

A Cross–Cultural Comparison of Complaints

Ana Koceva

Faculty of Philology, Goce Delcev University, Stip, North Macedonia

Complaining is a universal language act present in most languages. However, its universality does not mean equal linguistic expression nor structure. Hence, this research analyses the speech act of complaining in American English and Macedonian. The participants are 212 university students divided in two sample groups. One group involves native speakers of American English from San Diego, California, and the other sample group are native speakers of Macedonian from Shtip, North Macedonia. The data was gathered by an anonymous online questionnaire that included three speech situations with different topic and different social parameters. A quantitative and qualitative analysis was applied, specifically in identifying the strategies used to express a complaint, the applied perspective and modifiers within the complaint. The quantitative results helped detect the general linguistic pattern of a complaint in the two languages, while the qualitative analysis helped to correlate the social and contextual features of the complaints with their linguistic features in American English and Macedonian. The research succeeds in determining the similarities and differences of complaints in both languages, and concludes that similarities outnumber the differences. The main aim of the research is to raise awareness of foreign language learners and native speakers on the cultural influence over speech realization patterns.

Keywords: complaints, speech acts, American English, Macedonian

1 Introduction

In accordance with the views of Austin (1962), the founding father of speech act theory, utterances can be used to perform specific acts. The action performed by producing a certain utterance represents a speech act. Hence, speech acts are utterances with their own grammatical structure, lexical meaning and specific communicative function. The communicative function contains the speaker's communicative intention, which is expected to be recognized by the hearer or the interlocutor. The appropriate recognition of the speaker's communicative intent is essential for maintaining a successful communication in any language. Based on the speaker's communicative intent and the different actions that are being performed, there is a great variety of speech acts. In this paper, the focus is on the speech act of complaining or simply complaints.

Complaints are speech acts used to express displeasure, disapproval, annoyance, threat or reprimand usually as a reaction to a violation of the social rules or a certain offence perceived by the speaker (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993). The act of complaining represents "an illocutionary act in which the speaker expresses disapproval or negative feelings toward the state of affairs described in the preposition and for which the hearer is held responsible either directly or indirectly" (Trosborg, 1995, p. 311). As Olshtain and Weinbach (1993) point out, "the complaint is usually addressed to the hearer whom the speaker holds, at least partially, responsible for the offensive action" (p. 108). Moreover, complaints share specific negative evaluation, obtain agreement and establish a common bond between the speaker and the hearer, allow speakers to let off steam, and are used to open and sustain conversations (Boxer, 1996).

As complex speech acts, complaints have a variety of aspects or features that have been defined by different linguists. Austin (1962) classified them as behabitives or acts in through which the speaker expresses certain attitude or social behavior. On the other hand, Searle (1969) determined them as expressive acts since they express how the speaker feels or what is the speaker's attitude toward a prior action or state of affairs.

The notion by Olstain and Weinbach (1993) that complaining occurs when the speaker is affected by a certain action unfavorably marks it as a retrospective act. Trosborg (1995) also confirms that a complaint is “retrospective in its essence, because the speaker passes a moral judgement onto something, which he/she believes the complainer has already done, failed to do or is in the process of doing” (p. 311). Furthermore, the retrospective feature entails the notion of multiple utterance or as it was determined by Clyne, Ball and Neil (1991) most speech acts are realized not through a single utterance, but in a complex way through a multiple act. Murphy and Neu (1996) analyzed complaints as multiple acts and emphasized that complaints are most often realized in several turns, and rarely as a single utterance.

Furthermore, as Leech (1983) has observed, a complaint is a representative of the conflictive function, which includes acts of “threatening, accusing, cursing and reprimanding” (p. 105). As a conflictive act, a complaint can be a trigger for discrepancies in communication, and it can also influence the social relations between the interlocutors. Therefore, speakers tend to choose the most appropriate form of complaining in order to realize the act. In this way the speaker does not disrupt the communication altogether nor influences negatively the social relations with the interlocutor. The most appropriate form of a complaint usually means that the speaker urges the hearer to repair the damage or the error that has occurred. As Brown and Levinson (1987) pointed out, a complaint’s function is to confront a problem with an intention to improve the situation.

