

A comparative analysis of the use of forms of address by Spanish and Polish university students

Martin Testa ^{ORCID}* & Sara Zakrzewska ^{ORCID}

University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

Abstract: Misunderstandings arising from differing forms of address can significantly impact language users' *face*. Spanish and Polish cultural preferences for informal T pronouns based on familiarity, and formal V pronouns based on respect, respectively, may contribute to such misunderstandings. This article aims to examine the usage of second person singular personal pronouns among Spanish and Polish university students. A sample of 79 students (N=40 from Poland, N=39 from Spain) was analysed in relation to their use of T/V pronouns across 15 contexts. The data was subjected to a battery of chi-square tests using SPSS v29. The results reveal distinct tendencies in the distribution of T/V pronouns, confirming prior observations that Spaniards employ T forms more frequently than Poles. These pragmatic differences may hinder communication between individuals from both countries, highlighting the importance of understanding cultural implications to promote effective and respectful interactions among Spanish and Polish speakers.

Keywords: *sociolinguistics, contrastive grammar, forms of address, courtesy, personal pronouns, Spanish language, Polish language.*

Análisis comparativo del uso de alocutivos por parte de estudiantes españoles y polacos

Resumen: Los malentendidos que pueden surgir debido al uso diferente de las formas de tratamiento pueden afectar seriamente la 'imagen' (ingl. *face*) de los hablantes de una determinada lengua. Muchos estudios sugieren que en España parece haber una preferencia por utilizar pronombres de tratamiento basados en la familiaridad que reducen la distancia (pronombres T), mientras que en Polonia existe una mayor tendencia a utilizar pronombres de tratamiento basados en la cortesía (pronombres V). Este estudio se propone examinar las diferencias en el uso de los pronombres personales de segunda persona del singular entre estudiantes universitarios españoles y polacos. Para ello, se examinó una muestra de 79 estudiantes universitarios de Polonia (N = 40) y España (N = 39) en su uso de los pronombres T y V en 15 contextos diferentes. Los datos se analizaron mediante una serie de pruebas de la χ^2 utilizando el programa SPSS v29. Los resultados muestran diferentes tendencias en la distribución de los pronombres T y V, así como también confirman observaciones anteriores de que los españoles utilizan más frecuentemente las formas T que los polacos. Tales diferencias pragmáticas pueden dificultar la comunicación entre interlocutores de ambos países, por lo que es crucial concienciar sobre las implicaciones culturales de estas diferencias en pos de una comunicación efectiva y respetuosa entre hablantes de español y polaco.

Palabras clave: *sociolingüística, gramática contrastiva, alocutivos, cortesía, pronombres personales, lengua española, lengua polaca.*

How to cite: Testa, M., & Zakrzewska, S. (2026). A comparative analysis of the use of forms of address by Spanish and Polish university students. *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada*, 39(1), 332-351. <https://doi.org/10.58859/resla.835>

*Corresponding author: m.testa@uw.edu.pl

1. Introduction

It is widely recognised that every country's unique customs and traditions are reflected in their language and communication styles. This cultural diversity often manifests in how different communities use forms of address, an aspect of language that can significantly impact social interactions. As noted by Goffman (1955) and Brown & Gilman (1960), misunderstandings arising from these varied uses can critically affect the *face* of language users. This issue becomes particularly pronounced in professional and educational settings, where strict hierarchies necessitate adherence to specific forms of address, including professional titles, academic degrees, and appropriate pronouns. Such nuances in linguistic etiquette can play a pivotal role in maintaining or disrupting the social harmony within these environments (cfr. Baran & Urbaniak, 2021; Czarnecka, 2023).

The complexity of these interactions is further highlighted when considering cross-cultural exchanges. Cultures that are geographically or ideologically close may still have vastly different interpretations of politeness and respect in language use. For instance, what is deemed polite in one culture could be perceived as a *face-threatening act* in another, depending on the cultural values associated with specific linguistic forms. This contrast in cultural norms is exemplified in the differing usage of pronouns in Poland and Spain. After 1989, Poland witnessed a shift toward adopting Western standards of courtesy, integrating American influences with traditional Western European practices, as observed by Marcjanik (2017).

Currently, as members of the European Union, Poland and Spain potentially share some sociocultural norms. Programs such as Erasmus+ facilitate cultural and linguistic exchanges, and the dynamics of the single market may result in more standardised communication practices in professional settings. These factors may influence the choice of address forms to achieve a balance between courtesy, formality, and communicative efficiency within a diverse and multilingual context. Nevertheless, the strategies for using address pronouns diverge considerably cross-linguistically, despite both Polish and Spanish distinguishing between informal and formal forms.

In Spain (except for some parts of Andalusia) there seems to be a preference for using informal pronouns of address based on *familiarity* (hereinafter referred to as T pronouns) that reduce distance (Calderón Campos, 2010, p. 234), while in Poland there is a greater tendency to use formal pronouns of address based on *politeness* (hereinafter referred to as V pronouns) (Lisowska, 2017, p. 410). In Spain, it is common to address people informally in contexts where in Poland it would be considered impolite or even offensive. On the other hand, Poles use V pronouns in situations where a Spaniard might feel uncomfortable, perceiving it as an initiative of distance or a suggestion of inequality.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the differences in the use of forms of address by Polish and Spanish university students. For this purpose, data from 79 university students (40 Polish and 39 Spanish) will be analysed using a battery of chi-square tests to determine whether there are significant differences in the use of pronouns between these two groups.

This article is structured as follows. The literature review is divided into two main subsections: sociolinguistic considerations of forms of address (§2.1), where we explore the general theoretical framework, and studies on Spanish and Polish forms of address (§2.2), which highlights specific research contributions in these languages. Next, the methodology section (§3) details the approaches and methods employed to gather and analyse the data. The results section (§4) then presents the findings of our study, which are subsequently discussed in §5. Finally, some concluding remarks are provided in §6.

2. Literature review

2.1 Sociolinguistic considerations of forms of address

Forms of address refer to the different ways individuals are addressed or referred to in different contexts, such as formal or informal settings. Forms of address encompass the language, titles, and terms used to address interlocutors, taking into account cultural norms, social relationships, and professional environments. David Crystal (2010, p. 44) explains that in contemporary English, “the basic choice is between first name (FN) or title with last name (TLN), but several other conventions are possible in certain contexts, such as the use of LN in business or military settings (*Come in, Smith...*), or the use of abbreviations (*Is JM in?*)”. However, many languages offer a remarkable variety of forms of address to choose from.

