

# REQUEST BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATIVE STYLES IN PENINSULAR SPANISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH: A COMPARISON

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**Abstract.** This article presents an analysis of the request behavior of American English and Peninsular Spanish speakers. In line with previous research, the study shows that both populations behave similarly in that they privilege *conventional indirectness* and, especially, *ability queries*, over any other options. Our analysis of the distribution of all substrategies, however, points to overall different communicative styles on the part of the two groups. While conventional indirectness may not be perceived in the same way by Spaniards and Americans, we argue that the consistent use of more coercive formulas on the part of Spaniards and the avoidance of these formulas on the part of Americans should not be downplayed. The situational analysis shows that the two groups behave similarly when it comes to requesting action from an addressee of equal or higher status, but that requests to equal status members of the family are handled differently.

**Keywords:** *Pragmalinguistics, Sociopragmatics, Cross-cultural analysis, Request behavior, Communicative styles, Spanish, English*

## 1. Introduction

Language is a set of cultural practices that play an essential role in mediating the ideational and material aspects of human existence and, hence, in bringing about our particular *ways of being in the world* (Duranti 1997: 3). The study we conducted tried to shed some light on the ways of being in the world that are being enacted when speakers of Peninsular Spanish and American English are performing the ubiquitous act of requesting. We felt that, while there is an abundance of research on request behavior, these varieties of Spanish and English have been seldom compared.

Requests, a subclass of *directive* speech acts, are defined, within Speech Act Theory, as attempts by the speaker to make the addressee perform a certain action. As are other speech acts, requests, are classified as either *direct* or *conventionally indirect* (Searle 1979) depending on whether the intention (or illocutionary *force*) of the utterance is readily available to the hearer or whether it needs to be inferred. The main explanation for the deployment of indirect acts, argues Searle, is politeness. Politeness is a requisite for maintaining social harmony and serves to protect everyone's self-esteem or *face* (Goffman 1967). Politeness is constructed and enacted linguistically and, according to the now classical theory put forward by Brown and Levinson (1987), involves honoring two types of needs: the need to be approved and appreciated (or positive face), and the need to be unimpeded in one's actions (or negative face). From the point of view of politeness, requests are attempts to interfere in the hearer's actions (i.e., affect his negative face) and, therefore, constitute a *face threatening act* or *FTA* for short. To redress the potential affront of the FTA, speakers deploy negative politeness strategies such as indirectness.

Both Speech Act and Politeness Theories have been widely criticized on a number of counts, with the main objections focusing on their claims to universality, and their ethnocentrism. Yet, in spite of their very many shortcomings, the theories have proven to be very fruitful for an understanding of the linguistics behavior of speech communities. For this reason, in this study, we have chosen to adopt many of the categorizations put forward by the

first speech act theorists, and to work with Brown and Levinson's assumptions about face, with an understanding that alternative models by Hispanists are gaining currency. For example, we maintain the distinction between direct and (conventionally) indirect acts, while understanding that the perception of what is direct or indirect in Spanish and English may be different and that it might be more appropriate to talk about levels of certainty (Márquez Reiter 2002). Also, even though recent work in Spanish pragmatics (Briz 1998; Carrasco Santana 1998, 1999; among others) strongly questions Brown and Levinson's views, and suggests that Spanish –and Peninsular Spanish in particular– is oriented towards positive, not negative, politeness, we accept Brown and Levinson's premise that requests are acts (FTAs) that threaten the negative face of speakers.

Our study looks, first, at the linguistic features of requests used by Spaniards and Americans and identifies the preferences both groups show for certain substrategies and 'directness' levels. It then looks at the deployment of these strategies (and their associated levels of directness) in relation to social variables. The goal is to determine whether the groups display clear patterns of (linguistic) behavior that amount to communicative styles. And to think of how these 'ways of speaking' are connected with 'ways of being' in the world.

## 2. Instrument, participants and coding scheme

To elicit the desired requests we used a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). DCTs consist of descriptions of different situations, that are either followed by an incomplete dialogue—a dialogue with a turn left blank for the participant to fill, followed by a hearer's response (or *rejoinder*)—or left open (i.e., without the hearer's response, simply asking the participant to write down what they would say in that situation). We chose to use an open questionnaire because, as some have pointed out, "the inclusion of any kind of rejoinder is unnatural in the sense that, except for entirely scripted discourses, speakers cannot anticipate with certainty what kind of response will ensue" (Johnson *et al.* 1998: 161)<sup>1</sup>. The use of writing elicitation techniques such as the completion tests arose in the context of interlanguage studies, and was the principal instrument used in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), a major study which analyzed apology and request behavior across seven languages, and on which ours and many others studies are based. The extensive findings and valuable insights gained through the project validated the instrument and made its use popular in cross-cultural pragmatics.

Our DCT is made up of 14 situations that were designed to ensure cross-cultural correspondence, and tested in a pilot study. Twelve of the fourteen situations were designed to elicit requests, but one failed to do so and had to be eliminated from the final tally<sup>2</sup>. The remaining two scenarios called for apologies; the apologies were inserted to disguise the true purpose of the questionnaire. Each of the scenarios that elicited a request was conceived along three different social variables, with the final questionnaire depicting all possible combinations of the variables. The variables chosen were –following Brown and Levinson's (1987) model– the relative social power of the participants, the social distance between them and the degree of imposition of the request.

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<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the use of rejoinders is justified as a means to constrain response options to the required illocutionary act because "the contextual constraints provided by the situation description alone may not suffice" (*ibid.*). One of our scenarios failed to elicit the desired act, a situation that might have been avoided had we used rejoinders.

<sup>2</sup> The scenario that had to be eliminated had elicited requests, as expected, in the pilot. But more than 90% of the responses in the collected data were statements. See note 1 about possible explanation.

Table 1 below contains a brief account of the situations that elicited requests, and their description in terms of the three chosen variables. Appendix 1 shows the English version of the eleven situations that elicited requests as they appear in the test.

Situation	Social power	Social distance	Degree of imposition
S1: you ask sister to lend car for the weekend	S = H	-SD	High
S2: employee asks supervisor to change shift	S < H	-SD	High
S3: you ask to borrow the paper from colleague at cafeteria	S = H	+SD	Low
S4: you ask friend at work to lend umbrella	S = H	-SD	Low
S5: supervisor nurse calls nurse home to come fill other's shift	S > H	-SD	High
S6: you ask son's new friends to put music down	S > H	+SD	High
S7: you ask cleaning service to lock the door behind	S > H	+SD	Low
S8: you ask landlord for time to pay deposit and rent	S < H	+SD	High
S9: you ask police officer to give you directions	S < H	+SD	Low
S10: you ask people in line ahead of you to let you go first	S = H	+SD	High
S11: ask secretary to call client	S > H	-SD	Low

Table 1: Description of the situations according to contextual and social variables

The DCT was constructed in Spanish and English and distributed to Americans from various parts of the country, but who, at the time, were living in the Northeast, and to Spaniards who were mostly from Galicia, a region in the northwest of Spain. The only discriminatory criteria used for the selection of the population was age. Perceptions of power and rights and obligations may not be the same across different age groups. We, thus, chose to focus only on young adults –the ages of our participants ranged from eighteen to thirty-two– and our findings, though perhaps extensive to other age groups, apply only to this sector of the younger population<sup>3</sup>.

