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A Comparative Pragmatic Analysis of Requests in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak based on Trosborg's model

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Abstract: This article presents a comparative analysis of request speech acts in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak languages, using Trosborg's taxonomy of request strategies. Based on literary data from The Catcher in the Rye, Oq kema, and Ashıq bolmağan kim bar, the study identifies patterns of directness, indirectness, and politeness in requests. The findings reveal significant cultural and pragmatic variation across the three languages.

Keywords: Speech act, request, Trosborg's taxonomy, politeness, pragmatics, English, Uzbek, Karakalpak, comparative linguistics.

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INTRODUCTION

Requesting is a universal but culturally sensitive speech act that requires speakers to manage face, power, and social distance effectively. In pragmatics, requests are considered face-threatening acts (FTAs) due to their impositive nature. The way speakers mitigate this threat varies across languages and cultures, depending on their politeness norms and communicative expectations. This study conducts a cross-linguistic comparative analysis of request strategies in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak, using Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy of request strategies. The objective is to determine the dominant request types in each language and to explore the degree of directness preferred by speakers within literary dialogue, which mirrors natural language use.

Literature review. The speech act of request has been extensively studied in pragmatics, particularly in the field of interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics. Trosborg (1995) developed a comprehensive taxonomy of request strategies that differentiates among direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect forms. Direct strategies include imperatives and performatives, while conventionally indirect requests rely on modalized questions or preparatory conditions. Non-conventionally indirect requests are expressed as hints, requiring inferencing on the part of the hearer.

Trosborg's taxonomy has proven valuable in identifying the pragmatic mechanisms behind face-saving behavior and politeness strategies. It provides a structured way to assess the level of imposition, speaker authority, and the hearer's autonomy. This model is particularly effective when comparing languages with distinct sociolinguistic traditions, as it highlights how linguistic forms encode cultural values in interaction.

Research Methodology. This study employs a qualitative pragmalinguistic method to analyze the speech act of requesting in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak languages. The analysis is grounded in Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy of request strategies, which provides a structured classification system for categorizing requests into direct, conventionally indirect, non-conventionally indirect, and hint strategies.

The data source consists of naturally occurring request expressions extracted from literary dialogues in three culturally significant works: *The Catcher in the Rye* (English), *Oq kema* (Uzbek), and *Ashıq bolmaǵan kim bar* (Karakalpak). From each text, ten examples of request speech acts were purposively selected based on contextual relevance and representativeness of authentic dialogic interaction.

Each request was manually coded and categorized according to its level of directness as defined by Trosborg's model. The analysis involved contextual interpretation, speech act identification, and classification of the request type. This approach allows for cross-cultural comparison and identification of pragmatic tendencies in each language.

The study applies descriptive analysis to compare the frequency and nature of request strategies across the three languages. Additionally, discourse contextualization was used to understand how social roles, power relations, and interpersonal familiarity influence the form and function of requests in the chosen literary works.

Analysis and results. The analysis of request speech acts across the three literary works "*The Catcher in the Rye"* (English), "*Oq kema"* (Uzbek), and "*Ashıq bolmaǵan kim bar"* (Karakalpak) reveals distinct distributions and pragmatic features in accordance with Trosborg's taxonomy. The taxonomy distinguishes among four main request categories: direct requests, conventionally indirect requests, non-conventionally indirect (hints), and mild hints.

In English data from "*The Catcher in the Rye"*, the predominant strategies fall into the conventionally indirect category. Examples such as "Would you mind giving me a hand?" and "Can you just listen to me for a second?" exemplify the query preparatory form, which includes modal verbs and interrogative structures. These requests are frequently hedged with expressions of politeness, such as "please," "I was wondering," or softened tone, indicating a high concern for negative face and mitigation of imposition. Direct strategies and hints are used sparingly, mostly in emotionally tense moments or with close social distance, reflecting a culturally embedded tendency toward individualism and autonomy in American English.

In Uzbek data from "*Oq kema"*, the requests display a relatively balanced use of direct and conventionally indirect strategies. Direct forms such as imperatives ("Olib boring", "Ayting") are softened by the use of honorifics ("Bobo", "Mo'min bobo") or polite modality like "iltimos." Conventionally indirect forms often appear as modal questions ("Aytingchi, oq kema qachon keladi?") or polite suggestions. These strategies reflect Uzbek collectivist culture, where respect for elders, hierarchical relationships, and deference are pragmatically encoded into speech acts. Hints and non-conventionally indirect strategies are rare but may surface in emotionally charged or socially delicate contexts.

In Karakalpak data from "*Ashıq bolmaǵan kim bar"*, the majority of requests are realized through direct strategies, particularly imperatives ("Aspang'a qarań!", "Bıyaqqa kelip!"). The directness is culturally acceptable within the local norms of solidarity, shared understanding, and community closeness. However, in emotionally vulnerable moments, mitigated forms or indirect suggestions do emerge, such as "Men ortańızda ju'reyin", which suggest a more solidarity-driven politeness model than deference-based. Use of hints is minimal and mostly context-bound, underscoring the reliance on implicit cultural cues rather than explicit linguistic mitigation.

A comparative breakdown of the strategic usage in the three languages based on the selected corpus is as follows:

Language	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect (Hints)	Mild Hints

Language	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect (Hints)	Mild Hints
English	Low	High	Moderate	Low
Uzbek	Moderate	Moderate to High	Low	Low
Karakalpak	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low

The results demonstrate that directness vs. indirectness in requests is not solely a linguistic choice but a reflection of deeper cultural dimensions, such as power distance, individualism/collectivism, and politeness orientation. While English emphasizes indirectness and autonomy, Uzbek leans toward respectful moderation, and Karakalpak illustrates directness within communal norms.

These findings confirm the cultural relativity of request strategies and highlight the need for pragmatic sensitivity when engaging in intercultural communication. The variation in strategy use also reflects genre conventions, as all three corpora are drawn from literary dialogue where character relationships and emotions influence language use.

Conclusion and recommendations. This study has demonstrated that the realization of request speech acts varies significantly across English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak, influenced by linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic norms. The application of Trosborg's taxonomy has revealed that English speakers tend to favor conventionally indirect strategies to maintain politeness and mitigate imposition. In contrast, Uzbek speakers employ a balanced combination of direct and indirect forms, often incorporating honorifics and softeners to express deference and maintain social harmony. Karakalpak speakers show a preference for direct strategies, reflecting cultural values tied to urgency, solidarity, and contextual familiarity, while still relying on discourse context for politeness.

The findings confirm that request formulation is not universal but shaped by sociocultural expectations embedded in each language community. The analysis underscores the relevance of pragmatic competence and cultural awareness in cross-linguistic and intercultural communication. These insights may serve as a foundation for future research in comparative pragmatics, intercultural communication, and language pedagogy.

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