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## *Molim Vas* and *ИЗВИНИТЕ*: Analysis of Politeness Markers in Russian and Croatian Languages

Contemporary scholars in politeness have shifted away from traditional linguistic approaches, which relied heavily on politeness maxims and strategies. Instead, they now emphasize the importance of politeness markers, whose usage and meaning has not been extensively analysed in many languages. This article explores and compares the usage of verbal politeness markers in the Russian and Croatian language. Specifically, the focus is put on Russian and Croatian cultural equivalents of the terms *sorry*, *oprositi(te)* and *ispričavam se*, *извини(те)* and *прошу прощения*, and *please*, i. e. *molim (te/Vas)* and *пожалуйста* in a requesting speech act, particularly emphasizing interactions between individuals of varying power and social status. These markers are illustrated on the basis of results from two questionnaires administered to Russian and Croatian university students. The analysis reveals that *oprositi* is less formal than *ispričavam se*, whereas *извини(те)* and *прошу прощения* can both be used in formal and informal contexts, with *ispričavam se* being the most formal and used the most often out of the four. Furthermore, *molim te/Vas* proved to be more personal than *molim*, and less ritualised than *пожалуйста*, although the terms overlap significantly. Additionally, it has been suggested that Croatian students perceive the distance between themselves and their teachers as longer than Russian students. This research provides valuable insights into politeness markers in Croatian and Russian, highlighting the significance of context, formality, and linguistic nuances, as well as intercultural differences in the given languages. The article is a fragment of a tripartite research of politeness in university student-teacher email communication, and it serves as a call for further exploration of this under-researched topic.

**Key words:** politeness, politeness markers, intercultural differences, culture, comparative analysis, Russian, Croatian, linguistics.

**For citation:** Kolar, K. (2023) *Molim Vas i Izvinite: analiz markerov vezljivosti v ruskom i horvatskom jeziku* [Molim Vas and Извините: Analysis of Politeness Markers in Russian and Croatian Languages]. *Art Logos – The Art of Word*. No. 4. Pp. 231–246. (In Russian). DOI: 10.35231/25419803\_2023\_4\_231. EDN: PUJXJ

While many of us possess at least a basic understanding of the concept of politeness, very few, and quite rarely, delve deeper into its intricate components. We seldom take the time to ponder what exactly comprises politeness, what factors influence it, and how it evolves over time. Even when we do engage in such contemplation, we encounter a plethora of diverse ideas and theories on the subject, providing contrasting information and theo-

ries. For instance, Grice [8] and subsequently Leech [13] introduced the concept of politeness maxims and principles as the governing rules in communication politeness. On the other hand, Brown and Levinson [7] argued that politeness is contingent on a multitude of strategies and factors that influence its usage; nevertheless, all four believed these factors are universal, non-dependent on cultures and languages. In contemporary times, however, our perspective on politeness has become more nuanced. First of all, it is now widely considered that the notion of politeness differs from culture to culture Ide [9], Kharlova [5], Larina [3; 12], Leech and Larina [14], Locher [15], Watts [16–17], Wierzbicka [18], as well as that it not only includes the aforementioned theories but also incorporates additional elements and factors, such as politeness markers. According to Aleksandrova<sup>1</sup>, these markers are used to mitigate statements, which are sometimes associated with the speaker's desire to directly express their opinion or assessment. Although quite inconspicuous, these markers play a significant role in shaping our perception of politeness within a given discourse unit, particularly in the context of various speech acts. Surprisingly, in spite of their importance, they have been somewhat neglected in politeness research across various cultures, including the Russian culture, and even more so in smaller cultures, such as the Croatian culture. Consequently, this article seeks to, at least on a superficial level, identify the form, usage and characteristics of specific verbal politeness markers in both Russian and Croatian language.

