



NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

*Maria Grabovskaya, Ekaterina Gridneva,  
Andrian Vlachov*

# **POLITENESS STRATEGIES OF RUSSIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS: QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO QUALITATIVE DATA**

BASIC RESEARCH PROGRAM

WORKING PAPERS

SERIES: LINGUISTICS  
WP BRP 68/LNG/2018

*Maria Grabovskaya<sup>1</sup>, Ekaterina Gridneva<sup>2</sup>,  
Andrian Vlakhov<sup>3</sup>*

## **POLITENESS STRATEGIES OF RUSSIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS: QUANTITATIVE APPROACH TO QUALITATIVE DATA<sup>4</sup>**

This study deals with the politeness strategies of speakers of Russian, focusing on verbal expression of politeness. After running a field survey in schools in mid-2018, we try to analyze specific verbal markers of expressing politeness quantitatively. Four such markers were selected for this study, namely greeting, leave-taking, expressing gratitude and apology. Quantitative analysis shows that there is a clear frequency pattern found in these markers' use, indicating a relatively high degree of sociolinguistic variation. Possible causes of this effect are discussed, including cultural diversity and multilingual setting of the modern Russian school communicative domain.

JEL Classification: Z

Keywords: Russian, politeness, sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology, greetings, leave-taking, gratitudes, apology

---

<sup>1</sup> National Research University Higher School of Economics. School of Linguistics: Lecturer, Postgraduate Student. Email: magrabovskaya@gmail.com.

<sup>2</sup> National Research University Higher School of Economics. Department of English Language for the Humanities: Tutor. Email: egridneva@hse.ru.

<sup>3</sup> National Research University Higher School of Economics. Laboratory of Linguistic Conflict Resolution Studies and Contemporary Communicative Practices: Research Fellow. School of Linguistics: Senior Lecturer. Email: avlakhov@hse.ru.

<sup>4</sup> The article was prepared within the framework of the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2018 (grant №18-05-0013) and by the Russian Academic Excellence Project «5-100».

## **1. Introduction: politeness studies and Russian communicative culture**

Linguistic politeness studies are a well-established field of research originating both in language and sociocultural studies. As van Olmen points out, “[l]inguistic politeness can be defined as the ways in which language is employed in conversation to show consideration for the feelings and desires of one’s interlocutors, to create and uphold interpersonal relationships <...>, and to comply with the rules for what society or one’s culture considers appropriate behavior” (van Olmen, 2017). At its early stages, politeness research followed the sociological studies of interaction, employing such concepts as the cooperative principle, speech act and social face (Goffman 1972; 1983). This approach was refined in the pivotal work of Brown and Levinson (1987: 101–129) which introduced the concepts of positive and negative *faces* within verbal communication. Along with the studies of the cooperative principle by Grice (1975) where the well-known concept of communicative maxims was introduced, these works were crucial for the sociological studies of linguistic politeness.

However, the theoretical basis of the entire field was somewhat shaken in the later decades when anthropologists claimed that the cooperative principle is not universal (Keenan 1976: 67–80; Foley 1997: 279). As van Olmen (op. cit.) states, “[o]ne of the main objections was that, in [previous] approaches, politeness is a theoretical construct by observers, and that this so-called etic or second-order concept is often at odds with the emic or first-order views of politeness held by members of the observed groups. The discursive approach <...> sees politeness as constructed through discourse, and it concentrates on the ways in which the concept is used in interaction by the members of the observed group”. The discursive approach seems to be the most promising alternative to classic interaction studies as it takes all possible points of view into account and is based on data collected in the field. A comprehensive overview of different approaches to politeness is featured in Culpeper (2011: 393–397).

Studies of politeness in Russian communicative culture are generally considered to be scarce and, for the most part, focusing on either intercultural communication or substandard variants of Russian; a good summary of existing studies in the field can be found in (Buras, Krongauz 2013: 121–122). There is a nascent tradition of studying Russian politeness strategies within anthropology (Rudneva 2016); such studies use the concept of *community or practice* (ibid.: 221) when specific communities of this kind are studied using observation method. The main advantage of this approach is that it deals with spontaneous communication which can potentially help to understand how the communication in Russian works when not affected by written norms; however, such qualitative data is hard to collect and not always reliable.

The entire field of Russian (im)politeness still lacks its scholar, which is especially true about politeness studies for specific communicative domains. There have been several attempts

to bridge this gap (or rather a chasm) recently, using tools from various disciplines, both qualitative and quantitative ones. One thing is certain, though: to be able to compare different contexts, domains and cultures, we need to collect rich field data and apply quantitative methods to identify patterns and correlations within this dataset. This is the main framework used in this study.

## **2. Research question and methodology**

The research project this study is a part of aims at analyzing the politeness strategies used by speakers of Russian in specific communicative domains. For this study, we chose one specific domain, namely the politeness strategies of Russian school students in their interpersonal communication. This field was chosen due to its relative accessibility for the project members as well as because of the cultural and language superdiversity of urban schools in modern Russia.

When speaking of politeness, we follow the approach introduced by Watts (1992) who claims that politeness is socio-culturally determined behavior; however, we also accept the limitation introduced by Curl and Drew (2008: 143) that the politeness strategies are afflicted by the specifics of the situational context. While comprehensive understanding of those contexts can only be gained through the use of qualitative methods, we can still measure the use of specific language material in this domain and identify factors affecting the choice of strategies speakers make.

