

A TYPOLOGY OF VERBAL IMPOLITENESS BEHAVIOUR FOR THE ENGLISH AND SPANISH CULTURES

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ABSTRACT. *The present study takes as its point of departure Kaul de Marlangeon's (2008a) typology of verbal impoliteness in the Spanish-speaking cultures, and, using a corpus of English, attempts to test its validity and/or application to the English-speaking cultures. In that typology, the different types of impolite acts in the Spanish-speaking culture share in common either the intention to be impolite or the absence thereof. This common intention or lack of it is thought to be reflected and regulated by the culture in question. The main aim of such a typology was to find a taxonomy that would focus on the differences regarding impolite attitudes and behaviour within and along an impoliteness continuum. The results obtained make us feel inclined to argue in favour of the existence of more similarities than differences between the two macro-cultures under scrutiny with respect to the types of impoliteness found in them.*

KEY WORDS. *Impoliteness, typology of impolite behavior, Spanish and English cultures.*

RESUMEN. *El presente trabajo toma como punto de partida la tipología de la descortesía verbal de Kaul de Marlangeon (2008a) para las culturas hispanohablantes, y, usando un corpus del inglés, se propone evaluar su validez y su aplicación a las culturas anglófonas. En esa tipología cada tipo involucra los actos que comparten la misma intención descortés o la ausencia de ésta. Se considera que esta intención o falta de ella es reflejada y regulada por la cultura en cuestión. El objetivo principal de la tipología ha sido encontrar una taxonomía centrada en las diferencias entre las actitudes y el comportamiento descortés a lo largo del continuo de la descortesía. Los resultados obtenidos luego del estudio de corpus nos hacen inclinarnos a favor de la existencia de más similitudes que diferencias entre las dos macro-culturas estudiadas en relación a los tipos de descortesía encontrados.*

PALABRAS CLAVE. *Descortesía, tipología del comportamiento descortés, culturas anglo e hispanohablantes.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The point of departure for the present study has been Kaul de Marlangeon's (2008a) typology of impolite verbal behaviour in Spanish. We argue that this author's proposed types for Spanish can also be used –as general types– for descriptions of the phenomenon both in British and American English, on the grounds of the examples and data found in the English corpus used for the analysis, containing authentic language of everyday life as well as fictional discourse taken from three (English and American) films and a British comedy series. Kaul de Marlangeon's (2003 [1992-1995], 2005, 2008a, 2008b) and Alba-Juez's (2000, 2001 [1996], 2007, 2008) studies on the nature of impoliteness are also taken into consideration as previous background studies, as well as Culpeper's (1996, 2005) and Kienpointner's (1997) typologies of the phenomenon.

The best-known and most widely cited studies on impoliteness in the English-speaking world are Culpeper's (1996) and Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann's (2003), which were subsequent to Kaul de Marlangeon's (2003 [1992-1995]) similar study. Both Kaul de Marlangeon and Culpeper present a model of impoliteness that is basically the counterpart of Brown and Levinson's politeness model, and both argue that impoliteness has a direct relationship with the disparity of power between speaker and hearer. Kaul de Marlangeon's (2003 [1992-1995]) theory of impoliteness is complementary to Brown and Levinson's (1987) because the latter did not explicitly acknowledge the existence of impoliteness strategies or of strategies showing a neutral degree of politeness. Culpeper's work is based on *ad hoc* strategies and, contrary to Leech's (1983, 2007) view, he points out that no act is inherently impolite, but that such a condition depends on the context or speech situation. In a later study, Culpeper (2005) excludes certain kinds of behaviour from his taxonomy, such as non-intentional impoliteness, incidental threats, banter, and politeness without redressive action. He now includes sarcastic off record impoliteness as a new category, a type of impoliteness that had previously been analysed by Kaul de Marlangeon (2003 [1992-1995], 1999 [1993]) and by Alba-Juez (2001 [1996]).

The inherent meaning of the prefix *im-* in the word *impoliteness* (as well as that of the prefix *des-* in Spanish *descortesía*) reveals the original antonymic relationship between both terms but, as will become apparent throughout this paper, we view the phenomenon of impoliteness in a more complex light, as part of a continuum, and thus the definition presented in 2) goes beyond the simple antonymic conception of impoliteness as “the opposite of”, or “the lack of politeness”. We agree with some authors (such as Tracey 2008) who do not define the phenomenon in terms of what they lack, but based on the type of behaviour it manifests. Kienpointner (1997), for instance, is not in favour of viewing it as a marked, irrational or abnormal form of politeness, but instead alludes to a type of behaviour that is prototypically non-cooperative or competitive, which destabilizes interpersonal relations by creating an atmosphere of mutual irreverence or antipathy. In this definition, however, Kienpointner is referring almost exclusively to the prototypical form of impoliteness, which represents only one

of the types, namely *frustration impoliteness*, in Kaul de Marlangeon's (2005, 2008a) typology. Following Fraser (1990) and along the same line as Culpeper, Kienpointner points out that we cannot speak of inherently polite or impolite utterances, but of utterances whose politeness or impoliteness force hinges on the context in which they are used, a perspective to which we also adhere in this study. We do not share, however, Kienpointner's (1997: 255) view of impoliteness as *improper* communicative behaviour relative to a particular context, since in our opinion, impoliteness should be considered as a kind of behaviour that is always *appropriate* to a given communicative end. We support the idea that, in analogy with what Jay and Janschewitz (2008: 285) call "swearing etiquette", there is a general *impoliteness etiquette* which provides the basis for one's judgement about how impoliteness can be used appropriately in a given social setting or situation.

As regards universalistic positions, with respect to impoliteness we adopt –*mutatis mutandis*– the same view Leech (2007: 4) adopts for politeness. We believe that an absolute universalistic position is clearly untenable and, on the other hand, a completely relativist position is equally untenable.

The socio-cultural and pragmatic perspective chosen by Kaul de Marlangeon (2008a) in her original paper –where the typology is established– is justified by the fact that (im)polite verbal behaviour is idiosyncratic to each culture. Therefore, this original work was free from any universalistic assumptions. We acknowledge, however –along Leech's (2007) lines– that there exist common shared patterns or basic universal principles without which it would be impossible to speak of (im)politeness in the first place. It will be *ex post* test of the typology across different languages and cultures when we shall be able to assess its intercultural validity. In this particular paper we shall deal with impolite verbal behaviour in the English culture, with reference to the previous original work done regarding the Spanish culture.

