CULTURAL VALUES AND IMPOLITE BEHAVIOUR. THE CASE OF SPANIARDS AND NORTH-AMERICANS

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1. Introduction

Geert Hofstede's (1991) "individualism" cultural dimension is related to the concept of the *self*, namely the way in which individuals from a particular culture define their own identity and their relationship with other people. This dimension may be explained as a *continuum* along which cultural groups may show preferences in terms of 'individualistic' and 'collectivist' cultural orientations or, in other words, "concern for yourself as an individual as opposed to concern for the group to which you belong" (Hofstede 1991: 51).

The Dutch engineer and social psychologist Geert Hofstede analysed a large database of information collected from IBM between 1967 and 1973, covering more than 70 countries, related to the cultural values of their employees. He used the data to measure the degree of individualism or collectivism of people from different countries in the world using a 0 to 100 scale (0 corresponding to the most collectivist society and 100 to the most individualistic one). The results gave Spain and the USA a score of 51 and 91 points respectively, confirming a strong cultural difference between both countries. According to this, Spanish society may be considered a moderately individualistic culture, whereas North-Americans seem to hold highly individualistic cultural values.

Advances in social anthropology and social psychology in the last few decades of the twentieth century coincided with the reaction against the alleged universalism

of certain linguistic theories formulated by Anglo-Saxon academics (e.g. Brown and Levinson's 1987 politeness model). In the 1970's this resulted in the emergence of the new discipline *intercultural pragmatics*, which focuses on the descriptive and contrastive analysis of the culture-specific pragmalinguistic conventions ruling speech acts, social interaction and discourse strategies across languages (e.g. Wierzbicka 1991; Márquez-Reiter 2000; Hickey and Stewart 2005). More specifically, the correlation between Hofstede's individualism cultural dimension and linguistic behaviour has been of central concern for some linguists in recent times (e.g. Prykarpatska 2008; Loukianenko-Wolfe 2009; Ivorra-Pérez 2015).

Hofstede's cultural dimension of individualism may be related to communicative styles and (im)politeness. Although the term 'impoliteness' has been traditionally defined as the 'lack' or 'opposite' of politeness, we agree with Culpeper (1996), Kienpointer (1997) and Bousfield (2008) when they assert that utterances are neither inherently polite nor impolite but dependent on the conditions under which they are used. This supports the socio-cultural and pragmatic perspective proposed by Kaul de Marlangeon (2008) by which (im)polite behaviour is idiosyncratic to each culture.

48

Regarding research on linguistic impoliteness, it is worth mentioning the works of Culpeper (1996), Gómez-Morón (1997), Kienpointer (1997), Alba-Juez (2000, 2008), Kaul de Marlangeon (2008), Bernal (2008), Bousfield (2008, 2010), García-Pastor (2008), Graham (2008), Garcés-Conejos (2010), Haugh (2010), and Haugh and Bousfield (2012). Areas of research covered by these authors include linguistic impoliteness in different text types and discourses such as media and political discourse, bilingual code-switching sequences, emotionally charged argument sequences or computer-mediated communication.

The cross-cultural studies on the use of linguistic impoliteness are not as numerous as those concerning linguistic politeness. Most of the studies in this field have drawn comparisons between the uses of impoliteness strategies in different varieties of English (e.g. Culpeper 2008; Locher and Bousfield 2008) as well as between linguistic impoliteness in English and in other languages like Japanese, Chinese, Greek, German or Polish (e.g. Wierzbicka 1991; Spencer-Oatey 2000; Limberg 2009). As regards cross-cultural research on linguistic impoliteness comparing English and Spanish, the works of Alba-Juez (2006), Guerra-Bernal (2008) or Kaul de Marlangeon and Alba-Juez (2012) stand out.

The present research takes as its point of departure Kaul de Marlangeon's (2008) typology of verbal impoliteness behaviour for the Spanish cultures[1]. Drawing on that taxonomy, Kaul de Marlangeon and Alba-Juez (2012) conducted a comparative analysis of impolite acts in English and Spanish and reached the conclusion that the categories of impolite acts included in Kaul de Marlangeon's

taxonomy can also be used to describe and classify the same phenomena in English. We also assume that the impoliteness types might appear in the two cultures under study. However, we will take a step further in this research: to analyse, quantitatively, the frequencies in the use of impolite acts in the particular corpora chosen for the study. This will enable us to appreciate whether there are statistical differences between Spaniards and North-Americans as regards linguistic impoliteness.

2. Purpose and hypotheses

Our aim is to analyse the impact of Spaniards' and North-Americans' individualism index (Hofstede 1991) on the types of impolite acts (Kaul de Marlangeon 2008) uttered by the characters appearing in six well-known international movies (three from Spain and three from the US) along with the linguistic strategies through which those acts are expressed.