The overall goal of the project is to identify and analyze the politeness repertoire of Russian school students, and the main research question of this paper has been if the language material school students use in specific politeness contexts features diversity or not. The working hypothesis is that while basic politeness strategies used by speakers of Russian in other domains dominate the school students' communication and language material they use correlates with the general standard, there are other strategies and other types of language material in use by school students as the language environment they are in features diversity and connects to many other communicative cultures.

To test that hypothesis, a field survey has been run by project members in thirty Russian schools between late March and late May of 2018. The schools in question are mostly located in the city of Moscow and adjacent districts of Moscow Oblast, but also feature such Russian regions as Kirov, Volgograd and Samara Oblasts as well as the city of St. Petersburg. The geographical variation is not part of this study but is taken into account within the entire project. The survey was run by the members of the *Politeness in Russian: From Qualitative to Quantitative Methods* student research group (NUG) funded by the Higher School of Economics.

The focus group of this study includes students of these schools aged 11–18, which roughly corresponds to the Russian education levels of *srednyaya shkola* (middle school, years 5 to 9) and *starshaya shkola* (advanced school, years 10 and 11). The survey was distributed in person by the project members when visiting these schools. The anonymous questionnaire, printed on one sheet of paper, included four sections focusing on various aspects of interpersonal communication in schools. Each participant gave his or her informed consent for this survey in oral form. Each question of the survey was open-ended, allowing for multiple elaborated responses. Completed questionnaire sheets, along with the digitized response database, is kept by the Laboratory of Linguistic Conflict Resolution Studies and Contemporary Communicative Practices at the Higher School of Economics. In total, 1411 responses were recorded.

The survey in general focused on such politeness situations as greeting, leave-taking, expressing gratitude, apology, basic addressing and making requests. This particular study limits itself to the first four situations of this list as they are typologically similar in Russian communicative style and therefore subject to comparison. We have also limited this study to focus on the communication between students, i.e. equals: while communication in situations of status inequality (e.g. between students and instructors) was also included in the survey, we chose to focus on the student-to-student communication as the distribution of power in other contexts requires additional research. The same can be said about non-verbal communication which was also studied in the survey but is not included in this study.

Each set of responses was subject to manual markup by the authors of this paper, which required identifying general categories of verbal expressions within the given topic (greeting, leave-taking, expressing gratitude and apology). These categories were then subject to quantitative analysis, with its results represented graphically. Based on quantitative analysis, we attempted to make generalizations and identify common patterns in different communicative situations to find out what forms of verbal expression of politeness are most and least frequent in the Russian school students' discourse and if there is a correlation between situations in question.

The following sections deal with specific communicative situations, namely greeting, leave-taking, expressing gratitude and apology.

### **3. Markers of greetings**

We studied verbal structures that schoolchildren use when greeting each other. Gestures of greeting as well as greeting expressions used between teachers and children were not included in this particular study. Moreover, one respondent reported use of more than one word for greeting people.

According to the quantitative analysis, there are 20 types of greetings and they are described on the y axis of the Figure 1. The x axis accounts for the frequency of use of these expressions. The rarest expression occurred five times out of 1411, and the most frequent use is 1180 occurrences out of 1411.

