A Study on Linguistic Politeness Phenomena in English

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I. Introduction

This study investigates pragmatic aspects of linguistic politeness phenomena and principles that play important roles in successful communication. The purposes of this study are: (a) to analyze the concepts of politeness phenomena in human interaction, (b) to review the perspectives on politeness, (c) to emphasize the importance of linguistic politeness in communication, (d) to introduce some previous researches on linguistic politeness, i.e., studies by Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson[1] (1978, 1987), (e) to review the works on non-Western politeness that question the universality of politeness claimed by B & L, (f) to investigate the politeness phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese to further conclude that politeness is a socio-cultural phenomena based on the social values and social norms of a particular community.

One important aspect of being human is to know how to behave and how to interpret the behavior of others in a wide range of social situations. When we speak we are concerned with not only the information we are conveying, but also the effects that our words will have on those we are talking to. If we speak in inappropriate form, however clear the content of our message, we may still be misunderstood. So, a crucial point in human interaction is that people are much concerned to maintain a good relationship, to avoid imposing, and to give the other person some choice in the matter being discussed (Lakoff (1977)).

In recent years politeness phenomena have become central to discussions of human interaction. Following the Goffmanian tradition, politeness becomes essential to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation. As Gumperz (1987: xiii) notes in his introduction to the new edition of B & L□s influential work on universals of politeness phenomena (i.e., *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*), □any theory which provides an understanding of this phenomenon at the same time goes to the foundations of human social life□.

Linguistically, politeness can be defined as the interactional balance achieved between the need for clarity and the need to avoid interactional imposition. In this definition clarity can be associated with Grice□s (1975) Cooperative Principle in conversation and the maxims connected to it; the interactional imposition can be associated with Goffman□s (1967) face value as a public image.

As guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication, Grice□s conversational maxims aim at expressing information as clearly and succinctly as possible. However, observed linguistic behavior often deviates from Grice□s theory of conversation, in which the main purpose of conversation is assumed to be maximally efficient exchange of information. B & L (1978, 1987) assert that such deviation from the conversational maxims has a motivation — politeness.

B & L's politeness theory, first published in 1978, reissued in 1987, generates a wealth of conceptual and empirical researches, undertaken in the theoretical and methodological traditions of a number of social sciences, such as anthropology, developmental psychology and psycholinguistics, linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics and communication. Together with other politeness models, notably Lakoff□s (1973, 1975, 1977) and Leech□s (1983), B & L□s theory has partly been supported by the literature. However, in the light of current researches on politeness phenomena in non-Western cultures, it has also become clear that the early models are over-simplistic. As theories with claims to universality, they need elaboration and revision.

The analyses above fall into four chapters in this thesis. In chapter II, the concepts of politeness, the perspectives on it (i.e., the social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view, the face-saving view, and the conversational-contract view), and the importance of politeness are discussed.

Chapter III reviews three influential previous studies on linguistic politeness. Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977) suggests two rules of Pragmatic Competence — the Rules of Clarity and the Rules of Politeness. The Rules of Politeness are the major concern. Leech's (1983) Principles of Politeness and the six interpersonal maxims are analyzed. B & L's

(1978, 1987) face−saving model of politeness is discussed in detail.

In chapter IV, the problems existing in B & L□s politeness theory are pointed out and B & L□s claim for the universality of politeness is criticized at a deep level.

In chapter V, first, the Chinese concept of □face□ and the modern conception of Chinese politeness — *limao* 禮貌 — are analyzed. Then, Gu's (1990) Politeness Principle and maxims that operate in Chinese conversations are presented. Finally, four motivations of politeness in Modern Standard Chinese are formulated according to my knowledge. The account of the politeness phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese illustrates that linguistic politeness in Chinese culture has its own particular characteristics that are quite different from those in Western cultures as asserted by B & L. The discussion on the politeness phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese further questions B & L□s universal views on politeness.

II. Concept and Importance of Linguistic Politeness

2.1 Definition and Concept of Politeness

At first blush, it might seem obvious that politeness is simply a well-understood concept that pervades human interaction. Not so. A common understanding of the concept and how to account for it is certainly problematic. To define politeness appropriately is one of the difficulties existing in the study of linguistic politeness. It is not easy to give a proper definition to politeness. The researches on linguistic politeness started from the middle of 1970's, but researchers tried to put forward their definitions of it until the late of 1980's.

According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Grove (1976)), politeness is defined as:

> showing or characterized by correct social usage: marked by or exhibiting appearance of consideration, tact, deference, courtesy, or grace resulting sometimes from sincere consideration of others and sometimes from mere regard for etiquette.

Then, being polite is to show consideration, tact, deference, courtesy, or grace, sometimes for sincere consideration of others and sometimes for regard of etiquette.

Politeness is more concretely defined in *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* (Richards, Platt, & Weber (1985)):

> [politeness] (in language study) (a) how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationships; (b) how face-work; that is, the attempt to establish, maintain, and save face during a conversation, is carried out in a speech community. Languages differ in how they express politeness. ... Politeness markers include differences between formal speech and colloquial speech, and the use of address forms. In expressing politeness, the anthropologists B & L distinguished between positive politeness strategies (those which show the closeness, intimacy, and rapport between speaker and

> hearer) and negative politeness strategies (those which indicate the social distance between speaker and hearer).

In accordance with this definition, politeness, firstly, reflects the way in which the social distance between participants in a discourse and their different relations are expressed in languages; and secondly, reflects the way to establish, maintain, and save face during a conversation. Here, the concept of □face□ which is first presented by Goffman and later is adopted and developed by B & L is mentioned. Moreover, the style of speech and the use of address forms are also taken into consideration.

Goffman (1967: 5) characterizes face as □the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact□. B & L (1987) state that their notion of □face□ is derived from that of Goffman. B & L (1987: 61) assume that all competent adult members of society have □face□: the public self−image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of two related aspects: (a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non−distraction — i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition, (b) positive face: the positive consistent self−image or "personality" (crucially including the desire that this self−image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. They state that there are acts that intrinsically threaten face (i.e., face−threatening acts, □FTAs□ for short). According to B & L, politeness is defined as redressive action taken to counter−balance the disruptive effective of face−threatening acts. Positive politeness is redressive action directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants should be thought of as desirable. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded.

Lakoff (1975) interprets politeness as those forms of behavior that have been developed in societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction.

Fraser and Nolen (1981) suggest that politeness is the result of a conversational contract entered into by the participants in an effort to maintain socio−communicative verbal interaction conflict−free.

Leech (1983) defines politeness as those forms of behavior that are aimed at the establishment and maintenance of comity, i.e., the ability of participants in a socio-communicative interaction to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony.

The early politeness notions proposed by Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), B & L (1978, 1987), Fraser and Nolen (1981), and Leech (1983) unanimously conceptualize politeness as strategic conflict avoidance, which is the characteristic of politeness in occidental cultures. Politeness phenomena in oriental cultures such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean are found to be different from those in occidental cultures.

The most approximate Chinese equivalent to the English word □politeness□ is *limao 禮貌*, which is derived from the ancient Chinese word *li* 禮. The classical notion of *li* was formulated by Confucius (551 B.C. — 479 B.C.). This *li* does not mean politeness; it refers to the social hierarchy and the social order of the slavery system of the Zhou Dynasty (dating back to 1100 B.C.), which was regarded by Confucius as an ideal model of any society. In order to restore *li*, it is necessary to *zhengming* 正名, i.e., rectify names. To *zhengming* is to put each individual in her / his place according to her / his social position. This is important because

> if *ming* is not properly rectified, *speech* cannot be used appropriately; if speech is not used appropriately, nothing can be achieved; if nothing is achieved, *li* cannot be restored; if *li* is not restored, law and justice cannot be exercised; and if law and justice are not exercised, people will not know how to behave. (Confucius, *Zi Lu* 『子路』, translated by Gu (1990: 238))

Thus speech had to be used appropriately in accordance with the user's status in the social hierarchy so that *li* could be restored.

Not until two or three hundred years after Confucius did the word *li* designating politeness seem to be well established. This usage is found in the book *Li Ji* 『禮記』 (On Li) compiled (reputedly) by Dai Sheng sometime during the West Han Dynasty. The volume opens with:

“deference cannot be shown”, “speaking of *li* [i.e., politeness], humble yourself but show respect to other□. Gu (1990) states that denigrating self and respecting other remain at the core of the modern conception of *limao*. Gu (1990) suggests that the Politeness Principle (PP) in modern Chinese can be understood as a sanctioned belief that an individual's social behavior ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement.

The notion of face in Chinese culture is examined by Hu (1944). Hu discerns two concepts of face, *mianzi* 面子 and *lian* 臉. *Mianzi* comprises an individual's reputation achieved through success and ostentation, while *lian* refers to the moral character publicly attributed to an individual. Mao (1994) adopts and develops Hu’s face concepts in Chinese culture and further renews the concept of face that is asserted as a universal notion.

It is very clear that neither of these face concepts in Chinese appears to be compatible with negative face or positive face assumed by B & L, nor does the notion of *limao* 禮貌 (politeness), of which the essential elements are respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement. To be polite in Chinese discourse is, in many respects, to know how to attend to each other□s *mianzi* and *lian* and to enact speech acts appropriate to and worthy of such an image.

Hill *et al*. (1986), Ide (1989), and Matsumoto (1988) discuss the politeness phenomena in Japanese culture. They state that negative politeness, addressing interactants' territorial concerns for autonomy and privacy, derives directly from the high value placed on individualism in Western cultures. For Japanese society, by contrast, the overarching principle of social interaction has been conceptualized as □social relativism□, comprising concerns about belongingness, empathy, dependency, proper place occupancy and reciprocity. Given the collective rather than individualistic orientation of Japanese culture, negative face wants seem negligible and cannot account for politeness behavior. For Japanese speakers, politeness means to perceive one□s position in relation to others and choose the proper formality level of speech according to social conventions.

The argument of social relativism rather than individualism, both as social need and normative orientation, is further supported by evidence from language socialization in Korea (Clancy (1989)). Clancy□s observations contrast sharply with the socialization goals attested for North American society. The concept of politeness in Western cultures is found insufficient to explain the politeness aspects in Korean culture. The assertion that linguistic politeness only functions as a means to preserve face is problematic in Korean. Kim (1996) defines Korean politeness as a general method to comply with social standards and social expectations and to establish and maintain harmonious human relations. Ko (1996) argues that a Korean speaker choose the way of speech according to the addressee□s rank, social status, the age difference and the degree of intimacy between the speaker and the addressee.

The term □politeness□ itself carries different denotations and connotations. After the examination of the notion of politeness in both occidental and oriental cultures, it should be made clear that linguistic politeness is crucially a social phenomenon, so it should be understood differently in different cultures. In general, according to the studies on politeness up to present, the conceptualization of politeness, basically, has two aspects — volition (Hill *et al.* (1986), Ide (1989)) or strategic politeness (Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), B & L (1978, 1987), Fraser and Nolen (1981), and Leech (1983)) and discernment (Hill *et al.* (1986), Ide (1989)) or social indexing (Ervin-Tripp *et al.* (1990)). Volition is voluntary, based on a speaker□s active choice. Discernment is conforming to the expected norm. Volition is associated with performing linguistic action in order to reach specific communicative goals. Discernment, unlike volition, operates independently of the current goal a speaker intends to achieve. Rather, it represents the linguistic expression of □social warrants□, defined by Kochman (1984) as the entitlements to which individuals lay claim in social interaction. In a situation of volition, the speaker can actively choose an appropriate linguistic form from a relatively wide range of possibilities, depending on the speaker□s intention. It is a matter of intentional, strategic linguistic choice. In a situation of discernment, once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and appropriate behavior is essentially automatic and obligatory according to the social norms or conventions. It is a matter of obligatory linguistic choice.

Watts (1992) views linguistic politeness as forms of a more general form of politic behavior. Watts defines □politic behavior□ (sometimes termed □politic verbal behavior□) as □socio-culturally determined behavior directed towards the goal of establishing and / or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between the individuals of a social group, whether open or closed, during the ongoing process of interaction□ (Watts, 1992: 50). Goody (1978:1) points out:

> [...] effective social living requires anticipation of the actions of others, calculation of short- and long-term costs and gains, and close attention to signals about the consequences of one's own behavior. Such demands may have provided the stimulus which, together with language, led to the full development of the creative intelligence which leads us to designate our species homo sapiens.

Seen from this angle, therefore, politeness can be interpreted as one of the constraints on human behavior that help us to achieve □effective social living□.

Axia (1987) defines linguistic politeness as linguistic abilities required to establish and maintain social interaction. The requirements of politeness are stated as follows:

> The requirements of politeness include: ability to take into account the other person's attitude, mood and intentions; recognition of the reciprocity, in social terms, of the relationship between participants in the exchange (for example, status, roles, degree of familiarity, etc.; and the awareness of degree of formality or informality of the social situation (for example, a party, a lecture, etc.) (Axia, 1987: 3)

2.2 Perspectives on Politeness

Fraser (1990) posits four main perspectives on the treatment of politeness: the social-norm view; the conversational-maxim view; the face−saving view; and the conversational−contract view.

2.2.1 The Social−norm View

The social−norm view of politeness reflects the historical understanding of politeness generally embraced by the public within the English−speaking world. Briefly stated, it assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behavior, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context. A positive evaluation (politeness) arises when an action is in congruence with the norm, a negative evaluation (impoliteness = rudeness) when action is to the contrary. This normative view historically considers politeness to be associated with speech style, whereby a higher degree of formality implies greater politeness.

Examination of the traditional linguistic writings reveals almost no reference to politeness. Presumably it was not then taken to be a part of grammar but was associated with language use. Jespersen (1965) suggests that the rules for using *shall* in the first and *will* in the other persons lies in English courtesy or modesty, and concludes that □the speaker does not like to ascribe future events to his own will, but is polite enough to speak of someone else's will as decisive of the future□. Quirk *et al.* (1985) reveal the same orientation by putting forward a polite sequence □X and I□:

> The nonstandard usage of □Me and Mary are ...□ [is] more □reprehensible□, though nonetheless common, if the offending pronoun also violates the rule of politeness which stipulates that 1st person pronouns should occur at the end of the coordinate construction ... Another reason is that □X and I□ is felt to be a polite sequence which can remain unchanged ... (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 338)

The social-norm view of politeness corresponds to the conceptualization of politeness as discernment (Hill *et al.* (1986), Ide (1989)) or social indexing

(Ervin-Tripp *et al*. (1990)) that has been discussed in section 2.1.

2.2.2 The Conversational–maxim View

The conversational–maxim perspective relies principally on the work of Grice (1975) in his influential paper □Logic and conversation□. In an attempt to clarify how it is that speakers can mean more than they □say□, Grice argues that conversationalists are rational individuals who are primarily interested in the efficient conveying of messages. To this end, he proposes his general Cooperative Principle (CP):

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice, 1975: 45)

Stated in more simple terms, the CP provides that conversationalists should say what they have to say, when they have to say it, and the way they have to say it.

Grice associates with the CP a set of more specific maxims and sub–maxims. While one or more of the maxims may not be fulfilled by a speaker at a point in a conversation, the CP is always observed and any real or apparent violations of the maxims signal conversational implicatures: non–explicit messages intended by the speaker to be inferred by the hearer.

These conversational maxims are guidelines for the □rational□ use of language in conversation and are qualitatively different from the notion of linguistic rule associated with grammar. Maxims do not provide an account of well–formedness for a grammatical structure, but rather, serve to provide a set of constraints for the use of language — for the use of linguistic forms in conversation. Whereas the violation of a grammar rule results in ungrammaticality and the assessment not □knowing□ the language, violation of a conversational maxim may be accepted as signaling certain speaker intentions.

Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977) was among the first to adopt Grice's construct of Conversational Principles in an effort to account for politeness. Unlike Grice, however, Lakoff explicitly extends the notion of grammatical rule and its associated notion of well–formedness to pragmatics: □We should like to have some kind of pragmatic rules, dictating whether an utterance is pragmatically well–formed or not, and the extent to which it deviates if it does" (Lakoff, 1973: 296). Extending to the domain of politeness, she considers the form of sentences — i.e., specific constructions — to be polite or not.

Although entitling her 1973 paper "The logic of politeness", Lakoff never actually says what she takes politeness to be. We can, however, infer that she sees politeness to be the avoidance of offense, since in writing about the conflict between clarity and politeness she states that:

> Politeness usually supercedes: it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity. This makes sense, since in most informal conversation, actual communication of important ideas is secondary to merely reaffirming and strengthening relationships. (Lakoff, 1973: 297–298)

In her later works she is more explicit, referring to politeness as a device used in order to reduce friction in personal interaction.

The second scholar working within the conversational–maxim paradigm is Leech (1983). The position of Leech is a grand elaboration of the Conversational Maxim approach to politeness. Like Lakoff, Leech adopts the framework initially set out by Grice: there exists a set of maxims and sub–maxims that guide and constrain the conversation of rational people. He opts to treat politeness within the domain of a rhetorical pragmatics.

Important to Leech's theory is his distinction between a speaker's illocutionary goals (what speech act(s) the speaker intends to be conveying by the utterance) and the speaker's social goals (what position the speaker is taking on being truthful, polite, ironic, and the like). In this regard, he posits two sets of conversational (rhetorical) principles — Interpersonal Rhetoric and Textual Rhetoric, each constituted by a set of maxims, which socially constrain communicative behavior in specific ways.

Politeness is treated within the domain of Interpersonal Rhetoric, which contains at least three sets of maxims: those falling under the terms of Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP), those associated with a Politeness Principle (PP), and those associated with an Irony Principle (IP). Each of these interpersonal principles have the same status in his pragmatic theory.

Leech's Principle of Politeness can be stated as the following: other things being equal, minimize the expression of beliefs which are unfavorable to the hearer and at the same time (but less important) maximize the expression of beliefs which are favorable to the hearer.

