2 Theoretical Background: Many Faces of Facework

2.1 Introduction

Cross-cultural uses of the concept of face are diverse and the concept of “face” is considered to be a hallmark in people’s explanations of themselves and others in social interaction. “Face” and “facework” were not discussed by Western social scientists until the late 1950’s. In a seminal essay, entitled ‘On facework’, Goffman (1955) borrowed the term “face” from the Chinese and staked out this conceptual territory in a careful systematic study. Although different approaches to facework within the framework of different politeness theories have arisen in the meantime, all current research traces its immediate intellectual roots to Goffman.

Before reviewing these approaches, it is suitable to discuss characterizations of “face” and “facework”. Face is a social phenomenon; it comes into being when one person comes into the presence of another. Face stands for the socially situated identities people claim for themselves or attribute to others, whereas facework references communicative strategies that support or challenge those situated identities. For Goffman, face is “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (1955:2). Under his theory, people try to maintain their own face, as well as protect the face and feelings of others in an interaction. Hence, facework contains both defensive and protective nature which requires the reciprocal monitoring of social activity. The “face wants” individuals work for can be different in different contexts. Downgrading strategies such as self-handicapping strategies or self-mockery could be the signs of sophisticated tactics.

As facework is a routine part of a social matrix in which behavior is a response to internalized norms and to other’s demands for self-identification, one has the opportunity to construct different faces for different audiences. We may have different faces for our children, for our spouse, for our students, for our colleagues, for our enemies, for our employees, and so on. Each face has different characteristics and may provide distinct advantages. For instance, a university faculty member might adopt a “professor” role with a strict, authoritarian personality at the university and at home s/he might immediately shift into a “parental” role and deliberately lose in chess to make her/his daughter happy.
Goffman depicted face maintenance as a rule of social interaction that is executed in order to achieve other social and conversational goals as well as personal social gain (see Goffman, 1959).

Faces can be damaged in various ways. For that reason, face maintenance is an important aspect of social interaction. Actions that catch people out of face have impact not only for the actor but also for the interaction and the social structure. Borrowing an example from Goffman (1959) imagine a doctor who, during an operation, allows the patient to fall off the operating table. Neglecting the outcomes for the unfortunate patient, let’s just consider the doctor, nurses, and staff involved in this event. Firstly, at the professional level the doctor has shown a bad performance. Apart from the embarrassment, anxiety, and guilt he feels, this unforgivable event jeopardizes his career, his reputation, and financial future. Secondly, at an interactional level, the normal course of the interaction is disrupted. It is almost impossible to form a course of action that turns the atmosphere into the one prior to the incident. At the societal level, this event could probably have consequences for the reputations of those who claim similar faces–doctors will be trusted less than before. Thus, face maintenance has diverse consequences. It affects not only the performer who falls from face, but also all participants associated with the disrupted interaction, and social structure.

Goffman developed a theory in which he explained tactics of self-presentation styles of individuals in daily social interactions. In his words, “the individual will have to act so that he intentionally or unintentionally expresses himself, and the other will in turn have to be impressed in some way by him” (Goffman, 1959:2). Hence, the impression determines the way we appear in social life, and the reactions of others towards us are shaped by our impression. Goffman (1955) classified “basic kinds of face-work” into two groups as avoidance processes and corrective processes; “Avoidance process” stands for efforts to avoid negative impressions and prevent threats to self’s or other’s face. People engaging in avoidance processes often avoid situations that could be embarrassing or humiliating and thus forgo certain opportunities to convey favorable impressions. Avoidance-based maneuvers according to Goffman, are diverse. They can range from discretion, circumlocutions, deceptions, or phrasing one’s replies with careful ambiguity, to employment of a joking manner to take the line that interactants are good sports, able to handle the situation smoothly. Avoidance processes can be considered a rather passive form of attempts to create a desirable impression.