This endeavour will entail a qualitative analysis of Croatian and Russian equivalents of two of the most common English verbal politeness markers, namely, *sorry* and *please*. More specifically, the terms we will focus on, define and analyse are *oprosti(te)* and *ispričavam se*, i. e. *извини(те)* and *прошу прощения* as Croatian and Russian translations and supposed linguocultural equivalents of *sorry*, as well as *molim (te/Vas)* and *пожалуйста* as their equivalents of *please*. Additionally, we will illustrate the utilization of these equivalents using examples from the Croatian language corpus<sup>2</sup> and the Russian National Corpus<sup>3</sup>, as well as insights

<sup>1</sup> Александрова Ю. О. Эмотивное градуирование иллюквативной силы высказывания в английском оригинальном и переводном тексте: дис. ... канд. филол. наук: 10.02.04. СПб., 2003. 211 с. Available at: <http://www.dslib.net/germanskie-jazyki/jemotivnoe-graduirovanie-illokutivnoj-sily-vyskazyvanija-v-anglijskom-originalnom.html> (accessed 12 August 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Croatian language corpus, Institute of Croatian Language and Linguistics. Available at: <http://riznica.ihji.hr/philologic/Cijeli.whizbang.form.hr.html> (accessed 12 August 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Russian National Corpus. Electronic resource. URL: <https://ruscorpora.ru/en/> (accessed 15 October 2023).

from two questionnaires administered by Kolar in 2022. In these questionnaires, Croatian and Russian university students were asked to write a polite requesting email to their professor. This means that, in it, the focus was on the application of politeness in the speech act of request within the context of an interaction between individuals of differing power and social status. Our hypothesis is that the terms *molim (te/Vas)* and *пожалуйста* can be considered cultural equivalents, and so could *oprosti(te)* and *извини(me)*, as well as *ispričavam se* and *прошу прощения*, which we also assume could be considered the most formal markers in the group. Additionally, we assume that the terms to be analysed are formal enough to be used in requests, even between people of different social and power level, and shall appear in the analysed questionnaire. The main literary sources for this research, apart from the abovementioned corpora and questionnaires, will be Islentyev, Pesendorfer and Tolochin<sup>1</sup>, as well as Alemi and Maleknia [1], as the terms we have decided to discuss were chosen on the basis of their suggestions, and defined with the help of their descriptions of English politeness markers.

The analysis forms a vital component of an on-going tripartite research project focused on politeness strategies in university settings in Croatia, Russia, and the USA. It also serves as an extension to articles by Kolar (2023; forthcoming), which concentrate only on Croatian politeness markers, as this article adds a multicultural perspective, as well as an opportunity to detect potential linguocultural differences between the two languages.

### Method and Materials

Before defining the methodology we used, we should first address our references, as well as the definitions upon which this analysis and our choice of markers in it will be based. As suggested by Islentyeva, Pesendorfer, and Tolochin<sup>2</sup>, politeness markers encompass words and expressions that are linguistically associated with politeness. These markers can be categorized into two main groups: structural markers, including salutations, openings, and closings, and verbal markers, which consist of ex-

<sup>1</sup> Islentyeva, A., Pesendorfer, L., Tolochin, I. (2023) 'Can I have a cup of tea please?' Politeness markers in the Spoken BNC2014 // Journal of Politeness Research. Vol. 19, No. 2. Pp. 297-322. Available at: <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/pr-2022-0010/html> (accessed 15 October 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

pressions related to gratitude, apology, and more [1, c. 75]. In this article, our primary focus will be on verbal markers, and we will not delve into the discussion of structural markers. Within the realm of verbal politeness markers, there exists a wide array of expressions; however, as already stated, in this study, we aim to identify the Croatian and Russian counterparts for two of the most distinctive politeness markers in modern English: *sorry* and *please*. These markers have been chosen because they hold a significant position in English politeness [6, p. 230], making them an ideal starting point and reference for our analysis of politeness in the Croatian and Russian language. Consequently, for analysis, we propose *oprosti(te)*, *ispričavam se*, *извини(те)* and *прошу прощения* as Croatian and Russia cultural equivalents for *sorry*, and *molim (te/Vas)* and *пожалуйста* as their equivalents of *please*. In terms of methodology, our approach will involve a two-step process. First, we will provide a description of the meanings and potential applications of these selected terms, using their dictionary definitions and comparing them to their English cultural counterparts. For the purpose of defining their meanings, we shall use the Croatian Language Portal (HJP)<sup>1</sup> for Croatian definitions, and Wikislovar<sup>2</sup> for Russian definitions. Following this, the second step will involve presenting real-world examples of their usage, which were gathered from the Russian and Croatian language corpora, as well as Google Forms questionnaires administered in 2022 [10]. For these questionnaires, Croatian and Russian university students were tasked with composing an email to a hypothetical professor in which they requested to retake an exam they had failed, hoping to receive a favour from them. Consequently, as suggested in the introduction, our article will focus on the utilization of politeness markers within the context of a requesting speech act occurring between a university teacher and students, i. e. involving individuals with differing levels of social and power distance.