One of the guiding principles in our study is that, in order to understand and compare instances of impolite behaviour, it is essential to classify its discourses according to the kind of phenomenon they communicate, and adhering to Wierzbicka (2003: 7), we believe that it is also important to use a metalanguage that is natural and "intuitively revealing". Notwithstanding, and in spite of the undeniable differences between the Spanish and the English cultures (and the diversity found in the different sub-cultures within each one of them), we intend to attain a certain intercultural validity, given the general criteria on which the interpretation of the phenomenon has been based.

The methodological criterion applied by Kaul de Marlangeon (2008a) consisted in a) deducing an *endecatonic* (i.e. containing eleven basic premises) definition of impoliteness on the basis of an exhaustive theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of impoliteness in general, as a *second order approach* (Locher and Bousfield 2008: 5) accompanied by an empirical analysis of Spanish examples, and b) inferring the typology by grouping together those impolite acts that verify the same item within the definition. Kaul de Marlangeon's second order approach was based on a *first order approach* because, the users of a language have at their disposal –in a somewhat

rudimentary way and as a component of their own communicative competence– a typology of impolite forms of behaviour which allows them to express and evaluate both their own and other people’s impolite acts. (Kaul de Marlangeon 2008a: 254).

The classifying principle in the typology discussed herein is the establishment of types of impolite acts which share either the impolite intention¹ or the absence thereof. This similarity in the presence or absence of an impolite intention manifests itself idiosyncratically within, and is regulated by, the culture under scrutiny. The first nine items of Kaul de Marlangeon’s (2008a) endecatomic definition are concerned with the speaker’s attitude, while the two remaining ones are concerned with that of the hearer.

In accord with the aforementioned methodological criterion, the typology turns out to be finite, as opposed to the infinity that would result from types determined by strategies or particular linguistic mechanisms through which the impolite acts are realized. In this paper we are trying to show that the same theoretical framework can be used to describe and analyse English data. Our corpus this time contains contextualized examples of the English language –both real and fictional– which illustrate the different impoliteness types. In this respect, we deem it important to note that we did not impose the typology upon the English corpus: in principle we were open to the possibility of finding different types of impoliteness in English. What we found was that the strategies used by interlocutors to be impolite may vary from one language to the other, but each and every one of the examples analysed could be assigned to a given category within the existing typology, thus granting no reason for us to consider a change or modification of the main types; hence our claim for the common applicability of the typology to both languages.

Since the intention in using the corpus was not to obtain frequencies of use, we did not carry out any type of quantitative or statistical analysis. As suggested above, our main aim was to classify the examples of impoliteness found in English according to types in order to test Kaul de Marlangeon’s existing typology. We do not discard, however, the importance and pertinence of future research on the frequencies of occurrence of the different types (as well as the strategies used within them) in both languages, which may eventually throw light on the (similar or different) tendencies of both cultures towards –for instance– the preference for one type over another.

Thus, for the qualitative purpose of our analysis, we considered that both samples of everyday talk and of fictional language (such as that found in films and TV shows) were valid, since both are authentic within their genre, and the impoliteness spotted in both can be interpreted and classified according to types that may intuitively be recognized as such by the speakers of the corresponding culture. That is, we believe that not only the language of everyday conversation is authentic, but also the language used in films, for the latter is appropriate within the discourse type it belongs to. Therefore all instances of impoliteness found in fiction can be identified by the audience as possible cases within the corresponding culture.

As regards the samples of everyday talk, the examples used for the analysis in this work were taken from different conversations recorded by the authors of this paper both in Britain and the U.S.A. The samples of fictional language were taken from three

movies (*Bridget Jones's Diary*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *Rush Hour 2*), and one British comedy series ("*Yes, Minister*").

2. TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF IMPOLITENESS

Our main concern in this work is to give a thorough account of the different possibilities and properties that converge on the concept of impoliteness. We shall start by outlining and discussing the continuum which integrates both the concepts of politeness and impoliteness.

2.1. *The pragmatic continuum of the politeness-impoliteness force*

On the basis of Kaul de Marlangeon's (2003 [1992-1995], 2003, 2008a) findings, we claim that the politeness-impoliteness force is a function on the set of all possible utterances to the ternary set of attributes or values *{polite, neutral, impolite}*. Under that function, two given utterances may have the same value *polite* or the same value *impolite*, but in different degrees; hence the importance of the types of (im)politeness.

The politeness-impoliteness force is a permanent component of speech acts, which is parallel to the illocutionary force.

We also claim that politeness and impoliteness are two opposite aspects or sectors within the same pragmatic continuum. Each one of these aspects or sectors constitutes in turn a continuum. A pair of stages with its constituents on each one of these continua can function as polar opposites within the total continuum, as would be the case, on the one hand, of Brown & Levinson's (1987) *Bald on Record Face Threatening Act* (BOR FTA) and the *Formally Impolite Act with a Polite Purpose*² (Kaul de Marlangeon 2008a), considering that these two types of acts are the closest to the neutral degree on both sides. On the other hand, the *Face Flattering Act* (FFA) (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2004) is the polar opposite of the *Fustigation Impoliteness Act*³ (Kaul de Marlangeon 2005). This last pair of acts shows the opposing extremes of the gradation that makes up the whole continuum. This continuum, which is the result of a second order approach to the phenomenon, is illustrated in Figure 1.

The concept of polar opposites within the continuum integrates the natural and intuitive metalanguage of the speakers' communicative competence.

As we shall see in 3, the impoliteness sector of the continuum consists of seven adjacent sub-sectors or segments which present specific characteristics, and thus each segment represents a *basic type* of impoliteness and constitutes a *potential continuum* of impolite acts of the same kind. The criteria relative to this similarity are inherent to, and regulated by, the corresponding cultures in question. These acts are distinguishable only by the greater or lesser degree of the (intended or unintended) damage inflicted on H's image. This degree is measured by the analyst taking into account the semantic and socio-cultural conventions which are pertinent to the discourse context.

The first segment (Type 1), corresponding to formally impolite acts which have a polite intention, is ordered according to the increment of the superficial forms of impoliteness used. The last six segments are ordered according to the increasing impoliteness force.