In contrast to avoidance process”, the corrective process involves individuals’ attempts to correct undesired identities or to minimize the damage after an attack or threat to one’s face. One of the typical situations leading to corrective practices is that a person could be deemed to be responsible for a socially stigmatized event. Goffman (1955) identifies four types of counter actions in case of an event which introduces a need for corrective practices. They can be summarized as i) taking full responsibility of the event implying that threatening claims are too tough and have to be brought back into the line (process-challenge), ii) mitigation of the situation, claiming that it is a meaningless event, or an unintentional act, “understating” of extenuating circumstances, meaning of the event can be attributed to its initiators, offering compensation for the consequences, remedy for the losses (offering), iii) acceptance of the event in a reestablished
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expressive order (acceptance), iv) showing remorse and signs of gratitude for being forgiven (thanks).

Following the footprints of Goffman’s seminal work, different studies on politeness and facework have been conducted. Current approaches to facework can be categorized into two sorts; a) sociolinguistic approaches to politeness theory; and b) socio-psychological research on self-presentation and impression management. On the one hand, people’s self and other identity concerns are so complicated that many aspects of facework can be neglected, if we consider only psychological aspects of a certain interaction. On the other hand, language in facework is so multifunctional, so complex that, existed linguistic theories are far from covering multi-purposeful strategies in facework, different dependants/parameters/varieties of face wants (i.e. situation, personality, culture), and different strategies for desired entities. So, each approach has its limitations, but to combine them may allow us to set off their shortcomings and to give adequate attention to both an elaborate analysis of self-presentation strategies and implementation of them in discourse behaviors.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: to review and critique current politeness theories with specific reference to BL’s politeness theory, to offer the beginning of a speaker-oriented politeness theory of facework, which takes account of the full range of identity and personal face concerns people have in interaction and attends to the ways these concerns are expressed in discourse practices, and to discuss the notion of face and facework in Turkish culture as the underlying motivation behind the strategic self-presentation and politeness.

2.2 Theories of Politeness: An Overview

2.2.1 Robin T. Lakoff

Linguistic politeness lies implicitly at the very heart of a great deal of gender and language research conducted by Lakoff (1973, 1975, 1989a, 1989b, 1990) and her statement that women are more polite or deferent than men underlies the analysis of a range of linguistic features, from tag questions to directives. Lakoff underlines certain weakness of linguistic theory by connecting politeness with Grice’s Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975). Lakoff proposes a politeness rule on a par with the Gricean clarity rule and takes attention to the social aspect of language use when the speakers are not maximally clear. Accordingly, if the hearers realize that speakers do not fully adhere to Gricean maxims, they try to find out a reasonable explanation in the politeness rule. Lakoff introduces three politeness rules: “Don’t impose” (Rule 1), “Give options” (Rule 2), and “Make one feel good and be friendly” (Lakoff, 1973:298). Depending on which of the rules is more important, speakers can be said to adhere to a strategy of Distance (rule 1), Deference (rule 2), or Camaraderie (rule 3) (Lakoff, 1990:35. Although these rules can be observed in any interaction, different cultures tend to emphasize one or the other.

Lakoff’s conversational-maxim conceptualization of politeness has been the target of some criticism for being too vague to be operative and for not dealing with
the question of what politeness actually is (Van de Walle, 1993; Watts et al., 1992b). The model does not clearly explain how the three proposed rules of politeness are to be understood and how interlocuters could decide on a particular strategy (see Fraser, 1990b).

2.2.2 Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory

BL originally published their politeness theory in 1978. Politeness, as defined by BL (1978:1), goes beyond the table etiquette and manners; it is about “getting the things we want” and ideally, it seeks to prevent any potential for presupposed aggression and to make communication between the parties possible.

BL’s notion of “face” is derived from that of Goffman and from the English folk term, which ties up face with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated or losing face. Thus, face is something that is “emotionally invested, and that can be lost maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (BL, 1987:63). Face is the key term in understanding politeness, it “can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to interaction” (BL, 1978:61). BL consider Goffman’s concept of facework as a theoretical point, combining it with Grice’s (1975) theory of conversational implicature and conversational maxims to create a theory of politeness. Within this framework, politeness relies basically on the assumption by interlocutors of rationality and efficiency in conversation (Grice, 1975) and on the addressee’s recognition of the communicative intent of an utterance (Grice 1957).