## Results

Considering that the Croatian portion of this research has already been partially conducted, we shall start with

<sup>1</sup> Croatian Language Portal, HJP. Available at: <https://hjp.znanje.hr/> (accessed 10 August 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Wikislovar' Dictionary. Available at: <https://ru.wiktionary.org/> (accessed 10 October 2023).

the Croatian part of the analysis first, which will be followed by the analysis of Russian terms. For better understanding, we shall start with the terms *oprosti(te)* and *ispričavam se* in Croatian, and follow with *извини(ме)* and *прошу прощения* in Russian. Afterward, logically, the focus will be put on the Croatian and Russian cultural equivalents/translations of *please*, namely *molim (te/Vas)* and *пожалуйста*. In the end, their similarities and differences will be pointed out and discussed briefly before the formal discussion and conclusion.

Commencing with the concept of *sorry*, as asserted by Islentyeva, Pesendorfer, and Tolochin in their 2023 study, the given term is primarily recognized as an expression employed for the purpose of apologizing. Secondarily, it finds utility in self-correction, self-editing, double-checking, conveying irony and sarcasm, as well as in confrontational situations (2023). In the Croatian language, the most prevalent term employed in these contexts is *oprosti* in the second person singular form, and *oprostite* in the second person plural form, or when addressing someone with respect in the second person singular. *Oprosti* and *oprostite* represent two forms of the verb *oprostiti*, which, according to HJP, means to take into consideration somebody's explanation for a bad deed they have done, and to forgive someone's debts. In meaning, thus, we could say that they are close to the English *forgive me* – however, there is a difference. The difference is that *oprosti* and *oprostite* are more versatile and can be used both in formal and informal settings, across various speech acts of varying degrees of seriousness, as can be seen in the following examples from the Croatian language corpus:

1) *Mama, mamica, oprosti mi. Ne ljuti se...* / Mom, mommy, sorry. Don't be angry...

2) *Oprosti da te smetam, ali je stvar o kojoj se radi vrlo hitna i vrlo neugodna.* / I'm sorry to bother you, but the situation in question is urgent and very uncomfortable.

3) *Ovo s Džombom je jedna najobičnija, da oprostite, pizdarija!* / Sorry, but this Džomba issue is absolute bullshit!

As can be seen in the examples, the terms function with both formal and informal contexts, in personal and impersonal oral and written situations. Thus, we can conclude it would also work within the framework of requesting speech acts as

demonstrated in the questionnaire. With this in mind, one would expect to see it in the questionnaire: intriguingly, however, there were no instances of *oprosti(te)* found in it, so we cannot provide examples in this regard.

On the other hand, unlike *oprosti(te)*, *ispričavam se* is a term that is almost exclusively reserved for the act of apologizing, primarily in formal contexts. It comes from the Croatian verb *isprič(av)ati se*, which, according to HJP, means to give excuses or to justify yourself/your behaviour. This means it comes from the opposite point of view than the term *oprosti(te)* – the first person perspective. As such, it is closer to the meaning of the English phrase *I apologise*, and it is relatively close to it with regard to the perceived level of formality. It is particularly employed in conversations between individuals who may not be well-acquainted or possess a professional relationship, thereby indicating a significant social and power distance between the interlocutors, as can be deduced from the following corpus examples:

4) *Ispričavam se ako sam na ovakav način omeo efikasnost suda.* / I'm sorry if I thus disrupted the efficiency of the court.

