clac CÍRCULO
de
lingüística
aplicada a la
comunicación

58/2014

IMPOLITENESS, PSEUDO-POLITENESS, STRATEGIC POLITENESS? ON THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOUR IN ELECTORAL DEBATES

Francisco Fernández García
University of Jaén
fcofe en ujaen es

Abstract

This article analyses communicative behaviour in electoral debates, particularly with regard to the presence of elements of politeness or impoliteness. From both these questions, we develop two independent, albeit connected, lines of argument with the ultimate aim of discerning whether the features characterising politeness or impoliteness in debates are analogous to or, on the contrary, substantially different from those found in casual conversations. Our study has been conducted on the basis of our previous research and new data, and through a critical evaluation of the literature generated over the past few decades concerning both research into (im)politeness and into speaker behaviour in electoral debates. From this analysis, we conclude that both politeness and impolitenesss are genuine elements in debates, that is to say, debates are not radically unlike casual conversations, even if they do constitute a genre displaying a number of peculiarities arising from their public nature.

Fernández García, Francisco. 2014.
Impoliteness, pseudo-politeness, strategic politeness? On the nature of communicative behaviour in electoral debates.
Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación 58, 60-89.
http://www.ucm.es/info/circulo/no58/fernandez.pdf
http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/CLAC

Keywords: electoral debate, conflict, (im)politeness, mitigation

Contents

1. Introduction

This article analyses communicative behaviour of political speakers in electoral debates, particularly with regard to the presence of elements of politeness or impoliteness. The main objective is to establish whether these communicative events display, as far as (im)politeness is concerned, features analogous to or substantially different from those found in casual conversations.

The different theories on linguistic politeness constitute an extremely useful tool to understand certain aspects of how human communication works. Indeed, over the past few decades they have become a key component of pragmatic-discursive research, which is only natural when we think of the omnipresence of linguistic manifestations of (im)politeness in communicative interaction.

Since the early 1970s (Lakoff 1973), a huge amount of research has attempted to account for the way in which communicative interaction is strongly affected by the social factor in interpersonal relationships and by the way speakers act strategically in this sense. A number of authors worked within this theoretical current in the late 1970s and the 1980s (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987; Leech 1983) and there have been valuable contributions since then from different standpoints (among others, Fraser 1990; Meier 1995; Jary 1998; Watts 2003; Spencer-Oatey 2008).

Of all these proposals, the theory propounded by Brown and Levinson has been from the very beginning the axis around which all subsequent research in the field has revolved. This is still the case today, despite the unceasing flow of criticism and counterproposals ever since it was first published. These works have objected to many issues, from minor details to the theoretical kernel itself of the original proposal, including the very use of the word *politeness*, a common word in English, as a technical term (Watts 2003:12). One issue that has been particularly discussed is the supposed universal character of the theory (among others, by Matsumoto 1988; Watts 1992; or Bravo 2004). Sometimes it is partial adjustments that are proposed. Kadt (1998), for example, though accepting the general validity of the theory, proposed a return to the concept of *face* closer to that of Goffman (1967). Likewise, Spencer-Oatey (2002, 2008) has undertaken a thorough revision of the theory, a proposal supported by not a few researchers. Among the alternative proposals that pursue an approach substantially different from the study of politeness, mention should be made of Fraser (1990) and of Watts (2003), who has worked with what may be termed the *postmodern vision* of politeness (Terkourafi 2005).

All of the theories developed around the concept of politeness over the past twenty-five years seemed to assume, generally speaking, that speakers always try to preserve a balance in social relations, thus mitigating any possible face-threatening acts towards the interlocutor. Yet, this approach implied closing one's eyes to incontestable evidence to the contrary, insofar as sometimes we actually do not try to mitigate the threat, but do in fact seek to boost it. It is therefore clear that, in certain communicative contexts, politeness strategies may actually be reduced or even suppressed altogether. What is more, it is also possible to take one step further and allow strategies of impoliteness to enter the scene. Of course, even though this may arise in any communicative situation, including casual conversations when they happen to turn into heated arguments, the fact remains that communicative genres, normally associated with conflict and confrontation, are particularly prone to impoliteness.

This alternative view of the phenomenon shows that impoliteness need no longer be seen as a kind of pragmatic failure or communicative dysfunction. On the contrary, impoliteness may have a clearly strategic and systematic character. That was the view defended in a pioneering article by Culpeper (1996), who continued working along this

line in subsequent publications and finally systematized it in a book (Culpeper 2011). The original standpoint of this British researcher literally toppled over Brown and Levinson's (1987) theoretical proposal by characterizing impolite attitudes as the reverse of the polite attitudes described in the original model while keeping intact its general theoretical postulates. He then progressively introduced a number of adjustments, such as taking into account the role of prosodic elements or abandoning the distinction between positive face and negative face (Culpeper 2005)until he finally made public a proposal (Culpeper et al. 2010; Culpeper 2011) based on the theoretical model of Spencer-Oatey (2002, 2008). Mention should be made of Bousfield (2008), who, while vindicating Grice (1975), Culpeper (1996) and the tradition initiated by Brown and Levinson, attached greater importance to discourse and interaction in the workings of impoliteness, well beyond the boundaries of the original formulation.

The remarkable development of studies on (im)politeness and their theoretical principles over the past few decades have been accompanied by their application to an array of communicative settings and cultural environments that go far beyond the early interest in casual conversation, where the interpersonal function of language was thought to be most prominently present. The new horizons that opened up materialized first and foremost in the characterization of polite behaviour, as could be expected given the theoretical background, and subsequently researchers geared their studies towards the field of impoliteness. The range of issues analysed goes from transcultural variation in the perception of (im)politeness(Chang 2008; Culpeper et al. 2010) to the relation between politeness and gender (Holmes 1995; Mills 2003), as well as the re-examination from this perspective of a number of issues that had traditionally been approached by conversational analysis (Piirainen-Marsch 2005; Hutchby 2008).

Researchers have also channelled their efforts into improving, from the theoretical standpoint of (im)politeness, our understanding of the mechanisms governing the different genres of political communication, our object of analysis in this work, such as Harris (2001), Christie (2002), Fuentes Rodríguez (2006) or Luginbühl (2007). One of the genres that have commanded the greatest attention has undoubtedly been the electoral debate. This is indeed no surprise inasmuch as its agonalcharacter proves particularly interesting with regard to the manner in which social balance between participants is achieved. Among others, mention should be made of Dailey,

HinckandHinck (2008), Fernández García (2009) or Blas Arroyo (2011), who has collected his own research in the field for over ten years in a single work. Since it is the contentious nature itself of these communicative events that has appealed most to researchers, it is easy to see why impoliteness occupies a central place in these works.

