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**Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Honorifics in British
English, Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian**

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Abstract

In recent decades, a considerable amount of work has been carried out in pragmatics, which is the branch of linguistics dealing with language in use and the contexts in which it is used. A central theme in pragmatics is politeness. Some linguists defend universal methods, which could be applied to all languages regardless of cultural background; others, in contrast, propose that cultural background, which sets cultural values, is the essential consequence to politeness. Cultural values are unconscious shared ideas, beliefs and norms, which are established by a specific society. The aim of this project is to suggest that cultural values have an impact on the number and use of honorifics in a language. Honorifics are linguistic forms of politeness, which create asymmetric relationships among speakers. A comparison will be carried out among the following languages: British English, Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian. These languages will be compared using Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which separates societies into distinct groups with different predominant values in accordance with scores resulting from six distinct dimensions. Each country in which each of the languages is spoken, presents distinct scores in cultural dimensions. The Power Distance and Individualism dimensions show what values are predominant in a given society and allow developing hypotheses on whether those languages will reflect possible politeness asymmetry. My hypothesis deriving from these dimensions indicates a correlation between the number and use of honorifics in each language. I conclude that, distinct cultures have distinct predominant values, which reflect differently on the notion of politeness and its representation in a language.

Keywords: Cross-cultural pragmatics; Honorifics; Cultural dimensions theory; British English; Peninsular Spanish; Ukrainian

1. Introduction

Human communication is a complex process that presents several difficulties for linguistics to explain. For instance, what is actually said does not always match its meaning. Moreover, every language has its own particular discordances. This fact causes even more misunderstandings between speakers from different cultures. Therefore, in order for communication to be successful it is also important to learn how context and meaning are related. Furthermore, intercultural communication has never before been as abundant as now.

Pragmatics is the field of linguistics that investigates the contribution of context to meaning. Pragmatic studies have been particularly influential from the second half on the twentieth century. One of its branches is cross-cultural pragmatics, which makes comparison between different cultures (Hofstede 2004, Wierzbicka 2003[1991]). This field studies communication in intercultural contexts.

Over the recent decades, many linguists create hypotheses and try to give evidences that politeness principles are more culture-specific than universal (Kasper 1990, Matsumoto 1988, Prykarpatska 2008, Yuryeva 2018, Wierzbicka 2003[1991]). Politeness is an essential part of education, which is determined by specific values in a society. These values are deeply rooted and are generally non-conscious; as values vary from one culture to another, their linguistic representation also differs.

The focus of this work is a cross-cultural pragmatic comparison of the recurrent honorific forms in daily use in three languages: British English, Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian. These languages form part of different branches of Indo-European languages, which are Germanic, Romance and Slavic, respectively. In addition, they are influenced

by distinct historical and cultural aspects. The main aim of my dissertation is to provide evidence that the number and use of honorific forms is in correlation with the specific cultural values pertinent to each one of these languages and with the importance given to these forms within their specific societies.

Regarding methodology, this project is based on previous research in the field of pragmatics and cross-cultural studies. To compare the selected languages, I use Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, which represents the common problems or concerns that are familiar to all societies and the way that such societies address them. For the aim of this thesis, I will focus specifically on two indexes in Hofstede's theory: Power Distance and Individualism. The former index outlines the acceptance of unequal power distribution by the least powerful members in a society; the latter measures the closeness of relationships amongst its members. These two indexes will help to establish hypotheses, specifically, whether a culture is more or less prone to use honorifics.

Concerning structure, the project is organised in the following way: Section 2 will provide information on the cross-cultural pragmatics and the characteristics of politeness. Following this, Section 3 will define honorifics and further discuss the concept. Section 4 will provide information on Hofstede's cultural dimension theory and which values he assigns to each country where the compared languages are spoken: the United Kingdom, Spain and Ukraine. Section 5 will compare the use of honorifics in the three languages under consideration (British English, Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian). Finally, Section 6 will set out the conclusions to this work.

2. Cross-cultural and Politeness pragmatics

2.1. The cultural approach to pragmatics

When the field of pragmatics gained fuller influence in linguistics, in the 1980s, its main theoretical approach aimed to explain different occurrences, such as politeness, in a language by attempting to determine a universal framework that would be applicable to all languages. As Wierzbicka (2003[1991]) observes: “In the nineteen eighties, and as well into the nineties, the idea that interpersonal interaction is governed, to a large extent, by norms which are culture-specific and which reflect cultural values cherished by a particular society went against the grain of what was generally accepted at the time” (2003[1991]: v). It was not until around the 1990s that linguistics began researching into how these universal theories were mainly centered on the English-speaking world and therefore could not be applied to other traditions and cultures around the world (Kasper 1990, Matsumoto 1988, Wierzbicka 2003[1991]).