Like Grice, Leech provides a finer differentiation within his principles. He proposes six Interpersonal Maxims (Leech, 1983: 104 ff.): Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Agreement Maxim, Sympathy Maxim. He also proposes that each of these maxims has a set of scales which must be consulted by the hearer in determining the degree of any maxim required in a given speech situation.

Leech distinguishes between what he calls □Relative Politeness□, which refers to politeness vis−à−vis a specific situation, and “Absolute Politeness”, which refers to the degree of politeness inherently associated with specific speaker actions. Thus, he takes some illocutions (e.g., orders) — and presumably the linguistic forms used to effect them — to be inherently impolite, and others (e.g., offers) to be inherently polite.

Within his account, negative politeness consists in minimizing the impoliteness of impolite illocutions, while positive politeness consists in maximizing the politeness of polite illocutions. For example, using □If it would not trouble you too much ...□ as a preface to an order constitutes negative politeness, while using □I'm delighted to inform you ...□ as a preface to announcing the hearer to be the winner constitutes positive politeness.

Leech notes that because of its force an utterance will require different kinds and degrees of politeness, and suggests that there are four main illocutionary functions — competitive, convivial, collaborative, and conflictive — according “to how they relate to the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity" (Leech, 1983: 104 – 105). This proposal is difficult to evaluate, since there is no way of knowing which maxims are to be applied, what scales are available, how they are to be formulated, what their dimensions are, when and to what degree they are relevant, and so forth.

Moreover, Leech's conclusions seem too strong. He asserts, for example, that to order is inherently conflictive, reduces comity, and requires negative politeness on the part of the speaker. On occasions, this is true. But, for example, a teacher ordering a student to put her prize–winning solution on the board for the class would appear to have just the opposite effect. The problem arises because he asserts that particular types of illocutions are polite or impolite. While the performance of an illocutionary act can be so evaluated, the same cannot be said of the act itself.

A modification of Leech's position, still within the conversational maxim perspective, can be found in Kasher (1986). Kasher (1986: 110) posits a □mercantile□ view of politeness:

> Politeness of speech acts is a matter of their costs, as determined by certain scales of values. An ordinary speech act is presumably rational and as such its justification and reconstruction involves considerations as to which course of action would be of the least cost, from certain points of view. One such point of view, or cluster of points of view, is politeness [italics mine]. Another one is time. Under certain conditions, additional scales of values are used, such as ones involving considerations of commitment or implicature.

He argues that where there are cases in which both the CP and PP apply, a tug–of–war ensures, and what one needs is overriding principles of rationality to guide the resolution.

2.2.3 The Face–saving View

The best known of the recent approaches to an account of politeness is that in B & L (1978, 1987). For them, a strong motivation for not talking strictly according to conversational maxim is to ensure politeness.

In contrast to Leech, B & L maintain that Grice's CP has a very different status in their theory from any so-called politeness principles. More specifically, the CP specifies a socially neutral framework within which ordinary communication is seen to occur, the operating assumption being no deviation from rational efficiency without a reason; it is, however, considerations of politeness that do provide principled reasons for such deviation.

B & L assert that linguistic politeness must be communicated, that it constitutes a message, a conversational implicature of the sort proposed by Grice. Moreover, they suggest that the failure to communicate the intention to be polite may be taken as absence of the required polite attitude. The speaker of □I would really like it if you would shut the door□, for example, implicates not only a request, but also implicates the intention to be polite. On the other hand, uttering □Shut the door□ under the same circumstances may be heard as conveying the lack of polite intentions.

B & L place this explication for politeness within a framework in which their rational Model Person has □face□, the individual's self-esteem. Adapted from Goffman (1967), face is a universal notion, albeit a culturally elaborated □public self-image, that every member [of a society] wants to claim for himself□ (B & L, 1987: 61).

B & L (1987) characterize two types of face in terms of participant wants rather than social norms: negative face and positive face. Face is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced. They assume that it is generally in everyone's best interest to maintain each other's face and to act in such ways that others are made aware that this is one's intention.

The organizing principle for B & L□s politeness theory is the idea that □some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening ...□ (B & L, 1987: 24). To this end, each group of language users develops politeness principles from which they derive certain linguistic strategies. It is by the use of these so-called politeness strategies that speakers succeed in communicating both their primary message(s) as well as their intention to be polite in doing so. And in doing so, they reduce the face loss that results from the interaction.

Watts *et al.* (1992) assert that it would be no exaggeration to say that the face−saving view of politeness deriving from B & L has been most influential in providing a paradigm for linguistic politeness:

> Its fundamental advantage over other approaches to the subject lies in the fact that it takes as its starting point Goffman□s notion of face, interprets polite behavior as being basic to the maintenance of face wants and links it in a significant way with the Gricean maxims without needing to extend these in any way. □ It also discusses data from a range of languages other than English in order to underpin claims for the universality of politeness in language usage. (Watts *et al.*, 1992: 7)

2.2.4 The Conversational−contract View

The fourth approach to politeness is that presented by Fraser (1975), Fraser and Nolen (1981). While also adopting Grice's notion of a Cooperative Principle in its general sense, and while recognizing the importance of Goffman's notion of face, this approach differs in certain important ways from that of B & L.

According to this recognition, upon entering into a given conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, what the participants can expect from the other(s). During the course of time, or because of a change in the context, there is always the possibility for a renegotiation of the conversational contract: the two parties may readjust just what rights and what obligations they hold towards each other.

The dimensions on which interactive participants establish rights and obligations vary greatly. Some terms of a conversational contract may be imposed through convention; they are of a general nature and apply to all ordinary conversations. Speakers, for example, are expected to take turns, they are expected to use a mutually intelligible language, to speak sufficiently loudly for the other to hear clearly, and to speak seriously.

These are seldom negotiable.

Related are terms and conditions imposed by the social institutions applicable to the interaction. Speakers are expected to speak only in whisper, if at all, during a Protestant church service, everyone is expected to address the U.S. Chief Executive as □Mr. President□, and a witness in court is expected to speak only when questioned. Such requirements are also seldom, if ever, renegotiated.

And finally, other terms may be determined by previous encounters or the particulars of the situation. These are determined for each interaction, and most are renegotiable in light of the participants' perception and / or acknowledgements of factors such as the status, the power, and the role of each speaker, and the nature of the circumstances. These latter factors play a crucial role in determining what message may be expected: both in terms of force and content.

In short, people enter into a conversation and continue within a conversation with the understanding of their current conversational contract (CC) at every turn. Within this framework, being polite constitutes operating within the then-current terms and conditions of the CC. Politeness, in this view, is an on-going process. It is an expected, socially required norm of behavior, and participants in conversation are generally aware that they are required to act within the dictates of this expected code of behavior. Being polite is not predicated on making a hearer feel good, or not feel bad, but rather on conforming to socially agreed codes of good conduct. Being polite is taken to be a hallmark of abiding by the CP — being cooperative involves abiding by the CC.

Watts *et al*. (1992: 12) comment the conversational-contract view as follows:

> The chief advantage of the conversational-contract view of politeness is that it can account for the dynamic, changing nature of the concept, in both a historical sense and in the sense of ongoing interaction. In addition, it helps to explain why not all cultures have a term that is exactly equivalent to the English □politeness□, although the members of those cultures would certainly perceive

their social actions to be adequately labelled as such in English. Nor can we assume that the terms that are in use refer to the same phenomena.

2.3 Illocutionary Force and Politeness

Austin (1962) in *How to Do Things with Words* asserts that performative utterances (□performatives□ for short) are fundamentally different from constative (or descriptive) utterances. Whereas constative utterances can be evaluated in traditional terms of truth and falsehood, performatives are neither true nor false: instead, they are to be regarded as felicitous or non−felicitous. But examples such as

(1) He did not do it.
(1) I state that he did not do it.

lead Austin to the eventual conclusion that all utterances are □performative□ in the sense of constituting a form of action, rather than simply a matter of saying something about the world. Austin underlines this by drawing a parallel between □explicit performatives□ such as

(1) I promise that I shall be there.

and □primary performatives□ (or □primary utterances□) such as

(1) I shall be there.

Finally, as is well known, Austin concludes that in all regular utterances like (3) and (4), whether they have a performative verb or not, there is both a □doing□ element and a □saying□ element; and this leads him to shift to a distinction (Austin, 1962: 109) between locutionary acts and illocutionary acts, and to supplement these categories with the further category of perlocutionary acts.

(1) locutionary acts: roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain

sense and reference.

(1) illocutionary acts: utterances which have a certain (conventional) force (illocutionary force).

(iii) perlocutionary acts: what we bring about or achieve by saying something.

These three kinds of speech act can be understood as:

a locutionary act □ performing the act *of* saying something
an illocutionary act □ performing an act *in* saying something
a perlocutionary act □ performing an act *by* saying something

For example:

locution: S (speaker) says to H (hearer) that X.
(X is the propositional content, i.e. certain words spoken with a certain sense and reference)
illocution: in saying X, S asserts that P (proposition).
perlocution: by saying X, S convinces H that P.

Austin fastens on the second, illocutionary act and contrast it with the other two. The chief value of the distinction, for Austin, is that it enables us to separate the second category — the one with which the theory of speech acts is centrally concerned — from the other two. Among the three categories of speech act illocutionary act and illocutionary force that it has are regarded as the most important part in all regular utterances. Therefore, the term □speech act□ usually refers to illocutionary act. The implied meaning is that illocutionary force is frequently concerned and that politeness usually accompanies the intrinsic illocutionary force.

Politeness is an important missing link between the CP and the problem of how to relate sense to force. Different kinds and degrees of politeness are called for in different situations. At the most general level, illocutionary functions may be classified into the following four types, according to how they relate to the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity (Leech, 1983: 104).

(1) COMPETITIVE: The illocutionary goal competes with the social goal; e.g., ordering, asking, demanding, begging.
(1) CONVIVIAL: The illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal; e.g., offering, inviting, greeting, thanking, congratulating.
(iii) COLLABORATIVE: The illocutionary goal is indifferent to the social goal; e.g., asserting, reporting, announcing, instructing.
(iv) CONFLICTIVE: The illocutionary goal conflicts with the social goal; e.g., threatening, accusing, cursing, reprimanding.

Of these, the first two types are the ones that chiefly involve politeness. Where the illocutionary function is COMPETITIVE, the politeness is of a negative character, and its purpose is to reduce the discord implicit in the competition between what S wants to achieve, and what is □good manners□. Competitive goals are essentially discourteous. The PP is therefore required to mitigate the intrinsic discourtesy of the goal. The second type, that of CONVIVIAL functions, is, on the contrary, intrinsically courteous: politeness here takes a more positive form of seeking opportunities for comity. In the third category are COLLABORATIVE illocutionary functions, for which politeness is largely irrelevant. And in the fourth category of CONFLICTIVE functions, politeness is out of the question, because conflictive illocutions are, by their very nature, designed to cause offence.

The above classification is based on functions, whereas Searle□s (1979) classification of illocutionary acts is based on varied criteria. Roughly speaking, Searle□s categories are defined as follows:

(1) ASSERTIVES commit S to the truth of the expressed proposition: e.g., stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming, reporting. Such illocutions tends to be neutral as regards politeness, i.e., they belong to the COLLABORATIVE category above. But there are some exceptions: for example, boasting is generally considered to be impolite.
(1) DIRECTIVES are intended to produce some effect through action by the hearer:

ordering, commanding, requesting, advising, and recommending are examples. They frequently belong to the COMPETITIVE category, and therefore comprise a category of illocutions in which negative politeness is important. On the other hand, some directives (such as invitations) are intrinsically polite.

(iii) COMMISSIVES commit S (to a greater or lesser degree) to some future action; e.g., promising, vowing, offering. These tend to be CONVIVIAL rather than competitive, being performed in the interests of someone other than the speaker.

(iv) EXPRESSIVES have the function of expressing, or making known, the speaker□s psychological attitude towards a state of affairs which the illocution presupposes; e.g., thanking, congratulating, pardoning, blaming, praising, condoling, etc. Like the commissives, they tend to be CONVIVIAL, and therefore intrinsically polite. The reverse is true, however, of such expressives as □blaming□ and □accusing□.

(v) DECLARATIONS are illocutions whose □successful performance □ brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality□; e.g., resigning, dismissing, christening, naming, excommunicating, appointing, sentencing, etc. These actions, as Searle says □a very special category of speech acts□: they are performed, normally speaking, by someone who is especially authorized to do so within some institutional framework. As institutional rather than personal acts, they can scarcely be said to involve politeness. Moreover, politeness is not relevant to declarations because they do not have an addressee in the sense that applies to personal discourse: the person who makes a declaration uses language as an outward sign that some institutional (social, religious, legal, etc.) action is performed.

It is worth making the point that, as far as Searle□s categories go, negative politeness belongs pre-eminently to the DIRECTIVE class, while positive politeness is found pre-eminently in the COMMISSIVE and EXPRESSIVE classes.

2.4 Importance of Politeness

Grice (1975) proposed his general Cooperative Principle (CP) that has been discussed in 2.2.2. According to Grice, the CP is of paramount importance and is assumed to be operative in most conversations. He associates with the CP a set of more specific maxims and sub-maxims, which he presumes that speakers follow. Observance of the CP and maxims is deemed to be reasonable (rational), along the following lines:

> Anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation / communication (e.g., giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstance, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the CP and the maxims. (Grice, 1975: 49)

He also notes that the relative importance of the maxims differs as does the significance of their violation, and suggests that there might be a need for others not mentioned in his article:

> There are, of course, all sorts of other maxims (aesthetic, social, or moral in character) such as □Be polite□ that are also normally observed by participants in talk exchanges, and these may also generate nonconventional (i.e. conversational) implicatures. The conversational maxims, however, and the conversational implicatures connected with them, are specially connected (I hope) with the particular purposes that talk (and so, talk exchange) is adapted to serve and is primarily employed to serve. (Grice, 1975: 47)

Here Grice states the importance of politeness in conversations. Politeness is normally observed by participants in talk exchanges with the particular purposes.

Leech (1983) posits two sets of conversational (rhetorical) principles □ Interpersonal Rhetoric and Textual Rhetoric, each constituted by a set of maxims. Politeness is treated within the domain of Interpersonal Rhetoric, which contains at least three sets of maxims: those falling under the terms of Grice□s Cooperative Principle (CP), those associated with a Politeness Principle (PP), and those associated with an Irony Principle (IP).

Leech□s Principle of Politeness can be stated as the following: other things being equal, minimize the expression of beliefs which are unfavorable to the hearer and at the same time (but less important) maximize the expression of beliefs which are favorable to the hearer. Negative politeness therefore consists in minimizing the impoliteness of impolite illocutions, and positive politeness consists in maximizing the politeness of polite illocutions.

The CP and PP have different functions. The CP and its associated maxims used to explain how an utterance may be interpreted to convey indirect messages, and the PP and its maxims used to explain why such indirectness might be used:

> Politeness does not serve here as a premise in making inferences about S□s communicative intention. Thus, the PP does not seem to help in understanding S□s intention although, obviously, it plays a role in S□s choosing the appropriate expression of his communicative intention □ Thus the PP may help to understand reasons S had for choosing the particular content and form of what he said, but usually does not help to infer S□s intentions. (Leech, 1983: 38-39)

The PP can be seen not just as another principle to be added to the CP, but as a necessary complement. Leech□s point of view — unless you are polite, the channel of communication will break down — clearly reflects the function and importance of politeness in communication.

In short, the CP and the maxims associated with it would be guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication, so people should express their opinions clearly and succinctly, however, it is reasonable only if information is all that counts in communication. In real conversation people do not follow these maxims. The motivation of the deviation from these maxims is politeness. The sense of politeness is the basis for the most consequential interactions. For this reason, these maxims should be violated for the sake of politeness.

Fraser (1990) asserts that compared to grammatical rules conversational maxims occupy a more important status in conversations. According to him, the violation of a grammar rule results in ungrammaticality and the assessment not □knowing□ the language, whereas the violation of a conversational maxim may be accepted as signaling certain speaker intentions. Therefore, conversational maxims that include politeness principles can be regarded as a set of more important regulative principles. If the politeness principles fail to be applied appropriately, barriers of communication occur and the purposes of conversations can hardly be achieved. This is one type of miscommunication and as well as one kind of pragmatic failure occurring among nonnative speakers and children.

Janney and Arndt (1992) note that the inappropriate application of politeness principles may cause misunderstanding in intercultural (or cross-cultural) communications. According to Janney and Arndt, people from different cultures have not only different languages, but also different emotive styles and strategies of interacting. The latter are functionally related to the former, making both what and how things are expressed important features of communication in all cultures. Many problems of intercultural misunderstanding arise from the difficulty of finding tactful ways to communicate feelings and attitudes.

Kasper (1990) also states the importance of politeness in cross-cultural communications. According to Kasper, not-so-competent participants, such as nonnative speakers, suffer the perennial risk of inadvertently violating politeness norms, thereby forfeiting their claims to being treated as social equals.

To summarize, since languages function as a very important tool that make the social life in human societies possible, participants in conversations should produce utterances in polite ways. This is regarded as a basic condition of peaceful and successful social life. The function and importance of politeness is to get people through cooperative transactions with a minimal amount of friction.

III. Previous Studies and Principles on Linguistic Politeness

Interest in the socio-cultural phenomenon of politeness and the ways in which it is realized in language usage has certainly grown since B & L☐s seminal article in 1978. Questions about how politeness should be defined, the ways in which it is realized in different cultural frameworks and the validity of a universal theory of politeness are of interest to a wide range of social science researchers, in particular pragmalinguists, sociolinguists, sociologists, social anthropologists and social psychologists. The study of politeness focuses directly or indirectly on the presentation, maintenance and even adjustment of a concept of the ☐presentation of self☐ (Goffman (1967)) in the course of social interaction, on the historical growth of culturally specific patterns of behavior, and on the distribution of status and power in social groups. Hence the primary goal of such study should be the investigation of how human beings successfully manage interpersonal relationships to achieve both individual and group goals. Politeness can be interpreted as one of the constraints on human behavior that help us to achieve effective social living. The previous studies provide us with interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approaches to linguistic politeness.

