A Contrastive Study Of Request Production By Canarian Spanish Undergraduates: Speech Vs Writing; Spanish Vs English; Dct's Vs Role-Plays

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Abstract

In this presentation I will report on the results of an empirical research carried out at the ULPGC (Canary Islands, Spain), to study the strategies used in the production of requests by a group of young undergraduates. The purpose of the research was actually three-fold. Firstly, we aimed at providing data regarding the realization patterns of requests made both orally and in writing, by our informants in mother tongue, Canarian Spanish. This variety has been widely studied, as Corrales, Álvarez and Corbella's (2007) bibliographical compilation proves. However, as Morgenthaler (2008: 27) states, while many studies on Canarian Spanish have adopted a quantitative or variationist sociolinguistic perspective, other fields related to qualitative sociolinguistics, pragmatics or ethnomethodology remain almost totally unexplored. The present work is, to the best of my knowledge, the first investigation that tries to shed some light on the type of strategies used for making requests by speakers of Canarian Spanish. This first phase of our research was related both to cross-cultural pragmatics and intra-lingual pragmatic variation.

Secondly, since all our undergraduates were students of English as a Foreign Language, we also examined the requests they made as non-native speakers of English, also in writing and in speech. This second phase had to do with inter-language pragmatics. Two different methods were adopted for the elicitation of data for these two parts of the study, namely, an open tape-recorded role-play and a written questionnaire, following the format of the Discourse Completion Tests (DCT).

Thirdly, we also try to determine to what extent the results in each phase differ or not depending on the language and the method used in the elicitation of data, thus contributing also to the growing debate on the validity of research methods.

To complement our study, we also collected a total of 100 naturally occurring requests over a period of two months. In short, the research questions our study addresses are the following:

1. Which realization patterns (in terms of strategies and modification devices, if any) do Canarian undergraduates choose most frequently to make requests in situations of social distance/closeness and social power/equality?

2. Do they modify these patterns when they make requests in English?

3. Are there any noticeable differences in the realization patterns of requests made by Canarian undergraduates depending on the data collection procedure (namely, DCT's and oral role-plays)?

4. What basic features do the requests collected from natural data through field notes have? How do they differ from the elicited data?

   Due to time restrictions I just briefly describe the research setting, the informants and the methodology, before focusing directly on the results.

1. The setting

The research was carried out at the Faculty of Philology, located in one of the two city campuses of the ULPGC, at the beginning of the first semester (September /October) of the 2012-13 academic course. At that time the last academic course of the old degree in English Philology (following the 1994 Plan) was still under development, though now it is just being brought to complete extinction (it will be finished by the end of July 2013).

2 The informants

The informants who participated in the written questionnaire for this study were 35 undergraduates,[1] all studying the above mentioned old degree in English Philology. Although we did not factor into our analysis their gender or age, we can say they were 28 female and 7 male students, whose ages ranged from 20 to 29, their mean being 23. For the oral role-plays we relied on a small group of 10 self-selected students. All the undergraduates who participated in our research were of Canarian origin and the majority of them can be said to belong to a low-middle or middle social class. As regards their command of the English language, we can say that most of them had managed to pass the subjects *English language I* and *English language II* in previous courses and therefore they were supposed to have achieved a B1 level of English proficiency.

3. The Methodology:

As already explained, in our research we used a total of three different methods: written DCT's, oral roleplays, and natural data collection.

For the first phase of our research we employed the same written questionnaire used by Lorenzo-Dus and Bou Franch in 2003, in both Spanish and English versions. The Spanish survey was passed during the second week of September, and two weeks later we passed the English questionnaire. In the handout we have just included the English transcription of the six situations employed with indication of social distance and social power.

In order to perform and record the role-plays, in the second phase of our study, we made appointments with our students to meet them in pairs during the second week of October. The situations that we used were either invented or adapted from various sources, and they were performed first in Spanish and then in English. They are also described in the handout. Later on, the recordings were transcribed and analysed for the study and classification of the data.

For the third phase of our study, we collected a total of 100 natural requests over a period of two months. The requests were registered from spontaneous conversations held in various places (home, office, supermarkets, shops, park, airport, official

meetings, classroom) by different people (family, colleagues, friends, students, strangers, neighbours). Every time we heard a request made by anybody around us we tried to either write it down immediately or memorize it, taking as many notes as possible about the situation. The data were then transcribed and analysed manually.

