THE ROLE OF BILINGUALISM IN THE USE OF REQUEST ACTS PERIPHERAL MODIFICATION DEVICES

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1. Introduction[2]

The Valencian community is an example of a bilingual setting were both Catalan and Castilian are employed, studied and they serve as a means for education in primary and secondary schools. However, Catalan is a minority language compared to the status of Castilian, and this situation is shared by other bilingual areas in Spain. At present, Catalan is being promoted on the part of certain institutions in Castelló, like that of Jaume I University, where it is considered as the only official language. Authorities from the Autonomous Government have established immersion programmes so that children may receive education in the language they use at home and also for those children who do not have the chance to learn and make frequent use of Catalan outside formal settings. A third language has currently been introduced in the school curricula at very early stages, that of English, which means that bilingual speakers will now learn English as a third language almost at the same time they learn literacy issues in their mother tongue. The Valencian Community is not as exceptional case, as many communities around the world implement foreign languages in their educational programmes and most of them already made use of at least two languages. This fact is an instance of the existing reality that has given rise to an important area of research, namely that of third language acquisition.

Third language acquisition may be considered as a relatively young discipline in the field of applied linguistics. However, growing research on the topic signals out relevant differences between second and third language acquisition (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000) and it also posits peculiar features to third language learning processes. Clyne

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(1997) states that learning a third language may share some characteristics with second language but in the former case processes are far more complex. In fact, as argued by Cenoz (2000) second language acquisition need be distinguished from third language acquisition, since the latter one relates to extending the linguistic system of an individual not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. Following this view, Herdina & Jessner (2000) argue for a dynamic perspective in studying multilingualism phenomena. According to these authors learning a third language promotes the arousal of new skills and techniques deriving from the learners' previous language learning experiences.

Various scholars have attempted to identify characteristics of third language acquisition processing (Hufeisen & Lindemann, 1998; Cenoz & Genessee, 1998; Dewaele, 2001) by pointing to subjects from different linguistic backgrounds; Kecskés & Papp (2000) focus on Hungarian subjects, Schönpflug (2000) on Polish/German learners of English and Bouvy (2000) addresses French-speaking Dutch and German/English learners in Belgium. As argued by Cenoz & Jessner (2000) and illustrated in their volume, research adopting an educational perspective has been mainly carried out in three European areas, namely, those of Finland (Bjorklund & Suni, 2000), Friesland in The Netherlands (Ystma, 2000), and Spain (Lasagabaster, 1998; Muñoz, 2000). All studies quoted above ascertain positive effects of bilingualism in third language acquisition. Other variables analysed in these studies and which show influential effects on the subjects' performance are those of motivation, intelligence, exposure to the English language and age.

On the basis of results deriving from research on the acquisition of English as a third language within the European context, Cenoz & Jessner (2000: 257) propose some directives for further research which are specified as follows: (i) the analysis of the extent to which the spread of English on minority languages may affect those languages at the linguistic, sociolinguistic and psychological levels, (ii) the examination of the linguistic characteristics (phonetic, morphological, syntactic and pragmatic) of non-native speakers of English in Europe, (iii) the role of L1 and L2 in various aspects of third language acquisition, and (iv) the role of metalinguistic awareness in L3 development.

The study presented in this paper aims at addressing some of the above quoted needs, since it will particularly focus on non-native speakers of English within a

bilingual community (Catalan/Castilian), whose mother tongue (Catalan) is a minority language in their speech community (the Valencian Community). This study also attempts to find out differential effects of being monolingual or bilingual in using English as a third language, thereby focusing on the participants' pragmatic production. Considering current research, we may assume that bilingual learners will acquire an additional language faster and more efficiently. Cognitive and individual factors have been studied to a certain extent. Nevertheless, features of language use have not received much attention, particularly those dealing with third language learners' interactional competence.

2. Background

2.1. Studies on the role of bilingualism in third language use

Current research on third language acquisition that focuses on cognitive and developmental processes has pointed out the advantage of bilinguals over monolinguals. Studies in this respect have focused on creative thinking (Ricciardelli, 1992), metalinguistic awareness (Lasagabaster, 1998), immersion programmes (Sanz, 2000) and individual factors like those of age, motivation and intelligence (Cenoz & Valencia, 1994; Muñoz, 2000). Lambert (1990) also refers to bilinguals' advantage over monolinguals: "My own working hypothesis is that bilingualism provides a person with a comparative, three-dimensional insight into language, a type of stereolinguistic optic on communication that the monolingual rarely experiences" (1990: 212). In line with Lambert's hypothesis, Hoffmann (2001) argues that learners' ability to create their own linguistic means and adapt them to suit particular communicative requirements draws a difference between monolinguals on the one hand and bilinguals and trilinguals on the other. Considering Bachman's (1990) model of communicative competence, which is subdivided into language and pragmatic competence, Hoffmann (2001) presents a description of trilingual competence. According to this author, trilingual competence not only includes the linguistic aspects from the three language systems but also the pragmatic component, consisting of sociolingusitic, discourse and strategic competencies pertaining to the three languages involved.