Another important factor that helped to dismiss this universalism was the growth of cultural mixes. As Wierzbicka (2003[1991]) indicates:

At a time when every year millions of people cross the borders, not only between countries but also between languages, and when more and more people of many different cultural backgrounds have to live together in modern multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies [...]. This is what gave cross-cultural pragmatics enough evidence that the way people use language is very strongly connected to their customs (Wierzbicka, 2003 [1991]: viii).

Which could be also summarised as follows:

In different societies and different communities, people speak differently; these differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic, they reflect different cultural values, or at least different hierarchies of values; different ways of speaking, different communicative styles, can be explained and made sense of in terms of

independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities (Wierzbicka, 2003[1991]: 69).

As Anna Wierzbicka (2003[1991]) further comments, one of the reasons why cultural-based theories were once rejected and generally appeared to be somewhat insecure was because of a reticence of generalisation. The new approach could reduce a certain language to the stereotypes of its culture alone, and therefore it would not be studied properly. However, it seems as if universal methods were also unable to help with this problem, as they were mainly based on the English-speaking world.

It is true that each language presents regional and other variations and the use of certain expressions and manners of speaking changes depend on many factors, but to bear in mind all of these factors would be impractical in this dissertation. For the aim of this paper, some common examples will be used in order to compare the use of honorifics. To prevent against the over-influence of cultural stereotypes, the predominant cultural values of each country will be based on Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (as indicated above), which is widely used in cross-cultural comparisons.

2.2. Characteristics of politeness

Politeness is a familiar notion and one that is practiced by most communities across the world. If asked, most of the population can determine those aspects of their social intervention that is polite or impolite in accordance with the 'rules' of their society. Notwithstanding this, the concept is complex and even more so if we compare its variation. According to Geoffrey Leech, "politeness in this broad sense is a form of communicative behaviour found very generally in human languages and among human cultures ..." (2014:3). As the author explains further, politeness consists mainly in

speaking or behaving in a way that gives benefit or value not to yourself, but to the other person(s), especially the person(s) you are conversing with. It can manifest itself in different ways, both verbally and non-verbally.

According to Julia Yuryeva (2018), politeness in each country has its own tradition and history. People live in society and mostly adopt its rules. Over decades, indeed, over centuries, each culture builds or shapes its rules of politeness, which can be shown through attitude and language in interactional contexts. Politeness can simply be the key for better co-existence and can give information on the social origins of a speaker, amongst other information.

To delimit its characteristics, we can refer to Geoffrey Leech (2014), who provides an example of a violinist who, after finishing her performance is received with applause from the audience and, as a response, bows to her public. This scene is comprehensible, as this ritual is familiar to many people in our society. It takes place as a manifestation of politeness, concretely that which can be labelled as “communicative altruism”: the audience acknowledges the musician and appreciates her talent and the violinist in response lowers her body to show humility and gratitude. The act of politeness is therefore reciprocal. However, it may not be even remotely genuine. With this example, Leech comments on 8 aspects of politeness, which we will refer to below:

First of all, this it is not obligatory. Having said this, the above response it is usually perceived positively, especially as it is directed towards maintaining good socialisation and a respect for convention. Second, polite and impolite behaviour are gradual phenomena. In formal environments the requirements to show polite behaviour may be higher and signs of non-verbal and verbal politeness such as smiling, nodding and

the use of higher pitch are required in order to sound interested in a conversation; on other occasions, a simple smile when seeing someone is enough. Third, that in every society there is a notion of what is normal, and this notion is based on this society's cultural norms. Fourth, its occurrence is triggered by certain situations that are more likely to produce polite communication. Fifth, which Leech calls a "reciprocal asymmetry", it is considered polite behaviour to praise someone else and to try to maintain a humble attitude oneself; the opposite case would be considered impolite. The sixth aspect consists of manifestation through "repetitive behaviour", a cultural tradition which requires one person to offer something a few times, as the other person's rejection might be just a sign of politeness. Seventh, politeness may be characterised by the interchange of value between people, because when we are thanking or apologizing we do it for a reason. And, finally, the eighth characteristic of politeness is the "preservation of balance", that is linked to the idea that one must remain humble; if someone is praised they will try to respond something like *thank you* (Leech 2014:4-9).

