The Role of Intonation and Gesture in Mock vs. Genuine Impoliteness
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Shortly after Brown & Levinson (1987) released their groundbreaking work on politeness and the way politeness strategies are manifested in language, research began honing on the opposing reaction of politeness, that being impoliteness. Culpeper (1996, 2003, 2010) was one of the first in the field to expand upon Brown & Levinson’s framework to describe, and later extensively revise, the ways that impoliteness can be displayed. Within his theory, an important distinction was made between ‘genuine’ impoliteness, which is characterized by deliberately trying to harm the interlocutor’s face, and ‘mock’ impoliteness, superficial impoliteness that does not damage face. Although both types of impoliteness generally use the same lexical items, e.g. swear words (Stenström & Jörgensen, 2008) and slurs (Croom, 2011), the important distinction between the two is that mock impoliteness is used to maintain and improve a positive social relationship with those who are close to the speaker (Bernal, 2008; Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997; Kowalski, 2000; etc.). After this difference had been well established in the literature, the main focus became why speakers use mock impoliteness, how they use it and how their interlocutor interpreted it as mock and not genuine impoliteness. For example, current research (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006; Haugh & Bousfield, 2012) has mainly focused on the context of the situation as being the key to differentiating mock from genuine impoliteness, while linguistic factors such as prosody and gestures have been widely ignored. A few studies have treaded along this line, but they focused more on the use of prosody and gestures in expressing emotion (Culpeper, 2003; Ishi et al., 2008; Murray & Arnott, 1993). The present study examines to differentiate of mock vs. genuine impoliteness in Catalan based upon prosodic and gestural features. Five native speakers of Catalan were asked to complete a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) with 10 sentences, split evenly between situations which mock or genuine impoliteness could arise. The production data were then used in two perception experiments with native Catalan speakers, the first one examining whether participants could tell apart mock vs. genuine impoliteness on the basis of audio only, video only and combined audiovisual; the second experiment looked at to see if context could override the intended meaning of the utterance.

Sample DCT

**Genuine Impoliteness**
Heu quedat amb els amics d’un company de pis per anar al cinema. No els coneixes gaire, però n’hi ha un que sempre es fa el gracís, en Mateu. Mentre demanen les crispetes tu te’n vas al lavabo. Quan tornes tens una mica de paper de vàter enganxat a la sabata. Quan estàs arribant cap al grup en Mateu et crida i et diu rient:
“Què, has ressuscitat una mòmia? Ets un brut, tio”
Tu estàs molt emprenyat. Ara digue-li que calli d’una puta vegada

**Mock Impoliteness**
Has quedat amb els teus millors amics per anar al cinema. Mentre dos demanen les crispetes tu te’n vas al lavabo. Quan tornes tens una mica de paper de vàter enganxat a la sabata i et trobes amb el teu millor amic esperant-te, que et diu rient i fent broma:
“Què, has ressuscitat una mòmia? Ets un brut tio”
Tu li contestes fent broma que calli d’una puta vegada
References