Crystal reminds us of the classic work by Evans-Pritchard (1948), who studied the Nuer people of Sudan. This people have a complex address system that reflects their social structure. Individuals are given personal names at birth, referring to birthplace or events, but these names are only used by close relatives and friends in adulthood. Maternal grandparents give a second personal name for use by maternal relatives. Twins have special names indicating their birth order. Context plays a role in addressing individuals (such as through the use of ‘ceremonial names’, ‘ox-names’,¹ and ‘dance-names’), and so does kinship:

A man would normally be addressed using the name of his father (his *patronymic*). But a man visiting maternal relatives will be greeted primarily by his mother’s name (his *matronymic*). The naming of people after their eldest child (*teknonymy*) is also heard, especially when talking to in-laws. For example, a woman’s status in her husband’s home is based on her having borne him a child, and this is the link that binds her to her husband’s social group: It is therefore natural for that group to address her using the child’s name. (Crystal, 2010, p. 44)

In most European languages, however, forms of address tend to be classified as either T or V forms, after Latin *tu* and *vos* (Brown & Gilman, 1960), as in French *tu/vous*, German *du/Sie*, Early Modern English *thou/ye*, and, for the purpose of our study, Spanish *tú/usted*, and Polish *Ty/Pan(i)*. In Latin, *tu* was used to address a single person, whereas *vos* was

¹ Among the Nuer, “[w]hen a boy is initiated to manhood, he is given an ox” (Crystal, 2010, p. 44).

used for addressing multiple people. However, during the 4th century AD, addressing the Roman Emperor with the plural form *vos* became customary, leading to the upper classes exclusively using symmetrical V forms as a sign of respect (Crystal, 2010, p. 45).

Although Polish has only one address system consisting of the pronouns *Ty* (informal) and *Pan/Pani* (formal; m., f.) for the second person singular, and *Wy* (informal) and *Pan/Pani/Państwo* (formal; m., f., mixed) for the second person plural² (Lisowska, 2017, p. 405), Spanish, due to its wide diatopic variation, distinguishes up to four macro-systems (see Table 1).³

Table 1. Second-person singular pronouns in Spanish (adapted from Fontanella de Weinberg, 1999).

System		Pronouns (Sg.)	Used In...
I	T	<i>tú</i>	Spain
	V	<i>usted</i>	
II*	T	<i>tú</i>	South of Spain, parts of Latin America
	V	<i>usted</i>	
III	a	T	Andean region, parts of Central America
		V	
	b	T	Uruguay
		V	
IV	T	<i>vos</i>	Argentina, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Paraguay
	V	<i>usted</i>	

*System I differs from System II solely in its plural forms: *vosotros* (T) and *ustedes* (V) (I); exclusive use of *ustedes* (II).

Nevertheless, pronoun choice is not solely determined by a strict formal distinction between T and V forms. Instead, it depends on the intended meaning, implicatures, and the influence of social and cultural factors on communication, all of which falls under the domain of pragmatics. Aside from variation induced by time (diachronic), social groups (diastratic), geography (diatopic), and register (diaphasic) (as discussed by Coseriu, 1978, pp. 223-224), the choice of pronoun may also be influenced by strategies of *convergence*, such as adapting to the tone set by the interlocutor when initiating the conversation (Schwenter, 1993, p. 143).

Yet, pronoun choice is not limited to these factors alone. In certain cases, political influences can also compel language users to adhere to specific linguistic forms. Brown & Gilman (1960, p. 264) point out that, in France, “the nonreciprocal power semantic was dominant until the Revolution when the Committee for the Public Safety condemned

² An anonymous reviewer highlights that the distinction between *Wy* (T form) and *Państwo* (V form) in Polish university classrooms can be more complex than traditionally understood. In efforts to bridge the gap with students, academic teachers sometimes adopt a hybrid approach: addressing students with *Państwo*, yet conjugating verbs in the *Wy* (cfr. *Państwo robią → Państwo robicie*), resulting in a combination that is slightly less formal. Regrettably, our study was limited to the analysis of second person singular pronouns and did not explore these plural forms.

³ In this paper we focus on the pragmatic aspects of Polish and Spanish forms of address. For morphosyntactic details and historical perspectives, readers are referred to Łaziński (2006) and Lisowska (2017) for Polish, and Calderón Campos (2010) and Uber (2016) for Spanish.

the use of V as a feudal remnant and ordered a universal reciprocal T”, i.e. as a sign of *fraternité*. In 1938, the fascist regime in the Kingdom of Italy officially prohibited the use of *lei* in favor of *voi* due to considering the first as a foreignism (similarly, the use of *voi* was mostly abandoned in the post-war period, likely due to its associations with the fascist regime) (Treccani, 2012). Weissenböck (2006, p. 20.4) explains that the collapse of the Soviet Union led to changes in the Ukrainian address system. The use of first name and patronymic, “strongly associated with Russian and Russia”, has significantly decreased in Western Ukraine; instead, the Polish form of address (*Pan/i*) has been reintroduced, although the use of patronymics still persists in educational and work settings.

Pragmatics also plays a crucial role in determining politeness in communication. In interpersonal relationships, politeness is essential for speakers to maintain a positive image of themselves, namely a positive *face* (Goffman, 1955): the use of familiar T pronouns can sometimes be perceived as disrespectful; on the other hand, the use of V pronouns may also make the interlocutors uncomfortable or even offend them, as it can be interpreted as creating a distance or signalling that the speaker considers them to be older. That is why every communicative act represents a *face-threatening act* (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In general, the use of T pronouns implies proximity, solidarity, and intimacy with the interlocutor, while the use of V pronouns indicates hierarchical, social or age-related distance (Calderón Campos, 2010, p. 233). However, although the T-V difference may be simple to recognise in terms of morphology, these forms “follow a complex set of rules that foreigners never find easy to master. Terms such as ‘familiar’ and ‘polite’ capture aspects of their use, but are inadequate summaries of all their social functions, and ignore important differences between languages” (Crystal, 2010, p. 45).

According to Brown & Gilman (1960), pronoun choice in language is influenced by two semantic systems, namely *power* and *solidarity*. The power semantic reflects nonreciprocal relationships based on control and superiority, where the superior uses T and receives V (i.e. asymmetrical). The solidarity semantic, on the other hand, involves symmetrical relations based on shared characteristics or like-mindedness, allowing for the use of mutual T (i.e. symmetrical). Power is determined by factors such as physical strength, wealth, age, and institutional roles, while solidarity is shaped by attributes like political affiliation, family, religion, profession, sex, and birthplace. Nevertheless, as Brown & Gilman (1960, p. 258) point out, “[n]ot every personal attribute [such as eye colour] counts in determining whether two people are solidary enough to use the mutual T. (...) The similarities that matter seem to be those that make for like-mindedness or similar behaviour dispositions”. These systems – both power and solidarity – play an important role in shaping pronoun choice, which highlights the social dynamics and relationships embedded in language usage.

Some authors have attempted to create mechanisms that can evaluate the intricate process of selecting pronouns using simplified ‘yes/no’ flowcharts. Susan Ervin-Tipp’s (1972) model is a well-known example for American English and it considers factors such as familiarity, age, social status, gender, and whether or not the speaker knows the name

of the addressee. Crystal (2010, p. 44) warns, however, that “[t]he knowledge structure represented is that of an American academic; but dialect differences, idiosyncratic preferences, and other variants are not taken into account”. Diane Uber (2016) has put forward a system for Spanish, which is presented in Table 2. While charts can be highly practical, they often assume an ‘ideal reference speaker’ and may not fully capture the diversity within a language.⁴

Table 2. Variables in the choice of pronoun in Spanish (transl. and adapt. from Uber, 2016, p. 627).