According to BL (1978, 1987) face can be divided into two main categories: positive face (the need to be liked and admired) and negative face (the need not to be imposed on). Behavior which avoids imposing on others (or avoids threatening their face), is described as evidence of negative politeness, while sociable behavior expressing warmth towards an addressee is positive politeness behavior. BL also distinguish between “on-record” and “off-record” strategies and refer to these four kinds of politeness as super strategies. These kernel elements are essential in describing the quality of social interactions and relationships; the strategic orientation to participants’ face lies on positive, negative, bald-on-record, and off-record politeness. Behaviors that run contrary to the face needs of senders and/or receivers are referred to as face-threatening acts (FTAs). For instance, various communicative acts such as insults or criticisms can threaten hearers’ positive face by expressing disapproval, whereas requests for favors can threaten hearers’ negative face by constraining hearers’ behaviors and imposing on their autonomy. Other behaviors can threaten speakers’ own face needs; a confession of wrongdoing can threaten speakers’ positive face because it may elicit disapproval from others, while a promise of help can threaten speakers’ negative face by obligating speakers to engage in certain behaviors in the future.

Positive face

As stated by BL, the positive face is “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants” (1978:66). Positive politeness is oriented
toward the positive face of the hearer, the positive self-image that he claims for himself. The speaker expresses that s/he shares the hearer’s wants (e.g. by treating him as a member of an in-group, a friend, or a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked). In general, people want their plans, desires, achievements, and goals to be liked or approved by others. Examples of satisfying positive face-needs would be greetings, expressions of admiration and approval. The means of positive politeness consist of claiming common ground (in-group membership, common point of view, attitude, opinion, knowledge, etc.), conveying that speaker and hearer are cooperators (speaker indicates that he or she cares for hearer’s concerns, wants what hearer wants, etc.), and fulfilling hearer’s wants, thus redressing the hearer’s face directly when hearer’s wants are considered (see BL, 1978, 1987).

**Negative face**

Negative politeness on the other hand, is oriented mainly towards partially satisfying the hearer’s negative face, his basic wants to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness is thus essentially avoidance based and the speaker recognizes and respects the hearer’s negative face wants. BL define negative politeness, as “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction--i.e. to freedom of action and freedom form imposition” (1987:61). Such desired non-imposition is also familiar as the formal politeness characterized by formality, restraint, and respect. For example, requests with apologies for the imposition satisfy negative face wants. Acts that primarily threaten hearer’s negative face include orders, requests, advice, threats, reminders, and so forth. Negative politeness occurs in doing the FTA with face redress directed to the hearer’s desire of freedom. Hence, a clash occurs between the want to be direct (FTA on record) and the want to be indirect (signaling respect for the hearer’s desire for freedom). The use of hedges, honorifics and agent deletion also maximizes social distance and emphasizes hearer’s remoteness, respect, and power.

Certain speech acts are intrinsically face-threatening, so under the politeness theory, a speaker will consider the strength of a potentially face-threatening act and choose a linguistic strategy to minimize that threat as much as necessary. Face threatening acts, or FTAs, can be differentiated according to whether they threaten positive or negative face and whether they threaten the face of addressee or speaker. FTAs that put the positive face in danger are those acts that harm an interlocuter’s attempts to maintain a positive self-image. Therefore acts that threaten positive face-wants include criticism, disagreement, and the mention of taboo topics; threats to the speaker’s positive face include acts such as self-humiliation, apologies and admissions of guilt.

FTAs that threaten negative face comprise those acts that may interfere with an interlocutor’s freedom of action or freedom of imposition. Accordingly, acts that threaten an addressee’s negative face include requests, advice, and statements of envy; acts that pose a threat to speaker’s negative face include making promises unwillingly, expressing thanks and accepting an apology. BL (1987) acknowledged that these classifications of FTAs are not mutually exclusive since some FTAs offend both the positive and negative faces of an individual (e.g., complaints and
threats to an addressee) and similarly, some FTAs can harm both the speaker and the addressee.

There are possibilities for mitigation and redress of face threat at any given point of interaction. BL (1987) organize politeness super-strategies available to the speaker to minimize the threat of a specific FTA as given below.