In the light of the above-sketched theoretical and applied studies and on the basis of our previous research on the topic (amongst other publications, Fernández García 2000, 2001, 2002, 2008, 2009) and new data from the electoral campaign previous to the Spanish general elections of 2011, this work seeks to explore the nature of the interactional behaviour of speakers in electoral debates, both by characterizing it as polite versus impolite and by critically revising some of the opinions voiced about the subject in specialized literature. Our point of reference in order to determine what is to be taken as polite or not is the theoretical tradition regarding the management of face. From this perspective, we agree with Bousfield (2008: 72) that impoliteness takes place when the speaker attacks the addressee

1) in a non-mitigated manner, in contexts in which such mitigation is expected, or
2) in a deliberately aggressive manner, maximizing the threatening force of the statement by means of any discursive procedure.

Inversely, following this characterization, politeness is generally exhibited when the speaker softens the strength of his/her threats against the adversary by using any discursive procedure that may minimize the aggression.

Our analysis will revolve around two central questions that will guide the considerations presented in sections 2 and 3 of this work, respectively:

a) Is the electoral debate impolite or is it its intrinsically contentious character that compels us to interpret the impolite expressions exhibited in them as something radically different from those in a casual conversation?
b) Does politeness exist in the electoral debate or is it the case that exhibitions of politeness get denaturalized because of the intrinsically impolite nature of the genre and must, therefore, be considered as substantially different from those of a casual conversation?

2. Are electoral debates impolite?

As described above, most of the early works on the topic attempted to throw light on the way politeness mechanisms work, but researchers subsequently directed their interest to the features that characterize impolite behaviour. The analysis of impoliteness in different discursive genres has revealed that certain communicative contexts are particularly prone to its expression, as was shown by Culpeper (1996) for the discourse of military training or by Lakoff (1989) for legal discourse. In the case of political communication genres, the expectations that interviews arouse are very different from those of televised debates, the former taking place in a much more convivial atmosphere than the latter. Even though the more or less aggressive attitude of the interviewer in order to retrieve from a politician satisfactory answers to his/her questions may have changed over time and depends on the cultural context, it remains the case that no open conflict is expected in such communicative exchange, so much so that, if the reverse happens, it is likely to hit the headlines, as it did in January 1988 during D. Rather's famous interview with the then American vice-president G. Bush for CBS (Schegloff 1988/1989; Clayman and Wallen 1988/1989; Dillon et al. 1989). In fact, to give a second example, even if it may be natural to some extent to expect this, in the two debates prior to the Spanish general elections of 2008, M. Rajoy (the conservative candidate) accused J. L. Zapatero (the incumbent Prime Minister and progressive candidate) of lying over fifty times (Fernández García 2008),[1] it was indeed striking that during an electoral interview in 1996, J. M. Aznar (the conservative candidate for the PM's office) accused the interviewer of trying to manipulate the truth in the way that the questions were phrased.[2]

However, conflict is to be expected in debates. Two defining components of this genre can account for this:

[1] This may be considered natural, or perhaps not. It should be remembered that while this type of accusations are also frequent in Spanish parliamentary debates, they are absolutely forbidden in the British Parliament, where infractors may be severely sanctioned.

[2] The interview was hosted by the public television channel *La 1* on 29th February 1996 and moderated by journalist J. A. Martínez Soler (Fernández García, 2000: 51-52).

a) the very objective aimed at by the speaker, who, far from seeking consensus, wishes to defeat the adversary and to be seen above him/her by the audience, which is the final (and major) addressee of the whole communicative act;

b) the main means that the speaker has to secure this objective, namely, to criticize the adversary and his/her milieu in order to show how one cannot but disagree with his/her ideas, proposals, measures, etc.

It is obvious that these defining components point towards a direction radically different from those characterizing the standard principles of politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987; Leech 1983), which involve minimizing lack of modesty, maximizing agreement and minimizing dispraise. It is no wonder, therefore, that political debates should be expected to be contentious and that the presence of conflict should even be perceived as institutionalized (Harris 2001).[3] This customary verbal virulence has in fact paved the way for the following question: is linguistic impoliteness really impolite in contexts such as electoral debates where it has come to be taken for granted?

This question, which Blas Arroyo (2011:222) asks but does not give a clear answer to, is of great interest, inasmuch as it challenges the whole nature of such communicative exchanges and even the very notion of (im)politeness. We believe that the answer to this question, as we will argue in the following pages, must be affirmative, that is, impoliteness can and does exist in electoral debates, even if impolite acts may also be regarded as part of the game or of the conversational conventions of the genre, as happens in other genres. In other words, following to a certain extent Fraser and Nolan's (1981) hypothesis, even though the speaker participating in a debate may accept the existence of an implicit conversational agreement permitting the (habitual) use of discursive strategies of impoliteness, it does not follow that they should be used persistently or even necessarily.

In fact, it is not always the case that electoral debates should necessarily be marked by open impoliteness. This is what happened in the face-to-face debate between the socialist and conservative deputy party leaders before the 2008 Spanish general

[3] It should be remembered, however, that there exist historical and geographical differences in this respect too, and that top-level face-to-face debates in Spain have evidenced a greater degree of aggressiveness than is customary in other countries.

elections (P. Solbes and M. Pizarro), or when representatives from the five main political parties held a debate prior to the 2011 elections. Certain commentators suggested that the debate had been a "white-collar" debate or that it had had "an elegant tone of social gathering." The words in example (1), by means of which socialist candidate R. Jáuregui criticizes his conservative opponents, are meaningful in this sense:

(1)

Jáuregui: El PSOE siempre ha estado en los momentos críticos de la historia democrática de España ayudando a España, y perdóname, Alberto, el PP no ha estado a la altura en la crisis que acabamos de sufrir […]

Jáuregui: The PSOE has always been there to help Spain during the critical moments of Spanish democratic history, and forgive me, Alberto,the PP has not been up to the crisis we have just suffered […]

And the response to such words on the part of conservative candidate, A. Ruiz Gallardón, began in the following way:

(2)

Gallardón: Yo creo que el Partido Socialista, querido Ramón, ha venido a hablar del pasado, y yo, desde luego, lo que quiero es hablar del futuro.

Gallardón: I believe that the Socialist Party, dear Ramón, has come to speak about the past, and what I want, certainly, is to speak about the future.

It is apparent that the criticism of both candidates, that is to say, the attacks to the competitor's face, does not adopt the form of an impolite blow but, on the contrary, is mitigated by means of several strategies. In (1), the criticism is expressed towards the conservative party in third person, without personalizing it against its representative, however an explicit apology is personally directed at him previous to its formulation; that is to say, two mechanisms of negative politeness are used. Furthermore, a vocative referring to the first name of the opponent is included in the apology, and the speaker addresses the candidate with the verb form "tú" which is often used in casual conversation to demonstrate informality and trust instead of the most habitual (in this context) distancing formula ("usted"); we find, therefore, an accumulation of

mechanisms of positive politeness. In (2), the conservative party candidate responds using the same tone, with the criticism being softened as it is carried out in third person and with a surprising expression of appreciation (positive politeness) in the vocative.