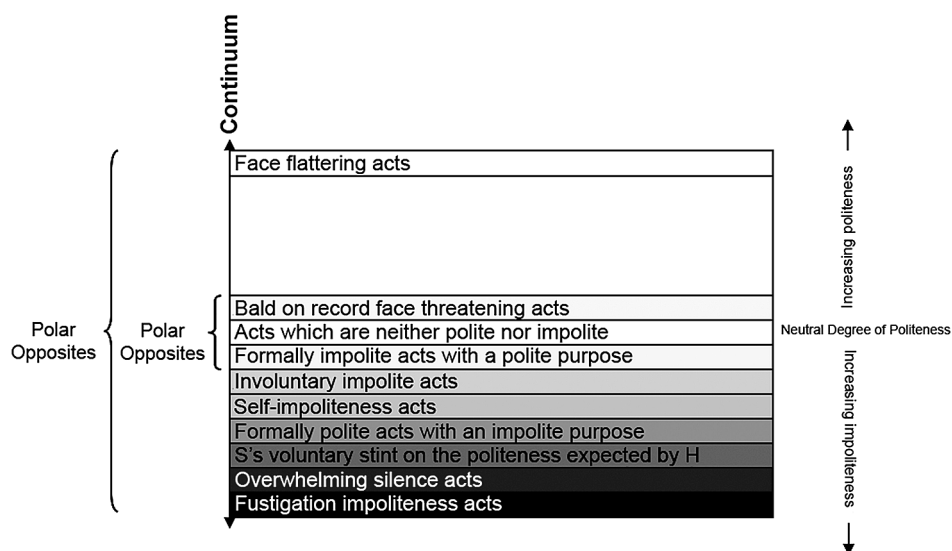


Figure 1. The politeness/impoliteness-force continuum

2.2. Kaul de Marlangeon's definition of impoliteness

Kaul de Marlangeon's (2008a) definition of impoliteness, as well as her typology for Spanish, emerged from the analysis and reflection upon the following facts concerning impolite behaviour (hereinafter IB):

1. IB is circumscribed to the speech community and its concept of politeness.
2. IB is associated to a partial or total lack of politeness.
3. IB is part of the politeness/impoliteness-force continuum.
4. IB may be intended or unintended.
5. When IB is intended,
 - 5.1. it is appropriate to the speaker's communicative end (i.e. it fulfils the communicative function the speaker has in mind);
 - 5.2. it establishes a disparity of power in favour of the speaker;
 - 5.3. the voluntary breaking of the generally accepted politeness norms reflects the individuality of the speaker, and consequently it exhibits creativity with respect to politeness rules or etiquette;

5.4. it serves the purposes of certain social discourse strategies that exhibit the particular *ethos* of the community in question;

Kaul de Marlangeon (2008a) comments on Culpeper's (2005) definition of impoliteness⁴ by pointing out that it is difficult to discern between the hearer's *perception* and *construction* of the speaker's act as intentionally impolite. She prefers to substitute both for the concept of *interpretation*, thus preventing the analyst from having to make the choice between these two options, since differentiating what the hearer *perceives* from what s/he *constructs* as impolite behaviour presents itself as a complicated, if not impossible task.

In 6) 6.2. below, Kaul de Marlangeon considers the possibility for a speaker to initiate the interaction by being impolite so as to defend his/her face (even when there is no apparent offence preceding it), as shown by the following quote by the Argentinian-Jewish journalist Chiche Gelblung: "*Sólo los judíos podemos criticar a los judíos, el resto es antisemitismo*"⁵ (*Only the Jewish can criticize the Jewish; the rest is anti-Semitism*). It can be observed that, in this particular situation, Gelblung defends himself and his race without having received any verbal previous attack, and offends all the non-Jewish people who criticize the Jewish by calling them *anti-semites* –a term which has so many negative and pejorative connotations. And even when it could be argued that there was a previous attack on the Jewish (the Holocaust), this attack did not constitute an utterance. Such a possibility has not been expressly contemplated by Culpeper (2003, 2005) in his studies, nor has it been treated by Harris, Gergen & Lannaman (1986) in their basic pairs, *offensive-defensive* and *offensive-offensive*. The results of the analysis made for our study, however, have led us to believe that this is a possible instance of impolite behaviour in both Spanish and English.

It is also worth noticing that Culpeper mentions the *gaffe* or *faux pas* as a case of unintended impolite behaviour on the part of the speaker, but, contrary to Kaul de Marlangeon (2005), unintended or involuntary impoliteness does not seem to be regarded by Culpeper as a true type of impolite behaviour, to judge by his manifestation supporting the idea that impoliteness **cannot** be unintended (Culpeper 2005: 37). In this respect, however, the results of our analysis have made us feel inclined to support the thesis (observable in our corpus data) that impoliteness can be unintended (and still offend the hearer, thence its interpretation as impolite) in both English and Spanish.

But the field of intentionality within impoliteness studies does not appear to be a firm ground for researchers yet. Considering the great amount of work (e.g. Mills 2003; Locher and Watts 2008; Culpeper 2008; Leech 2007) and the huge running debate about the idea that we can only *reconstruct* speaker intention, we are aware of the fact that intentionality can be a slippery concept in many cases. Notwithstanding, for the illustration of the different types within the typology (see 3 below) we claim that the examples illustrate situations in which –other things being equal– there is clear and high potential for them to be interpreted as cases of impoliteness.

All the above considerations were taken into account by Kaul de Marlangeon in order to produce her *endecatonic* definition of impoliteness, which, as its name implies, includes eleven instances or possibilities for impolite behaviour, and is stated as follows (Kaul de Marlangeon 2008a: 258-59 [our translation]):

Impoliteness occurs in any of the following eleven instances:

A) When the speaker (S):

- 1) tries to be polite to the hearer (H), but for H, S's manner of expression is reminiscent of improper, indecorous or disrespectful language.
- 2) involuntarily offends H by:
 - 2.1.) committing a gaffe or faux pas, or
 - 2.2.) stinting on the politeness expected by H, or
 - 2.3.) ignoring politeness norms
- 3) deliberately uses offensive language toward him/herself with different motivations
- 4) is very polite or excessively polite to the hearer, in order to hurt or mock him/her.
- 5) voluntarily stints on the politeness expected by H
- 6) deliberately offends H with a purpose that may:
 - 6.1.) damage H's face
 - 6.2.) defend S's face

B) When H:

- 1) interprets S's behaviour as an intentional face attack that induces him/her to accept the attack or reject it through defence or counter-attack.
- 2) remains silent intentionally, in order to indicate disagreement/ discontentment with S's utterance.