We hypothesise that the different individualistic cultural orientations held by Spaniards and North-Americans may promote different frequencies in the use of impolite acts as well as divergent linguistic strategies to convey the former. We also hypothesise that the level of social distance and affect existing between the speaker (henceforth S) and the hearer (henceforth H) in a particular situation could have an impact on these differences. Hence, Spaniards and North-Americans are likely to have different perspectives and interpretations as to the way impoliteness is realised and interpreted in their respective cultures.

3. Data Collection

Scripts from a small sample of movies made either in Spain or in the US were analysed. From the US we selected *Fatal Attraction* (1987), *Pretty Woman* (1990) and *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), whereas from Spain we chose *La ley del deseo* (1987), *Jamón, Jamón* (1992) and *3 Metros sobre el cielo* (2010). We agree with Kaul de Marlangeon's and Alba-Juez (2012: 72) when they claim that "fictional language can be considered as authentic within its genre", as the impolite utterances observed in movies may be recognised as such by the speakers from the corresponding culture. In fact, film scripts have been used for research on linguistic analysis (e.g. Alba-Juez 2006, 2008; Dynel 2013).

The main reason for choosing these movies is because their plots reveal frequent disagreements and their characters engage in frequent arguments due to their different social backgrounds, envy, competitiveness or unrequited love. This gives rise to the frequent use of linguistic impoliteness.

49

4. Data Analysis

An observational analysis of the movie scripts was carried out to examine the similarity or difference in the use of impoliteness types (Kaul de Marlangeon's taxonomy 2008) along with the linguistic strategies through which these types are expressed. In order to interpret the scripts more accurately, the movies were also watched. Whereas the analysis of linguistic strategies was observational, the one related to the types of impolite acts was not only observational but also quantitative. This enabled us to calculate the absolute frequency of occurrence of each type of impolite act as well as the relative frequency, i.e. the absolute frequency divided by the total amount of utterances contained in each corpus. As these were, inevitably, of unequal size (PenSp movies: 4,263 utterances; AmE[2] movies: 5,712 utterances), the absolute frequency of each type was computed per 1,000 utterances, which is a conventional way of standardising results of corpora of different sizes.

We would like to point out that we only examined those types of impolite acts which we found more recurrent in the scripts analysed: (a) formally impolite acts with a polite purpose; (b) formally polite acts with an impolite purpose; and (c) fustigation impoliteness. Other types such as overwhelming silence acts, involuntary impolite acts, the S's voluntary stint on the politeness expected by the H and self-impoliteness acts were discarded because of their non-existence or very few instances found. Nevertheless, they would deserve to be examined in future studies with a selection of different corpora.

The results were also submitted to statistical analysis using the Chi-square test of homogeneity in a contingency table by means of the computer program SPSS Statistics 22 Software. In this regard, when the statistical difference between both data sets was equal to or below p<.05, this was interpreted as significant. If the statistical difference was below p<.01, it was considered highly significant.

Variables like *social distance* (Scollon and Scollon 1995) and *affect* (Spencer-Oatey 2000) were considered as potential factors impacting both on the use of impoliteness types and on the linguistic devices used to convey each type. As a result, four different situations were taken into account: a) contexts where the S and the H are not acquainted with each other but the S feels physical attraction towards the H. In this particular situation it might be preferable to use 'physical attraction' rather than 'affect' as it is the first time they meet (+D/+A); b) contexts in which the S and the H are not acquainted with each other but for whatever reason (e.g. difference of social status, envy, competitiveness, unrequited love) they show negative affection towards each other (+D/-A); c) contexts in which the S and the H know each other and show reciprocal affection, namely interactions involving friends and colleagues, family members or couples (-D/+A); and d)

50

contexts in which the S and the H know each other but a moment of conflict makes them lose their mutual affection. This last situation also includes cases in which although the S and the H are acquainted, they simply do not like each other or they have never liked each other (-D/-A).

5. Findings

In the following subsections we describe the main findings obtained in our study and illustrate these from excerpts from the movie scripts analysed:

5.1. Formally Impolite Acts with a Polite Purpose

This type of impolite act consists in exploiting 'jocular or humorous insults' (Haugh and Bousfield 2012) on the part of the S to create solidarity with the H. The intention of the S is not to insult or swear but to express admiration, involvement and positive appreciation of the relationship with the H. Table 1 shows the results obtained in relation to this type of verbal impoliteness behaviour:

Formally impolite acts with a polite purpose	PenSp		AmE		Chi-square test
	Absolute frequency n= 4,263 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utterances)	Absolute frequency n= 5,712 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utterances)	
+D/+A	19	4.4	2	0.3	13.908 (.000)*
+D/-A	—	—	—	—	—
−D/+A	40	9.3	11	2.1	16.922 (.000)*
−D/-A	—	—	—	—	—
Total	59	13.8	13	2.2	30.486 (.000)*

Table 1. Formally impolite acts with a polite purpose. Frequencies obtained for the PenSp and the AmE corpora.