It is certainly true that this type of discursive attitude is not the most frequent in political debates.However, even at meetings clearly characterized by impoliteness, it is not usual that this should be the unmarked option for the whole of the communicative exchange and, actually, the fluctuating circumstances during the course of the exchange tend to prompt shifts, often cyclical, between politeness and impoliteness (Fernández García 2000, 2009), as will be explained later. This way, the debate between socialist candidate P. Solves and the conservative candidate R. Rato in the electoral campaign of the Spanish general elections in 1996showed harsh verbal exchanges in some moments, whilst in other moments it was much calmer.For example, when, after a pause, the second section (on employment) was beginning, Rato posed his first intervention in the following way, responding to the previous words of Solbes:

(3)

Rato:[…] yo quisiera decir, primero, que, sobre el tema de desempleo, nosotros no somos eh no estamos satisfechos. Y lamento no estar de acuerdo con el señor Solbes; creo que las cifras no son para estar satisfechos.

Rato: […] I would like to say, firstly, that on the topic of unemployment we are not eh we are not satisfied. And I regret that I do not agree with Mr. Solbes; I believe that the figures are not something to be satisfied about.

The implementation of the face threatening act against Solbes by criticizing his management and the disagreement with the previously expressed views, draws attention to the accumulation of negative politeness markers on the part of Rato, such as the expressed regret for the action or softeners like “quisiera decir” (‘I would like to say’) and “creo que” (‘I believe that’).

It is clear, therefore, that the impolite attack is not always the norm, the unmarked choice in debates. So, it does not hold the affirmation that, precisely because of being systematic, impoliteness loses its nature in this discursive genre. Therefore, when impoliteness appears, whether face attacks to adversaries should be considered as expected or unmarked or not, it may be posited that their purpose is to harm their public

image and to bring them into disrepute before the audience by employing means that are the reverse of what is generally understood as a polite attitude. In Leech's (1983) terms, they attempt to maximize the cost and minimize the benefit for the adversary, the opposite in fact of what is upheld by the Politeness Principle. See, for example, what happened a few minutes later in the debate between Solbes and Rato. As the debate advances, the discussion becomes more vehement:

(4)

Rato: […] la precarización viene porque […] los métodos que utilizan ustedes para luchar contra el paro es abandonar a los parados a su suerte…

Solbes: No es cierto.

Rato:… porque la formación, fíjese cómo será de grave el asunto que nunca se ha reunido el pleno del Consejo Nacional de Formación Profesional, fíjese usted que no existe en España un catálogo de cualificaciones profesionales, fíjense ustedes que han creado un contrato de aprendizaje que no puede aplicarse a las personas que tienen titulación, y fíjese usted que […].

Rato: […] Uncertainty occurs because […] the method you use to fight against unemployment is to leave unemployed people to their fate...

Solbes: It is not true.

Rato:… because training, look at how serious the issue is that the National Council of Professional Training has never had a meeting, how Spain doesn´t have a catalogue of professional qualifications and the fact that you have created a learning contract that cannot be applied to people who have academic qualifications, and look at[…]

The change in attitude is clear and impoliteness mechanisms begin to arise.Rato, after having raised (immediately before the quoted fragment) a completely open disagreement, without any mitigation, makes here a series of equally direct criticisms. The attacks against the adversary are personalized in the second person, with a systematic and vehement reiteration of the deictic element. We also see that Solbes reacts denying openly, accusing his opponent of falsity. Those impolite attacks in (4) took place, we said, in a debate that showed a rough verbal exchange but that, like most

of them, had also more calm moments in which politeness was present, as we saw in (3).This fact, however, does not make these attacks any more or less impolite than those that could be developed in more aggressive discussions, as, for example, the two debates between Zapatero and Rajoy in the Spanish general elections in 2008.

Let us now deal with our question (recall: are electoral debates impolite?) from another point of view.Against the increasingly common view of considering politeness and impoliteness in terms of their respective objectives (following Brown and Levinson's theory), that is, in terms of mitigating or enhancing the face threats to the interlocutor (or maximizing or minimizing a friendly rapprochement –positive politeness– or a respectful detachment –negative politeness–), Watts (2003:19-22) claims that there exists an ideal of *politic behaviour*, which is viewed as the conduct appropriate for the social interaction in which the speaker is engaged, insofar as all types of social interaction are subject to certain communicative patterns that create expectations among speakers about the way in which the interaction is likely to develop. Taking this ideal behaviour as the reference point, any communicative acts standing out as a result of their going beyond or falling short of the expectations may be deemed as polite or impolite. Following this line of thought and linking it with the discussion described above, a great deal of impolite communicative behaviour in political debates should not be so considered, because it falls within the limits of what can be expected. However, two objections at least must be raised against this conception. First, as Watts himself acknowledges, expectations on how interaction might develop are not static, but always negotiable. Second, if we go into the details, the boundary between what is expected and what is conspicuous (be it polite or impolite behaviour) often proves rather nebulous or arbitrary[4] when compared to the much more analytically clear-cut criterion used to classify as polite or impolite all those linguistic elements related in one way or another to the balance of social relations between speakers (maintenance, breaking, reestablishment, etc.).

On the other hand, Watts (2003:23) claims that, since interaction is constantly being negotiated, what is perceived as (im)polite at one moment may no longer be so

[4] This seems to be a recurrent problem in Watts (2003), which Terkourafi (2005: 252), among others, has pointed out. Culpeper's (2011: 16) observation that the distinction between politic behaviour and (im)politebehaviour should be seen as a continuum seems very pertinent in this context.

the next moment. It follows that (im)politeness simply cannot be defined a priori, that is, no predictive models can really be established. Yet, as pointed out above, the fact that a specific linguistic act taken as marked and unexpected in a specific communicative event at a specific moment should be viewed as unmarked the next moment does not mean that such act should turn from polite to impolite or vice versa. Two examples from the second debate between Zapatero and Rajoy in 2008 can clarify this point.Even in the first of the five thematic sections, and in a context of dialectical calm, Zapatero threw the following words at Rajoy:

(5)

Zapatero: Usted ha estado engañando a los ciudadanos.

Zapatero: You have been deceiving the citizens.

It seems undeniable that the attack is frontal and impoliteness is apparent, because nothing is done to soften the threat against Rajoy, a threat that is clearly enhanced by the explicit deictic (grammatically unnecessary in Spanish) and the lexical election "engañar" ('to deceive'), as opposed to other possibilities like "faltar a la verdad"('to miss the truth').

About halfway through this debate, in the third phase, the situation changed dramatically: the discussion became very tense, interruptions and attacks were constant and aggressive. In such framework, Rajoy spoke to Zapatero using words such as the following:

(6)

Rajoy: Usted mintió a los españoles cuando dijo […]. Usted engañó, engañó hasta la saciedad.