4. The results

Let's see now the results obtained in each of the three phases of our research, namely, the native-speaker (Canarian Spanish) analysis, the non-native English speaker analysis and the natural data analysis. The quantitative and qualitative analyses are complemented with a study of the statistical significance of our findings. For this we employed a hypothesis test.[2] In statistical terminology we considered a binomial test of equal proportions, where the distribution of the proportions has been approached, asymptotically, by a normal distribution (Rohatgi, 1976).

4.1. Native speaker analysis: written and oral requests

After distributing our Spanish DCT among our 35 undergraduates, we obtained a corpus of **210** written requests in Canarian Spanish. Similarly, with the six situations included in our recorded role-play activity, (which was carried out by 10 self-selected students of the same group of informants,) we collected a total of **60** oral requests in Canarian Spanish. Let's comment on the results in each.

4.1.1 Request patterns in our written DCT in Spanish

We will describe the request patterns both in terms of the strategy types and the internal/external modification devices used. For the classification of the requests strategies we have simplified Díaz Pérez 2003's proposal, following Trosborg (1995), by omitting his "category 0 (no realization)". Table 1 below offers our data regarding the strategy types used by our informants in each of the six situations of the Spanish DCT. The strategies are supposed to vary in correlation with the two main factors that characterize each situation, namely social power and social distance, with the level of imposition also having a role to play. However, as Thomas (1995: 129) explains, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between them, and "in fact some studies conflate the two" so that although identified as separate dimensions, in practice that distinction is often not maintained. The reason is that "power and social distance very frequently co-occur, as we tend to be socially distant from those in power over us. But this is by no means always the case".

On the other hand, it is interesting to note here that when studying politeness in Spain, Hickey (2005: 321) mentions that many studies on the linguistic mechanisms to perform speech acts in Spanish agree that although this language has various forms of indirectness, Spaniards "use them differently and less frequently" than speakers of other languages. In fact, Iglesias (2001: 274-75) highlights the fact that "the imperative in Spanish is not inherently impolite". In line with these ideas, we can observe that in our data there is a considerably high number of direct requests,

amounting to 72, which constitutes 34,2% of the corpus of written requests in Canarian Spanish. In addition, and in agreement with the results of previous studies, the majority of the requests made by our informants fall into the category of the hearer-oriented conventionally indirect strategy, as expected. No other strategies were used here by our informants.

A quantitative analysis of the data in Table 1 below reveals that the highest number of direct requests occur in those situations (S) which either involve familiarity with the hearer, namely, S-2 (coke, n=33), S-4 (notes, n=12), S-5 (Dad's car, n=9) or social power on the part of the speaker, like S-1 (bookshop, n=11). Similarly, the highest figures for hearer-oriented conventionally indirect requests appear in two situations of social distance, S-3 (pen, n=34), S-6 (letter of recommendation, n=29), followed closely by S-5 (Dad's car, n=26) which involves social closeness but a highly imposing request of someone who is supposed to have more power, the speaker's father. Surprisingly, S-1 and S-4 elicit a similar number of hearer-oriented conventionally indirect requests (n=24 and n=23, respectively), even though the former is much less imposing than the latter.

As regards the modification devices used in requests, and their classification into internal and external, we have used Alcón Soler et al, 2005's proposal (see Appendix C), which we have slightly adapted to our results. Table 2 below shows the data obtained in this first phase of our research, dealing with the patterns of requests in Canarian Spanish. In the tables, the external modification devices are marked in grey shading.

In the light of the data in Table 2, it appears that 'attention getters' are the type of modification device, which is much more frequently used by our informants as they occur in 51.4% of the requests. They are followed at considerable distance by 'please', which is used only in 36 of the 210 requests of the corpus, thus obtaining a percentage of only 16.9%. In decreasing order of frequency, other devices used are 'grounders' (n=21) 'softeners' (n=17), 'openers' (13), 'other syntactic mitigators' (n=11) and hesitators (n=2), with no 'intensifiers' occurring at all. These figures seem to suggest that the requests made by our Canarian Spanish undergraduates tend not to include too many nor too varied mitigators, the internal type being particularly scant.

