

Original Research

The role of prosody in expressing culture-specific speech behaviour of language teachers in English

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The article explores prosody as one of the most salient aspects of speech in expressing culture-specific speech behaviour of Russian teachers of English and their English counterparts. The significance of the research has been determined by the need to establish the features that display one's identity in a foreign language. Our concern is with the L1 strong influence on L2, due to which non-native speakers fail to conform to native-speaker norms of English. The question of whether to teach students native speaker-like pronunciation/prosody or tolerate the interference of their mother language was once strongly debated and many tend to abandon native-speaker norms for various reasons. However, based on a recent students' survey we can note that their view is to acquire the appropriate norm and sound native speaker-like. Moreover, the study analyses several groups of teachers of British and Russian origin and their classroom English language to point out certain prosodic features indicating their native accent and culture. Each of the segmentals is illustrated with examples from authentic demonstration lessons. A general scientific descriptive method is applied alongside the method of phonetic investigation. The assumption that prosody conveys strategies of politeness theory in the speech of language teachers in classroom discourse was confirmed by study results. We observe maximum correlation between implicit and explicit modality in the classroom management by the group of British informants whereas socially and culturally conditioned speech behaviour of the Russian teachers determined by the type of discourse accepted in society leads to a marked difference from the dominant strategies and prosodic features regarding politeness in British culture. The findings demonstrate the key role of prosody in the study of im/politeness. The article may be of interest to specialists in intercultural communication, phonetics, didactic communication and to anyone researching the issues of the culture-specific speech behaviour of English language teachers.

KEYWORDS: *impoliteness, politeness, prosody, accent, interference, classroom discourse, Russian, English*



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1. INTRODUCTION

The studies of im/politeness have been a hot topic for the last several decades. Special issues and whole volumes of journals have been dedicated to these studies, and scholars in different disciplines contributed to

the phenomena, enlarging the scope of research and boosting the popularity of the im/politeness themes. Such compelling interest can be explained by the pursuit of effective ways and mechanisms for interaction and better mutual understanding. Indeed, these scientific

ic achievements acquire particular significance in intercultural communication when *'due to considerable differences in cultures, there exists a real threat of miscommunication, as a result of which the partners will make an unfavourable impression on each other as impolite, tactless, and emotionally unrestrained speakers, or, on the contrary, will be perceived as indecisive interlocutors'* (Ivanova, 2019, p. 141).

Nevertheless, despite the variety of approaches, languages and contexts for research, methods of analysis of im/politeness there are few works describing and comparing the prosodic features of im/polite culture-specific speech behaviour. As Culpeper (2011) stated, the vast bulk of research on politeness or impoliteness pays woefully little attention to the role of prosody, neglecting such a crucial fact that prosody does more than disambiguate messages. Prosodic features can overrule conventional meanings associated with linguistic forms. It is interesting to give thought to it and try to find reasons for such a mismatch in research. Why does prosody being such a salient characteristic of speech get less consideration in the study of im/politeness?

First, we will contemplate and try to identify some possible reasons for that negligible interest towards prosody in the im/politeness domain. Then we will discuss prosodic interference that inevitably appears in the speech of Russian learners and point out the most relevant deviations from Standard English that might prevent conformity with native-speaker norms. We will also interpret the results of the survey regarding the importance of pronunciation/prosody in the work of future teachers of English and analyse several language lessons to verify the role of the prosodic features in expressing culture-specific speech behaviour in English.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study employed quantitative data collected from a questionnaire and a survey, which allowed us to gather information relevant for our work. Moreover, we analysed seven lessons by Russian and British teachers focusing on prosodic features expressing politeness that were used in classroom discourse. We scrutinised and interpreted the findings. A general scientific descriptive method is applied alongside the method of phonetic investigation (perceptive analysis of speech), which allows to observe the extent that prosody plays in maintaining politeness in Russian and British classroom discourse.