Variable	T	V
Age of interlocutor	Same or younger	Older
Sex of interlocutor	Same (esp. among women)	Opposite
Profession of interlocutor	Same or ‘lower’	‘Higher’
Rank of interlocutor (workplace)	Same or ‘lower’	‘Higher’
Colleagues?	Yes	No
Known for over a month?	Yes	No
Friends?	Yes	No
Is the interlocutor a client?	No	Yes
Type of workplace	Factory, office, workshop	Customer service, financial
Topic of conversation	Everyday life, social	Contracts, agreements, prices
By phone?	No (before id. the interlocutor)	Yes
Personal style	(individual)	(individual)

Traditional theories of politeness (e.g. Brown & Gilman, 1960; Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987) have been widely recognised but also faced substantial criticism, particularly in cross-cultural contexts (see Eelen, 2001, for an overview).⁵ Wierzbicka (1985) and Ogiermann (2009) criticise these theories for their Anglo-Saxon bias, noting that direct forms like imperatives, considered impolite in these models, are often used in polite requests in other languages like Polish. This challenges the assumed correlation between indirectness and politeness, suggesting that politeness is significantly influenced by cultural norms. In fact, Blum-Kulka (1987) argues that directness in communication can also be regarded as a form of politeness because it clearly conveys the speaker’s intentions, thereby saving the interpreter’s time. However, Ogiermann (2009, pp. 191–192, and the references therein) points out that traditional theories of politeness often fail to address the relationship between directness and honesty – this is particularly relevant in cultures such as Russia, where indirectness may be perceived as deceitful or as a waste of the interlocutor’s time.

⁴ Furthermore, Ervin-Tripp’s model fails to consider *diamesia*, which, as we will see in §§4 and 5, can be a significant variable to consider.

⁵ Despite these criticisms, Ogiermann (2009, p. 210) acknowledges the enduring importance of Brown & Levinson’s framework for cross-cultural analysis. While the concept of politeness as a dynamic and conversationally constructed notion offers insights into the diverse uses of language, Brown & Levinson’s approach, despite being static and speaker-oriented, has been instrumental in identifying different strategies across languages.

Similarly, Diana Bravo also criticises the Anglo-centered bias in traditional studies of politeness and face. In her work, [Bravo \(2003\)](#) introduces the concepts of the image of autonomy (Spa. *imagen de autonomía*) and the image of affiliation (Spa. *imagen de afiliación*). These concepts demonstrate how politeness and face in communication can be expressed through a blend of individuality (autonomy) and community belonging (affiliation). Particularly in Spanish negotiation contexts, as Bravo explains, personal territory is de-emphasised in favor of familiarity and interpersonal trust.⁶ This approach often leads to the use of traditionally informal pronouns, such as the T forms, to establish rapport. In other words, these pronouns are employed to enhance “solidarity between the speaker and the addressee” and to foster “a mutual atmosphere of kindness and goodwill” ([Bhatti & Žegarac, 2012](#), p. 284, and the references therein).⁷ Similarly, [Ferrari \(2014](#), p. 251) comments, referencing [Molinelli \(2010\)](#), with regard to modern Italian. Ferrari observes that in scenarios like a university professor e-mailing a colleague they have never met, the choice of the informal *tu* is guided more by the identity of the social role than by the degree of familiarity.

[Wierzbicka \(2016\)](#) rightly observes that an analysis of language use across Europe can reveal complex and intricate webs of cultural assumptions and attitudes. This phenomenon accounts for why English words such as *respect* do not have exact semantic equivalents in other languages, consequently fostering an Anglocentric perspective of these concepts. In her exploration of Natural Semantic Metalanguage, [Wierzbicka \(2016](#), p. 39) identifies two distinct forms of ‘respect’: ‘public regard’ and ‘personal respect’. For instance, the use of German pronouns *Herr/Frau* appears to embody the notion of public regard, in contrast to Polish pronouns *Pan/Pani*, which seem to reflect personal respect. Wierzbicka adds that this distinction is evident in the German preference for combining forms of address with surnames (e.g., *Frau Schulz/*Eva*) and the Polish tendency to pair them with first names (e.g., *Pani *Kowalska/Ewa*), suggesting a personal relationship that is compatible with the use of a first name (also see [Marcjanik, 2017](#), p. 34).

Among other proposals to explain the choice of forms of address, [Marcjanik \(2002\)](#) introduces three principles of politeness, namely *symmetry* (reacting in expected forms), *solidarity* (implying reciprocity and cooperation), and *subordination* (involving downgrading compliments and self-deprecation).⁸ These principles offer a contrast to the traditional dichotomy of *power* and *solidarity* proposed by Brown & Gilman. Moreover, the categories proposed by both Marcjanik and Brown & Gilman should be considered dynamic, influenced by ongoing societal shifts in perceptions of social hierarchy (cfr. [Baran & Urbaniak, 2021](#), p. 142). Baran & Urbaniak argue that classical power relations in society have evolved, and today, despite differences in social hierarchy, speakers often use formal

⁶ For [Bravo \(2003](#), p. 99), in terms of the Spanish language: “[l]a confianza interpersonal no requiere que se compartan los deseos del interlocutor, ni que se aprueben sus características de personalidad sino que se lo acepte así tal cual es aunque se lo critique ‘abiertamente’ o se disienta con lo que piensa (también ‘abiertamente’); es más importante conocer a una persona que aprobarla”.

⁷ [Wierzbicka \(2016](#), p. 40) contends that in Polish it is the repetitive use of *Pan/i* that functions as a method for building rapport, since repeating *Pan/i* not only conveys but also reinforces “good feelings” towards the addressee, thereby enhancing the warmth of the conversation.

⁸ In [Marcjanik \(2002\)](#): *symetryczność zachowań grzecznościowych; solidarność z partnerem; bycie podwładnym*.

address forms (such as *usted* or *Pan/i*) symmetrically. This reflects a shift from the typical asymmetrical power relations in most social situations, though they still exist in specific contexts, such as adult-child communication (Baran & Urbaniak, 2021, pp. 141–142).

Finally, the relationship between sociological identity and forms of address merits some attention. Brown & Gilman's (1960, p. 275) classic study observed that radical students were more inclined to use T forms compared to their conservative counterparts. These findings led them to suggest that forms of address might serve as indicators of broader social and political attitudes. While hypotheses of this kind may be difficult to confirm, Crystal (2010, p. 45) states that they "are well worth following up, as they bear directly on the task of establishing the basis of sociolinguistic identity". Interestingly, Weissenböck (2006) also attributes the variation in the selection of forms of address in Ukrainian to individuals' differing orientations towards either traditional or liberal values.

2.2 Studies on Spanish and Polish forms of address

In the context of our study, while European Spanish is often considered more prone⁹ to the use of T pronouns than Polish (Adamska & Waluch-de la Torre, 2005; Lisowska, 2017), Czarnecka (2023) points out that in recent years, the symmetrical system of solidarity (T-T) is becoming more common also in Poland, either due to the horizontalisation of social relationships (Sikora, 2011) or the 'Americanization' of discourse (Ożóg, 2014) (cfr. also Lisowska, 2017). Calderón Campos (2010, p. 234) claims the same for Spanish. This phenomenon began to emerge in the first half of the twentieth century, although its greatest boom has been observed in the last five decades (NGLE, 2009, p. 322).