5) *Prije svega, ispričavam se što Vas smetam, posebno što Vas izuzetno cijenim...*

First and foremost, I am sorry to bother you, especially since I respect you very much... / Such a distance, in addition to the given examples, is particularly evident in the context of the questionnaire, in the analysed teacher-student communication. An example of its usage is exemplified below:

6) *Ispričavam se na smetnji i unaprijed zahvaljujem na odgovoru.* / Sorry for bothering you and thank you in advance for your reply.

While *ispričavam se* could also be used ironically, considering the formality of its nature, it commonly pertains to more sincere and earnest contexts, as is the case in the abovementioned examples. Considering that the term *ispričavam se* appeared in several occasions in the questionnaire, while *oprosti(te)* did not appear in it at all, despite being more common in Croatian, we can conclude that the students were aware of the social and power distance between them and their teacher and chose to emphasise it by opting for the phrase *ispričavam se*.

In Russian, on the other hand, *извини(те)* represents the imperative form of the verb *извинить* (with *извини* being

used for second person singular, and *извините* for second person plural and respectful second person singular), which, according to Wikislovar', means to forgive someone for a relatively minor offense or sin or to release from responsibility for the bad action committed. Just like *sorry* and *oprosti(te)*, it is used for apologies, in both formal and informal contexts, but also for the purpose of expressing disagreement, especially before denying someone a favour. The usage of the terms can be seen in the following corpus examples:

7) *А у нас кот тоже Томасом зовут, извините, что не по теме.* / Our cat is also called Tomas; sorry, this is off-topic.

8) *Извини, что так поздно, но, если я этого не скажу, я лопну.* / Sorry I'm saying this so late, but if I don't do it, I'll burst.

9) *На этот раз, уж извините, без фоток – фотографирование в цирке не приветствуется.* / Sorry, no photos this time – taking photos is not encouraged at the circus.

The term *извини(те)* is often made synonymous with the term *прости(те)* in Russian – however, the terms are not the same, and the latter term did not appear in our questionnaire, so we will not focus on it in this context. Having said that, the term *извините* (always in the respectful second person singular form) appeared in the questionnaire several times, usually in the following contexts:

10) *Извините, у меня не получилось сдать экзамен с первого раза, но я бы очень хотела попробовать повторно сдать.* / Sorry, I failed to pass the exam the first time, but I would really like to try to take it again.

11) *Извините за беспокойство, но я бы хотела спросить, возможно ли пересдать экзамен?* / Sorry to bother you, but I would like to ask if it is possible to retake the exam?

As can be seen on the basis of the examples from the questionnaire, *извините* was used primarily as an apology before a request was made. However, it appeared in relatively few emails, which might potentially be the result of perceived distance between the student and the teacher in the email – perhaps the students thought *извините* was not formal enough. To get a better insight into this, we shall start with the analysis of the next Russian apology term we have chosen – *прошу прощения*.

*Прошу прощения*, according to the Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Literary Language<sup>1</sup>, carries the same meaning as *извините*, in the sense that it is used when addressing or warning about something or as form of an apology for what was said or done. The main difference between the two terms is the form, considering that *прошу прощения* is a phrase in first person singular, which could be translated as *I ask for forgiveness*, which would inherently make it more personal, apologetic, and even subordinate. In that sense, it could be considered closer to *ispričavam se*. Its usage, as exemplified in the Russian National Corpus, can be seen below:

12) *Еще раз прошу прощения, что беспокоил Вас длинным ненужным письмом.* / Once again, sorry for bothering you with a long unnecessary letter.

13) *Всё прежде было загажено, замусорено и, я прошу прощения, засрано.* / Everything before was dirty, littered and, sorry, full of shit.

14) *Прошу прощения и предлагаю тебе руку и сердце.* / I'm sorry and I give you my hand and heart.

