

How to start a request? A contrastive study of alerters in Spanish by speakers of L1 Spanish and L1 French

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Abstract

The formulation of requests has been widely studied in pragmatics, both within a (variety of) language and from a contrastive perspective. In this study, we will show the specific role of alerters (elements that precede the request head act and that serve to get the attention of the hearer on the request) in request formulation, comparing L1 speakers of Spanish and L2 speakers of Spanish with L1 French in Discourse Completion Tests and Naturalised Interactions. In doing so, we contribute to the contrastive pragmatic study of both languages. Our data reveal that there are statistically significant differences in the use of alerters from Spanish L1 and L2 speakers in the DCTs but not in the Naturalised Interactions. Alerters occur with rather similar frequencies in both groups, but there are qualitative differences as to which forms are adopted. At the methodological level, we highlight that data obtained from both groups' DCTs vs. Naturalised Interactions show different results, thus underlining the importance of combined methods for contrastive pragmatics research.