While there are many studies on the evolution of pronouns of address from a monolingual perspective for both Spanish (e.g. Blas Arroyo, 1994; Györi & Komlódi, 1996; Hummel et al., 2010; Lara Bermejo, 2021) and Polish (e.g. Dąbrowska, 2006; Huszcza, 2006; Niżegorodcew, 2008; Sikora, 2011), as well as the difficulties they pose in the teaching of Spanish as a foreign language (e.g. Ramos González, 2010), especially in closely related languages such as Portuguese (e.g. Vigón Artos, 2006) and Italian (e.g. Bettin, 2022), much less exploration has been done regarding the pragmatic differences in the use of these pronouns between Spanish and languages with greater typological distance, such as Polish.

For contemporary Spanish, Calderón Campos (2010, p. 234) observes a preference for the use of *tú*, particularly among young people and those with a higher sociocultural level. It has become common to use the T pronoun within family relationships and among friends, which was contrary to the norm until the early twentieth century. Moreover, the use of *usted* (V pronoun) has been abandoned in healthcare institutions, and there is an increasing trend of using the familiar form of address between teachers and students (at

⁹ This is interesting from a historical perspective since in the seventeenth century, Francisco Sobrino (1697, p. 36; in Sáez Rivera, 2006) noted that Spaniards 'overdid' courtesy forms. Also, in the same century, the use of *usted* seems to have influenced the spread of the third-person singular pronoun *Lei* as a courtesy form in Italian, instead of the second-person plural *voi* (cfr. Treccani n.d., s.v. lei); conversely, the Italian expression *vostra signoria* seems to have influenced the development of the Spanish forms *vuestra señoría* and *usía* during the Renaissance (see Zieliński, 2018, p. 351).

all levels of education). It is worth noting, though, that the use of *tú* can be considered offensive when addressing “un dependiente o a un camarero adulto al que no se conoce, o a un cliente adulto igualmente desconocido” (NGLE, 2009, p. 322).

For Polish, Marek Łaziński (2006, p. 112; in Lisowska, 2017) observes that the use of *Ty* is reserved for family members and close friends, although it can happen that even people who maintain a close relationship for years continue to address each other using the formal *Pan(i)* pronoun. In the work environment, it is very common to use the form *Pan(i)* accompanied by the person’s profession or position (e.g. *Pani Dyrektor* ‘Mrs. Director’, *Panie Redaktorze* ‘Mr. Editor’). Another relatively new form of address is the use of *Pan(i)* followed by the person’s name in the vocative case (e.g. *Pani Natalio*, *Panie Kamilu*), which is characteristic of upper classes, although some people perceive it as ‘too familiar’ and inappropriate, especially with strangers (Łaziński, 2006, p. 104). One of the most striking differences compared to Spanish concerns the family domain: while the use of the T form dominates in Spanish, in Polish it is very common to use the third-person singular with personal nouns (instead of *Pan(i)*), e.g. *Czy chce ciocia herbaty?* (‘Would Aunt like some tea?’), *Pięknie babcia wygląda* (‘Grandma looks beautiful’) (cfr. Łaziński, 2006, p. 17).

Baran & Urbaniak (2021) explore the forms of address in Spanish, Italian, and Polish languages, drawing insights from Bravo (2003). They find that despite typological kinship, these languages exhibit distinct differences in their address systems, with Italian and Polish being more similar to each other than to Spanish. They observe that Spanish society favors solidarity pronouns, indicative of an equality model in which *tú* is the unmarked form, whereas *usted* is marked for distance (Roselló Verdeguer, 2018), while Polish and Italian maintain hierarchical importance, though contemporary trends show some deviations from traditional models in the latter two (Baran & Urbaniak, 2021, p. 155). They also note that in Polish V-forms are also used in public surroundings, such as bars and shops. However, there is a noticeable tendency among the youth to prefer T-forms in these contexts. In contrast, in Peninsular Spanish, the level of acquaintance with the interlocutor does not seem to play a significant role in the choice of form.¹⁰

Furthermore, Baran & Urbaniak (2021, p. 149, and the references therein) observe that in Polish academic settings, the language system is highly asymmetrical. This is particularly apparent in educational contexts where students are obliged to use both pronominal forms of reverence and academic titles. Bogusławski (1985) describes this phenomenon as a Polish ‘obsession with titles’ (Polish: *tytułomania*), a view also discussed by Marcjanik (2017, p. 36). However, Łaziński (2006, pp. 76-78) notes a decline in the use of academic titles compared to the past. In contrast, Spanish academic environments, especially in higher education institutions like universities, do not typically require the formal *usted*. Sampedro Mella (2021) points out that both students and teachers commonly use the

¹⁰ Moreover, Baran & Urbaniak (2021) emphasise the importance of studying interaction in different contexts. They illustrate this with an academic scenario where two professors, equal in hierarchy and typically using solidarity T-forms, switch to V-forms during a faculty reunion, adhering to commonly accepted verbal behaviour.

informal *tú*, with *usted* reserved for interactions with highly respected or significantly older professors. This reflects a more egalitarian approach in these educational settings (Baran & Urbaniak, 2021, p. 149).

In a recent study, Czarnecka (2023) analysed a university sample of 200 individuals (50 Polish students, 50 Spanish students, 50 Polish professors, and 50 Spanish professors) and found differences in the use and perception of T/V pronouns in both countries. Among the most striking responses in that study, some Spanish students (although few) claimed to use the informal address even with the dean of their faculty, something unthinkable in the Polish university context.¹¹ However, without falling into extremes, the majority of both Spanish students and professors consulted stated that university-level *tuteo* (i.e. use of T forms) is normal and, in fact, strengthens interpersonal bonds. Nevertheless, opinions are not unanimous: some consider the use of T forms at university appropriate only among students, while others are in favor of ‘widespread informality’ as a means of fostering interpersonal bonds between students and professors (i.e., they view the use of V pronouns as artificial). Additionally, most Spanish professors do not consider the use of informal address as a lack of respect, while most Polish professors do.

On the contrary, most of the Polish professors in Czarnecka’s study claim that university-level informality is unacceptable¹² and explain that they tend to maintain the use of formal pronouns even in symmetrical relationships (e.g. with other professors), unlike their Spanish counterparts. Many of them emphasise that informality is not symmetrical: only professors can address their students using informal pronouns, not the other way around. Additionally, a vast majority of the Polish students in the study appear to be much more hesitant to use familiar pronouns in a university setting and, in fact, prefer to be addressed as *Pan/Pani*, unlike Spanish students.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of these studies analyse the differences from a qualitative perspective or, even when they mention certain quantitative aspects, they are limited to descriptive analysis (percentages, averages, etc.). That is why the main objective of this study will be to attempt to determine if there are *significant* differences in the use of T/V pronouns by Polish and Spanish university students.