3. THE TYPOLOGY

On the basis of the above considerations, Kaul de Marlangeon (2008a) proposes the following scale of impoliteness types, according to the growing intensity of the impoliteness force transmitted by the acts in question. For the intended acts, the higher the number, the stronger the impoliteness force, i.e., the higher the degree of impoliteness:

- 1) Formally impolite acts with a polite purpose
- 2) Involuntary impolite acts
 - 2.1.) Gaffes
 - 2.2.) S's involuntary stint on the politeness expected by H
 - 2.3.) Involuntary omission of politeness

- 3) Self-impoliteness acts
- 4) Formally polite acts with an impolite purpose
- 5) S's voluntary stint on the politeness expected by H
- 6) Overwhelming silence acts
- 7) Fustigation impoliteness acts

All the impoliteness types involve the speaker's attitudes, with the sole exception of *overwhelming silence*, which has to do with the hearer's attitude. Consequently, the hearer's interpretation that the speaker's attitude attacks the hearer's face does not make up a type, even when it constitutes a case of impoliteness (i.e. case B) 1) within item 2.2. in this paper, which was included in the *endecatonic* definition in order to acknowledge a possibility considered by Culpeper (2005) in his definition of impoliteness).

We illustrate this fact by means of the following example: Someone asks a slightly overweight woman "When is it due?" (thinking that she is pregnant but she is not), thus drawing attention to the fact that she is (a bit) heavy. We typify this question within this context as a gaffe. As the hearer does not produce any utterance, we ignore the degree to which she might have been offended –or if she was offended at all–, so the classification of this instance as a gaffe has to do with the speaker's attitude only. If, however, the overweight woman had had some kind of verbal reaction, she would have automatically turned into the speaker, and if her reaction had been impolite, it would surely have corresponded to a different type of impoliteness other than a gaffe.

The impoliteness cases of the *endecatonic* definition correspond to, and at the same time define, the types indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation between cases and types of impoliteness

CASES	TYPES
A) 1)	3. 1)
A) 2) 2.1.)	3. 2) 2.1.)
A) 2) 2.2.)	3. 2) 2.2.)
A) 2) 2.3.)	3. 2) 2.3.)
A) 3)	3. 3)
A) 4)	3. 4)
A) 5)	3. 5)
A) 6) 6.1.)	3. 7)
A) 6) 6.2.)	3. 7)
B) 2)	3. 6)

The categories of the above typology are directly related to the concept of impoliteness force increment, i.e. to the degree of the damage inflicted on H's image. This degree is measured by the analyst according to semantic and socio-cultural conventions pertinent to the discourse context. Thus we believe these types are more general and much less culture-specific than if they were based on, for instance, linguistic or pragmatic strategies. Considering that Kaul de Marlangeon (2008a) already presented examples for the Spanish language, in this particular study we shall focus on the way these types are realized in English.

4. EXAMPLES AND ANALYSIS

Our English corpus includes different sources, such as the scripts of three movies (*Bridget Jones's Diary*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *Rush Hour 2*), five episodes of the British TV comedy series ("*Yes, Minister*"), and our own collection of samples of everyday conversation⁶. We have also examined the discourse used in four editions of the American television show *The O'Reilly Factor*, and in two of the *Late Show with David Letterman*, as well as some *You Tube* videos containing the public speeches of American and British politicians. Since the research intention was mainly typological and not topological⁷, we focused our attention on the variety of types or categories of impoliteness found in the data, irrespective of the discourse type. Research on the same grounds for English and other languages would also be revealing, but it goes beyond the scope and aims of the present paper.

Taking into account the fact (discussed in 2.2. above) that we can never be entirely sure about the intentions of the interlocutors, we have attempted to choose examples that seemed to be clear in the display of both speakers' and hearers' impolite intentions, leaving the least possible room for doubt.

4.1. *Formally impolite acts with a polite purpose*

Within this type, Kaul de Marlangeon includes cases of the ludicrous use of irony, a phenomenon that has been labelled *positive irony* by Alba-Juez (2000, [1996] 2001), and which has basically no impolite intention. On the contrary, the intention of S is to praise H or show some kind of positive appreciation of the relationship with H, as Haverkate (1988: 90) shows by means of the following example of an ironic statement made in a conversation between two lovers: *I don't like you at all!* This phenomenon has been described by Kasper (1990) as *ironic rudeness* or *mock impoliteness*, and by Leech (1983) as *banter* or *mock irony*.

Kaul de Marlangeon also considers those cases in Spanish where an insult is used together with a positive, direct exclamation, such as "*¡Viva México, cabrones!*" ("Long live Mexico, you bastards!"), or "*¡Viva Chile, mierda!*" (Literally: "Long live Chile, shit!"). Here, the intention is not to insult or to swear but to express an exacerbated feeling of patriotism, as implied and conveyed by the direct, joyful and exhilarated

exclamation. Thus we may say that the words *cabrones* and *mierda* can not be interpreted as *impoliteness markers* (Alba-Juez 2007, 2008), nor can we consider the word *monster* to be an impolite marker in English when, for example, a woman says to her lover: “*I love you, monster*”.

In spite of the above, we acknowledge that there are occasions when this type could also include an indirect criticism on the part of the speaker (and thus may go beyond a mere case of banter), which could reflect a hidden intention of being mildly impolite. Alba-Juez (2000) considers this possibility by analysing examples similar to the following:

[1]

A father to his teenage daughter: *Come on! Go ahead and eat!*

Daughter: *No, I don't want to eat. I want to lose weight. I'm fat.*

Father: ***Oh Yeah! You're super-fat; you're so fat you make sumo wrestlers look anorexic!***

Here the father is criticizing and praising his daughter at the same time: On the one hand, he is being nice in implying she is not fat at all, but on the other hand he is showing his disagreement with his daughter's self-image and intention to lose weight, and thus may have the two-fold intention of being polite and (mildly) impolite at the same time.

4.2. *Involuntary impolite acts*

These are the only cases in which the use of impoliteness is not strategic. Here we have identified three subtypes whose common characteristic is the lack of an impolite intention. The difference between the three of them is the degree of damage impinged on the hearer's expectancy of politeness.