Comparatively, the highest number of modification devices occur in S-3 (n=50), requesting a pen of a stranger, followed by 39 mitigating devices in S-5, borrowing Dad's car –a much more imposing request in terms of the value of the object requested– and 35 mitigators in S-1, requesting for information of a stranger.

Seemingly, for these informants requesting of a stranger (S-1 and S-3) is an act that results in a higher amount of 'attention getters' (n=31 and n=23, respectively) and more 'softeners' (14 in S-3). In contrast, the highest occurrence of 'please' (whose general frequency is considerably low) occurs (n=12) in S-2. This could be explained by the need to mitigate the demand of the imperatives, since this is the situation that

elicited the highest number of direct requests (n=33). The use of this polite marker in Spanish (*por favor,* 'please') deserves some comments here and also in the other phases of our research, as will be seen. Currently, there are two informal versions of *por favor*, of increasing use especially among youngsters: one is the shortened form *por fa,* and the other is the shortened and diminutive *por fi.* We have detected that they are used relatively frequently in those situations of social proximity (-SD) and even between strangers of equal social power (-SP), though in this case with a lower frequency. They are used both as 'attention getters', as in (1) and (2), or as external modification devices, as in (3) and (4):

(1) *Por fi, ¿me puedes traer una coca-cola?* ('Please, can you bring me a coke?' S-2)

(2) *Por fa, ¿me dejas tu coche?* ('Please, can you lend me your car'? S-5)

(3) *Pásame una cola, por fi.* ('Pass me a coke, please' S-2)

(4) *Pásame cuando puedas los apuntes del otro dia, por fa.* ('Pass me the notes from
the other day, when you can, please' S-4)

On closer inspection, and leaving 'attention getters' aside to concentrate in the rest of the devices, we can also see how the highest number of modificators (n=27) occurs in S-3, which, as already stated, involves a request of a stranger. In particular, this situation elicited the largest amount of 'softeners', mostly of the type underlined in (5)

(5) *Disculpa, ¿me podrías dejar el bolígrafo un momentito* ('Excuse me, could you lend me your pen just a little moment?').

Both S-4, 'borrowing notes', and S-6, 'letter of recommendation', follow with 20 modification devices, probably because of the level of imposition they involve. In S-4, half of the devices have to do with 'grounders' to justify the need to request, such as the one in (6)

(6) *Oye, ¿me dejas tus apuntes? Es que no pude venir a clase* ('Hey, will you lend me your notes? It's just that I couldn't come to class').

In S-6 we find 'other types of syntactic mitigators' (n=6), such as the ones in (7) and (8)

(7) *Si no es mucha molestia, me gustaría pedirle que me escribiera una carta de recomendación para hacer un curso en Inglaterra* ('If it's not too bothering for you, I'd like to ask you to write a letter of recommendation for me to take a course
in England')

(8) *Si fuera tan amable, ¿le importaría redactar una carta de recomendación para solicitar una beca?* ('If you are so kind, would you mind writing a letter of recommendation for me to apply for a grant?')

There are also more 'openers' (n=5) and 'preparatories' (n=3), as shown in (9) and (10) respectively:

(9) *¿Le importaría escribirme una carta de recomendación que necesito para poder ir a estudiar a Inglaterra?* ('Would you mind writing me a letter of recommendation that I need to be able to go and study in England?')

(10) *¿Podría usted hacerme el favor de escribirme una carta de recomendación?* (Could you do me a favour and write me a letter of recommendation?

In S-5, most devices are 'attention getters' (n=21), followed by 'please' (n=7, three of them in the shortened form *por fa*) and some 'grounders' (n=4).

4.1.2 Request patterns in our oral role plays in Canarian Spanish

Table 3 below shows the data obtained through this method regarding the request strategies used. It is obvious that the most frequent request strategy is once again the conventional indirect hearer oriented type. The percentage of direct strategies is also similar (31.6% here vs 34.2% in the DCT's), just slightly smaller. What clearly differentiates the results in this second phase is that three informants resorted to speaker-oriented conventionally indirect strategies and two of them used an impersonal perspective, something that didn't happen in the DCT's. This seems to imply that this method elicits more varied requests, regarding request strategies.