Despite the subordinate wordage, as we can see from the examples, *прошу прощения* seems to work both in formal and informal context, as well as with strangers and acquaintances, even people we consider very close. Interestingly, in spite of all this, in the analysed Russian questionnaires, the given phrase appeared only once, in the example below:

15) *Прошу прощения, но могу ли я попробовать сдать экзамен ещё один раз?* / I'm sorry, but can I try to pass the exam one more time?

This example points to the fact that both *прошу прощения* and *извините* can be used in formal and informal situations. Apart from this, the questionnaire has shown that *извините* is more common of the two, but also that the Russian students had less need to use it than Croatian students, which could suggest that they perceive the distance between themselves and their teacher as shorter.

Regarding the term *please* and its Croatian cultural counterpart, as discussed in the introduction, the prevailing expression

<sup>1</sup> Phraseological Dictionary of the Russian Literary Language. Available at: <https://rus-phraseology-dict.slovaronline.com/> (accessed 16 October 2023).



used to express this notion in the given culture is *molim (te/Vas)*. It actually represents a first person singular present tense of the verb *moliti*, which, according to HJP, means to request, to ask, to pray or plead with someone. In their research, Islentjeva, Pesendorfer, and Tolochin (2023) discuss that *please* serves as a linguistic tool for mitigation, typically coming before command issuances and a various utterances. *Molim (te/Vas)* functions in a similar manner, with the primary distinction residing in the utilization of the pronouns *te* and *Vas* in conjunction with *molim*, as opposed to the usage of *molim* in isolation. The objectless form, *molim*, is primarily employed within professional domains, particularly in public spaces such as railway and bus stations, hospitals, supermarkets, and the like. It carries an inherently impersonal quality, as its purpose is to address the general public. Consequently, it bears an emphatic, though not necessarily empathetic tone. Thus, using *molim* without the associated pronouns in one-on-one interactions may come across as rather stern and authoritative, sometimes even misplaced and impolite. It is worth noting that this objectless form did not make an appearance in the questionnaire, suggesting that the students were cognizant of the inappropriateness of addressing individuals (of higher power or social status) in such a manner. Conversely, employing *molim* in conjunction with the pronouns *te* (second person singular) and *Vas* (second person plural; respectful second person singular) offers a broader range of applications. This combination is suitable for both formal and informal situations, accommodating professional as well as personal discourse, irrespective of the age or status of the individuals involved, as displayed in the following sentences from the Croatian language corpus:

16) *Dragi Isuse, molim te oprosti mi i ne daj mi više da sam zločesta...* / Dear Jesus, please, forgive me and don't let me be bad again...

17) *Molim te, molim te, molim te, nazovi me. Volim te svim svojim srcem.* / Please, please, call me. I love you with all my heart.

18) *Molim Vas da nam potvrdite rezervaciju, mi vam unaprijed najljepše zahvaljujemo na ljubaznosti.* / Please, confirm your reservation, and thank you for your kindness in advance.

The term *molim (te/Vas)* is the most commonly utilized mechanism for softening commands and features prominently in re-

quests, pleas, and similar communicative functions. This prevalence explains its appearance in the aforementioned questionnaire and a representative example of its usage can be observed below:

19) *Molim Vas da mi javite ako postoji drugi termin kada bih mogla doći napisati ispit.* / Please, notify me if there is another time I could come and take the exam.

Of course, the term used included the respectful, second person singular pronoun *Vas* instead of *te*, which confirms the students who took part in the questionnaire are aware of the social distance between them and their professor. Additionally, and quite interestingly, in the questionnaire, *molim Vas* appeared more often in the conditional form or in the past tense (past simple), rather than in present simple, as is the case with following sentences:

20) *Molila bih Vas za veliku uslugu te da mi izađete u susret.* / I would ask you for a big favour and to meet me half way.

21) *Ovim bih Vas putem htjela najljepše zamoliti da mi dozvolite da još jednom izađem na ispit.* / This way, I would most kindly like to ask you to allow me to once again take the exam.

22) *Htjela sam vas zamoliti da mi ipak omogućite izlazak na ispit.* / I wanted to ask you to allow me to take the exam anyway.