The general results indicate that the characters from the PenSp movies use formally impolite acts with a polite purpose with much greater frequency than their AmE counterparts, revealing highly significant statistical differences (X^2=30.486, p<.000). This applies either to situations in which the S and the H are of different social classes, but the former feels physical attraction towards the latter (+D/+A)

and to contexts in which there is no social distance between both participants who show mutual affect (-D/+A). The observational analysis shows that the strategies used to convey this type of impolite act are similar in both corpora, that is, the S uses direct linguistic devices to address the H. These mainly cover insults and rude expressions as well as second-person singular pronouns in Peninsular-Spanish, which have basically no impolite intention.

Instances of the first situation (+D/+A) can be observed in the first encounter of Hache and Babi (*3 Metros sobre el cielo*) as well as when Raúl and Silvia meet for the first time (*Jamón, Jamón*). Both males address females with rude expressions which are interpreted by the latter as improper. These are instances of what Thomas calls 'pragmatic failure' (1983) or what Goméz-Morón (1997) refers to as 'unintentional impoliteness'. Whereas the boys' intention is to establish a good social relationship with the girls in order to flirt with them, the latter perceive this as impolite since the former have not respected the distance variable in the social encounter:

(1)

Hache is riding his motorbike when he meets Babi at a traffic stop light. The latter is in her father's car on her way to school (+D/+A):

—Hache: '¡Fea! Sí, tú ¡fea!' (Babi ignores Hache and flips the bird) [Dogface! Yeah, you! Dogface!][3]

(*3 Metros sobre el cielo*, 00:04:12-00:04:35)

(2)

Raúl works for a ham company and meets Silvia on his way to work. He stops her and invites her to test a piece of ham when, unexpectedly, he cuts his finger with a knife (+D/+A):

—Silvia: 'Chúpate el dedo' [Lick your finger]

—Raúl: '¿*Por qué no me lo chupas tú*?'[Why don't YOU lick it?]

—Silvia: '¡*Eres un cerdo!*'[You're dirty-minded!] (Silvia ignores Raúl and avoids making eye contact with him)

—Raúl: '*Tú* y yo nunca seremos amigos. *Lo único que podemos hacer es follar*' [You and I will never be friends. We can only fuck] (*Jamón, Jamón*, 00:29:39-00:29:59)

The next excerpt is drawn from the AmE corpus. On this occasion it is a woman, Alex, who addresses Dan with an insult 'naughty' in order to flirt with him. However, this type of insult cannot be considered as disrespectful as those uttered by the PenSp characters:

(3)

Alex Forrest is having a drink with Dan Gallagher for the first time. Even though the latter is married, Alex feels physical attraction towards him and addresses him as 'naughty' in order to seduce him (+D/+A):

—Alex: 'So, where's your wife?'

—Dan: 'Where's my wife? My wife is in the country with her parents, visiting for the weekend'

—Alex: 'And you're here with a strange girl being a *naughty* boy' (*Fatal Attraction*, 00:15:04-00:15:18)

As for the second situation (-D/+A), it is also observed that the expressions used by the PenSp characters seem to be more disrespectful than the ones used by their AmE counterparts:

(4)

Pollo and Hache are close friends. The former gets into the latter's bedroom to wake him up. Hache addresses his friend with insults like 'coño' and 'cabrón' (-D/+A):

Hache: '¿Quién *coño* te ha dejado entrar? ¡*Cabrón*! (They start laughing and playing with the pillow) [Who the hell let you in? Bully!] (*3 Metros sobre el cielo*, 00:23:29-00:23:30)

(5)

Keef, the concierge of the hotel where Marisa Ventura works as a maid, is in charge of reporting employee behaviour. He has found out that Marisa has gone out for a walk with one of the most important guests at the hotel: Assemblyman Cristopher Marshall. He tells Marisa that he has the obligation to report her wrong behaviour. Seconds later, Keef starts laughing and tells Marisa to give him a kiss on the cheek. Marisa replies with an apparently rude expression '*You dirty old man*', showing solidarity and friendship towards her colleague (-D/+A):

—Keef: You know I'm beholden to report employees misbehaving. And there is only one thing could make me shut my mouth (He points to his cheek so that Marisa can give him a kiss)

—Marisa: *You dirty old man*. (Marisa kisses him). (*Maid in Manhattan*, 00: 57: 10-00: 57: 30)

(6)

As their frequency of contact increases, Babi starts feeling that she has fallen in love with Hache. When they are in a disco, they address each other with insults. This time, however, the insults used by both participants reveal reciprocal affection as they are in love with each other (-D/+A):

—Hugo: ¡Fea! [Dogface!]