Despite the above quoted assumptions that point out differences between monolinguals and bi-/trilinguals in terms of communicative language use, most research

has accounted for cognitive and developmental variables rather than for features of language use on the part of third language learners. However, some research has been conducted in this respect addressing issues like those of switching phenomena (Williams & Hammarberg, 1998; Hammarberg, 2001) and cross-linguistic influence (Cenoz *et al.*, 2001), communicative sensitivity, communicative anxiety (Delawaele, 2001), interactional competence and pragmatic transfer.

Williams & Hammarberg (1998) analysed the role of background languages in the production of a third one as far as switching phenomena were concerned. The subject for the study was an adult whose first language was English, second languages were German, French and Italian, and Swedish was her third language. Results attributed a distinct role to the subjects' first and second languages in switching code while using a third language. In addition to that, findings presented interesting implications for existing models of bilingual production (de Bot, 1992) regarding the activation of first and second languages in the use of a third one.

The influence of speakers' first and second languages in producing a third one, as well as interaction among those languages and its effect on their use has been further documented in Cenoz *et al.*'s volume (2001). These authors compile existing research on cross-linguistic matters affecting the use and acquisition of a third language in different multilingual settings. On the one hand, studies in this volume focus on factors involved in linguistic interference (Cenoz, 2001) and on the interaction among existing languages in the trilingual mind (De Angelis & Selinker, 2001; Hammarberg, 2001; Kellerman, 2001). On the other hand, certain issues related to trilinguals' or polyglots' communicative competence, mainly those involved in grammatical (Gibson *et al.*, 2001), lexical (Ecke, 2001; Hervig, 2001; Ringbom, 2001) and discourse skills (Fouser, 2001) are also dealt with. Findings from these experiments present an extended research agenda in the field of third language acquisition thereby focusing on its use. Therefore, it raises the need for further investigating third language production. In fact early findings on language use pointed to an advantage of bilingual over monolingual subjects in communicating. Genessee *et al.* (1975) contrasted the degree of communicative sensitivity of bilingual and monolingual children in describing a game to a blind person. Results showed that bilingual speakers were more sensitive than monolingual ones concerning interpersonal skills.

According to Oskaar (1990), interactional competence, including sensitivity to the listener among other features, may be described as the ability to transfer sociocultural norms. Bearing this notion in mind, we may consider pragmatic competence as a constituent of the whole construct of interactional competence. This definition also implies pragmatic issues of the languages known by the bilingual or multilingual speaker. Jessner (1997) also points to the advantage of bilinguals over monolinguals regarding their interactional competence, that is, their ability to communicate with others, to perform and interpret communicative actions on the basis of the sociocultural and sociolinguistic norms of a particular speech community. In fact, as argued by this author, bilinguals might show a higher degree of pragmatic development than monolingual speakers. Nevertheless, despite the increasing interest in third language use (see Cenoz *et al.*'s volume, 2001), few studies have addressed the development of pragmatic competence in third language learners.

An exception is Fouser's research (1997) which focuses on pragmatic transfer of an adult Korean advanced learner of Japanese as a third language in manipulating various speech levels and honorifics in Japanese. Participants in this study were a 27 year old Korean/English speaker learning Japanese as a third language at an advanced level, and a native speaker of Japanese aged 24, who acted as a native-speaker informant. In order to elicit the use of honorifics and collect relevant data from the subjects, they were asked to complete a Japanese C-Test, a translation task, a Discourse Completion Test, a Discourse Evaluation Test, a short writing task, and a language learning experience questionnaire. Both participants also held a retrospective interview with the researcher. The use of various elicitation techniques aimed at obtaining information on their global proficiency level, pragmatic production, affective and cognitive variables and metapragmatic knowledge. The hypothesis of this study was based on perceived language distance effects in target language production, which had also been dealt with by Kellerman (1991) and Cenoz (2000). Therefore, the author predicted that language transfer would occur from the language perceived as closest (Korean) to the target language (Japanese). Fouser's prediction was supported by results, which pointed out the overruling effect of perceived language distance in pragmatic transfer. Subjects resorted to their first language (Korean) regarding pragmatic features of the target language (Japanese). The influence of the second language (English) is not clearly seen. On the basis of these results the author posits a

mismatch between advanced learners linguistic and pragmatic competence. However, as stated by Fouser (1997), individual variables might have also promoted the results. The author also raises the idea that cognitive variables, differences in formal education and metapragmatic knowledge might have affected the learners' output.

Following Fouser's assumptions (1997) on the factors that might have influenced his subjects' performance, particularly those of educational background and metapragmatic knowledge, we also believe that further research should consider other variables that may influence bilingual learners' pragmatic competence in a third language. Investigation in this respect should account for the complex nature of multilingualism on the one hand, and for particular characteristics of pragmatic development on the other.

2.2. Foreign language learning and pragmatic production

Interlanguage pragmatics deals with learners' acquisition and use of pragmatic aspects of the target language. A growing body of studies now exist that focus on pragmatic competence of language learners and non-native speakers of English. One of the most influential works in this field is that of Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989) who attempted to discern variation in speech acts (i.e., requests, apologies and complaints) production by individuals from various linguistic backgrounds. In general terms, results from their study showed that language learners, as well as native speakers, made use of different linguistic realisations. However, language learners did not always consider the appropriateness of certain routines to particular contexts. The mismatch of second language learners' grammatical and pragmatic competence has been frequently pointed out (Blum-Kulka, 1996) and this fact has raised the interest in the study of pragmatic competence by second language acquisition researchers.