The use of such language demonstrates that the participants possess an awareness of the significant power differential between themselves and their teacher. Therefore, they employed an indirect politeness strategy that involves the use of negative forms, enhancing their efforts to convey politeness while maintaining a certain degree of distance, emphasising their request and mitigating it at the same time.

As for Russian and *пожалуйста*, the situation is slightly more complex. While, similarly to *molim (te/Vas)* it also serves as the most common translation and equivalent of *please*, *пожалуйста* is actually neither a verb, nor a phrase – it is a particle, and its usage is significantly more diverse. In addition to being used in requests, it is also used as a response to *thank you*, as a polite remark used when handing something to someone (in the sense of English *here you are*), and with the notion of emphasising orders, irony, joy, confusion etc. Some of the examples of its usage can be seen below:

23) *Скажите, пожалуйста, а какая у меня цифра в голове?* / Tell me, please, what number am I thinking of?

24) Я приеду к тебе... Пожалуйста... Мне это очень нужно... / I'll come to your place... Please... I really need that...

25) Вот. Пожалуйста... Конверт... / Here you are... An envelope...

While the term can be applied in various different ways, it is imperative to note that it is generally used for the purpose of increasing politeness levels, i. e. as a proper and common politeness marker. Considering so many usage possibilities, it is not a surprise that *пожалуйста* appeared quite frequently in the questionnaire, most often in the following sense:

26) Подскажите, пожалуйста, какие у меня есть варианты для сдачи? / Tell me, please, what are my possibilities for exam retaking?

Although *пожалуйста* here does function as plea enforcement, the form it appears in is actually well-known as a “double imperative” (Glazkova: [2]), which is the most common (polite) request format in Russian (Formanovskaya: [4, p. 198]). In that sense, we can actually say it functions similarly to *molim (te/Vas)*, as well as that the students participating in the questionnaire realised what speech act they were taking part in and that they were in a subordinate position, which required more politeness.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis we conducted, we arrived at several noteworthy conclusions. To begin, we delved into the realm of apologies in Croatian and Russian and uncovered that the most prevalent cultural equivalents for sorry in Croatian are *oprosti(te)* and *ispričavam se*, whereas in Russian these are, among others, expressed by *извини(те)* and *прошу прощения*. While these expressions share similar meanings, our investigation illuminated the following information: *oprosti(te)* possesses a broader spectrum of applications than *ispričavam se*, and can be utilized in formal and informal contexts. On the other hand, *ispričavam se* is primarily reserved for formal contexts. When it comes to Russian, *извини(те)* seems to be used more often than *прошу прощения*, although both expressions can appear in formal and informal contexts. Additionally, while *прошу прощения* has a more personal, and even subordinate, form, it does not seem to have a more subordinate or more formal effect than *извини(те)*. In general,

it would seem that the Croatian term *oprosti(te)* is semantically and pragmatically very close to *извини(те)*, and pragmatically close to *прошу прощения*, whereas *ispričavam se* seems to be the most formal out of the four apology-focused terms here. Overall, we can conclude that *oprosti(te)* and *извини(те)* would be the closest equivalent of sorry in Croatian and Russian respectively, whereas *прошу прощения*, and even more so *ispričavam se*, overlap with its meaning, but are not semantically and pragmatically identical to each other and to sorry. Finally, on the basis of quantitative appearance of these terms in the article, it would seem that Croatian (or rather Croatian students) tend to apologise more than Russian students, although this topic requires significantly more research.