As far as modification devices are concerned, Table 4 below shows the types used by our informants in the oral role-plays. When analysing the data obtained through this method plays we can observe that the six devices that are more frequently used by our informants are the same as those in the DCT's, although in a slightly different order. 'Attention getters' continue being the most favoured device (33.7%), followed by 'grounders' (29.2%) and 'softeners' (10.1%). Another important difference is that in the oral role-plays three new modificators are used, namely, one 'expander', two 'promises of reward' and resorting to a 'negative verb' in the request head act. Thus, this method also seems to elicit a higher number of 'grounders' and 'softeners', and in general more varied types of modificating devices.

As regards the asterisk added to the figure (2*) for 'please' in S-2, it has to do with the special use of this politeness marker, *por favor* ('please') in one of the oral role-plays. It is interesting to note that although here one student used the informal shortened and diminutive form *por fi,* he did it in a repetitive or reduplicative way, which intensifies its force, as seen in (11):

(11) *Cari, guapa, por fi, por fi, por fi, por fi, ¿podrías dejarme los apuntes del otro día que tuve que ir al médico?* ('Sweetie, be a dear, please, please, please, please, could you lend me the other day's notes, as I had to go to the doctor'?

This informant repeated *por fi* four times, but in our frequency count we considered it just as one single occurrence, not four.

4.2. *Interlanguage analysis (non-native English speakers): written and oral requests*

In the lines below we offer and examine the data of the English corpora, namely a corpus of 210 written requests produced by our 35 informants and a corpus of 60 oral requests made by the same 10 self-selected non-native English speakers.

4.2.1 Request patterns in the written DCT's in English

In comparison with those in Tables 1 and 2, the figures in Table 5 below show some differences in the request patterns followed by our undergraduates when writing requests in English. As can be observed, the most favoured strategies are again the conventionally indirect hearer-oriented type (n=119), followed by the direct strategy (n=60). However, the number of occurrences of the latter has diminished and the conventionally-indirect speaker-oriented strategy is now also used in 30 requests. In addition, one informant employed an impersonal perspective in one of the situations. These features seem to indicate that our undergraduates are aware of some important differences that exist between the typical patterns that they use for the realization of polite requests in Spanish and those in English. Likewise, it is interesting to note the relative decrease in the percentage of direct requests, even though it is still high for the typical standards in the English speaking societies.

Table 6 below offers data regarding the modification devices used by our informants in the DCT in English. As shown, when writing requests in English our informants seem to use more (n=246 vs n=212 in Spanish) and more varied mitigating devices. In fact, they use almost all the types. They maintain their preferences as they seem to use much more frequently the same two types of mitigating devices that they favoured in the Spanish version of the questionnaire, though their occurrences are higher, and so are their highest percentages, i.e. 'attention getters' (52.4%) and 'please' (21.9%). Notwithstanding, they also use more 'openers', more 'intensifiers' and more 'preparators' than when requesting in Spanish; the number of 'softeners', 'grounders' and 'other syntactic mitigators' is comparatively lower, though.

4.2.2 Request patterns in the oral role plays in English

The data obtained regarding the strategies used by our informants when requesting orally in role plays are collected in Table 7 below. As shown in this table, the strategy most frequently used by our informants when requesting orally in English is once again the conventionally indirect hearer-oriented type. In comparison to role-plays in Spanish, the most noticeable feature here is the increase in the percentage of speaker-oriented conventionally indirect strategy (16.6% vs 5% in Spanish). This reflects our students' awareness of the greater tendency towards this strategy among native English speakers. In contrast, the percentage of usage of the impersonal perspective is a bit lower here (1.6%) than in the case of role plays in Spanish (3.3%).

Regarding the internal and external modification devices, what the figures in Table 8 indicate is that 'attention getters' continue being the most frequently used device, with similar percentages, followed by 'grounders' and 'please', which noticeably increases its percentage of use here (23.1% vs. 8.9% in Canarian Spanish role plays). This seems to reflect students' awareness of the typically higher frequency of use of this device in English than in Spanish. Intensifiers also increase their usage (3,3%) compared to the Spanish data (0.6%), while we find neither 'expanders' nor 'negative verbs', but there is one 'hesitator' used by one informant as seen (marked in italics) in (12):

(12) Alejandro, I'm sorry but there's a problem with your paper, *and, er, I don't know how to say this*. You have to hand it in two weeks before, so sorry.