Existing reviews of research on L2 pragmatic development (see Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Bardovi-Harlig, 1999 and Kasper, 2000) illustrate the increasing interest by interlanguage pragmatists on second language pragmatic development. These reviews have also provided their own research agendas that point out current needs and ideas to be tackled in further studies which include, among others, (i) the role of individual differences (Kasper & Rose, 1999) and (ii) the influence of the elicitation method used (Kasper & Dahl, 1991) in analysing pragmatic development of second language learners. Individual differences have only been

considered in cases where scholars have compared pragmatic production of learners from various linguistic backgrounds with that of native speakers (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995). In our opinion, specific learners' characteristics have not been examined in the field of IL pragmatics far beyond cross-cultural and cross-linguistic analyses. For this reason, the study presented in this paper will account for the learners' linguistic background as an individual feature which may affect their pragmatic production in English.

A second issue quoted above that deserves further investigation according to IL pragmatics researchers is that of the role of the elicitation method employed. Recent debate seems to attribute advantages and disadvantages to existing research methods in terms of the amount of data that may be collected and the quality of such data. Written pragmatic production tasks, like Discourse Completion Tests, are said to be very useful in gathering wide amounts of data, however, the information collected may not be relevant to the extent that features of spoken language are presented in written form (Houck & Gass, 1996). In line with this idea, oral pragmatic production tasks are said to be time-consuming, as they imply data transcription, and contextual variables may not be controlled (Beebe & Cummings, 1996). Yet results obtained by means of oral production tasks, like open Role-plays, may be more significant to the extent that learners interact with another participant and thus may be exposed to the social and linguistic constraints involved in the use of a given speech act (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985).

In order to account for the above mentioned advantages and disadvantages, some studies have been conducted in order to compare results obtained from the implementation of oral and written production tasks. Findings from these studies point to a quantitative and qualitative increase in the use of particular speech act linguistic realisations in oral tasks compared to the amount of data obtained from written pragmatic production tasks (Rose, 1992; Hudson *et al*., 1995; Yamashita, 1996). Nevertheless, as argued by Sasaki (1998) results from most existing studies attributing benefits to oral over written pragmatic production tasks may not be generalisable as these only considered ESL (English as a Second Language) students in the United States with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. According to Sasaki (1998) more studies are needed that focus on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings,

where learners lack opportunities to produce pragmatic output and to be exposed to appropriate input.

In an attempt to meet that need and thus broaden the scope of IL pragmatics research, we have contrasted EFL learners' performance in a discourse completion test and a role-play task. In so doing, we have particularly concentrated on our subjects' use of request acts peripheral modification items.

The speech act of requesting has received a great deal of attention on the part of IL pragmatists either in cross-sectional (Scarcella, 1979; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; Takahashi & Dufon, 1989; Trosborg, 1996; Takahashi, 1996; Hill, 1997; Hassall, 1997; Rose, 2000) or in longitudinal studies (Schmidt, 1983; Ellis, 1992; Ohta, 1997). Most studies have focused on request realisation strategies adopting Brown and Levinson's directness to politeness continuum (1987); however, few studies have dealt with the use of mitigation devices in performing request moves, thus providing a partial account of requestive behaviour. Following Trosborg (1995) and Sifianou (1999), we understand that requests are made up of two main parts: the head and its peripheral elements. These last ones involve modification items that are distributed into two main groups, those referring to internal modification of the request head and those modifying the core externally. Considering Sifianou's classification (1999), internal and external modifiers consist of openers (e.g., *Do you think*?), softeners (e.g., *possibly*), hesitators (e.g., *could... could you*), cajolers (e.g., *you know*), appealers (e.g., *OK*), attention getters (*excuse me*), commitment-seeking devices (*can I ask you a question*?), grounders (*because I can't*), disarmers (*if you are not too busy*), expanders (*could you do that*? *I would be very grateful if you could do it*) and the use of *please*.

Despite the scarcity in investigation dealing with request modifiers, findings from recent studies in ESL contexts point to the learners undersue of internal request modifiers compared to native speakers' use of the items (Rintell, 1981; Kasper, 1982; House & Kasper, 1987; Harlow, 1990). Similarly, research in EFL contexts shows that the use of request acts by native and non-native speakers of English differs mainly in the variety of request formulations employed and in the absence of peripheral modification devices in non-native speakers' production (Campoy & Safont, 2001).

Given the need to mitigate the impositive nature of request acts and the apparent misuse of requests on the part of learners, as denoted by their underuse of modifiers,

further research should focus on the use of request acts peripheral modification items by EFL learners, on the one hand; and on the type of tasks that best elicit such use, on the other. Bearing this idea in mind, in the present study we have examined L3 learner's use of request acts peripheral modification devices and compared its performance with monolingual learners of English in two different tasks (i.e., DCT and Role-play). In so doing, we have tackled the role of individual variables (Kasper & Rose, 1999) and the influence of the task type (Sasaki, 1998) in the pragmatic perfomance of EFL learners, the one side, and pragmatic production in third language acquisition (Hoffmann, 1999), on the other. These issues have not received much attention on the part of scholars but they have been mentioned in the proposed research agendas of scholars from the IL pragmatics and L3 acquisition disciplines (see Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Hoffmann, 2001).

