

Individual Paper Session 24
Pragmatics
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Bilingualism & Speech Act of Request: Is Knowledge of a Second Language Really Helpful?

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Once considered a rather special language phenomenon, bilingualism has recently turned to one common norm among the people in many countries of the world. As attitudes toward the phenomenon of bi-/multi-lingualism are going through a gradual process of modification in recent years, the attention is now turning toward the newer field of tri-lingualism. L₃ acquisition, however, may still be considered as a relatively young discipline in the field of SLA, partly due to the fact that it involves far more complex processes (Cenoz & Gessner, 2000; Clyne, 1997).

The present study is intended to be a follow-up to the work of those concerned with the effects of bilingualism on success/failure in an L₃. Although research abounds in this newly-founded area, most of the researchers to date have focused on the linguistic aspects and have nearly ignored the peculiarities of language use in context of real life, particularly those features of language use dealing with third language learners' interactional competence (Jorda, 2002). The present study aims to address one such neglected area and hence it focuses on the influences of bilingualism on the subjects' use of speech act of request. The subjects of the study were composed of Turkish-Persian/Kurdish-Persian bilinguals and Persian monolinguals, who were learning English in academic settings. Moreover, data gathering procedure involved the use of both discourse completion tests and oral production tasks.

Based on the results of the study, considerable advantage is attributed to bilinguals over monolinguals concerning the use of speech act of request.