Rajoy: You lied to the Spaniards when you said […]. You deceived, deceived over and over again.

In a turn of less than two minutes, with constant interruptions from his adversary, Rajoy made up to fifteen accusations of lying. Therefore, returning to the argument regarding the ideas of Watts (2003: 23), when a discussion advances and gets more passionate, the impolite elements become increasingly expected and unmarked, because they become the default option, as it were, and tend to be more and more directly expressed. However, would that imply that they are not conspicuous and, therefore, not impolite?

Would that imply that (6) is not as impolite as (5)? We believe that an affirmative answer could hardly be tenable,[5] as will be shown next.

We have shown elsewhere (Fernández García 2009) the soundness of Kothoff's (1993) analysis of the context of a discussion and of her proposal that the development of a discussion tends to be accompanied by a change in the format of the conversation, in the course of which disagreement replaces agreement as the preferred option, in conversational analysis terms, so much so that the speakers' main objective is to contradict their interlocutors quickly and coherently. In this respect, a very enlightening idea concerning the concept of preference is raised by Bousfield (2008:237). He points out that, even though this concept is usually comprehended in structural terms (in accordance with the standard postulates found in works such as Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974 or Levinson 1983), the non-specialized cognitive notion of 'preference' is to be found in the majority of works dealing with this issue. What is more, according to Bousfield (2008:237), that other aspect of preference, which we could term 'sociopragmatic', proves to be particularly apposite when we establish a relationship between the study of conversation and that of (im)politeness.

In this context, we can think of an adjacency pair of the type 'judgement'-'agreement/disagreement'. If a speaker utters an opinion as the first pair part ('judgement'), the second speaker may choose the preferred response ('agreement') or the non-preferred one ('disagreement'). These alternatives are studied by Levinson (1983:336) in structural terms, the former being the unmarked option, requiring less linguistic material, being more direct, etc., and the latter being the opposite. However, what should be stressed here is that the first option is also the one preferred from a sociopragmatic point of view, that is, it is in keeping with the motivations and wishes of the first speaker. But when the structure of the conversation undergoes a transformation such as that explained by Kothoff (1993), disagreement ceases to be the non-preferred option structurally and becomes the preferred one, it even remains the preferred

[5] On the other hand, if we accept Watts' (2003: 23) radical view denying the existence of a minimum basis conventionally shared by the speakers, we should also accept that the explanatory potential of any theory on (im)politeness would be reduced to the bare minimum. In fact, since a theory is precisely about developing predictive models, it may be claimed that this postmodern stance in politeness research will simply end up by undermining its own viability.

response from a sociopragmatic point of view. It is precisely because of this clash that the impolite nature of the act arises: the sociopragmatically non-preferred act that constitutes a face-threatening act to the interlocutor is executed structurally as the preferred option, that is, it is executed in a more direct and clear fashion, with no elements mitigating its aggressiveness. The examples are countless almost in any debate. Consider, for example, the contrast between fragments (3), above, and fragment (7), next, from the face-to-face top-level debate between A. Pérez Rubalcaba and M. Rajoy in the Spanish general elections of 2011.In (3), sociopragmatic preference towards agreement is accompanied by a structural preference in the same direction; in (7), disagreement (the non-preferred choice from sociopragmatic perspective) has clearly become the structurally preferred option:[6]

(7)

Rajoy: ¿Cómo no tiene nada que ver con el desempleo?

Rubalcaba: No, señor Rajoy. No está metido.

Rajoy: Sí, sí, sí.

Rubalcaba: No está metido el desempleo. Se lo han contado a usted mal.

Rajoy: Sí tiene que ver con el desempleo. Sí, sí.

Rubalcaba: No, señor Rajoy.

Rajoy: Se lo he oído en muchas ocasiones al ministro de Trabajo.

Rubalcaba: Que no, que no, que no.

Rajoy :How can it not concern unemployment?

Rubalcaba: No, Mr Rajoy. It's not in there.

Rajoy: Yes, yes, yes.

Rubalcaba: Unemployment isn't in there. You've been wrongly informed.

Rajoy: Yes, it concerns unemployment. Yes, yes.

Rubalcaba: No, Mr Rajoy.

Rajoy:I've heard it many times from the Minister of Labour.

Rubalcaba: No, no, no.

[6] Interruptions and overlaps are constant in this fragment. However, in order to make its comprehension easier, we present the words of one and another as consecutive. We will do the same in the following examples.

Such a transformation of the conversational format (Kothoff 1993), narrowly linked to a parallel move from politeness to impoliteness, is clearly detectable, in general, in electoral debates, though it has the peculiarity of taking place cyclically, between certain turning points (such as interspersed advertising moments or the close of thematic blocks), though with ever-increasing tempo (Fernández García, 2000, 2009). We may therefore conclude that politeness and impoliteness find their own slots over the course of these communicative events (allowing for any differences between them, of course): the former while structural and sociopragmatic preference match, the latter when there is a mismatch between both dimensions. Such a coexistence between politeness and impoliteness confirms the idea that impoliteness in electoral debates is displayed very similarly to the way it appears in other communicative contexts. However, could the same be claimed for the markers and strategies of politeness used in electoral debates?

3. Does politeness exist in electoral debates?

We have described electoral debates as a discursive genre significantly characterized by the attack to the adversary, which favours the prominent role of linguistic impoliteness. Does that mean then that linguistic politeness is entirely absent from the genre? We already advanced a negative answer to this question, despite the usually more reduced role of polite behaviour compared to other communicative genres. In this sense, Blas Arroyo (2001: 40, 2003:398) asserts that impoliteness is, generally speaking, the unmarked element of a debate, the prevailing norm. This view needs to be qualified, though, because it probably derives from the absence of a clear-cut distinction between attacking a dialectic adversary and expressing linguistic impoliteness against him/her, since the latter does not always go hand-in-hand with the former. In fact, as we said above, the attack to the adversary does prove to be a clearly defining feature of debates, which materializes in the shape of constant manoeuvres of disagreement and criticism. However, these attacks need not always emerge as impolite actions, since their threatening character may actually be mitigated by markers of politeness, as we saw, for example, in (1) or (3). Of course, they can also be carried out with no mitigators at all or, even further, they can be accompanied by an aggressiveness-enhancing element, so that the impolite function is clearly achieved in both cases, as it occurred in (4) or (6). In

this sense, Bousfield (2008:67-69) retains the distinction established by Goffman (1967) between *intentional* and *incidental* face-threatening acts (besides those of an *accidental* nature). While intentional threats deliberately attempt to maximise the offence, incidental threats are an inherent component of some speech-acts, but not a fundamental communicative goal, which is why they readily admit the presence of politeness markers. For example, shortly after the moment corresponding to example (3), in the Solbes-Rato debate in 1996, the former talked to the latter in the following way:

(8)

Solbes: […] usted dice, y utiliza, en mi opinión, de forma incorrecta el concepto de precariedad […].