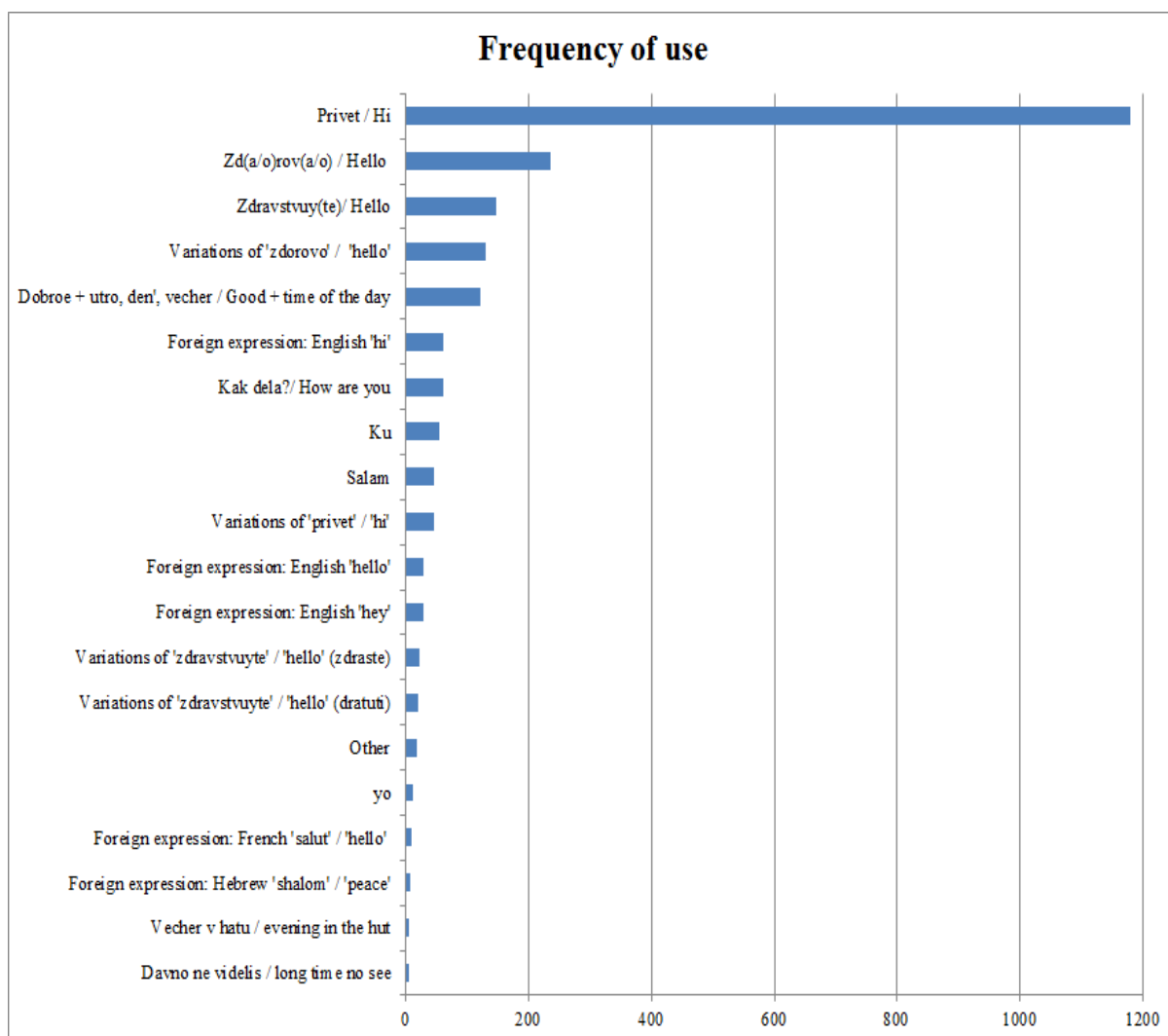


Figure 1. Frequency of use: markers of greeting

The most frequent greeting marker is *privet* 'hi'. This word was used 1180 times. One should mention that there is a big use gap between this word and all other expressions. In other words, *privet* 'hi' was used 1180 times while all other words were used less than 250 times. This difference is crucial and makes this greeting the leading one.

The other frequently used word is *zdarova* in the meaning of 'hi' or 'hello'. This word was used 236 times. In Russian, it is an interjection which comes from the root *-zdorov-* meaning 'healthy'. It should also be mentioned that this word can be spelled in different ways. Participants wrote this word as following: *zd(a/o)rov(a/o)*. Consequently, it can be spelled as *zdorovo*, *zdarova*, *zdarovo* and *zdorova* while the normative spelling is *zдорovo*.

Other frequently occurring words are *zdravstvuy(te)* (147 tokens), contracted variants of ‘*zdorovo*’ (130 tokens) and *dobroe + utro, den’, vecher* / ‘good + part of the day’ (121 tokens). The first word *zdravstvuy(te)* (147 tokens) is used as ‘hi’ or ‘hello’ in Russian and originally means ‘be healthy’. Additionally, two forms of this word were used: *zdravstvuy* and *zdravstvuyte* which distinguish between the familiar *ty* ‘you’ and the respectful *vy* ‘you’, or T–V distinction. Contracted variants of ‘*zdorovo*’ (130 tokens) are expressed in the following ways: *darova, dorova, dorou*. All these words are informal forms of *zdorovo*. Collocations such as *dobroe utro, dobriy den, dobriy vecher* meaning ‘good morning’, ‘good day’ and ‘good night’ respectively are also popular. They were used 121 times.

The next group of greetings are those used from less than 100 times. They are: foreign expressions, *kak dela* ‘how are you’, *ku, salam*; variations of *privet* ‘hi’<sup>5</sup> and variations of *zdravstvuyte* ‘hello’. Our respondents used the following foreign expressions: English ‘hi’ (60 tokens), ‘hey’ (28 tokens) and ‘hello’ (28 tokens). These were written using Latin as well as Cyrillic characters adopting these words to the Russian language. Another collocation was *kak dela* ‘how are you’ which was used 60 times. Then there are *ku* (54 tokens), *salam* (45 tokens) and variations of ‘*privet*’ / ‘*hi*’ (45 tokens). *Ku* is a greeting common among video gamers. It was also used in the movie “Kin-Dza-Dza” to greet the person with the higher social status. *Salam* is a part of Islamic greeting tradition. In addition to all mentioned, there were many variations or short and informal forms of *privet* ‘hi’ such as: *priv, privki, privetik, privetuli*. Lastly, we consider two variations of *zdravstvuyte* ‘hello’. As mentioned before, these variations are the short and the informal form of this word. The first variation is *zdraste* (22 tokens) while another is *dratuti* (21 tokens).