From a very young age, children are taught sometimes indirectly certain politeness norms for better socialisation. Verbally, they are taught to say *thank you* or to acknowledge the presence of someone and to wish them a good day. These types of politeness manifestations are very common and are generally spread over different cultures. However, some of these manifestations are culture-specific or are presented in different cultures but to very different degrees. Such examples include pronouns of address and honorific titles, which can be collectively called 'honorifics'. These are forms that not only mark politeness, but also indicate an asymmetry within the ambit of politeness. One of the speakers takes a lower position and thereby places the other member in this linguistic exchange into a higher position.

This paper will not discuss other well-known but actually rather minor (and restricted) aspects of honorifics, which are royal titles (“His/Her/Your Majesty”, etc.), religious titles (“The very reverend” etc.) and designations of status in Law (specifically, judges “Your Honour” and opposing barristers “My Learned Friend”). Whilst these aspects are of considerable formal interest, their application to everyday language use is limited. This project is therefore mostly concerned with the way in which speakers address one other in their daily lives and normal circumstances, within common types of situations.

3. Pronouns of address and honorific titles

Honorifics are linguistic forms of politeness that create asymmetric relationships among speakers. This asymmetric relation may convey respect or admiration for another person, social distance, formal politeness or humility. It can be represented in a variety of ways through pronouns of address such as *usted* in Spanish, honorific titles such *Mr*, in English or through morphological and grammatical forms such as those used in Japanese, which uses an honorific *o-* prefix before the addressee’s name, as in *o-namae* (Leech 2014:10).

Pronouns are more complex and revealing than they may seem. Not only are they an indispensable tool to know who we are referring to, but they are also important indicators of the mentality and traditions that pertain in a specific society and the ways in which that society perceives the world. Pronouns of address, for example, can tell us about the asymmetry that exists in a language. Therefore, the analysis of these forms is

fundamental to understanding a certain language and the people who speak it, as well as the relationships that exist amongst these speakers.

In the 1960s, Roger Brown and Albert Gilman first introduced the terminology for two distinct singular pronoun forms: T for familiar and V for polite pronouns. They owe their origin to the Latin form *tu* (second person singular) and *vos* (second person plural) and applied these notions to many Indo-European languages among which we find English and Spanish. The V pronoun appeared in Latin as a form to address the emperor; as the symbol of plurality implies power, the emperor himself referred to his person as *we* (meaning I and the People). Over time, this form of address extended to other influential and powerful figures and, as imitation, expanded and also reached the lower classes and influenced other languages. Brown and Gilman claim that this distinction is still present in the majority of Indo-European languages such as German, Italian and French, among others (1960:254).

If observed closely, it becomes clear that these pronouns can appear in reciprocal or also in non-reciprocal use. Norma Carricaburo (1997) states that when two interlocutors can use either the T-T form or V-V form, they are reciprocal; that is, there is a symmetry in power, which implies solidarity. However, a younger person who uses the V pronoun to address the elder person, but is addressed by the same person with a T pronoun in response, is a clear example of non-reciprocal use, which indicates inequality of power. Brown and Gilman describe this inequality as “A is/has something more than B”; this “something more”, it could be age, professional hierarchy, social status, place of birth and other similar factors (1960:258).

In order for reciprocity to take place, two people need to feel or share solidarity. It is difficult to predict or generalise exactly what factor or factors are able to create this solidarity, as human emotions and bonds are not predictable and are complex; what is more, theory in this field does not always apply to real-life relationships. However, it seems that two interlocutors are mostly prone to create a bond of solidarity, according to Brown and Gilman, by having “(...) like mindedness or similar disposition: as political membership, family, religion, profession...”, or also by sharing “(...) extreme distinctive values on almost any dimension may become significant...” (1960:259). In this case, the speakers, most certainly will opt for the T-T form, especially in our society. Although the V-V form existed and is still in use, its use is generally decreasing, since when solidarity bonds are established between people they tend to opt for the T pronoun. If the reciprocal V is used, it is usually due to formal situations, to highlight the personal or otherwise professional respect that people feel for the other, or there may be possible additional factors linked to cultural traditions.

The non-reciprocal use of pronouns occurs when a given factor or factors mark inequality in power, as stated above. The most common causes are age and social or professional hierarchy. According to Julia Yuryeva, - culture plays an enormous role here, because what is perceived as normal and respectful in one society may not be considered so in another one. People tend to imitate the pattern structured by their culture, which manifests itself in linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour and communication (2018). As we will see later, in section 5, in both Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian the age factor can produce distinct reciprocity, but, in case of British English, it produces none at all, as the T-V distinction is no longer in use.

Another form of asymmetric politeness is seen in honorific titles, which precede a person's name or surname. Commonly, if a language presents a T-V pronoun distinction, these titles are used in combination with the V pronoun or with an omitted pronoun but with verbal conjugation, which effectively encodes it. For example, in the Spanish utterance *Señor, ¿(usted) qué piensa de...?*, the verb conjugation in the third person singular denotes the polite pronoun, and that is why the word *usted* could be omitted.

