

Facework and Prosocial Teasing in a Synchronous Video Communication Exchange

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This study centres on the analysis of prosocial teasing during a videoconference (telecollaboration) exchange between mixed-gender adolescent secondary school students from Spain and Germany. We contend that the provocative elements present in prosocial teasing activate a play frame, in Gregory Bateson's terms, in which seemingly hostile face acts can be interpreted as playful behaviour. We argue that successful teasing can ultimately enhance the face of the teaser and that of the person being teased and thus build up rapport between them. Our analysis of the facework in the interaction during this telecollaboration exchange is based on Erwin Goffman's notions of face, demeanour and deference and stands in opposition to the dominant (im)politeness paradigm put forward by Jonathan Culpeper, which has its roots in Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson's seminal work.

Keywords: facework; teasing; telecollaboration; language learning

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La imagen pública y las burlas prosociales durante un intercambio mediante comunicación sincrónica por videoconferencia

Este estudio se centra en el análisis de las burlas solidarias durante un intercambio mediante videoconferencia (telecolaboración) entre estudiantes de secundaria de ambos sexos de España y Alemania. Argumentamos que los elementos provocativos presentes en las burlas amistosas activan lo que Gregory Bateson denomina un cuadro de juego, en el que los actos aparentemente hostiles contra la imagen pública del interlocutor pueden interpretarse como una conducta lúdica. De esta manera, las burlas solidarias pueden finalmente mejorar la

imagen pública de la persona que bromea y de la persona objeto de la burla para así construir una buena relación entre ellos. Nuestro análisis de la imagen pública durante la interacción durante este intercambio telecolaborativo se basa en las nociones de imagen pública, comportamiento y deferencia de Erwin Goffman y se opone al paradigma dominante de (des)cortesía formulado por Jonathan Culpeper, que tiene sus raíces en el trabajo pionero de Penelope Brown y Stephen C. Levinson.

Palabras clave: imagen pública; burlas; telecolaboración; aprendizaje de idiomas

I. INTRODUCTION

This study centres on the analysis of a telecollaboration exchange using videoconferencing software involving mixed-gender secondary school students from Spain and Germany. This interaction caught our attention because it seemed to be more aggressive than other telecollaboration exchanges we had analysed while, at the same time, containing numerous humorous episodes.

Our first hypothesis was that the aggressive speech acts in the exchange did not denote hostility but had playful intentions. We therefore turned to Gregory Bateson's (1976) concept of *play frame* for a way to explain what was happening in the exchanges. Thus, our first objective was to identify those cases in which play frames are activated and how this is achieved. Our second hypothesis was that the aggressive/playful interactions we identified were cases of teasing. Consequently, using a facework-oriented account of teasing based on Erwin Goffman's ([1955, 1956] 1967) notions of *face* and *facework*, our second objective was to show how such an approach can explicate the mechanisms involved in the teasing episodes we encountered.¹

This research is unique in two ways. To our knowledge, it is the only study that focuses on teasing in such a secondary school telecollaboration context. Secondly, as far as we know, it is also the only one that analyses a complete exchange—around thirty-five minutes—that contains several teasing episodes. This contrasts with other studies that explore isolated examples of teasing but do not carry out an in-depth analysis of the build-up to the teasing episode and its consequences.

2. TEASING

Almost without exception, researchers agree that *teasing* is a combination of seemingly hostile and good-natured behaviour. Sarah L. Tragesser and Louis G. Lippman, for example, claim that teasing “has both a competitive purpose and a prosocial purpose” (2005, 255) while Dacher Keltner et al. describe it as simultaneously “aggressive” and “playful” (1998, 1232). Richard D. Alexander (1986) puts forward the idea that the main function of teasing is to elevate the teaser's status, while Cheryl J. Pawluk (1989) and Leslie A. Baxter (1992) both see it as a way of strengthening bonds. Jennifer Hay distinguishes between *teaseS*, where the emphasis is on solidarity, and *teaseP*, which puts the onus on power (2000, 720). The latter often involves physical and verbal aggression and, in much of the literature, is labelled *bullying*, defined by Peter K. Smith as “a form of aggressive behaviour—behaviour designed to hurt another” (2016, 519). Our stance is that conduct that is perceived by the target as causing pain, even if it involves humour, is bullying, while behaviour that is deemed to strengthen bonds, or involves well-intentioned playfulness, constitutes teasing. Nevertheless, due to its playful/aggressive nature, even

¹ The 1967 publication contains the original articles from 1955 and 1956. The page numbers refer to the 1967 publication.

well-intentioned prosocial teasing may sometimes be interpreted as hostile behaviour. This might explain why teasing occurs predominantly among friends (Carlson-Jones and Burrus-Newman 2005; Gorman and Jordan 2015; Van Vleet and Feeney 2015), as there is a lower probability of negative effects among people who know and like each other (Keltner et al. 1998, 2001). Consequently, the perception of prosocial intent is felt to be greater where friendship exists (Carlson-Jones and Burrus-Newman 2005).

Teasing is found in both same- and mixed-gender groups (for an overview of gender and teasing, see Carlson-Jones and Burrus-Newman 2005). Intergender teasing often involves flirting (Pawluk 1989; Keltner et al. 2001; Tragesser and Lippman 2005). In fact, in one of Jeffrey Hall and Xing Chong's five types of flirting, the "playful flirting style," teasing has a central role (2015, 44). Although explicit references to "liking" the opposite sex" are common (Thorne and Luria 1986, 185), flirting, like teasing, can often be "inexplicit, deniable" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 2013, 107).

Many researchers see humour as a common and often essential component of teasing (Pawluk 1989; Baxter 1992; Whitesell and Harter 1996; Keltner et al. 2001). Tragesser and Lippman claim that during teasing episodes, humour is "commonly motivated by good intentions" (2005, 255) or, as John J. La Gaipa puts it, is delivered "in the spirit of fun rather than malice" (1977, 422). We distinguish here between teasing and *banter*, which are often used as synonyms in much of the literature. While both employ humour, the difference is that the humour in teasing is always directed at a person whereas banter, "aimed primarily at mutual entertainment" (Norrick 1993, 29), may involve humorous comments about third persons or the context. With regard to irony, although it is frequently mentioned in the literature on teasing, it can also be found in discourse that is not directed at the person being addressed. In spite of its importance, humour is not present in all types of teasing. For instance, leading questions are not necessarily accompanied by any overt verbal or nonverbal signals (Pawluk 1989, 160). They constitute a challenge because, by their very nature, they prompt the respondent to give an answer he/she may not want to give.