3. Methodology

The sample of the present study consists of 79 university students from Poland (N = 40) and Spain (N = 39) (see Table 3).¹³

¹¹ The following statement by a Spanish student is striking: “a la hora de hablar con un profesor que no conoces, tendemos a tutear. Nos cuesta llamar a las personas por *usted*” (Czarnecka, 2023, p. 20).

¹² A Polish professor suggests that, in reality, some professors use *Ty* to address students, although: “w polskiej kulturze i języku (...) jedyną formą poprawną jest zwrotne *Pan/i*” (‘in Polish culture and language (...) the only correct form is the reciprocal use of *Pan/i*’) (Czarnecka, 2023, p. 24).

¹³ Unfortunately, an in-depth analysis of the participants’ places of origin is not feasible in our study, as nearly all Polish participants (N = 39) listed *Polska* (‘Poland’) as their place of origin, with only one specifying *Warszawa* (‘Warsaw’). Regarding the Spanish group, the places of origin reported were more varied, including Valencia (N = 11), Madrid (N = 5), España (N = 3), Málaga (N = 3), Alicante (N = 3), Almería (N = 3), Barcelona (N = 2), País Vasco (N = 2), Elche (N = 2), Salamanca (N = 1), Castellón (N = 1), Cádiz (N = 1), Bilbao (N = 1), and Pamplona (N = 1).

Table 3. Sample of the present study.

	POL (N = 40)	ESP (N = 39)
Age	min. 19, max. 24 (\bar{x} = 21.45, median 21)	min. 19, max. 23 (\bar{x} = 21.33, median 21)
Gender	female (N = 30) male (N = 10)	female (N = 36) male (N = 3)
Studies	Social Sciences (N = 22) STEMs (N = 18)	Social Sciences (N = 27) STEMs (N = 12)

In order to analyse the use of T/V pronouns by Spanish and Polish individuals, two analogous surveys were prepared, one in Spanish and one in Polish. The surveys consisted of fifteen brief questions about how participants address different groups of people (see Q1-Q15, below) and two additional questions regarding the perception of polite and informal forms.

The use of pronouns was analysed in the following contexts: (Q1) parents, (Q2) close relatives, (Q3) distant relatives, (Q4) young friends, (Q5) young acquaintances, (Q6) young strangers, (Q7) adult friends, (Q8) adult acquaintances, (Q9) adult strangers, (Q10) elderly acquaintances, (Q11) elderly strangers, (Q12) young professors in person, (Q13) young professors by e-mail, (Q14) senior professors in person, and (Q15) senior professors by e-mail. For convenience, these questions were grouped under the following labels: FAMILY (Q1, Q2, Q3), YOUTHS (non-family) (Q4, Q5, Q6), ADULTS (non-family) (Q7, Q8, Q9), ELDERLY (Q10, Q11) and PROFESSORS (Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15). Finally, two questions were aimed at evaluating the relationship between nationality and the perception of T forms as a lack of respect (Q16), as well as between nationality and V forms as a marker of distance (Q17).

The data was collected through Google Forms and shared on various social media platforms. Once the surveys were completed, the data was transferred to an Excel document to be later imported and analysed using SPSS v29 software for iOS (IBM, 2022).

The data collected meet the assumptions of the χ^2 test (cfr. McHugh, 2013), i.e. the data were obtained through random selection, the variables are nominal, the study groups are independent (i.e. Polish and Spanish), and each subject contributes data to only one cell in the χ^2 table.

4. Results

When addressing their *parents* (Q1), Spaniards (100%) were more likely to use a T form than Poles (97.5%). However, this difference was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = .987, $p < .320$. A similar situation was found when evaluating the relationship between nationality and the use of T forms when addressing *close relatives* (Q2). Spaniards (100%) were more likely to use a T form than Poles (90%). In this case, the difference was significant,¹⁴

¹⁴ The Continuity Correction value suggests the relationship is not significant, $p = .130$, so this result should be taken with caution.

χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 4.108, $p < .043$. Finally, with regard to *distant relatives* (Q3) T forms were used by a higher percentage of Spaniards (94.9%) compared to Poles (75%). A χ^2 test of independence revealed that this relationship was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 6.053, $p < .014$.

When addressing *young friends* (Q4), all participants in both groups use T forms (Pol. *Ty*, Spa. *tú*). On the other hand, with regard to *young acquaintances* (Q5), Spaniards (97.4%) were more likely to use a T form than Poles (65%); the difference was significant χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 13.506, $p < .001$. Finally, a χ^2 test of independence was performed to evaluate the relationship between nationality and the use of T-V forms with *young strangers* (Q6). The relationship between these variables was significant χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 24.300, $p < .001$. Spaniards (66.7%) were more likely to use a T form than were Poles (12.5%).

With regard to *adult friends* (Q7), T forms were used by a much higher percentage of Spaniards (94.9%) compared to Poles (32.5%). A χ^2 test of independence revealed that this relationship is significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 33.064, $p < .001$. Another χ^2 test of independence found a significant relationship, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 24.878, $p < .001$, between nationality and the use of T forms when addressing *adult acquaintances* (Q8); again, Spaniards (64.1%) were more likely than Poles (10%) to use T forms. Finally, also when addressing *adult strangers* (Q9) were Spaniards (33.3%) significantly more likely to use T forms than were Poles (2.5%); χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 12.875, $p < .001$.

With regard to *elderly acquaintances* (Q10), Spaniards (46.2%) were more likely to use T forms than were Poles (0%), and this difference was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 23.909, $p < .001$. In the case of *elderly strangers* (Q11), although the difference was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 1.039, $p = .308$, Spaniards (2.6%) were still slightly more likely to use T forms than were Poles (0%).

At university, T forms were used by a higher percentage of Spaniards (76.9%) compared to Poles (2.5%) when addressing *young professors in person* (Q12). A χ^2 test of independence found this difference to be significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 45.874, $p < .001$. Another χ^2 test of independence was performed in order to evaluate whether this difference held when addressing *young professors by e-mail* (Q13). Again, Spaniards (28.2%) were more likely to use a T form than were Poles (0%), and this difference was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 13.107, $p < .001$. When addressing *senior professors in person* (Q14), T forms were used by a higher percentage of Spaniards (30.8%) compared to Poles (0%), and this difference was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 14.512, $p < .001$. However, when it came to addressing *senior professors by e-mail* (Q15), although Spaniards (7.7%) were more likely to use T forms than were Poles (0%), a χ^2 test of independence revealed that this difference was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 3.198, $p = .074$.

Finally, a χ^2 test of independence was performed to examine the relation between nationality and the perception of T forms as a lack of respect (Q16). The relation between these variables was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 79) = 2.206, $p = .137$. Nevertheless, Poles (52.5%) were more likely to consider the pronoun *Ty* as a lack of respect than were Spaniards

(35.9%) with the pronoun *tú*. On the other hand, V forms were considered as a marker of distance (Q17) by a higher percentage of Spaniards (92.3%) compared to Poles (52.5%), and this difference was found to be significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 15.574, p = < .001$.