The list of abbreviations of Nuclear Tones and Heads used in the article:

HF – High Fall

LF – Low Fall

LR – Low Rise

MR – Mid Rise

MF – Mid Fall

FR – Fall Rise

HH – High Head

MH – Mid Head

SH – Stepping Head

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Changing views

The shift in the focus of teaching the English language from native speaker-like speech models toward intelligibility gave rise to a discriminatory attitude toward pronunciation and prosodic features. According to Munro and Derwing (2011), intelligibility is hard to assess but broadly, they understood it as the degree of a listener's actual comprehension of an utterance. They conducted research with L2 students to clarify some misconceptions about a foreign accent, seen as the cause of miscommunication, by examining its different facets and analysing its impact on intelligibility and comprehensibility of speech.

It is common knowledge that an accent or accented speech differ from the local variety, therefore might be indistinguishable, and might have a negative influence on communication (Popova & Magsumov, 2021). Munro and Derwing view comprehensibility as the listener's perception of how easy or difficult it is to understand a given speech sample and measured the amount of time or effort listeners spent to process utterances (Munro & Derwing, 2011). The overview of the works on pronunciation and intonation in Munro and Derwing (2011) and the results of the scientific experiments confirmed the idea of the explicit effect that pronunciation and intonation have on intelligibility and comprehensibility. However, the scholars emphasise that there are special aspects of prosody and segmentals, like stress error or monotone, etc. which are more crucial to intelligibility than others, hence should be given more attention in teaching the language. Neglecting general speaking habits, volume, rhythm, syllable structure and segmentals with a high functional role as stated by Munro and Derwing (2005) can be frustrating both for speakers and for interlocutors.

A stereotypical attitude towards accents according to the basic ranking into 'pleasant vs unpleasant' or 'appropriate vs inappropriate' (Andersson, 1992; Litvinov et al., 2017) existed up until the mid-20 century where

'the most pleasant to the ear' position was taken by the non-regional sociolect – Received Pronunciation. The bottom of the scale was given to the urban working-class accents. Multiple experiments on accented speech demonstrate the subjectivity of its perception, which has existed in society for a few centuries. People used to be judged according to the way they spoke, and cultural stereotypes or associations linked to the local speech varieties and not according to their level of competence (Mikhaleva, 2008).

This form of accent discrimination is gradually levelling off due to the diversification of the language and transition to a more tolerant treatment of any form of speech thanks to the policy of multiculturalism in the modern world. The fact that, according to the national census poll, native Londoners are now in a minority proves that, first of all, accents are flexible and undergo different modifications under the influence of extra linguistic factors and, secondly, there is a relative acceptance of new accent forms in everyday communication (Mikhaleva, 2016).

Consequently, a number of extralinguistic and linguistic factors can cause a distorted perception of a person in everyday communication. We can now witness the active development of self-concept and self-manifestation in the social environment and the English language in particular when traditional values of the language and culture are either lost, merged or slightly modified according to the speech community of the area.

As far as professional communication is concerned, some linguists interpret a foreign accent as '*a pronunciation defect of a non-native speaker, their individual cultural and personal features which differ from the features of a native speaker*' (Baryshnikov, 2020, p. 177). This takes us back to the subjective perception and accent inequality of the participants mentioned above. People may be perceived as incompetent, and the level of credibility may be rather low. Intolerance, rejection or even conflicts in intercultural communication could be avoided by sticking to a neutral form of the English language since there is no universal foreign accent as such which could facilitate mutual understanding and perception of the informants.

Secondly, we can presume that expanding globalisation and the internationalisation of speech behaviour are posing a threat to national cultures and languages, thus raising an interest in national cultures and a desire to preserve their own identity. Non-native speakers are not ready to completely blend in with a new culture

and master the native speaker-like speech, which may tamper with their self-image. Moreover, having an accent can be beneficial in communication with native speakers who are aware of speaking with foreigners and will modify their speech for the sake of their partners (Porter & Garvin, 1989; Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; Bermus et al., 2021). We do not favour this point of view, which recognises an accent as the main source of expressing identity, as being too naive.

