists of interactions in social networks between students and a teacher, specifically two extended dialogues containing implicit requests that differ in their degree of indirectness and pragmatic complexity.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both chosen interactions represent implicit requests, which fall under indirect directive acts associated with negative politeness strategies. These strategies are typically used as a means to minimize face-threatening acts and/or to demonstrate exaggerated politeness. At the same time, the analyzed requests differ in their degree of implicitness. In the first case, the dominant contextual variable determining the "amount" of facework and, consequently, the level of accumulation of pragmatic devices to redress the face threat is the asymmetry of institutional roles between the teacher and the student. In the second case, it is the degree of seriousness of the request.

4.1 INTERACTION 1: Pragmatic Device Interface in Conventional Indirect Request

1. Student: 1.1. Good evening, this is Nina Kovalenko, the head of the third-year distance students in English philology. 1.2. Sorry for bothering you, but our session with you starts on Monday. 1.3. Would it be convenient for you to hold the introductory lesson with us on those days?

2. Professor: Thank you, I see this class in my schedule.

3. Student: It's only one class, if I'm not mistaken.

4. Professor: Thank you, I see.

5. Student: Could you send the Zoom link?

6. Professor: Yes, of course.

Analysis. In this first interaction, the request in 1.3. and 5 concerns the professor fulfilling their institutional duties, so the use of distancing politeness markers is minimal. The amount of "face work" is regulated by the institutional distance in the asymmetrical student-teacher relationship and the social distance determined by contextual variables such as age and familiarity level. The absence of the "seriousness" parameter in two request explains why they are formulated conventionally – as indirect speech acts, posed as questions with downtoners and mitigators: "Would it be convenient" and "Could you". The first request is introduced by an external modifier, combining grounders (justification for the request based on the upcoming session) and apologies. In terms of conversational analysis, the modifier serves as a pre-sequence move that prepares the ground for the request.

After the professor's brief response (turn 2), the student's turn 3 may seem unjustified. On one hand, it diverges from the topic, constituting a side move, though it does not develop into a full side sequence due to the professor's concise reply. On the other hand, turn 3, which comes between two requests, violates the maxims of quantity and relevance by being a side move with redundant and irrelevant information. It also contains components like the downtoner "only" and the hedge "if I'm not mistaken." However, this phrase can be explained from the perspective of negative politeness – a hyperbolic concern for the professor's negative face, influenced by the asymmetry of their relationship. The speaker likely believes that minimizing the effort or time required to fulfill the request (that is, conducting only one lesson during the session) mitigates the potential threat to the professor's negative

face. Since, by the criterion of efforts involved to fulfill two requests, the first request prevails, the side sequence relates to it.

Thus, in the first interaction, the primary parameter determining the number of correlating pragmatic devices is the "power" relationship or institutional asymmetry in the teacher-student interaction. This correlation can be represented in the following schematic form:

Power/Institutional Asymmetry → Pragmatic Devices Correlation

Four negative politeness strategies (Conventional Indirectness, Question and Hedge, Minimization of the Imposition, and Apologizing) → Indirectness: Requests framed as questions with mitigators.

Negative politeness strategies → Structurally complex non-preferential speech move: Use of external modifiers (justifications, apologies) to soften requests and maintain politeness; Use of downtoners and hedges in the request and its external modifiers to further minimize imposition.

Use of external modifiers → Pre-sequential apology and justification as the grounders for the initial request; Side-sequences: Divergence from topic, redundant information indicating concern for negative face.

Resulting Pragmatic Effect:

- Hyperbolic care for the professor's negative face
- Attempts to minimize perceived effort or imposition
- Structural simplicity of requests due to minimal perceived threat to the addressee's face

4.2 INTERACTION 1: Pragmatic Device Interface in in Nonconventional Indirect Request

1. Student: 1.1. Hello, I am the group leader of the first-year part-time master's students. 1.2. We are supposed to have an introductory session with you on the 21st of November. 1.3. Essentially, this is our only session with you, and after that, we'll only meet again during the spring session, and that's it.

2. Professor: Hello. Thank you for informing me.

3. Student: 3.1. And the subject is already for the second semester, it's just that the introductory session was scheduled now. 3.2. Usually, professors just gave us the tasks for the semester and instructions on where to send them. 3.3. In our part-time group, everyone works, they are at work all day.

4. Professor: Understood. We'll hold the session as scheduled. I'll send the Zoom link.

In the second interaction, the amount of "face work" increases due to the fact that, in addition to the criteria of "institutional authority" and social distance, another contextual variable is introduced – the "seriousness of the request." The request is formulated as follows: the student indirectly asks to replace the planned class with the distribution of assignments.

That is, even if the request were formulated in a veiled interrogative form and softened by external and internal modifiers, it would still represent a serious threat to the addressee's face, as it calls for the violation of their institutional duties. Therefore, the implicitness of the request is at its highest here, as it is expressed through providing background information and institutional context. The student's primary request is hidden within a detailed description of the situation.