With teasing there is always some sense of play, a deviation from mere transactional discourse that starts with some kind of provocation, such as a humorous remark or a challenging question or statement directed at the target. Many researchers have turned to Bateson's explanation of this paradoxical juxtaposition of provocation and play, which came about while he was observing play-fighting among primates. He observed that during these activities, although a playful nip denoted a bite, it did not denote "what would be denoted by the bite" (1976, 69), that is, genuine hostility. The nip constitutes a metacommunicative signal that triggers what he calls a "play frame" (72). Teasing can thus be seen as the verbal counterpart of mock physical fighting. In this view, a verbal provocation denotes an attack on the target but does not denote real hostility towards him/her. The verbal nip can provoke a reaction in the target and initiate what we will call a *teasing frame*, that is, a subtype of play frame, during which verbal thrusts and parries can ensue without either participant taking offence.

2.1. Teasing among L2 Learners Online

We have found only seven studies that mention teasing in online language learning, five pertaining to written Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and two that centre on oral CMC. Even though written CMC has obvious limitations compared to audiovisual communication, the presence of teasing was not uncommon in these five studies. In her enquiry into a written online chat in German for university students, Chantelle N. Warner's results showed that much of the interaction was rather playful and that the participants "developed a level of comfort that allowed for teasing and taunting" (2004, 76). Carl Meskill and Natasha Anthony discovered that the use of humour, teasing and puns in the online written communication of learners studying Russian was common, more so than in the "serious" environment of the f2f classroom" (2007, 82). Similarly, Ilona Vandergriff (2013) highlighted the frequency of humour, play and teasing in the interactions between native and nonnative speakers of English in her text-chat corpus. Vandergriff and Carolin Fuchs (2012) also found teasing in one of their mixed-gender dyads during an online written advanced German course. Finally, Marta González-Lloret highlighted that "in spite of their lower linguistic proficiency," L2 learners were able to communicate emotions and engage in elaborate interaction including playful language and teasing (2016, 307). Regarding teasing during videoconferences, of the several dyads of nonnative speakers of English that Müge Satar analysed, only one had developed a relationship that allowed for reciprocal teasing and humorous banter (2015, 492). However, in another study of videoconferencing between Swedish and Spanish students using English as a lingua franca, Melinda Dooly and Nuriya Davitova provide evidence that teasing fosters "in-group solidarity" (2018, 231).

2.2. Teasing and Facework

One of the earliest and most influential studies on teasing and the role of face—a person's self-image—and facework—the strategies used to protect, maintain or enhance face—was carried out by a team of researchers led by the psychologist Dacher Keltner (Keltner et al., 1998). These authors turn to the seminal work on politeness by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1987) to offer a face-threat perspective on teasing, which they define as "intentionally face-threatening verbal or nonverbal action directed at another that is accompanied by redressive humor and positive and negative politeness tactics that mitigate the face threat of the tease" (Keltner et al. 1998, 232). Mitigation can be achieved through "unusual vocalisations, singsong voice, formulaic utterances, elongated vowels and unusual facial expressions" (232).

We argue that while Brown and Levinson's approach is admirably suited for the identification of mitigation strategies, which make up one side of teasing, it was not designed to explain the deliberate use of face aggression or impoliteness (Locher and Watts 2005) such as the kind found in teasing. The dominant paradigm on face aggression, the (im)politeness approach, which builds on Brown and Levinson's work,

treats teasing as “mock impoliteness” (Culpeper 2011, 208), a term originally coined by Geoffrey Leech (1983). *Impoliteness* itself is defined as “a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts” (Culpeper 2011, 23). Thus, for an utterance to be identified as mock impoliteness, the target of the tease would first have to recognise it as embodying a specific behaviour towards which he/she has a negative attitude and then realise that said behaviour is being simulated. As recognition of intentions is normally post hoc, this is perfectly feasible. However, the greatest problem with both the concepts of impoliteness and even more so *mock impoliteness* arises due to the denotations and connotations of the lexeme *politeness* itself. As Janet Holmes and Stephanie Schnurr point out, “its everyday meaning constantly distorts discussion” (2005, 124). We would argue that it also affects the related terms impoliteness and *mock politeness*, which is actually a convoluted form of polite behaviour.

Due to the conceptual bias towards the politeness pole in human communication in Brown and Levinson and their successors (e.g., Eelen 2001, 87), we turned to Goffman’s approach to facework, which includes accounts of both the reasons for face aggression and the mitigation of face threats. Goffman defines face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [*sic*]” ([1955] 1967, 5). He does not divide face into positive or negative poles as Brown and Levinson do, nor does he ever use these terms to refer to face or face threats. We would argue that the positive/negative dichotomy is redundant, as whether one violates a person’s desire for freedom of action—perpetrates a negative face threat according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 65)—or harms someone’s need to be appreciated—which Brown and Levinson call a threat to positive face (1987, 66)—one ultimately threatens a person’s face or “positive social value” ([1955] 1967, 5).

Regarding the term facework, although the strategies it entails are manifold, Goffman defines it simply as the actions taken by a person to make whatever he/she is doing consistent with face ([1955] 1967). Goffman divides facework into two main categories, *deference* and *demeanour*. Deference refers to the facework carried out to maintain, protect or enhance the face of others, while demeanour serves to defend, maintain or enhance the face of the speaker. Deference is implemented through two sets of behaviours. The first, “avoidance rituals” (Goffman [1956] 1967, 62)—the predecessor to Brown and Levinson’s negative face strategies (1987, 129)—comprise acts which minimise imposition, such as avoiding sensitive topics or ignoring other people’s embarrassing behaviour.² The second, “presentation rituals”—precursor to Brown and Levinson’s positive face strategies (1987, 101)—are acts “through which the individual makes specific attestations to recipients concerning how he [*sic*] regards them and how he [*sic*] will treat them in the on-coming interaction” (Goffman [1956] 1967, 71). These avoidance and presentation strategies comprise the full range of

² In our approach, we will use the term *strategies* rather than the more dramaturgical expression, *rituals*, favoured by Goffman.

speech acts—such as compliments, requests, apologies—paralinguistic features—such as loudness and/or voice quality—nonverbal acts—such as laughter—and physical gestures—such as winks, bowing and averting eye contact. The other side of facework, demeanour, which is obviated by Brown and Levinson, serves mainly to protect the speaker's face, and involves individuals behaving according to societal norms of discretion, modesty and self-control (Goffman [1956] 1967, 77). It should be noted that, although deference is principally directed at the other(s) present in an interaction and demeanour focuses on the speaker, according to Goffman they frequently overlap ([1956] 1967, 491). As Joel L. Telles puts it, “proper demeanor can well be a form of deference to others” and vice-versa (1980, 328).