4.2.1. Gaffes

The fact that gaffes are by definition devoid of impolite intentions does not exempt them from having an impolite effect in some contexts or situations. A distinctive feature of this kind of acts is the possibility of the retrospective awareness (on the part of S or of any other interlocutor) of the act, with the subsequent feeling of regret about the generated mistake or misunderstanding. Due to their unintended character, the impolite effect of gaffes can be rated as considerably low within the impoliteness continuum. An embarrassing example of a real life gaffe was the one uttered by the American Vice President Joe Biden when asking Chuck Graham, a Senator who is confined to a wheel chair, to stand up:

[2]

Biden: Ah..Chuck Graham, state Senator is here. Chuck, stand up, Chuck! Let me get to see you... (Biden then notices Graham is sitting in a wheel chair). Oh, God love you, what am I talking about! I'll tell you what: You're making everybody else stand up though, pal. Thank you very, very much I'll tell you what: stand up for Chuck! (the audience cheers) Thank you pal...

Transcribed from *You Tube* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRV5Y1JCGR>, September 9, 2008.

As can be observed, Biden was completely unaware of Graham's physical impairment and when he realizes he has made the gaffe, he tries to repair his mistake by reprimanding himself (*Oh, God love you, what am I talking about!*) and by making everyone else stand up for Graham.

4.2.2. S's involuntary stint on the politeness expected by H

This subtype of involuntary impoliteness can again be illustrated by means of an exchange in one of the scenes of the movie *Bridget Jones's Diary*, when Mark Darcy responds in a very direct and sincere way to Bridget's thanks, instead of with the expected second part of the adjacency pair (which would have been a polite *You're welcome* or *Don't mention it*). Here, Mark unintentionally offends Bridget, who by now is notably in love with Mark, and who would have preferred him to have taken the initiative by inviting her to the party:

[3]

Bridget: Thank you for inviting me.

Mark: **I didn't. It must've been my parents.**

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones's Diary*).

4.2.3. Involuntary omission of politeness

In both Spanish and English, a prototypical example of this subtype of involuntary impoliteness occurs when children or teenagers forget to thank adults. This unknowing behaviour brings about the inevitable subsequent remark (in retrospective awareness) by their mothers/fathers/caregivers in English: (*Johnny*) *what do you say (to Mrs X for having invited you to her home)?* or in Spanish: (*Anita*), *¿Qué se dice (a la señora, por haberte invitado hoy)?* In such cases (especially if the involuntary impoliteness comes from an adolescent), it is not uncommon to hear the adult saying afterwards that Johnny's or Anita's manners left much to be desired, which shows that the adult in question took the teenager's omission as an instance of mild impoliteness or rudeness.

4.3. *Self-impoliteness acts*

We find instances of this type of impoliteness in both English and Spanish when people use impolite or rude language toward themselves. Self-impoliteness may be authentic or feigned. In the first case, the speaker speaks to himself –loudly– in all sincerity (e.g.: *Damn, what an idiot I am!*). In the second case, the speaker strategically manipulates his message with the aim of performing a *Face Flattering Act* (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2004) or of eliciting it from the hearer. The first possibility operates in the following way: As the speaker damages her own face, she undermines her own image

and exhibits greater humility than she has –or a humility that she simply does not have– in front of the hearer. The second possibility occurs when the speaker is capable of eliciting a comment from the hearer that will repair the damage the speaker has inflicted upon herself (e.g.: *Oh, no! Not at all; on the contrary, what you did was a very intelligent thing to do!*).

We find an instance of authentic self-impoliteness in the following self-derogatory comment Bridget makes to herself regarding her performance when appearing on T.V. wearing a mini-skirt and sliding down a pole:

[4]

Bridget: Excellent. **Am national laughing stock. Have bottom the size of... Brazil. Am daughter of broken home... and rubbish at everything** and –oh, God...Am having dinner with Magda and Jeremy.

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones's Diary*).

Another instance of authentic self-impoliteness is found in Daniel's discourse, when coming back to Bridget and expressing his regret for having left her for another woman:

Daniel: I thought you might be on your own. Huh. **What an idiot.**

Bridget: Excuse me.

Daniel: I've been going crazy. I can't stop thinking about you... **and thinking what a fucking idiot I've been.** Christ, is that blue soup?

Bridget: Yes.

Daniel: That Sunday in the country... [...]. It was all just going so fast—the hotel and that weekend, meeting your parents. I just panicked. You know me. **I'm... I'm a terrible disaster... with a posh voice and a bad character...**

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones's Diary*).

By means of feigned self-impoliteness, S performs a strategic manipulation of his/her message with the purpose of producing a FFA or of inducing H to such an act. The first possibility may be ironic or not. It is ironic, for instance, in the exclamation *See how stupid I am?!*, when the evidence of the facts shows that S has done something clever or worth the admiration of his/her interlocutors. In a similar situation, a Spanish speaker would say something like: *¡Ja! ¡Ya ves qué tonto que soy!*, an ironic utterance that would generally be accompanied by an expression of pride on S's face.

The non-ironic FFA mentioned above functions this way: as S inflicts damage to his own face, he belittles himself before H, deliberately exhibiting a meekness he barely possesses or simply does not have. In so doing, S enhances his face before himself.

The aim of S's feigned self-impoliteness is fulfilled when H feels the need to repair the damage S has inflicted on his/her face. An illustrating pair for this situation would be, in Spanish:

[5]

S: ¡Si seré gilipollas!

H: ¡Pero no, con lo inteligente que usted es!;

and in English:

S: Damn, what a fat-head I am!

H: Oh, no! How can you say such a thing! I think you are the smartest guy on earth.

Ironic feigned self-impoliteness falls within the first category of this typology (*formally impolite acts with a polite purpose*).