Hypotheses of our study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Bilinguals learners of English as a third language will outperform monolingual learners in the number and variety of request acts modification items employed, thus denoting better pragmatic performance as far as request acts mitigation is concerned (Jessner, 1999).

Hypothesis 2: The use of modification items will be task-dependent, and the open role-play will elicit more modification items than the discourse completion test. The difference between tasks will be both quantitative and qualitative (Rose, 1992; Hudson et al., 1995).

3. The method

3.1. Participants

Participants for the present study consisted in 160 female students of Jaume I University based in Castelló who were engaged in an English for Academic Purposes course that lasted one semester.

Our subjects had studied English as a foreign language both at primary school and at high school and none of them had ever been to an English-speaking country before. As a major focus was drawn on bilingualism effects in participants' performance, proficiency effects were not considered in the study presented. Nevertheless, we may state that an equal number of beginner and intermediate

proficiency level learners took part in our study. Our subjects were Spanish and born in the Castelló region. Their age ranged between 19 and 22 years old, the average age being 20.5 years.

In order to ascertain the actual degree of bilingualism of our subjects we distributed a bilingualism test (see Appendix A) that was designed on the basis of Wei's classification of bilingual competence (2000: 6-7) and Baker's definition (1996) of the phenomenon. The test included eighteen questions aimed at ascertaining the degree of bilingual competence of our subjects. On account of the results obtained from the bilingualism test, we considered as bilingual subjects those who had been trained both at primary school and high school with a prevalence of Catalan over Castilian language and who also made regular use of Catalan in their daily communication with friends, at home and at the university. These participants also viewed Catalan as their mother tongue and as the mother tongue of their parents. Besides, we considered as monolingual subjects those ones who had not received prior instruction in Catalan neither at primary nor at secondary schools and who had never used Catalan in formal or in informal situations. Interestingly, most of these monolingual subjects were living in Castelló city and their parents came from towns and cities belonging to Castilian-speaking areas in Spain. Therefore, despite the fact that they were born in this bilingual community, they had never had the need to communicate in Catalan, nor to read the press or watch TV in that language. Additionally, these subjects had never studied the language as they came from private schools, which some time ago did not necessarily include instruction in or about the Catalan language.

To avoid the effect of extraneous variables, all the participants were female students.

3.2. Data collection procedure

In order to analyse bilingualism effects in pragmatic production, we examined participants' performance in an open role-play and an open discourse completion test. These tasks were selected on the basis of previous research examining the advantages of a given elicitation method over another one (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Rose 1992). The open Discourse Completion Test (henceforth DCT) we resorted to consisted of twenty prompts that required request acts use (see Appendix C). Situations included in the written production test varied in terms of familiarity, dominance or degree of imposition

in making the request. This task was written and it was carried out individually. The role-play task (see Appendix B) consisted of ten prompts or brief descriptions for situations that identified the status of the speaker and hearer in the exchange to be produced but no further guidelines were offered. It was carried out in pairs for it required oral interaction.

Data from the role-play task was tape-recorded and transcribed for its later coding. Subjects' responses to the discourse completion test were also analysed and codified afterwards. In order to codify our data related to the use of request acts modificaton items, we considered the amount and type of modifier employed by our subjects on the basis of Sifinou's suggested taxonomy (1999) of request modification devices, as illustrated in Table 1.

Since our data were normally distributed (Kolgomorov-Smirnov = .774), and consisted of a wide sample (participants =160), we made use of statistical parametric tests. The T-test for independent measures was employed in addressing significant differences between monolingual and bilingual subjects' responses in DCT and role-play task. The reason why we chose this statistical procedure referred to the fact that data were continuous, we relied on two subgroups (bilingual and monolingual) and contrasted their performance in the above quoted tests. In addition to that, we made use of matched T-test to compare learners' performance in the written and oral task and thus test the second hypothesis of the study which referred to task effects and modifiers use.

Table 1. Taxonomy of peripheral modification devices based on Sifianou's proposal (1999).

INTERNAL MODIFICATION	Softeners	*Just, possibly*
	Hesitators	*Could you...could you...*
	Attention-getters	*Excuse me...*
EXTERNAL MODIFICATION	Grounders	(explanation)
	Disarmers	*If you are not too busy*
	Expanders	(repeat request with diff. formula)
	Please	

4. Results and discussion

As stated above a first analysis of our data concerned the comparison between our bilingual and monolingual subjects in terms of the number of modification items

used. In so doing, we aimed at testing Hypothesis 1, which predicted the advantage of bilingual over monolingual subjects in their global use of peripheral modification items. Findings to this respect are best exemplified in Figure 4.1 below.
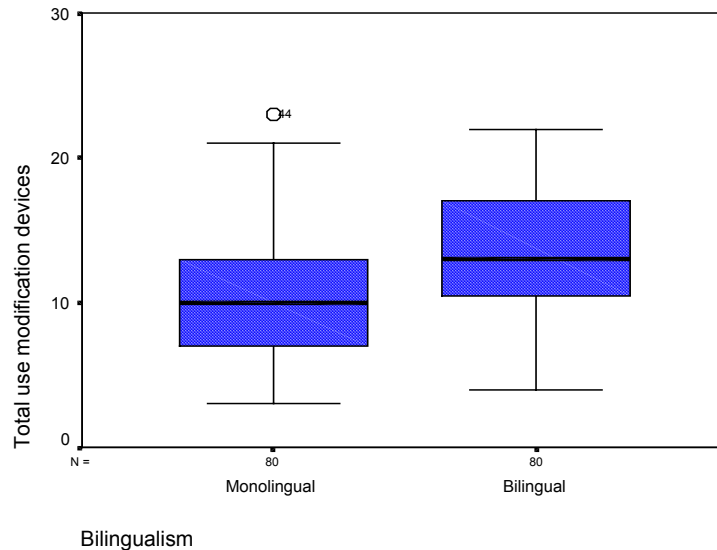

Figure 4.1. Total number of modfication devices used by monolingual and bilingual subjects.