4.3

4.4 Natural data analysis

With the field notes we took over a period of 2 months we obtained a corpus of 100 naturally occurring requests produced by different speakers in different situations. We summarise all the data in Table 9 below, which includes two sections: 9.A presents the strategies used and 9.B the modificating devices; in this case all of them are external.

As can be observed, the majority of the requests collected occurred in situations of social proximity (family or friends/colleagues environment). This probably explains why, in contrast with the results in the other phases of our research, most of the requests here (53%) are direct. However, in 13 of these contexts of proximity conventionally indirect requests were used, instead. On the whole, the hearer-oriented type was much more frequently used than the speaker oriented strategy (42% vs. 5%). Likewise, 14 situations involving social distance elicited direct requests, usually mitigated with 'please' or 'other syntactic modification devices', such as *cuando puedas* ('when you can'), or *si eres tan* amable ('if you are so kind').

Another noticeable feature is the considerably smaller number of modificating devices used, which lowered to only 5 types: in decreasing order of frequency, we have 'attention getters', which again have the highest percentage of usage, 'grounders', 'please' with a remarkably low frequency of use (only 10%); 'other syntactic modificators' and 'preparators'. The explanation for this could be that in this phase of our research we had limited access to situations which involved social or power distance, which normally tend to provoke a higher and more varied number of devices.

Finally, once again we observe that the two informal versions of the politeness marker *por favor,* namely *por fa* and *por fi,* are used in situations of social proximity, and there are three occurrences of each. (13) and (14) are examples produced by the writer's son:

(13) *Dame tu ratón, por fa.* ('Give me your mouse, please')

(14) *Tráeme el libro, por fi*. ('Bring me the book, please')

4.4 Statistical significance of the results

As regards the significance level, Table 10 below offers the critical p-values[3] obtained after studying the relationship between the situational factors and the type of strategy and the number of mitigating devices used, in the light of the data described in each of the tables above for the different phases of our research. For the interpretation of the critical p-values given for each of the tables, we must take into account that the closer the critical p-value is to zero the stronger the influence of the variable studied and, therefore, the relationship between the strategy used and the corresponding situational variables becomes obvious.

As observed in Table 10, this relationship only seems to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) in Tables 1, 3, 5, 6 and 9A/B, respectively dealing with the strategy types used by our informants when producing requests in writing and in oral role-plays in their mother tongue (Canarian Spanish), both the strategies and mitigating devices used when writing in English and both the strategies and modificators registered in the natural data. The interpretation for this is that the situational factors play an important role in both the strategy types and the number of modificators used by the requesters, the tendency being to favour direct requests and fewer modificating devices, mostly the external type, in situations of social proximity.

In addition, when contrasting the results in terms of the method used, the p-value is 0.0000, which means that the difference is statistically significant. However, when comparing the findings in terms of the language used, the p-value reaches 0.1131, therefore the difference between the results in English and those in Canarian Spanish is not statistically significant. In other words, the method used (written DCT's vs. oral role-plays) to elicit the data seems to have an influence on the results, while the language employed does not determine a statistically significant difference in our findings. This might be explained because of a certain degree of interference of the students' mother tongue (Canarian Spanish) on their production in the target language (English).

5. Concluding remarks

In this research we have explored the main request patterns followed by a group of Canarian undergraduates studying English as a Foreign Language at the ULPGC within the framework of speech act theory and politeness theory. For each of the three research phases, our findings reveal the following points:

As regards the results of the written DCT's, we can observe that, when comparing the patterns of the requests made by our informants in Canarian Spanish with those they made in English, the former include a higher number of direct strategies (72 vs. 60). Besides when writing requests in English, our students used a number of speaker-oriented conventionally indirect requests (n=30), a strategy they never resorted to when writing requests in Spanish. In addition, one informant employed an impersonal

perspective in one of the requests, something that didn't happen in the Spanish version.

As far as the modification devices are concerned, they are more numerous in the written requests made in English (246) than in the Spanish ones (212). A case in point is that of 'please', which is used in 54 English utterances versus 36 written requests in Canarian Spanish. Similarly, requests in English include more 'attention getters' (129 vs. 109) and 'openers' (10 vs. 13). Surprisingly, our students employed more 'softeners', 'grounders' and 'other syntactic mitigators' in their Canarian Spanish requests than in their English version. These results seem to suggest that while these undergraduates have learnt some aspects of politeness in English which differ from those of their own native language and culture, they still need to learn to use other markers of politeness in the target language, i.e., our informants are aware of some of the differences that exist between requests in Spanish and requests in English, but they still need to learn to use more and more varied modification devices, particularly of the internal type, as well as to adopt the speaker-oriented perspective, which is more typical of politeness in English.