The conflictive aspect further entails the complaint’s role as a face threatening act, in accordance to Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, where a complaint is referred to as a face threatening act because it threatens both the positive and the negative face of the hearer (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Also, the degree of a face threat of a complaint is closely related to its level of directness. Directness is “the degree of how face threatening an utterance is, that is, how strong, forceful, abrupt, or aggressive the tone of an utterance or a speech act is” (DeCapua, 1989, p. 26). As Trosborg (1995) stated: “by choosing a particular level of directness, the complainer is able to decide on the conflict potential of the complaint” (p. 314). Herein, the general classification of complaints can be done into direct and indirect complaints. Boxer (1993) explained that indirect complaining is not directly addressed to the person responsible for the disposition; an indirect complaint is “the expression of dissatisfaction to an interlocutor about oneself or someone/something that is not present” (Boxer, 1996, p. 219). On the other hand, a direct complaint is addressed to the complainees responsible for the offence and “may be phrased in terms of a straightforward accusation or in terms of moral judgement” (Trosborg, 1995, p. 314.)

The numerous features of a complaint offer variability of aspects to analyze this speech act, which has consequently produced numerous research papers on complaining. Some works have shown great similarities and minor differences in the performance of complaints between native and non-native speakers (Yang, 2016), while other works have shown indications that “cultural differences—in terms of social appropriateness norms when performing speech acts and in terms of cultural communication style preferences—may lead to misunderstandings” (Ndenguino-Mpira, 2009, p. 88). The research done in North Macedonia has confirmed the existence of “negative transfer from the learners’ culture in speech acts” (Kusevska, 2014, p. 102) and the fact that “the Macedonian learners are not sure how to politely formulate their complaints in English” (Kusevska, Ivanovska, Daskalovska, 2017, p. 102). Kusevska (2019) has documented the formulation of complaints in English by Macedonian learners of EFL and compared them to the formulations of American native speakers, which has proved that there are deviations in the linguistic means used by the two groups of respondents, differences in the applied force and inappropriate use of linguistic means by learners of EFL. This paper presents a contrastive view of complaining in American English and Macedonian aiming to determine the similarities and differences of the linguistic pattern of complaints in these two languages.

2 Methods

The complexity of the speech act of complaining have led me to use a mixed method of analysis. The process of data analysis includes a quantitative analysis of the general strategies used in the speech act of complaining. The aim of the quantitative analysis is to gather statistical data on the frequency of the strategies used to express a complaint, as well as the perspectives and the modifiers used within these speech acts. Then, the process continues with a qualitative analysis, in order to acquire more in-depth knowledge on the correlation of the social and contextual factors for each situation separately. This analysis shifts the focus from the numbers and frequencies of the previous analysis toward a more detailed view into the complaints

in the two languages.

2.1 Participants The target population of the research are university students. I have used a nonprobability sampling and focused on students that are currently enrolled at a university. The voluntary response sampling resulted in two sample groups of total 212 volunteer participants. The first sample group consists of 106 respondents, whose native language is English and are currently living and studying in San Diego, California at the University of San Diego. The other sample consists of 106 respondents, who are native speakers of Macedonian and are currently living and studying in Shtip, North Macedonia at the Goce Delcev University.

2.2 Instrument The instrument used to gather the data was an online open-ended discourse completion task that included three different speech situations. The described situations were designed to elicit a complaint include different social factors and different context. The description for each situation was carefully structured so that it elicits a complaint.

Table 1: Description of the DCT

Speech Act	Context	Social Distance	Social Status	Severity of Disposition
Complaint	A stranger cuts in line in front of you.	distant	neutral	low
	Your friend is being late.	close	equal	medium
	The professor announces that he/she has lost your exam paper.	medium	unequal	high

The first situation includes interlocutors with equal social status, high social distance and low degree of imposition. The second situation involves interlocutors with equal social status or power, low social distance and medium degree of imposition. The third situation involves an interlocutor that is socially superior to the speaker, high social distance between the interlocutors and low degree of imposition.