The last group includes the least popular greetings which were mentioned less than 20 times. There are such expressions as: “other” (18 tokens), *yo* (12 tokens), foreign expression (French *salut* / ‘hello’) (10 tokens), (Hebrew ‘shalom’ / ‘peace’) (eight tokens), *vecher v hatu* ‘evening to this house’ (five tokens) and *davno ne videlis* ‘long time no see’ (five tokens). “Other” includes various types of collocations used very rarely and not attainable to any greeting group mentioned above. These are: *cho pochom* ‘how much’, *cho kogo* ‘what and whom’, *oo, kogo ya vizhu* ‘oh, look who’s here!’ etc. *Yo* is an interjection meaning ‘hello’ or ‘hey’. The least popular greetings are *vecher v hatu* ‘evening to this house’ and *davno ne videlis* ‘long time no see’. Both were used five times only. *Vecher v hatu* ‘evening to this house’ originates in criminal jargon.

---

<sup>5</sup> The reason for setting up a separate class for this kind of greetings (in contrast to just *privet* ‘hi’) is twofold. Firstly, one may notice the diversity of possible informal diminutives of *privet* ‘hi’, such as *privki, privetik, privetuli, privetik* and many others; merging them with *privet* would mean ignoring this morphological diversity. Secondly, all these diminutives have lesser degree of formality compared to *privet* itself, meaning they are used in a specific social setting than *privet*. That kind of sociolinguistic data should also be preserved for further analysis.

To sum up, the quantitative analysis indicates that the most frequently used greeting is *privet* ‘hi’. It was recorded 1180 times which constitutes almost 80% of the overall number of answers. However, the least frequent greetings are *vecher v hatu* ‘evening to this house’ and *davno ne videlis* ‘long time no see’, with just five occurrences for each. There is a possible correlation of the length of the greeting, cf. a short one-word *privet* ‘hi’.

#### 4. Markers of leave-taking

The second part of the survey deals with the markers of leave-taking. As mentioned before, we focused on the verbal expression of leave-taking in the student-to-student situations. Figure 2 summarizes the quantitative analysis results: the *x* axis provides the frequency of use of these expressions while the *y* axis depicts types of leave-taking markers. There are 17 types of leave-taking expressions used by students. The most frequent word was used 1086 times while the least frequent word was used only twice.

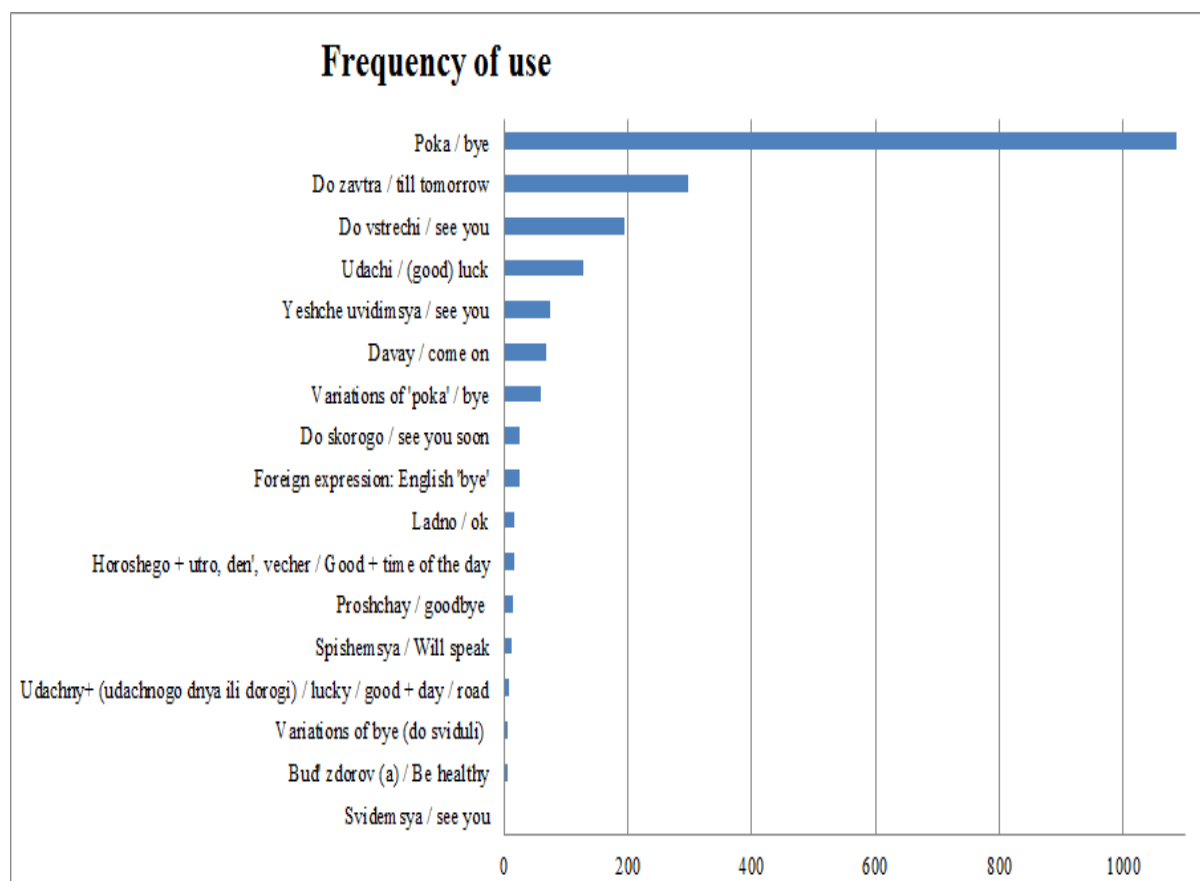


Figure 2. Frequency of use: markers of leave-taking

According to Figure 2, the most frequently used way to say goodbye was *poka* ‘bye’. This word was mentioned 1086 times. Moreover, there is also a large gap between this word and all the others: the latter ones were used just less than 300 times. This means that *poka* ‘bye’ is the most popular way of expressing leave-taking.