It is important to bear in mind that theory on honorific use does not always correspond to practice in a language and there can be some exceptions and variations to the rules. Language is subject to different social and affective factors, traditions in different regions of the same country and others. In addition, some of the forms become dated with time and can fall out of use or, else may only remain used in certain formal ambits.

4. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Geert Hofstede, (b. 1928, Harlem, The Netherlands) a social psychologist and anthropologist, became interested in cross-cultural communication during the 1980s. His cultural dimensions theory is widely used for comparing different languages and people's manner of interaction from a cultural perspective. Moreover, his theory has evolved through the years and is now successfully applied among international companies to organise their workspace and communication in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts, which are quite common amongst people from different cultural backgrounds.

Hofstede's theory is based on similar notions to that of Weirzbicka's, which I will discuss further below, in a sense that both base their ideas upon cultural backgrounds that sets specific values and even prioritise some with respect to others (Hofstede 2004, Wierzbicka 2003 [1991]). The theory consists of six dimensions of culture, scoring from 1 as the lowest to 100 as the highest. As Hofstede observes: "a dimension is an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (from Hofstede's website *Hofstede Insights*). All dimensions represent common problems or concerns that are familiar to all societies and the way that people in these societies address them. These dimensions are:

1. **Power Distance:** this shows how inequality of power is accepted and expected by the less powerful members in a society. The higher is the score, the more established the hierarchy of power in the society. The lower the score, the more equally power is distributed among its members.

2. **Individualism:** this measures the closeness of relationships among members of a given society. It shows whether these relationships are inter-dependent and have strong ties or, on the contrary, whether members are essentially expected to care for themselves and have close relations only with their relatives. It is seen as an opposition between collectivism and individualism. The higher the score, the more self-centred and independent the individuals are.

3. **Masculinity:** this index reveals the priorities or motivations that mark members of a society. The lower the score, the more the members of a society are concerned with values that are linked to, feminine societies (as Hofstede term them), which take more into consideration quality of life and care for others. The higher the score, the more its

members are concerned with values such as ambition, success and recognition. Again, in Hofstede's terms, higher-scoring groups are also known as masculine societies.

4. **Uncertainty avoidance:** this dimension measures tolerance of ambiguity. Cultures with higher scores tend to avoid undefined and ambiguous situations, the unknown, and especially the future, all of which makes them feel uncomfortable and can even cause fear. The lower the score, the less the members of a society are concerned about ambiguity and fewer preventive measures such as rules, institutions, rigorous planning, etc., are used and installed in its culture.

5. **Long-Term Orientation:** this analyses perspectives and approaches regarding the present and the future. The higher the score, the more practical the society is in adapting to different situations and changes within it, also known as long-term orientation. The lower the score, the more tied to tradition and past experience the society is when facing problems and making decisions, also known as short-term orientation.

6. **Indulgence:** this dimension analyses the control that people establish over their desires and impulses. Lower scores indicate weak control; higher scores represent greater restraint.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions bring together all essential aspects of human society. The comparison of these dimensions helps to highlight differences amongst cultures and where exactly such differences lie. Each dimension can provide an explanation in a specific field of concern. For the purpose of this project, which is to compare three different languages in their variety and use of honorifics, the most helpful dimensions are Power Distance and Individualism.

Before proceeding to a fuller explanation of the two chosen dimensions, it is important to explain the function of the scores. A certain score in these indexes does not simply locate one culture at a specific degree between two dichotomies; what is more representative is not the score itself, but what values the score implies for that society. The specific result will give priority to one or more values over the others that lie at the opposite spectrum of the scale. These values will be set in the “software of the mind” (from *Hofstede Insights*). Hofstede (2004) uses this concept to describe collective mental programming, which has a great influence on our life and therefore on language. As the author further explains, people are mostly not aware of these values; nor are they and they like identity, which can be changed and which evolves over time. Values are basically permanent and depend on a person’s environment, particularly on their childhood and on their relationship with their parents. Later in life, further socialisation and life experiences are also of great importance.

The Power-Distance index not only reveals inequality in power and its acceptance by the least powerful members but, more importantly, what value or values are being fostered with in this concept. Children learn about the world and its rules by the example shown by parents or carers. One such example is social hierarchy, which starts with the parents’ role and over time expands into social and professional life (Brown and Gilman 1960). According to Hofstede (2004), the higher the score in Power Distance, the more prominent the value of respect, which will become fixed in an individual’s “software of the mind”. In contrast, the lower the score, the more probable it is that the principal value established will be that of independence, which in turn should reflect itself in the language used.