2.3 Variables The focus in this research was on the social and contextual variables. The independent variable is the native language for both groups: American English for the American participants and Macedonian for the Macedonian participants. The dependent variables are the social factors, which were the social status of the interlocutors, the social distance between them and the severity of the imposition. The social distance was determined based on the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors, while the social status was defined in accordance to the interlocutors' role in society.

2.4 Procedure The research was conducted in two phases: data collection (phase 1) and data analysis (phase 2). In the first phase, the anonymous discourse completion task was made available on Google forms for three months. Students at the University of "Goce Delchev" in Shtip, North Macedonia and students from the University of California "San Diego" in San Diego, California were invited to participate in the study. All the information concerning the questionnaire was sent to the students in writing. There was not any communication nor connection between the students and the researcher. The whole completion of the questionnaire was done online in time suitable to the respondents.

In the second phase, quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted on the obtained data. The quantitative analysis included entering the data in the SPSS system and labelling the perspectives, strategies and modifiers of the gathered complaints following the chosen categorization. Then an ANOVA variance analysis and an independent T-test were applied on the entered data. This was followed by a more thorough qualitative analysis, which included an individual analysis of the three situations and a correlation between the social and contextual factors of the situation, the interlocutors' linguistic pattern and the generated frequencies from the previous statistical analysis.

The research was concluded by summarizing the similarities and differences between complaints in the two languages.

2.5 Data analysis The data analysis encompasses the classifications of: the perspective applied in the complaints, the strategies used to express the complaints and the modifiers used within the complaints.

The perspective analysis followed the view of Haverkate (1984), who distinguished between focalizing and defocalizing expressions in the act of complaining. If the speaker chooses a focalizing expression, it means that the intent is to bring into prominence the role of the referent in the described state of affairs. On the other hand, the speaker chooses a defocalizing expression in order to minimize the role of the referent or to completely exclude the referent.

The strategies used to express a complaint were classified in accordance with the categorization of Trosborg (1995), who differentiates among four main categories: no explicit approach, expression of disapproval, accusation and blame. The first category includes hints as a strategy to express a complaint. The second category includes strategies for expressing annoyance or ill consequences. The accusations as a third category can be direct or indirect. The fourth category is blame, which can be expressed as modified blame or explicit blame (toward either a person or a behavior).

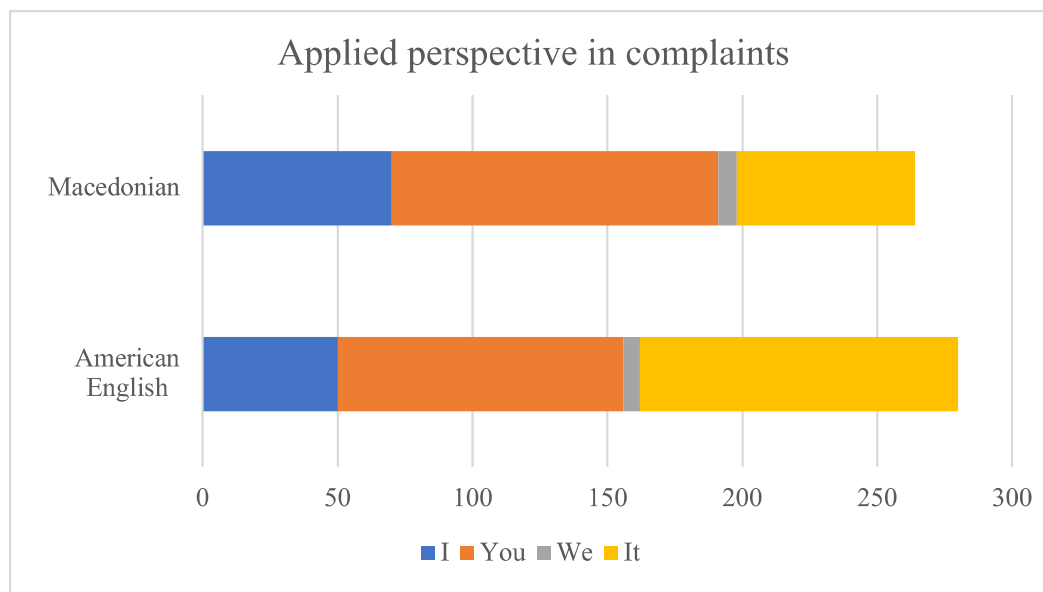
The modifiers or the words that appear within the speech act or follow or precede the act were also analyzed. These modifiers were labeled as internal or external. The internal modifiers are used by speakers either to make the speech act more effective, or to make the speech act milder. On the other hand, the external modifiers are used as supporting or additional statements that carry out the desired action of the speech act.