—Babi: ¡Bruto! [Brutish!] (They kiss each other) (*3 metros sobre el cielo*, 00:48:22-00:48:25)

5.2. Formally Polite Acts with an Impolite Purpose

Contrary to the positive irony that formally impolite acts with a polite purpose entail, this type of verbal impoliteness behaviour is called by Culpeper (2008: 24-28) 'negative over-politeness'. This consists in "expressing polite forms of address

as well as some manifestations of cynicism" (Kaul de Marlageon and Alba-Juez 2012: 82) with the aim of criticising or belittling the H. The findings obtained in the use of this type of impolite act can be seen in Table 2 below:

Formally polite acts with an impolite purpose	PenSp		AmE		Chi-square test
	Absolute frequency n= 4,263 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utterances)	Absolute frequency n= 5,712 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utterances)	
+D/+A	—	—	—	—	—
+D/-A	8	1.8	68	11.9	49.420 (.000)*
−D/+A	—	—	—	—	—
−D/-A	7	1.6	25	4.3	10.290 (.001)*
Total	15	3.5	93	16.2	59.549 (.000)*

Table 2. Formally polite acts with an impolite purpose. Frequencies obtained for the PenSp and the AmE corpora.

The general findings show that in the AmE corpus this type of verbal impoliteness behaviour is of greater frequency (93/16.2) than in its PenSp counterpart (15/3.5), resulting in highly significant statistical differences ($X^2=59.549$, p<.000). Likewise, high statistical differences are found with respect to the PenSp corpus, both in contexts where there is social distance and no affect between the S and the H (+D/-A) as well as in those of no distance and no affect between them (-D/-A).

In both data sets this type of verbal impoliteness act is expressed through the use of off-record strategies and polite expressions. Despite this, slight differences are appreciated. Whereas the characters from the PenSp movies tend to use a wider range of polite forms of address and indirect questions, in the AmE movies hedged expressions are included to a greater extent. These include modal verbs, verbs of opinion or probability adverbs. Let us observe some of the above-mentioned strategies in some excerpts from the movie scripts analysed:

(7)

As they have an important business dinner in the evening, Vivian must buy a dress with the money Edward Lewis has given her. When she gets into one of the many luxurious boutiques in Rodeo Drive, its owners use polite expressions ('May I help you?', 'Are you looking for something in particular?', 'Thank you', 'You are obviously in the wrong place', 'Please leave'), hedges realised through cognitive and

modal verbs ('I don't *think* this *would* fit you', 'I don't *think* we have anything for you') as well as off-record strategies ('It's very expensive') to avoid selling Vivian a dress on account of her look (+D/-A):

—1ˢᵗ Woman: '*May I help you?*'

—Vivian: 'I'm just checking things out!'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: '*Are you looking for something in particular?*'

—Vivian: 'No, well, yeah, um, something conservative'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: 'Yes'

—Vivian: 'You got nice stuff'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: '*Thank you*'

—Vivian: 'How much is this?'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: '*I don't think this would fit you*'

—Vivian: 'Well, I didn't ask if it would fit. I asked how much it was'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: 'How much is this, Marie?'

—2ⁿᵈ Woman: '*It's very expensive*'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: '*It's very expensive*'

—Vivian: 'Look. I got money to spend in here'

—1ˢᵗ Woman: '*I don't think we have anything for you. You are obviously in the wrong place. Please leave*' (*Pretty Woman*, 00:38:54-00:39:33)

(8)

Alex turns up in Dan's home with the intention of seeing him and starts talking to the latter's wife, Beth Gallaguer. Alex does not accept that Dan has definitely broken up with her. As the couple is planning to sell their home, Alex visits the house with the excuse of being interested in buying it. Nevertheless, her intentions are not exactly those. When Dan gets home and sees Alex, both address each other with the use of polite expressions ('Hi. Glad to meet you', 'Nice to meet you. Haven't we met somewhere before?', 'I don't think so, no') which are obviously insincere (-D/-A):

—Beth: 'Hi, darling. Darling, this is Alex. I've forgotten your last name'

—Alex: 'Alex Forest'

—Dan: '*Hi. Glad to meet you*'

—Alex: '*Nice to meet you. Haven't we met somewhere before?*'

—Dan: '*I don't think so, no*' (*Fatal Attraction*, 01:03:04-01:03:57)

(9)

As they have fallen in love, Babi runs away with Hache and does not attend her Latin class. The next day, Babi falsifies her mother's signature to justify her absence to her teacher. The latter uses polite forms of address ('Srta. Alcazar', 'usted', 'su') and indirect questions ('¿Sabe usted que lo que ha hecho significa la expulsion inmediata de este centro, verdad?', '¿Esta es la firma de su madre, verdad?') with the intention of criticising Babi's inappropriate behaviour (-D/-A):