This score does not imply that cultures having independence values that are more predominant are not, therefore, respectful or that their communication is impolite. Principally, it mainly establishes a distinction among societies in which the expression of respect and politeness are more or less symmetrical.

Cultures with a higher Power Distance will be more prone to using the perspective of respect, which is similar to hierarchical structure. Linguistically, this can be expressed through the use of honorifics. In contrast, cultures with low/lower results in Power Distance are more prone to opt for other techniques or approaches to politeness that do not emphasise difference in power, such as the use of indirectness strategies in requests, or negative politeness (Prykarpatska 2008).

The Individualism index differentiates between collectivist and individualist societies. The former can in some degree be compared to tribes, as their members are dependent on each other to a fairly high degree. As in all groups, hierarchy in a lesser or a greater degree is established. For a group to be successful in surviving, the relationships amongst its members must be harmonious, at least at a superficial level, and respect must be maintained. Across cultures, the factors that trigger this respect may change, but the most common factors are: social and professional hierarchy; level of wealth; and most commonly age difference (Brown and Gilman 1960). In societies that are more individualist, people do not depend to a high degree on others and are freer regarding their communication styles. As Iryna Prykarpatska observes, in individualistic societies “authority is not recognised just on the basis of age, wealth or origin” (2008:90). However, cultures that are more individualistic take personal freedom into fuller consideration. Consequently, respect and politeness are shown by considering someone’s

privacy, allowing greater scope for personal freedom of choice and, generally, avoiding displays of open disapproval.

| Dimensions | UK | Spain | Ukraine |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Power Distance | 35 | 57 | 92 |
| Individualism | 89 | 51 | 25 |
| Masculinity | 66 | 42 | 27 |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | 35 | 86 | 95 |
| Long Term Orientation | 51 | 48 | 55 |
| Indulgence | 69 | 44 | 18 |

Table 1. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions (from *Hofstede Insights*)

As indicated in the table above, all three countries have relatively contrasting results in the Power-Distance and Individualism indexes. In greater opposition to each other are the United Kingdom and Ukraine. In all six dimensions, Spain lies in the middle of the scale.

From these results, certain conclusions may be drawn. The United Kingdom’s ranking in the Power-Distance (35) and in Individualism (89) dimensions, according to Hofstede’s cultural theory, points to a society that is more individualistic, with little power distance. In fact (in Hofstede’s terms), the UK is one of the most individualistic societies in the world, with only the United States and Australia in a higher position (from *Hofstede Insights*). The main value established by these results is independence and therefore non-hierarchical respect. Consequently, in theory the use and number of honorifics in (UK) English should be lower in comparison to Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian. Politeness should be represented in English by other methods such as indirectness and respect for privacy, among others.

Spain’s ranking in Power Distance (57) shows that it is a fairly hierarchical society. With respect to Individualism, in his online characterisation of each country

assessed, Hofstede underlines that Spanish Individualism is relative; compared to most European countries, Spain is characterised as a Collectivist society, as its score is relatively high. However, if compared to other collectivist countries in the world, it is seen as an Individualistic society. In all the categories, Spain is located between the scores for the United Kingdom and Ukraine; therefore, the use of honorifics in this country should be higher than in the UK, but probably lower than in Ukraine.

Ukraine's rankings in this tri-cultural comparison present most polarity: its Power Distance is the highest among the three countries compared (92) and its Individualism index is the lowest (25). This leads to the conclusion that it is a society with substantial power inequality and tendencies towards collectivism. As a consequence, the main value established in this culture would be that of respect. In theory, therefore, this should result in a larger number of honorifics in the language, and their more frequent use.

5. Comparison

5.1. British English

All languages have geographical variation and different uses within the same country; English is no exception. It has very considerable variants depending on where it is spoken, particularly taking into account that it is, even more so than Spanish, prevalent in distinct areas around the world. To limit this variation in my study, I therefore opted to focus on British/UK English. At all times, and again to limit variation, I refer to the standard variant of the language.

In comparison to other Indo-European languages, English does not have a polite V pronoun. Indeed, standard modern UK English has only one form (*you*) that serves equally as a second-person singular and second-person plural pronoun. Therefore, we can say that English does not currently have a polite form, that would allow, on its own, to show asymmetry in power between speakers.