Regarding compatibility of pronunciation and identity, we can turn to Timmis (2002) who speculates on the problem of what to consider a norm for the classroom. Being a full-time classroom teacher struggling with the dilemma of whether to teach his students native-speaker English or international English, he came across completely opposite academic views on the issue. Therefore, to clarify it for himself and find harmony in teaching he surveyed students and teachers from more than 45 countries by asking them questions on pronunciation and grammar. He got quite unexpected and interesting results, which we briefly summarise here. Most students who communicated with non-native speakers or were going to do so in future expressed a desire to achieve a native speaker-like English pronunciation, which would benefit their future career greatly. The teachers were more realistic, saying that native English pronunciation was a long-term goal that is practically next to impossible to accomplish and were satisfied with their learners preserving the accent of their country. Given the results of Timmis's (2002) research into pronunciation, we can suggest that there is a disagreement between the students' wish to sound natural and native speaker-like and the teachers' tolerant attitude toward their learners' accented speech.

Bearing in mind the issue of the role of prosody in im/politeness, we can suggest one more argument, describing prosodic features as conventional and gradient (Arndt & Janney 1985, 1987; Culpeper, 2011) and thus being too elusive to instruct and follow. Indeed, they prove these characteristics by the example of the tempo of speech or the pitch of the voice and raise the question of what tempo to count as fast or slow, high pitch or low pitch and so on. These aspects are relative. At the same time Culpeper (2011) stated that these gradient and relative prosodic traits make it crucial to account for the pragmatic inferencing that underpins its role in communication, once again emphasising close interaction of prosody and pragmatics where prosody helps to maximise a particular part in an utterance or a text for the right interpretation of it.

3.2. Prosodic interference

To state the obvious, while learning a second language people do not merely acquire necessary vocabulary, grammar and other knowledge and add it to their brains, complex processes of interaction between the languages take place in the minds of learners. Such interactive phenomena back in the mid 20 century were given the notions of transfer, which meant positive effects, and interference, which meant negative ones. In our research, we came across the negative influence/interference of the Russian mother tongue prosodic features (L1) on the second English language (L2). Prosody is believed to be one of the fundamental difficulties faced by learners of English.

In general, interference is defined as deviation from norms caused by one language influencing another. Intensive studies of the phenomenon began a long time ago. Russian phoneticians have made a great contribution to the theory of interference, implementing different approaches to its study: linguistic (Dubovsky, 1978; Dubovsky & Zagraevskaya, 2014; Metlyuk, 1986), cognitive (Fomichenko, 2005), linguo-didactic (Vishnevskaya, 1985, 1993; Anashkina, 1992; Ivanova, 2001; Makarova, 2011).

A significant number of the studies are devoted to the intonation errors in the English speech of Russian bilinguals and some practical hints about how to overcome the difficulties and improve suprasegmental qualities of speech. As Vishnevskaya and Levina (2007) stated, Russian speakers tend to make mistakes in the pronunciation of the English nuclear tones substituting them with less gradual Russian ones. Moreover, complex and compound English tones are much narrower than they are in the English language, and Russian speakers often level them out. They also make a smaller number of pauses in utterances, wrong distribution of stress elements, and do not observe the alteration of stressed and unstressed syllables, which leads to the problems with rhythm.

Moreover, the difference between Russian and English intonation patterns lies not only in the manner of articulating the contours, the choice of the prosodic elements but also in their functioning in speech and the attitudes and emotions that they express in different types of utterances. This is one of the crucial factors in revealing one's national identity and dominant strategic directions regarding positive or negative politeness culture (Ivanova et al., 2020). Makarova (2017) gives a lot of attention in her research to the sentence accent location in the English speech of the Russians, emphasising

that the communicative effect of such errors has been poorly studied and does not have a valid experimental confirmation. In different perception experiments conducted by the scholar together with American speakers, they identified and described erratic nucleus shifts in the English utterances of Russian students and the communicative effect they produced on native speakers. Native auditors declared most of the shifts unacceptable. In many cases, they could not derive the speaker's intention from the message. In other words, communication between the speaker and the listener was not successful and failed to achieve the intended goal of the speaker. Ivanova (2001) suggests that the main cause of accent shifts is due to the incorrect interpretation of the meaning of utterances or the neglect of the preceding context. Students fail to observe 'given' and 'new' information (theme/rheme) as important determinants of accentuation or deaccentuation of words.