—Teacher: '*Srta. Alcázar*. Esta es la firma de *su* madre, ¿verdad? Resulta raro. Acabo de hablar con *su* madre y no me dijo nada de *su* enfermedad, ni tampoco de *su* falta de asistencia el viernes. Así que está en camino. *¿Sabe usted que lo que ha hecho significa la expulsión inmediata de este centro, verdad?'*

[Miss Alcazar! Did your mother sign this, didn't she? It's odd. I've just spoken with her and she didn't know that you were ill or that you were absent on Friday. She's on her way. You know that what you've done means immediate expulsion from this school, don't you?] (*3 Metros sobre el cielo*, 01:07:28-01:07:51)

5.3. Fustigation Impoliteness

Following Kaul de Marlangeon and Alba-Juez (2012: 85), this type of verbal impoliteness behaviour is related "to verbal aggression in a confronting situation". The S intentionally offends the H with a purpose that may either damage the H's face or defend the S's face. In the same vein, the H interprets the S's behaviour as an intentional face attack that leads him/her to accept the attack or reject it through defense or counter-attack.

Fustigation impoliteness can be enacted either through the use of direct or indirect linguistic strategies. Indeed, sometimes both strategies are used simultaneously by the S and the H in the corpora examined. Nevertheless, as our intention is to obtain statistical data as regards the frequency of both strategies independently, we will first show the frequency on the use of direct strategies and then the frequency for the indirect ones. Table 3 shows the results of the frequency of direct fustigation strategies:

Fustigation impoliteness Direct strategies	PenSp		AmE		Chi-square test
	Absolute frequency n= 4,263 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utteranc.)	Absolute frequency n= 5,712 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utteranc.)	
+D/+A	—	—	—	—	—
+D/-A	176	41.2	76	13.3	45.403(.000)*
−D/+A	—	—	—	—	—
−D/-A	369	86.5	287	50.2	15.523(.000)*
Total	545	127.8	373	65.3	59.569(.000)*

Table 3. Fustigation impoliteness: Direct strategies. Frequencies obtained for the PenSp and the AmE corpora.

As shown in Table 3, the characters from the PenSp movies use direct strategies far more frequently (545/127.8) than their AmE counterparts (373/65.3). Statistically speaking, highly significant statistical differences have also been found (X^2=59.569, p<.000). A deeper analysis of the variables of social distance and affect unveils statistical differences between both corpora, be it in situations where the interlocutors hold social distance and no affect (+D/-A) (PenSp: 176/41.2 - AmE: 76/13.3; X^2=45.403 (.000)) or in those contexts where they hold no distance and no affect (-D/-A) (PenSp: 369/86.5 - AmE: 287/50.2; X^2=15.523 (.000)).

In the movie scripts from both languages the S uses linguistic expressions directly addressed to the H (e.g. harsh insults and rude expressions, direct forms of address, questions directly addressed to the interlocutor, threats, disagreement with the information provided by the other interlocutor or verbs in imperative form). The following excerpts from the film scripts analysed include the aforementioned strategies:

(10)

Raúl and José Luis meet for the first time in the ham factory where the former works. José Luis is determined to end with Raúl's life for having seduced his girlfriend, Silvia. He also finds out that his mother, Concha, is also having an affair with this boy. Therefore, the on-record strategies to convey fustigation impoliteness are frequently used in this context as observed in the use of imperatives ('Abre') along with the use of threats and rude expressions ('Sal de ahí si tienes cojones', 'Pero, ¿qué coño quieres?') (+D/-A):

—José Luis: '*Abre*' *Sal de ahí si tienes cojones*' [Open. Come out if you have balls]

—Concha: 'Mi hijo' [My son]

—Raúl: 'Tu hijo?' [Your son?]

—Concha: 'Habrá visto el coche' [He must have seen the car]

—Raúl: 'Tápate' [Cover yourself]

—José Luis: '*Sal de ahí si tienes cojones*' [Come out if you have balls]

—Raúl: '*Pues claro que tengo cojones. Pero,¿qué haces aquí? Pero,¿qué coño quieres*?' [Of course I have balls. But, what are you doing here? But, what the fuck do you want?] (They start fighting with the hams until Raúl finally kills José Luis) (*Jamón, Jamón*, 01:23:04-01:23:31)

(11)

Tina Cantero is arguing with her brother, Pablo Cantero, a famous film writer and director. The latter wants Tina to play a part in his next movie. The problem arises when Pablo tells his sister that the role she is going to perform has many things in common with her real life and the problem she has with men. Although Pablo has no intention of being impolite to Tina, the latter interprets her brother's utterances as impolite. As the conversation unfolds, both treat each other with direct fustigation strategies, such as imperatives ('Te prohíbo que toques el menor acontecimiento de