Goffman was the first to propose that facework can be used deliberately to create face threats. He calls one type of face aggression “making points,” where a “threat will be willfully introduced for what can be safely gained by it” ([1955] 1967, 24). He suggests that one of the reasons for carrying out face aggression is to enhance one's own face. However, this does not imply that making points is necessarily at the expense of the target, and he differentiates making points from purposefully trying to insult someone or insulting someone accidentally through a faux pass. Indeed, the episodes he describes are compared to a “game” in which an initial “remark” may be countered by a “riposte” and the latter met with a “counterriposte” and so on (24-25).

Finally, following Goffman and using insights from Bateson, we here define teasing as the deliberate but nonserious use of face-threatening presentation strategies (FTPSs) to provoke the target of the tease and thus potentially create a teasing frame. In order for the target of the tease to react playfully to the provocation, playfulness needs to be metacommunicated in some way. This can be effected through unusual vocalisations, intonation, etc. (Keltner et al. 1988, 2001), but also through context—for instance, within an established jocular relationship (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 195). Prosocial teasing, if the tease is successful, has the potential to enhance both the face of the teaser and the target of the tease.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE ANALYSIS: DATA, PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Selection of the Exchange

The exchange analysed here was recorded during the Telecollaboration for Intercultural Acquisition Project (TILA), funded by the European Union. The secondary schools participating in the project were located in France, Germany, Holland, Spain and the UK. The Spanish cluster, coordinated by the authors of this article, comprised schools from Germany, Spain and the UK and the target languages were English and Spanish. From this cluster, we obtained fourteen viable recordings of videoconferences within a classroom context. Twelve recordings featured English (ENG) and Spanish (SPA) students and two involved German (GER) and Spanish students.

TABLE 1. Information on the TILA project exchanges and videos

Exchange	Main participants	Length of Video	
GER/SPA1	SPA1, SPA2, GER1, GER3	Video 1:	35:12
GER/SPA2	SPA3, GER3	Video 2:	29:08
SPA/ENG1	SPA4, ENG1	Video 3:	14:45
SPA/ENG2	SPA5, ENG2	Video 4:	23:23
SPA/ENG3	SPA6, ENG3	Video 5:	06:43
	SPA6, ENG3	Video 6:	16:52
	SPA6, ENG3	Video 7:	13:50
SPA/ENG4	SPA7, ENG4	Video 8:	06:15
	SPA7, ENG4	Video 9:	29:37
	SPA7, ENG4	Video 10:	18:15
	SPA7, ENG4	Video 11:	17:13
SPA/ENG5	SPA8, ENG8, ENG10	Video 12:	26:42
	SPA8, ENG8	Video 13:	16:26
SPA/ENG6	SPA9, ENG10	Video 14:	26:20
		TOTAL:	05:07:23

After analysing the facework in all the videos, the German-Spanish exchange, which we will call GER/SPA1, struck the authors as being very different from GER/SPA2 and the six exchanges involving English and Spanish students due to its competitive yet playful nature. To discover whether this impression was shared by others, a questionnaire was administered to twelve British university students on a year-abroad stay in Spain as they were proficient in both of the languages used in the interaction, that is, English and Spanish. The questionnaire included Likert-scale questions on the level of competitiveness, aggressiveness and humour present in all fourteen videos and comment boxes for each of these parameters (see appendices 1 and 2). As the total duration of all the videos was over five hours and the students were only available for a maximum of two hours, the videos were divided into four groups which were seen by three informants each. The results for the average Likert-scale scores showed that the GER/SPA1 exchange indeed scored higher than the other thirteen videos for all three parameters.

TABLE 2. Average for parameters

Average	GER/SPA1	Other groups
Competitiveness	2.6	1.4
Aggressiveness	2.0	1.2
Humour	4.6	3.1

3.2. Participants

All eleven participants in the GER/SPA1 exchange were sixteen at the time of recording. Most of the interventions involved a Spanish male, SPA1, and two German females, GER2 and GER3. A second Spanish male, SPA2, is seen on screen throughout most of the exchange but only talks occasionally. Two other female German students are also visible on screen throughout the interaction (figure 1): GER1, who speaks fleetingly at the beginning, and GER4, who does not intervene verbally at all. Five more male Spanish students appear intermittently and are addressed several times by SPA1 and SPA2. The German teacher (GERT) intervenes on several occasions while the Spanish teacher (SPAT) only intervenes twice, each time very briefly. The Spanish and German students clearly know their respective classmates but the two national cohorts had never met previously.

FIGURE 1. Participants: (1) GER2, (2) GER4, (3) GER1, (4) GER3, (5) SPA2, (6) SPA1



3.3. Methodological Approach

We have adopted a qualitative approach to facework in teasing in this study for several reasons. The first is that, as Robyn Penman argues, “in any interpretation procedure

we must allow for multiple facework goals being served simultaneously and/or sequentially” (1990, 19) and hence absolute numbers or statistics are of very little use; this is especially true when applied to an exchange like this, which is composed of less than 1,800 words. Moreover, during teasing, one or more nonverbal semiotic modes may actually contradict the verbal message of an interactant completely (Sugawara 2009, 109). Finally, each interaction between the Spanish and German students has an impact on their relationship and affects the way the ensuing discourse develops. All of these reasons argue against the use of a quantitative approach.

Consequently, in the following analysis section, we provide a detailed and nuanced account of the buildup to the teasing episodes, with an emphasis on the demeanour of the participants. In order to locate FTPSs that may potentially have triggered the teasing episodes, we first identified any instances of verbal play, potentially provocative or ironic utterances and awkward leading questions taking into account any relevant interaction between the participants. We then identified any reactions to the FTPS when uptake was detected, including face-mitigating strategies and counter teases. At the end of the analysis section below, a table summarising the FTPSs and students’ responses to them is provided.