Anashkina (1992) analysed prosodic interference of contact establishing phrases in dialogues and noted that Russian students do not often observe intonation contours, which convey a certain pragmatic meaning. For example, instead of a friendly, rising tone that encourages further conversation in informal greetings, they sound gloomy and categorical using a falling nuclear tone. The author points out those Russian speakers seem to be unaware of expressing and transmitting their emotions and attitudes to listeners, thus overlooking the essential attitudinal function of intonation. As stated by Wells (2018), *'English makes more elaborate use of intonation to signal meaning than do most other languages. This is the reason why it should not be neglected by learners and teachers of English as a foreign language'* (Wells, 2018, p. 11).

4. STUDY AND RESULTS

4.1. Pronunciation/prosody survey results

Timmis's (2002) survey covered a wide geographical area and included responses from more than 40 countries. It encouraged us to hear Russian students' opinion about pronunciation. Our research was carried out in 2 phases.

In phase 1 we surveyed 100 undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Department of Language Teaching and Business Communication of Moscow City University (Russia). We intended to explore how the respondents would portray a foreign language teacher, what characteristics (linguistic, psychological, personal, the art of teaching, etc.) they consider the most relevant in this profession. We used a questionnaire designed

according to a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is the lowest point and 5 is the highest one in assessing a particular component. The questionnaire contained 20 questions.

As this paper is critically concerned with the role of prosody conveying im/politeness in the language of non-native teachers of English in a classroom discourse and identifying the importance of acquiring native speaker-like intonation models, we will briefly outline only those data that are appropriate for us in this research. According to the respondents, the most valuable characteristics in terms of linguistic competence for a foreign language teacher are native-speaker fluency in English; the ability to interact with representatives of different cultures; native speaker-like pronunciation and prosody and the ability to tailor their language to the level and needs of their students. The participants ranked the suggested options in the questionnaire highly. The maximum scores of 4.7 and 4.6 were given to tailoring and fluency respectively. We can note that such a ratio might be attributed to upper-intermediate or advanced L2 students who want to deal with very competent fluent teachers to master a language. However, it might beg the question of whether being fluent in a language is compulsory with beginners, elementary or pre-intermediate students. As for native speaker-like pronunciation and prosody, the average score was 4.2, which, in our opinion, may indicate a tendency among the students to regard native speaker-like norms as very desirable for a foreign language teacher.

In phase 2 we selected and surveyed 12 students studying pedagogy and English in the second year of the university, who are going to be classroom English teachers. All of them are from the most advanced group in terms of their English and have a good command of the language. The aim was to investigate their perception of the importance of studying English pronunciation and the value of sounding native speaker-like both in Russian and in English.

We began by asking the respondents to express their views on whether they consider pronunciation a key to success, particularly in their future profession. In addition, we wanted to find out if the students would like to speak English without a trace of their native accent. Nine out of twelve respondents (75%) were sure that it is crucial for an English teacher to sound like a native speaker of English and to be a role model for their students. They wanted to get rid of their Russian accent in English. Certainly, not all of them speak naturally like a native speaker themselves and they are aware of their problems, mainly in terms of prosody.

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Such responses were quite predictable, and it was quite interesting for us to know the reasons behind the opinions of those three informants who do not think pronunciation is vital in teaching the language. The students who were not aspiring to native speaker-like pronunciation thought that being confident and using the correct grammar and vocabulary would be enough for them to become a leading professional. It appears that these three students experience problems with pronunciation themselves concerning the articulation of some sounds as well as intonation. The problems with articulation are their 'fossilised' errors as initially in their school years they were not instructed on the right position of the organs of articulation. We can acknowledge that some phonetic mistakes in the articulation of some English consonants did not influence the intelligibility or comprehensibility of their speech. However, it was different with vowel sounds. Not having the short-long vowel opposition in Russian, the students quite often do not observe this differentiating qualitative feature of vowels in English either, thus causing a distraction for their listeners.

Concerning the prosodic features, all respondents find it difficult to acquire them correctly. While practising reading dialogues and texts with the focus on intonation in their classes of Phonetics, some of them managed to imitate the speakers and had a positive outcome, sounding quite natural. Eventually, they delivered their own monologues and had roundtable discussions on a given topic where they followed certain native speaker-like intonation models to both their delight and the delight of their teachers of Phonetics.