The next popular collocation was *do zavtra* ‘till tomorrow’. We found this expression mentioned 297 times. Additionally, *do vstrechi* ‘see you’ and *udachi* ‘(good) luck’ were frequent as well. They were mentioned 195 times and 127 times respectively.

The other group of leave-taking markers are those used less than 100 times. There are *yeshche uvidimsya* ‘see you’ (74 times), *davay* ‘come on’ (68 times), variations of *poka* ‘bye’ (60 times), *do skorogo* ‘see you soon’ (25 times) and one foreign expression: English *bye* (25 times). Such markers of leave-taking as variations of *poka* ‘bye’ (60 times) include many specific expressions: *pokeda*, *pokasik*, *poka-poka*. These are informal forms of the word *poka* ‘bye’.

The last group of leave-taking markers occur even less frequently. Students mention them less than 20 times. There are *svidimsya* ‘see you’ which is the least used (only 2 times), *bud’ zdorov(a)* ‘be healthy’ (5 times), variations of *bye* (6 times), *udachny (udachnogo dnya / dorogi)* ‘lucky/good + day/road’ (8 times). Other expressions are more frequent: *spishemsya* ‘will speak’ (12 times), *proshchay* ‘goodbye’ (15 times), *horoshego + utro, den’, vecher* ‘good + part of the day’ (17 times) and *ladno* ‘ok’ (17 times). Moreover, we should consider informal forms of *do svidaniya*, which are *do sviduli* or *dosviduli, dosvidos*.

To generalize, the most popular marker of leave-taking is *poka* ‘bye’. It was used 1086 times while the rarest one is *svidimsya* ‘see you’ which was used just twice.

In conclusion, it’s important to mention that the results of quantitative analysis concerning markers of leave-taking are very similar to those concerning greetings markers. There is one leading expression which was used more than 1000 times constituting almost one third of all expressions. Then there are some groups of the words with different degrees of frequency. However, the next level of frequency does not exceed 300 uses. Second and third positions are held by words which were used 236 and 297 times respectively. As a consequence, there is a large gap between the most popular words (more than 1000 of uses) and all the other words (less than 300 uses). Moreover, some markers have their variations, which are short and informal forms. Finally, some foreign expressions were used as well.

## **5. Markers of gratitude**

Another part of the survey deals with thanking teachers and classmates. As mentioned previously, we focus on the student-to-student communicative situation; therefore, we only analyze words explicitly stated to be used with classmates/friends and words without any specification about the person they are used to.

As the question consists of two parts and the second part includes the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’ (*Do you use other words than “thank you”?*), we didn’t include this word in our analysis. Some respondents used it but we ignored such cases as there was a clear instruction to

think of other words. We chose not to analyze the answers with the words meaning “no” or just “yes” (which probably refer to the question about difference between words used when speaking to teachers and classmates/friends) and the situations when there was no answer. We also ignored remarks about pronouns used when speaking to classmates/friends and teachers.

We were able to identify 17 different groups of the responses. Figure 3 presents the classification groups (without the group where other responses were collected) and the number of answers where there was a word (were words) suitable for this groups. The most frequent words are from the group of *blagodaryu* ‘thank you’ where this word can be used separately or with some additions (e.g. personal pronouns). 361 respondents mentioned this word in their answer to the considered question.