3 Results and analysis

The general quantitative results showed that there is no statistically significant difference in the linguistic pattern for expressing a complaint in American English and Macedonian.

The initial analysis showed that the leading perspective for complaints in American English is the defocalising ‘it,’ while in Macedonian complaints are most commonly expressed with the defocalising ‘you.’

Figure 1: Applied perspective in Macedonian and American English complaints



The overall results show that American respondents mainly used no explicit approach (35%) and expressions of disapproval (30%). They are followed by lower instances of accusations (13%), expressions of blame (12%) and opting out or no response at all (7%). On the other hand, the Macedonian respondents have mostly used expressions of disapproval (31%), which were followed by a similar use of accusations (26%) and no explicit approach (21%). There were also fewer instances of opting out (9%), expressing blame (7%) and directive acts (6%). This general classification gives only an aspect of the complaint structure, and it is inevitably followed by further analysis and classification of the strategies.

The general results in relation to the type of modifiers included in the complaints (see Table 2) show that both sample groups have a preference for external modification of complaints. However, American speakers have more than double usage of external modifiers, especially in the first and the third situation. On the other hand, most of the external modifiers by Macedonian speakers were applied in the first situation. Also, it is interesting to note that the American English speakers applied four times more internal modifiers than the Macedonian speakers, who again have a lower usage of internal modifiers in all three situations.

Table 2: Number of modifiers used in each speech situation

Situation	American		Macedonian	
	internal	external	internal	external
1	15	105	5	66
2	49	36	12	18
3	57	124	20	17
Total	121	265	37	101

After the obtained data was analyzed for each speech situation individually, it resulted into more clear notions about the speakers' preferences when complaining.

In relation to the complaint's perspective, it was noticed that the leading 'it' perspective is the most common perspective only in the third situation, while the 'you' perspective is preferred by American English speakers in the other two situations. On the other hand, the leading perspective 'you' for Macedonian speakers is present in the first and the second situation, but its frequency greatly decreases in the third situation, where Macedonian speakers equally use the perspectives 'I' and 'it.'

Table 3: Results of applied perspectives

		Respondents			American English speakers			Macedonian speakers		
		Situations			1	2	3	1	2	3
Type of a perspective	focalizing speaker perspective (I)				16	17	17	23	13	34
	focalizing hearer perspective (you)				37	61	18	36	68	17
	defocalizing speaker perspective (we)				5	1	0	4	3	0
	defocalizing hearer perspective (it)				26	21	71	22	9	35

Also, the in-depth analysis of the three situations involving a complaint offered a more precise view on strategies' frequency of use. The results showed that the leading complaint strategy for American respondents were hints in all three situations, which was always followed by expressions of annoyance as a second most frequent strategy. It has to be mentioned that there were instances of opting out in the first situation as well as expressions of modified blame, while in the second situation there was a rise in the indirect accusations and fewer instances of direct accusations and modified blame.

Although Macedonian respondents opted for the same two strategies, they appear in a reversed order. The leading strategy was the expression of annoyance that was usually followed by hints. However, in the first situation the number of used hints equals the number of opting out. Then in the second situation hints were used as much as indirect accusations, and there is a large number of direct accusations as well. In the final situation, the third place is occupied with requests for repair as a directive act or an additional element, which does not appear at all in the previous two situations.