However, when it comes to other classes, for example, Business English or Speech Practice, few of the students have prosody in mind. They usually concentrate on what to say rather than how they say it and consequently their intonation patterns are Russian, and their speech is heavily accented. They fail to demonstrate fi-

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nal nuclear tones; they sound monotonous and do not project their voice and the articulation is not energetic. We doubt that they deliberately sacrifice native speaker-like models to preserve their self-identity. It is more likely that sounding like a native speaker requires a degree of effort, both mental and physical. It does not come naturally. It needs practice and experience and a desire to leave one’s comfort zone to achieve a positive result, and the students are not always willing to work hard.

Our next question was how the students perceive accent in their native Russian language and whether accent hampers intelligibility and can have a negative impact on somebody’s career. In 100% of the responses, the students say that they are not sensitive to Russian accented speech in everyday communication; it does not bother them at all. In other words, they all displayed a high degree of tolerance towards accented Russian speech.

Nevertheless, non-native speaker pronunciation will clearly be a disadvantage if a person moving to Russia wants to build a career which requires communication with people because they should sound natural. In a professional environment the respondents want to deal with native speaker-like norms, otherwise they will feel some distraction and even mistrust. Here we can note a contradiction between the way some students see themselves in their profession as English teachers and what they expect from non-native speakers who work in Russia.

4.2. Expressing politeness through prosody in classroom discourse

To identify the role of the prosodic features that they play in expressing culture-specific speech behaviour in English we analysed seven language lessons conducted by British and Russian English language teachers. The comparison of their classroom language

was carried out at the auditory level with the main emphasis on the choice of the prosodic elements in the utterances. The hypothesis of the present research is that there is a clear correlation between explicit and implicit modality, which means that negative and positive politeness culture categories are reflected in the intonation patterns chosen by a speaker. We believe that secondary illocutions, which express the state of mind of the speaker, his/her status-role relations and which are combined with the primary illocutionary meanings, are culturally and socially conditioned and correlate with the types of discourse accepted in society. Thus, we assume that national identity may be subconsciously revealed in a person’s speech behaviour.

The first group of informants was a group of native speakers of English. Generalising the teaching style of the British informants we can note that they demonstrate excellent rapport with the audience. The soft tonality of most of the utterances is manifested both in the choice of language and in their prosodic design. A restrained but at the same time unobtrusive, unimposing manner of setting tasks and eliciting answers, moderate pace of speech, and clearly pronounced instructions are the features that characterise all the lessons by the British teachers chosen for the present research.

The quality of the teacher’s speaking style is confident, intonationally expressive, but not overly emotional or emphatic. We notice emotional self-regulation during the lessons. Distancing strategies are clearly expressed in the choice of vocabulary, syntax and intonation. We have identified the following tactics of classroom interaction used by the British teachers of English: getting students involved, giving instructions, initiating the activity, giving feedback. The main forms of manifestation of negative politeness are the expressions of uncertainty, softening of the utterances, minimising the imposition, use of modals, conventional indirectness and expressions of doubt in the language of the teachers.

The samples below have been taken from the lessons and interpreted according to the strategies of a negative politeness culture and the basic prosodic features of culture-specific speech behaviour, which we consider the main communication principles in the present study.

We notice emotional self-regulation in the speech of the British language teachers when they are setting communicative tasks. The politeness of distancing is clearly manifested in the types of phrases used by all the informants.

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The intonation of the teachers' address to students varies from low falls when calling a student by name, to emphatic high falls when using the pronoun *you*. A low rising tone is used to talk to a group of students.

What do you (HF) think?

Ladies (LR)? What do you two (HF) think?

Daniel (LF), tell us something about your partner (HH+LF).

Feedback language is rather limited in the choice of vocabulary. *Ok* and *good* are often repeated as an approval, used with a rising tone, whereas to signal the transition to the next task – *so, ok* – a descending tone is used.

Ok (LR).

Ok (LF), fantastic (HF).

Very (LF) good. Yeah (MF).

Yes (LF), that's right (LF).

The examples below illustrate negative politeness, which is expressed by softening statements, careful wording and using questions instead of direct imperatives.