In terms of education and occupation, the informants were of various backgrounds: there were among them college students and people employed in different areas (teachers, mechanics, lab assistants, etc), some having completed college, others without higher education studies.

The total number of questionnaires obtained in English was one hundred nineteen and, in Spanish, one hundred and twenty-one.

The scheme that we developed to code the data builds on the scheme used in Blum-Kulka *et al.*'s (1989) aforementioned seminal study, the CCSARP, and on Márquez Reiter's study on British and Uruguayan requests, which, in turn, drew on the CCSARP. But we introduced some changes. Namely, our scheme presents two substrategies to code the head act that were not distinguished in the two referenced studies. The first of these new substrategies involves the use of the verb 'may' or the verb 'can' in combination with a first person pronoun (i.e., 'May I/can I ...?', or 'Puedo...?'). In most models, this formula is coded as an *ability question*<sup>4</sup>. We think it is a *permission question*<sup>5</sup>, and that it is more indirect than an ability question. The higher level of indirectness comes from the fact that in the formula the hearer is not mentioned. When the emphasis is on the role of the speaker ('May/can I' and 'Puedo') and not on the hearer, the imposition is lessened. This difference in perspective alone justifies the creation of a separate substrategy. We thought this more accurate coding could,

<sup>3</sup> The design of this study sets the conditions to research, by replicating it with an older population, whether, indeed, different age groups perceive power and social distance differently.

<sup>4</sup> Neither the CCSARP nor Márquez-Reiter say explicitly how strategies using 'may' were coded in their studies. We assume, though, they were coded as ability queries, as they don't easily fit in any of the other categories.

<sup>5</sup> Ervin-Tripp (1976) identifies this substrategy and codes it separately from 'ability questions' in her work. We are thus, truly, only re-introducing a category that is inexplicably lost in latter studies.

potentially, reveal, first, a picture of the preferences speakers have different from the one yielded by other studies. ‘So-called’ ability queries (i.e., those containing a form of ‘poder/can’ + either first/second pronoun) are shown in other studies to be the most preferred substrategy, both in Spanish and English.<sup>6</sup> The coding we proposed would allow to see whether ‘true’ ability queries (i.e., those containing a form of ‘poder/can’ + second person pronoun) are indeed the most used substrategy in both languages, and the extent to which ‘permission questions’ –a much more indirect substrategy, as explained earlier– are used. Any differences in preferences and relative distribution of the two substrategies in each of the two languages would then reveal new or additional differences in the cross-cultural requesting behavior of Spaniards and Americans, which might otherwise go unnoticed.

We introduced one other strategy to the ‘standard’ scales to account for formulas that included expressions such as *Is it OK...?/¿Está bien...?*, *Is there any way...?/¿Hay manera de...?*, that appeared with certain frequency. We called this realization *prediction question with a reasonability check*. Because the expressions these strategies contain acknowledge the view of requests as something undesirable, or something that involves some sort of difficulty, and –as do some modifiers– try to clear any potential objections the addressee might raise, we consider the strategy to be more indirect than ability questions or willingness questions. The utterance of realizations such as these ones, we think, is representative of a *way of speaking* that tries to downplay imposition.

The scheme we used, then, accounts for twelve different types of strategies. The list of strategies and the classification of internal modifiers and supportive moves, together with examples from our data, can be found in Appendix 2. Below we look at the findings yielded by our analysis.

### 3. Findings

The analysis is structured around the parts of the request most pragmatically and culturally significant; namely the *head act*, *internal modifiers* and *supportive moves*. First we discuss the results concerning the core of the request, or *head act*, (i.e., the minimal unit that can realize the speech act). Then we look at the use of downtoners, *internal modifiers* that are part of the head act but non-essential. Finally we examine the data related to the *supportive moves*, the modifiers that lie outside the head act.

#### 3.1 The head act: (Dis)preferred levels of directness and strategies and situational variation

When it comes to the analysis of the head act, studies have focused on identifying the preferences speakers show for one or other level of directness (or *main strategy* types) and the most used individual strategy (or *substrategy*), or couple of strategies. Our study, likewise, looks into the distribution of main strategy types and determines not just what the most used individual strategies are, but also provides a detailed contrastive analysis of the use of all individual strategies in both languages, with an eye to uncovering trends that may speak of different communicative styles. We present these findings below in section 3.1.1. Speech act studies, additionally, have looked at situational variation, which we also do in section 3.1.2.

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<sup>6</sup> Ability *queries* is another label commonly used for ability questions.

### 3.1.1 The distribution of main strategy types and individual strategies

Table 2 shows the distribution of the main levels of directness, and the raw scores of each strategy type. Figure 1, below, also shows the distribution of main strategy types.

<b>DIRECT</b>	English [1309] <sup>7</sup>	Spanish [1331]	<b>CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT</b>	English [1309]	Spanish [1331]	<b>INDIRECT</b>	English [1309]	Spanish [1331]
<i>Obligation stat.</i>	0	32	<i>Q prediction</i>	44	199	<i>Hints</i>	14	33
<i>Mood derivable</i>	131	276	<i>Q ability</i>	414	347			
<i>Performative</i>	0	32	<i>Q. willingness</i>	145	212			
<i>Need statement</i>	44	39	<i>Q. prediction + RC</i>	153	58			
<i>Want statement</i>	0	19	<i>Q. permission('May'/ 'Can I')</i>	349	71			
			<i>Suggestory formula</i>	14	13			
<b>Total</b>	[175] <b>13.3%</b>	[398] <b>29.9%</b>	<b>Total</b>	[1119] <b>85.5%</b>	[900] <b>67.6%</b>	<b>Total</b>	[14] <b>1.1%</b>	[33] <b>2.4%</b>

Table 2: Raw scores of all strategies and distribution of main strategies type.

The data yielded by our study confirms earlier results (Blum-Kulka and House 1989; Vazquez-Orta 1995; Márquez-Reiter, 2000; among others): to perform requests, speakers of both languages favor conventionally indirect realizations the most.<sup>8</sup> But, as was the case in previous studies, our results also reveal cross-cultural differences. The degree to which speakers of American English seek to mitigate their requests is not matched by speakers of Peninsular Spanish. Americans resorted to conventional strategies on 85.5% of their requests, almost a 20% more often than Spaniards. Or, what is the same, Spaniards find being ‘coercive’ acceptable more often than Americans do –in fact, twice as often, or on 30% of their requests. Speakers of both languages, on the other hand, seldom resort to the use of hints to perform the request.