Solbes: […] you say, and in my opinion, you use the concept of precariousness incorrectly […].

Solbes criticizes a particular statement of Rato, but far from emphasizing his face-threatening act against him, he talks about an "incorrect" use (instead of a "wrong", "malicious" or "misleading" one, for example) and inserts a negative politeness marker, the doxastic predicate "en mi opinión" ('in my opinion') (Haverkate, 1994: 124-124).If this marker has a place, it is because the face-threatening act has an incidental nature (that is to say, it is inherent to the critic act carried out) but it is not an intentionally impolite attack.

We have just argued that both politeness and impoliteness strategies are inevitably found in electoral debates, even though their relative weight understandably varies according to the purpose of the communicative event in question. The key issue —we said— is that electoral debates, just as any other discursive genres involving conflict and as happens in casual disputes, tend to exhibit a steady increase of belligerence that is eventually liable to transform the interactional context (see section 2). This transformation makes politeness cease being expected, in the first turns in the debate, and disappear little by little, progressively allowing the presence of impolite elements, until eventually the latter become the unmarked, conversationally preferred option. In this sense, Blas Arroyo (2001, 2003, 2011) himself acknowledges a cyclical escalation of belligerence in debates, so that in certain phases of the debate, ruthless attacks to the rival are far from being expected. We can recall, for example, an analysis

of frequency of interruptions that was carried out elsewhere (Fernández García, 2000: 169-170), concerning a debate among three candidates from the Spanish general elections of 1996 (socialist J. Borrell, conservative R. Rato and communist F. Frutos). There are, at the beginning of the debate, several turns without any interruption; interruptions then start to appear more or less sporadically; and, after a while, discussion radicalizes and interruptions take place constantly. This change in the conversational dynamics is a clear indication of the transformation of the debate from a politeness phase to an impoliteness one, from the incidental threat to the intentional one, from mitigation to boost.

Having therefore accepted that politeness markers do appear in debates, we still need to address the issue of their nature. Blas Arroyo (2011:251) not only claims that impoliteness is the unmarked element of a debate, but also argues that, when displayed, polite behaviour is of an egotistical nature, which is why he terms it "falsa cortesía" ('false politeness'). Admittedly, it is possible to defend the existence of self-interested politeness (Fernández García 2008, 2009), which is clearly a strategic move seeking to reinforce the self-image rather than that of the adversary (Bravo 2001). However, need that imply that such politeness expressions are *false* in nature? When, for example, a speaker softens his/her criticism of the adversary by means of some mitigating element, a politeness mechanism is in fact being used, notwithstanding what the motivations may have been. Moreover, as Harris (2001:452) and Watts (2003:51) point out, strategic components are at the very root of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, where politeness is not completely wanting in selfish motives.

Blas Arroyo (2011), on the contrary, argues that the politeness markers employed in an electoral debate do not perform, generally speaking, a mitigating function in attacks, but an intensifying one rather. Certainly, it is generally accepted in discursive pragmatics nowadays that the relations between form and function in discourse are far from automatic, so that the use of a politeness marker need not actually imply that a politeness act is being performed. Likewise, the existence of speech acts inherently polite or impolite is hard to accept, as Leech (1983) did[7]. See, for example,

[7] The corroboration of the lack of automatic relation between form and function lies at the very root of the comprehension of irony. In fact, there is a great deal of evidence against the existence of inherently polite or impolite speech acts, as is clearly confirmed by ritual insulting as a means of solidarity building

the words that Rubalcaba used in his face-to-face debate with Rajoy prior to the general elections of 2011:

(9)

Rubalcaba: Me gustaría saber si usted tiene alguna propuesta para financiar la sanidad pública más allá de esos de esos principios generales que ha anunciado usted en una clase de primero de economía que le agradecemos todos los españoles, estoy seguro.

Rubalcaba: I'd like to know if you have any proposal to finance public health beyond those those general principles you have announced in a first course class of economy that, I'm sure, all Spaniards appreciate.

Certainly, the positive politeness that entails the speech act of gratitude seems to be clearly neutralized here, since, with an ironic sense, the socialist candidate tries to sneer at what, in his view, has been a puerile and simplistic explanation of the conservative candidate.However, the fact that examples of this type should be found is clearly not enough to justify such a generalizing statement. Consider, in this sense, the positive politeness markers we saw in examples (1) and (2) or the negative politeness example in (8). We can think whatever we want about the intentions of the speaker when using them, but the truth is that no indication makes us interpret them as impoliteness enhancers. According to Terkourafi (2005:251), what makes a politeness marker operate as such is the duly contextualized use of elements that are conventionally associated with politeness, as long as their conventionally polite potential is not cancelled by other means, so that the mechanism may work as that of a generalized implicature (Grice 1975). It is clear, for instance, that responding with gratitude to a manifestly spiteful act loses its polite potential since it is irony that is intended. This is so because it does not fit into the conceptual frame of gratitude that the speaker has built up in his/her previous communicative experience. These kind of mechanisms can certainly operate in political

(Labov 1972; Holmes 1995). The indissoluble relation between form and function is also one of the most serious problems in classical speech-act theory, as pointed out by Escandell Vidal (1996: 74-75). However, this need not imply that there are no conventions of shared meaning among speakers. On the contrary, it seems necessary to acknowledge their existence and that of the influence of contextual factors. In fact, the most convincing approach, in our opinion, is to view those two elements scalarly, as standing at both ends of a continuum and to consider that (im)politeness in a certain communicative act is interpreted according as it falls towards one end of the scale or the other.

debates, as we have seen in (9) or happened in the second round of the 2007 French presidential elections, when N. Sarkozy steadily eroded S. Royale's face by means of an unrelenting excess of politeness that turned it into irony (Fracciolla 2011). However, except for instances in which the polite potential of certain formulas may be cancelled out (or even actually changed into a tool for impoliteness, in the sense Culpeper (1996) called *mock politeness*), a solid foundation to generalize in this direction does not exist.

Against this line of argument, Blas Arroyo (2003, 2011), on the basis of data about the face-to-face top-level debates between F. González and J. M. Aznar (the progressive and conservative candidates, respectively) in the campaign for the 1993 Spanish general elections, claims that the use of apologies during the central phases of a debate (when the dialectical struggle is most severe) is overwhelming in contrast to the peripheral phases (opening turns, conclusions, etc.).[8] In his opinion, such apologies are not authentic, that is, they do not function as proper politeness acts, since they clearly tend to appear precisely in the most belligerent phases. However, the fact remains that these data do not necessarily lead to those conclusions, for several reasons:

a) peripheral phases are much shorter than central ones, which in itself could well justify quantitative differences;
b) peripheral phases tend to focus on the audience (towards which speakers even direct their looks), rather than on the adversary, so that apologies in such context do not really make much sense;
c) mitigators appear while the speaker is attacking his/her adversary (which usually occurs during the central phases), even if they then tend to disappear gradually as the discussion becomes more passionate, in a process which is often cyclical in nature, as observed earlier.