As shown in the boxplot above, bilingual subjects did not only employ a wider amount of modification devices but their performance reveals a higher degree of frecuency in terms of use as a regular pattern. Besides, monolingual subjects employed less modification items and the mean score (m.s.= 10.21) is inferior to that of bilinguals (m.s.= 13.28) performance as far as frecuency is concerned. In order to further analyse the apparent divergence in the mean scores related to the number of modification items used by the two subgroups, we decided to apply a T-test for independent measures to our data.

Table 4.1. Total number of modification devices employed.

	m. s.	s.d.	T
Monolingual	10.21	4.18	-4.735*
Bilingual	13.28	3.99	

*p < 0.001

As provided by results from the T-test displayed in table 4.1. above, the difference in the quantity of peripheral modification devices appeared as statistically

significant with a probability level of 99% {p = .000}, thus, confirming Hypothesis 1 of our study which predicted the advantage of bilingual learners' over monolingual ones in their global use of modifiers. Results presented so far refer to quantitative differences between groups. In accounting for qualitative differences, we analysed bilinguals and monolinguals use of internal and external modifiers, as displayed in figures 4.2. and 4.3. below.
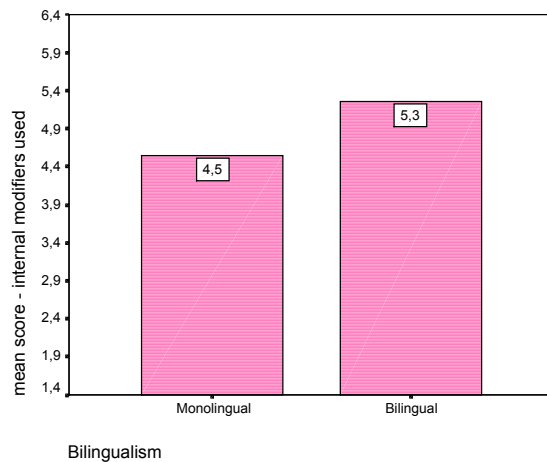

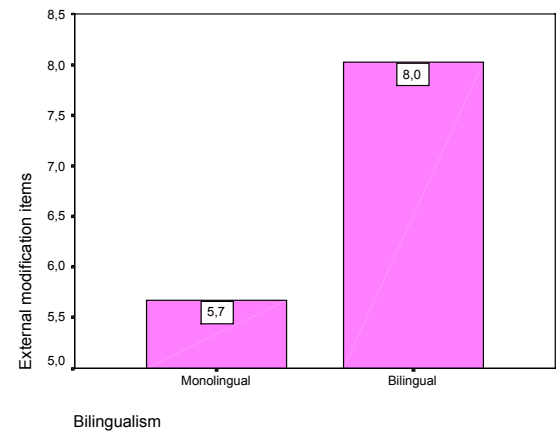Figure 4.2. Internal modification devices used.

Figure 4.3. External modification items.

According to findings presented above, it seems that differences between groups were higher in external than in internal modifiers use. We decided to apply a T-test for independent measures in order to ascertain the extent to which these differences were statistically significant. Results showed that bilinguals employed a higher number of internal modification items (softeners, attention-getters and hesitators) {m.s.= 5.25} than monolingual subjects {m.s. = 4.53}, but the difference between groups was not statistically significant {*t*= -1.377, *sig.*=.170}. With reference to external modification devices, bilingual participants employed more often these items (m.s.= 8.06) than monolinguals ones (m.s.= 5.67) in making requests and such difference appeared to be statistically significant {t=-5.298, p<.001}.

Although qualitative differences between groups were not statistically significant in the case of internal modification devices, we believe that our results are significant to the extent that they posited relevant differences between the two groups as far as theior global use of modifiers was concerned. In this sense, we may say that Hypothesis 1 of our study which predicted the advantage of bilingual over monolingual

learners was partially supported by our findings. Furthermore, we may state that our study is also in line with Jessner's assumptions (1999) which report an advantage to bilingual compared to monolingual learners as far as their interactional competence is concerned, since we understand pragmatic production is part of the learners' overall interactional competence, and request modifiers are instances of pragmatic behaviour. Additionally, our findings also seemed to confirm Herdina and Jessner's dynamic view of multilingualism (2000), since the skill of reducing the impositive nature of request acts by making use of mitigators (i.e. modification items) seemed to be highly more developed in bilingual learners of English (p =.000).

A second goal in our study referred to the role of the task type and research method in eliciting pragmatic production on the part of English learners (Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Sasaki, 1998). We particularly analysed whether the type of task had affected our subjects' use of request acts peripheral modification devices. Bearing this purpose in mind, we first considered the global amount of peripheral modification items used by participants and accounted for statistical differences in applying a Matched -T-test to our data. Secondly, we contrasted bilingual and monolingual subjects' performance in the oral and written production tasks.