Complex utterances

I'd like you to work in your groups (MH+LF), please?

So (LF) what I would like you to do now (MF) is look at all these actions (FR).

Conventional indirectness

Can you talk (HF) together for about two minutes (HF+LR) and answer these two questions (ST H+LF)?

Can you go back and sit in your places (FR)?

Modal verbs

Can I just stop you there (FR)?

Ok, I'm gonna stop you there now, if I may (FR).

Being pessimistic, i.e., expressing doubt about the possibility of an event, is realised in subjunctive statements. However, conditionals are not very frequent in the classroom language that we analysed.

If you check with your partner (MH+FR) ...?

British informants do use imperatives in giving instructions. On the one hand, it contradicts the theory of negative politeness culture where there is a tendency to

sound less direct and avoid imposition. On the other hand, since it is hardly possible to avoid this syntactical structure in academic discourse, the correct choice of intonation helps to soften the command. For example, in one of the phrases the rising nuclear tone is used in four syntagms out of six to encourage the listeners to perform.

Write some ideas (F+R), talk together (F+R). Five (HF) minutes. Go (HF). I want you to talk together (MH+FR). So, could you talk together (MH+LF), please (LR)?

Despite the above mentioned, the most typical structure for the imperatives is the V+N structure.

Have a think (HF) about that (LF) when you're using (LF) it.

Take a look at this picture (HH+FR).

Have a look at number 5 (HH+HF).

The other thing that we find typical of the negative politeness strategy is the manner and wording with which the teacher sets students' homework. For instance, one of the teachers asks the students for their permission three times, waiting for their approval, which looks like a kind of a game, and as a result, without receiving any reaction from the class, he voices the homework. Negative politeness strategy is expressed here via minimising the imposition, softening the statements.

Thank you very much (LF) for today (HF). You worked very hard (HH+HF). I'd like (LF) to give you some homework (FR). Ok (LR)? Ok (LR)? Alright (LR)? For tomorrow (FR). I'd like (LF) you please (LR) to write (LF) and say (LF) what you'd do (LR) in each of those sentences (HH+FR). Thank you very much, guys (HH+LR). Please (LR) go for coffee (HH+FR).

The dynamics of the lessons observed is consistently smooth. Only once at one demo lesson does the teacher increase the height of the falling tone and the volume of the utterance in general trying to encourage the students to react more actively to tasks, to repeat the phrases in chorus. However, a minute later, she lowers the pitch and volume, the energy subsides and the entire emotional uplift decreases.

Ok (HF). Let's get some energy (HH+HF) in here, ok (LR). Sit up (HH+MR), hands down (HH+MR). Look at me (MR). Yes (LR). Put some energy (HH+MR). So (LF)....

We observe maximum affinity of implicit and explicit modality in the classroom management by the group of British informants, who apply different negative politeness strategies to ultimately achieve their

'We also notice simple grammar constructions in setting communicative tasks. Future Simple or Present Simple Tenses are used to give instructions. This may sound rather pressured to an English speaker, especially in combination with falling tones'

goal. Interaction with the students employs a variety of prosodic components that are socially and culturally specific to the didactic communication as well as balancing the social distance between the teacher and the student, which is hierarchically minimised in Western culture. The prevailing nuclear tones expressing secondary illocution of the distancing strategies are a Fall-Rise complex nuclear tone and a simple Low-Rise tone. Mid-Level Head in combination with descending tones of Low or High pitch level achieve the desired effects in academic contexts.

The second group of informants includes native Russian teachers of English. The dynamic of the lessons analysed is fast. Students follow the instructions, which are clear and simply verbalised and teachers are actively involved in working with their students. One type of activity is replaced by another without long pauses.

The prevailing communicative style is that of dominance and authoritarianism. However, one typical feature of the positive politeness culture is responsiveness and participation in the students' language progress. The timbre of voice is a key factor that demonstrates status-role relations in the group of Russian informants. We can characterise it as cold and imperative. Giving instructions, in one of the lessons analysed, the teacher sounds tough with emotional unvariability. The teacher speaks in a high pitch at an increased volume, even though the student audience is rather small.