4. ANALYSIS

Unlike other kinds of online interaction, during this kind of telecollaboration exchange the students have no anonymity at all with regard to their international peers or their classmates, which means that any potential occurrence of face loss would be witnessed by both cohorts. The fact that the participants are teenagers elevates the importance of maintaining face, given that preoccupation with self-image is claimed to be at its greatest during this stage of development (Rosenberg 1965, 5; Harter, Stocker and Robinson 1996, 286). In this context, being properly demeaned, as Goffman states, is a way of protecting one’s face (1967, 81). Demeanour is also an index of a participant’s perceived attitude to what is going on, that is, whether he/she is interested, enthusiastic, bored, hostile and so on, and can affect the direction that an interaction takes. In this sense, the prosocial demeanour of the participants is evidenced at the beginning of the exchange when SPA1 enthusiastically apprises his friends of the arrival of one of the German students (GER4), at which point the other Spanish students approach the screen to look at the German ones, and smile and wave at them, after which GER4 waves back. SPAT also contributes to the relaxed atmosphere when he appears behind SPA1 and SPA2 and draws what look like halos over their heads with his hands in a friendly but ironic fashion. All this leads us to conclude that the students are motivated, relaxed and in a good mood and, more importantly, that this is transmitted to all involved.

Eight minutes into the recording, after the students come into the classroom, sit down and put on their headphones, the verbal exchange begins. The peers greet each

other in a friendly manner—a face-enhancing presentation strategy—and start the task “Getting to know you/Conociéndonos,” requiring the students to elicit information about their peers, first in Spanish and then in English. Both German students laugh during the opening stage, conducted in Spanish, while SPA1 takes a more transactional approach and asks them their names, the school they attend, etc. Initially, the conversation is somewhat marred by technical problems, but roughly ten minutes into the exchange these are overcome and the participants start to complete the task in hand—also a sign of being well-demeaned (Goffman [1955] 1967, 55).

Throughout the telecollaboration exchange, interaction is predominantly symmetrical (Goffman [1956] 1967, 58), that is, between student peers. SPAT intercedes verbally only once to tell students to switch from Spanish to English. GERT, on the other hand, is a little more active during certain stages and can be seen moving around in the background helping the students to solve technical, linguistic and minor disciplinary problems (when the Spanish boys show an inappropriate image or make fun of the girls).

The mixed-gender configuration of the exchange, that is, the fact that all the Spanish students are boys and all the German students are girls, has a significant influence on the interactions. This is apparent from the start when SPA2, who only talks briefly during the exchange, shouts to SPA3 and the other off-camera male participants that the female German participants are very “hot”:

(1)

24 <SPA2> Ey. Eusebio, Eusebio <SPA3>, están muy buenas. <09:03>³

In addition to this explicit example, the laughing, giggling and signs of animation that are often present during episodes of flirting (Whitty 2003, 343) are also found throughout this interaction. Indeed, the existence of flirting in the exchange is noted by British informant 3 (see appendices 1 and 2).

The task the students undertake requires many question-answer sequences and therefore can be described as transactional (Rees and Monrouxe 2010, 3385). The more than 150 questions in the exchange rarely include hedges, and the words *please*, *thank you* and *gracias* appear only once each in the whole exchange and *por favor* only twice. Unmitigated questions could constitute face threats but as the students are obliged to ask questions as part of their task, we do not consider them to be face threats at all nor do they seem to be treated as such by the interactants. The students' questions, in this context, can be seen as “politic” behaviour (Watts 2003, 19) or, following Goffman ([1956] 1967), simply the students acting in a well-demeaned fashion. Example (2), made up of direct questions, is typical of the exchange in general:

³ Numbers on the left refer to the lines in the transcript. Participants' names have been changed.

(2)

51 <SPA1> Uhmm ... ¿Cuántos años tienes, Ingrid? Ingrid! <11:17>
(Uhmm ... How old are you, Ingrid? Ingrid!)

52 <GER2> ¿Sí?
(Yes?)

53 <SPA1> ¿Cuántos años tienes?
(How old are you?)

54 <GER2> Tengo dieciséis [sic] años. <11:24> [<SPA1> ¿Dieciséis?] ¿Y tú?
(I am sixteen [sic] years old. <11:24> [<SPA1> Sixteen?] And you?)

55 <SPA1> Dieciséis también. Tenemos la misma edad ... dieciséis años.
(Sixteen too. We are the same age ... sixteen years old.)

In early parts of the exchange (example 3), we detect the first signs of verbal playfulness in SPA1's questions: (a) the repetition of words, (b) pronouncing each syllable separately, (c) code-switching, (d) using jargon and (e) onomatopoeia (white noise, line 250). We interpret that SPA1 is moving from a transactional, question/answer mode to a more interactional mode (Rees and Monrouxe 2010, 3385) that seeks to provoke a more emotional response from his interlocutors. The features he uses are similar to those found in "foreigner talk," the speech employed by native speakers when talking to nonnative speakers and which, according to Charles A. Ferguson, who coined the term, can often be perceived as condescending (1975, 10). In effect, SPA1 comes across as rather patronising and thus we would argue that these excerpts include playfully provocative word play and thus constitute a series of FTPSs:

(3)

36 <SPA1> ¿Se escucha bien? ¿Se escucha bien? ¿Se es-cu-cha bien? <10:13>
(Can you hear ok? Can you hear ok? Can you hear O-K?)

82 <SPA1> ¿En qué curso estás? ¿Qué estudias? ¿Curso? ¿level? (...) <13:29>
(What year are you in? What do you study?)

83 ... year ... level [in English]) Level of your studies.

155 <SPA1> ¿Cómo se llama tu profesor? ¿Cómo se lla-ma tu pro-fe-sor? <18:55>
(Ok, What is your teacher's name? Your teach-er's name?)

249 <SPA1> Ese es el equipo de fútbol de mi com-pa-ñero. Repito, -ñero. <25:54>
(That is the football team of my class-mate, I repeat, mate.)

250 <SPA1> <Makes white noise sound> Corto y cambio.
(Over and out)

In spite of his provocations, there is no reaction from the German students. This is probably because SPA1 speaks very quickly, as thirteen minutes into the exchange, GER2, who has already complained about this problem, informs her teacher and he

enjoins the boys to speak more slowly. In example (4), GER2 does seem to react to SPA1's provocation when she replies emphatically—"Sí, comprendo" (line 190)—to make clear that she has understood the question. The intonational contour of her reply seems to communicate a certain exasperation at the way SPA1 couches his questions, which may be construed as a face threat:

(4)

188 <SPA1> Vale pero bien. Ingrid, [<GER1> ¿Sí?] ¿cuántos años tiene cuántos años tiene
(OK but ok Ingrid, how old is your

189 tu hermano? Tu hermano edad. Años? <21.05>
brother? Your brother, age, years?)