When comparing these results with those obtained in the oral role plays, we notice that in the latter the number of modification devices is higher and more varied, as they used other types they didn't resort to when writing, such as 'negative verbs', 'promise of reward', 'expanders' or 'intensifiers', the latter being used only twice in the English written requests.

There are also some noticeable differences which have to do with the language used. Thus, students use 'please' much more often when they use English, while the percentage of usage of some modification devices is also higher in the requests they make in this foreign language. Another observation is that the Spanish equivalent to 'please' adopts two colloquial forms, *por fa* and *por fi,* which tend to be used in situations of social closeness or proximity.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the high percentage of direct requests which range between 34.2% in written requests in Spanish and 28.5% in written requests English, the lowest frequency. Apparently, this reveals students' awareness of the fact that direct requests are less appropriate in English. Interestingly, in the oral role-plays both in Spanish and English the percentage is the same, 31.6%. This preference for directness is confirmed by the natural data, which record 53 occurrences of this type of request, among the 100 collected. These figures prove the tendency among Canarian Spanish speakers towards positive politeness, an orientation that actually abounds in the Spanish-speaking world.

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situations / strategies	1. bookshop n	2. coke n	3. pen n	4. notes n	5. car n	6.letter n	TOTAL n (%)
conv. Indirect hearer-oriented	24	2	34	23	26	29	**138 (65.7%)**
Direct	11	33	1	12	9	6	**72 (34.2%)**

Table 1: Distribution of request strategies used in written requests in Canarian Spanish

Situations→ / modifi-cation devices	1.bookshop n	2. coke n	3. pen n	4. notes n	5. car n	6. letter N	TOTAL n (%)
Attention getters	31	17	23	5	21	12	**109 (51.4%)**
Openers	0	0	3	2	3	5	**13 (6.1%)**
Softeners	0	0	14	0	3	0	**17 (8%)**
Preparators	0	0	0	0	0	3	**3 (1.4%)**
Grounders	0	0	7	10	4	0	**21 (9.9%)**
Hesitators	0	0	0	0	0	2	**2 (0.9%)**
Other syntactic mitigators	1	0	1	2	1	6	**11 (5.1%)**
Please	3	12	2	6	7	6	**36 (16.9%)**
TOTAL n	**35**	**29**	**50**	**25**	**39**	**34**	**212**

Table 2: Internal/external modification devices used in Canarian Spanish written requests

situations / strategies	1. music n	2. notes n	3. paper n	4. librarian n	5. money n	6. extension n	TOTAL N (%)
non-conv. Indirect	1	0	0	1	1	0	**3 (5%)**
conv. Indirect hearer-oriented	9	8	1	3	7	5	**33 (55%)**
Impersonal perspective	0	0	0	0	0	2	**2 (3.3%)**
conv. Indirect speaker-oriented	0	0	0	0	0	3	**3 (5%)**
Direct	0	2	9	6	2	0	**19 (31.6%)**

Table 3: Distribution of request strategies used in oral role plays in Canarian Spanish

Situations→ / modifi-cation devices	1. music n	2. notes n	3. paper n	4. librarian n	5. money n	6. extension n	TOTAL n (%)
Attention getters	10	9	8	8	10	8	**53 (33.7%)**
Openers	2	2	0	0	2	1	**7 (4.4%)**
Softeners	3	0	0	2	7	4	**16 (10.1%)**
Intensifiers	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1 (0.6%)**
Negative verb	0	2	0	0	0	2	**4 (2.5%)**
Preparators	1	3	0	0	0	0	**4 (2.5%)**
Grounders	10	7	7	7	6	9	**46 (29.2%)**

Other syntactic mitigators	0	1	5	0	0	2	**8 (5%)**
Promise of reward	0	1	1	0	0	0	**2 (1.2%)**
Expander	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1 (0.6%)**
Please	3	2*	1	4	2	3	**15 (9.5%)**
TOTAL n	**30**	**27**	**22**	**21**	**27**	**30**	**157**