Figure 2: Strategies used by American respondents

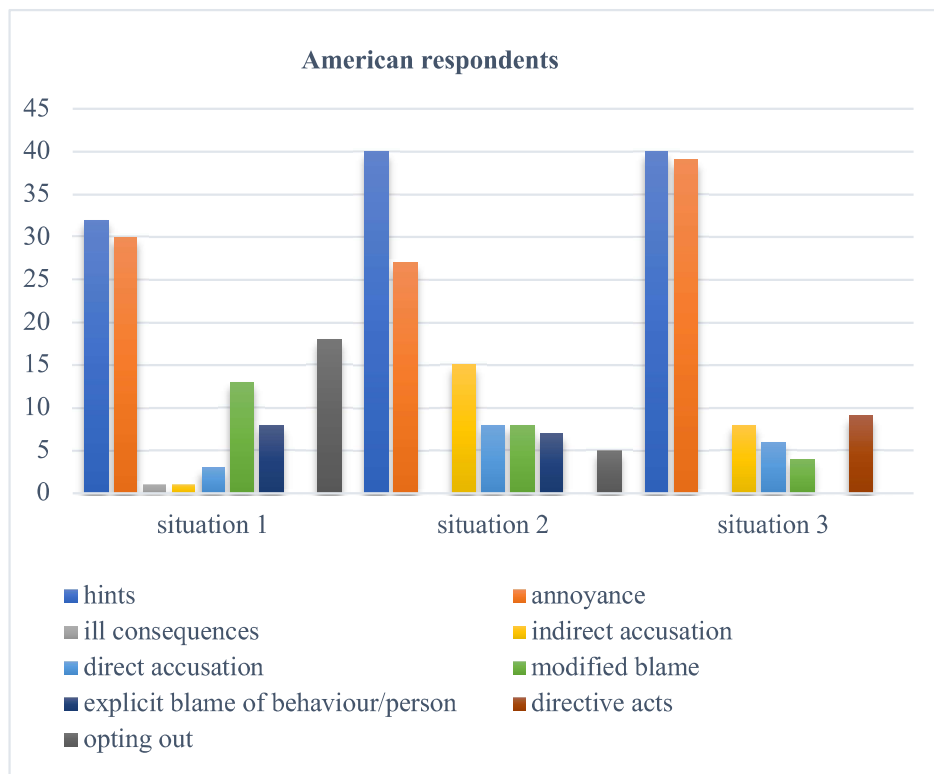
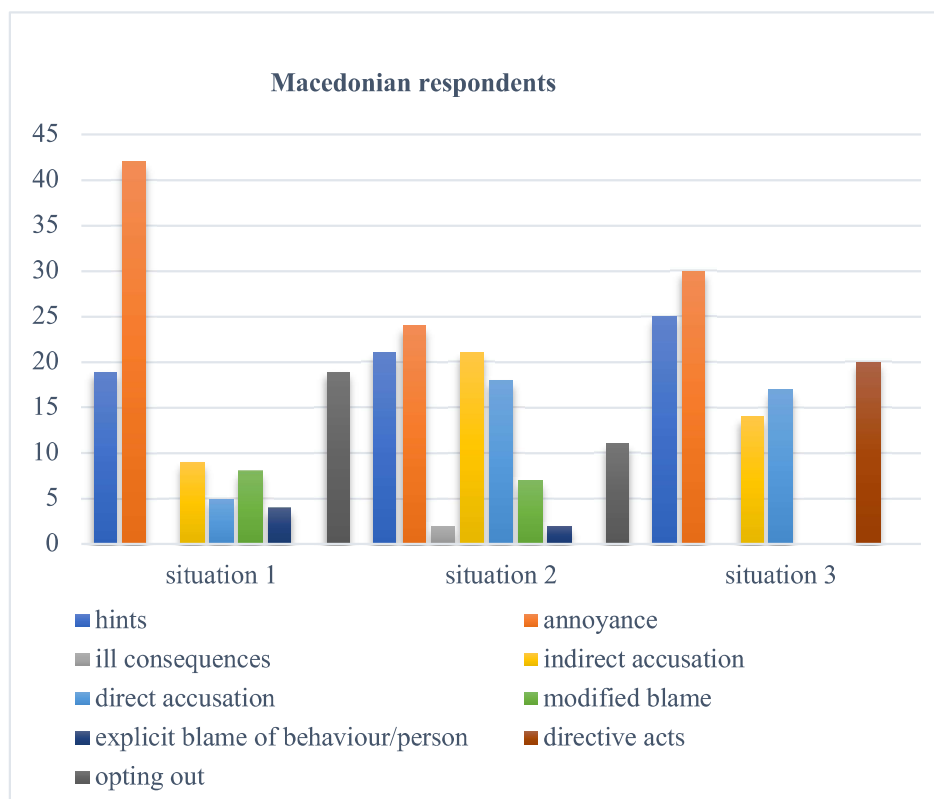