4.4. *Formally polite acts with an impolite purpose*

Within this type, politeness forms are paradoxically used as a means to aim at impoliteness. The context of the situation plays a crucial part in the successful achievement of this aim, for the formally polite language of S is to be interpreted as an ironic attack towards H (or a third party). A particular case of this type is the so-called *negative over-politeness* (cf. Culpeper 2008: 24-28), i.e., being intentionally overly polite with the contradictory aim of belittling or criticizing the hearer. For instance, all ironic uses of polite forms of address fall into this category, as well as some manifestations of cynicism, like the one in example [7], taken from a scene in the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, where the protagonist, Andy Dufresne, is accused of having killed his wife and is therefore sent to prison. The first day in Shawshank prison, Warden Norton introduces the new prisoners to the Captain of the Guard, Mr. Hadley, a corrupt, cynical and cold character who abuses his power to cruel extents. In this exchange with the prisoners, both the linguistic and non-linguistic context (mainly provided in the first part of this scene, with physical violence and fustigation impoliteness) help the viewer interpret his message in the second part as not precisely a “welcoming” one, in spite of the apparent politeness and “softness” of his last utterance (“*Welcome to Shawshank*”):

[6]

Norton: This is Mr. Hadley, Captain of the Guard. I am Mr. Norton, the warden. You are convicted felons; that’s why they’ve sent you to me. Rule number one: no blasphemy. I will not have the Lord’s name taken in vain in my prison. The other rules you’ll figure out as you go along. Any questions?

Convict: When do we eat?

(Cued by Norton’s glance, Hadley steps up to the con and screams right in his face):

Hadley: YOU EAT WHEN WE SAY YOU EAT! YOU SHIT WHEN WE SAY YOU SHIT!
AND YOU PISS WHEN WE SAY YOU PISS! YOU GOT THAT YOU MAGGOT-
DICK MOTHERFUCKER?

(Hadley rams the tip of his club into his belly. The man falls to his knees, gasping and clutching himself. Hadley takes his place at Norton’s side again, and **softly**, says):

Norton: Any more questions? (Silence)... I believe in two things: Discipline and the Bible. Here, you’ll receive both (holds up a Bible). Put your trust in the Lord. Your ass belongs to me. **Welcome to Shawshank.**

(Example transcribed from *The Shawshank Redemption*).

4.5. *S's voluntary stint on the politeness expected by H*

This type of impoliteness reflects S's denial of H's right to receive the politeness H believes s(he) deserves and consequently expects from S. Thus the rude behaviour is here interpreted as such on the grounds of S's deliberate *omission*, rather than *action*. However, the omission is not complete, for S does not resort to total, overwhelming silence: s(he) participates in the exchange, but withholds politeness to a certain extent. Thus S generally flouts Grice's Quantity Maxim by avoiding the upper points of a compliment or admission.

We find two examples of this type in [7] and [8]. Example [7] has been taken from one of the episodes of the British TV comedy series "*Yes, Minister*", where Humphrey's impoliteness is brought about by his reluctance to tell Bernard his secret. It is clear that Bernard expected Humphrey to tell him the hidden information, considering the fact that Humphrey's previous question (*Can you keep a secret?*) is the prototypical pre-sequence used in English when people *do* want to tell a secret, therefore clashing with Humphrey's uncooperative final reply:

[7]

Bernard: What are we supposed to do about it?

Humphrey: Can you keep a secret?

Bernard: Of course!

Humphrey: **So can I.**

(Example transcribed from Jay and Lynn (1994), "*Yes, Minister*" Video Episode: 'Open Government').

In [8] we find Mark Darcy once more, expressing his impoliteness towards his rival, Daniel Cleaver, by implicitly rejecting his invitation and ignoring him (since he addresses Bridget, not Daniel, in his reply):

[8]

Daniel: At least stay for a birthday drink... with me and Bridge, huh?

Mark: **Good-bye, Bridget.**

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones's Diary*).

4.6. *Overwhelming silence acts*

The intention behind this type of impoliteness has to do with H's performance of an impolite act by not replying to S's comment or action. In effect, by remaining silent, H establishes a confrontation with S and/or challenges the veracity or validity of S's previous statement. We are conscious of the fact that silence can also be strategically used to mean, for example, acceptance or compromise, but that is not the type of silence we refer to with the term *overwhelming silence*. Overwhelming silence is the silence that is used to show disagreement or a certain degree of contempt for, or disapproval of the interlocutor's previous comment or behaviour.

Impolite behaviour has frequently been associated to the use and abuse of power (e.g. Culpeper 1996), and some authors, such as Kurzon (1992), have focused on the use of silence as a strategy to attain power or gain control of a given situation. Escandell Vidal (1993: 43) argues in favour of the communicative value of silence as an alternative to the actual use of words. Cordisco (2005) views silence as a peculiar kind of behaviour that may turn out to be communicatively dense and can therefore produce (not necessarily intentional) impolite effects. Akman (1994: 213) asserts that in some instances silence can be understood as a speech act of the form “I will not participate in order to show people (the listeners or in general, others present) that you are a laughingstock”.

Kaul de Marlangeon finds an instance of this type of impoliteness in the challenging and overwhelming silence of the hearer as a response to S’s comment: *Fulano es un brillante profesor, ¿verdad?* (‘Mr. X is a brilliant Professor, isn’t he?’). The polite and expected answer in this case should be an assertive reply of the type: *Sí, la verdad que sí* (‘Yes, he sure is.’), but H chooses silence instead, as a means to express disagreement. In this case, the question is merely rhetorical, where S takes H’s adherence for granted. However, by remaining silent H turns the question into a *de facto* one, and this “strident” negative silence is understood as a negative answer which turns out to be even more impolite than the explicit communication of disagreement because it attacks and belittles S’s world view, making S feel overwhelmed, embarrassed or isolated.

In everyday English conversation, it is not difficult to find this kind of situation, when someone expresses admiration for a given person, as is the case of the girl who was head over heels in love with her boy-friend and ‘tortured’ her group of friends (who were not very keen on him) with her insistent question: “*Isn’t he wonderful? Isn’t he wonderful?*”? As a sign of protest and disagreement, her friends replied by not responding and by looking at one another in despair, out of boredom and discomfort.

In the “*Yes, Minister*” series, there are several occasions on which Humphrey does not want to follow the Minister’s orders, and therefore shows his disagreement in various ways. The strategic use of silence is one possible way of showing disagreement, by simply not making any comments regarding what the Minister says, or not answering his questions, as we can see in [9]:

[9]

Hacker: This directly comes from Brussels, saying that all EEC members must conform to some niggling European word processing standards, that would have to agree with tons and masses of European word processing committees of the forthcoming European Word Processing Conference in Brussels...

(Hacker and Humphrey remain silent, as it is evident they do not agree on the European plan that (supposedly) the Minister (Hacker) supports.)

Hacker: Well, say something!

Humphrey and Bernard look at each other puzzled, and finally reply, insincerely:

Humphrey: Yes, Minister.