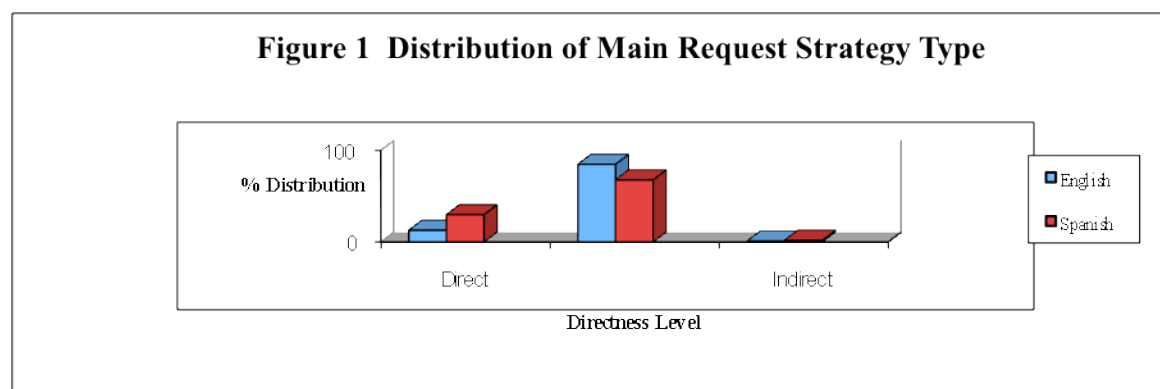


Figure 1: Distribution of Main Request Strategy type.

An analysis of the use of individual strategies showed further coincidences as well as divergent tendencies in the behavior of both groups. The data showed that the formulas the two groups prefer most and least are the same. That is, they both find ability queries the most appropriate realization for most situations, with Americans deploying them on more than 30% of all requests and Spaniards on more than 26%. And they both favor suggestory

<sup>7</sup> The total number of requests elicited by the DCT and analyzed is 1,309 for English, and 1,331 for Spanish.

<sup>8</sup> We know only of two studies that suggest otherwise. Arellano (2000) found that the preferred strategy among Mexican-Americans speaking Spanish was the imperative with *por favor*; Lorenzo and Bou (2003) found that Spanish undergraduates also preferred the use of direct forms.

formulas, hints and direct strategies –with the exception of mood derivable formulas– the least. In fact, these formulas are each used in a 1% of the situations, or less. In other words, we found most requests phrased in the manner of *Can you ... ?/ Puede(s) ... ?* and rarely as *How about ... ?/ Y si ...?*, or *I need you to .../ Necesito que ...*, etc. The preference levels shown for other somewhat frequent strategies, however, vary across both groups. For example, the second most used strategy among Americans is the permission formula (more indirect than the most frequently used formula), present in 26% of the requests.<sup>9</sup> For Spaniards, the tendency, when not inquiring about ability, is to go more direct; they choose to perform the request through a sentence in the imperative in 21% of all cases. Among the conventionally indirect formulas, Spaniards also choose those that are more direct more often: Prediction and willingness formulas are favored a lot more often than (the more indirect) permission and prediction with a reasonability check formulas.<sup>10</sup> What holds for Americans is the exact opposite: the most direct of the indirect conventional realizations, prediction query, is the least preferred of these groups of formulas –except for suggestory formulas; they use it in only a 3% of all requests. Table 3 captures these results.

English			Rank	Spanish		
Strategy Name	D/I Level	% Distribution		Strategy name	D/I Level	% Distribution
Ability Q	7	31%	<b>1</b>	Ability Q	7	26%
Permission Q	10	26%	<b>2</b>	Mood Derivable	2	21%
Q prediction + RC	9	11%	<b>3</b>	Willingness	8	16%
Willingness	8	11%	<b>4</b>	Prediction Q	6	15%
Mood Derivable	2	10%	<b>5</b>	Permission	10	6%
Prediction Q	6	3%	<b>6</b>	Q prediction + RC	9	4%

Table 3: Ranking of most used realizations in Spanish and English<sup>11</sup>

The analysis of the percentage distribution of individual strategies in both languages, then, shows areas where the two groups converge, but also points to differences in their linguistic behavior. The fact that the most preferred strategies in English correspond to levels 7 and 10 in the (in)directness scale, while in Spanish the tendency is to use levels 7 and 2 the most, testifies to the higher tolerance Spaniards have for directness—a fact that was already made clear earlier in the analysis of main directness level. The data contributes to our understanding of the unique ‘cultural ways of speaking’ that define and differentiate both speech communities.

<sup>9</sup> As explained in section 2, this was a substrategy we created to account for formulas that in other studies were subsumed under the *ability question* category, but whose different *perspective* calls for a separate categorization of the request. See also note 4.

<sup>10</sup> It should also be noted that the linguistic make-up of the *prediction query* is quite different in the two languages. The English realization contains the future tense, or the conditional, while Spanish uses the present, which makes the strategy much more direct than its English counterpart. The Spanish form reflects a felicity condition that Haverkate calls *non-obviousness of compliance*, which, truly, makes this formula a question of both prediction and willingness.

<sup>11</sup> The table includes the six most used strategies in both languages (ranked by frequency). The remaining strategies in the scheme are, as said above, used rather scarcely.

### 3.1.2 Situational distribution of main strategy types

In the previous section we recorded similarities and differences in the linguistic behavior of Spaniards and Americans, without considering the situations that trigger the request. In this section we present the requestive behavior of the groups in relation to the social situations that we proposed in our questionnaire. That is, we establish which situational variables trigger which request behavior, and whether speakers of both languages respond in the same manner to the same situations.

We found that most situations elicited either a direct or conventionally indirect requestive strategy. Table 4 and figures 2 and 3 below show the distribution of those strategies across the situations. Some situations, however, were met with a different type of response. Hints were a possible response, although, as shown in 3.1.1, the incidence of this type of indirect strategy was very low. Other behaviors were also possible: speakers could respond with a speech act other than a request, or they could choose to opt out of the FTA, that is, produce no speech act. Opting out occurs when the threat to the hearer's face is considered too high, and the utterance of the request is seen as too damaging to the social relationship, were it to take place. The incidence of this type of behavior is telling of how the social situation (with all its variables) is perceived by the speakers.

Here we look first at those instances. We found that one situation in particular was met with silence, especially in English. A large percentage of the American respondents (66%) and a good portion of the Spanish participants (33%) chose to opt out of the FTA, producing neither a request nor any other speech act, in situation ten (speaker asks people in line ahead of him/her at a bank to let him/her go first). Here the speaker would have addressed a status equal (S=H) who they are not acquainted with (+SD) and be involved in a situation where the imposition is high. The agreement found in cross-cultural behavior—in spite of the higher percentage of refusals to perform the request or any other act among Americans and the *divergent* behavior of Spaniards, who on 14% of the cases not only choose to go on record, but they do it baldly, with no redressive action—might be based on the coincidence over the conventions of *queuing* or *getting in line* and of appropriate behavior to obtain services and goods in both societies.<sup>12</sup> The answer, however, might also be related with *time* and the high value this *good* has assigned in the societies under scrutiny. The unacceptability of performing a request in this situation might lie in the *commodity* status that time has achieved in these highly developed societies. It is also interesting to see how Spanish speakers, who in spite of a certain reticence, go on record on 66% of their responses, do so primarily by questioning the willingness of the hearer to perform the action. That is, 48% of the requests produced in this situation take the form of *¿Les importaría...? (Would you mind...?)*. More so than any of the other strategies, this realization presents the desired action as a choice for the addressee, and emphasizes the lack of authority of the speaker to demand it.