5. Discussion

Our results confirm the trends in pronoun usage found in previous research (e.g. [Adamska & Waluch-de la Torre, 2005](#); [Calderón Campos, 2010](#); [Czarnecka, 2023](#); [Lisowska, 2017](#)), highlighting a marked preference for T pronouns among Spaniards and V pronouns among Poles, with notable exceptions based on social context and the relationship between interlocutors. Moreover, the results indicate that the difference is significant in almost all cases, except when addressing: parents, close friends, elderly strangers, and senior professors via email (as well as in terms of the perception of T pronouns as a lack of respect).

The significance of these differences becomes particularly evident when considering [Goffman's \(1955\)](#) theory of face-work, which suggests that linguistic choices serve to navigate and negotiate social identity and interpersonal relationships. The preference for T pronouns among Spaniards can be interpreted as a manifestation of solidarity and an attempt to minimise social distance between interlocutors. This is consistent with the broader Spanish cultural orientation towards fostering an image of *affiliation* and informality in social relations (cfr. [Bravo, 2003](#)). On the other hand, the Polish preference for V pronouns, even in contexts where Spaniards might opt for T forms, reflects a cultural emphasis on respect, formality, and maintaining a certain level of *autonomy* (cfr. [Bravo, 2003](#)). This suggests that in Polish interactions, face-work often involves upholding the social hierarchy and showing deference, especially in relationships characterised by asymmetry or where the social distance is greater.

Furthermore, there are certain groups of individuals whom Spaniards address using the T pronoun, whereas Poles consistently use the V pronoun when referring to them. When it comes to addressing the elderly (acquaintances and strangers), young professors via email, senior professors in person, and older professors via email, none of the Polish respondents used *Ty*, whereas some of the Spanish respondents reported using the *tú* pronoun.

It is worth noting that a Polish respondent mentioned using the third-person singular form when addressing their own parents. While this does not directly correspond to the V pronoun *Pan(i)*, it is still considered a form of courtesy (e.g. *Czy mama chce...?* 'does mom want...?').¹⁵ Therefore, we have coded this response as V. Similarly, we have applied the same coding for responses that indicate the use of the third person singular when referring to close and distant family members. Nevertheless, with close individuals such as family or close friends, both nationalities prefer T pronouns. The significant differences begin to emerge when it comes to distant relatives, where Poles more often choose V forms

¹⁵ An anonymous reviewer suggests that the use of third-person pronouns in the family domain, a custom mostly familiar among older generations who addressed their parents in this manner, is no longer common. This topic merits further research.

which, as we have seen, do not necessarily involve the use of *Pan(i)*, but rather other strategies such as the use of lexical forms (e.g. *babcia, mama, wujek*) accompanied by verbs conjugated in the third person singular.

It is noteworthy that the Polish courtesy treatment extends to young individuals as well (especially strangers or acquaintances), meaning that it applies even among peers. In the question regarding distant young individuals (such as neighbours), only one Spanish respondent stated that they use *usted* (V), whereas among the Polish respondents, over one-third of the answers were *Pan/Pani* (V). This suggests that even among individuals of the same age, distancing strategies are much more frequently used by Polish respondents. The Polish tendency to extend courtesy forms to young people, including their peers, can be seen as a protective measure for the speaker's and the addressee's face, ensuring that respect is communicated and that social boundaries are acknowledged.

Furthermore, the usage of pronouns can be dynamic. In fact, in the question regarding the form used with young professors (via email and in person), a Spanish informant responded that they use *usted* but added that it sometimes 'depends on the professor stating how they would like to be addressed'. On the other hand, this seems to be only applicable to 'young' professors, indicating that age (and not just social status) may play a significant role when selecting a pronoun for Spanish students – in the case of Polish respondents, status appears to be of greater importance.

The university context is particularly interesting, as a large majority of Spanish respondents use the informal *tú* form with young professors, while only one Polish respondent chose the informal *Ty* form in the same question. This practice among Spanish students could be seen as an attempt to construct a collegial and less hierarchical relationship with their instructors, thereby fostering a learning environment characterised by mutual respect and approachability. Conversely, the formal address by Polish students, regardless of the professor's age, underscores a cultural prioritisation of respect and formality in academic settings, aimed at protecting the professor's social face. As we have seen in §2, in Polish culture, a formal treatment is adopted towards university professors and school teachers. It should be borne in mind that at Polish universities, the pronoun *Pan(i)* is often used next to professional titles, such as *Pani Profesor* ('Mrs. Professor') and *Panie Doktorze* ('Mr. Doctor'). In fact, two Polish respondents specified that they use the form *Pan(i) + title*. However, one of them uses titles only with senior professors, while the other does not use them with young professors 'in person'. The rest of the respondents did not specify, but it is understood that they apply the same rule. Additionally, one respondent uses the form *Pan(i) + title* exclusively in email communication, both with young and senior professors.

Moreover, while the use of Spanish *tú* decreases significantly with senior professors, the already extremely rare use of Polish *Ty* with young professors completely disappears with senior professors. Another interesting aspect is that there is a tendency for Spaniards to switch from T to V when it comes to communication via email, which suggests that Spaniards perceive email contact as more formal than face-to-face interactions (cfr.

Czarnecka, 2023).¹⁶ This shift from T to V pronouns in email communications with professors signals an understanding of the digital medium as a more formal context, where the preservation of the addressee's face requires a more formal mode of address.

It is also worth mentioning that one respondent (POL40) specifically mentioned using V pronouns when addressing Polish professors but T pronouns when addressing foreign professors. This behaviour reveals an aspect of face-work that is sensitive to the cultural background of the interlocutor, which indicates a strategic adjustment of face-saving techniques to align with the cultural expectations and norms perceived to be held by the foreign counterpart. This observation raises questions about the relative influence of an interlocutor's nationality versus the language of communication. Specifically, it invites further inquiry into whether Polish speakers, when interacting in Polish with native Spanish speakers who are also proficient in Polish, would adhere to the formal *Pan(i)* in accordance with Polish conventions or switch to the informal *Ty*, as POL40's practice suggests.

Finally, regarding the perception of pronouns, almost all Spanish respondents acknowledged that V pronouns create distance between interlocutors, while only a small number of Polish respondents perceive it that way, a finding that highlights the cultural specificity of face-work strategies. On the other hand, in general, Spanish speakers do not perceive T pronouns as disrespectful, whereas Polish speakers do, which can noticeably influence the choice of pronouns, especially in less familiar contexts. This suggests that Spanish T/V forms seem to be motivated by solidarity rather than power, whereas in Polish they seem to be motivated by power rather than solidarity (cfr. §2.2).

All of the aforementioned differences can lead to misunderstandings among speakers of these two languages. Situations in which one addresses someone else using a form of address that is not customary in the target culture of their interlocutor can damage their *face*: if Spanish students were to use informal *Ty* with Polish professors who are not aware of the pragmatic differences in pronoun usage, it might be offensive. Similarly, Polish students who address Spanish professors with formal *usted* (rather than *tú*) at the end of the semester could jeopardise their face by conveying a lack of trust or familiarity towards their interlocutor.