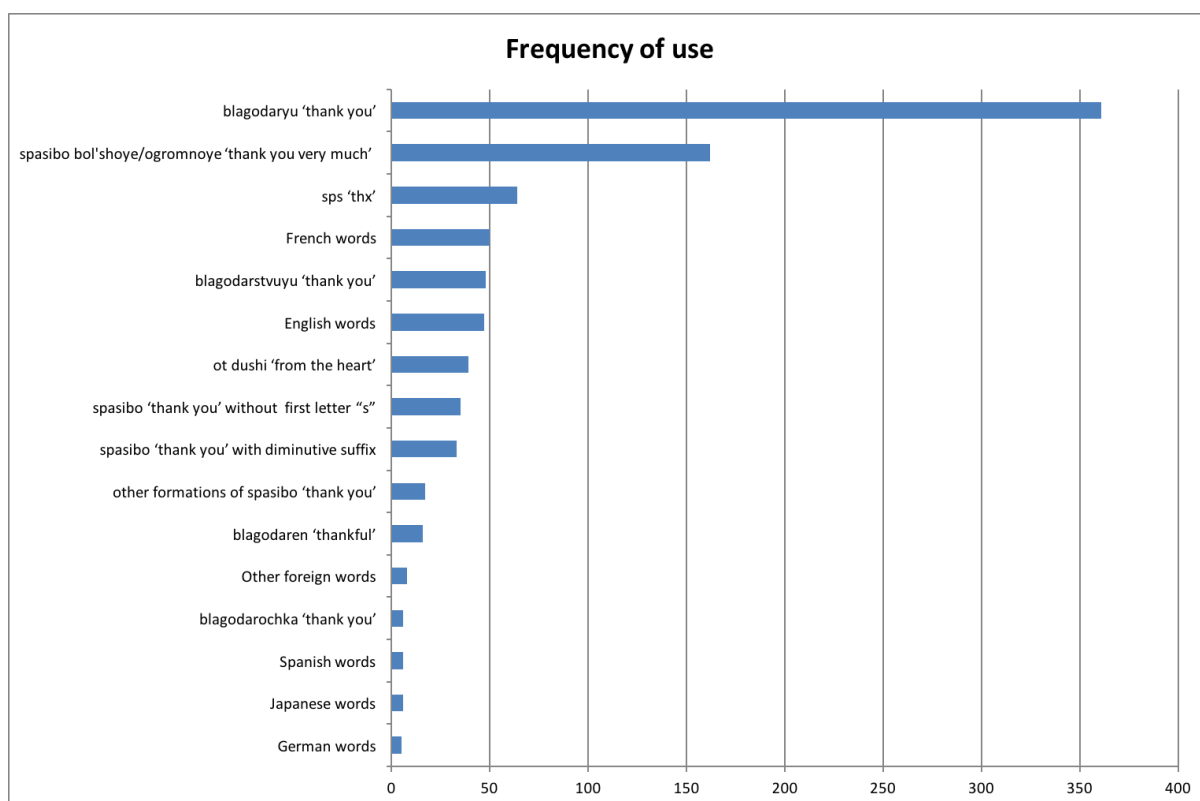


Figure 3. Frequency of use: markers of expressing gratitude

The second most frequently used words are from the group which contains the adjectives *bol'shoye* ‘big’ and *ogromnoye* ‘very big’ referring to the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’. These adjectives enhance the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’. The adjectives could be written without the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’ itself as this word was already introduced in the question. The adjectives can also stand before or follow the main word. 162 respondents use these words when thanking their classmates/friends.

The third group contains the abbreviation *sps* ‘thx’ which is formed from the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’. The form *sps* ‘thx’ can be used not only in the standard variant but also

written phonetically as it is pronounced as well as can contain diminutive suffix. 64 respondents use this word in their speech.

The fourth group contains French words used in the meaning ‘thank you’. Some answers are written in French alphabet (e.g. *merci*); some are written with Russian letters (e.g. *mersi*). In some answers there are also words to enhance the meaning ‘thank you’ (e.g. *mersi baku*). But the fact of using Latin characters does not imply the knowledge of French language. In one of the answers there was a form *mercy boky* written in Latin characters although the French phrase is spelled as *merci beaucoup* ‘thank you very much’. Fifty respondents use the words originated from French in their communication.

The fifth group contains an obsolete but still occurring word *blagodarstvuyu* ‘thank you’. The form of the word coordinates with the speaker. 48 respondents used the word in the answer to the question.

The sixth group contains English words used in the meaning ‘thank you’. There are various variants mentioned: *thank you*, *thanks*, *thnx*, etc. Some variants were written in Cyrillic and show the pronunciation pattern. 47 respondents use English words to say ‘thank you’.

The seventh group contains the phrase *ot dushi* ‘from the heart’. There are also variants continuing with *v dushu* ‘to the soul’ sometimes separated with additions. 39 respondents use the pattern.

The eighth group contains the words formed from *spasibo* ‘thank you’ which can have suffixes used with the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’ but lack the initial “s”: *pasibo*, *pasib*, *pasibon*, etc. 35 respondents stated their usage of these forms in their speech.

The ninth group contains the words formed from *spasibo* ‘thank you’ which have diminutive suffix (but don’t lack the first letter “s”). Variants: *spasibochki*, *spasibki*, *spasibuli*. 33 respondents use these words.

The tenth group contains other formations of the word *spasibo* ‘thank you’: *spasibon*, *syab*, etc. 17 respondents mentioned these words in the answer to the considered question.

The eleventh group contains the word *blagodaren* or *blagodarna* ‘thankful’. The former word is of masculine gender and the latter one is of feminine one. With this form, *premnogo* ‘very’ is frequently used and has the same meaning as *ochen* ‘very’ which is also used with this word. 16 respondents use the word from this group.