Fraser (1990) posits four main ways of viewing politeness in the literature, the social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view (Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), Leech (1983)), the face-saving view (B & L (1978, 1987)) and the conversational-contract view (Fraser (1990)).

Watts *et al*. (1992) assert that a distinction needs to be made between first-order and second-order politeness. The first-order politeness corresponds to the various ways in which polite behavior is perceived and talked about by members of socio-cultural groups. It encompasses, in other words, commonsense notions of politeness. The second-order politeness, on the other hand, is a theoretical construct, a term within a theory of social behavior and language usage.

The social-norm view that has been discussed in Chapter II corresponds to the first-order politeness. It was a virtual side remark by Grice (1975) in his influential paper □Logic and conversation□ that gave rise to the study of linguistic politeness within the framework of Anglo-American pragmatics and the ensuing attempts to develop the second-order politeness concepts. Researches on politeness by Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), Leech (1983), B & L (1978, 1987), Fraser (1990), and Fraser and Nolen (1981) all involve the second-order politeness concept.

In this chapter we will first discuss Lakoff□s rules of politeness, then analyze Leech□s principle of politeness, and finally discuss B & L□s politeness theory.

3.1 Lakoff□s Rules of Politeness

3.1.1 The Rules of Politeness

Lakoff (1977) asserts that there are some areas where autonomous syntax fails to function as a viable theoretical construct. Pragmatic phenomena are sometimes indeed out of the purview of linguistics, since they are not, strictly speaking, grammatical phenomena, but rather reflect all sorts of non-linguistic facts about the speaker, his environment, and the real world. The effectiveness of communication is one for linguists to work on, often with the cooperation of other kinds of specialists including anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, literary critics, and others.

Lakoff (1977) suggests two rules of Pragmatic Competence (Lakoff, 1977: 86):

(i) Make yourself clear. (the Rules of Clarity)
(ii) Be polite. (the Rules of Politeness)

Lakoff asserts that these are the pillars of our linguistic as well as non-linguistic interactions with one another.

Fraser (1990) considers the first of these two rules to cover essentially the maxims of Grice□s Cooperative Principle (CP). Lakoff herself also says that the Rules of Clarity have been formulated; not fully satisfactorily, but certainly in a valuable outline, in Grice□s (1975) work on the Cooperative Principle (CP).

First of all, let□s review Grice□s Cooperative Principle (CP). Grice (1975) proposes the general Cooperative Principle (CP), under which four categories of maxims are distinguished (Grice, 1975: 45-46).

The Cooperative Principle (CP):

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged.

1. Quantity: Give the right amount of information: i.e.,
   1) Make your contribution as informative as is required.
   2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true: i.e.,
   1) Do not say what you believe to be false.
   2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relation: Be relevant.

4. Manner: Be perspicuous: i.e.,

1) Avoid obscurity of expression.
2) Avoid ambiguity.
3) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4) Be orderly.

Let□s move on to the Rules of Clarity proposed by Lakoff (1977).

The Rules of Clarity (Lakoff, 1977: 87):

(i) Saying as much and no more than is necessary.
(ii) Saying what is true, what is relevant, and saying it in a non−confusing way.

It is evident that the Rules of Clarity function as rules to the speaker to divulge the denotative content of her / his speech act as clearly and with as little confusion as possible. If one seeks to communicate a message directly, if one□s principal aim in speaking is communication, one will attempt to be clear, so that there is no mistaking one□s intention.

According to Lakoff (1977), like the Rules of Clarity, the second rule of Pragmatic Competence — the Rules of Politeness — are designed to get people through cooperative transactions with a minimal amount of wasted effort, or friction. Unlike the Rules of Clarity, the Rules of Politeness are to some extent mutually exclusive: different ones are applicable in different real-world situations, and applying the wrong one at the wrong time may cause as much friction as not applying any.

The Rules of Politeness (Lakoff, 1977: 88):

(i) Formality: Don□t impose / remain aloof.
(ii) Hesitancy: Allow the addressee his options.
(iii) Equality or camaraderie: Act as though you and addressee were equal / make him feel good.

Each of these are oriented to make the hearer □feel good□.

3.1.1.1 Rule 1 of Politeness

The first rule of politeness is followed when the speaker keeps her / his distance from the addressee; neither asks about her / his personal affairs nor tells the addressee about her / his own (since the personal affairs are non-free goods[2] in Goffman□s (1967) sense); does not use particles like □*you know*□, □*I guess*□, □*well*□, since these tend to reflect personal attitudes of the speaker; and does not guess at attitudes of the addressee. This is also the rule that governs □proper□ behavior in other ways: using correct table manners; not interrupting; using locutions like □*one*□, the passive, impersonal forms; and in languages that have them, using the □polite□ form of □*you*□, and sometimes other pronouns as well, marking distance between the speaker and the addressee. Hence, sentence (5a) and (6a) are polite utterances rather than (5b) and (6b) respectively.

(1) a. May I ask how much did you pay for that vase, Mr. Hoving?
b. How much did you pay for that vase?
(1) a. Dinner is served.
b. You wanna eat?

The use of title + last name, rather than first name as a form of address is a form of Rule 1 politeness too: it maintains distance between speaker and addressee and ensures that the relationship between them remain purely formal.

Violations of Rule 1, where it might ordinarily be applicable, do occur; in these cases, depending on the nature of the violation, who the violator is, and her / his relation to the violatee, the action may be described as □gross□, as □being familiar□, or as □having no breeding□. Also, the rule may be applied where ordinarily it would not be applied; in this case the applier may be considered pompous, stuffy, standing on ceremony.

3.1.1.2 Rule 2 of Politeness

The second rule of politeness can be defined as permitting addressee to decide her / his own options. It is at first glance apparently another phrasing of Rule 1. But actually it is applicable in different contexts, it is violated in different ways, it interacts differently with other pragmatic phenomena, and violations are interpreted quite differently.

Rule 2 can be called the rule of hesitancy, since the effect of giving someone else options is often to seem indecisive oneself, in order to let her / him decide. Trouble sometimes results from overzealous application of this rule by two consenting adults: if both participants in a decision-reaching situation each elect to put this rule in force, a stalemate will arise:

(1) a. What do you wanna do?
b. Oh, I☐ll leave it up to you.

Rule 2 is very often conventional politeness. The speaker wants to appear polite by giving the addressee a choice; but for any of various reasons, the addressee has no choice, and had better recognize the fact and act according to the real situation. But often the speaker herself / himself is in a bind: she / he knows the situation doesn☐t really permit the addressee to have a true choice, but she / he must make it look as though she / he does, for the sake of politeness.

The use of tag-imperatives, euphemisms, ☐*please*☐, hedges like ☐*sorta*☐, ☐*in a way*☐, ☐*loosely speaking*☐, and the use of particles like ☐*well*☐, ☐*er*☐, and ☐*ah*☐ are all examples of Rule 2 politeness.

(1) It☐s time to leave, isn☐t it?
(1) a. That was sorta stupid of you.
b. That was stupid of you.

It is a little nicer to criticize someone by saying (9a) than by saying (9b). The word ☐*sorta*☐ is used to express conventional uncertainty, used as a way of leaving the final judgment to the addressee. The same act of stupidity might be described both by (9a) and (9b); the main difference is not in how stupid the speaker views the act as having been, but in how angry she / he wants to risk making the addressee.

The application of cogitatives □ words like *suppose*, *guess* (shown as (10)) is another way of conventionally softening a declaration where the speaker in truth feels strongly enough to have uttered a pure declarative. Framing a statement as a cogitative act rather than a declarative act leaves the addressee free to believe or not.

(10) I guess it□s time to leave.

Here, too, direct imperatives can be distinguished from those derived by implicatures. Obviously, it is more polite (at least sometimes) to issue an order indirectly, since it theoretically leaves the addressee□s options open. On the other hand, sometimes an indirect imperative may be felt as ruder than a direct one. The indirect imperative (11a) that implies (11a□) is an indirect way of saying (11b). (11a) may or may not be a polite way of saying (11b), depending on the situation. In other words, it may be construed as polite under Rule 2, since the addressee is given an option; but when all the speaker wishes to do is not to violate Rule 2, it may be taken as a violation of Rule 3 because she / he is in a superior position to the addressee.

(11) a. It□s cold in here.

a□. My wish is your command. (If I say anything to you, you are to construe it as an order; I am so far superior to you.)

b. Shut the window.

There may well be different idiolects for politeness: what is courteous behavior to some people might be boorish to others because they have slightly differently formulated rules or because their hierarchy of acceptability is different. Thus, for instance, in certain cultures it is considered boorish to ask how much someone else□s possession costs. This is because such a question is felt to violate Rule 1, or perhaps Rule 2. But Rule 3 directs, among other things, that we should show an interest in the other person□s personal affairs, and compliment her / him on her /

his taste and financial success. So for some people, such a question is a warm and courteous way to begin a conversation. For the former group, Rule 1 takes precedence over Rule 3; for others, Rule 3 supersedes Rule 1.

3.1.1.3 Rule 3 of Politeness

The third rule of politeness is the equality rule: act as though the speaker and the addressee were equal. It is also a rule of informality, the opposite of Rule 1; where it is possible to employ Rule 3, the employment of Rule 1 instead will seem stiff and unfriendly. In a Rule 3 situation, speakers of those languages having such devices will use the informal form of *you* mutually, and first-hand or nickname terms are preferred rather than title + last name forms which are used in accordance with Rule 1. In Rule 3 situations, many particles like □*you know*□, □*I mean*□, □*like*□ are employed. They aren□t used so much for hesitancy, but rather to express a feeling of solidarity between speaker and addressee. They do not bear dictionary, or denotative, meaning.

In Rule 3 settings, simple imperatives are employed: not (12a) nor (12b), but (12c):

(12) a. Please take out the garbage.
b. Don□t you think the garbage is beginning to smell?
c. Take out the garbage.

3.1.2 The Relationship between the Rules of Conversation and the Rules of Politeness

The Rules of Conversation refer to the maxims under Grice□s Cooperative Principle (CP). It has been noted that Lakoff□s Rules of Clarity correspond to the Rules of Conversation. In other words, the Rules of Conversation are there to ensure clarity. Clarity in a conversational contribution means that the speaker will not be wasting the addressee□s time. That is, she / he is not imposing on the addressee. Hence, the Rules of Conversation can be regarded as subcases of the Rules of

Politeness, strictly speaking, as subcases of Rule 1. They are in effect in Rule 1 situations, cases of formality. Their purpose is to avoid imposition on the addressee. The Rules of Politeness are in conflict with the Rules of Conversation precisely in Rule 3 situations. Therefore, violations of the Rules of Conversation save only Rule 2 and Rule 3 politeness. (Lakoff (1973))

Conversational implicature is closely tied to politeness. When the speaker is afraid that what she / he has to communicate will involve non-free goods of some kind, she / he is apt to resort to circumlocution, that is, the use of implicature. In fact, conversational implicature is a special case of Politeness Rule 2; at least conventionally, it gives the addressee leeway in interpreting what is said to her / him. Strict adherence to the Rules of Conversation is, if related to politeness at all, Rule 1 related.

Interesting relationships exist among indirect speech acts. In particular, there is a hierarchy in which they may be used to replace direct utterances. Theoretically, an imperative could implicate either a declarative, a question, or another imperative, and similarly for the other two major speech act types. In actuality, there are many fewer possibilities, and these may be represented schematically by the following hierarchy (Lakoff, 1977: 100):

question < declarative < imperative

This may be read as: a question may implicate a declarative or an imperative, a declarative may implicate an imperative or another declarative, but an imperative may implicate only another imperative, not a question nor a declarative. In this sense, an imperative is the strongest of the three speech act types, a question the weakest. Examples can be found as the following:

(13) Where□s the peanut butter? ‘⊃[3]

1. You’ve put the peanut butter someplace weird.
2. Give me the peanut butter (already).
3. Why isn’t the peanut butter on the table?

(14) It’s cold in here. ∨ ⊃

1. Close the window.
2. I’m uncomfortable.
3. * Where’s my sweater? (where * denotes an impossible implicature.)

(15) Take out the garbage. ∨ ⊃

1. * It smells in here.
2. * What day does the garbage get collected?
3. Follow my orders.

This hierarchy forms the basis for explaining why compared with an imperative, a declarative, compared with a declarative, a question weakens the illocutionary force. An imperative is the least polite and the most avoided of all the three speech act types, and hence cannot be used as an indirect means of conveying the others. In conclusion, Lakoff (1977) explains that politeness is often a decisive factor, as well as a very complex one when several ways of saying approximately the same thing exist.

3.2 Leech□s Principle of Politeness

3.2.1 The Politeness Principle and Its Maxims

Like Lakoff, Leech (1983) adopts the framework initially set by Grice: there exist a set of maxims and sub-maxims that guide and constrain the conversation of rational people. Leech (1983) states that rhetoric places a focus on a goal-oriented speech situation, in which S (speaker) uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of H (hearer).

Using a distinction familiar in the work of Halliday, Leech distinguishes two rhetorics, the interpersonal and the textual rhetorics (Leech, 1983: 15-16).

Cooperative Principle (CP)

Interpersonal Rhetoric Politeness Principle (PP)

Irony Principle (IP)

Textual Rhetoric

Processibility Principle

Clarity Principle

Economy Principle

Expressivity Principle

The Politeness Principle (PP) (Leech, 1983: 81):

Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs; Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs.

Leech proposes six maxims under the Politeness Principle. The six maxims tend to go in pairs (Leech, 1983: 132):

(i) Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives)

(1) Minimize cost to other

(1) Maximize benefit to other

(ii) Generosity Maxim (in impositives and commissives)

(a) Minimize benefit to self

(b) Maximize cost to self

(iii) Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives)

(a) Minimize dispraise of other

(b) Maximize praise of other

(iv) Modesty Maxim (in expressives and assertives)

(a) Minimize praise of self

(b) Maximize dispraise of self

(v) Agreement Maxim (in assertives)

(a) Minimize disagreement between self and other

(b) Maximize agreement between self and other

(vi) Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)

(a) Minimize antipathy between self and other

(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other

Politeness concerns a relationship between two participants *self* and *other*. In conversation, *self* will normally be identified with S, and *other* will typically be identified with H; but since speakers also show politeness to third parties, who may or may not be present in the speech situation. The label *other* may therefore apply not only to addressees, but to people designated by third-person pronouns.

Not all of the maxims and sub-maxims are equally important. Of the twinned maxims (i) — (iv), (i) appears to be a more powerful constraint on conversational behavior than (ii), and (iii) than (iv). This reflects a more general law that politeness is focused more strongly on *other* than on *self*. Moreover, within each maxim, sub-maxim (b) seems to be less important than sub-maxim (a), and this again illustrates the more general law that negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness (seeking concord). One further difference in importance should be noted: politeness towards an addressee is generally more important than politeness towards a third party.

These maxims are observed □up to a certain point□, as relative rules rather than as absolute rules. It is particularly important to remember this with the weaker sub-maxims, such as □Maximize dispraise of self□. A person who continually seeks opportunities for self-denigration quickly becomes tedious, and more importantly, will be judged insincere. In this way the Maxim of Quality in the Cooperative Principle (CP) restrains the conversation participants from being too modest.

3.2.1.1 The Tact Maxim

(a) Minimize cost to other
(b) Maximize benefit to other

Politeness is essentially asymmetrical: what is polite with respect to H or to some third party will be impolite with respect to S, and vice versa. The justification for the maxims of politeness is precisely that they explain such asymmetries, and their consequences in terms of indirectness.

The most important kind of politeness in English-speaking society is covered by the operation of the Tact Maxim. The Tact Maxim applies to Searle□s (1979) directive and commissive categories of illocutions, which refer, in their propositional content X, to some action to be performed, respectively, by the hearer or the speaker. This action may be called A, and may be evaluated in terms of what S assumes to be its cost or benefit to S or H. On this basis, X may be placed on a cost-benefit scale, as in the following examples:

cost to H   less polite

(16) Peel these potatoes.
(17) Hand me the newspaper.
(18) Sit down.
(19) Look at that.
(20) Enjoy your holiday.
(21) Have another sandwich.

benefit to H   more polite

Another way of obtaining a scale of politeness is to keep the same prepositional content X and to increase the degree of politeness by using a more and more indirect kind of illocution. Indirect illocutions tend to be more polite because they increase the degree of optionality, and because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be.

directness less polite

(22) Answer the phone.
(23) I want you to answer the phone.
(24) Will you answer the phone?
(25) Can you answer the phone?
(26) Would you mind answering the phone?
(27) Could you possibly answer the phone?

indirectness more polite

There are two sides to the Tact Maxim, a negative side ☐Minimize the cost to H☐, and a positive side, ☐Maximize the benefit to H☐. The second is less important. It means that in proposing some action beneficial to H, S should bias the illocution towards a positive outcome, by restricting H☐s opportunity of saying ☐No☐. Thus an imperative, which in effect does not allow H to say ☐No☐ is (in an informal context) a positively polite way of making an offer as (21) shows.

Leech proposes that the Tact Maxim has five scales which must be consulted by the hearer in determining the degree of tact required in a given speech situation (Leech, 1983: 123 ff.):

Cost−Benefit Scale:
Represents the cost or benefit of an act to the speaker and hearer.

Optionality Scale:
Represents the relevant illocutions, ordered by the amount of choice which the speaker permits the hearer.

Indirectness Scale:
Represents the relevant illocutions, ordered in terms of hearer ☐work☐ to infer speaker intention.

Authority Scale:
Represents the relative right for speaker to impose wishes on the hearer.

Social Distance Scale:
Represents the degree of familiarity between the speaker and

hearer.