A large percentage (42%) of the American respondents also avoided producing a request (or any other different speech act) in situation eight (asking the landlord for an extension to pay the deposit). It seems clear that those speakers see the social and contextual variables at play here as too high-stake to produce the request. But the unequal relationship, lack of familiarity between the participants, and high degree of imposition, are not evaluated in the same manner by Spaniards, who almost unanimously choose to go on record in this situation (with a conventionally indirect request). Such divergent behavior shows that situations that share the same social factors are not regarded the same way in both societies; it also shows that, at least in certain situations, in Spanish, performing the request is not

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<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, though, those acts (i.e., bald on record) were very heavily modified, internally and through several grounders.

perceived as damaging to the hearer's face to the same degree that it is in English, and therein an acceptable behavior. This suggests the wants of both groups of people are different.

In the remaining situations proposed in our questionnaire, the two groups rarely opted out. That is, they almost always produced some sort of utterance, though, in a few cases, this utterance was not a request. The responses that we found were also reminders that choices may reflect personal (and not simply) cultural patterns: a particular English respondent chose not to perform the requests when the degree of imposition was high. We will now discuss the responses to these situations in detail.

We have said repeatedly that, overall, impositive or direct strategies are less preferred strategies, especially for Americans. A look at figure 2 clearly shows that, indeed, direct strategies –both in Spanish and in English– are clearly dispreferred under certain circumstances; or said differently, certain situations call for indirect strategies.

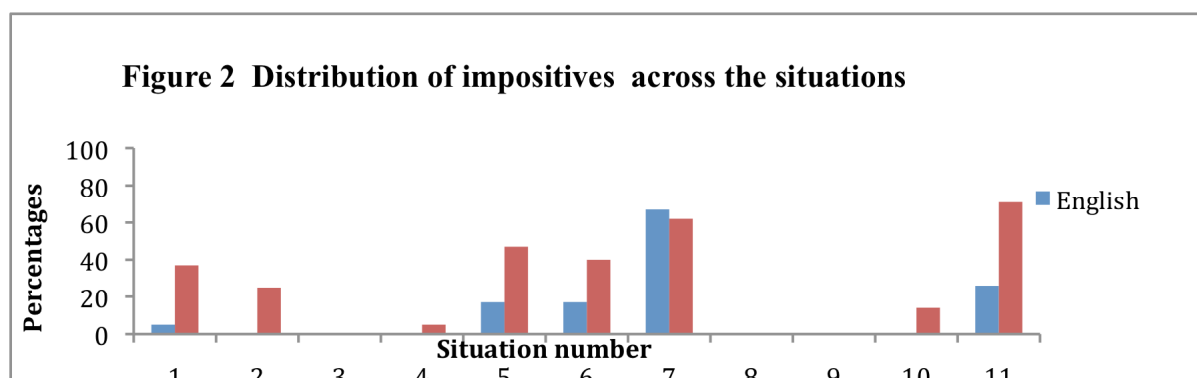


Figure 2: Distribution of impositives across the situations.

The degree of cross-cultural coincidence is, indeed, remarkable. In addition to situations eight and ten, (which, as discussed earlier, elicited no response or only some indirect strategies in Spanish), several other situations admitted no direct strategies as a response. These are situations two, three, four and nine in English, and three and nine in Spanish. Additionally, situation one in English and situation four in Spanish show a very low incidence of direct strategies. These situations are similar in that the speaker is addressing either someone of equal (S=H) or higher status (S<H). An analysis of the distribution of strategy type according to social power, shown in table 4 below, makes this coincidence readily observable.

Power is only one of the social variables that affects and defines a situation. But what the data seems to indicate is that this particular variable is a good predictor of the level of directness the speaker will choose to perform the request. Thus, when addressing family (but see below), friends, co-workers, strangers, bosses and law-enforcement personnel, Americans and Spaniards can be generally expected to opt for a conventionally indirect strategy when making a request.

Indeed, in English, in six out of the seven situations where the relationship is between equals (S=H) or the addressee has more power (S<H), and in Spanish in four out the seven, speakers avoid the use of direct strategies. In these situations speakers overwhelmingly choose to protect the addressee's face –although Spaniards less so than Americans–, and give options, even when the relationship is between equals and the imposition low, as is the case in situations three and four (borrowing the paper, and an umbrella).<sup>13</sup> This finding

<sup>13</sup> In situation four (ask friend at work to lend umbrella), a small percentage of Spanish speakers used a direct strategy. Interestingly, the situation also elicited a good number of answers other than a request; 24% of all



contradicts the assertion found in recent studies on (Peninsular) Spanish politeness that (in Spanish) not much energy is put into preserving the autonomy and territorial values of others (Bravo 2004: 29).

Power	Situation	English DIRECT/ CI <sup>14</sup>	Spanish DIRECT/ CI
<b>S &lt; H</b> <sup>15</sup>	# 2	0% / 80%	25% / 75%
	# 8	0% / 58%	0% / 81%
	#9	0% / 95%	0% / 76%
<b>S = H</b>	#1	5% / 89%	37% / 57%
	#3	0% / 84%	0% / 90%
	#4	0% / 95%	5% / 71%
	#10	0% / 31%	14% / 52%
<b>S &gt; H</b>	#5	17% / 83%	47% / 47%
	#6	17% / 66%	40% / 45%
	#7	67% / 33%	62% / 33%
	#11	26% / 72%	71% / 28%

Table 4: Distribution of directness levels according to social power

In one situation (among the S=H or S<H scenarios), though, both Spanish and English speakers dared to perform the request without redressive action: this is situation number one (ask sister to lend her car). There is, however, no true convergence here: the two groups are, in reality, behaving differently. Americans use direct strategies in only a 5% of the cases, while Spaniards deploy them in close to 40% of the utterances. Such divergent behavior suggests relationships between siblings (or perhaps within the nuclear family) are conceived of differently in both societies; this, in turn, results from the fact that the rights and obligations among members of those groups do not coincide cross-culturally. Thus, while for Spaniards it is quite acceptable to demand something of one's siblings, Americans prefer to ask for it.