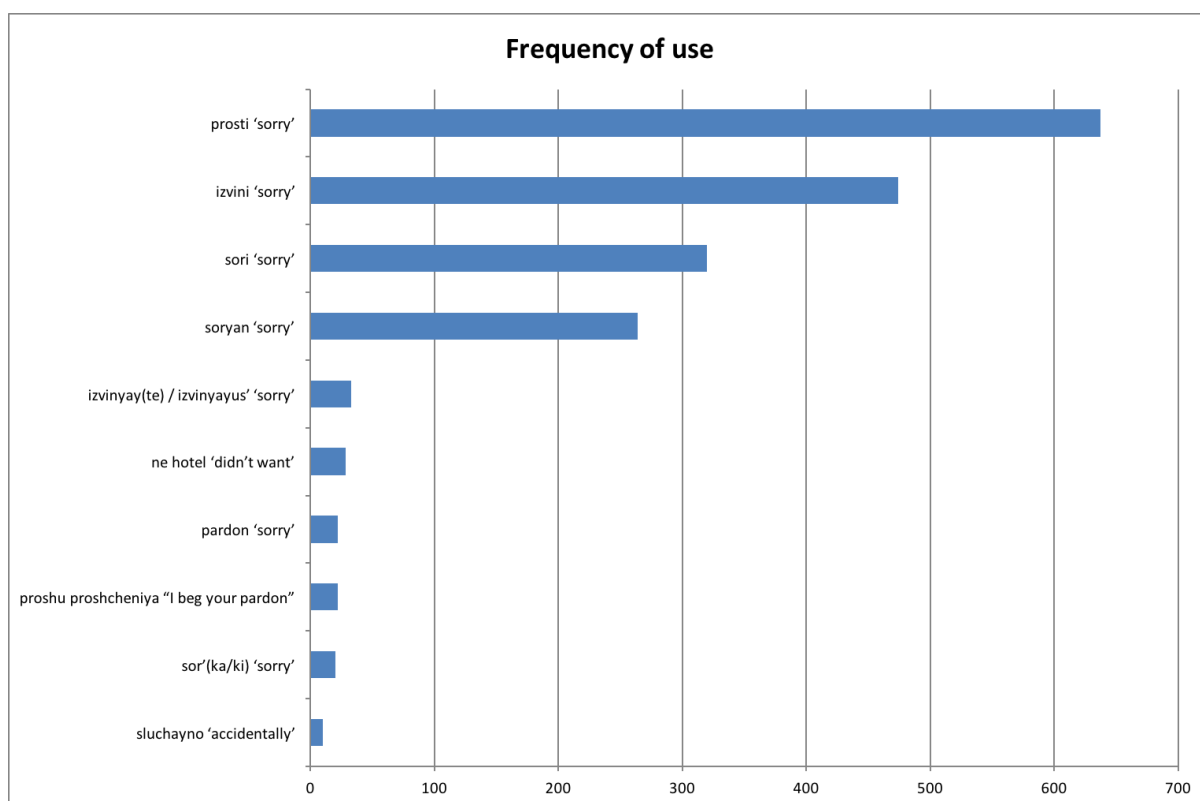
The four following groups contain words from foreign languages but not English or French. Japanese is used by six respondents, Spanish is also used by six respondents, German is used by five respondents, other languages are used by eight respondents. The last group also counts the number of respondents who wrote that they use other languages but did not specify the language.

There is also a word used by six respondents: *blagodarochka* ‘thank you’. The word in the group description stands in nominative case, but is also used in accusative case. There is also a group called “other” where there are words from 157 respondents.

## **6. Markers of apology**

Another part of the survey deals with making an apology. It was stated previously that we focus on the student-to-student communicative situation; therefore, we only analyze the question about apologizing to classmates and friends. This question is the third one in the group of questions about making an apology. Before the question of interest there are two questions about apologizing to teachers (when a respondent made a small mistake or a big mistake). We included answers to the questions about teachers only if in the question about classmates and friends it was indicated that the words used are the same as in the question(s) about teachers. We chose not to analyze the answers with the words meaning “no” or just “yes” and the situations when there was no answer. We also ignored remarks about apologies made by others but not the respondent.

We were able to identify 11 different groups of the responses. Figure 4 presents the classification groups (without the group where other answers are collected) and the number of answers where was a word (were words) suitable for this groups. The most frequently occurring words are from the group *prosti* ‘sorry’. The word can stand in this form (singular) or in plural form. There can be also additions to this word, e.g. word *pozhaluysta* ‘please’ or address to the person. 637 respondents indicated this word in their answer to the question.



**Figure 4. Frequency of use: markers of expressing apology**

The second most frequently used words are from the group which contains the word *izvini* 'sorry' or the combinations with this word (sometimes other words can be used with the given one as it is described for the previous group with the word *prosti* 'sorry'). 474 respondents mentioned in their answers the word *izvini* 'sorry' with or without any additional words.

The third group contains the English word *sorry* which can be written both in Russian or in English. In Russian it can be spelled differently (e.g. *sori*, *sorri*, *sore*). Other words in both Russian and English (spelled in Cyrillic or Latin) can be used with the given one. 320 respondents used the described word while apologizing to their classmates or friends.

The fourth group contains the word *soryan* 'sorry' (and its variations) which is formed from English word *sorry*. Some of the variations: *saryan*, *soryanchik*, *soryanus*, *soryanych*. Some other words can be added to the main one. 264 respondents indicated that they use the described word.

The words from the following six groups are used rather rarely. The fifth group contains the words *izvinyay(te)* 'sorry' and *izvinyayus* 'sorry'. The interesting thing is that the variants of the word *izvinyay(te)* 'sorry' can be spelled without the initial "i". *Izvinyayus* 'sorry' can be used with other words. 33 respondents wrote down words that are in this fifth group. The sixth group contains *ne hotel* 'didn't mean to' which can combine with other words and is often used with the first-person pronoun. There are 28 answers classified to be in this group. The seventh and the eighth groups contain 22 answers each. The seventh group contains *pardon* 'sorry' in

different forms, while the eighth group contains *proshu proshcheniya* ‘I beg your pardon’. The ninth group contains the word *sor’(ka/ki)* ‘sorry’. There are 20 answers in this group. The tenth group contains the word *sluchayno* ‘accidentally’, different words can be added to this one. There are 10 answers in this group. There is also a group called “other” where there are words from 141 respondents.