On Leech□s view, the Tact Maxim can be observed only as follows: As the hearer costs, the hearer authority relative to the speaker, and the social distance increases, the greater will be the need for providing the hearer with options and the greater the need for indirectness in the formulation of the expression conveying the message.

3.2.1.2 The Generosity Maxim

(a) Minimize benefit to self
(b) Maximize cost to self

The Tact Maxim is other−centred; the Generosity Maxim is self−centred.

(28) a. Could I borrow this electric drill?
b. Could you lend me this electric drill?
(29) a. I wouldn□t mind a cup of coffee.
b. Could you spare me a cup of coffee?

Since (28a) and (29a) have no reference to the cost to the hearer, they are more polite than (28b) and (29b) respectively.

3.2.1.3 The Approbation Maxim

(a) Minimize dispraise of other
(b) Maximize praise of other

In its more important negative aspect, the Approbation Maxim says □avoid saying unpleasant things about others, and more particularly, about H□. Hence whereas a compliment like (30a) is highly valued according to the Approbation Maxim, (30b) is not.

(30) a. What a marvelous meal you cooked!

b. + What an awful meal you cooked! (where + stands for □impolite□)

Similarly, it is acceptably polite to say (31) (referring to the performance of a musician), but suppose that B is the performer as shown in (32), in this case, B falls foul of the Modesty Maxim.

(31) A: Her performance was outstanding!

B: Yes, wasn□t it!

(32) A: Your performance was outstanding!

B: + Yes, wasn□t it!

Since dispraise of H or of a third party is impolite, various strategies of indirectness are employed in order to mitigate the effect of criticism.

(33) A: Her performance was magnificent, wasn□t it!

B: Was it?

With regard to (33), assuming that both A and B listened to the performance, B□s reply is evasive and implicates an unfavorable opinion. By questioning A□s statement, B implicates that she / he is not sure whether A□s judgment is correct. In this case, B apparently violates the CP (the Maxim of Quantity), however, B□s reluctance to declare her / his opinion is due to the Approbation Maxim.

In other cases, the reluctance to criticize manifests itself in institutionalized forms of understatement:

(34) Her performance was not so good as it might have been.

With reference to some scale of value, (34) in effect says □a higher position on the scale is possible□. But where the Approbation Maxim is in force, a failure to commit oneself to a favorable opinion implies that one cannot (truthfully) do so. In other words, the lack of praise implicates dispraise.

3.2.1.4 The Modesty Maxim

(a) Minimize praise of self
(b) Maximize dispraise of self

The Modesty Maxim, like the other maxims of politeness, shows itself in asymmetries:

(35) A: They were so kind to us.
B: Yes, they were, weren□t they.
(36) A: You were so kind to us.
B: + Yes, I was, wasn□t I.

As (35) shows, it is felicitous to agree with another□s commendation except when it is a commendation of oneself. As (36) illustrates, to break the first sub-maxim of Modesty is to commit the social transgression of boasting.

(37) a. How stupid of me!
b. + How clever of me!
(38) a. + How stupid of you!
b. How clever of you!

Example (37) shows how self−dispraise is regarded as quite benign, even when it is exaggerated for comic effect. Example (38) illustrates that it is polite to praise others, but impolite to dispraise others.

(39) a. Please accept this small gift as a token of our esteem.
b. + Please accept this large gift as a token of our esteem.

In (39a), the understatement of one□s generosity is shown to be quite normal, and indeed, conventional, in contrast to the exaggeration of one□s generosity.

Example (39b) breaks the first sub-maxim of Modesty.

3.2.1.5 The Agreement Maxim

(a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
(b) Maximize agreement between self and other

(40) A: It was an interesting exhibition, wasn□t it?
B: + No, it was very uninteresting.

In (40), B□s reply violates the first sub-maxim of the Agreement Maxim.

(41) A: A referendum will satisfy everybody.
B: Yes, definitely.

In (41), B maximizes agreement between A and herself / himself by using the word *definitely*.

(42) A: English is a difficult language to learn.
B: True, but the grammar is quite easy.
(43) A: The book is tremendously well written.
B: Yes, well written as a whole, but there are some rather boring patches, don□t you think?

As (42) and (43) show, partial disagreement is often preferable to complete disagreement.

3.2.1.6 The Sympathy Maxim

(a) Minimize antipathy between self and other
(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other

(44) a. I□m terribly sorry to hear that your cat died.

b. + I□m terribly pleased to hear that your cat died.

c. I□m terribly sorry to hear about your cat.

d. I□m delighted to hear about your cat.

The Sympathy Maxim explains why congratulations and condolences are courteous speech acts, even though condolences express beliefs that are negative with regard to the hearer as shown in (44a). This is polite, in contrast with (44b). There is nevertheless some reticence about expression of condolences, since to refer to the propositional context X is in fact to express an impolite belief in the sense of a belief unfavorable to H. Hence it might be preferable to say (44c) instead of (44a). Example (44c) is interpreted as a condolence, i.e., as an expression of sympathy for misfortune, and (44d) as a congratulation. That is, the event alluded to in (44c) is assumed unfortunate, and that in (44d) is assumed fortunate.

3.2.2 Conflicts within Leech□s Maxims of the Politeness Principle

There is an obvious trade-off between different maxims of the Politeness Principle (PP). The Modesty Maxim sometimes comes into conflict with some other maxim, in which case one maxim has to be allowed to take priority over the other. In the former example (36), for example, B adheres to the Agreement Maxim at the expense of the Modesty Maxim, but in this situation the Modesty Maxim plainly carries greater weight.

The operation of Leech□s maxims varies culturally. It appears that in Japanese society, the Modesty Maxim is more powerful than it is as a rule in English-speaking societies (Miller (1967)). In English-speaking societies, it would be customarily more polite to accept a compliment graciously rather than to go on denying it. English-speakers would be inclined to find some compromise between violating the Modesty Maxim and violating the Agreement Maxim (Leech, 1983: 137).

In Japanese culture, a person may say *Ohitotsu dʒzo* (literally “Please [have] one”) when offering food to others, which, although apparently minimizes generosity, may be seen as a result of attaching greater importance to modesty: to offer more than one is to suggest that one□s food is worth eating. In contrast, an

English-speaking host might well be considered niggardly if she / he passed round the peanut-bowl with the words: *Have a peanut!* It is normally considered to be more polite to offer a large quantity: *Have as many as you like.*

The greater value attached to the Modesty Maxim in Japanese culture is indicated further by the greater degree of understatement employed in giving presents. Whereas an English person may (as in the former example (39a)) call her / his gift □small□, the Japanese may go further, and say □This is a gift which will be of no use to you, but □□

3.2.3 The Cooperative Principle (CP) and the Politeness Principle (PP)

The Cooperative Principle (CP) (Grice, 1975: 45):

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The Politeness Principle (PP) (Leech, 1983: 81):

Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs; maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs.

Leech (1983) states that the PP can be seen not just as another principle to be added to the CP, but as a necessary complement, which rescues the CP from serious trouble.

Leech gives the following two examples where the PP rescues the CP:

(45) A: We□ll all miss Bill and Agatha, won□t we?
B: Well, we□ll all miss BǮLL.
(46) P: Someone’s eaten the icing off the cake.

C: It wasn't MK.

In (45), B apparently fails to observe the Maxim of Quantity: when A asks B to confirm A's opinion, B merely confirms part of it, and pointedly ignores the rest. From this an implicature is derived: □S is of the opinion that we will not all miss Agatha□. But on what grounds is this implicature arrived at? Not solely on the basis of the CP, for B could have added □□ but not Agatha□ without being untruthful, irrelevant, or unclear. The conclusion is that B could have been more informative, but only at the cost of being more impolite to a third party: that B therefore suppressed the desired information in order to uphold the PP.

In (46), typically an exchange between parent P and child C, there is an apparent irrelevance in C□s reply. C□s denial is virtually predictable in such a situation, as if C were being directly accused of the crime. Leech□s explanation of this apparent breach of the Maxim of Relation is as follows. Suppose P is not sure who is the culprit, but suspects that it is C. Then a small step of politeness of P□s part would be to make an indirect accusation by substituting an impersonal pronoun *someone* for the second-person pronoun *you*. When C hears this assertion, C responds to it as having implicated that C may well be guilty, denying an offence that has not been overtly imputed. So the apparent irrelevance of C□s reply is due to an implicature of P□s utterance. C responds to that implicature, the indirectness of which is motivated by politeness, rather than to what is actually said.

Both examples illustrate how an apparent breach of the CP is shown, at a deeper level of interpretation involving the PP, to be no such thing: in this way, the CP is redeemed from difficulty by the PP.

Leech summarizes the general social function of the CP and the PP and explains the □trade-off□ relation between them. The CP enables one participant in a conversation to communicate on the assumption that the other participant is being cooperative. In this the CP has the function of regulating what we say so that it contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discoursal goal(s). However, the PP has a higher regulative role than this: to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations that enable conversation participants to assume that their interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place. Leech states, □Unless you are polite, the channel of communication will break down.□

There are some situations where politeness can take a back seat. This is so, for example, where S and H are engaged in a collaborative activity in which exchange of information is equally important to both of them.

But there are other situations where the PP can overrule the CP to the extent that even the Maxim of Quality (which tends to outweigh other cooperative maxims) is sacrificed. That is, in certain circumstances, people feel justified in telling □white lies□.

In being polite one is often faced with a clash between the CP and the PP so that one has to choose how far to trade off one against the other.

With regard to the relationship between the CP and the PP, Kasper (1990) take two discourse types, i.e., transactional discourse and interactional discourse, into consideration. According to Kasper, transactional discourse type focuses on the optimally efficient transmission of information. Conversational behavior that is consistent with the requirements of transactional discourse will thus be characterized by close observance of the Cooperative Principle. Interactional discourse, by contrast, has as its primary goal the establishment and maintenance of social relationships. In interactional discourse, therefore, the Cooperative Principle is regularly overridden by the Politeness Principle in order to ensure that participants□ face-wants are taken care of.

3.3 Brown and Levinson□s Politeness Theory

3.3.1 Brown and Levinson□s Politeness Principle

It would be no exaggeration to say that the face-saving view of politeness deriving from B & L (1978, 1987) has been most influential in providing a paradigm for linguistic politeness which goes beyond a mere extension of the Gricean maxims.

B & L believe that politeness is basic to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation. B & L also assert that in addition to the status of politeness as universal principles of human interaction, politeness phenomena by their very nature are reflected in language.

According to B & L, the major justification for the bifurcation of the theory of meaning into semantics and pragmatics was the basic Gricean observation that what is □said□ is typically only a part of what is □meant□, the proposition expressed by the former providing a basis for the calculation of the latter. In this perspective, indirection, together with related kinds of mismatch between the said and the unsaid, is a central phenomenon. In this regard, pragmatic principles are taken to fix the reference of referring expressions. Thus, pragmatics enters the arena twice: once to fix the proposition expressed by what is □said□, the second time to calculate the indirect or contextual implications of the proposition expressed. Politeness will still be seen to play a central role in the second kind of calculation.

The fundamental advantage of B & L□s politeness theory over other approaches to linguistic politeness lies in the fact that it takes as its starting point Goffman□s (1967) notion of face, interprets polite behavior as being basic to the maintenance of face wants and links it in a significant way with the Gricean maxims (Watts *et al*., 1992: 7). According to B & L, the CP specifies a socially neutral framework within which ordinary communication is seen to occur, the operating assumption being no deviation from rational efficiency without a reason; it is, however, considerations of politeness that do provide principled reasons for such deviation.

B & L assert that politeness principles are reflected in linguistic universals. They discuss data from a range of unrelated cultures and languages including English, Tzeltal, South Indian Tamil, Malagasy and Japanese in order to underpin claims for the universality of politeness in language usage.

B & L□s argument can be summarized as follows (B & L, 1987: 59-60):

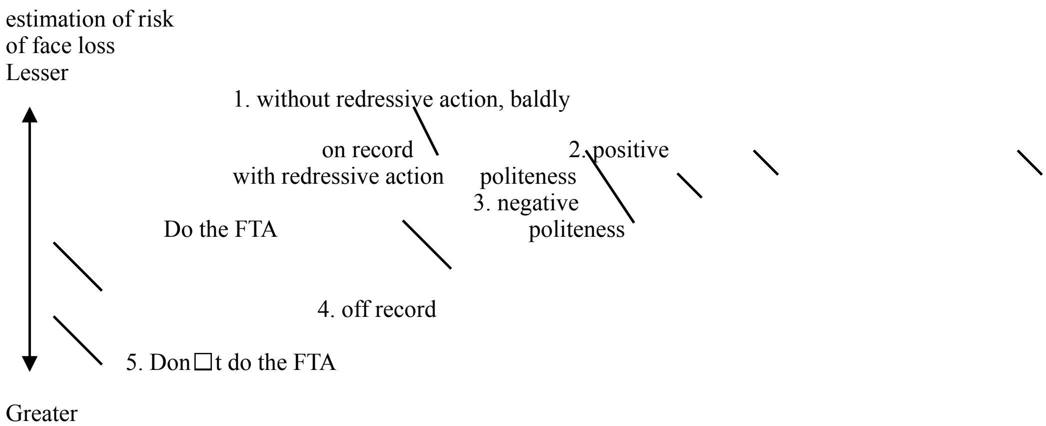
(i) B & L construct a Model Person (MP). All MPs are willful fluent speakers of natural languages, further endowed with two special properties □ rationality and face. Rationality means the availability to MPs of a precisely definable mode of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends. Face refers to the two particular wants that MPs are endowed — roughly, the want to be unimpeded (i.e., negative face) and the want to be approved of in certain respects (i.e., positive face). All MPs have positive face and negative face, and all MPs are rational agents — i.e., choose means that will satisfy their ends. S and H are MPs.

(ii) Given that face consists in a set of wants satisfiable only by the actions (including expressions of wants) of others, it will in general be to the mutual interest of two MPs to maintain each other□s face.

(iii) Some acts intrinsically threaten face; these □face-threatening acts□ are referred to as FTAs.

(iv) Unless S□s want to do an FTA with maximum efficiency (defined as bald on record) is greater than S□s want to preserve H□s (or S□s) face to any degree, then S will want to minimize the face threat of the FTA.

(v) The following set of strategies function as means satisfying communicative and face-oriented ends. The more an act threatens S□s or H□s face, the more S will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy; this by virtue of the fact that these strategies afford payoffs of increasingly minimized risk:



(vi) Since i — v are mutually known to all MPs, a MP will not choose a strategy less risky than necessary, as this may be seen as an indication that the FTA is more threatening than it actually is.

3.3.2 Properties of Interactants

B & L assume that all competent interactants in a society have two properties: face and rationality.

3.3.2.1 Face

B & L☐s notion of ☐face☐ is derived from that of Goffman (1967) and from the English folk term. Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction. In general, people cooperate in maintaining face in interaction. It is in general in every participant☐s best interest to maintain each other☐s face. Although the content of face differs in different cultures, for example, what the exact limits are to personal territories, what the publicly relevant content of personality consists in, etc., B & L assume that the mutual knowledge of members☐ public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal.

B & L define ☐face☐ as the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself. Face consist in two related aspects (B & L, 1987: 61):

(a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition
(b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants

B & L treat the aspects of face as basic wants, which every member knows every other member desires, and which in general it is in the interests of every member to partially satisfy. Therefore, the components of face given above may be restated as follows (B & L, 1987: 62):

(a) negative face: the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others

(b) positive face: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others

3.3.2.2 Rationality

B & L define □rationality□ as certain rational capacities, in particular consistent modes of reasoning from ends to the means that will achieve those ends.

A further aspect of rational behavior seems to be the ability to weigh up different means to an end, and choose the one that most satisfies the desired goals. This will treat all preferences as rational ones, and exclude extrinsically weighted wants.

3.3.3 Intrinsic FTAs and Strategies for Doing FTAs

3.3.3.1 Intrinsic FTAs

The kernel idea of B & L□s politeness theory is that some acts intrinsically threaten face and thus require softening. Whereas Leech proposes that certain types of acts are inherently polite or impolite, B & L propose that such acts are inherently face-threatening to the speaker, to the hearer, or to both.

They propose the following four-way analysis of FTAs:

(i) Acts threatening the hearer□s negative face: e.g., orders, requests, suggestions, advice, remindings, threats, warnings, dares, offers, promises, etc.

(ii) Acts threatening the hearer□s positive face: e.g., expressions of disapproval, criticism, complaints, contradictions, disagreements, challenges, mention of taboo topics, etc.

(iii) Acts threatening the speaker□s negative face: e.g., expressing thanks, acceptance of H□s thanks or H□s apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, unwilling promises and offers, etc.

(iv) Acts threatening the speaker□s positive face: e.g., apologies, acceptance of a compliment, confessions, admissions of guilt or responsibility, etc.

3.3.3.2 Strategies for Doing FTAs

B & L propose that in the context of the mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid the face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat. It is by the use of these so-called politeness strategies that interactants succeed in communicating both their primary massage(s) as well as their intention to be polite in doing so. And in doing so, they reduce the face loss that results from the interaction.

B & L posit a taxonomy of possible strategies for performing FTAs, summarized as follows (B & L, 1987: 69):

low face risk to the participant

1. without redressive action, baldly

on record

with redressive action

2. positive politeness

3. negative politeness

Do the FTA

4. off record

5. Don☐t do the FTA

high face risk to the participant

Doing an act baldly, without redress, involves doing it in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible (for example, for a request, saying ☐Do X!☐), as stated in Grice☐s maxims (1975). The bald-on-record strategy is undertaken with the least concern for face. Literally, the acts of bald-on-record strategy are clearly impositive speech acts. The situations for this strategy include cases then the FTA is used for great urgency, desperation, efficiency, or in the addressee☐s interest; or where the speaker is vastly superior in power to the addressee. When maximum efficiency is very important no face redress is necessary.

The examples in this category are shown below:

(47) Help!
(48) Forgive me.
(49) Send me a postcard.