190 <GER2> Sí, comprendo <laughing>. Tiene vientidós años.
(Yes, I do understand <laughing>. He is twenty two.)

Examples (5), (6) and (7) are very clear instances of teasing. In (5), there is a case of misnaming, an FTFS. SPA1 deliberately calls GER2 "Bond," possibly because her real name is the same as that of the main female character in the videogame *Blood Stone*. When she appears to go along with him, he shows his appreciation by exclaiming "Let's go to the party!" —part of which she repeats, although it is not clear whether GER2 fully understands SPA1's intent:

(5)

44 <GER2> Yo me llamo Ingrid y eso es Petra ... Petra. <10.47>
(My name is Ingrid and that is Petra ... Petra.)

45 <SPA1> Bond y Petra, ¿no? Bond, Petra.
(Bond and Petra, no? Bond, Petra.)

46 <GER2> Sí.
(Yes)

47 <SPA1> Come on to the party! Let's go! <laughs> ¡Ha!

48 <GER2> Let's go! <laughs>

49 <SPA1> Let's go to the party! <laughs>

In example (6), in reaction to GER2's assertion that the German students study a lot, SPA1 employs an FTFS consisting of an ironic remark (line 135). There is no overt verbal reaction on the part of the German students, but GER2 smiles and looks at GER3 and the latter makes an inaudible comment in German to GER1. SPA1's quip is a reaction to GER2 having broken the unwritten rule of attributing importance to schoolwork (line 134). Helen Spencer-Oatey comments that students who "appear to be too clever and/or studious" will lose face as most students attribute more value to being cool than having an interest in schoolwork (2007, 644):

(6)

134 <GER2> Estudiamos mucho. <17.08>

(We study a lot.)

135 <SPA1> ¿Sí? Sois muy inteligentes.

(Yeah? You are very intelligent.)

Around two minutes later (example 7), combining teasing with flirting, SPA1 asks GER2 if she likes going to the cinema and when she answers affirmatively, he asks her whether she goes with [male] friends—“amigos.” He does this while smiling and looking sideways at his friend. SPA1’s question constitutes an FTPS as it could be construed as an intrusion into her privacy. Before he can finish his question, GER2 tells her teacher in German that the Spanish boys are laughing at them, proof that she feels she is being teased:

(7)

161 <SPA1> ¿Te gusta ir al cine? <19.11>

(Do you like going to the cinema?)

162 <GER3> Sí.

(Yes.)

163 <SPA1> Pero, ¿tú sola? ¿O con ... <Smiles and looks around> o con tus amigos?

(But you on your own? Or with ... or with your friends? [masculine ending])

164 [<GER2>They are laughing at us! <In German>]

Immediately after this, GERT light-heartedly reprimands SPA1 in Spanish for laughing at his students (example (8), line 165). SPA1 does not take the rebuke very seriously and defends himself by jokingly blaming his classmates (line 166):

(8)

165 <GERT> ¿Os estáis riendo de las chicas? ¡Qué malo! <19.32>

(Are you laughing at the girls? Such a bad person!)

166 <SPA1> No. Mis compañeros de aquí que son un poco traicioneros.

(No. My classmates here are a bit sneaky.)

Line 193 in example (9) constitutes an FTPS in the form of an ironic question—also noted by British informant 3. As soon as GER3 asks SPA1 to repeat the question, he backtracks. SPA1’s motives appear to be simply to amuse himself at GER3’s expense:

(9)

191 <SPA1> Uhmm, y tu hermana, ¿cuántos años tiene? Tu hermana. <21.13>

(Uhmm, and your sister, how old is she? Your sister.)

192 <GER3> Tiene diecinueve años.

(She’s 19.)

- 193 <SPA1> ¿Seguro? <Laughs>
(Sure?)
- 194 <GER3> ¿Qué?
(What?)
- 195 <SPA1> Vale, nada, nada ... uhmm.
(Ok, nothing, nothing ... uhmmm.)

We agree with British informant 3 that in example (10), lines 203 to 205, SPA1 is being facetious. Using hyperbole, he compares GER2's Spanish with SPA2's. GER2 reacts to his praise with embarrassment (line 206) as compliments can be face-threatening (Goffman 1967, 108). Simultaneously, SPA1's compliment also represents a friendly tongue-in-cheek dig at his classmate—another FTFS:

- (10)
- 203 <SPA1> En mi opinión, estás hablando ... [<GER2> Tenemos estudiar mucho.
<22.09>]
(In my opinion you are speaking ...[We have to study a lot.]
- 204 pero, en mi opinión, estáis hablando bien el, el español, lo habláis bien. Mejor
- 205 que mi compañero. <joins first finger and thumb to make an “o” to
display praise>
(but in my opinion you are speaking Spanish well, you speak it well, better
than my classmate.)
- 206 <GER2> <They laugh> Ne, ne <in German>, gracias! <22.21>
(No, no, thank you.)

SPA1 also employs light-hearted banter, a face-enhancing presentation strategy, and even clowns around by putting a cloth over his head as if it were a turban near the end of the exchange. SPA1's joking manner is picked up on by all three of the British informants who watched this exchange. One of the clearest examples of banter is SPA1's answer when asked if he has any pets:

- (11)
- 228 <SPA1> Yo tampoco, pero tengo a mi hermana, que es suficiente. A ver. <24.10>
(Neither have I, but I have my sister and that is enough. Let's see.)
- 229 <GER2> <laughs> <GER2 to GER1 in German: He said that he doesn't have any
- 230 pets but he has a sister, which is almost the same.> <They all laugh>

SPA1's jocular commentary can be described as banter as there is no attempt to provoke the German students. It constitutes a presentation strategy that enhances both SPA1's face and that of the others as it creates a certain amount of common ground. The comment is received with laughter by GER2, who apprises the other German students of SPA1's comment, and they too laugh.

Twenty-six minutes into the interaction, SPA2 shows the German students an inappropriate photograph on his mobile, which is greeted with shock and laughter by the German students. GERT intervenes to tell them to be very careful as he is watching. The showing of the photograph can be interpreted as a kind of visual tease to provoke a reaction. Surprisingly, less than thirty seconds later SPA1 asks his interlocutors about their favourite day of the week and the incident is not mentioned again. Almost immediately after this, SPAT approaches them to tell them to switch from Spanish to English.