Figure 3: Strategies used by Macedonian respondents



4 Discussion

The research findings enable a description of the most common linguistic pattern of complaints in American English and Macedonian, as well as a comparison of the similarities and differences of the speech act of complaining in the two analyzed languages.

The most common act of complaining in American English is characterized as hearer oriented with either specific or nonspecific reference depending on the social relations between the interlocutors. Moreover, it is usually conveyed through an inexplicit form of expressing disapproval or annoyance. Also, the complaints in American English are highly externally modified in order to almost always alert the hearer of the forthcoming complaint.

On the other hand, the most typical complaint in Macedonian can be described as hearer oriented with a specific reference toward the interlocutor. It can be conveyed through forms expressing disapproval, annoyance or accusations depending on the additional social factors of the speech situation. The use of modifiers is not very present; however, interlocutors are often notified for the forthcoming complaint through an explanation or justification.

After determining the general features of the act of complaining, it was easier to elaborate on the variations in relation to the specific parameters in the individual speech situations.

4.1 *Perspective applied in complaining* The two groups of respondents showed a very similar preference in relation to the applied perspective in the act of complaining. Macedonian native speakers show a strong preference of the focalizing ‘you’ perspective, when speaking with a stranger or with a friend, which means that they express a specific reference toward the hearer and establish the hearer as the agent of the complaint. However, the complaints change when the interlocutor has a higher social status and there’s a medium social distance. In this speech situation, the Macedonian speakers change their tendency to either a focalizing speaker perspective ‘I’ or a defocalising hearer perspective ‘it.’ This change from the common pattern requires further studies in order to determine the direct cause, or if it’s only a personal preference of the respondents.

The complaints in American English are also hearer oriented. Surprisingly, when speaking to a stranger, these speakers show equal distribution of hearer-oriented complaints with a specific reference and with a nonspecific reference. Therefore, additional research and data are needed in order to make any claims about the causes for these changes. On the other hand, when speaking with a friend, the American respondents tend to put the emphasis on the hearer usually with the aim to humiliate him/her. Yet, when speaking to a professor they aim to exclude the interlocutor by a nonspecific reference, which suggests their intention to decrease the face threat and increase the level of politeness.

It can be concluded that the type of a perspective applied in the act of complaining shows similar tendencies and at times overlaps between the complaints in American English and Macedonian. Moreover, the few detected variations show no significant statistical difference.

4.2 *Strategies used for complaining* The overall classification of the data confirmed that the category of no explicit approach is the most common category in the American English complaints, which opposes other researchers such as Razzak & Jamil (2016) and Kusevska (2019), who have determined the category of expressions of disapproval as the most common one for American English. Although the present research shows that disapprovals are present in American complaints, they are much less frequent. Moreover, it shows that the category of disapprovals is the most common one only in the Macedonian complaints, which corresponds with the findings of Kusevska (2019).

The correlation between the data and the features of the studied speech situations enabled me to determine the most common preferences in both American English and Macedonian. A complaint in American English is expressed in the form of hints or highly indirect implications made by the speaker that refer to the offence that has been done or to the hearer’s responsibility for that offence. Also, it often comes in a combination of hints and an expression of annoyance, and less frequently (when there is close social distance and equal social status) it is a combination of hints with indirect accusations.