However, this was not always the case for the standard. English did have two different forms: *thou* (nominative) for the second-person singular and *ye* for the plural. *You* was originally the accusative form, but with time it replaced *ye* and became the only pronoun used. *Thou* was used as a T pronoun, but after the Norman Conquest (1066) and the subsequent implantation of Norman-French nobility and culture, the English aristocracy was politically motivated to imitate the new norm and, eventually, began to use *ye* as a polite version instead of *thou*. As Brown and Gilman (1960) explain, over time it extended to all parts of the population and occupied the singular and plural position; *thou* was perceived as impolite and archaic and became less prevalent in Early Modern English (although the old distinction was still widespread even in the time of Shakespeare, that is, in the late sixteenth century). Eventually, certainly by about eighteenth century, it became disused. As Brown and Gilman observe further, it is difficult to ascertain exactly why this process took place. One possible cause is the English tendency to simplify pronouns and the resulting ambiguity people faced when deciding on the right pronoun.

As Yuryeva (2018) observes, English has a very limited number of honorific titles; these mainly consist of “Mr” (| 'mɪstə |) the general term for men; “Mrs” (| 'mɪsɪz |), a general term for married women; “Miss” (| 'mɪs |), a general term for unmarried women and the now widespread and preferred form to designate any woman, “Ms.” (| mɪz |), a

neutral alternative to *Mrs* or *Miss*. Moreover, their use is reduced to relatively formal occasions and often only in written form. They are almost always followed by surname and practically never by a person's first name. As indicated, the two female honorifics *miss* and *missus*, express difference in marital status. *Missus* is used for married women, who usually take their husbands' surname, *miss* indicates single status. In earlier periods *master* and *miss* were honorifics for boys and girls, respectively, but as Yuryeva (2018) states, they are now mostly in disuse (and were, even when common, restricted to higher social levels). The following examples indicate current usage:

- (1) Mr. Williams is arrested and led off at Belville's bidding. (BNC)
- (2) I asked Ms. Higgins what the difference was between the monsoon and the pre-monsoon. (BNC)
- (3) Mrs. Simpson turned her face and looked out of the window. (BNC)

The hypothesis made in Section 4 is confirmed. The Equality of Power distribution and a high score in the Individualism dimension have their effect on the language. English has a very limited number of asymmetric politeness forms and the use of honorifics is reduced to fairly clearly determined occasions or situations.

Another indicator of value of independence in English is the first-person pronoun I, which is capitalised. Hofstede (2004) suggests that this orthographic marker is a reflection of individualism in the English-speaking culture. In addition, it can be seen that English has a tendency to eliminate honorifics, first starting with the elimination of T-V distinction and later by the disuse of *master* and *miss*. (As indicated earlier, I do not discuss other instances of honorifics in English, such as those used for royalty, in religion or in law, as these are especially restricted.)

5.2. Peninsular Spanish

As regards politeness honorifics in Spanish, it is important to specify that my focus is limited to Peninsular Spanish (also termed “Iberian” or “Castilian”). It is one of the most-spoken languages in the world in terms of native speakers. As such, it also has enormous regional variation, which justified my decision to limit the scope of this assessment.

Spanish has two forms of second-person singular pronoun: *tú* (familiar) and *usted* (formal); similarly, it uses the second-person plural *vosotros/as* (familiar) and *ustedes* (formal). As an exception, in Andalusia the second-person plural form *ustedes* is used for second-person plural reference. This T-V distinction derives from Latin; the original distribution was *tú* and *vos* (still in use in certain areas), which was then replaced by *usted* (Brown and Gilman, 1960:254). Carricaburo (1997) indicates, *tú* is used in informal situations, between family relatives and for intimacy. The form *usted* is recommendable for formal situations or as a form to address older or respected people, among others. The polite form *usted/es* requires the verb form and pronominal form in the third-person singular or plural. Because of the morphology of its verb-system in which grammatical person is clearly reflected, pronouns can be omitted in Spanish, with only the verb being essential to an utterance. In other words, Spanish is a SVO language with a pro-drop parameter, the subject in many cases being omitted, as the verbs agree with this in person and number.

There are different connotations for the choice of each form as regards reciprocity. If speakers reciprocally use the *tú* pronoun, this may indicate: “la familiaridad, la informalidad, la solidaridad (...) y el acercamiento psicológico o afectivo” (Carricaburo

1997:9). Meanwhile, the reciprocal choice of the polite form may connote respect for each other, social or psychological distance, or even a possible conflict.