If we now observe the face-to-face top-level debates of the Spanish general elections in 2008 and 2011, we can see that, certainly, apologies were frequent during the central phases, but often with a very specific use that had nothing to do with impoliteness boosting. This occurs when, in an interruption, the one interrupted attempts to retain the

[8] According the data provided, there are 89,7% instances in the central phases and 10,3% in peripheral ones.

speaking turn, such asin this verbal exchange between Zapatero and Rajoy in the second debate of 2008:

(10)

Rajoy: Usted no es consciente de este problema. Usted no es consciente…

Zapatero: El primer gobierno que dedica dinero a…

Rajoy:… no, no, perdón.

Rajoy: You're not aware of this problem. You're not aware...

Zapatero: The first government that dedicates money to...

Rajoy:… no, no, excuse me.

On the other hand, we also find examples of evidently genuine apologies, as those of Rubalcaba in his debate with Rajoy in 2011.When the conservative candidate said that he was preventing him from developing his argument because of constant interruptions, Rubalcaba stopped interrupting and said:

(11)

Rubalcaba: Perdone. Tiene usted razón, tiene usted razón.

Rubalcaba: Excuse me. You are right, you are right.

On other occasions, like in example (12) (words of Rajoy in the second debate of 2008), the apology does not sound, possibly, as genuine as it does in (11), and nor does it sound like an ironic booster of the attack, but rather a ritualized formula of politeness:

(12)

Rajoy: Dice que el Partido Socialista es el centro o el eje central. Mire, perdone usted, sinceramente, en el centro de este país en este momento está el Partido Popular.

Rajoy: You say that the Socialist Party is the centre or the central axis. Look, excuse me, sincerely, it is the Popular Party that is at the center of this country during this moment.

Blas Arroyo (2011) himself (who, as we saw, believed politeness markers emphasized rather than mitigated attacks) claims that politeness markers should be related not to politeness, but to *politically correct* behaviour, since they always seek the maximum benefit for the speaker, never for the rival. But it is not here that the crux of the matter lies. Indeed, it seems hard to believe that the speaker, who is trying with all his/her

effort and resources to defeat the adversary, would be willing to give any benefit, however slight, to the opponent gratis. If he/she does so, it must then be a strategic decision to enhance his/her public image before the audience. Ridao Rodrigo (2009:15) clearly states, with respect to the use by speakers during a debate of both politeness and impoliteness strategies, that the latter seek to harm the public image of the adversary, while the former aim at positively enhancing the speaker's own face. In fact, it is well known that, when audiences perceive that the behaviour of a candidate is too aggressive, they usually make him pay for it. That is what happened to L. Fabius during the debate with J. Chirac in the 1985 French Assembly elections (Boudeau et al. 1985) and, in Spain, to Rajoy during the 2008 debates with Zapatero (Fernández García 2008). It is not surprising, therefore, that the speaker would try to restrain his/her attacks against the adversary, hoping to find a medium point that permits a sufficient amount of incisiveness, but without seeming too overtly aggressive. The way to achieve this is through a strategic use of politeness. This seems to be the explanation for certain words used by Rato towards Solbes in the debate cited in (3), (4) and (8). The conservative candidate harshly attacks the socialist candidate for his economic management and also alludes to corruption scandals. When he is finishing his turn, he seems to think that he has perhaps been too harsh and adds:

(13)

Rato: Perdone que le diga; es que, claro, dice usted unas cosas…

Rato: Sorry to have to say this but, it´s just that, clearly, you do say some things…

That is to say, Rato uses negative politeness after having finished his attack and justifies himself by the fact that Solbes "has roused him" with his words.

After all, we must think that such a strategic view of politeness is not intrinsically different from what happens in countless casual demonstrations of polite behaviour where the speaker is strategically concerned about how the interlocutor perceives that his/her face is being treated, how it is perceived by a third party, or both things at the same time. From very early childhood, at least in certain cultures, children learn how positive politeness markers are used strategically: "Daddy dear, can you buy me...?". Does the child really seek to reinforce his/her father's positive face? Should this occur, it surely cannot be but a collateral effect of the child's real perlocutionary

objective: procuring a benefit for him/herself. Let us now think of a manager who, after stepping out of his/her office and standing opposite a junior's desk, in a large-sized room with many employees at their desks, gives him/her a bunch of documents and says: "I'd like you to look at these reports whenever you can." On the basis of what the participants of the communicative event know about the context of enunciation, it seems highly likely that the junior employee will leave aside anything he/she may be working on, having understood the manager's utterance as "Look at these reports at once." In fact, we know that a speaker very often breaks away from the principles expected in a transactional exchange and prefers to communicate in an interactionally more effective manner (Escandell Vidal 1996:141). Now, should this be taken as a sign of respect towards the interlocutor's face, with the purpose of reinforcing it in front of others and making a pretence of freedom about something by means of a request which is neither exhortatory ("I'd like") nor urgent ("whenever you can")? Does the speaker choose that phrasing in order to improve his/her own face in front of the employee, showing an appearance of amenability and affability? Does he/she do it to project that face in front of the other workers or anybody who might be present at the time? And last but not least, are all these questions relevant when considering that the boss has in fact carried out a threatening act towards the employee's face, even if softened by clear makers of negative politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987), trying not to impose him/herself but to give options (Lakoff 1973)? Very unlikely. In other words, whether we believe that the speaker's primary communicative goal was to save the interlocutor's face or his/her own face, or simply to behave in a politically correct manner, the fact remains that the communicative result is the same: the speech act marked by politeness has been performed according to what is socially appropriate in the context (Watts 2003). Spencer-Oatey (2008:32) explains that speakers may choose between four different orientations when managing their social rapport with their interlocutors: they may reinforce, maintain, disregard or challenge the rapport. With respect to reinforcement, she says: "Their motives for holding such an orientation could be various; for example, to start an incipient romantic relationship; to win a lucrative business contract; to show genuine friendliness to someone who is lonely; and so on. But whatever people's motives, their desire is for positive change: to improve the rapport between them." Obviously, there are many psychological reasons for showing politeness when

beginning a relationship, securing a contract or showing friendliness, but there their discursive effects must be fewer. We, therefore, hold that the strategic character of politeness (whether that used by a child addressing his/her father, a boss talking to an employee or a politician debating with an opponent) need not be assumed to be more or less false. The moment an expression of politeness works as such during a conversation (that is, provided it does not become a impoliteness enhancer if contextual conditions allow an ironic reading), any judgment about its sincerity simply seems to be irrelevant.