## **7. Discussion and conclusion**

The data analyzed in sections 3–6 bring forward a number of important observations. The basic hypothesis proved true: in each communicative situation, there are 1–2 dominant expressions, while the rest of the politeness repertoire features diversity. The verbal expression of politeness is influenced by numerous communicative domains, and while the Russian communicative culture is believed to be more homogeneous than many other ones, the degree of structural *and* sociolinguistic variation in this domain is considerably higher than expected.

We argue that this might be motivated by two factors. Firstly, as mentioned in section 2, despite the popular belief, the communicative culture of Russian school students is rather diverse because it is affected by social and cultural context: migrations, popular culture, societal development and so on. Patterns identified in the dataset can confirm that school students’ communication reflects the current trends of the Russian-speaking community; therefore, the formality of this specific communicative context plays no significant role in the degree of sociolinguistic variation within it.

There is, however, another possible explanation. School students’ communication is heavily influenced by languages other than Russian: in our dataset, quite a few of those are represented, with many loanwords becoming common after a short time. Such plurilingual situation appears due to the fact that school is a natural place to study and use other languages (predominantly English but not limited to it), but the Russian communicative style in general is also traditionally open to language contact (as opposed to purist ones). This tradition encourages variation and promotes its occurrence in various communicative domains, including the school one.

In addition to that, it should be said that the degree of linguistic variation (e.g. phonetic, grammatical etc.) is also relatively high within this dataset. While such diversity can be explained through structural features of Russian, it is possible that it continues the same trend inflicted by the sociocultural diversity and the plurilingual context of school communicative domain: if one kind of variation is there, another one is also likely to appear. However, this hypothesis needs additional verification.

Finally, one should mention that different communicative situations (greeting, leave-taking, expressing gratitude on the one hand, and expressing apology on the other) feature different statistical distribution of responses in the dataset. While the first three situations are heavily dominated by one communicative option, the remaining one (expressing apology) features some degree of statistical diversity. That may be due to structural constraints of this category in Russian, but can also be caused by the context itself: this situation alone requires response from one's interlocutor, which may result in increased variation. This idea also requires verification in other contexts of this dataset.

To summarize, this quantitative study, being a work in progress, unveils several important trends of the Russian-speaking school students' communication. The conclusions drawn here should be checked for validity in other datasets and using other tools and techniques, but this stage of the research provides useful insight to politeness strategies of the speakers of Russian and the ways it can be studied with combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

## References

- Brown, P., Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge university press.
- Buras, M. M., Krongauz, M. A. (2013). *Obrashcheniya v russkom semejnomy etikete: semantika i pragmatika* [Forms of address in Russian family etiquette: semantics and pragmatics]. *Voprosy Jazikoznanija*, (2), 121-131 [in Russian].
- Curl, T. S., & Drew, P. (2008). Contingency and action: A comparison of two forms of requesting. *Research on language and social interaction*, 41(2), 129–153.
- Culpeper, J. (2011). Politeness and impoliteness. *Pragmatics of Society*. Pp. 393–438.
- Foley, W. A. (1997). *Anthropological Linguistics: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and Conversation*. In P. Cole, & J. L. Morgan. (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics*, Vol. 3, *Speech Acts* (pp. 41-58). New York: Academic Press.
- Goffman, E. (1972). *The Neglected Situation*. In: *Language and Social Context*. Ed. by P. Giglioli. Penguin Books. Pp. 61–66.
- Goffman, E. *The Interaction Order* // *American Sociological Review*. 48/1983. Pp. 1–17.
- Keenan, E. O. (1976). The universality of conversational postulates. *Language in society*, 5(1), 67–80.
- Rudneva, E. A. (2016). *Antropologiya vzhlivosti: obshchekul'turnye i lokal'nye normy vzaimodejstviya* [Anthropology of politeness: general cultural and local norms of interaction]. *Antropologicheskij forum*, (30) [in Russian].

van Olmen, D. (2017). Politeness in language. // Oxford Bibliographies. URL:  
<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199772810/obo-9780199772810-0161.xml#obo-9780199772810-0161-bibItem-0002>

Watts, Richard J. (1992). Linguistic politeness and politic verbal behavior: Reconsidering claims for universality. In: Watts, Richard J., Sachiko Ide, Konrad Ehrlich (ed.) (1992): Politeness in Language. Studies in its History, Theory and Practice. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, p. 21–42.



## **Contact details:**

Maria Grabovskaya

National Research University Higher School of Economics. School of Linguistics:  
Lecturer, Postgraduate Student. Email: magrabovskaya@gmail.com.

Ekaterina Gridneva

National Research University Higher School of Economics. Department of English  
Language for the Humanities: Tutor. Email: egridneva@hse.ru.

Andrian Vlachov

National Research University Higher School of Economics. Laboratory of  
Linguistic Conflict Resolution Studies and Contemporary Communicative  
Practices: Research Fellow. School of Linguistics: Senior Lecturer. Email:  
avlachov@hse.ru. (Corresponding author)

**Any opinions or claims contained in this Working Paper do not necessarily  
reflect the views of HSE.**

**© M. Grabovskaya, E. Gridneva, A. Vlachov, 2018**