A complaint in Macedonian usually takes the form of an indirect expression of annoyance or a highly indirect implication of the hearer’s responsibility for the offence. A distinguishing feature is the use of accusations, which make the hearer the agent of the complaint and connect the hearer with the offence. The

accusations (both direct and indirect) were highly preferred when talking with close friends and when complaining to a professor.

In summary, the detailed comparison of the complaints in American English and Macedonian has shown that the respondents show a similar linguistic pattern of complaining that at times overlap, but also contains specific distinguishing features.

The major finding from the present research in relation to the strategies used for complaining is the use of a combination of two or more strategies to express a complaint in both groups, which confirms the aspect of complaints as multiple acts as stated by Murphy and Neu (1996) and in correspondence with the claims of Clyne, Ball and Neil (1991). Furthermore, the most frequent strategy that was used in combination with others is the strategy of hints that most often appeared as part of the opening act and not the head act of the complaint.

4.3 *Modifiers used in complaints* The overall distribution of modifiers showed variations among the three analyzed speech situations, as well as differentiations of the two groups of speakers.

American English native speakers show a tendency for highly modified complaints that are softened, polite and alert the interlocutor of the forthcoming complaint, but only when the interlocutor is either a stranger or a professor. Surprisingly, there are almost no modifiers when speaking to a friend in the American English complaints.

Macedonian native speakers show a lack of tendency to apply any type of modifier in their complaints. The minimal number of modifiers that appear within the Macedonian complaints were linked to the situation where the interlocutor is a stranger. Moreover, it was determined that this group of speakers have a tendency to alert their interlocutor for the forthcoming complain and/or to use explanations for their complaints, but only when speaking to a stranger.

Hence, it can be concluded that there is a variation in the modifiers used within the act of complaining between Macedonian and American English. The two main differences are caused by the different influence of the social factors over the two groups of respondents. The close social distance between interlocutors (being friends) causes a very high degree of modification for the speakers of American English. On the other hand, only the large social distance between the interlocutors (being strangers) influences the use of modifiers in the Macedonian complaints that alert, explain or justify the complaint. Moreover, it has to be emphasized that explanations and justification were not present at all in any of the American English complaints.

However, the noted differences in relation to the modification of complaints in American English and Macedonian need a future analysis in order to test or provide evidence that there is a statistically significant difference between the two languages.

4.4 *Similarities versus differences in the speech act of complaining* After determining the general features, it is easier to elaborate on the variations in relation to the specific parameters in the studied speech situations. It also enables a more detailed insight into the similarities and differences of the speech act in the two languages.

The first similarity between the American English and Macedonian complaints is the choice of the respondents to refrain from a comment. This similarity is present almost solely in the situation with the lowest severity of imposition, which is a strong indication that the choice to opt out is directly connected to the parameter showing the severity/level of imposition.

The second similarity is the use of additional act, specifically a request for repair, as part of the speech act. This similarity shows a correlation with the degree of social status, since it is present solely in the context in which the interlocutors have unequal social status.

The third similarity is the use of an accusation as a complaint strategy and the parameters following it. The data from both sample groups confirms that there is a higher preference for expressing an accusation when the interlocutors have a close social distance.

Moreover, the American and Macedonian speakers share the preference of using a hearer-oriented complaints and a tendency to notify the hearer of the forthcoming complaint.

Beside the similarities, there are also differences in the structure of the speech act of complaining. First, the complaints in American English are more externally modified, or these speakers are more prone to alert the hearer when complaining. Also, the frequency of external modifiers correlated with the social status. More precisely, when the social status is equal the external modification is at its lowest, but when the social

status is neutral (unknown) the external modification has a significant rise that continues to grow until the social status becomes unequal.

Second, the Macedonian complaints have a frequent use of the strategy of accusation even when the social distance between the interlocutors is medium that does not correspond with the American responses.

Third, the tendency of Macedonian speakers to provide explanation or justification for the complaint is absent from the American complaints.

Herein, it can be concluded that the similarities outnumber the differences between the two languages.