Positive politeness is demonstrated through the power difference between the teachers and the individuals involved in the educational act and the degree of imposition of authority is quite high. The examples below illustrate a positive politeness characteristic of Eastern European culture. The dominant strategic directions regarding this culture in the lessons include direct imperatives, personal constructions and modality and expressions of interest in the addressee's involvement in the activities.

Small talk at the beginning of the lesson is typical of the strategy of involvement in the positive politeness culture, however, prosodically it does sound categorical

and business-like due to the wrong choice of a falling tone in this sort of utterance. The correct tone in English phrases where we hear Low-Falls would be a low rising tone, which expresses interest and involvement.

How are you (LF)? Good (LR)? Good (LR)? The weather (LF) is bad (LR) but you're good (LF).

Feedback language just like in the group of the British informants also contains some interjections used with a Russified rising tone, however, a polite expression is used with a typical English complex Fall-Rise tone.

Ah (LR). Oh (MR). Good (HF). Thank you (FR).

General statements quite frequently start with the adverb *so* as a way of indicating the teacher's idea, said with a falling tone. This is an example of lexical and prosodic transfer into English. Addressing students by name is also realised by a low falling tone in English, which is a typical tone of address in Russian. This, however, correlates with the style of the British teachers. We also notice simple grammar constructions in setting communicative tasks. Future Simple or Present Simple Tenses are used to give instructions. This may sound rather pressured to an English speaker, especially in combination with falling tones. However, this strategy illustrates the positive politeness culture.

So, Katya (LF), you will go (LF) next time (LR) and you will correct (LF) your mistake.

So, what do you do? So, one person runs to the board, chooses one word and writes what?

You don't write anything now. You just speak to your partner, you look at your picture and you make up a sentence and say it, all right?

We analysed a series of video lessons with one group of students and noticed their progress in learning the language material. And even though the students appear tense and are verbally reserved, they smile during the lesson, and appear to be psychologically comfortable. That might be because they have been studying with this teacher for a long time and are familiar with the style and manner of conducting classes. Thus, we cannot deny the influence of a teacher's personal style on the conduct of his/her classes and the correlation between prosodic features and personality type. The teacher is temperamental and emotional. Instructions are expressed in a motivational imperative form, repeated several times with a categorical descending tone.

Imperatives prevail in the teacher talk of all the Russian informants. We assume that this is the way that teachers concentrate students' attention on their in-

structions, subconsciously demonstrating their status, adopting the role of a controller of the lesson, increasing the social distance. Typical of the British informants, V+N constructions have not been spotted in the classroom language of this group.

Now look at the picture (HH+LF).

Stop (HF). Now (LF) listen to me (LF).

Now. Martin, stop (LF). Sit down (LF). Relax (LF).

Prosodically, teacher talk in the demonstration lessons of this group of informants is similar with little variation; the most frequent falling tone is used in imperatives. Softening of the phrases with an exclamation like *please* makes imperatives sound politer, on the one hand, and adds more force to the request, on the other. The melodic colouring of the phrase by using a Mid-Rise intonation in the exclamations reduces the reserve of the falling tone in the main utterance. However, the Russified Mid-Rise intonation indicates the transfer of the rising tone pattern in the native language to a foreign language.

Ask me this question, please.

Please, stop. Pencils down.

Strong modal verbs expressing obligation are chosen by Russian teachers to give instructions. In combination with raised pitch and increased loudness such types of utterances create a rather domineering manner by the teachers.

And then you have to stand here, you will make a line.

You can correct mistakes of your colleagues, then you come back.

The message in the group of Russian teachers of English is conveyed explicitly through the choice of grammar and vocabulary. The teachers' speech is prevalent in the use of imperatives and words expressing directives.

There is minimum correlation between explicit and implicit modality in the classroom management by the group of Russian informants, who use positive politeness strategies in communication with their students. Teachers employ the prosodic components that are socially and culturally specific to the role and status of the speaker accepted in Eastern culture. The prevailing nuclear tones expressing secondary illocution of the strategies of positive politeness culture are falling tones and an involuntary Russified Mid-Rise tone.

To support our assumptions that the choice of intonation patterns reflects the politeness culture theory, we analysed a lesson in Russian taught by a British teacher. We present a sample of the phrases in phonetic script.