57

mi vida …', 'Anda y envenénate la vida …'), disagreement with the information provided by the other interlocutor ('Nadie va a jugar con ellos', 'Pero, ¿quién ha dicho que tu vida sea ridícula?'), questions directly addressed to the H (¿Quieres escucharme un momento?', '¿Me oyes?'), forms of address directed at the H ('No permito que ni tú ni nadie …') , insults ('hijo de puta') (-D/-A):

—Tina: '*Te prohíbo que toques el menor acontecimiento de mi vida*. Por ridícula que sea tengo derecho a que se me respete'. [I don't let you talk about any aspect regarding my life. Perhaps, I'm a ridiculous person but I have the right to be respected]

—Pablo: *Pero, ¿quién ha dicho que tu vida sea ridícula?'* [Who said that your life is ridiculous?]

—Tina: '*No hace falta que me lo diga nadie. Yo lo sé*' [Nobody needs to say that. I know it]

—Pablo: '¿Quieres escucharme un momento?'[Can you listen to me for a second?]

—Tina. 'Sí, claro. Mis fracasos con los hombres son algo más que los argumentos de un guión. *No permito que ni tú* ni nadie juegue con ellos'[Yes, of course. My failure with men is much more than the plot of a script. I let neither you nor anybody else play with them]

—Pablo: '*Nadie va a jugar con ellos*' [Nobody is gonna play with them]

—Tina: 'Son míos. ¿Me oyes? Míos' [They're mine. Hear me? Mine]

—Pablo: '*Anda y envenénate la vida con ellos si tanto te gustan*' [Go away and poison your life with them if you like them so much].

—Tina:*'No me gustan, hijo de puta* pero he tenido que pagar un precio alto por esos fracasos. Son lo único que tengo' [I don't like them, son of bitch! But I have had to pay a high price for those failures. This is the only thing I have] (*La ley del deseo*, 00:46:34-00:47:09)

(12)

Dan Gallaguer goes to Alex Forrest's home to ask why she went to his home to see his wife. As he is very angry with her and Alex does not accept a final break up with him because she is supposedly expecting a child, both start arguing and addressing each other by means of insults ('smug bastard', 'sick', 'slut'), rude expressions ('If you can't fuck me, just hit me') and threats ('don't you ever pity me', 'you tell my wife, I'll kill you') (-D/-A):

—Alex: '*Go ahead, hit me. If you can't fuck me, just hit me*'

—Dan: '*You're so sad. Do you know that? You're lonely and very sad*'

—Alex: '*Don't you ever pity me, you smug bastard*'

—Dan: '*I'll pity you because you're sick*'

—Alex: '*Why? Because I won't allow you to treat me like some slut...you can just bang a couple of times and throw in the garbage?* I'm gonna be the mother of your child. I want a little respect'

—Dan: 'You want respect? Respect. What are you doing?'

—Alex: 'Please don't go. I didn't mean it. I'm sorry. *I'll tell your wife*'

—Dan: '*You tell my wife, I'll kill you*' (*Fatal Attraction*, 01:07:21-01:08-22)

Fustigation impoliteness. Indirect strategies	PenSp		AmE		Chi-square test
	Absolute frequency n= 4,263 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utteranc.)	Absolute frequency n= 5,712 utterances	Relative frequency (x 1,000 utteranc.)	
+D/+A	—	—	—	—	—
+D/-A	46	10.7	33	5.7	2.227 (.084)
−D/+A	—	—	—	—	—
−D/-A	11	2.5	21	3.6	3.176 (.054)*
Total	57	13.3	54	9.4	.086 (.423)

Table 4. Fustigation impoliteness: Indirect strategies. Frequencies obtained for the PenSp and the AmE corpora.

The frequency in the use of indirect fustigation strategies are similar in both corpora (PenSp: 57/13.3-AmE: 54/9.4) and no statistical differences have been found (X^2=.086, p<.423). We also observe that their frequency is much more limited than that obtained for direct fustigation strategies. As seen in Table 4 above, indirect strategies to express fustigation impoliteness are used either in situations of social distance and no affect (+D/-A) as well as in those of no distance and no affect (-D/-A) between the interlocutors. Nevertheless, the AmE characters use them more frequently (21/3.6) than their PenSp counterparts (11/2.5) in situations of no social distance and no affect (-D/-A), but the statistical difference found is minimal (X^2=3.176, p<.054).