Example (12) starts with SPA1 asking whether GER2 has a boyfriend (line 280). This is a direct leading question as the two had only met less than twenty minutes before and it encroaches on GER2's personal rather than academic space. As such, it is an FTFS that simultaneously constitutes a threat which has been "willfully introduced," in Goffman's words ([1955] 1967, 24), and quite clearly eschews the avoidance strategy of discretion ([1955] 1967, 16):

(12)

- 280 <SPA1> Eh, eh, my friend has a question <SPA2 lifts finger> <28:08>
 281 that is if you, uhmm, do you, do you have, uhmm, a boyfriend?
 282 <GER2> Yes. <Smiles, pauses and GER3 looks at her> No, I don't.
 283 <puts on fake glum face> <GER2 and GER3-smile>
 284 <SPA1> No? Oh! Why?
 285 <GER2> I [<SPA1> Why?] think I am not beautiful enough
 286 <SPA1 and SPA2 laugh>.
 287 <SPA1> Okay. <looks at friend>
 288 <GER2> <German girls laugh loudly> Okay?
 289 <SPA1> Uhmm, he thinks <points to friend> that you are beautiful.
 290 <SPA2 opens mouth in disbelief and laughs while looking to the side>
 291 <GER2> Thank you. That is what I wanted to hear <smiling>
 292 <SPA1> Oh, oh <laughs> ¡Disco, disco! <28:45> <Moves hand in dancing
 293 movement and makes rhythmic noise>
 294 <GER2 laughs>

At first, GER2 answers SPA1's question with a rapid "Yes" and smiles, but after a very brief pause she says, "No, I don't," and puts on a fake glum face with a protruding bottom lip (line 282). Her antics seem to be a way of playing down the possibly embarrassing situation. Then SPA1 asks her, in a surprised tone (FTFS), why she has no boyfriend (line 284) and GER2 replies that she thinks she is "not beautiful enough" (line 285). Diana Boxer and Florencia Cortés-Conde state that self-effacing comments of this type serve to improve conversational rapport and enhance the subject's face (1997, 282). Goffman sees self-deprecation as a gambit that leaves others to "compliment and indulge" the speaker ([1955] 1967, 24). Following Schnurr and Angela Chan, we consider GER2's comment to be a case of "pseudo self-deprecation" (2011, 29)—a clear

sign that she is playing along with SPA1. When he responds with a simple “okay” (line 287), the German students laugh loudly and GER2 exclaims with a questioning tone “Okay?” (line 288), as if to reprimand him for agreeing with her so easily.

Possibly because of this reaction, after consulting with SPA2 for several seconds, SPA1 retorts that his friend thinks that GER2 is beautiful (line 289). This explicit expression of “liking” of the kind mentioned by Barrie Thorne and Zella Luria (1986) constitutes an FTPS, as it is potentially embarrassing for GER2. SPA2 reacts by opening his mouth in disbelief and leans to one side out of camera, implying that he did not know what was coming. GER2 replies, “that is what I wanted to hear” (line 291). British informant 3 regards this as a case of “fishing for compliments,” but we see it as a clever riposte in the context of playful teasing and further evidence of her playing along. SPA1 laughs and utters, “Oh, oh,” and ends the exchange chanting, “Disco, disco” (line 292), which is greeted with laughter by GER2.

In sum, in (12) SPA1 uses a series of FTPSs to provoke GER2 and score points, but she proves herself to be well-demeaned by showing “poise under pressure” (Goffman [1956] 1967, 77). By taking up the challenge, she also demonstrates that she is a “good sport,” a positive characteristic in many cultures (Pawluk 1989, 160) and a sign of being well demeaned. Goffman’s comment that “it is always a gamble to ‘make a remark’” ([1955] 1967, 25) seems to be applicable to SPA1 in this instance, as he is “wittily outdone” (Dynel 2008, 244) by GER2. Nevertheless, we interpret SPA1’s laughter and his chanting of the word “disco” at the end of the exchange as a sign of his approval of GER2’s performance and consequently a face-enhancing presentation strategy. Moreover, it provides evidence that SPA1 is himself a well-demeaned person, a good sport. GER2’s laughter at SPA1’s antics can also be seen as face enhancing.

In example (13), the German students go on the offensive and, in what looks like a tit-for-tat exchange, GER3 asks SPA1 the same leading question twice (FTPSs), namely, whether *he* has a girlfriend or not (lines 317 to 319). He finally answers, “No. No way, no” (line 320). British informant 2 calls GER3’s intervention “a micro aggression,” but adds that it helps the development of the conversation. GER2 then replies with “that’s good” (line 321) and she and GER3 smile at each other. GER3 then goes on to press him further—another FTPS—on why he does not have a girlfriend. His answer, that studying is more important than having a girlfriend, causes GER2 to laugh out loud and exclaim, “What?” (line 328), clearly questioning his motives—another FTPS. Immediately afterwards there is a follow-up question—“What’s more important?” (line 329)—yet another FTPS. SPA1 repeats his reasoning and adds that he prefers to have a girlfriend after he has finished studying. Simultaneously, he looks around laughing, perhaps for support from his classmates. GER2 threatens his face once again through a further FTPS by asking why he thinks studying is more important than having a girlfriend (lines 332 to 334). Her tone is almost derisory and her words are greeted by laughter from her classmates. Then in German she says as an aside to her German classmates, “I mean, come on!” (line 334). It is SPA1 who

now seems to be breaking the unwritten rule of being too studious. Perhaps, for this reason, SPA1 defends his face by deflecting the blame for not having a girlfriend to the fickleness of Spanish girls (lines 335 and 336). When GER2 asks him if he dislikes this type of behaviour, SPA1, playing the victim, replies “they don’t love me” in a tone of mock self-pity (line 338), causing GER2 to smile briefly. This reasoning seems to satisfy GER2 and both laugh:

(13)