The higher tolerance for direct behavior shown by Spaniards over Americans in situation number one can be seen as proof of the general tendency of the first for more directness (documented in section 3.1.1). If we look closer, however, something else emerges. It appears that the incidence of direct strategies is very limited in all situations where the addressee has equal or more power than the speaker (S=H and S<H), except in (situation) one. That is, a good part of impositive behavior in Spanish takes place within the 'family boundaries'. There is, of course, as we shall see shortly, a high occurrence of impositive behavior in situations where the speaker has power over the addressee (S>H). That withstanding, we can say that Spaniards' directness is partly played out among family members of the same status (i.e., siblings and couples), and is therefore not necessarily as widespread as thought, but defined situationally. In other words, according to our data, Spaniards can be as indirect as Americans in certain situations, even towards people of equal status, but are much more direct in others, specially in those where requests among family members occur. These findings are not completely in line with those of other researchers who suggest that, in Spanish, social distance is a good predictor of strategy type, and that in

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responses were invitations to join the speaker for coffee, with the hope, we suspect, that the addressee would bring the umbrella along!

<sup>14</sup> CI stands for 'conventionally indirect' strategies.

<sup>15</sup> It should be recalled that situation 'zero' (where S < H), was not computed into the data, due to the fact that it seldom produced the desired act. This situation belongs in this part of the chart and would have been included here had it 'worked'.

situations where there is no or little social distance between the interlocutors there is a preference for direct strategies (Le Pair 1996; Marquez Reiter 2000). Further research to support either set of findings is necessary.

We have thus far concentrated on situations that called mostly for indirect realizations, and which, we concluded, involved addressees of equal or higher status. In the remaining situations, where the speaker has power over the addressee (S>H), the choices made are of a different ‘sign’. (Again, table 4, and figures 2 and 3 reveal these results). Indeed, situations five, six, seven and eleven are situations that are resolved, cross-culturally, with indirect as well as direct strategies; in Spanish, especially, the presence of direct realizations is significant. For both groups, then, more social power or authority over the addressee translates into giving less options and being more imposing. The degree to which direct behavior is deployed, however, varies with each situation, and, as indicated above, cross-culturally.

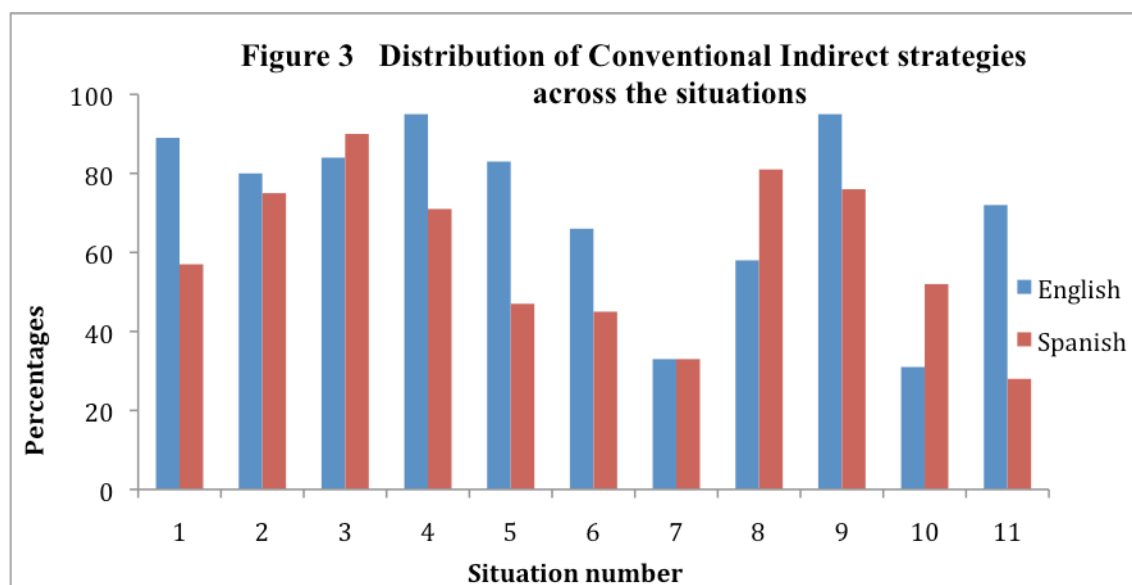


Figure 3: Distribution of conventional indirect strategies across the situations.

Situation number seven (asking the cleaning service to lock the door behind) was the situation that produced the most cross-cultural agreement, and also the one that elicited the highest percentage of direct strategies in English and the second highest in Spanish<sup>16</sup>. The situation is one where the speaker is paying for a service and can, therefore, expect compliance from the addressee; the imposition is low and the social distance high. It seems such combination of characteristics is what grants the use of impositive strategies in both languages.

Situation eleven (boss asks secretary to call a client), and situation five (supervisor nurse request nurse to fill other nurse’s shift) are similar to situation seven in that they involve the relationship between a boss/employer and her subordinate/employee; the difference between the two and situation seven is one of degree of familiarity. Interestingly, the two scenarios, unlike seven, are assessed very differently by both groups. Situation eleven (boss to secretary, thus S>H) elicited the highest degree of impositives in Spanish, while American respondents overwhelmingly preferred the use of conventionally indirect realizations. In fact the proportion of conventional indirect and direct strategies used in Spanish (almost 1:3) is the inverse of that found in English (almost 3:1).

<sup>16</sup> That is, of all eleven strategies, not only those where the speaker has more power than the addressee.

The deployment of less impositive formulas and distancing devices on the part of American bosses' –according to Brown and Levinson's model– protects the negative face of the employees, and maybe is a recognition that their rights to be unimpeded in their actions are being violated. The choice of indirect strategies might be made to de-emphasize (or obscure) power differentials and the boss' right to demand the action. Spaniards, on the other hand, choose realizations that do not obscure the fact that employees have obligations and that highlight their limited freedom (or absence of choices), all of which could be seen as a sign of little concern for the 'face' or self-image of the employees. Even when the imposition is high, and when the right of the boss to demand the action could be put into question, Spaniards maintain a high usage of direct strategies. That is what situation five (supervisor calls nurse home to fill other's shift), where almost a 50% of the requests are not mitigated, shows. (In English, in the same situation, only a 17% of the requests are made using a direct strategy). One could argue that the factor that determines the divergent behavior in these situations is the different construal of social distance (SD). The use of mitigated requests by American superiors' responds to their concern for their subordinate's face, which, in turn, is triggered by the familiarity/closeness (-SD) existing between the two. That is, familiarity demands options be given and power differentials be downplayed. For Spaniards, the opposite seems to be the case. Carrasco Santana (1999) maintains that familiarity or a degree of *confianza* allows Spaniards to encroach upon the personal territory of the hearer without necessarily imposing on him/her. Our data show that such claim is true in situations where  $S > H$  and -SD, but not in other situations (including when  $S = H$ ). Under these conditions, though, it is the case that the suspension of the right to independence and to have options does not seem to involve damage to the self-image. This leads us to conclude that the right to be unimpeded in one's actions is not what defines a Spaniard's sense of self-worth, as Brown and Levinson would suggest.<sup>17</sup> Face, in short, does not have to be (only) about independence. Ultimately, this means that the notion of face proposed by these scholars is not, as many have pointed out, universal; it does not apply to all cultures, including to some degree to the Spanish culture.