In Spain, especially in urban areas, the form *tú* seems to have replaced its formal version in many situations, particularly among the younger population. The main factors that may persuade speakers to opt for *usted* is their interlocutor's age and social-professional status, or being in a very formal environment, to mark distance or as a courtesy. As indicated above, region variation also plays an important role. Carricaburo (1997:11) indicates that speakers' gender is also of importance. For example, she states that young people from Madrid often choose a distinct version of second-person pronoun, men opting to address their interlocutor with the informal form, while women tended more to use the formal pronoun. This change was already noticeable in the 1960s. Alonso comments on this switch and how the 'real' *tú* lost its meaning of intimacy, as people massively began to use it instead of *usted* (in Carricaburo 1997:10). For the subsequent period, Molina indicates that the younger generation has a stronger tendency to use the informal version and that *usted* is now perceived as too marked (in Carricaburo 1997:11).

The most common honorific forms in Spanish are *señor* (m.) and *señora* (f.). These forms should be used with the person's surname. They are recurrent honorifics in the workplace. *Señor* and *señora* can also be used by themselves, especially when addressing unknown people politely. An example of usage is as follows:

(4) No sé si el juego de toque que propone el señor Vidackovic es apropiado para segunda. (esTenTen11)

The diminutive forms *señorito* and *señorita*, also exist, but are now mostly archaic in Spain and could even imply a pejorative meaning. The term *Caballero* ("gentleman",

used as a form of address without name or surname) is another masculine honorific in Spanish, but it is increasingly falling into disuse, especially among young urban speakers.

The terms *Don* (m.) and *doña* (f.), on the other hand, do collocate with a first name but are usually limited to highly formal situations, mostly in political, legal or administrative environments. As Carricaburo (1997) observes, essentially these pronouns are now appropriate only when referring to professors, in court or to high officials among others.

(5) No sólo doña Elvira la acompaña, sino dos o tres damas más. (esTenTen11)

The hypothesis made in Section 4 is confirmed. The Inequality of Power distribution within society, shown in the Power-Distance index, seems to have an effect on the language. Spanish does not simply present a wider range of honorific titles than English, but also has the T-V pronoun distinction in both singular and plural. Moreover, the number of occasions when these forms are used is more extensive; aspects such as age, social and professional status seem to trigger their use, which in turn is a sign of a collectivist society.

However, as with English, a shift in their use can be traced. Some Spanish honorifics such as *caballero*, *señorito*, *señorita* are generally no longer in use; others, such as *don* or *doña*, are now highly restricted. Additionally, although this is a personal appreciation for which I do not offer any further support, the *tú* pronoun seems to have become more common than *usted* in recent decades.

5.3. Ukrainian

In Ukrainian as well as in Peninsular Spanish, there is a T-V distinction between second person singular *ty* (*mu*) and *Vy* (*Bu*). *Vy* is also the form for the second-person plural and, additionally, is a polite form as with *vouz* in French, when referring to a singular interlocutor. In writing, the polite *Vy* is capitalised (*Bu*), while the plural is not. As in Spanish, the pronoun can be omitted and only the verb needs obligatorily to be used. Ukrainian is, like Spanish, a SVO language with a pro-drop parameter, with the subject in many cases being omitted as the verbs agree with this in person and number.

Theoretically, the use of *ty* is reserved for close friends, family relatives and prayer. Use in family environments is often complex as it depends fundamentally on tradition in the speakers' geographical area and, ultimately, on the specific linguistic culture of family. Age also plays an important role in such cases; with *ty* usually being preferable for relatives of a similar age. Shevchuk (2011) stresses the importance in Ukrainian culture for older people and parents; the V form was commonly used in the last century, particularly in villages, as the form to address one's parents. While grandparents will usually be addressed with a respectful form, parents are now generally addressed by the T pronoun, with the exception of rural areas (which, as in many languages, tend to be linguistically more conservative).

The use of pronouns of address may or may not be reciprocal, depending on power and solidarity. The prevailing factors that determine asymmetry in power are age and professional hierarchy, although age is still also respected in the latter ambit. A younger speaker in a higher social or professional position would still address an older person with the V form. Children address adults with the V pronoun; adults address children with a T

form; in this case, age marks asymmetry in power. Adults address elders by using a V pronoun and, in response, elders may respond with a T or V form depending on factors such as social position, distance, respect or formality.

Apart from the T-V pronoun distinction, Ukrainian has honorific titles such as *pan* (m. -пан), *pani* (f. -пані) and *panstvo* (pl. панство), which are very common honorific titles in Slavic languages. Their meaning is comparable to English “Master”. As Lesyuk (2017) explains, these forms can be used by themselves as vocatives, in combination with the person’s surname in more formal occasions or with a person’s first name in more informal situations. In addition, these honorifics are often combined with the adjective *sha`novnyu* (шановний), meaning “venerable”, to give more emphasis, or even *velmyshanovnyu* (вельмишановний), meaning “most venerable”. The forms are used on formal occasions, particularly when introducing someone or as a reference in, for example, public speaking. Additionally, however, they are also a recurrent form for use with relatives and friends, to stress respect and appreciation.