4 Conclusion

The present study simultaneously shows the universality and distinctiveness of the speech act of complaining in American English and Macedonian. It proves that the same social and contextual factors produce a complaint for both American English and Macedonian speakers. Moreover, it shows that the social factors can have a variable influence over the linguistic structure of complaints produced by the two groups of speakers.

The social distance and the social status have a great impact on the linguistic pattern of complaints. Social distance was determined as the most influential parameter. For example, close social distance causes a shared higher preference for expressing an accusation for both American English and Macedonian speakers. Social status also has an impact on the linguistic pattern of the studied speech act, but its influence is larger on the American English speakers. Specifically, social status was linked to changes in the applied perspective and the degree of applied modifiers in the complaints of both languages.

Furthermore, the study shows that complaints are multiple acts that are expressed by a combination of strategies that are structured within an opening act, then a head act and a closing act of the complaint. The opening act always includes strategies for no explicit approach. The head act can be represented with expressions of disapproval or expressions of accusation in both languages, which directly depends on the social status and the social distance of the interlocutors. Finally, the closing act includes with requests of repair, which was characteristic only for the situation involving an interlocutor with unequal social status in both languages.

It can be concluded that the speech act of complaining has a similar linguistic pattern in American English and Macedonian. It is an indirect, hearer oriented and externally modified act through which speakers aim to achieve peaceful communication, maintain social harmony and decrease possible face threat in both languages. The minor variations that occur between the two languages are caused by the different influence of the social factors on the two group of speakers that come from a different culture, but ultimately are determined as not statistically significant.

References

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boxer, Diana. (1993a). *Complaining and commiserating*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Brown, Penelope & Stephen C. Levinson. (1987). *Politeness. Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clyne, Michael, Martin Ball, & Deborah Neil. (1991). Intercultural communication at work in Australia: Complaints and apologies in turns. *Multilingua* 10, pp. 251-273
- DeCapua, Andrea. (1989). *An analysis of pragmatic transfer in the speech act of complaints as produced by native speakers of German in English*. EdD thesis. Columbia University Teachers College New York.
- Haverkate, Henk. (1984) *Speech acts, speakers and hearers*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company
- Kusevska, Marija. (2014). Приговарање [Complaining]. In Marija Kusevska, Zorica Trajkova, Neshovska Silvana, & Fanija Smichkovska. *Govorni chinovi: baranje, zablagodaruvanje, izvinuvanje i prigovaranje vo angliskiot i vo makedonskiot jazik [Speech acts: requesting, expressing gratitude, apologizing and complaining in English and Macedonian]*. pp. 269-320. Skopje: Akademski pechat.
- Kusevska, Marija. (2019). What makes and breaks foreign language learner communication: An interlanguage study of complaints. *European Journal of English Language Teaching*. 4 (4), pp. 70-92. doi:10.5281/zenodo.2651748

- Kusevska, Marija, Bilijana Ivanovska, & Nina Daskalovska. (2017). Прагматичка компетенција кај македонските изучувачи на англискиот и на германскиот јазик. [Pragmatic competence of Macedonian learners of English and German]. Штип: Универзитет „Гоце Делчев”.
- Leech, Geoffrey. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Levinson, Stephen C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Murphy, Beth & Joyce Neu. (1996). My grade's too low: The speech act set of complaining. In Susan M. Gass & Joyce Neu, *Speech Acts Across Cultures. Challenges to communication in a second language*. (pp. 191-216). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Ndenguino-Mpira, Hermann. (2009) *Pragmatic aspects of making and responding to complaints in an intercultural university context*. MPhil thesis. Stellenbosch University.
- Olshtain, Elie & Liora Weinbach. (1993). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Searle, John R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Razzak, Summia Fuad Abdul & Abdul Karim Fadhil Jamil. (2016). A pragmatic study of complaints. *European Academic Research*, IV (4), pp. 4137-4159.
- Trosborg, Anna. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Yang, He. (2016). A cross-cultural study of complaint strategies by Chinese and British university students. *International Conference on Education, E-Learning and Management Technology*. pp. 207-211.