Bernard: Right sir

Humphrey: [This time trying to be sincere] Well, Minister, I'm afraid that is a penalty we have to pay for trying to pretend that we're Europeans...

(Transcribed from "Yes, Minister on the EEC" at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-Xvy1r4Pm8&NR=1>)

Humphrey then tries to repair the original mildly impolite silence by making use of hedges (*Well... I'm afraid...*) when expressing his real thoughts (against the European Union), thus mitigating the disagreement.

As may have become apparent, overwhelming silence is the extreme manifestation of stint on the politeness expected by H (Type 5 in this typology).

4.7. *Fustigation impoliteness*

Kaul de Marlangeon (2005) draws from the meaning of the term *fustigation* (in the sense of "whipping somebody or something") metaphorically, considering that this type of impoliteness consists of verbal aggression in a confronting or challenging situation, where the main aim is to damage the interlocutor's face. It may be enacted through direct or indirect strategies, and the degree of injury that each one causes depends on the respective contexts of the particular situation and/or culture.

The evidence of our corpora examples has led us to conclude that, both in English and Spanish, speakers may strategically choose directness or indirectness in order to express fustigation impoliteness. The prototypical example of a direct strategy for fustigation impoliteness is the use of harsh insults in a face-to-face argument or fight between two individuals, two groups, or an individual versus a group. The following is one example of direct fustigation taken from a *Late Show* interview with David Letterman, in which Letterman attacks Bill O'Reilly in a very direct manner:

[10]

Letterman: I'm not smart enough to debate you point to point on this (Audience laughs), but I have the feeling, **I have the feeling, I have the feeling that 60% of what you say is crap (pause). But I don't know that for a fact (pause).**

Show musician: Sixty...

L: You say sixty percent?

SM: Sixty percent yeah.

L: Sixty percent, that's just uh (Audience laughs) I'm just spitballing here (laughs faintly).

SM: Ahaha!

O'Reilly: **Listen. I respect your opinion, you should respect mine.**

Transcribed from the *Late Show with David Letterman*, NBC, January 2006.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHeksT6it6s&feature=related>

Bill O'Reilly himself is well-known and has been strongly criticized for using fustigation impoliteness very often, by telling many of his invited guests to shut up, thus performing the impolite act of shouting them down⁸.

Fustigation impoliteness constitutes in itself a continuum, where a vast array of possibilities can be found. The data used for our analysis have shed light on the fact that, especially in English, the use of indirect strategies for the expression of fustigation impoliteness is not infrequent. On many occasions, verbal fustigation can be woven into an intricate fabric of witty and truly aggressive language containing no surface taboo words or insults. A typical and extreme example of the use of a direct strategy for fustigation impoliteness between individuals is found in this sequence between Hadley (the Captain of the Guard) and a prisoner (who has been nicknamed “Fat ass” by his prison-mates):

[11]

Hadley: What’s your malfunction you fat fuckin’ barrel of monkey-spunk?

Fat ass: PLEASE! I AIN’T SUPPOSED TO BE HERE! NOT ME!

Hadley: I ain’t gonna count to three! Not even to one! Now shut the fuck up or I’ll sing you a lullaby!

(Example transcribed from *The Shawshank Redemption*).

Such verbal aggression is followed and complemented by its physical manifestation, for the prisoner is cruelly beaten to death as a consequence of this incident. It also constitutes a prototypical example of the use of impoliteness by the powerful against the powerless.

On a more egalitarian (and much less cruel) basis, direct and indirect strategies for fustigation impoliteness also accompany the fight between Daniel and Mark at the end of *Bridget Jones’s Diary*:

[12]

(Mark was leaving Bridget’s home but he comes back with a defiant attitude.)

Mark: All right, Cleaver, outside.

Daniel: [weak laugh] I’m sorry? Outside? Uh, should I bring my duelling pistols or my sword? All right. Hang on.

Mark: I should’ve done this years ago.

Daniel: Done what?

Mark: This! (He lands a blow on Daniel’s face).

Daniel: Ooh! Fuck! Fuck me! That hurt! Ahhh! What the fuck do you think you’re doing?

Mark: This! [Punches Daniel in face again]

Daniel: Oh Christ! Not again!

(The fight continues...).

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones’s Diary*).

In this exchange, Daniel first resorts to sarcasm as an indirect strategy for fustigation impoliteness in order to imply that Mark is being ridiculous in challenging him to a formal duel (*Outside? Uh, should I bring my duelling pistols or my sword?*). However, once the situation has turned dramatic, and after receiving Mark’s physical attack, he sets sarcasm aside and chooses more aggressive, direct strategies to express his fustigation impoliteness (*Ooh! Fuck! Fuck me! [...] What the fuck do you think you’re doing?*)

A typical example of the use of indirect strategies for fustigation impoliteness (also previously analysed in Alba-Juez, 2007) is found in the verbal attack Daniel's lover inflicts on Bridget in [13], when Bridget discovers that Daniel has been cheating on her:

[13]

(Bridget finds a woman naked and hiding in Daniel's bathroom, and therefore looks at her in astonishment.)

Daniel: This is Lara, from the New York office. Lara, this is Bridget.

Lara: Hey there. (To Daniel) **I thought you said she was thin.**

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones's Diary*).

Lara's sarcastic allusion to Bridget's overweight condition, together with the fact that it is evident that she has been having sex with Daniel shortly before Bridget arrived, is clearly perceived by Bridget as utterly humiliating fustigation impoliteness.

The confrontation of an individual versus a group is analysed by Kaul de Marlangeon through the prism of Bravo's (1999) socio-cultural approach, in which the categories of *autonomy* and *affiliation* are defined. The former category alludes to the individual's need to perceive him/herself and be perceived by the other members as different from the group; the latter refers to the need to belong to and be perceived as part of the group. For the particular field of impolite behaviour, and on the assumption that such a field of research is situated at the intersection of language and social reality, Kaul de Marlangeon (2005: 303, 2008b: 736) introduces the concepts of *refractoriness* and *exacerbated affiliation* in the following manner: Refractoriness is defined as the exacerbated autonomy of considering oneself and being considered by others as an opponent to the group; whereas, exacerbated affiliation involves seeing oneself and being seen by others as part of the group, with the right to choose impoliteness in defence of the group.