- 317 <GER3> Do you have a girlfriend? <30:56>
 318 <SPA1> What?
 319 <GER3> Do you have girlfriend?
 320 <SPA1> No. No way, no.
 321 <GER2> That’s good. <German girls look at each other and smile>
 322 <SPA1> Yes, ok. Yeah.
 323 <GER3> <unintelligible>
 324 <SPA1> What? <holds headphones> <SPA1 to SPA2> ¿Eh?, Que si tengo novia.
 325 <SPA1 to SPA2> What? If I have a girlfriend.
 326 <GER3> Why don’t you have a girlfriend?
 327 <SPA1> Uhhh, because I think that the studies is more important that have girlfriend.
 328 <GER2> <laughs> What?
 329 <GER3> What’s more important?
 330 <SPA1> <Hears a noise, turns and laughs> I prefer study first, I prefer study
 331 and after that the studies I prefer have girlfriend. Can you understand me?
 332 <GER2> <looks puzzled> Why do you think school is more important than
 333 a girlfriend? <almost sarcastic tone> <GER2 laughs and all her classmates
 334 laugh out loud> <GER2 to classmates in German> I mean, come on!
 335 <SPA1> Because, because in Spain the girls are very, uhhh, cambian de novio,
 336 change of the boyfriend very quickly.
 337 <GER2> Ah, ok and you don’t like this?
 338 <SPA1> She ... they don’t love me. <SPA1 laughs and GER2 smiles>
 339 <GER2> OK, uhhh, ok ... <32:21>

In (12) and (13), the importance of an audience during teasing (Pawluk 1989, 156; Goffman, [1955] 1967, 25) becomes apparent—SPA2’s reaction to a comment by SPA1 (290), the laughter from the German student onlookers (288, 334) and GER2’s aside to them (334). This backs up Robin M. Kowalski’s assertion that “the presence of an audience can affect a teasing episode” and “enhance the enjoyment and fun of the interaction” (2004, 332).

The only instance of what could be called authentic face aggression occurs in (14) when GER2 points out SPA2’s misunderstanding of her previous question. British informant 374 remarks that the German students “come across slightly

aggressive” here and “laugh amongst themselves at the boy’s misunderstanding of her [GER2] question”:

(14)

366 <GER2 to SPA2> I asked how old are you. Not how are you. <laughs>. <34:29>

On hearing this, the other German students laugh openly at SPA2’s inability to understand. There is no uptake from SPA2, who seems oblivious to what is happening and simply utters, “What?”

In spite of the uncharacteristically aggressive exchange in (14), a few seconds later (example 15), when SPAT tells his students the class is over, SPA1 ends the whole exchange with what seems like genuine gratitude for an enjoyable verbal exchange (line 374)—a face-enhancing presentation strategy:

(15)

372 <SPA1> Uhhh, sorry, uhhh, we leave this class. OK? Uhhh. <34:53>

373 <GER2> OK.

374 <SPA1> Uhhh, this moment were, was very very funny for me. OK? Goodbye.

375 <GER3> Yeah, nice to meet you.

376 <GER2 and GER3> Bye. <End of interaction>

SPA1’s expression of gratitude is, in turn, reciprocated, which seems to prove that teasing has indeed contributed to creating some common ground between the participants in the exchange.

Finally, in order to provide an overview of the whole exchange we offer the following table, a summary of the FTPS employed in our exchange in order to either trigger or extend teasing.

TABLE 3. FTPSs and responses to them, as well as the time when they occur in the video

Episode	Time	FTPS	Response to teasing
1	10:13	SPA1 patronising foreigner talk	No uptake
2	13:29	SPA1 patronising foreigner talk	No uptake
3	17:08	SPA1 irony (line 135)	Nonverbal reaction
4	18:55	SPA1 patronising foreigner talk	No uptake
5	19:11	SPA1 personal question	GER2 informs teacher of teasing
6	20:47	SPA1 misnaming	No uptake
7	21:05	SPA1 patronising foreigner talk	GER2 protests that she does understand
8	21:13	SPA1 irony	GER2 requests repetition

Episode	Time	FTPS	Response to teasing
9	22:09	SPA1 ironic compliment (line 5)	GER2 rejects compliment
10	25:54	SPA1 patronising foreigner talk	No uptake
11	26:21	SPA2 showing of inappropriate photo	GER2 and GER3 react with shock and laughter
12	28:06	SPA1 personal question	GER2 responds
	28:20	SPA1 asks for reasons for answer	GER2 self-deprecation
	28:28	SPA1 agreement with GER2's negative assessment of herself	GER2 responds with surprise and laughter
	28:36	SPA1 compliment	GER2 responds with mock agreement to which SPA1 responds enthusiastically
13	30:56	GER3 personal question	SPA1 repetition request
	31:01	GER3 repetition of personal question	SPA1 responds and GER2 acknowledges response and SPA1 acknowledges the acknowledgment
	30:16	GER3 personal question	SPA1 responds to which GER2 responds with laughter and surprise
	31:29	GER3 clarification request regarding previous question	SPA1 reformulates previous answer
	31:51	GER2 personal question related to previous questions (sarcastic tone)	SPA1 responds
	32:14	GER2 acknowledgment of SPA1's response followed by another personal question	SPA1 responds indirectly and GER2 acknowledges answer
14	34:29	GER3 face-threatening statement accompanied by laughter	SPA2 unattended reformulation request

5. CONCLUSIONS

We have argued that one of the salient characteristics of our exchange is prosocial teasing. The results from the questionnaire administered to twelve British students back this up, as the GER/SPA1 exchange scored higher than the other ones for competitiveness, aggressiveness and humour, the last two terms being mentioned in abundance in the literature on teasing. In their comments, the informants mention the presence of sarcasm and how SPA1 mocks GER2's intonation—two types of behaviour related to teasing. Moreover, the German students themselves complain to the teacher that their Spanish counterparts are laughing at them—an indication of teasing. Finally, our own analysis of the exchange provides several clear examples of teasing, such as SPA1's ironic remark in (6) that GER2 is very intelligent.

There is no doubt that flirting takes place in the exchange. The remark shared between the male Spanish students on the attractiveness of the female German students is an early indication that gender might play a role in the proceedings. This is confirmed when SPA1 asks whether GER2 goes to the cinema alone or with male friends and the boyfriend/girlfriend questions. Unlike using overt compliments, flirting through teasing provides SPA1 with the safeguard of deniability as he can always state that he is only asking questions. The fact that the exchange is online and between English L2 speakers does not seem to stop the participants from becoming involved in very sophisticated dialogue, especially in examples (12) and (13). In this sense, our analysis backs up research into written and oral L2 exchanges in CMC.