Redressive action means an action that attempts to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it in such a way, or with such modifications or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired. Such redressive action takes one of two forms (positive politeness or negative politeness), depending on which aspect of face (positive or negative) is being stressed.

Positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of H, the positive self-image that she / he claims for herself / himself. Positive politeness is approach-based. It is roughly the expression of solidarity, e.g., □Since we both want to hear the announcement, □□

Negative politeness, on the other hand, is oriented mainly toward satisfying (redressing) H□s negative face, her / his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness, thus, is essentially avoidance-based. It is roughly the expression of restraint, e.g., □If it wouldn□t be too much trouble, □□ There is a natural tension in negative politeness between (a) the desire to go on record as a prerequisite to being seen to pay face, and (b) the desire to go off record to avoid imposing. A compromise is reached in conventionalized indirectness, for instance, □Can you pass the salt?□

Off-record politeness is roughly the avoidance of unequivocal impositions, e.g., □It would help me if no one were to do anything for just a moment.□ Linguistic realizations of off-record strategies include metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate, without doing so directly, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable.

3.3.3.3 The Weightiness of an FTA

Analogous to Leech□s proposal that scales are involved in assessing the degree of politeness required, B & L claim that a speaker must determine the seriousness or weightiness of a particular FTA*x* in terms of three independent and culturally-sensitive variables (B & L, 1987: 74 ff.):

(i) The Social Distance (D) between S and H (a symmetric relation); in effect, the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share
(ii) The Relative Power (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation); in effect, the degree to which S can impose will on H
(iii) The Absolute Ranking (R) of impositions in the particular culture, both in terms of the expenditure of goods and / or services by H, the right of S to perform the act, and the degree to which H welcomes the imposition

According to B & L, the weightiness of an FTA is calculated thus (B & L, 1987: 76):

$$Wx = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + Rx$$

W*x* is the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA*x*. As W*x* increases, a rational agent would tend to choose to use the higher-numbered strategies. D(S,H) is the value that measures the social distance between S and H. P(H,S) is a measure of the power that H has over S. R*x* is a value that measures the degree to which the FTA*x* is rated an imposition in that culture.

D, P and R variables are all relevant and independent.

Considering first the D variable, with P and R held constant and small, only the expression of D varies in the following two sentences:

(50) Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?
(51) Got the time, mate?

Example (50) would be used where (in S□s perception) S and H were distant, and (51) where S and H were close. D, then, is the only variable that changes from (50) to (51), and in doing so lessens W*x* that provides the motive for the particular linguistic encoding of the FTA.

Turning to the P variable, suppose D and R are held constant and have small values:

(52) Excuse me sir, would it be all right if I smoke?
(53) Mind if I smoke?

Example (52) might be said by an employee to her / his boss, while (53) might be said by the boss to the employee in the same situation. Here, P is the only variable that changes from (52) to (53), and this lessens W*x* that provides S with the reasons for her / his choice between (52) and (53) for her / his linguistic encoding.

With regard to R, suppose P is small and D is great, and P and D are held constant.

(54) Look, I☐m terribly sorry to bother you but would there be any chance of your lending me just enough money to get a railway ticket to get home? I must have dropped my purse and I just don☐t know what to do.
(55) Hey, got change for a quarter?

S in saying (54) considers the FTA to be much more serious than the FTA done in (55). The only variable is R, and it must be because R*x* is lower in (55) that the language appropriate to a low W*x* is employed there.

None of these variables can be viewed as a constant between individuals. The choice of a specific linguistic form is to be viewed as a specific realization of one of the politeness strategies in light of the speaker☐s assessment of the utterance context.

The operation of B & L☐s model can be summarized into the following steps (B & L, 1987: 90-91):

(i) Unless the speaker intends to perform an FTA with maximum efficiency, the speaker must determine that she / he wishes to fulfill the hearer face wants to some degree as a rational means to secure the hearer□s cooperation, either for purposes of face maintenance or some joint activity, or both.

(ii) The speaker must then determine the face-threat of the particular FTA (the W*x*) and determine to what extent to minimize the face-loss of the FTA, considering factors such as need for clarity and the need to not overemphasize the degree of potential face-loss.

(iii) The speaker must then choose a strategy that provides the degree of face-saving consistent with (ii), above. Retention of the hearer□s cooperation dictates that the strategy chosen meet the hearer□s expectation of what is required at that point.

(iv) The speaker must then choose a linguistic means that will satisfy the strategic end.

Since each strategy embraces a range of degrees of politeness, the speaker will be required to consider the specific linguistic forms used and their overall effect when used in conjunction with one another.

3.3.4 Politeness Strategies

B & L claim that a face−bearing rational agent will tend to utilize the FTA−minimizing strategies according to a rational assessment of the face risk to participants. The rational agent would behave thus by virtue of practical reasoning, the inference of the best means to satisfy stated ends. B & L also claim that what links these strategies to their verbal expressions is exactly the same kind of means−ends reasoning.

B & L note that there are two general aspects of the use of linguistic means to serve politeness functions. These two general aspects hold equally for all strategies.

First, the selection of a set of strategic wants to be realized by linguistic means may also involve the organization and ordering of the expression of these wants, so that (56) and (58) are more polite than (57) and (59) respectively.

(56) If you don□t mind me asking, where did you get that dress?

(57) Where did you get that dress, if you don☐t mind me asking?

(58) Goodness, aren☐t your roses beautiful! I was just coming by to borrow a cup of flour.

(59) I was just coming by to borrow a cup of flour. Goodness, aren☐t your roses beautiful!

Presumably, the processes involved here have to do with topicalization and focus.

The second general observation about the outputs of all strategies is that the more effort S expends in face-maintaining linguistic behavior, the more S communicates her / his sincere desire that H☐s face wants be satisfied.

B & L mainly discuss three types of politeness strategies with elaborate examples. They are positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record politeness and they will be discussed in the following part.

3.3.4.1 Positive Politeness

According to B & L, positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee☐s positive face, her / his perennial desire that her / his wants (or the actions / acquisitions / values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one☐s own wants are in some respects similar to the addressee☐s wants.

The positive politeness strategies (PPS), in total, consist of 15 kinds of strategies.

PPS 1. Notice, attend to H (her / his interests, wants, needs, goods)

(60) You must be hungry, it☐s a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?

(61) What a beautiful vase this is! Where did it come from?

PPS 2. Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)

(62) What a fantástic gárden you have!

(63) How absolutely márvelous / extraórdinary / dévastating / incrédible!

PPS 3. Intensify interest to H

This may be done by using the □vivid present□. For example:

(64) I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? — a huge mess all over the place, the phone's off the hook and clothes are scattered all over ...

A related technique is to exaggerate facts, to overstate:

(65) There were a million people in the Co-op tonight!

(66) I□ve never seen such a row!

PPS 4. Use in-group identity markers

(67) Here mate, I was keeping that seat for a friend of mine □

(68) Come here, mate / honey / buddy.

(69) Got any Winstons?

(70) a. Lend us two quid then, wouldja mate? (in British English)

b. Lend us two bucks then, wouldja Mac? (in American English)

(71) Mind if I smoke?

(72) How about a drink?

PPS 5. Seek agreement

Repetition:

(73) A: John went to London this weekend!

B: To Lóndon!

PPS 6. Avoid disagreement

Token agreement:

(74) A: That□s where you live, Florida?
B: That□s where I was born.

Pseudo-agreement:

(75) I□ll meet you in front of the theater just before 8:00, then.
(76) So when are you coming to see us?

Hedging opinions:

(77) I really sort of think / hope / wonder □
(78) It□s really beautiful, in a way.

PPS 7. Presuppose / raise / assert common ground

(i) Point-of-view operations

(79) I had a really hard time learning to drive, didn□t I.
(80) (in reference): This / Here is a man I could trust.

(ii) Presupposition manipulations

(81) Wouldn□t you like a drink?
(82) Don□t you think it□s marvelous!?

PPS 8. Joke

(83) OK if I tackle those cookies now?

PPS 9. Assert or presuppose S□s knowledge of and concern for H□s wants

(84) Look, I know you want the car back by 5:00, so should(n□t) I go to town now? (request)

PPS 10. Offer, promise

(85) I□ll drop by sometime next week. (shows S□s good intention)

PPS 11. Be optimistic

(86) You□ll lend me your lawnmower for the weekend, I hope / won't you / I imagine.

The minimization of the size of the face threat — W*x* — implies that it's nothing to ask (or offer, etc.) or that the cooperation between S and H means that such small things can be taken for granted. This minimization may be literally stated with expressions like *a little*, *a bit*, *for a second* or with a token tag.

(87) I'm borrowing your scissors for a sec — OK?
(88) I just dropped by for a minute to invite you all for tea tomorrow — you will come, won't you?

PPS 12. Include both S and H in the activity

(89) Let□s get on with dinner, eh? (i.e. you)
(90) Give us a break. (i.e. me)

PPS 13. Give (or ask for) reasons

(91) Why don□t we go to the seashore!

PPS 14. Assume or assert reciprocity

(92) I□ll do X for you if you do Y for me.
(93) I did X for you last week, so you do Y for me this week.

PPS 15. Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

S may satisfy H□s positive−face want by actually satisfying some of H□s wants, that is, by the action of gift−giving, not only tangible gifts, but human−relations wants such as the wants to be liked, admired, understood, listened to, and so on.

3.3.4.2 Negative Politeness

According to B & L, negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee□s negative face: her / his want to have her / his freedom of action unhindered and her / his attention unimpeded. It is the heart of respect behavior. Negative politeness is specific and focused: it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects. Negative politeness strategies (NPS) consist of 10 types of strategies.

NPS 1. Be conventionally indirect

In this strategy a speaker is faced with opposing tensions: the desire to give H an □out□ by being indirect, and the desire to go on record (the want to be direct stemming from □do FTA on record□). In this case it is solved by the compromise of conventional indirectness, the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings which are different from their literal meanings.

(i) Politeness and indirect speech acts

Indirect speech acts are certainly the most significant form of conventional indirectness. The use of indirect speech acts is universal.

It has been claimed that sentences carry in their structure indications of their illocutionary force. Thus syntactic questions are paradigmatically used to request information, assertions to make statements of fact, imperatives to command, and so on. Indirect speech acts function as hedges on illocutionary force. B & L claim that the motivation for indirect speech acts is the speaker□s want to communicate her / his desire to be indirect even though in fact the utterance goes on record.

Speech acts presuppose their felicity conditions. A systematic way of making indirect speech acts in English is related to a felicity condition. A felicity condition (Austin (1962), Searle (1969)) is one of the real−world conditions that must be met by aspects of the communicative event in order for a particular speech act to come off as intended. For instance, for a request to be felicitous, the addressee must be thought potentially able to comply with the request, the requestor must want the thing requested, and so on. Which precondition is questioned or doubted is highly relevant to whether the form is indeed polite in a particular context.

The constraints on conventional indirect requests appear to have to do largely with politeness. For request, only the forms represented by the following schema are polite (B & L, 1987: 135):

question ± subjunctive ± possibility operator ± *please*

felicity condition +

assertion + negation ± subjunctive ±
possibility operator ±
tag ± *please*

This predicts the following distribution between polite and rude indirect requests (where ^{r} = rude, ^{p} = polite, and * = non−grammatical):

Questioned:

(94) ^{p} Can you pass the salt?
(95) ^{p} Could you pass the salt?
(96) ^{p} Could you possibly pass the salt (please)?
(97) ^{r} Couldn□t you (possibly) pass the salt?
(98) *Couldn□t you (possibly) pass the salt, could you?

Asserted:

(99) r You can pass the salt. (with *please* = a very peremptory request)

(100) ?r You could pass the salt. (with *please* = a slightly presumptuous request)

(101) You couldn□t pass the salt. (not a request without a possibility notion)

(102) ?*You couldn□t pass the salt please.

(103) p You couldn□t possibly / by any chance / I suppose / perhaps pass the salt (please), (could you?)

The speaker chooses one of the following two derivative wants:

Be pessimistic: assume H is unlikely to be willing / able to do any acts predicated of her / him

Question, hedge: don□t assume H is able / willing to do any acts predicated of her / him

B & L claim that indirect speech acts are universal and for the most part are probably constructed in essentially similar ways in all languages. B & L further assert that the universality of indirect speech acts follows from the basic service they perform with respect to universal strategies of politeness.

(ii) Degrees of politeness in the expression of indirect speech acts

What makes some conventionally indirect expressions slightly more or less polite than others? The general principle is this: the more effort a speaker expends in face−preserving work, the more she / he will be seen as trying to satisfy H□s face wants, therefore, the more polite the utterance is. This is illustrated by the following ordering of polite requests (from least to most):

(104) Lend me your car.
(105) May I borrow your car please?

(106) I□d like to borrow your car, if you wouldn□t mind.
(107) Would you have any objections to my borrowing your car for a while?
(108) Could you possibly by any chance lend me your car for just a few minutes?
(109) There wouldn□t I suppose be any chance of your being able to lend me your car for just a few minutes, would there?

NPS 2. Question, hedge

(110) A swing is sort of a toy.
(111) John is a true friend.
(112) I wonder if (you know whether) John went out.
(113) He really did run that way.
(114) That□s just how it is, in fact / in a way / in all probability / don□t you agree.

Hedges addressed to Grice□s Maxims:

Quality hedges:

(115) I think / believe / assume □
(116) As I recall □

Quantity hedges:

(117) roughly / approximately / to some extent
(118) I□ll just say he□s not easy to get on with.

Relevance hedges:

(119) This may not be relevant / appropriate / timely, but □
(120) I might mention at this point □

Manner hedges:

(121) What I meant was ☐
(122) To put it more simply ☐

NPS 3. Be pessimistic

(123) I don☐t imagine / suppose there☐d be any chance / possibility of you ☐
(124) Perhaps you☐d care to help me.

NPS 4. Minimize the imposition, Rx

(125) I just want to ask you if I can borrow a tiny bit of paper.
(126) I just dropped by for a minute to ask if you ☐

Expressions that minimize R*x* are expressions like: *a tiny little bit*, *a sip*, *a taste*, *a drop*, *a smidgen*, *a little*, *a bit*, etc.

NPS 5. Give deference

There are two sides to the coin in the realization of deference: one in which S humbles and abases herself / himself, and another where S raises H.

In English the second member of pairs like *eat / dine*, *man / gentleman*, *give / bestow*, *bit / piece*, *book / volume* and so on encode greater respect to the person, activity or thing.

(127) We look forward very much to dining / eating with you.

The address forms such as *Sir*, *Madam*, *Lady* originally had aristocratic connotations. They are typically strategically used to soften FTAs. For example:

(128) Excuse me, sir, but would you mind if I close the window?

NPS 6. Apologize

(129) I☐m sure you must be very busy, but ☐

(130) I hesitate to trouble you, but ☐

(131) I simply can☐t manage to ☐

(132) Excuse me, but ☐

NPS 7. Impersonalize S and H

(133) a. I tell you that it is so.

b. It is so.

(134) a. I ask you to do this for me.

b. Do this for me.

In general, forms like (133a) and (134a) are conversationally unusual, in contrast to the more expectable (133b) and (134b) respectively.

Example (135b) is marked as aggressively rude, compared to (135a):

(135) a. Take that out!

b. You take that out!

(136) It appears / seems (to me) that ☐

(137) It is regretted that ☐ (rather than ☐I regret that ☐☐)

(138) ☐ if it is possible (rather than ☐☐ if you can☐)

(139) One might think ☐ (rather than ☐You / I might think ☐☐)

(140) His Majesty is not amused.

NPS 8. State the FTA as a general rule

(141) The audience will please refrain from smoking in the theater.

NPS 9. Nominalize

(142) a. You performed well on the examinations and we were favorably impressed.
b. Your performing well on the examinations impressed us favorably.
c. Your good performance on the examinations impressed us favorably.

Example (142c) seems more formal, more like a business letter than (142b), and (142b) more than (142a). So as the subject is nominalized, the sentence gets more formal.

NPS 10. Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H

(143) I☐d be eternally grateful if you would ☐

3.3.4.3 Off Record

According to B & L, a communicative act is done off record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. In other words, the actor leaves herself / himself an ☐out☐ by providing herself / himself with a number of defensible interpretations. Thus if a speaker wants to do an FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, she / he can do it off record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it.

Such off-record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language. H must make some inference to recover what was in fact intended. If a speaker wants to do an FTA, and chooses to do it indirectly, she / he must give H some hints and hope that H picks up on them and thereby interprets what S really intends to say. The basic way to do this is to invite conversational implicatures by violating, in some way, the Gricean Maxims of efficient communication.

Off-record strategies (ORS) consist of 15 kinds of strategies.

(I) Violate the Relevance Maxim

ORS 1. Give hints

(144) It□s cold in here. (c.i. Shut the window)

(145) This soup is a bit bland. (c.i. Pass the salt)

ORS 2. Give association clues

(146) Are you going to market tomorrow? □ There□s a market tomorrow, I suppose. (c.i. Give me a ride there.)

Euphemisms for taboo topics are also presumably derived from implicatures of this kind, for example, *WC*, *toilet*, *lavatory*, *bathroom*, *cloakroom*, *restroom*, etc.

ORS 3. Presuppose

An utterance can be almost wholly relevant in context, and yet violate the Relevance Maxim just at the level of its presuppositions.

(147) I washed the car again today.

(II) Violate the Quantity Maxim

ORS 4. Understate

(148) A: How do you like Josephine□s new haircut?
B: It□s all right / pretty nice / OK. (c.i. I don□t particularly like it.)

ORS 5. Overstate

(149) I tried to call a húndred times, but there was never any answer.
(150) You néver do the washing up.

ORS 6. Use tautologies

(151) War is war.
(152) Boys will be boys.

(III) Violate the Quality Maxim

ORS 7. Use contradictions

(153) A: Are you upset about that?
B: Well, yes and no / I am and I□m not.