The implications of these findings for the teaching of Spanish and Polish as foreign languages are significant. Educators must not only convey the grammatical rules governing pronoun use but also impart an understanding of the sociopragmatic nuances that dictate pronoun selection in different social contexts. This includes a sensitivity to the face-work considerations that underpin these choices, which is crucial for effective and

¹⁶ To the best of our knowledge, *diamesic* variation (Mioni, 1983) in the use of forms of address at the university level has not been explored. According to Koch (2001), language usage can vary depending on how it is conceived and the medium through which it is transmitted: "orality and writtenness concern first of all the conceptual aspect of a text and are to be understood respectively as equivalents of the concepts of communicative immediacy (orality) and communicative distance (writtenness)" (De Caprio & Senatore, 2016, p. 133).

respectful communication across cultural boundaries (cfr. Wierzbicka, 1985, 2016). These insights underscore the importance of an integrated approach to language teaching that emphasises the complex interplay between language, culture, and social interaction.

One of the limitations of this study is that the majority of the respondents are female, which is common in the Humanities in both Poland and Spain. Due to this, no conclusions can be drawn regarding linguistic variation in pronoun usage based on gender.¹⁷

6. Conclusions

As we have seen, there is a certain relationship between nationality and the distribution of use of the T/V forms of address: in our study, Spaniards more frequently use T forms, and there are even situations in which these forms are used exclusively by Spaniards (cfr. PROFESSORS above). It is also interesting that asymmetric dynamics (related to power semantics) are to be found in Polish (e.g. courtesy forms with relatives) but not in Spanish. Indeed, European Spanish seems to primarily rely on reciprocity (and solidarity semantics), except perhaps in situations involving a substantial age difference (e.g. over 40 years), combined with a very low level of familiarity.

The pragmatic differences discussed above can hinder communication and interactions between speakers of these two languages. That is why it is crucial to be aware of these disparities in order to prevent misunderstandings and potential offence. Understanding the cultural and pragmatic implications of pronoun usage can greatly enhance effective and respectful communication among Spanish and Polish speakers.

CRedit Author contribution / Contribución de los autores

Conceptualization / *Conceptualización*: Martin Testa / Sara Zakrzewska.

Formal Analysis / *Análisis formal*: Martin Testa / Sara Zakrzewska.

Methodology / *Metodología*: Martin Testa / Sara Zakrzewska.

Writing / *Redacción*: Martin Testa.

Research dataset / *Datos de investigación*: Sara Zakrzewska.

Funding, data availability, and copyright / Financiación, disponibilidad de datos y derechos de autoría

Funding / *Financiación*: No funding / *No se ha recibido financiación*.

Image use consent / *Consentimiento para el uso de imágenes*: No images are included in this article / *Este artículo no contiene imágenes*.

Conflict of interest / *Conflicto de intereses*: The authors declare no conflict of interest / *Los autores declaran no tener ningún conflicto de intereses*.

Data availability statement / *Declaración de disponibilidad de datos*: The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the authors upon request, including the underlying .csv files / *Los datos que respaldan los resultados de este estudio están disponibles previa solicitud a los autores, incluidos los archivos .csv originales*.

License / *Licencia*: This article is published under the CC BY 4.0 License / *Este artículo se publica bajo la Licencia CC BY 4.0*.

¹⁷ Carricaburo (2015); in Czarnecka, (2023) observes that in Madrid, gender can influence the selection of pronouns: men tend to use *tú* more often than women.

Editorial history / Fechas del proceso editorial

Received / Recibido: 29/06/2023

Accepted / Aceptado: 28/02/2024

Published / Publicado: 01/04/2026

References

- Adamska, A., & Waluch-de la Torre, E. (2005). Sobre la pragmática de las fórmulas de tratamiento en español y polaco. In J. A. Moya Corral (Ed.), *Pragmática y enseñanza de la lengua española: Actas de las X Jornadas sobre la Enseñanza de la Lengua Española* (pp. 84–96). Universidad de Granada.
- Baran, M., & Urbaniak, E. (2021). How language shapes interpersonal distance: An analysis of pronominal forms of address in Spanish, Polish and Italian. *Beyond Philology: An International Journal of Linguistics, Literary Studies and English Language Teaching*, 18(3), 137–161. <https://doi.org/10.26881/bp.2021.3.05>
- Bettin, A. (2022). *La (des)cortesía lingüística: los pronombres tú/usted y tu/lei en español e italiano* [Unpublished B.A. thesis]. Università Ca' Foscari Venezia. <http://hdl.handle.net/10579/20919>
- Bhatti, J., & Žegarac, V. (2012). Compliments and refusals in Poland and England. *Research in Language*, 10(3), 279–297. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10015-011-0025-x>
- Blas Arroyo, J. L. (1994). Los pronombres de tratamiento y la cortesía. *Revista de Filología de la Universidad de La Laguna*, 13, 7–35.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11(2), 131–146. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(87\)90192-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(87)90192-5)
- Bogusławski, A. (1985). De l'adresse, avec référence particulière au polonais. *Revue des Études Slaves*, 57(3), 469–481. <https://doi.org/10.3406/slave.1985.5508>
- Bravo, D. (2003). Actividades de cortesía, imagen social y contextos socioculturales: una introducción. *Repositorio ASICE-Programa EDICE*, 98–108.
- Brown, R., & Gilman, A. (1960). The pronouns of power and solidarity. In T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), *Style in language* (pp. 253–276). MIT Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813085>
- Calderón Campos, M. (2010). Formas de tratamiento. In M. Aleza Izquierdo & J. M. Enguita Utrilla (Eds.), *La lengua española en América: Normas y usos actuales* (pp. 225–236). Universitat de València.
- Carricaburo, N. (2015). *Las fórmulas de tratamiento en el español actual* (2nd ed.). Arco/Libros.
- Coseriu, E. (1978). Einführung in die strukturelle Betrachtung des Wortschatzes. In H. Geckeler (Ed.), *Strukturelle Bedeutungslehre* (pp. 193–238). Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Crystal, D. (2010). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Czarnecka, N. (2023). *Comparación de las formas de tratamiento en polaco y en español: su uso en el ambiente universitario* [Unpublished B.A. thesis]. Uniwersytet Warszawski.
- Dąbrowska, M. (2006). (Nie)grzeczność w mediach elektronicznych [(Im)politeness in electronic media]. *Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego*, 62, 117–127.