The delicacy and awkwardness of the request are iconically reflected in the organization of the addresser's speech as a collection of non-preferential moves, with side sequences, and markers of negative politeness, which maximally increase the indirectness and implicitness, thereby implementing "non-imposition" strategies

toward the addressee-teacher and protecting the addresser's "own" face. The degree of implicitness in the request is so high that it lacks its conventional structure – the head act of the request. Its content is not articulated at all and is intended to be inferred by the professor from a combination of external modifiers, which are meant to precede the request. However, the modifiers fulfill their modifying (mitigating) function of grounders not through their explicit content but through the conversational implicatures they contain.

The external modifier 1.3., contained in the first extended speech turn of the student, actually does not fall under any classification of modifiers: it neither justifies, nor prepares, nor disarms. 1.3 is not only redundant but also irrelevant for the professor (who knows the schedule of their classes), representing an unclear side branch of the conversation, thus simultaneously violating the maxims of quantity and relevance of information. At the same time, the maxim of quantity is violated by the semantic structure of this act – it contains many redundant words in the form of internal modifiers: hedges such as "Basically" and "that's it," and the repetition of the downtoner "only." Besides considerations of negative politeness, the use of internal modifiers in 1.3. is meant to emphasize the idea that it's only one-time lesson. The violation of the maxims acts as a trigger for a weak conversational implicature, which is intended, in accordance with the principle of cooperation, to restore completeness and logical-semantic coherence. The implicature is based on the interaction of verbal means with presuppositional knowledge, presumably shared by the communicants: "the students will forget everything anyway in the six months that will pass between this class and the summer exams".

Such an implicature may already be associated with the grounding (the futility of the lesson) of the request not to hold the class, which cohesively should follow its justification. However, the speech act 3.1., which begins the student's next turn, is simply a pleonastic reformulation of the previous one, further complicating the structure of the non-preferential move. The pleonasm, by violating the maxim of quantity, additionally violates the maxim of clarity, as its submaxim is "be concise." In the internal semantic structure of the move, the violation of the maxim of conciseness is indexed by the hedge "it's just" and the adverb "already." The violations of the maxims are again meant to show the addressee that the speaker's words carry an implicit meaning. That is, the implicature of the previous act – "the futility of the single class" – is intended once again.

The next two sentences of turn 3 still do not constitute a request, providing two additional justifying modifiers. However, as with the modifiers 1.3. and 3.1., the modifying function in acts 3.2. and 3.3. is not performed by the explicit content of the justifications, but by the conversational implicatures of each, triggered by the violation of the cooperative maxims. For instance, the trigger for implicatures is the violation of the maxim of relevance by both sentences: the student clearly deviates from the main topic, so 3.2. and 3.3. are side moves, each of which could initiate side sequences if the professor is willing to "pick up" on this line of conversation.

Act 3.2. also deviates from the maxim of quantity, which is marked by the seemingly "redundant" words "usually" and "just", which in fact, thanks to the lexical presuppositions they contain, make a significant contribution to the justification of the request. The downtoner "just" serves as a mitigator for the action of "giving an assignment," implying, at the level of conventional implicature, that this is not difficult at all for the professor. The adverb "usually" acts as a generalizer, referring to a strategy of negative politeness. This strategy significantly reduces the imposition on the addressee, presenting what is expected from this specific professor as a general

rule. Accordingly, the justification for the request is not activated at the level of the explicit meaning of the external modifier 3.2. – i.e., the information that other professors gave assignments – but at the level of conversational implicature, restoring the relevance and quantity of information: instead of holding the class, give us an assignment—this is not a deviation from the rules, but a common practice ("usually"), everything is very simple ("just"). In sentence 3.3., markers of deviation from the maxim of quantity include the pleonastic repetition of the idea that students are working. The quantity of information can be restored through an implicature connecting the verbal code with the presuppositional knowledge that it is difficult for working students to attend classes: there will be few students in the class (if the professor decides to hold it).

Thus, all of the contextual variables highlighted by Brown and Levinson impact the level of implicitness of the request in the analyzed speech act, with the seriousness of the request being the predominant parameter. The request is inferred from the set of implicatures embedded in its external motivators. The triggers of these implicatures are violations of the maxims of quantity, relevance, and clarity of information. These violations are marked by numerous side sequences deviating from the main topic, pleonastic reformulations of the same content, hedges, and mitigators within the justification modifiers. The restoration of logical-semantic coherence, completeness, and clarity of information is achieved through the resulting implicit meaning – the content of the request. A fully informative statement should be inferred by the professor as the illocution of an indirect directive act: "Do not hold the class at all." Deriving the request's content at the level of implicature does not pose a threat to the face of the addressee, as the professor is given the optional choice to either "understand" or "not understand" the student's hints. In this case, the professor shows with his speech move 4 that he has inferred a discursive implicature – the content of the request intended by the addresser, but does not follow the implied request to change the structure of the session. The professor's response is laconic and confirms the institutional protocol (the class will take place as scheduled).