Table 4: Internal/external modification devices used by our informants in oral role plays in Canarian Spanish

situations / **strategies**	**1. bookshop n**	**2. coke n**	**3. pen n**	**4. notes n**	**5. car N**	**6. letter n**	**TOTAL n (%)**
Impersonal perspective	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1 (0.4%)**
conv. Indirect hearer-oriented	28	3	26	21	11	30	**119 (56.6%)**
conv. Indirect speaker-oriented	1	0	6	5	17	1	**30 (14.2%)**
Direct	6	32	3	9	7	3	**60 (28.5%)**

Table 5: Distribution of request strategies per situation by non-native English speakers

situations→ / modifi-cation devices	1. bookshop n	2. coke n	3. pen n	4. notes n	5. car N	6. letter n	TOTAL n (%)
Attention getters	31	20	28	10	23	17	**129 (52.4%)**
Openers	0	0	7	4	3	5	**19 (7.7%)**
Softeners	0	0	10	0	1	1	**12 (4.8%)**
Intensifiers	0	0	0	0	0	2	**2 (0.8%)**
Preparators	0	0	0	1	3	1	**5 (2%)**
Grounders	0	0	6	4	4	3	**17 (6.9%)**
Other syntactic mitigators	0	0	1	3	2	2	**8 (3.2%)**
Please	7	17	9	9	3	9	**54 (21.9%)**
TOTAL n	**38**	**37**	**61**	**31**	**39**	**40**	**246**

Table 6: Internal/external modification devices used in written requests in English

situations→ / strategies	1. music n	2. notes n	3. paper n	4. librarian n	5. money n	6. extension n	TOTAL n (%)
conv. Indirect hearer-oriented	10	9	0	2	8	1	**30 (50%)**
Impersonal perspective	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1 (1.6%)**
conv. Indirect speaker-oriented	0	1	1	0	0	8	**10 (16.6%)**
Direct	0	0	9	8	2	0	**19 (31.6%)**

Table 7: Distribution of request strategies used in oral role plays in English

situations→ / modifi-cation devices	1. music n	2. notes n	3. paper n	4. librarian n	5. money n	6. extension n	TOTAL n (%)
Attention getters	10	7	9	6	9	8	**49 (32.4%)**
Openers	2	1	0	0	0	1	**4 (2.6%)**
Softeners	1	0	2	0	1	3	**7 (4.6%)**
Intensifiers	0	0	1	1	1	2	**5 (3.3%)**
Hesitator	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1 (0.6%)**
Preparators	0	0	0	0	0	3	**3 (1.9%)**
Grounders	9	7	3	5	9	7	**40 (26.4%)**
Promise of reward	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1 (0.6%)**
Other syntactic mitigators	1	1	2	0	0	2	**6 (3.9%)**
Please	8	6	2	5	8	6	**35 (23.1%)**
TOTAL	**31**	**22**	**21**	**17**	**28**	**32**	**151**

Table 8: Internal/external modification devices used for requesting in oral role-plays in English

situations→ / 9.A: Strategies	PROXIMITY (52 situations)	SOCIAL Distance/Power (48 situations)	TOTAL	EXAMPLES
Direct	39	14	**53**	*Go* to bed!
Conv. Indirect H-O	10	34	**44**	*Could you* tell me who's teaching this afternoon?
Conv. Indirect S-O	3	0	**3**	*Can I* use this lane?
9.B: EXTERNAL MODIFICATORS				
Attention getters	0	37		*Excuse me*, do you mind the dog?
Preparators		6		*Can you do me a favour*? Call Miguel
Grounders	0	16		Can you grease my office lock? *It doesn't work properly*
Please	6	4		Give me a napkin, *please*
Other syntactic modificators	0	9		Would you help me weight the oranges, *when you can*?
TOTAL	**6 modificators**	**72 modificators**		

Table 9: Natural language requests data

TABLES	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4	T-5	T-6	T-7	T-8	T-9A	T-9B
p-values	0.0000	0.1617	0.0000	0.0020	0.0000	0.0215	0.0376	0.0224	0.009	0.0000

Table 10: Critical p-values obtained after applying the hypothesis test to the data in each of the tables

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