A prototypical illustration for both concepts would be the case of the football hooligan who insults the members of the opposing team at the football match, simultaneously manifesting both his/her refractoriness towards them and his/her exacerbated affiliation to the team s/he supports or represents. The same situation could hold true for group versus group confrontation, where not a single member, but the whole group of hooligans, acts against a similar group representing the opposing team.

In the following example ([14]), the group of married couples shows refractoriness towards Bridget, to which Bridget presents her defence by showing her autonomy and opposition to them:

[14]

(Bridget Jones is sitting at the dinner table with a group of "not very friendly friends")

Magda: [smugly] Hey, Bridge, how's your love life?

Bridget: Oh [weak laugh]

Cosmo: Still going out with that publishing chappie?

Bridget: Ah, no, no, actually...

Cosmo: Never dip your nib in the office ink (smug laugh). **You really ought to hurry up... and get sproged up, you know, old girl? Time's a-running out. Tick-tock.**

Bridget: Yes, yes. Uh, tell me, is it one in four marriages... that ends in divorce now, or one in three?

Mark: [promptly] One in three!

*Cosmo: **Seriously, though, offices are full of single girls in their thirties. Fine physical specimens, but they just can't seem to hold down a chap.***

*Woney: **Yes, Why is it... there are so many unmarried women in their thirties... these days, Bridget?***

[Guests all stop eating and stare at Bridget].

Bridget: [weak laugh] Oh, I don't know [weak laugh] I suppose it doesn't help that underneath our clothes... our entire bodies are covered in scales. [pained smile, weak laughter from guests]

(Example transcribed from *Bridget Jones's Diary*).

As may become apparent, in this example there is a sequence of two offensive-defensive pairs (Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann 2003), the offensive parts (in bold) coming from Cosmo and Woney, and their defensive counterparts (in italics), from Bridget. Cosmo's first attack is direct, by telling her that she is old and should hurry up and get married. Bridget defends herself by using indirect, sarcastic impoliteness in the form of a rhetorical question containing some negative statistical information on divorce, and Cosmo and Woney counter-attack by indirectly implying that she is one of those thirty-year-old girls who "can't seem to hold down a chap". Finally, Bridget resorts once more to strategic impolite sarcasm to defend herself, and in so doing she succeeds in making her "friends" feel uncomfortable and a bit disconcerted.

Thus, direct and indirect strategies are used both in English and Spanish to express fustigation impoliteness. This said, and judging by the numerous cases of indirect fustigation found in the English corpus, we might feel inclined to believe that English speakers are more prone to use indirectness as a fustigation strategy than Spanish speakers are. However, more research and a specific quantitative study would be necessary to make this assumption on scientific grounds, so we set aside this issue as a topic for further investigation.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of Kaul de Marlangeon's (2003[1992-1995], 2008a) findings, the politeness-impoliteness force turns out to be a function on the set of all possible utterances to the ternary set of attributes or values {*polite*, *neutral*, *impolite*}. Under that function, two given utterances may have the same value *polite* or the same value *impolite*, but in different degrees; hence the importance of the types of (im)politeness.

That function establishes a continuum of polite and impolite acts. The impoliteness sector of this continuum consists of seven adjacent sub-sectors or segments which do not overlap or share any common elements. Each segment represents a *basic type* of impoliteness and constitutes a *potential continuum* of impolite acts of the same kind. The criteria relative to this similarity are inherent to, and regulated by, the corresponding

cultures in question. Those acts, intended or unintended, are distinguishable only by the greater or lesser degree of the damage they inflict.

The first segment or Type 1 corresponds to formally impolite acts with a polite purpose; it is ordered according to the increment of the superficial forms of impoliteness used to fulfil the polite purpose. The second segment or Type 2 corresponds to involuntary impolite acts; it includes three subtypes: *gaffes*, *S's involuntary stint on the politeness expected by H* and *involuntary omission of politeness*. The third segment or Type 3 concerns self-impoliteness acts. The fourth segment or Type 4 encompasses the formally polite acts with an impolite purpose. The fifth segment or Type 5 is devoted to S's voluntary stint on the politeness expected by H. The sixth segment or Type 6 is assigned to overwhelming silence acts. The seventh segment or Type 7 embraces fustigation impoliteness acts. The last six segments, i.e. types from 2 to 7, are ordered according to the increasing impoliteness force. For the intentional acts, the stronger the intention, the higher the degree of impoliteness. In the case of Type 2 acts, there is no intention of being impolite on the part of the speaker, but the perlocutionary effect of these acts is, however, impolite.

All types are directly related to the concept of impoliteness force increment, i.e. to the degree of the damage inflicted on H's image, and this degree is measured by the analyst according to semantic and socio-cultural conventions pertinent to the discourse context.

On the basis of the analysis of the cases of impoliteness found in our English corpus, we have been able to verify that the general types of verbal impoliteness proposed in Kaul de Marlangeon's (2008a) typology of impolite verbal behaviour for Spanish can also be used to describe and classify the same phenomena in English. Put in simple words, we found cases of impoliteness in English corresponding to all the types, and we did not find any cases which could not be assigned to one of the categories initially proposed by Kaul de Marlangeon.

Whereas the main types of impoliteness do not differ from one language to the other, the strategies used within each of the types might differ in quality and frequency. By means of a different kind of analysis from the one carried out in this paper, we would be able to arrive at conclusions regarding the higher or lower frequencies of occurrence of the types of impoliteness in both languages, as well as regarding the possible differences or similarities in the use of the strategies within a given type. We leave these and other aspects (such as the topological study of all the types of impoliteness) as topics for further research.

NOTES

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1. We are, however, aware of the fact that we cannot be categorical about judging speaker's or hearer's intentions and thus we can only attempt to interpret such intentions. See 2.2. in this paper for further discussion of this issue.
2. See 3.1.
3. See 3.7.
4. "Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)" (Culpeper 2005: 38).
5. Quoted by Alberto Buela at the Hontanarhiperboreo Blog (hontanarhiperboreo.wordpress.com, February 8, 2010).
6. These samples were recorded by the authors of this paper on different occasions in the U.S.A. and Britain from 1997 to 2008. They constitute a collection of 25 different conversations or situations.
7. A topological study has already been carried out for Spanish, whose results can be found in Kaul de Marlangeon's (2010) work.
8. As can be seen in <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIVnwYGU9Qo&feature=related>

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