Regarding the global amount of peripheral modification items employed by participants, we may say that our subjects made a higher use of external {m.s.= 6.65} than internal {m.s.= 4.89} modification items, being the differences in such use statistically significant {T=-5.405} (p<.001) as reported by results obtained from the Matched T-test. This finding is line with previous studies from the IL pragmatics field which reported learners' tendency to use more external than internal modification items (Rintell, 1981; Kasper, 1982; House & Kasper, 1987; Harlow, 1990). In our opinion, learners' underuse of internal modifiers may be related to proficiency-effects, due to the syntactic complexity involved in the production of certain internal modifiers (e.g., *possibly, just*), as external modifiers, like grounders (i.e., providing reasons for making the request) or the word *please* may be considered as syntactically less demanding. However, further research on the role of proficiency level would be necessary to sustain such assumption.

Another variable that was considered in the study refers to the role of the task type in eliciting the use of modifiers. As predicted by Hypothesis 2, the open role-play would elicit more modification items than the discourse completion test. In testing this

hypothesis we compared bilingual and monolingual learners' performance in the two tasks, thereby focusing on their global use of peripheral modification items.
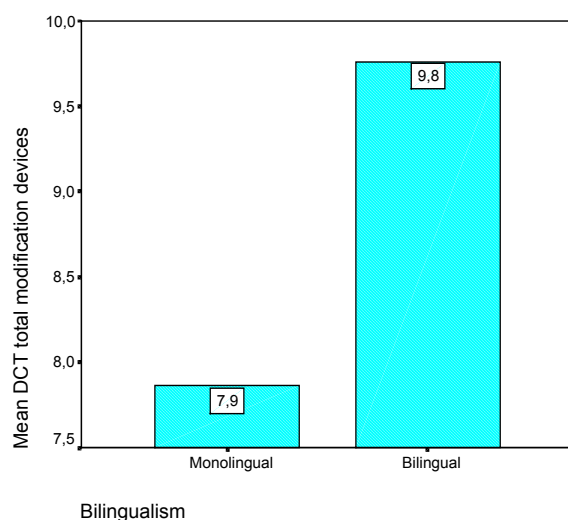

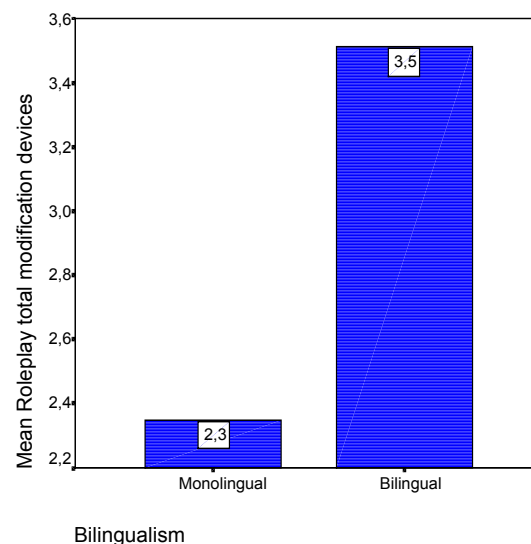Figure 4.4. Modification items used in DCT.

Figure 4.5. Modification items used in Roleplay.

As displayed in figures 4.4. and 4.5. above, mean scores related to modifiers use in each task show that the written task elicited more modification items (m.s.=8.81) than the oral task (m.s.=2.93). Furthemore, after applying a Matched T-test to our data, differences in the use of modifiers in role-play and DCT appeared to be statistically significant {t= 24.166}, (*p*<.000). This finding seems to contradict previous studies which led to a wider use of modifiers in the oral than in the written production task ().WE believe that various factors might have influenced subjects' performance. Unlike in previous studies (Sasaki, 1998), our subjects' interlocutor in th eoral task was not a native speaker, but another participants who shared the speakers' L1 (and L2). This fact might have prevented them from using a higher amount of modifiers, as the impositive nature of requests may not be so apparent. Furthermore, as we were dealing with an open version of a role-play their performance was less controlled than that of other subjects in previous studies (Hudson et al., 1995). However, we should state that in line with Beebe & Cummings' assumption (1996), our participants provided longer responses in the role-play task, which included different turns, but modifiers use and contextual variables were not fully controlled.

In addition to that, we also think that the fact that the written task was done individually might have influenced results, since participants had more time to reflect upon their responses to specific situations and include a modifier whenever they felt it was necessary. On the contrary, the presence of an interlocutor in the oral task might have had time constraining effects, since the interlocutor waits for an answer. Therefore, we may say that particular characteristics of language learners (i.e., linguistic background), as well as the context in which the language is learnt, whether it is a second or a foreign language learningsetting, and also characteristics of learner groups in that context (i.e., if learners share their L1 or L2), will affect English learners' use of request modifiation items, thus, also influencing their pragmatic competence. However, further research in these aspects is needed to corroborate our findings.

One important aspect deriving from our study relates to bilinguals' use of modifiers as opposed to monolinguals' performance. In order to further analyse that aspect and considering quanlitative differences could not be drawn from our results, as far as the use of internal modifiers was concerned, we examined the two learner groups in the two different tasks.