- De Caprio, C., & Senatore, F. (2016). Orality, literacy, and historiography in Neapolitan vernacular urban chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In L. Degl'Innocenti, B. Richardson, & C. Sbordoni (Eds.), *Interactions between orality and writing in early modern Italian culture* (pp. 129–144). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315589190-9>
- Eelen, G. (2001). *A critique of politeness theories*. St. Jerome Publishing.
- Ervin-Tripp, S. (1972). On sociolinguistic rules: Alternation and co-occurrence. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics* (pp. 213–250). Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1948). Nuer modes of address. *The Uganda Journal*, 12, 166–171.
- Ferrari, A. (2014). *Linguistica del testo. Principi, fenomeni, strutture*. Carocci.
- Fontanella de Weinberg, M. B. (1999). Sistemas pronominales de tratamiento usados en el mundo hispánico. In I. Bosque & V. Demonte (Eds.), *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española* (Vol. 1: Sintaxis básica de las clases de palabras) (pp. 1399–1426). Espasa Calpe.
- Goffman, E. (1955). On face-work: An analysis of ritual elements in social interaction. *Psychiatry*, 18(3), 213–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1955.11023008>
- Györi, A., & Komlódi, Z. (1996). La evolución del trato social en el español de España y en el de América Latina: Aspectos sociolingüísticos y de comunicación intercultural. In Z. Komlódi & H. Hediger (Eds.), *Actas y comunicaciones del XXI Congreso de la Asociación Europea de Profesores de Español (León, 23–30 de julio de 1996)* (pp. 87–119). A.E.P.E.
- McHugh, M. L. (2013). The chi-square test of independence. *Biochemia Medica*, 23(2), 143–149. <https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2013.018>
- Hummel, M., Kluge, B., & Vázquez Laslop, M. E. (2010). *Formas y fórmulas de tratamiento en el mundo hispánico*. El Colegio de México.
- Huszcza, R. (2006). *Honoryfikatywność: gramatyka, pragmatyka, typologia [Honorifics: Grammar, Pragmatics, Typology]*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- IBM. (2022). *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows* (Version 29.0) [Computer software]. IBM Corp.
- Koch, P. (2001). Oralità/scrittura e mutamento linguistico. In M. Dardano, A. Pelo, & A. Stefanlongo (Eds.), *Scritto e parlato. Metodi, testi e contesti* (pp. 15–29). Aracne.
- Lara Bermejo, V. (2021). Cortesía y pronombres de tratamiento en la Península Ibérica (1700–1950). *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana*, 38(2), 7–9. <https://doi.org/10.31819/rili-2021-193802>
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
- Lisowska, M. (2017). El pronombre. In W. Nowikow (Ed.), *Gramática contrastiva español-polaco* (pp. 379–410). Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Łaziński, M. (2006). *O panach i paniach. Polskie rzeczowniki tytułowe i ich asymetria rodzajowo-płciowa [About pan's and pani's: Polish titular nouns and their gender asymmetry]*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Marcjanik, M. (2002). *Polska grzeczność językowa*. Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej.
- Marcjanik, M. (2017). Aspekt kulturoznawczy badań konfrontatywnych nad grzecznością językową. *Język Polski*, 97(2), 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.31286/JP.97.2.3>
- Mioni, A. M. (1983). Italiano tendenziale: osservazioni su alcuni aspetti della standardizzazione. In P. Benincà (Ed.), *Scritti linguistici in onore di Giovan Battista Pellegrini* (Vol. 1) (pp. 495–517). Pacini.

- Molinelli, P. (2010). Pronomi allocutivi. In R. Simone, G. Berruto, & P. D'Achille (Eds.), *Enciclopedia dell'italiano* (pp. 47–49). Istituto della enciclopedia italiana.
- Niżegorodcew, A. (2008). “Witam Pani Aniu”: czyli grzeczność w mailach [“Hello, Ms. Ania”: Politeness in emails]. In Z. Cygal-Krupa (Ed.), *Współczesna polszczyzna: stan, perspektywy, zagrożenia* (pp. 117–128). Księgarnia Akademicka.
- Real Academia Española, & Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española. (2009). *Nueva gramática de la lengua española*. Espasa Libros.
- Ogiermann, E. (2009). Politeness and in-directness across cultures: A comparison of English, German, Polish and Russian requests. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 5, 189–216. <https://doi.org/10.1515/JPLR.2009.011>
- Ożóg, K. (2014). Współczesna polska grzeczność językowa a postmodernizm [Contemporary Polish linguistic politeness and postmodernism]. *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis*, 9, 49–60.
- Ramos González, N. M. (2010). La incidencia cultural en el uso de los pronombres de cortesía. *Biblioteca virtual redELE*. 2010 (n.º extraordinario, junio), 1–10.
- Roselló Verdeguer, J. (2018). Las formas de tratamiento en el corpus PRESEEA-Valencia: Un estudio sociolingüístico. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación*, 76, 241–260. <https://doi.org/10.5209/CLAC.62507>
- Sáez Rivera, D. (2006). Vuestra merced > usted: nuevos datos y perspectivas. In J. L. Girón Alconchel & J. J. Bustos Tovar (Eds.), *Actas del VI Congreso Internacional de Historia* (Vol. 3) (pp. 2899–2912). Arco Libros.
- Sampedro Mella, M. (2021). Las formas de tratamiento en la tradición académica del español. *Anuario de Letras. Lingüística y Filología*, 9, 105–132. <https://doi.org/10.19130/iifl.adel.2021.1.00284>
- Schwenter, S. A. (1993). Diferenciación dialectal por medio de pronombres: una comparación del uso de “tú” y “usted” en España y México. *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 41(1), 127–149. <https://doi.org/10.24201/nrfh.v41i1.926>
- Sikora, K. (2011). Z panem i kmieciem po świecie-o tradycji i współczesności w zwracaniu się do drugich [“Around the World with a Master and a Churl: On Tradition and Modernity in Addressing Others”]. *LingVaria*, 2(12), 79–88.
- Sobrino, F. (1697). *Nouvelle grammaire espagnole, mise en bon ordre et expliquée en françois* [New Spanish grammar, arranged and explained in French]. Chez François Foppens.
- Treccani. (2012). Lei, uso del. In *La grammatica italiana*. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/uso-del-lei_\(La-grammatica-italiana\)](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/uso-del-lei_(La-grammatica-italiana))
- Treccani. (n.d.). Lei. In *Enciclopedia Treccani online*. Retrieved February 6, 2026, from <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/lei>
- Uber, D. R. (2016). Formas de tratamiento. In J. Gutiérrez-Rexach (Ed.), *Enciclopedia de lingüística hispánica* (pp. 620–629). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315713441-55>
- Vigón Artos, S. (2006). La cortesía en la enseñanza del ELE a lusófonos. In A. Álvarez, L. Barrientos, M. Braña, V. Coto, M. Cuevas, C. de la Hoz, I. Iglesias, P. Martínez, M. Prieto, & A. Turza (Eds.), *La competencia pragmática y la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera: Actas del Congreso Internacional de ASELE*, 16, Oviedo, España, 2006 (pp. 658–669). Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla.

- Weissenböck, M. (2006). Pronouns of address in western Ukrainian: Between tradition and modernity. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29(2), 20.1–20.15. <https://doi.org/10.2104/ara10620>
- Wierzbicka, A. (1985). Different cultures, different languages, different speech acts: Polish vs. English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9, 145–178. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(85\)90023-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(85)90023-2)
- Wierzbicka, A. (2016). Terms of address as keys to culture and society: German herr vs. Polish pan. *Acta Philologica*, 49, 29–44.
- Zieliński, A. (2018). Cambio lingüístico y cortesía verbal. El caso de usía. In J. Bień, B. Brzozowska-Zburzyńska, A. M. López González, & W. Nowikow (Eds.), *Lingüística hispánica en Polonia: tendencias y direcciones de investigación* (pp. 347–361). Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.