ORS 8. Be ironic

(154) John is a real genius. (after John has just done twenty stupid things in a row)
(155) Beautiful weather, isn□t it! (to postman drenched in rainstorm)

ORS 9. Use metaphors

(156) Harry is a real fish. (c.i. He drinks / swims / is slimy / is cold−blooded like a fish.)

ORS 10. Use rhetorical questions

(157) How many times do I have to tell you □? (c.i. Too many.)
(158) What can I say? (c.i. Nothing, it□s so bad)

(IV) Violate the Manner Maxim

ORS 11. Be ambiguous

Purposeful ambiguity may be achieved through metaphor, since it is not always clear exactly which of the connotations of a metaphor are intended to be invoked. Thus:

(159) John is a pretty sharp / smooth cookie.

could be either a compliment or an insult, depending on which of the connotations of *sharp* or *smooth* are latched on to.

ORS 12. Be vague

(160) Perhaps someone did something naughty.

ORS 13. Over-generalize

Rule instantiation may leave the object of the FTA vaguely off record. H then has the choice of deciding whether the general rule applies to her / him. For example:

(161) The lawn has got to be mown.
(162) Mature people sometimes help do the dishes.

The use of proverbs has the same function:
(163) A stitch in time saves nine.
(164) A penny saved is a penny earned.

ORS 14. Displace H

S may go off record as to who the target for her / his FTA is, or she / he may pretend to address the FTA to someone whom it wouldn□t threaten, and hope that the real target will see that the FTA is aimed at her / him.

ORS 15. Be incomplete, use ellipsis

(165) Well, if one leaves one☐s tea on the wobbly table ☐

(166) Well, I didn☐t see you ☐

IV. Reexamination of the Universality of Politeness Claimed by Brown and Levinson

This chapter is a critical examination of the theory of linguistic politeness proposed by B & L (1978, 1987). Of the various models of linguistic politeness which have been advanced, B & L☐s is the one which most specifically claims its pancultural validity, and therefore its potential application to intercultural studies. However, a number of works have argued that this model is seriously flawed. This chapter focuses on the notion, fundamental to B & L□s theory, of □face□, and questions the universality of the proposed constituents of face particularly in the light of Chinese culture. B & L□s claim for the universality of politeness is criticized and their politeness theory is commented by reviewing some current approaches to the study of linguistic politeness as well as some recent work on non-Western politeness.

4.1 Brown and Levinson□s Claim for the Universality of Politeness

Recently there has been a lot of interest in language universals. B & L (1978, 1987) seek to describe the universality of politeness. Particularly, B & L describe the universal motivations behind politeness and devise a universal set of politeness principle.

B & L□s claims for □universals□ on politeness amount to (B & L, 1987: 244):

(i) The universality of face, described as two kinds of wants.

(ii) The potential universality of rational action devoted to satisfying others□ face wants.

(iii) The universality of the mutual knowledge between interactants of (i) and (ii).

B & L propose a face-saving model of politeness in which they claim various universals on linguistic politeness. One of the universal views is that all people involved in social interaction have face. B & L□s notion of face is based on Goffman□s definition of face as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself. B & L assume that all competent adult members of society have □face□: the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself. They construe face as consisting of two specific kinds of desires or face-wants that individual interactants attribute to one another, and that every member knows every other member desires. They call these □negative face□ and □positive face□.

Negative face refers to the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Positive face refers to the positive consistent self-image or “personality” (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. They restate the two aspects of face as □basic wants□ rather than □ norms□ by defining negative face as the want of every competent adult member that his action be unimpeded by others and define positive face as the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. While recognizing that the content of face is culture-specific and subject to much cultural elaboration, B & L maintain that the notion of face constituted by these two basic desires is universal, and they claim that face is a public self-image to which individual members of a given community orient themselves.

The second universal view on politeness proposed by B & L is that universally people□s interactions are geared towards maintaining each other□s face. In other words, the need to maintain each other□s face is the important function of politeness in all languages and cultures. Face is therefore seen, by B & L, as a type of pancultural human resource □that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction□ (B & L, 1987: 61). B & L state that □in general people cooperate in maintaining face in interaction□ and that □it is in general in every participant□s best interest to maintain each other□s face□ (B & L, 1987: 61).

The third universal view is B & L□s assertion that some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening. These acts that intrinsically threaten face are called face-threatening acts (FTAs). Except in the case where the speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency, she / he will try to minimize the face threat by choosing an appropriate strategy such as avoiding the FTA, or performing along with the FTA a redressive act. Positive politeness is what B & L call redress directed to the addressee□s positive face wants; redress consists in partially satisfying that desire by communicating that one□s own wants (or some of them) are in some respects similar to the addressee□s wants. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is redressive action addressed to the addressee□s negative face: her / his want to have her / his freedom of action unhindered and her / his attention unimpeded.

In short, one of the stated goals of B & L□s work on linguistic politeness is their hope to show that superficial diversities can emerge from underlying universal principles and are satisfactorily accounted for only in relation to them, and they claim that their model for politeness is universal. In other words, B & L hope to be able to use their model of the universals in linguistic politeness to characterize the cross-cultural differences in ethos, the general tone of social interaction in different societies.

4.2 Comments on Brown and Levinson□s Universal Views on Politeness and Their Politeness Theory

Gu (1990) argues that B & L□s monograph on linguistic politeness can be seen in two ways. One is that it is a fairly thorough cross-cultural treatise on face threatening acts (FTAs). The other is that it is a cross-cultural account of politeness phenomena by way of examining how politeness is employed to redress the performance of FTAs. B & L□s politeness theory has partly been supported by the literature. Their lasting achievement is to have provided excellent heuristics to investigate a highly complex object of inquiry. However, in the light of current evidence, it has also become clear that their model, while impressive in their parsimony and elegance, are over-simplistic. Particularly, as a theory with claims for universality of politeness, B & L□s model needs elaboration and revision. The problems existing in B & L□s politeness theory are as the following: (i) the problem with the concept and the universality of face. (ii) the neglect of the normative aspect of politeness; (iii) the pessimistic evaluation of politeness.

(i) The problem with the concept and the universality of face

What specifically informs and constitutes B & L□s face-saving theory of politeness is a highly abstract notion of □face□ — one that they argue is universal

(B & L, 1987: 13, 61-62). The concept of face and the claim for its universality must be questioned and reexamined.

B & L acknowledge deriving their formulation of face from Erving Goffman's classic account of face and from the English folk notion of face. Goffman characterizes face as □the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact□ (Goffman, 1967: 5). He sees face not as a private or an internalized property □lodged in or on his [the individual□s] body□, but as an image □located in the flow of events□, supported by other people□s judgments, and endorsed by □impersonal agencies in the situation□ (Goffman, 1967: 7). Seen in this light, face becomes a public image that is on loan to individuals from society, and that will be withdrawn from them if they prove unworthy of it. To secure this public image, people engage in what Goffman calls □face-work□. Goffman specifies two kinds of face-work: the □avoidance process□ (avoiding potentially face-threatening acts) and the □corrective process□ (performing a variety of redressive acts) (Goffman, 1967: 15-23).

B & L define face as □the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself□ (B & L, 1987: 61). They construe face as consisting of two specific kinds of desires or face-wants — "negative face" and "positive face". While recognizing that the content of face is culture-specific and subject to much cultural elaboration, they maintain that the notion of face constituted by these two basic desires is universal, and they claim that face is a public self-image to which individual members of a given community orient themselves. Yet, by characterizing face as □a public *self*-image□, they seem to part with Goffman□s face concept. For Goffman, face is a pubic property. In contrast, B & L characterize face as an image that intrinsically belongs to the self. Mao (1994) argues that Goffman□s face is a public, interpersonal image, while B & L□s face is an individualistic, self-oriented image. Such a self-oriented characterization of face, which may very well underlie Western interactional dynamics, can be problematic in non-Western context.

Mao (1994) discusses the concept of face in Chinese culture. Two Chinese characters are used to convey the denotative meaning of the word □face□: *mianzi* 面子 and *lian* 臉. *Mianzi* 面子 stands for prestige or reputation, which is either achieved through getting on in life (Hu, 1944: 45), or ascribed (or even imaged) by other members of one's own community (Ho, 1975: 869-870). *Lian* 臉 refers to "the respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation□ (Hu, 1944: 45). Neither *mianzi* nor *lian* in Chinese can be properly understood in terms of negative face or positive face respectively (Mao, 1994: 457-462).

Gu (1990) observes that the Chinese notion of negative face differs from B & L□s definition. Gu bases this observation on the fact that such speech acts as inviting, offering, and promising in Chinese are not generally regarded as threatening to the hearer□s negative face. For example, to insist on inviting someone to dinner is considered to be polite in Chinese even if the invitee declines the invitation. Such an act does not pose a threat to the invitee□s negative face, as it might, according to B & L, in an English-speaking context (Gu, 1990: 242).

Matsumoto (1988) questions B & L□s claim that the constituents of face could apply to Japanese interaction. She argues that what is most alien to the Japanese notion of face is B & L□s formulation of negative face as the desire to defend one□s own territory from the encroachments of others or as the want to be unimpeded in action. Such a desire or want, according to her, presupposes that "the basic unit of society is the individual" — a presupposition that is characteristic of European and American cultures, but uncharacteristic of Japanese culture. What is characteristic of Japanese culture is not a claim to individual freedom of action but a distinctive and perennial emphasis on interpersonal relationships; such an emphasis revolves around acknowledging and maintaining one□s position in relation to other members of the same community, and in accordance with their perceptions about such a position. In other words, what is of paramount concern to a Japanese is not her / his own territory, but the position in relation to the others in the group and her / his acceptance by those others. A Japanese generally must understand where she / he stands in relation to other members of the group or society, and must acknowledge her / his dependence on the others. Matsumoto claims that loss of face is associated with the perception by others that one has not comprehended and acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group. She also claims that preservation of face in Japanese culture is intimately bound with showing recognition of one□s relative position in the communicative context and with the maintenance of the social ranking order. In short, Matsumoto argues that the Japanese concepts of face are qualitatively different from those defined as universals by B & L.

Mao (1994) states that there seems to be a resemblance between the Chinese concept of face (*mianzi* 面子 and *lian* 臉) and the Japanese concept of face. Specifically, both stress the public, communal aspect, and both foreground others' perceptions of whether a given sanction has been secured (Chinese), or a given relationship has been acknowledged (Japanese). Such a concept of face differs considerably from the notion of negative face.

Mao (1994) argues that the Chinese and Japanese concept of face, and B & L□s characterization of face, are informed, respectively, by two different underlying forces. The Chinese and Japanese concept of face may be regarded as a centripetal force, as Chinese and Japanese face gravitates toward social recognition and hierarchical interdependence. B & L□s concept of face may be regarded as a centrifugal force, because Anglo-American face spirals outward from individual desires or wants, and sees the self as the initiating agent. These two divergent forces represent two different face orientations.

In order to account for these two apparently opposing forces, Mao proposes a different interactional construct — "the relative face orientation" (Mao, 1994: 471). The relative face orientation may be defined as:

> an underlying direction of face that emulates, though never completely attaining, one of two interactional ideals that may be salient in a given speech community: the ideal social identity, or the ideal individual autonomy. The specific content of face in a given speech community is determined by one of these two interactional ideals sanctioned by the members of the community. (Mao, 1994: 472)

According to Mao, the ideal social identity motivates members of the community to associate themselves with others and to cultivate a sense of homogeneity; the ideal individual autonomy marks off a separate and an almost inviolable space, within which the individual can preserve and celebrate her or his freedom of action without fear of becoming an outsider.

Mao concludes that Chinese and Japanese face are oriented toward an ideal social identity; such an orientation gives rise to a *public* image. In contrast, B & L□s formulation of face is oriented toward an ideal individual autonomy; such an orientation nurtures a public *self*-image. By identifying these two different potential interactional ideals, the relative face orientation construct allows for cultural differences without burying the concept of face.

B & L□s propose face-saving model, with its two specific constituents (negative and positive face), undoubtedly foregrounds the significance of face as an interactional force shaping the things that we do with words. It enables us to see how we resort to different kinds of linguistic strategies to counteract the threats to face that our speech acts may entail (Mao, 1994: 483). However, the notions of face are perceived and manifested in different ways in different cultures. Face is actually found to wear different cultural faces. Therefore, B & L□s claim to the universality of their concept of face are unjustified.

(ii) The neglect of the normative aspect of politeness

According to Gu (1990), in interaction politeness is not just instrumental; it is also normative. B & L treat face as wants rather than as norms or values, but it would be a serious oversight not to see the normative aspect of politeness. Failure to observe politeness will incur social sanctions. Gu emphasizes the normative nature of politeness in Chinese society. In the Chinese context, politeness exercises its normative function in constraining individual speech acts as well as the sequence of talk exchanges. He notes that B & L□s failure to go beyond the instrumental and recognize the normative function of politeness in interaction is probably due to their construction of their theory around the notion of two rational and face-caring model persons (MPs). This, he argues, may well work in atomistic and individualistic societies like those in the West, but not in a non-Western society where the group is stressed above the individual.

Mao (1994) states that the tendency to act primarily in compliance with the anticipated expectations of communal norms rather than personal desires continues to be observed by the mainland Chinese. He further argues that what informs this tendency, in large measure, is the Chinese concept of face, which is different from B & L□s notion of face.

Fraser (1990) posits four main ways of viewing politeness in the literature: the social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view, the face-saving view, and the conversational-contract view. The social-norm view reflects that Fraser has noticed the normative aspect of politeness. The social-norm view posits that there are standards of behavior in any society and in any age according to which the speaker is deemed to have spoken politely or not. Fraser maintains that these are normally associated with particular speech styles in which a higher degree of formality implies greater politeness.

Janney and Arndt□s (1992) assertion on social politeness corresponds to the social-norm view of politeness. Social politeness is rooted in people□s need for smoothly organized interaction with other members of their group. As members of groups, people must behave in more or less predictable ways in order to achieve social coordination and sustain communication. One of their main means of doing this is to follow conventions of social politeness. The function of social politeness is essentially to coordinate social interactions.

The social-norm view of politeness corresponds to the kind of politeness that has been termed □discernment□ by Hill *et al*. (1986). Hill *et al*. (1986) assume that discernment is an important factor in all sociolinguistic concepts of politeness. Discernment is □conforming to the expected norm□ (Hill *et al*., 1986: 348). In a situation of discernment, once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and appropriate behavior is essentially automatic and obligatory according to the social norms or conventions. Discernment is the major aspect of linguistic politeness in Japanese and Korean.

In their studies of the honorific system in Japanese, both Matsumoto (1989) and Ide (1989) argue that it is not necessarily face that governs the interactant□s behavior but rather interactional aspects of the conversation and social and psychological attitudes toward the particular referent expressed by the subject.

Matsumoto (1989) asserts that □no utterance in Japanese can be neutral with respect to [the] social context□ in which it is uttered; □a Japanese speaker cannot avoid conveying the setting and the relationship among the addressee, the third person(s) or object(s) in the utterance, and herself / himself□ (1989: 208). In a culture where the individual is more concerned with conforming to norms of expected behavior than with maximizing benefits to self, face, in B & L□s sense, ceases to be an important issue in interpersonal relationships. In such a culture, discerning what is appropriate and acting accordingly is much more important than acting according to strategies designed to accomplish specific objectives such as pleasing or not displeasing others.

Ide (1989) subscribes to the view that discernment rather than face is the motivating force behind Japanese politeness. She argues that B & L□s universal principles neglect two aspects of language and usage which are relevant to linguistic politeness in Japanese: (a) the conscious choice of formal linguistic forms, and (b) an aspect of usage, discernment, which she defines as □the speaker□s use of polite expressions according to social conventions rather than interactional strategy□. Linguistic discernment refers to the systematic encoding of □the distinction between the ranks or the roles of the speaker, the referent, and the addressee□ (Ide, 1989: 230); it conveys a mutual desire to acknowledge, and to perpetuate — via language — social distinctions that are either ascribed or prescribed by the conversational participants. Normally, Japanese speakers choose proper linguistic forms to encode different kinds of relationships that are required to be acknowledged in each given situation. This again suggests that certain manifestations of politeness are responses to expected social norms of behavior. In Japanese society, according to Ide, the practice of polite behavior according to social conventions is known as *wakimae*. To behave according to *wakimae* is to show verbally and non-verbally one□s sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions. In other words, polite behavior is a response to one□s awareness of social expectations appropriate to her / his place in society.

According to Kim (1996), politeness in Korean culture should be understood as a general method to comply with social standards and social expectations and to establish and maintain harmonious human relations. B & L☐s universal framework of politeness is not sufficient to explain the politeness aspects like honorifics in Korean. B & L claim that honorific expressions have originated from the productive strategy of face preservation and the reason the honorifics are used is to preserve the negative aspect of face. However, the honorifics in Korean reflect rank differences or ranking relationships rather than the negative face preservation. The primary motive for the use of honorifics is attributed to the intricate social ranking system in Korean society. In Korean society, there is no situation that people say anything without considering ranking differences in interpersonal communication. People always want to keep and maintain the perceived social ranks. People are expected to be ready to differentiate themselves from others with delicate degrees of deferential expressions appropriate to the rank order. The social rank order is a sort of social norm which Korean society is based on.

To summarize, the normative aspect of politeness is neglected by B & L. The social-norm view of politeness, as discussed above, stands in contrast to the face-saving view of politeness proposed by B & L. In the social-norm view, politeness is sees as arising from an awareness of one☐s social obligations to the other members of the group to which one owes primary allegiance, while the face-saving view assumes that politeness is a strategy acquired and maintained by individuals to attain specific objectives, goals, or intentions.

(iii) The pessimistic evaluation of politeness

Nwoye (1992) realizes that the main principle of B & L☐s politeness theory is the notion that some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening. Nwoye analyzes that consequently, social interaction becomes an activity of continuous mutual monitoring of potential threats to the faces of the interactants, and of devising strategies for maintaining the interactants' faces — a view that if always true, could rob social interaction of all elements of pleasure. This analysis reflects B & L☐s pessimistic evaluation of politeness.