When it comes to the Croatian and Russian counterparts of *please*, in these articles, we have identified them as *molim (te/Vas)* and *пожалуйста*. In its bare form, *molim* is employed in formal situations, often with instructions to a general audience, and it can potentially come across as impolite when directed at an individual. However, by incorporating the pronouns *te* or *Vas*, *molim* takes on a more personal tone and can be used in both formal and informal settings, irrespective of social or power dynamics. For an even higher degree of politeness, individuals have the option of employing the conditional or past simple forms of *molim*, such as *zamolila bih Vas*, *htjela bih Vas zamoliti*, or *htjela sam Vas zamoliti*. This enhances the formality, intensity, and personalization of the request. *Пожалуйста*, on the other hand, although universal in form, has a broader usage spectrum, and is more ritualized than *molim Vas*. Therefore, while both *molim Vas* and *пожалуйста* were used quite often in the questionnaire, *пожалуйста* appeared almost exclusively in the context and form of so-called double imperatives as a tool of request mitigation, whereas *molim Vas* appeared in different forms, tenses and contexts. As such, we can conclude that, while they are similar, *пожалуйста* is more universal and ritualised, whereas *molim* in combination with the pronoun *te/Vas* is more personal and, in a way, more subordinate. This, apart from their grammatical form, creates the greatest difference between the two terms. However, it must be emphasised that markers in Croatia have so far not been studied, and a superficial research such as this one is not enough to get a full and comprehensive insight into

the topic, especially when it comes to the usage of *molim*. Finally, it must also be pointed out that the analysed markers are not the only politeness markers that appeared in the research: there were plenty of other markers, including the *te/Vas* pronouns and the respectful second person singular in both languages. However, as has been stated, due to the lack of research in Croatian in this regard, and the limitations of our study, we have decided to start with the most basic markers, in hope that more markers will be taken into consideration further on.

In conclusion, we could make a preliminary suggestion that the perceived power and social distance between Croatian students and their teachers is greater than the perceived distance between their Russian counterparts. Nevertheless, for a more comprehensive understanding of politeness markers in both Croatian and Russian language, further research is warranted. A quantitative analysis should be conducted to identify the most common and expected markers, as well as their usage, in the given languages. Moreover, there is a need for exploration and investigation of additional politeness markers, ideally through a broader-reaching questionnaire, to gain deeper insights into the intricacies of politeness in both languages, the differences in their perception, and the cultural expectations their speakers have in this regard. Conducting such research would shed light on politeness in both countries, especially Croatia, which is currently underexplored. This would benefit both locals and foreigners, particularly in academic contexts, as international mobility in universities all over the world is increasing. We hope this study inspires further exploration of linguistic politeness, especially in multicultural and Slavic context.

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Клара Колар

## ***Molim Vas* и *Извините*: анализ маркеров вежливости в русском и хорватском языках**

Современные исследователи категории вежливости отошли от традиционных лингвистических подходов, опирающихся на максимы и стратегии вежливости. Интерес переместился на маркеры вежливости, использование и значение которых не подвергались анализу во многих языках. В статье сравнивается использование речевых маркеров вежливости в русском и хорватском языках. Основное внимание уделяется русским и хорватским культурным эквивалентам маркера *sorry – oprostite(te)/ispricavat se* и *извини(me)/прошу прощения* и маркера *please – molim (te/Vas)/пожалуйста* в речевом акте просьбы, особенно при взаимодействии людей разного социального статуса. Данные маркеры проиллюстрированы примерами из двух опросов российских и хорватских студентов на материале их общения с преподавателями по электронной почте. Анализ учитывал степень официальности/неофициальности маркеров в условиях разных контекстов общения. Сделан вывод, что хорватские студенты воспринимают дистанцию между собой и преподавателями как более формальную, чем русские студенты. Это исследование дает ценную информацию о маркерах вежливости в хорватском и русском языках, подчеркивая значимость контекста и лингвистических нюансов, а также межкультурные различия в данных языках.

**Ключевые слова:** вежливость, маркеры вежливости, межкультурные различия, культура, сравнительный анализ, русский язык, хорватский язык, лингвистика.

**Для цитирования:** Колар К. Molim Vas и Извините: анализ маркеров вежливости в русском и хорватском языках // Art Logos (искусство слова). – 2023. – № 4. – С. 231–246. DOI: 10.35231/25419803\_2023\_4\_231. EDN: PUJXJ

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*дата получения:* 20.09.2023 г.  
*дата принятия:* 30.10.2023 г.  
*дата публикации:* 30.12.2023 г.

*date of receiving:* 20 September 2023  
*date of acceptance:* 30 October 2023  
*date of publication:* 30 December 2023