One final situation that we have not discussed yet involves the relationship between adults and their children. It is situation six (mother asks son's friend to lower the music). The results in English follow the same trend found in situation eleven and five (where  $S > H$ ); this is, the situation elicits some direct strategies (17%), but is preferably responded to with conventionally indirect realizations (66%); in quite a few cases, too, the speakers produced no request. These preferences, once again, show Americans' tendency to give options and not exercise power. Spaniards, on the other hand, choose to use many more direct strategies (40%), in line, again, with their response to other situations of the same type (i.e.,  $S > H$ ). The different behaviors the two groups display confirm the lack of cross-cultural agreement in situations where the speaker has power over the addressee (with the exception of situation seven). But more specifically, the disagreement speaks of cross-culture differences in the power relationships between adults and children; namely, parental/adult authority is played down in English, whereas in Spanish, is made more prominent, while not always exercised. More data on the behavior displayed in this type of relationship –as in all other relationships discussed here– would be necessary to confirm the tendencies observed in our study.

Our analysis has shown that the choice of type of strategy varies in response to the variables that make up the situation, and varies cross-culturally, although showing certain degree of agreement. The data show that Americans and Spaniards behave similarly when it comes to requesting action from addressees of equal or higher status, ranging from colleagues

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<sup>17</sup> They of course are not saying that the person's self-esteem derives solely from being free from impositions, but that that independence is necessary and a defining factor.

and friends to bosses: both groups avoid impositions (i.e., favor conventionally indirect strategies), although Spaniards occasionally tend to take a more demanding stance, and show impositive behavior. Requests to equal status members of the family, however, are handled slightly differently. Direct behavior is observed in English –however seldom– and is deployed quite regularly in Spanish.

The data also showed that, cross-culturally, situations where the speaker has more power than the addressee elicit the use of both direct and indirect strategies. It was in this type of situations that we witnessed the highest frequencies of directness in both languages, though in English those frequencies were still quite low. The general trends that we have reported earlier are confirmed here: Americans use ‘mitigating’ politeness more often than Spaniards. A communicative style that emphasizes non-interference is thus confirmed vis-à-vis one that underlines directness.

### 3.2 Analysis of internal modification

“Internal modifiers are elements within the request utterance proper (linked to the head act), the presence of which is not essential for the utterance to be potentially understood as a request” (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989: 19). Even though these elements can be used to emphasize the degree of coerciveness (i.e., be used as *upgraders*), what the speaker is more often seeking to do is to mitigate or soften the force of the utterance. For that they can resort to a number of lexical or syntactic *downgraders*, such as hedges, downtoners, cajolers, past and conditional tenses, the use of conditional clauses, etc.<sup>18</sup> To better account for the co-occurrences of modifiers, given the large number of cases found, we coded several combinations of categories. These are combinations of the conditional and another downgrader (in most cases lexical, but also syntactic), combinations of two lexical downgraders and combinations of three or more downgraders. See appendix 2 for examples.

The results observed in the analysis confirm the tendencies observed in the choice of main strategies. The reported inclination of American speakers to avoid imposition is corroborated and reinforced by their use of internal downgrading modification: 70% of their requests are modified. Furthermore, their effort to mitigate is such that almost 40% of those modified requests include more than one downgrader. That amounts to twice the number of downgraders Spaniards use. The lower incidence of downgraders in Peninsular Spanish shows that Spaniards do not mitigate their request as often (only half of them) and do not modify them so heavily (only 12% of the requests elicited bear more than one downgrader). The results are in line with the notion that Spaniards are less concerned about minimizing the force of their acts than Americans are. They also coincide with the results yielded by the CCSARP.

The breakdown of internal modifiers by categories shows that, in American English the most typical pattern found is a request mitigated through the conditional plus another lexical or syntactic downgraders (37% of all cases), or through the conditional alone (33%). When Spanish speakers choose to soften the request, they also show a clear preference to do it through the conditional tense (it accounts for 55% of all the downgraders). However, as mentioned earlier, they do not modify as heavily as in English; that is, they modify through the conditional alone, rarely using it in conjunction with other downtoners.

Other syntactic downgrading devices are rather scarce. Lexical ones are slightly higher, but still low in frequency, with the exception of politeness markers (*please/por favor*). These appear in 14% of both Spanish and English requests. Next to politeness markers are

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<sup>18</sup> Spanish can also achieve mitigation morphologically, through the use of diminutives. In our data, however, there was no evidence of this type of modification, except in alerters—as part of some terms of address (i.e., *hermanita*). Their use falls, therefore, outside our range of analysis.

understaters (e.g., *a bit, un poco*), present in a 6% and a 7% of the requests in English and Spanish respectively.

### 3.3 Analysis of supportive moves (or external modification)

*Supportive moves*, like downgraders and upgraders, are elements that help modify the impact of the head act by either mitigating or aggravating its force. Unlike downgraders and upgraders, however, they are a unit external to the request (i.e., they lie outside the request proper), and can either precede or follow the head act.

In our data we found evidence of many of categories of external modifiers typically reported in other studies; namely, availability questions, grounders, disarmers, promise of reward, imposition minimizer. We also found a few more elements that we named as follows: offer/invitation, apology, expression of thanks/appreciation and greeting/establishing rapport.

We found that, of all responses that produced a request, a 67.6% in English and a 59% in Spanish included a supportive move. As was found in other studies (Faerch and Kasper 1989, Marquez Reiter 2000), grounders are the most common supportive move (40% in requests in English and 42% in Spanish), followed by a combination of moves, which usually includes a grounder plus other strategies (28% and 25% respectively in English and Spanish). Grounders are therefore pervasive. Giving reasons, justifications and explanations for an action opens up an empathetic attitude on the part of the interlocutor.

What is most interesting about the data on external modification is this is an area where the two languages come the closest. It appears that even though Spaniards generally find it easier than Americans to intrude in the speaker's space (i.e., to make the request), they nonetheless find it important to somehow acknowledge they are incurring in an imposition.

On the other hand, the however slightly lower number of English requests that are externally modified (as opposed to those requests bearing internal modification) may be explained precisely by the high occurrence of downtoners, and, in general, the choice of less impositive strategies. Still the percentage of externally modified requests is higher in English than in Spanish, which contributes to the overall picture that Americans seek to avoid coerciveness much more than Spanish do.

### 3.4 Summary of the findings

According to the data, then, when speakers of American English and Peninsular Spanish request that something be done, they will most often do it by means of a conventionally indirect realization; in fact, in almost 40% of all cases, they will both use an 'ability question' to perform that request. And they will both use a supportive move to lessen the impact of the request in approximately 60% of the requests. Moreover, in both languages the most common request will have an identical structure. It will include

ability query <sub>[main strategy]</sub> + conditional tense <sub>[internal modifier]</sub> + grounder <sub>[supportive move]</sub>

These are important coincidences but behind which lie important differences. Americans, we found, do not just have an obvious inclination for being indirect: they use conventionally indirect strategies in 85% of all of the requests and have a preference for the more indirect of the indirect strategies (i.e., those which are least coercive). Spaniards, on the other hand, find it more acceptable to be coercive—as shows the fact that they use twice the amount of direct strategies Americans use—and, prefer (i.e., use more) the 'more direct' of the indirect strategies. This assessment is further confirmed by the results of the analysis of internal modifiers. Americans make extensive use of downgraders, while Spaniards mitigate much

less often, once again showing a higher tolerance for more direct behavior, and for ‘interfering’ in the addressee’s life.