According to B & L☐s politeness theory, most verbal and non-verbal acts are potentially face-threatening. Kasper (1990) argues that viewing almost all linguistic actions as potentially face-threatening is a very pessimistic view of interaction and, therefore, communication is seen as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavor.

Sifianou (1991) asserts that viewing almost all linguistic actions as potentially face-threatening represents a negative evaluation of politeness. Sifianou (1991) investigates the function of diminutives and of constructions containing □a little□ in Greek and in English within B & L□s model of interaction. B & L (1987) see diminutives as negative politeness markers used to minimize impositions. Sifianou argues that in Greek, such linguistic elements serve as markers of friendly, informal politeness. The highly developed system of diminutives in Greek facilitates the expression of positive politeness. In Greek, the use of diminutives mainly serves to establish or reaffirm a solid framework for the interaction. The notion of imposition is assessed differently in English and Greek societies. For B & L, requests always involve some degree of imposition, which always requires some kind of minimization. Being polite, therefore, is largely a matter of being on the alert to minimize impositions by using the proper mitigating devices, such as diminutives and expressions meaning □a little□. In Greek culture, requests do not necessarily entail imposition on the addressee. There are situations where requests are not interpreted as impositions at all: when participants have specific, culturally, and situationally determined rights and obligations to perform particular acts, or when the result of a request directly or indirectly benefits the addressee. Sifianou further argues, contrary to B & L□s claim, that in such contexts, softening devices like diminutives are hardly necessary to mitigate impositions, as there are no impositions involved.

Nwoye (1992) also criticizes B & L□s pessimistic view on politeness by examining the operations of politeness in Igbo society. Nwoye states that in B & L□s model, face has a cause-and-effect relationship with the notion of imposition. Precisely because many acts are said to be face-threatening, they are considered as impositions. Strategies are then sought for redressing the perceived threats to face and their concomitant impositions. Nwoye further argues that like notions of face, notions of imposition are culture-specific. In a culture where individuals are seen as isolated islands, where the primary goal of every individual is to satisfy her / his personal needs and to maximize her / his personal comfort, every act that brings one in contact with other people might be regarded as an imposition. However, in the Igbo culture, very few acts are considered as impositions. The Igbo disposition to care more for the collective image of the group than for that of the individual accounts for why acts normally regarded as impositions in some other societies are not so regarded by the Igbo.

When B & L discuss the act of complimenting, they focus only on its face-threatening aspects. For them, by complimenting an addressee□s dress, a speaker may indicate a desire for it. Such an act on the part of the speaker may impede the addressee□s freedom of action and constitute a threat to her negative face. Moreover, if the addressee accepts the compliment, according to B & L, she may also feel compelled to disparage the dress or return the compliment, either of which may detract from her positive face. This line of reasoning prompts Schmidt to characterize B & L□s theory as embodying □an overly pessimistic, rather paranoid view of human social interaction□ (Schmidt, 1980: 104).

According to Mao (1994), face-work, in fact, is also a mutually beneficial enterprise. In complimenting an addressee□s new dress, for example, a speaker is not only attending to the addressee□s positive face (her (Mao uses the feminine pronoun to refer to the addressee and the masculine pronoun to refer to the speaker) desire to be liked), but also consolidating or anointing his own positive face — showing off his own good taste, and encouraging the addressee's complimentary feedback. In performing such a speech act, the speaker could very well initiate a round of mutual enhancement of positive face, consummating a genuine talk exchange. Thus, face-work aims not merely to preserve face but to enhance it, and to effect a qualitative change in interpersonal relationships.

To summarize, some problems do exist in B & L□s politeness theory; particularly, their claim for the universality of politeness should be reexamined. As Janney and Arndt (1993) suggest, B & L□s theory, like other theories of language universals, lacks a culturally unbiased conceptual framework for objectively and empirically evaluating their politeness universals. The theory operates at a high level of idealization and requires a great degree of reduction. Such a theory, Janney and Arndt (1993) argue, ultimately turns politeness universals into products, rather than objects, of rational, logical analysis. Janney and Arndt propose a methodological shift away from investigating universals of politeness to studying cultural identity in its various linguistic and other manifestations, a shift that helps to account for cultural variations in politeness from a more flexible point of view.

V. The Linguistic Politeness Phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese

The aim of this chapter is fourfold. First, results from anthropological studies on Chinese culture are presented to illustrate the discrepancy between B & L☐s assumption and the Chinese notion of ☐face☐. Secondly, the modern conception of Chinese politeness — *limao* 禮貌 — and its essence are investigated. Thirdly, Gu's (1990) politeness principle and maxims that operate in Chinese conversations are presented. Fourthly, four motivations of politeness in Modern Standard Chinese are formulated according to my knowledge. The account of the politeness phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese illustrates that linguistic politeness in Chinese culture has its own particular characteristics that are quite different from those in Western cultures as asserted by B & L.

5.1 Preliminary Remarks

First, Modern Standard Chinese is meant to refer to the officially standardized modern Chinese *putonghua 普通話, i.e., the language used by the mass media and taught at schools and to foreign learners. It does not belong to any specific speech community of a particular area.*

Secondly, the data in this section are transcribed in hanyu pinyin 漢語併音, the Chinese phonetic alphabet system, which was officially endorsed in 1958.

Thirdly, the data in this section are followed by, first, word-for-word translation, and second, free translation.

5.2 The Notion of Face in Chinese Culture

As Mao (1994) points out, two Chinese characters are used to convey the denotative meaning of the word □face□: *mainzi 面子and lian* 臉. Both characters encode connotative meanings as well, which have to do with reputable, respectable images that individuals can claim for themselves from communities in which they interact, or to which they belong.

The two concepts of face, *mianzi* 面子and *lian* 臉, are originally examined by Hu (1944). *Mianzi* 面子stands for prestige or reputation, which is either achieved through getting on in life (Hu, 1944: 45), or ascribed (or even imaged) by other members of one's own community (Ho, 1975: 869-870). *Lian* 臉 refers to "the respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation"; it embodies "the confidence of society in the integrity of ego's moral character", and it is "both a social sanction for enforcing moral standards and an internalized sanction□ (Hu, 1944: 45).

Mao (1994) argues that there are two major differences between the Chinese concept of face and B & L□s concept of face.

The first difference has to do with the overall conceptualization of face. By defining face as the public *self*-image that every member wants to claim for himself, B & L center their definition upon the individual rather than the communal aspect of face; that is, face becomes a self-image. The self is the principal constituent that informs the content of face. The overall composition of this self-image, with its negative and positive aspects, remains constant and predetermined: it is not susceptible to external pressure or interactional dynamics, and it only concerns the individual□s wants and desires.

The Chinese concept of face does not privilege the self nearly as much as does

B & L□s definition of face. Chinese face encodes a reputable image that individuals can claim for themselves as they interact with others in a given community; it is intimately linked to the views of the community and to the community□s judgment and perception of the individual□s character and behavior. Chinese face emphasizes not the accommodation of individual wants or desires but the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgment of the community. In other words, the Chinese concept of face is a public image. Chinese face depends upon, and is indeed determined by, the participation of others.

The second difference pertains to the content of face — negative face and positive face. B & L's negative face refers to an individual's need to be free of external impositions and represents a desire to be left alone to enjoy a sense of one's territorial integrity; whether or not one is interacting with the others becomes less important. In contrast, Chinese *mianzi* communicates something different: it identifies a Chinese desire to secure public acknowledgement of one□s prestige or reputation. In short, *mianzi* in Chinese cannot be properly understood in terms of negative face. *Lian* in Chinese is also different from B & L□s positive face except that both *lian* and positive face identify an individual□s desire to be liked and to be approved by the others. Comparatively speaking, *lian* is more socially situated than positive face; it embodies the imprimatur of the society as a whole rather than the goodwill of another individual. *Lian* is earned cumulatively by an individual in relation to the rest of the community, and it depends on how that individual internalizes the communal sanction.

5.3 The Modern Conception of Chinese Politeness — *limao* 禮貌 — and Its Essence

5.3.1 The Chinese Concept of Face and Politeness (*Limao* 禮貌)

Mao (1994) argues that *mianzi* and *lian* constitute a quintessential aspect of Chinese politeness. Recent studies have shown that an orientation remains central to the Chinese cultural imperative. This is the interactional orientation on the part of the individual speaker toward establishing connectedness to, and seeking interpersonal harmony with, one's own community — an orientation that *mianzi* and *lian* encode and epitomize. The tendency to act primarily in compliance with the anticipated expectations of communal norms rather than personal desires continues to be observed by Chinese people. What informs this tendency is the Chinese concept of face.

Watts *et al*. (1992) suggest that a distinction should be made between first-order and second-order politeness. First-order politeness corresponds to the conventional ways in which polite behavior is perceived and talked about by members of socio-cultural groups. Second-order politeness is a theoretical construct, a term within a theory of social behavior and language usage.

Mao (1994) argues that the concept of politeness in Chinese pertains more to first-order politeness; that is, to how politeness is manifested and conveyed within the framework of a given culture. Mao further states that to be polite in Chinese discourse is to know how to attend to each other☐s *mianzi* and *lian* and to enact speech acts appropriate to and worthy of such an image.

The origin of Chinese politeness (*limao* 禮貌, i.e., the most approximate Chinese equivalent to the English word "politeness") is the ancient Chinese word *li* 禮, formulated by Confucius (551 B.C. – 479 B.C.). *Li* originally has to do with the social hierarchy and the social order. Not until two or three hundred years after Confucius did the word *li* designating politeness seem to be well established. The book *Li Ji* 『禮記』 (On Li) compiled by Dai Sheng (sometime during the West Han Dynasty) is a treatise on politeness. The volume opens with: "deference cannot be shown☐, ☐speaking of *li* (i.e., politeness), humble yourself but show respect to other☐. The function of *limao* in ancient China is to signal social hierarchical relations.

On the basis of the ancient concept of *limao*, Gu (1990) investigates the modern conception of it and states that denigrating self and respecting other remain at the core of the modern conception of Chinese politeness (*limao*).

5.3.2 The Essence of *Limao* in Modern China

In modern China, the function of politeness of signaling social hierarchical relations has become obscure, and politeness seems to have assumed two duties, i.e., to enhance social harmony and to defuse interpersonal tension or conflict.

What seem to have remained intact are the essential elements of politeness. Gu (1990) argues that there are basically four notions underlying the Chinese conception of *limao*: respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement. ☐Respectfulness☐ is self☐s positive appreciation or admiration of other concerning the latter☐s face, social status, and so on. ☐Modesty☐ can be seen as another way of saying ☐self-denigration☐. ☐Attitudinal warmth☐ is self☐s demonstration of kindness, consideration, and hospitality to other. ☐Refinement☐ refers to self☐s behavior to other which meets certain standards. The four elements need not co-occur to constitute *limao*. In fact, behavior that highlights one of them will usually be perceived as polite behavior.

5.4 Gu☐s Politeness Principle and Maxims

Following Leech☐s account of politeness pragmatics, and especially its regulative orientation, Gu analyzes *limao* in terms of maxims, suggesting that the maxim-oriented approach is appropriate, because politeness in the Chinese context ☐exercises its normative function in containing individual speech acts as well as the sequence of talk exchanges☐ (Gu, 1990: 242). Gu (1990) elaborates the four elements of *limao* into politeness maxims.

Gu☐s Politeness Principle (PP) can be understood as:

> a sanctioned belief that an individual☐s social behavior ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement. (Gu, 1990: 245)

On the basis of four essential notions underlying the Chinese conception of politeness seven politeness maxims jointly give substance to the Politeness Principle

(PP). Four maxims are presented here (Gu, 1990: 246-255):
(i) The Self-denigration Maxim

This maxim consists of two sub-maxims: (a) denigrate self and (b) elevate other. This maxim absorbs the notions of respectfulness and modesty. The breach of sub-maxim (a), i.e., denigrate other, is perceived as being impolite or rude. The breach of sub-maxim (b), i.e., elevate self, is construed as being arrogant, boasting, or self-conceited.

(ii) The Address Maxim

The Address Maxim reads: address your interlocutor with an appropriate address term. This maxim is based on the notions of respectfulness and attitudinal warmth. The act of addressing involves: (a) S☐s recognition of H as a social being in her / his specific social status or role, and (b) S☐s definition of the social relation between S and H. It helps establish or maintain social bonds, strengthen solidarity, and control social distance. A failure to use an appropriate address term is a sign of rudeness, or a signal of a breakdown of established social order.

(iii) The Generosity and Tact Maxims

In Chinese culture, the Generosity and Tact Maxims are underpinned by the notions of attitudinal warmth and refinement. In Chinese culture, the two maxims are complementary. This is because impositives and commissives are transactional: in view of the cost-benefit scale, S☐s impositives will be H☐s commissives, and S☐s commissives H☐s impositives. In impositives, S observes the Tact Maxim in performing the acts, while H observes the Generosity Maxim in responding to S☐s acts. In commissives, on the other hand, S observes the Generosity Maxim, whereas H observes the Tact Maxim.

5.5 The Motivations of Politeness in Modern Standard Chinese

Contrary to B & L☐s politeness theory, Chinese politeness is normative rather than strategic in nature. Appropriate display of politeness in the proper context is obligatory, as lack of it will incur social sanction. Appropriateness and moderation according to one□ notion of politeness is thus a set of behavioral norms closely woven into the very fabric of the society and geared towards the smooth operation of the entire society.

It seems that Chinese politeness may adopt the concept of discernment that is more suited to describing and explaining Japanese and Korean politeness. However, Chinese is basically not an honorific language like Japanese and Korean, where linguistic choices are strictly governed by the relative status and social distance of the interactants. When it comes to signaling politeness in social interaction, the choices are far less restrictive and rigid in Chinese than those in Japanese and Korean. Furthermore, the modern Chinese society has evolved considerably from the old style of *li* 禮. There are certainly honorific terms in classical Chinese, but many of them have become obsolete in Modern Standard Chinese. It would seem that if they are retained at all in communication, they have become stylized formulae, acting as a mark of formal style rather than as a politeness strategy. The formal classical style is not necessarily the equivalent of politeness. Classical Chinese and Modern Standard Chinese are just two alternative communication styles, the latter certainly being the more popular one. There is no unanimous agreement that one is inherently more polite than the other, although the former may seem to be more deferential.

Bearing the analyses above in mind, we can get a conclusion that the politeness phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese are different from those in Western languages as well as some other Eastern languages like Japanese and Korean. Linguistic politeness in Chinese culture has its own characteristics.

In the following part, I will investigate the motivations of politeness in Modern Standard Chinese.

5.5.1 Modesty

Chinese are very modest. In particular, a Chinese frequently compliment her / his friends on their appearances, abilities, accomplishments, and possessions. However, she / he is as reluctant to accept a compliment as she / he is eager to give one. This is a manifestation of the Chinese virtue of modesty.

Chinese and Americans are found to present largely different verbal responses to compliments in the same situation. Suppose a Chinese and an American are complimented respectively by their friends on the dresses they are wearing as ☐What a nice dress! You look great in it.☐ The Chinese and the American will give obviously different replies to the compliment.

The American☐s responses are as follows:

[1] Thank you. You made my day.
[2] Thanks. I like this design.
[3] Thank you. It☐s one of my favorite dresses.
[4] Thanks. I☐m glad you like it.

The Chinese☐s responses are as the following:

[5] bu. bu tai hao kan. yan se tai liang le.
no not too good look color too bright
(No. It☐s not that nice at all. The color is too bright.)

[6] bu. bu tai hao. wo mei zhao dao yi jian neng geng shi he wo de.
no not too good I not find a can better suit me
(No. It☐s not that great. I couldn☐t get one that would have suited me better.)

[7] bu gui. hen pian yi.
not expensive very cheap
(No, not expensive. It☐s cheap stuff.)

[8] bie. wo dou bu hao yi se le.
no I already embarrased
(No. I☐m embarrassed.)

The American☐s responses to the compliment are characterized by compliment acceptance. She responds to the compliment by expressing her thanks to the complimenter. The typical utterance is [1]. She also shows her agreement with the complimenter, as in [2]. Moreover, she may express her gladness about being complimented, as in [3] and [4].

The Chinese□s responses to the compliment are characterized by compliment rejection and self-denigration. She says □no□ to the compliment, disagreeing with the complimenter on the praiseworthiness of the object of the compliment. After disagreeing with the complimenter, she will offer some explanations about the object of the compliment. The explanations, however, seem to serve only one purpose: to justify her self-denigration. The utterances such as [5], [6] and [7] illustrate this point. She may also express embarrassment, as in [8].

We can then draw a conclusion: when being complimented, an American will readily accept the compliment, but a Chinese will try to deny the truth of the compliment. The American is being polite to the extent that by accepting and showing appreciation of the compliment, she / he avoids threatening the positive face of the complimenter. The Chinese shows modesty by denigrating herself / himself, ignoring the factuality of the compliment paid to her / him.

Rejection and acceptance are the major difference in replying to compliments between Chinese and Americans. The difference reflects the differences of social values between Chinese culture and American culture.

In American society, everyone is encouraged to think positively of herself / himself. To an American, self-denigration almost always does damage to her / his own face. Therefore, when faced with a compliment, an American seldom humbles herself / himself, but accepts it gladly.

In Chinese culture, modesty is a virtue, a sort of social norm, and therefore, a motivation of politeness in social interaction. Appearing humble and modest helps maintain and enhance a Chinese□s *mianzi* and *lian*. Self-denigration is required in compliment responding. As a result, a Chinese chooses to lower herself / himself when responding to compliments.