4. Results and discussion

At the end of the introductory section we raised two issues that were developed in sections two and three, respectively. The first issue dealt with the way in which electoral debates should be considered by and large as regards the regular presence of impoliteness elements, that is, we examined whether the presence of such elements is so natural that it would be purposeless to consider those communicative events as impolite. We argued that, even if the communicative goals pursued by the speakers do explain such frequent demonstrations of impoliteness, their presence varies from one event to another. We also argued that, even when impoliteness is manifested most intensely, it is unequally distributed among the different phases of a debate, in agreement with the evolution of the conversation format. There exists a difference between, on the one hand, those moments in which the structurally non-preferred character of the second part of an adjacency pair coincides with its non-preferred character from a sociopragmatic perspective and, on the other hand, those moments in which no such coincidence occurs, so that what is sociopragmatically non-preferred becomes structurally preferred. This difference is a clear demonstration of the evolving pattern of (im)politeness acts during a debate. For this reason, we came to the conclusion that electoral debates may be described as impolite only insofar as the mechanisms and resources of linguistic impoliteness tend to be present, and that, nevertheless, this discursive genre is not so intrinsically different from casual conversations (casual *discussions*) as to justify its categorization as a qualitatively different type of communicative exchange from the perspective of impoliteness. This conclusion is basically justified by the fact that impolite behaviour in debates, however frequent it

may be, is hardly ever constant and omnipresent. Moreover, it is precisely the existence of phases not overtly impolite and of elements of politeness that disproves the view that debates are not to be considered as impolite precisely because impoliteness is something natural in them.

The second issue dealt with the nature of such elements of politeness as they appear in electoral debates. We have just pointed out that it is precisely their presence that legitimizes demonstrations of impoliteness. Indeed, the elements of politeness do have their place in debates, insofar as constant attacks to the adversary do not necessarily imply constant impoliteness, particularly because constant attacksare shown in a more or less mitigated manner during certain phases of the debate. Besides, concerning the nature of such politeness markers and strategies, the view that they act as impoliteness enhancers is an unjustified generalization since this only happens in very specific contextual circumstances. Also, the view that they are instances of false politeness is not tenable either, since these politeness strategies are no more or no less false in debates than they are in most casual conversations. As Hernández Flores (2004:98) explains, the fact that a politeness act towards an addressee should also have a positive effect on the speaker's face is not unusual at all. This has frequently gone unnoticed, ever since Brown and Levinson's (1987) original proposition, due to confusion between the level of communication (in which the politeness act is intended for the addressee) and the level of the social effect achieved (in which the politeness act affects the face of both speaker and addressee). In summary, it seems that, in order to properly understand these issues, we should take into account not only the strategic nature that politeness acts may possess, but also their perlocutionary facet, which proves really important in the analysis of politeness, whatever the speaker's motivations may be to show politeness. We may, therefore, conclude that politeness in political debates does not reveal any qualitative differences that would justify its categorization as something fundamentally different from politeness in casual conversation.

When we try to explain the natural coexistence of politeness and impoliteness in electoral debates, we cannot but conclude that the reason must liein the communicative goal pursued by the speakers, which is simply to win the dialectic struggle, the goal to which all the strategies deployed by the speakers is subordinated (Luginbühl, 2007:1385). This struggle, like all struggles, has its own rules, which allow the speaker

to strike at the adversary's face, but only within certain limits lest his/her own face should also be harmed.[9] The paradox is aptly described by Fracciolla (2011:2483):"Pressures from the audience force both candidates to *show* that they are polite to each other, at the same time trying to attack one another to be *preferred* to the *other* candidate by the voters. Hence, politeness may become an element in the winning strategy […]." The balance —we should remember— seems to arise from an essential feature of such communicative events: the speaker plays a role in a public spectacle. When an angry argument develops in the midst of a casual conversation, the speakers, in the heat of the moment, frequently resort to more or less emotional, but clearly open, strategies of impoliteness. This *affective impoliteness* is in sharp contrast with a much more thought-out and strategic type of impoliteness, which may well be called *entertaining impoliteness* (Culpeper 2011), which works in a very similar way to what we see in talk shows, where verbal confrontation constitutes the basis of its attraction for the audience (Brenes Peña 2009).

Another significant clue to understand speakers' behaviour in debates is given by Spencer-Oatey's (2008:32) four orientations that speakers may use when managing their social rapport with their interlocutors: reinforcing, maintaining, disregarding or challenging the relationship (see the final part of section 3 above). We may suppose that the first option (reinforcement) will be ruled out in principle: a speaker does not participate in debate to make friends nor does he/she expect to bring the opponent to his/her own position with words of praise. At the other end, the fourth option, to torpedo the social balance of the rapport can, and in fact normally is, perceived negatively by the audience, so that it is strategically undesirable. Therefore, the speaker can only move between the second and third options: maintaining as much social balance as is feasible and seeking to achieve his/her discursive goals whatever the consequences on the social rapport. Moving from one extreme to the other will make the speaker shift between polite and impolite behaviour, just as the strategic disadvantage of the first and fourth option will prevent him/her from leaning exclusively on either type of behaviour.

[9] However, this does not occur in the same way in all discursive genres. Brenes Peña (2009: 145) points out, for example, that in certain common kinds of interview on Spanish television today, which could be seen as 'talk shows', the type of interviewer sought by the producer must *ideally* have an aggressive character keen on harming the interviewee's face.

References

Blas Arroyo, José Luis. 2001. “No diga chorradas...” La descortesía en el debate político cara a cara. Una aproximación pragma-variacionista. *Oralia* 4, 9-45.

Blas Arroyo, José Luis. 2003. “Perdóneme que se lo diga, pero vuelve usted a faltar a la verdad, señor González”: form and function of politic verbal behaviour in face-to-face Spanish political debates. *Discourse & Society* 14, 395-423.

Blas Arroyo, José Luis.2011. *Políticos en conflicto: una aproximación pragmático-discursiva al debate electoral cara a cara.*Bern: Peter Lang.

Bousfield, Derek. 2008. *Impoliteness in Interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Bravo, Diana. 2001. Sobre la cortesía lingüística, estratégica y conversacional en español. *Oralia* 4, 299-314.

Bravo, Diana. 2004. Tensión entre universalidad y relatividad en las teorías de la cortesía. In Diana Bravo & A. Briz (eds.), *Pragmática sociocultural: estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español*, 15-37. Barcelona, Ariel.

Brenes Peña, Ester. 2009. La agresividad como espectáculo en la televisión de hoy. In Catalina Fuentes Rodríguez & Esperanza Alcaide Lara (eds.), *Manifestaciones textuales de la descortesía y agresividad verbal en diversos ámbitos comunicativos*, 141-160. Seville, Universidad Internacional de Andalucía.

Brown, Penelope, & Stephen C. Levinson. 1978. Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena. In Esther N. Goody (ed.), *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*, 56-311. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Penelope, & Stephen C. Levinson. 1987. *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Use*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Chang, Wei-Lin. 2008. Australian and Chinese perceptions of (im)politeness in an intercultural apology. *Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication* 1.2, 59-74, http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/88118/7.-Weilin-Chang---Australian-and-Chinese-perceptions-of-politeness.pdf

Christie, Chris. 2002. Politeness and the linguistic construction of gender in Parliament: An analysis of transgressions and apology behavior. *Working papers on the web* 3.