These opposing tendencies, summarized in table 5 below, amount, we think, to distinct requesting styles.

	Main Strategy			Modification	
	Direct	Conventional	Indirect	Internal	External
<b>English</b>	13%	85%	1.65%	71%	63%
<b>Spanish</b>	29%	68%	2.4%	50%	61%

Table 5 Results of request behavior in Castilian Spanish and American English

The results of the situational analysis also showed areas of agreement and divergence between the two groups. When the speaker is addressing friends, co-workers, and people with more power, both Americans and Spaniards prefer to deploy indirect strategies. They behave differently, though, when the addressee is a family member or someone with less social power than the speaker; Spaniards deploy far more impositive realizations in these situations. It is here, in fact, that Spaniards overall preference for direct strategies lies. They otherwise would not be so different.

The preferences Americans show for indirect patterns support a notion of the self that seeks to be unimpeded, or that at least, seeks to redress the violation of the independence of others more often than their counterparts in the study. Spaniards appear to have a slightly less bounded concept of the self, and are therefore more tolerant of impositions; or so it would seem.

One final point that we made, and which follows from the differences observed in the behavior of the two groups, is that the way the self-image of Spaniards and Americans is ‘built’ –as far as their negative face is concerned- may not be the same. The more frequent use of direct strategies among Spaniards (especially in the situations specified earlier) –we have suggested– shows that, to a certain degree, being impeded in their actions is not harmful to their face. Or not to the degree it would be for Americans. This, ultimately, means that the very notion of negative face, as proposed by Brown and Levinson, needs to be revised. At the heart of the discussion lies the concept of self and the related notion of individualism (Geertz’s), from which Brown and Levinson’s were borrowing in the first place. Even though we are talking about two Western societies, those notions appear not to stand in both of them, and thus possibly nor do they stand in many others.

#### 4. Final remarks

The study we conducted tried to shed some light on the ways of being in the world that are being enacted when speakers of (Castilian) Spanish and (American) English are performing the ubiquitous act of requesting. Communicative practices are bound with habitual patterns of thought and representation, which, in turn, are coupled with cultural practices and ideologies, and become embodied in the habitus (Bourdieu 1977). We chose to study requests because this type of speech act can be a ‘site of struggle’, a space where what is socially possible and acceptable for a speaker to ask of others, and the terms on which the asking is done and, conversely, what a hearer finds acceptable to be asked, are being negotiated. The linguistic choices interactants make are determined by, and at the same constitutive of, how the self is

understood. The classical Western conception of the person is that of a bounded universe (Geertz 1983), who seeks autonomy in action. Requests impinge on the ability to act freely. Requests behavior (in conjunction with the study of realizations of other acts) has therefore been used to *expose* local notions of self.

We mentioned in our introduction, and at several points in our discussion that researchers working on Spanish claim that there is a high incidence of positive politeness and direct behavior in the language—which, in turn, suggests the notion of self held by Spaniards and other Spanish speaking communities is nothing like the one Brown and Levinson assign in particular to Western societies. Our study confirms these claims to a certain degree, while also suggesting a much more nuanced scenario.

Peninsular Spanish, especially in comparison to English, does show a high incidence of direct behavior. However, this direct behavior is, overall, less frequent than indirect behavior—it accounts only for 29% of all realizations (see table 5 above). And it is not deployed in all situations. Mitigating politeness was indeed seldom deployed in the family and the workplace. The reason for this behavior might be that there is an expectation that the interlocutor will comply to the request; or at least that it is his/her obligation to comply. Or it may be due to the fact that, as Carrasco Santana (1998, 1999) maintains, Spanish society favors egalitarianism and proximity. This claim, however, is too blunt and unwarranted (specially the first part), and too removed from any linguistic evidence. What we are comfortable saying is that the linguistic behavior observed suggests that Spaniards do have a less territorial and bound notion of self than Americans, where interdependence and not autonomy is often invoked. We would not, however, go as far as saying that (in Spanish) *not much energy is put into preserving the autonomy and territorial values of others* (Bravo 2004: 29). Our data did show a higher incidence of negative or mitigating politeness in situations among people of equal status (S=H), including friends and colleagues (where – SD). On the whole, then, the picture is not all that clear-cut. Further research is clearly needed.

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## APPENDIX 1

d

### Instructions

**Below we present you with a series of situations. We ask that you read the situations and write down the exact words you would say in these instances. If you think you would not say anything under the described circumstances, write nothing.**

1. It's summer time. The weather is really nice and you want to take off with a couple of friends for the weekend. You need a car, but don't have one. However, your sister has one and she could lend it to you. What do you say to her?
2. You are an employee at a department store. You are scheduled to work this coming Saturday. A friend you have not seen in quite a while has just called you on the phone. S/he is going to drive through town on Saturday, on her/his way to a family gathering. S/he would love to see you and spend some time together; and so would you. You decide to talk to your supervisor at work to see about changing your shift. What do you say to her?
3. You go to the cafeteria at work. There you see a colleague you recognize, but with whom you are not really acquainted. He has with him a newspaper he is not reading at the moment. You are eager to read about some show that is in town these days. What do you say to him
4. You are stepping out of work to go grab a quick coffee. It's pouring out and you don't have an umbrella. You go back in, and go to a colleague and friend you know has an umbrella. What do you tell her?
5. You are the supervisor nurse. Two of your nurses have called in sick. You decide to call a third nurse home on her day off to ask her to come in to work. What do you tell her?
6. Your son has made new friends and he has let you know they are coming by this afternoon. When you yourself arrive at home, you hear loud music coming out of his room. You want the volume turned down and you are going to tell them so. When you enter the room you don't see your son anywhere, but address the group of youngsters anyway. What do you tell them?
7. You have called in a cleaning service for a much needed spring cleaning. You have given them instructions about what needs to be done and you are now leaving. You want them to lock the door on their way out and leave the key under the doormat. What do you tell them?
8. You have been looking for an apartment to rent out. You have now settled on one. You are going to let the owner know. But you can't pay him the deposit and first month's rent for a few more days. What do you tell him?

9. You are driving around in a city you don't know and you get lost. But then you see a cop. You go to him and ask for directions. What do you tell him?
10. You arrive at the bank and there are two people in line ahead of you. You are in a real hurry and decide to talk to those people if they will let you go ahead of them. What do you tell them?
11. You need to see a client in your office to discuss his case. You talk to your secretary and ask her to call him and arrange a meeting. What do you tell her?