The correlation of pragmatic devices in Interaction 2 can be represented schematically as follows:

(1) A threat to the negative face of the institutional addressee, who is implicitly requested to violate institutional duties → (2) the request is formulated as a multi-component, non-preferential move, incorporating several external modifiers expressed through side sequential steps → (3) the modifier phrases as a whole violate the cooperative maxims of quantity, relevance, and clarity by deviating from the main topic and providing redundant or irrelevant information → (4) within the semantic structure of the modifier phrases, elements such as hedges, generalizers, and mitigators introduce additional violations of the same maxims, acting as markers of negative politeness → (5) these violations trigger conversational implicatures that justify the request at an implicit level → (6) an illocutionary act of an indirect directive request is derived from these implicatures.

The findings demonstrate that the speech act of request cannot be reduced to an isolated structure of a direct or implicit directive, but should instead be viewed as an integrative pragmatic complex formed through the interaction of multiple pragmatic phenomena. The analysis supports Brown and Levinson's (1987) assumption that the degree of indirectness and the accumulation of face-saving devices correlate with contextual variables such as institutional power, social distance, and the seriousness of imposition. At the same time, the study contributes to politeness-oriented pragmatics by demonstrating that these contextual variables

influence the degree of implicitness and the interface of pragmatic devices in different ways. In the analyzed teacher–student interactions, institutional power asymmetry and social distance trigger a relatively limited accumulation of mitigating devices, primarily realized through conventional indirectness, hedges, downtoners, and external modifiers. By contrast, the seriousness of imposition leads to a substantially more complex pragmatic configuration involving side sequences, markers of negative politeness, references to shared presuppositional knowledge, violations of cooperative maxims, and the generation of conversational implicatures through which the request itself is inferred rather than explicitly verbalized.

The findings also extend traditional structural approaches to request acts, which typically distinguish between the core or head act of the request and its mitigating peripheral modifiers (Alcón Soler et al., 2005; Reiter, 2000; Trosborg, 1995). While previous studies primarily treat external modifiers as supportive elements accompanying the request proper, the present analysis demonstrates that highly face-threatening requests may disrupt this conventional structure. In the second interaction, the seriousness of imposition leads to the reduction of the request head act itself, whose content is not verbalized explicitly but inferred through conversational implicatures generated by a combination of peripheral modifiers.

The study extends previous politeness-oriented approaches by showing that face-saving mechanisms are realized, in addition to conventional politeness markers (Flores-Salgado, Castineira-Benitez, 2018; Halupka-Rešetar, 2014; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Alcón Soler et al. 2005), through violations of cooperative maxims, and implicature-triggering mechanisms. In this respect, the findings confirm Grice's (1975, 1989) inferential model, according to which violations of quantity, relevance, and clarity generate conversational implicatures, while simultaneously demonstrating that such violations may perform additional face-saving and interactional functions in institutional communication.

The study also supports conversation-analytic observations regarding dispreferred actions (Kravchenko & Blidchenko-Naiko, 2020; Kravchenko & Zhykharieva, 2020; Robinson & Bolden, 2010), which are frequently characterized by structurally expanded turns, side sequences, hesitations, and elaborations. However, the present analysis further demonstrates that these structures are pragmatically interconnected with negative politeness strategies and implicature-generating violations of cooperative maxims, contributing to the mitigation of institutional face threats. The findings therefore confirm the hypothesis proposed in this study that the increasing seriousness of a request correlates with decreasing conventionality of request formulation and with multiplying and interaction of pragmatic devices. Consequently, indirect requests should be interpreted not as isolated speech acts, but as multifaceted pragmatic configurations emerging through the interface of speech-act structure, politeness strategies, conversational organization, and inferential processes.

4 CONCLUSION

This study has presented an integrative pragmatic analysis of request acts, demonstrating that various pragmatic devices associated with requests form a coherent complex, regularly interacting with one another as face-preserving mechanisms. By employing an integrative pragmatic approach, we have uncovered that these devices not only correlate in their function but also iconically reflect the level of seriousness of the request. This correlation emphasizes the pragmatic

balance between politeness strategies and the perceived threat to face, with the accumulation of such devices signaling a heightened level of face sensitivity.

The correlation of the following pragmatic devices has been identified: framing a request as a dispreferred move, including pre-sequences and side sequences that function as external modifiers of the act of request; violation of the maxims of quantity, relevance, and clarity of information by pre-sequences and side sequences, which trigger conversational implicatures; violation of the cooperative maxim of the quantity of information through hedges and mitigators within the structure of the request itself or its modifiers, leading to the strengthening of derived implicatures or the activation of new ones; the activation of negative politeness strategies through all internal and external complexities-modifiers in the dispreferred act; and the derivation of the illocutionary intent of the request based on implicatures as an indirect directive act.

The hypothesis posited in this article – that the seriousness of a request inversely affects its conventionality – was supported through analysis of two extended interactions between Student and Teacher. As the seriousness of a request increases, its conventionality diminishes, leading to requests that are more implicit or indirect. In these cases, the core of the request, that is, the request itself, may appear absent, compelling the addressee to engage in additional cognitive effort to infer the speaker's intention, deriving it from the set of implicatures built into external pragmatic modifiers associated with the justification of the request.

This research opens new avenues for exploring the interplay of pragmatics devices in other speech acts, expanding the integrative pragmatic model to encompass a broader range of communicative scenarios.

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