In our overview of why individuals indulge in teasing, we looked at the research carried out in the politeness tradition, the dominant paradigm for the analysis of teasing in the field of facework. We argue that Brown and Levinson's view of facework, under the rubric of politeness, exists exclusively to mitigate or redress face threats that already exist, not to provoke them. We, therefore, consider that it is simply not designed to analyse deliberate face threats, such as the type found in teasing. Even those who base their work on Brown and Levinson's classic study agree on this and provide their own (im)politeness approach to account for aggressive facework. We argue that the words *politeness* and *impoliteness* are loaded terms, and that the explanation Jonathan Culpeper (2011) offers for teasing, or mock impoliteness, only compounds the problem. We support an alternative view of why people tease, based on the concept of playfulness. We put forward that teasing is a type of playful activity designed, in part, to amuse the instigator. It is based on goading a target verbally in order to provoke a reaction. The words "you are very intelligent" are used to tease in example (6), but could also be used to convey sincere praise. Just as in the physical provocation found in play fighting, speech acts in teasing episodes can be interpreted as nonhostile. The question of whether a trigger is deemed to be hostile or not depends on contextual clues and/or knowledge of the participants and, as we have already proved, in the exchange we have analysed, the demeanour of all the participants was positive throughout.

Apart from a desire for playfulness, our contention is that individuals tease to enhance their face, since a successful tease can place the teaser in a favourable light. Regarding the mechanisms of teasing from a facework perspective, a tease normally starts with what we have called an FTFS. The face-threatening presentation strategies we have found in our analysis are made up of ironic remarks, misnaming, leading questions and word play.

Finally, our findings clearly show that telecollaboration, through the medium of videoconference software, gives students the opportunity to meet their peers online and engage in meaningful and occasionally very elaborate spoken communication that is similar to face-to-face communication between interlocutors situated in the same physical space.⁴

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APPENDIX 1

The tables below show which informants analysed which videos. The videos were divided into four groups to ensure that each group of informants had fewer than two hours of video to analyse. The duration of the videos assigned to each group is as follows: group 1, 01:04:28; group 2, 01:20:33; group 3, 01:11:20; group 4, 00:54:20. The numbers within these tables go from 5 “I strongly agree” to 1 “I strongly disagree.”

TABLE 4. Is the interaction in general competitive?

		Informant 1	Informant 2	Informant 3	Average
Group 1	SPA/ENG1	3	3	1	2.34
	SPA/ENG2	1	2	1	1.34
	SPA/ENG7	1	2	1	1.34
Group 2	SPA/ENG3	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG3	1	1	2	1.34
	SPA/ENG3	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG5	1	1	3	1.67
	SPA/ENG6	1	1	1	1
Group 3	SPA/ENG4	1	1	2	1.34
	SPA/ENG4	1	1	4	2
	SPA/ENG4	1	2	1	1.34
	SPA/ENG4	1	1	2	1.34
Group 4	GER/SPA1	3	2	3	2.67
	GER/SPA2	3	1	2	2

TABLE 5. Is the interaction in general aggressive?

		Informant 1	Informant 2	Informant 3	Average
Group 1	SPA/ENG1	2	2	1	1.67
	SPA/ENG2	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG7	1	3	1	1.67
Group 2	SPA/ENG3	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG3	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG3	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG5	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG6	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG6	1	1	1	1

		Informant 1	Informant 2	Informant 3	Average
Group 3	SPA/ENG4	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG4	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG4	1	1	1	1
	SPA/ENG4	1	2	1	1.34
Group 4	GER/SPA1	3	2	1	2
	GER/SPA2	2	1	2	1.67

TABLE 6. Is the interaction in general humorous?

	Group & Video	Informant 1 Humour	Informant 2 Humour	Informant 3 Humour	Average
Group 1	SPA/ENG1	3	4	1	2.67
	SPA/ENG2	3	3	2	2.67
	SPA/ENG7	4	4	3	3.67
Group 2	SPA/ENG3	3	2	2	2.34
	SPA/ENG3	4	3	3	3.34
	SPA/ENG3	5	4	3	4
	SPA/ENG5	5	4	2	3.67
	SPA/ENG6	5	2	5	4
Group 3	SPA/ENG4	5	1	4	3.34
	SPA/ENG4	5	2	5	4
	SPA/ENG4	2	2	2	2
	SPA/ENG4	4	2	1	2.34
Group 4	GER/SPA1	5	4	5	4.67
	GER/SPA2	4	3	3	3.34

APPENDIX 2

The following table includes the comments of the three informants assigned to analyse the interaction in GER/SPA1.

TABLE 7. Comments made by the informants

Is the interaction in general competitive?
Informant 1: Not very competitive in general. However, the girls laugh when the boys do not understand a question which can be interpreted as the girls becoming slightly competitive.
Informant 2: SPA1 tends to dominate the conversation with no competition from GER speakers.
Informant 3: GER2 & GER3 were competing for the attention of SPA1 & SPA2. Both competing for the attention of SPA1. Once SPA1 asks GER2 & GER3 if they have boyfriends, GER2 becomes a lot more interested in answering his other questions and receiving his attention
Is the interaction, in general, aggressive?
Informant 1: The girls come across slightly aggressive towards the end when they say “I ask how old are you not how are you.” They laugh amongst themselves at the boy’s misunderstanding of her question and this can come across as slightly aggressive.
Informant 2: SPA1 dominates the conversation and sometimes interrupts GER2 when she is talking, rather than having a little more patience while she tries to answer his questions.
Both parties seemed keen to strike up an amicable friendship. At one point he mocks the intonation of GER3 asking her “seguro?” when she says her sister’s age (more in a humorous way than aggressive). He could also be seen as aggressively flirty as he is very complimentary and asks about their personal lives (boyfriends) without knowing how they will react. GER2 & GER3 are shown an inappropriate photo which shocks them and makes them laugh awkwardly.
Is the interaction, in general humorous?
Informant 1: There was lots of humour on both sides. Both parties display signs of sarcasm and humour—the girls seem to display signs of humour amongst themselves, whereas the boys are more direct with their humour and making jokes.
Informant 2: Both parties appear to enjoy interacting, responding to humorous topics of conversation. SPA1 tends to make jokes and gives a light-heartedness to the conversation, exclaiming “Come to the party!” and “Disco disco” nearer the start of the exchange.
Informant 3: Very lighthearted. There were jokes, relaxed body language and gesturing throughout. One of his very early lines to GER2 is “come on to the party! Let’s go!” setting the tone of the conversation as very light-hearted. He uses a lot of gestures and relaxed body language throughout. Jokingly questions GER3 on whether she is sure about her sister’s age due to her unsure intonation (most likely due to unconfidence in her language ability). He comments “En mi opinión, estás hablando bien el español... mejor que mi compañero.” When asked if he has a pet, he says “no” and “tengo a mi hermana, que es suficiente.” At the end of the video, he appears with a scarf over his head.

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