Abstract
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November 29th, 2012

Acquisition of Indirect Commands as Requests
In Heritage Speakers and Their Monolingual Counterparts;
A Study in Spanish and English

The aim of this paper is to explore differences in the acquisition of indirect requests in English and Spanish when used by heritage speakers dominant in one of the previously named languages. In the study of pragmatics, directives are defined as either an act of ordering or requesting used to direct an addressee to perform or not to perform an act. There are a number of social factors relating to both participants and the weight of the imposition of the request, which determine the kind of politeness strategy employed in the performance of the speech act. In this decision, different cultures have been shown to vary greatly in their interaction styles and exhibit different modes of speech act behavior. This choice resides in the varying importance assigned to situational and contextual factors by differing societies. According to Brown and Levinson, England, and other English speaking societies, are peoples who place a high value on the societal distance between speakers and therefore, a high number of politeness strategies prevail in social encounters. This, however, contrasts with many Spanish-speaking civilizations, especially those in the Southern Hemisphere, where an affinity for greater directness because of a perceived smaller-distance between conversationalists, is employed. Due to the different rates of directness of requests that are manifested across languages, it is possible that Spanish heritage speakers will have more difficulty in both the acquisition and usage of indirect commands. However, if heritage speakers are shown to have an excellent grammatical and lexical command of the construction of indirect requests, the inability to communicate effectively due to committing pragmatic failures will demonstrate that bilingual learners are just as liable to transfer rules concerning the appropriate environment to employ syntactic constructions as those of their native grammar itself.