(6) Більше голосів на з'їзді набрав пан Добкін. (uaTenTen11)

Bil'she holo'siv na z'yizdi nab'rav pan 'Dobkin.

(The majority of the votes were for pan Dobkin)

The forms are *dob`rodiy* (m.) and *dobrodiyka* (f.) are less common and more literary. They are rarely used in contemporary language, their usage being mostly reduced to an adjective meaning, which can be translated as “someone who does good deeds”, especially in the ambit of philanthropy.

Serbenska (2011) observes that a new form of honorific was established in Ukrainian during the Soviet period, which is the use of the first name in combination with

a patronymic. This consists of the father's first name plus the suffixes: *-vych* for men, and *-(i)ivna* for women, as in *Ganna Volodymyriina* (Ganna, woman's first name, and Volodymyr, father's first name, plus the *-ivna* suffix). This is now widely used, especially in a formal environment and above all where there is an age difference, to show respect or to maintain distance. As an example, in schools or other academic institutions, students refer to their teachers by their name followed by a patronymic.

The hypothesis made in Section 4 seems to be confirmed. Ukrainian presents a very high Power-Distance score, which is represented in the current language by the wide number of honorifics and their use. There is no substantial difference in number between Ukrainian and Peninsular Spanish in this respect. However, honorifics in Ukrainian seem to be more recurrent. As in English and Spanish, certain honorific forms are no longer used by speakers, such as *dobrodiy/dobrodiyka*, and situations in which the use of an addressing V pronoun would be required have mostly disappeared, as with the address form for parents.

With respect to the Individualism index, whereas English capitalises its first singular pronoun, *I*, giving it more emphasis, Ukrainian capitalises the polite form *Vy*. This example may be interpreted as showing how the cultural values of individualistic and collectivistic societies are reflected through language.

6. Conclusion

The main aim of my degree-final project has been to provide evidence that the number and use of honorific forms is in correlation with the specific cultural values pertinent to each one of these specific languages and with the importance given to these

forms within the corresponding specific societies. British English, Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian are spoken in countries that represent very distinct scores as established by Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory.

The scores on the Power-Distance and Individualism indexes have enable me to elaborate hypotheses on whether a culture was prone to asymmetric politeness, and to what degree. Following this, the hypotheses were compared to the number and use of honorifics in each society based on previous research.

In conclusion, in light of my assessment of the three languages and cultures indicated in this study, the number and use of honorifics are shown to be in correlation with Hofstede's theory. Speakers of British English, as a society with a low Power-Distance index and a high Individualism index, tend to use fewer honorifics and in lesser frequency compared to speakers of Peninsular Spanish and Ukrainian, both of which are societies with a higher Power Distance. Moreover, the higher the score, as in the case of Ukrainian, the more visible asymmetry is.

This is a small-scale study that, given the obvious constraints of space, necessarily restricts itself to relatively generalized cases and, equally necessarily, cannot engage more fully with enormously significant factors of class, gender, or regional variants, all of which considerations would add richer and more complex data. However, notwithstanding this limitations, my final conclusions is that the application of Hofstede's theory to honorific form in contemporary use by the language focused on this current study, provides a valuable framework for inter-language/inter-cultural comparison and is a means by which my essential thesis (namely, that the use of honorifics reflects the specific cultural "make-up" of a given society) has been confirmed.

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Appendix:

Examples extracted from British National Corpus:

(1) Mr. Williams is arrested and led off at Belville's bidding.

Pamela, or, The Reform of a Rake, by Richardson S., Fidelis M. and Havergal G.

UK: Amber Lane Press, 1987

(2) I asked Ms. Higgins what the difference was between the monsoon and the pre-monsoon.

The love of a king. Barnes T. and Dainty P. Oxford: OUP, 1989.

(2) Mrs. Simpson turned her face and looked out of the window.

Examples extracted from esTenTen11:

(4) No sé si el juego de toque que propone el señor Vidackovic es apropiado para segunda.

Document number: 3219; Extracted from:

<http://foros.lavozdigital.es/panorama-t28873.html>

(5) No sólo doña Elvira la acompaña, sino dos o tres damas más.

Document number: 127; Extracted from:

http://www.elcultural.es/version_papel/CINE/3442/La_Locura_de_amor_de_un_a_reina

Example extracted from uaTenTen11:

(6) Більше голосів на з'їзді набрав пан Добкін.

Document number 4612; Extracted from:

http://eramedia.com.ua/article/199367-vladislav_lukyanov_nhto_ne_ochkuvav_scho_mi_vtratimo_krim/