Clayman, Steven E., & Jack Whalen. 1988/1989. When the medium becomes the message: The case of the Rather-Bush encounter. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 22. 241-272.

Culpeper, Jonathan, Leyla Marti, Meilian Mei, Minna Nevala & Gila Shauer. 2010. Cross-cultural variation in the perception of impoliteness: A study of impoliteness events reported by students in England, China, Finland, Germany and Turkey. *Intercultural Pragmatics* 7. 597-624.

Culpeper, Jonathan. 1996. Towards an anatomy of impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics* 25. 349-367.

Culpeper, Jonathan. 2005. Impoliteness and entertainment in the television quiz show: The Weakest Link. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1. 35-72.

Culpeper, Jonathan. 2011. *Impoliteness. Using Language to Cause Offence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dailey, William O., Edward A. Hink & Shelly S. Hinck. 2008. *Politeness in Presidential Debates: Shaping Political Face in Campaign Debates from 1960 to 2004*. Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield.

Dillon, George L., Anne Doyle, Carol Eastman, Harold Schiffman, Sandra Silberstein, Michael Toolan, Susan Kline & Gerry Philipsen. 1989. Analysing a Speech Event: the Bush-Rather Exchange. A (not very) Dramatic Dialog. *Cultural Anthropology* 4. 73-94.

Escandell Vidal, María Victoria. 1996. *Introducción a la pragmática*. Barcelona: Ariel.

Fernández García, Francisco. 2001. Ironía y (des)cortesía. *Oralia* 4, 101-127.

Fernández García, Francisco. 2002. Sobre la funcionalidad de la interrogación retórica en la oratoria político-electoral. In Mª D. Muñoz Núñez *et alii* (eds.), *IV Congreso de Lingüística General* (vol. III), 989-998. Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz.

Fernández García, Francisco. 2000. *Estrategas del diálogo. La interacción comunicativa en el discurso político-electoral*. Granada: Método Ediciones.

Fernández García, Francisco. 2008. Los debates Zapatero /vs/ Rajoy de 2008. Claves discursivas de una victoria. *LinRed* 6, 1-37, www.linred.es/articulos_pdf/LR_articulo_03122008.pdf

Fernández García, Francisco. 2009. (Des)cortesía y pugna dialéctica en el debate político-electoral. *Oralia* 12, 267-304.

Fracciolla, Béatrice. 2011. Politeness as a strategy of attack in a gendered political debate. The Royal-Sarkozy debate.*Journal of Pragmatics* 43, 2480-2488.

Fraser, Bruce, & William Nolen. 1981. The association of deference with linguistic form. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 27. 93-111.

Fraser, Bruce. 1990. Perspectives on Politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics* 14. 219-236.

Fuentes Rodríguez, Catalina. 2006. ¿Cortesía o descortesía? La imagen del entrevistado vs. la imagen del entrevistador. *Cultura, lenguaje y representación* 3. 73-88.

Goffman, Ervin. 1967. *Interaction ritual.* New York, Anchor Books.

Grice, Paul. 1975. Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & R. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, 41-58. New York, Academic Press.

Harris, Sandra. 2001. Being politically impolite: extending politeness theory to adversarial political discourse. *Discourse & Society* 12, 451-472.

Haverkate, Henk. 1994. *La cortesía verbal. Estudio pragmalingüístico*. Madrid: Gredos.

Hernández Flores, Nieves. 2004. La cortesía como la búsqueda del equilibrio de la imagen social. In Diana Bravo & Antonio Briz (eds.), *Pragmática sociocultural: estudios sobre el discurso de cortesía en español*, 95-108. Barcelona, Ariel.

Holmes, Janet. 1995. *Women, Men and Politeness*. London, Longman.

Hutchby, Ian. 2008. Participants' orientations to interruptions, rudeness and other impolite acts in talk-in-interaction. *Journal of Politeness Research* 4. 221-241.

Jary, Mark. 1998. Relevance theory and the communication of politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics* 30. 1-19.

Kadt, Elizabeth de.1998. The concept of face and its applicability to the Zulu language. *Journal of Pragmatics* 29. 173-191.

Kotthoff, Helga. 1993. Disagreement and concession in disputes: On the context sensitivity of preference structures. *Language in Society* 22. 193-216.

Labov, William. 1972. Rules for Ritual Insults. In David Sudnow (ed.), *Studies in Social Interaction*, 120-169. New York: Free Press.

Lakoff, Robin. 1973. The Logic of Politeness, or Minding your P's and Q's. *Proceedings of the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*. 345-356.

Lakoff, Robin. 1989. The limits of politeness: therapeutic and courtroom discourse. *Multilingua* 8. 101-129.

Leech, Geoffrey N. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.

Levinson, Stephen C. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Luginbühl, Martin. 2007. Conversational violence in political TV debates: Forms and functions.*Journal of Pragmatics* 39. 1371-1387.

Matsumoto, Yoshiko. 1988. Reexamination of the universality of face: politeness phenomena in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics* 12. 403-426.

Meier, A. J. 1995. Passages of politeness.*Journal of Pragmatics* 24. 381-392.

Mills, Sara. 2003. *Gender and Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Piirainen-Marsch, Arja. 2005. Managing adversarial questioning in broadcast interviews. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1.193-217.

Ridao Rodrigo, Susana. 2009. "Y es que usted cambia de criterio cada cuarto de hora": Las estrategias de (des)cortesía en los debates electorales españoles de 2008. *LinRed*7. 1-19, www.linred.es/articulos_pdf/LR_articulo_06102009.pdf.

Sacks, Harvey, Emanuel A. Schegloff& Gail Jefferson. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50. 697-735.

Schegloff, Emanuel A. 1988/1989. From interview to confrontation: Observations on the Bush-Rather encounter. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 22. 215-240.

Spencer-Oatey, Helen. 2002. Managing rapport in talk: Using rapport sensitive incidents to explore the motivational concerns underlying the management of relations. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34. 529-545.

Spencer-Oatey, Helen. 2008. Face, (Im)Politeness and Rapport. In Helen Spencer-Oatey (ed.), *Culturally Speaking. Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*, 11-47. London: Continuum.

Terkourafi, Marina. 2005. Beyond the micro-level in politeness research. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1. 237-262.

Watts, Richard. 1992. Linguistic politeness and politic verbal behavior: reconsidering claims for universality. In Richard Watts, Sachiko Ide and Konrad Ehlich (eds.), *Politeness in Language: Studies in his History, Theory and Practice*, 43-69. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Watts, Richard. 2003. *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Received: February 27, 2013
Accepted: May 26, 2014
Revised: May 30, 2014
Published: May 31, 2014