Table 4.2. Modification items used in DCT.

	m.s.	s.d.	T	Sig.
Bilingual	9.76	2.35	-4.105	.000
Monolingual	7.86	3.41		

Table 4.3. Modification items used in Role-play.

	m.s.	s.d.	T	Sig
Bilingual	3.51	2.39	-3.468	.001
Monolingual	2.35	1.81		

According to results displayed in tables 4.2. and 4.3., we may state that bilingual learners outperformed monoligual ones in terms of the number of modifiers employed in both the oral and written task, and such difference was statistically significant. Although it was not explicitly stated in Hypothesis 1 of the present study, we may assume that these findings partly support it, as a clear advantage may be observed on th epart of bilingual participants in terms of quantity. Therefore, the fact that bilingual subjects outperformed monolingual ones in the two tasks seems to reveal that L3 learners tried to mitigate the impositive nature of the request act more often than the other learner group. In light of our results and despite the lack of statistical significance in learners' use of internal modifiers (see figure 4.2.), we decided to draw a correlation analysis (Spearman test) and findings showed that correlation between bilingualism and use of modification items was significant (R= .355, p= .000), thus presenting more

evidence about the role of bilingualism in terms of the number of modification devices employed.

In light of our results further research is necessary to truly account for the role of bilingualism in learners' use of request modification devices in particular, and other pragmatic aspects in general. We have tried to adopt a different perspective in analysing our learners pragmatic production, that of their linguistic background which pointed to the fact that half of them were learning English as a third language. Additionally, it has also been our purpose to broaden the scope of investigation in third language acquisition to consider pragmatic development of L3 learners, since, as argued by Hoffmann (2001), it concerns one aspect which characterises bilingual and trilingual competence and differentiates these from monolingual competence.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, we may say that our hypotheses were partly supported by our results. On the one hand, we aimed at determining whether bilingualism would affect foreign language learners' pragmatic production and results confirmed the advantage of bilingual over monolingual learners in the global use of request acts peripheral modification item, and distinguishing between their performance in the oral and written task. However, no statistical differences were found concerning participants use of internal modifiers. Besides, we found significant correlation level between bilingualism and modifiers use. Therefore, our results support Jessner's assumptions which point to a highly developed interactional competence in third language learners, since we understand pragmatic production as part of the overall communicative competence. Furthermore, we may state that our findings are in line with Herdina & Jessner's dynamic view of multilingualism (2000), since skills involved in making use of appropriate requestive behaviour (including mitigation devices) appeared more developed in third than in second(foreign) English learners.

On the other hand, our second hypothesis was not confirmed by our findings. Opposite to results from previous studies, more modification items were employed in the written than in the oral task. We have attributed such findings to characteristics of the learners, like the fact that they all shared their L1 (or L2), and this was not the case

of previous research conducted in ESL settings (Yamashita, 1996); and we have also related our findings to the nature of the task.

Our study is also subject to certain constrains, as we have only dealt female participants at a similar age range. Dealing with subjects at different age periods or including male participants could have varied our results, since investigation in these matters bears some influential role to the age and gender factors (Cenoz, 2000; Muñoz, 2000).

Despite the above mentioned limitations that may be attributed to the present study, we believe that findings should be considered to the extent that they support our hypotheses and seem to confirm and further expand previous research from the field of third language acquisition. The advantage of bilingual subjects in producing requestive behaviour seems to call for further research on the development of pragmatic competence on the part third language learners by focusing on the production of other pragmatic aspects. So far a wide amount of research in the interlanguage pragmatics field has signalled out developmental stages that help us understand psycholinguistic and cognitive processes in acquiring a second and to a lesser extent a foreign language. Nevertheless, we do live in a multilingual society and since knowledge of more than one language has proved to influence the acquisition and use of a third one, pragmatic competence deserves investigation from that perspective. In so doing, we may better understand the development of those processes implied in multilingual acquisition and use, while shedding more light on the development of second/foreign language acquisition and use in turn.

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Appendix A: Bilingualism Test

What language did you receive instruction in

- at school?

Catalan/Valencian ❏   Castilian ❏   Other:.............

- at the high school?

Catalan/Valencian ❏   Castilian ❏   Other:.............

Do you know if you have been formally educated within the framework of any of the following programmes?

P.I.P. ❏   P.I.L. ❏   P.E.V. ❏   Other: ....

1. What is your mother tongue? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

2. What language do you usually employ when you write? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

3. What language do you usually employ when you speak? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

4. How would you evaluate your competence in Castilian and Catalan?

	SPEAKING	LISTENING	WRITING	READING
CATALAN				
CASTILIAN				

A : Excellent command   **B** : Good command   **C** : With difficulties   **D** : No idea

1. What language do you use at home ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

2. What is your parents' (family members') mother tongue ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

3. What language do you usually use with your friends ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

4. What language are the newspapers or magazines you usually read in? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

5. What language are the radio programmes you listen to ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

6. What language are the TV programmes you usually watch in ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

7. What language do you use when you go shopping ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

8. What language do you use when you ask for things in a bar or restaurant ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

9. What language do you employ when somebody is introduced to you for the first time? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

10. Do you use the same language with the following interlocutors ?

■ someone who is not from your region and speaks Castilian.

■ someone who is not from your region, speaks Castilian but has lived here for more than 10 years.