Modesty as a motivation of politeness in Modern Standard Chinese goes beyond compliment responding. Chinese people are very hospitable. I am sure that many people have the experience of being invited by a Chinese family to their home for

☐an ordinary home-cooked dinner☐. Only when you move to the dinner table, do you realize the magnitude of their effort for the dinner: there are so many dishes on the table that you cannot see the table itself. Moreover, courses keep coming on the table. You may doubt that this would truly be considered an ☐ordinary home-cooked dinner☐ in any country. However, at the same time, you hear that the host says, ☐There☐s not very much here; this is just an ordinary dinner☐, or ☐There is nothing to eat. Let☐s make do with it☐, or even ☐I☐m not a qualified cook. Probably the food doesn☐t agree with your taste.☐ The host☐s utterances will make an American guest feel puzzled. In the United States, if someone has put this type of effort into a meal, she / he will surely proudly say something like ☐These dishes are my specialties; I learned it from my friend who is an excellent cook☐, or ☐I spent just about all day working on them! I do hope you enjoy the dinner☐. However, in China, this type of utterances is generally considered boastful and inappropriate. To be modest, again, is the norm.

5.5.2 Generosity

The Chinese are a very generous and gracious people. From the very early infancy, Chinese are educated to be generous and are socialized into the need for, and the proper ways of, offering help to one another. To be generous is the norm. Generosity is a motivation of politeness in Modern Standard Chinese discourse activities like offering.

An offer is regarded as an imposition in B & L☐s politeness theory if, by it, the hearer is constrained to act in some way she / he normally would not have acted, that is, if her / his freedom to act or not to act is impinged on. Moreover, the hearer incurs a possible debt. In most Western cultures where individuals tend to isolate themselves from one another, where the primary goal of every individual is to satisfy her / his personal needs, every speech act that involves the contact with one another might be considered an imposition. However, in the Chinese socio-cultural context, imposition may not be viewed in the same way as in the Western societies. Certain speech acts like offers, which B & L regard as face-threatening, are not imposing in the eyes of Chinese people. This is related to the fact that people care for the collective good rather than for the self in Chinese culture.

In Chinese society where generosity and mutual cooperation is seen as the norm in social interaction, offers are not only expected but are frequently made with little or no imposition on both the speaker and the hearer. The following discourse that takes place between A and B illustrates how Chinese speakers present offers motivated by their generosity. The conversation happens in an office. A and B are colleagues. It is time to leave for home. A has finished the work and is ready to go, while B is still busy with his paperwork.

[1] A: hai you duo shao mei wan cheng?
still leave how much not finish
(How much is still undone?)
[2] B: bu duo.
not much.
(Not much.)
[3] A: wo lai bang ni.
I come help you
(Let me help you.)
[4] B: ni xian zai bu hui jia?
you now not go home
(Not going home now?)
[5] A: mei guan xi.
not matter
(It doesn☐t matter.)
[6] B: hao, wo men yi qi gan. jin tian wo qing ni chi wan fan.
OK we together do today I treat you eat dinner
(OK. Let☐s do together. I☐ll treat you dinner.)
[7] A: hao.
OK
(OK.)

Realizing that B cannot go home because of the undone work, A expresses his willingness of offering his help to B by uttering [3]. A□s offering is motivated by his generosity and his consciousness of mutual cooperation. A is generous because he doesn□t care that he will leave for home late because he helps B with his work. A does not regard his offering of help as an imposition on B. He does what he should do in accordance with the expected norm, i.e., to offer help to those who are in situations requiring help. B□s inquiry [4] does not reflect his rejection of being helped; rather it implies B□s intention to confirm that A can help him. Moreover, by uttering [6], B offers dinner to A as a repayment. This is generated by his generosity and his awareness of mutual cooperation. In this discourse activity, A and B offer help to each other and feel no imposition on each other. The principle of reciprocity in Chinese society reduces the burden of imposition. According to the principle of reciprocity, by accepting an offer, the offeree assumes the obligation to repay the offerer as an indication of her / his sincere gratitude. The principle of reciprocity also reflects that social interactants are generous to one another in Chinese society.

5.5.3 Respectfulness

Respectfulness is a social norm in China. Chinese people are expected to show respect to one another in social interactions. Respectfulness generates an appropriate way of addressing others.

As has been mentioned previously, Chinese is basically not an honorific language like Japanese and Korean. However, there are honorific terms in classical Chinese. For instance, the address system in ancient China is strictly governed by the relative social status and social distance of the interactants. In Modern Standard Chinese many of these are absent. However, what remains intact is the motivation of a proper way of addressing one another.

Different from the address system in the English-speaking world, the Chinese given name is not a non-kin public address term, but a kin familial address term. It is considered rude to call the given name of a person who has no familial relationship with the addresser. The Chinese surname combined with a governmental title, or an occupational title, or an honorific modifier can be used as public address term. For instance, *Wang Shi Zhang* (i.e., Mayor Wang (*Wang* is the addressee□s surname)), *Wang Jiao Shou* (i.e., Professor Wang), *Lao Wang* (*lao* is the honorific form, meaning □aged□ and □respectable□, used to address an aged person), *Xiao Wang* (*xiao* is the honorific form, meaning □young□ and □respectable□, used to address a young person), *Wang Xian Sheng* (i.e., Mr. Wang), and *Wang Nü Shi* (i.e., Ms. Wang).

The addressing term *shifu* is a very popular address politeness marker. *Shifu* originally means a qualified worker as distinct from an apprentice, and later, it is used as a respectful form of addressing term for a skilled worker, and further, it is adopted as a frequently used address politeness marker. *Shifu* can be used alone when one address other respectfully and politely.

Some Chinese kinship terms have extended and generalized usage. For example, *yeye* (i.e., grandpa), *nainai* (i.e., grandma), *shushu* (i.e., uncle), *a□yi* (i.e., aunt), etc. can be used to address people who have no familial relation whatever with the addresser. This phenomenon reflects the respectfulness motivation of Chinese politeness. The addresser chooses the one of the above terms to address the addressee according to her / his age. This addressing way is considered respectful. However, a European or an American will feel offended if she / he is addressed in this way by someone who has no familial relation with her / him.

It is quite common among the Chinese to introduce each other by getting to know each other□s names, particularly surnames. The most popular utterance of inquiring other□s surname is □nin guixing?□ (i.e., □What□s your respectable surname?□ when translated into English). When meeting someone for the first time, a Chinese asks for her / his surname and at the same time evaluates it as □respectable surname□. Chinese people always take the first opportunity to show their respect to others. Unlike Chinese speakers, English speakers tend to self-introduce. The English practice can probably be explained as being motivated by the desire of avoiding potential face threat. The Chinese practice is motivated by respectfulness.

5.5.4 Friendliness

Chinese people are very friendly. Friendliness is a very important motivation of politeness in Chinese social interaction. Friendliness also explains some politeness phenomena with the Chinese characteristics.

In Chinese culture it is very natural and not impolite to ask personal and private questions like □How old are you?□, □Are you married?□, □What□s your occupation?□, □Where did you graduate from?□, etc., when people meet one another for the first time. These questions are conventionally polite and friendly questions. They are usually raised directly. However, these questions are seldom presented in the first meeting with others in most Western cultures. If these questions are necessary, for example in a social survey, they will be raised indirectly. People from most Western cultures often declare their intention to protect their personal affairs. They believe that others have no right to pry into things that belong to themselves only and have nothing to do with others. This, again, is related to every individual□s negative face, i.e., her / his basic claim to freedom of actions and freedom from impositions. In Chinese culture, since individuals are not isolated from one another, it is not impolite but friendly to ask something that is considered private in Western cultures.

Greetings in many languages often indicate the time of day, for example, English has □Good morning□, □Good afternoon□, and □Good evening□. Chinese also has the equivalents with English, □zao shang hao□ (i.e., Good morning), □xia wu hao□ (i.e., Good afternoon), □wan shang hao□ (i.e., Good evening). However, Chinese also has its particular ways of greeting.

It is a common Chinese greeting to say □chi le me?□ around meal time. If this greeting had been put literally into English as □Have you eaten yet?□ or □Have you had your meal?□, it would have sounded rather unusual. The greeting □chi le me?□ is nothing more than a Chinese way of saying □Hello□ or □Hi□.

However, this way of greeting may be considered to threaten the addressee□s negative face in the eyes of people from Western cultures, because by their way of thinking, the utterance □chi le me□ implies the addresser□s concern that they do not get their meals ready because of lack of money. In Chinese culture, it is a friendly way of greeting to say □chi le me□.

There are some other similar Chinese greetings, such as □shang nar qu a?□ and □dao nar qu le?□ These would be □Where are you going?□ and □Where have you been?□ if translated literally into English. The natural reaction of people from Western cultures to these greetings would most likely be □It□s none of your business!□ However, in Chinese culture, these greetings are friendly and intimate ways of greeting to show one□s personal concern about the addressee. They stress the speaker□s interest in the addressee□s activities.

In the sense of friendliness, the personal questions mentioned above and the particular ways of greeting are used for formal positive politeness in Chinese culture. However, in Western cultures, these are considered rude because they are believed to threaten the addressee□s negative face.

5.6 Politeness and Cultures

When people get together, communication is inevitable. When we attempt to communicate with others, we seek to establish □commonness□ by sharing in formation, knowledge, ideas, or attitude. Communication is a two-way process. Cultural differences are major sources of communication distortion. Communication difficulties arising from cultural differences are due to the lack of commonality of values, beliefs, and norms between people of two cultures.

Politeness is very important in communication. At the most abstract level, politeness is a universal phenomenon, i.e., it is found in every culture. However, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, politeness is based on the social values and social norms of a particular community. According to Meier (1995), the term □appropriateness□ is a preferable definition of politeness. Within such a view, politeness can only be judged relative to a particular context and a particular addressee□s expectations and concomitant interpretation. What counts as polite behavior (including values and norms attached to such behavior) is, culture-specific and language-specific.

Within the previous discussion of the motivations of politeness in Modern Standard Chinese, we have seen the differences of politeness phenomena between Chinese culture and Western cultures. These differences reflect their different social values and social norms.

In short, the understanding of the different concepts of politeness and the different politeness phenomena is of great importance in communication among different cultures.

VI. Conclusion

This is a pragmatic study on linguistic politeness.

The various concepts of politeness and the four perspectives on politeness proposed by Fraser (1990) have been analyzed. What is common to these varying conceptualizations is the idea of appropriate language use associated with smooth communication. This smooth communication is achieved on the one hand through the speaker□s use of intentional strategies to allow her / his utterances to be received favorably by the addressee and on the other hand by the speaker□s expression of the expected and prescribed norms of speech. The function and importance of politeness can be understood through the relationship between the Politeness Principle (PP) and the Cooperative Principle (CP). The assertion □unless you are polite, the channel of communication will break down□ (Leech, 1983: 82) clearly reveals the importance of politeness in human interaction.

Three previous politeness theories proposed by Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), Leech (1983) and B & L (1978, 1987) have been reviewed. They unanimously conceptualize politeness as strategic conflict avoidance.

Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977) is the first to consider politeness from the conversational-maxim point of view. She gives two rules of Pragmatic Competence: Be Clear (the Rules of Clarity) and Be Polite (the Rules of Politeness). The Rules of Clarity covers essentially the maxims of Grice□s Cooperative Principle. The Rules of Politeness is composed of three sub-rules: Don□t impose, Give options, Make A feel good. Each of these is oriented to make the hearer feel good. Lakoff argues that □Be Clear□ and □Be Polite□ are in opposition to each other, and notes that they are at times reinforcing, at other times in conflict.

Leech (1983) is the second scholar working within the conversational-maxim paradigm. Leech enlarges the Gricean Cooperative Principle on a grand scale, adding to it a Politeness Principle and an Irony Principle. Like Grice he divides the Politeness Principle into six Interpersonal Maxims (Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Agreement Maxim and Sympathy Maxim) and goes on to suggest that each maxim operates along a range of different scales (the Cost-Benefit Scale, the Optionality Scale, the Indirectness Scale, the Authority Scale and the Social Distance Scale).

B & L propose a face-saving model of politeness. They postulate a Model Person (MP), who is a willful fluent speaker of a natural language. All MPs are endowed with two qualities: □rationality□ and □face□. B & L state that their notion of face is derived from that of Goffman (1967) and from the English folk term. They assume that all competent adult members of society have face: the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting of two related aspects — negative face and positive face. Negative face refers to the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction — i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Positive face refers to the positive consistent self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. There are acts that intrinsically threaten face (face-threatening acts, FTAs). Except in the case where the speaker wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency, she / he will try to minimize the face threat by choosing an appropriate strategy such as avoiding the FTA, or performing along with the FTA a redressive act. B & L mainly discuss three politeness strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness.

Works on linguistic politeness in non-Western cultures, particularly in Chinese, Japanese and Korean, question and reexamine B & L□s claim for the universality of face and the universality of politeness. The politeness phenomena in Modern Standard Chinese are investigated. The differences of politeness phenomena between Chinese culture and Western cultures prove that, first, politeness, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, is based on the social values and social norms of a particular community; secondly, polite behavior is culture-specific and language-specific; thirdly, politeness fulfills normative as well as instrumental functions in interaction.

The comparison of linguistic politeness phenomena in Western and non-Western cultures confirms that the importance of politeness in human interaction and the various culture-specific politeness concepts and politeness phenomena should be well recognized and understood to achieve successful cross-cultural communication.

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국문초록

영어의 공손 현상에 관한 연구

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이 연구는 인간의 의사소통 능력 중에서 화용 능력을 언어적 공손이라는 현상과 원리를 중심으로 고찰한 것이다. 이 연구의 목적은 다음과 같다: (a) 의사소통에서 나타나는 공손 현상의 개념을 분석하고, (b) 공손에 대한 견해를 고찰하고, (c) 의사소통에 공손 표현의 중요성을 살펴보며, (d) 공손의 현상을 Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), Leech (1983), 그리고Brown & Levinson (1978,

1987)의 공손 이론 모형을 중심으로 고찰하며, (e) Brown & Levinson의 공손 보편성 이론을 다른 각도 즉, 비서구 언어적 공손에 대해 살펴보고, (f) 마지막으로, 현대 표준 중국어의 공손 현상을 설명함으로써 언어적 공손이 특정 공동체의 사회규범과 사회적 가치에 기초한 사회-문화 현상이라는 결론을 도출한다.

중국, 한국, 일본과 같은 동양 문화권의 공손에 대한 개념과 서양 문화권의 그것은 다르다. Axia (1987)는 동서양권의 공손의 특징을 종합하여 사회 상호작용을 확립하고 유지함에 필요한 언어능력을 언어학적 공손이라고 정의한다.

Fraser (1990)는 공손의 언어적 현상은 그것을 어떠한 관점에서 보는가 하는 견해에 따라 크게 네 가지, 즉 사회 규범적 견해, 대화 격률의 견해, 체면유지 견해, 그리고 대화상의 계약 견해로 나눈다.

공손 표현은 의사소통에 중요하다. 언어가 인간의 사회 생활을 가능하게 하는 가장 중요한 도구이기 때문에 원만하고 성공적인 사회 생활의 기본 조건으로서 타인의 행위를 예측하여 자기 자신의 계획을 수정하는 인간 행동의 현상은 언어에서 두드러지게 나타나는 것을 볼 수 있으며, 이러한 언어 현상이 곧 공손 표현으로 나타나는 것이다. 이러한 목표 지향 책략으로서의 공손 표현은 언어 사용에 있어서 가장 중요한 부분을 이룬다.

Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1977), Leech (1983), 그리고 Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987)등에 의해서 제기된 초기 공손 이론은 공통적으로 공손이 충돌을 회피하기 위한 책략으로 개념을 정한다.

Lakoff는 화용 능력의 규칙에는 명료성 규칙과 공손 규칙이 있다고 한다. 그 중 명료성 규칙은 Grice의 대화 협력 원칙 CP에서 말하는 의사소통의 명확성과 관련되어 있으며 공손 규칙에는 그 하위 규칙으로 격식, 주저, 동등 규칙이 있다고 설명한다.

Leech는 의사소통에서의 공손 원리를 여섯 가지 격률로써 설명한다. 이 여섯 가지 격률은 재량 격률, 관용 격률, 칭찬 격률, 겸양 격률, 동의 격률 그리고 동조 격률이다.

Brown & Levinson은 체면의 개념이 공손의 동기를 유발한다고 한다. 즉, 모든 이성적 인간에게는 적극적 체면과 소극적 체면이 있으며 어떤 발화행위는 본질적으로 체면을 위협하는 것이어서 상대의 체면이 중요하면

예의를 갖춘다고 한다. 이 논문에서는 Brown & Levinson이 제시한 세 가지 가장 중요한 체면 유지 공손 책략 — 적극적 공손, 소극적 공손, 암시적 공손 — 을 논의한다.

중국, 한국, 일본과 같은 비서구권에서의 공손에 대한 연구는 Brown & Levinson의 체면과 공손의 보편성이라고 하는 주장에 대해 의문을 제기하고 재고찰한다. 이 연구에서는 중국어의 공손 표현과 연관 시키기 위해서 중국문화에 있는 체면과 현대적 중국의 공손 현상의 개념을 살펴본다. 중국어를 사용한 의사소통에서 일어나는 Gu (1990)의 공손 원칙과 격률을 제시한다. 본 연구자가 현대 표준 중국어에 있는 공손의 네 가지 동기요인을 정리해 본다. 먼저 살펴보았던 Brown & Levinson의 이론모형에서 나타나는 서구 문화권과 달리 중국문화에 있는 언어적 공손은 자기 특징을 갖고 있는 사실을 현대 표준 중국어를 통해 구분 이해해 본다. 달리 말해서, 현대 표준 중국어에 있는 언어적 공손 현상에 대한 논의는 Brown & Levinson이 주장한 공손 보편성과 달리 공손의 상대성에 대해 재고찰해 본다.

서양 문화와 비서구 문화의 공손 현상의 비교는 성공적인 문화 교류를 위해 원활한 의사소통에 있어서 공손의 중요성과 문화의 상대적 공손 개념, 공손 현상은 인지되고 이해되어야 한다는 것을 보여준다.