In both corpora indirect fustigation strategies are expressed through the use of off-record strategies, polite expressions or hedged utterances, which are similar to the ones used to express formally polite acts with an impolite purpose. In the following excerpts drawn from the movie scripts examined we can observe some of the above-mentioned linguistic strategies:

> (13)
> Edwards introduces Vivian to his friend and colleague Philip in a polo match. When Vivian is not present, Edward tells Philip that Vivian is a prostitute. As Philip feels that Vivian can be an important obstacle in his friend's business career, he goes towards her with the intention of humiliating her and removing her from Edward's life. To this end, he proposes that she should spend some time with him when Edward leaves her. This message is conveyed through the use of indirect linguistic devices like polite expressions ('Having a nice time, Vivian'?), off-record strategies that allude to prostitution ('Must be a quite change from Hollywood Boulevard,

hmm?', 'Don't worry; your secret is safe with me'), hedges realised through modal verbs and probability adverbs ('Maybe, uh, you and I could get together…'). As Vivian feels really offended, she replies to Philip's proposition in a cynical way ('Yeah, sure. Why not?') (-D/-A):

—Philip: '*Having a nice time, Vivian?*'

—Vivian: 'Yeah, I'm having a great time'

—Philip: '*Must be a quite change from Hollywood Boulevard, hmm?*'

—Vivian: 'What?'

—Philip: '*Yeah, Edward told me. But don't worry; your secret is safe with me. Listen, maybe, uh, you and I could get together some time after Edward leaves*'

—Vivian: '*Yeah, sure. Why not?*'

—Philip: 'We'll just have to do that, hmm' (*Pretty Woman*, 01:10:53-01:11:21)

 (14)

Tina Cantero feels ofended by his brother's comment regarding her buttocks in spite of the fact that the latter's intention has not been to offend. As such, she replies to him indirectly by means of an off-record strategy alluding to his homosexuality ('Será porque lo utilizo menos que tú') (-D/-A):

—Pablo: 'Oye, ¿qué tal la entrevista con los productores esos?' [Ey, how did the interview with those producers go?]

—Tina: 'Fatal. ¿Sabes lo que me han propuesto?' [Horrible. Do you know what they have proposed me?]

—Pablo: 'No' [No]

—Tina: 'Un porno. Con ella' (Pointing to her daughter) [A porn movie. With her]

—Pablo: '¿y?' [And?]

—Tina: 'He estado muy fina. Les he dicho que estaba mayor para enseñar el culo. ¡Hijos de perra!' [I've been very refined. I told them that I was so old to show my ass. Sons of a bitch!]

—Pablo: 'Pues para tu edad no lo tienes mal' [So it is not so bad for your age]

—Tina: '*Será porque lo utilizo menos que* tú' (Alluding to her brother's homosexuality) [It must be because I use it less than you] (*La ley del deseo*, 00:15:35-00:15:48)

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Given the results of our analysis of limited corpora we may accept the hypotheses formulated at the beginning of this paper. The index of individualistic cultural values (Hofstede 1991) held by Spain (51) and the USA (91) seems to influence on the frequencies of verbal impoliteness types (Kaul de Marlangeon 2008) and on the linguistic devices used by their speakers to convey verbal impoliteness.

Similarly, the level of social distance and affect held between the S and the H appears to be responsible for the differences encountered.

Our findings would seem to suggest that Spaniards tend to use insults and rude expressions with a polite purpose (a strategy corresponding to Kaul de Marlangeon's acts of the type *Formally impolite acts with a polite purpose*), which may be interpreted as instances of 'jocular abuse' (Bousfield 2008). According to Haugh and Bousfield (2012: 14), this term refers to situations "where the S casts the target into an undesirable category or with undesirable attributes using conventionally offensive expressions".

This type of impolite act is framed by the S and interpreted by the H as non-serious or jocular, particularly when used between friends, colleagues, couples or family members. Moreover, the characters from the PenSp films resort to 'jocular abuse' in contexts where the S and the H do not know each other but the former feels physical attraction towards the latter. The H, on the contrary, interprets this rudeness as improper giving the social distance established between them. As the frequency of contact with the S increases, the H starts accepting these rude expressions and even replies to the S with similar linguistic strategies, but this time with the intention of showing affection as both initiate a relationship.

As regards the AmE movies, formally impolite acts with a polite purpose are used much less frequently than in their PenSp counterparts. These are also used in contexts similar to those in the PenSp movies. However, the types of insults used to express formally impolite acts with a polite purpose may be considered less offensive and disrespectful in the AmE corpus. In this sense, the AmE characters would possibly be using what Haugh and Bousfield (2012: 10) call 'jocular mockery', that is, "a specific form of teasing where the S diminishes something of relevance to someone present within a non-serious or jocular frame".

These findings may have their explanation in the fact that Spain, as a moderately individualistic culture, is more prone to foster social intimacy among its people (Mueller 1987; Walker et al. 2003). Hence, we share Alba-Juez's (2000) and Kaul de Marlangeon's and Alba-Juez's (2012) view when concluding that lack of politeness seems to promote social intimacy among Peninsular-Spanish speakers. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that our analysis has been based on dyadic interactions. That is why we agree with Haugh and Bousfield (2012) that this relational connection created by mock impoliteness could be interpreted differently across participants in a multi-party interaction.