■ someone who has just arrived to your town and speaks Castilian.

■ someone who has just arrived to your town, speaks Castilian but understands Catalan.

11. If your interlocutor does not seem to understand you, do you change the code (from Catalan to Castilian or vice-versa) ?   Yes ❏   No ❏   It depends ❏

■ If your answer is *It depends*, what does it depend on ?

12. If you know that your interlocutor speaks Castilian and understands Catalan. What language would you use ? Catalan/ Castilian/ Other:

13. If your interlocutor replies to your comments in Castilian, what language would you employ ?

Catalan/ Castilian/ Other: Why ?

14. Do you consider yourself as bilingual (Catalan/Castilian) ?

    Yes ❏   No ❏   I'm not sure ❏   Why?

Appendix B: Role-Play Task Scenarios

A. You are two friends. One of you wants the other to ask the teacher a question about vocabulary, because there is a word s/he does not understand, but s/he is not very good at English.

B. A policewoman has arrested a burglar. She wants the burglar to raise his/her hands and to go with her to the police station.

C. You have invited a very famous and efficient pedagogue at an institutional dinner. One of you is the pedagogue. You fell extremely hungry. This pedagogue starts speaking round the table and nobody has started eating yet, because they are waiting for the guest to start.

D. One of you is a policeman. He wants the other person to move his car because it is in the way and due to this fact a traffic jam has been produced.

E. You both work in a tiles factory. One of you is a secretary who needs two days off because his/her mother is ill. Talk to your boss.

F. You are the human resources manager of a company. Your secretary has been arriving late during the last week. You wouldn't like him/her to come late again.

G. One of you works for a travel agency. The other visits the travel agency in order to get information about flights to Japan. The latter would like to know how much the cheapest ticket to Japan costs.

H. One of you works at the information desk in Heathrow airport. Your partner has just arrived at Heathrow airport and does not know where to take the bus to Victoria station. S/he approaches the information desk.

I. You have an appointment to see the doctor and you are sitting in the waiting room. It is getting late and you wonder whether your turn has passed. Suddenly, a nurse enters the room.

J. One of you is the teacher and the other is a student who goes to his/her teacher's office desk to talk about his/her final exam. The student is very nervous and would like to smoke.

Appendix C: DCT - Scenarios

Situation 1: You have invited a very famous pedagogue at an institutional dinner. You feel extremely hungry, but this engineer starts speaking and nobody has started eating yet, because they are waiting for the guest to start. You want to start having dinner. What would you say?

Situation 2: You work as a secretary in a tiles factory. You need two days off because your mother is ill. What do you say to your boss?

Situation 3: You are a policeman. A person has produced a traffic jam because his car is in the way. You want that person to move his car. What do you say to him?

Situation 4: A policewoman has arrested a burglar. She wants the burglar to acknowledge his rights and to go to the police station with her. What does she say to him?

Situation 5: You have invited your mother/father-in-law to your house for lunch. It is the first time. You would like to know what is your boyfriend/girlfriend favourite sandwich. What do you say to your father-/mother-in-law?

Situation 6: You do not understand one English word, but you want your partner to ask the teacher because you think that you are not very good at English. What do you say to your friend?

Situation 7: You are the human resources manager of a company. Your secretary has been arriving late during the last week. You wouldn't like him/her to come late again. What would you say to her?

Situation 8: You need some information about flights to Japan. Particularly, you would like to know how much the cheapest ticket to Japan costs. You visit a travel agency for this purpose. What do you say to the travel agent?

Situation 9: You are studying for an exam in your friend's house. It is very hot and you cannot stand it but you don't know if your friend is also hot. What would you say?

Situation 10:You are a teacher. One of your students has not handed in an essay that was compulsory for the final mark. Today this student comes to your desk. What would you say?

Situation 11: You want your boyfriend/girlfriend to stop eating snacks. You don't want him/her to get angry, but you just cannot stand the noise.

Situation12: You have an appointment to see the doctor and you are sitting in the waiting room. It is getting late and you wonder whether your turn has passed. Suddenly, a nurse enters the room. What would you say?

Situation 13: You go to your teacher's office because you need to talk to her. It is a very important matter about your final exam. You feel very nervous and would like to smoke. What would you say?

Situation 14: You have just arrived at Heathrow airport and you do not know where to take a bus to Victoria Train Station. You decide to go to the information desk. What would you say?

Situation 15:You have been taking driving lessons for some months and you believe that it is time to take the driving test. However, your instructor has not mentioned anything to you. What would you say?

Situation 16: The date for applying to an English exam has expired, but you know that someone last year applied for that same exam after the application term. You go to the place where applications are handed in. What would you say?

Situation 17: You don't feel very well. You need an appointment to see the doctor. You phone to the doctor's. What would you say?

Situation 18: You are a salesman from a company that produces and distributes software products. A new tiles factory has been created. It is based in your home town. You decide to go there and talk to the production manager to see if you could sell your products. First, you need an appointment, so you enter the company and talk to one of the receptionists in production. What would you say?

Situation 19: You would like to have your hair cut. Tonight you have been invited to a party. Due to this reason, you would like to have a new haircut. You go the hairdresser's. What would you say?

Situation 20: Your best friend has moved to another town. You phone to his/her mother's house, because you want to know your friends' new phone number. What would you say?