The intonation of the address to students varies from Fall-Rise when calling a student by name, to Low-Fall when using the collective noun *class*.

Kiana (FR).

Class (LF).

Melodic variation and the choice of nuclear tones typical of the English language and representing negative transfer into Russian proves our hypothesis. Both positive and negative particles (*yes, no*) are pronounced with a Fall-Rise tone for *yes* with a meaning of encouragement, support and a High-Fall to express involvement, interest and soften the negation. In Russian in a similar context, these words would be articulated using a Mid-Fall tone.

Da (FR).

Net (HF).

The teacher expresses enthusiasm both non-verbally and verbally. Clear actual division of a sentence (theme-rheme affinity) is phonetically inferred and expressed by Fall and Fall-Rise nuclear tones. Very emotional word-by-word emphasis with nuclear tones may be attributed to the teaching process, however, the choice of nuclear tones relates to the strategies of the negative politeness culture and deviates from the norms of the Russian language.

Kto (FR) skazal (FR) 'Ya hochu pojti v teatr' (SH +MF)? / Who said 'I want to go to the theatre?'

On skazal (FR), ya (LR) ne (FR) hochu (LR) idti (LR) s Liamom (LF). / He said 'I don't want to go with Liam.'

No (LF) eto (LR) problema (HF). / But this is a problem.

5. CONCLUSION

National and cultural specifics of behaviour are expressed in the choice of prosodic characteristics of the speaker. Asymmetry of politeness systems may lead to misinterpretation of teachers' verbal intentions by their audience. The difference between the Russian and British style is expressiveness versus restraint strategies. Thus, a style that doesn't impose, indirect expression of instructions and relative restrictions on the use of imperatives are typical features of the English communication style.

According to study results, the most frequent prosodic features used by the British teachers are combinations of falling and rising tones, low falling tone and mid pitch. The timbre quality is soft, calm and relaxed. This, together with the syntactic structures, makes role inequality less obvious. In the English lan-

guage if the primary illocution is expressed by an imperative, the secondary illocution – i.e., prosody – softens the tonality of the phrase.

As far as the Russian teachers' repertoire is concerned, we notice the use of Fall and Mid-Rise tones which are an example of negative transfer. Tonality is the key factor, which demonstrates the role and status of the speakers in this group. The instructions sound like commands, business-like but emotionally flat. This style of communication and specific strategies used in classroom language are motivated by socio-cultural factors which are common to the Eastern tradition high power distance society and consequently, to Russian-speaking students, sound appropriate and comprehensible. We stick to the idea that the teachers employ a prosodic style subconsciously, which to some degree reflects their personal style.

Teachers in both groups are accommodating, wanting to cooperate and overall, linguistically polite. They use expressions that are both contextually appropriate and understood as socially positive by their target audience. However, to a native speaker of English an explicit illocution of Russian informants typical of positive politeness based on an involvement approach may appear as rather direct and an imposition and can pose a threat of miscommunication.

On the one hand, the manner of behaviour, lack of the mask of friendliness, a general impression of author-

itarianism when displaying positive politeness strategies in a foreign language may indicate that teachers are bossy, not involved in the work and are indifferent to the audience. This creates a negative impression of Russian speakers of English judging by their language repertoire. On the other hand, speaking about the job of an English teacher, who acts as a mediator of culture and a source of ethno-cultural information, we face the problem of insufficient awareness among the language teachers of this role and their task. Being experts on foreign language culture, teachers should transfer their knowledge and their experience by presenting themselves as role models for students, and their speech behaviour, presumably, should be identified by students with the speech of a native speaker. Hence the need to be able to switch from the native language to a foreign one at the phonetic level: softening the tonality, increasing the register, using nuclear tones in accordance with the rules of their functioning and adding targeting would be more positively perceived by representatives of a foreign language culture. Socio-cultural parameters are manifested in the language and their awareness helps us to understand and correctly interpret the communicative behaviour of representatives of different linguistic cultures. Thus, we tend to believe that strategic use of the language being part of the communicative competence should be taught to learners to be able to apply suitable strategies in a foreign language.

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