Additionally, could you please provide the following information about yourself:

Age:

Education:

Current occupation:

Place of residence:

Place where you have resided for the longest period of time in your life:

## APPENDIX 2

Scheme used to code the request strategies.

### *Head Act*

#### A. Direct strategies

1. *Locution derivable (or obligation statements):*

[PnS] Pili, cuando puedas, *tienes que* llamar a este señor.

2. *Mood derivable:*

[PnS] *Déjame* el paraguas, que voy a tomar el café.

[AE] Hey guys, time *to turn it down* a little, ok?

3. *Performative:*

[PnS] Oiga, *quería pedirle* que me cambiase el turno, si es posible.

4. *Need statement:*

[PnS] Me ha surgido un asunto y *necesitaría* que me cambiases el turno

[AE] *I need you to turn the music down* to a more reasonable level.

5. *Want statement:*

[PnS] *Quisiera*, si fuera posible, cambiar el turno de sábado.

*Desearía* cambiar el turno, porque...

#### B. Conventionally indirect strategies

6. *Non-obviousness of compliance/ prediction query:*

[PnS] *¿Me dejas* el coche?

[AE] *Will you please call* Mr. A to schedule an appointment for this afternoon?

[PnS] *¿Serían tan amables de dejarme* pasar?

7. *Ability questions:*

[PnS] *¿Podría indicarme* por dónde se va a la calle Posadas?

[AE] *Can you just lock the door and leave the key under the doormat?*

8. *Reference to willingness question:*

[PnS] *¿Le importa que* le pague en un par de días?

[AE] *Do you mind if* I give you a check in a few days?

[PnS] *¿Estaría usted dispuesto a* esperar un par de días?

9. *Prediction questions with a reasonability check:*

[PnS] Hola, Luisa, *¿sería posible* cambiar el turno del sábado por otro día?

[AE] *Is there any way that I could get* Saturday off?

10. *Permission questions:*

[PnS] *¿Puedo coger* el periódico, por favor?

[AE] *May I look at* your newspaper for a minute?

*Could I borrow* that paper for 2 seconds?

11. *Suggestory formula (or Questioning reason):*

[PnS] Ehh! *¿Por qué no bajáis* la música?

[AE] Hey guys, *how about turning down the volume?*

### C. Indirect strategies

12. *Hint* (Strong/ Mild):

[PnS] ¿Estás leyendo [el periódico]?

[AE] Hey, Becca, are you going to need your car this weekend?

### **Internal modifiers**

#### Downgraders

##### Syntactic downgraders:

- *Negation of a preparatory condition:*  
[PnS] ¿*No puedes cambiarme* mi turno el turno el sábado?
- *Subjunctive:*  
[PnS] ... si *podieras* venir a trabajar hoy nos vendría muy bien...
- *Aspect:*  
[AE] ... I *was hoping* you that you could come in and help.
- *Conditional tense:*  
[PnS] ¿*Podrías* venir hoy a trabajar? Porque han faltado Mari y Juani ...  
[AE] *Could* you please lock the door and put the key under the mat?
- *Past tense:*  
[PnS] *Quería* pedirle que me cambiase el turno...  
[AE] I *was wondering* if I could borrow your car for the day.
- *Conditional clause:*  
[PnS] Perdonen, es que tengo mucha prisa y *si me dejasen* pasar delante.
- *Combinations of the above:* Very often, downgraders are given in combinations.  
[PnS] *Quisiera, si fuera posible* cambiar el turno del sábado.  
[AE] *I wonder if you would mind if I looked* at your paper.

##### Lexical and phrasal downgraders:

- *Politeness marker:*  
[PnS] *Por favor*, ¿me podría decir como llegar a la Avenida de Lugo?  
[AE] *Please* lock the door on your way out and...  
*Do you think* you could turn down the music?
- *Understater:*  
[PnS] Eh! ¿Os importaría bajar *un poco* la música?  
[AE] Can you *just* lock the door and leave the key under the doormat?
- *Subjectivizer:*  
[AE] *I was wondering* if there is anyway you would let me borrow your car.
- *Appealer:*  
[PnS] Te mango el paraguas, ¿*vale*?  
[AE] Time to turn it down a little, *ok?*

- *Combinations* of the above are always possible.  
 [PnS] Eh, *por favor*, ¿os importaría bajar *un poco* la música?  
 [AE] Hey guys, could we turn that down *a bit, please*?

Upgraders:

[PnS] La escandalera es muy grande; ¡hay que bajar el volumen a la música y pensar en ir acabando *ya!*

**Supportive moves**

Mitigating Supportive Moves:

- *Preparator:*  
 [PnS] Hermanita, ¿para el sábado y el domingo te hará falta el coche? Es que.. , me lo podías prestar  
 [AE] Jen, *do you need your car this weekend?* Could I borrow it?
- *Grounder:*  
 [PnS] *Te llamaba porque Pili y Juan están de baja* y necesitamos una persona para la guardia. ¿Podrías venir?  
 [AE] *I have a friend coming from out of town during my work shift this weekend.* I was wondering if there would be any way I could work different hours?
- *Disarmer:*  
 [PnS] Oye, Juani, *ya sé que es una faena llamarte en tu día libre*, pero estamos muy pillados ... Ven al hospital.  
 [AE] ... *I know it is your day off and I understand if you can't make it*, but is there anyway you could come in today?
- *Promise of reward:*  
 [PnS] ...¿sería mucho pedirte que vengas hoy a echar una mano? *Luego veríamos como compensarte las molestias.*  
 [AE] ...I really can use some help. Can you come in? *I owe you one.*
- *Imposition minimizer:*  
 [PnS] *Si no necesitas el coche*, ¿me lo podrías prestar para salir el 'finde'?  
 [AE] Sue, *when you have a minute*, could you call this client up?
- *Apology:*  
 [PnS] *Perdona que te moleste*, pero como tenemos mucho apuro, ¿podría contar contigo hoy?  
 [AE] *I am so sorry* to call you on your day off, but can you fill in today?
- *Offer/ Invitation to join in an activity:*  
 [PnS] ¿*Vienes a tomar un café?* Así me tapas con el paraguas  
 [AE] Hey, sis! Can my friends and I use our car this weekend? *You could come with us, if you'd like.*
- *Expression of appreciation/ thanks:*  
 [PnS] Por favor, llame a la Sra. Gonzáles y concierte una cita para el jueves a la mañana. *Gracias.*

[AE] On your way out, could you lock the door and stick the key under the mat? *Thanks*

- *Greeting + Establishing rapport:*

[PnS] *Hola, ¿qué tal? ¿Te importaría dejarme el periódico?*

[AE] *Hey, how are you doing? How is everything going? Could I take a look at that paper? I'll get it right back to you.*

Aggravating Supportive Moves:

[PnS] Señores, *la escandalera es muy grande*; ¡hay que bajar la música...!

¡Venga, venga, bajad la música que *esto no es un bar!*

Pero bueno, chicos, ¿cómo no ponéis la música más baja? ¡*Vais a volverme chiflada que ya no está una para estos trotes!*