Concerning the use of formally polite acts with an impolite purpose, the high frequencies obtained in the AmE movies may be due to the high individualistic

61

culture favoured by the North-Americans. In this culture, the S's rights to be free from the imposition of others and keep his/her own space is considered paramount (Scollon and Scollon 1995; Singh and Pereira 2005). Hence, the characters from the AmE movies use this type of act in situations of no affect and regardless of the social distance held between the S and the H. Through the use of off-record strategies, hedged and polite utterances, the S attempts to be ironic towards the H with the purpose of hurting or mocking him/her.

Despite the fact that the number of instances of formally polite acts with an impolite purpose found in the PenSp movies is limited, their characters also use off-record strategies so as not to address their interlocutors directly. Nevertheless, a higher use of polite forms of address and indirect questions has been observed. One explanation could lie in the fact that, as Spaniards are more inclined to foster social intimacy and collaboration, distancing themselves from other interlocutors by means of these types of strategies could have an impolite perlocutionary effect in their culture.

As for fustigation impoliteness, the results obtained lead us to believe that Spaniards could be more direct than North-Americans. In this way, our findings coincide with those obtained by Kaul de Marlangeon and Alba-Juez (2012). Nonetheless, the results of this study indicate that direct fustigation strategies are used by Spaniards in contexts of no affect between the S and the H and regardless of their level of social distance. As Spanish culture is regarded as moderately individualistic in which speakers have the right and the need to be cooperative members in any communicative act (Scollon and Scollon 1995; Leaptrott 1996), they seem to discard considerations of social distance between them. In this regard, for the PenSp culture, the more direct strategies the S utters to express fustigation impoliteness, the more impolite the H's interpretation of these utterances will be.

We have also found that the AmE characters use a high frequency of direct strategies to express fustigation impoliteness, but these are more recurrent in contexts where there is no social distance and no affect between the S and the H. This may imply that North-Americans would be more concerned than Spaniards about the social distance they hold with other interlocutors when the use of direct fustigation impoliteness comes into play.

Concerning indirect fustigation strategies, the findings reveal a limited use in both data sets. In the AmE movies, however, these are included in higher frequencies in situations where the S and the H hold no social distance and no affect, showing a minimal statistical difference with respect to the PenSp corpus. We may interpret these findings in the following way: unlike their PenSp

counterparts, the AmE characters' high individualistic values (e.g. being free from the imposition of others and keep their own space) could be reflected not only in the use of direct fustigation strategies in situations of no social distance but also in the use of indirect ones. Nonetheless, the use of direct strategies would prevail.

It is noteworthy that the preferences for the different types of impolite acts exhibited by the characters in the corpora analysed should not be interpreted in absolute terms, but as a cline (O'Driscoll 1996). In other words, all the verbal impoliteness acts included in Kaul de Marlangeon's taxonomy (2008) are present in both cultures, but in some cases their frequency seems to depend on contextual factors. This cline could be due to the way Spaniards and North-Americans understand the concept of the self and the relationship with other people as well as the level of social distance and affect held between the S and the H in a particular situation. Consequently, what is considered polite or impolite within a culture might be interpreted as context-bound, culture-related and dependent on the level of social distance and affect held by participants.

This has been a preliminary and superficial cross-cultural study of linguistic impoliteness and its possible correlation with cultural values. However, it is not without limitations, all of which open up possible areas of research in the future. Firstly, it would be interesting to analyse a larger number of movies than were used for this research. Secondly, the power distance held between interlocutors and the weight of imposition of a particular speech act would be variables to be included in future studies. Thirdly, a quantitative analysis of the linguistic devices used in each impoliteness type could be another issue of interest. Last but not least, more research could be done on how the H reacts to the impolite acts uttered by the S together with the role intentionality plays in assessment of impoliteness.

One final point to consider is that even though Hofstede and other authors in the field (e.g. Hall 1976) have made generalisations about, for instance, the British or the Spanish culture, we must not overlook the fact that a culture generally contains many "sub-cultures". In this respect, Scollon, Scollon and Jones (2012) point out that speakers participate in different discourse systems embedded in their own cultures throughout their whole life (e.g. gender or sexual identity, particular region or country, the historical period in which they live, their hobbies, etc.). In our view, these discourse systems may also favour different impoliteness strategies in a culture. All the aforementioned aspects should be addressed in future studies for a full picture of the complex role that linguistic impoliteness plays in human communication.

Notes

[1] Kaul de Marlangeon's verbal impoliteness types can be found in Kaul de Marlangeon (2008).

[2] From now onwards, "PenSp" stands for "Peninsular Spanish" and "AmE" for "American English".

[3] All the English translations have been drawn from the subtitles appearing in the Peninsular-Spanish movies analysed.

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65

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