- do the FTA boldly on record
- do the FTA on record with positive politeness
- do the FTA on record with negative politeness
- do the FTA off record

Figure 1. Linguistic super-strategies for performing

In dealing with FTA the speaker must choose whether or not to go on record with the act. Going on record indicates that the speaker’s communicative intent remains unambiguous; going off record means that more than one interpretation is possible in the form of an understatement, metaphor, and hints.

If the speaker decides to go on record with the FTA, then it can either be done directly or some attempts can be made to minimize its face damage. The former approach is the super strategy of bald-on record politeness in accordance with the Gricean maxims, which define “the basic set of assumptions underlying every talk exchange” (BL, 1978:95). This strategy primarily serves one purpose: to be of use for S “whenever S wants to do the FTA with maximum efficiency more than he wants to satisfy hearer’s face” (1978:95). In other words, on-record utterances do not minimize the face threat and examples include direct imperatives, attention getters, warnings, or demands.

For the latter approach, however, there are two super-strategies available to diminish or counteract the potential face damage of the FTA. Positive politeness refers to the addressee’s face wants by emphasizing communality and cooperation, whereas the negative politeness caters to the addressee’s negative face wants by conveying a desire not to impose.

When the speaker wants to avoid responsibility, he or she goes off record in doing an FTA and leaving it up to hearer to interpret it (1978:211). The speaker here uses indirect, vague, and ambiguous language by employing metaphors, irony, rhetorical questions and contradictions. The off-record strategy is based on violation of Grice’s maxims. In giving hints and clues, the speaker violates the Relevance maxim (“What a boring movie!”-implication of “Let’s leave”); understating and overstating, speaker violates the Quantity maxim (“I told you a thousand times”); using metaphors, irony, rhetorical questions, and contradictions, speaker breaks the Quality maxim (“He is a real fish”) (BL, 1987:215-222); and by using indirect, vague, or ambiguous language, the speaker violates the Manner maxim (“I am going you-know-where”).

According to BL (1987:2) politeness constitutes the “expression of social relationships” and thus provides a verbal way to relieve the interpersonal tension arising from communicative intentions conflicting with social needs and statuses. Within the framework of this fundamentally social functionality, BL claim that their
theory, which is captured by their concept of a universal speaker/hearer or Model Person is universally valid.

2.2.3 Geoffrey Leech

The theory of politeness developed by Leech (1980, 1981, 1983) posits politeness within the framework of “interpersonal rhetoric”, where a broad distinction between semantics and pragmatics is highlighted. Semantics is concerned with the domain of grammar, the linguistic system, the code, whereas pragmatics is concerned with the domain of rhetoric, the implementation of the code, the relationship between the sense of a sentence and its communicative meaning.

Leech’s distinction between semantics and pragmatics overlaps with the Hallidayan functional distinction between the ideational and the textual functions. Accordingly, semantics and thus grammar covers the ideational function, while pragmatics involves both the interpersonal and the textual functions. Accordingly every utterance involves all three functions which are interpersonal, ideational and textual transaction. Interpersonal and textual rhetoric are both involved in the encoding and decoding of the utterance, textual rhetoric is involved in shaping the utterance.

Leech introduces six politeness maxims. These are Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy. Tact indicates minimizing cost and maximizing benefit to the hearer. Generosity refers to minimization of speakers’ own benefit, while maximizing that of the hearer. Approbation is about minimizing dispraise and maximizing praise of the hearer. Modesty involves minimizing self-praise and maximizing self-dispraise. Agreement concerns minimizing disagreement and maximizing agreement between Self and Other. Sympathy is about minimizing antipathy and maximizing sympathy between Self and Other.

Maxims, situations and scales all interact to map the semantic sense to the pragmatic force of an utterance. According to Eelen (2001:9) “Leech’s concept of politeness is concerned with conflict avoidance, which is attested by the specifications of the maxims, as well as by his claim that politeness is geared to establishing comity”.

2.2.4 Sachiko Ide

Ide’s theory (1982, 1986, 1989, 1992) is based on the Japanese concept of politeness where she sees politeness as basically involved in maintaining smooth communication. The basic point she criticizes in BL, Lakoff and Leech is that in their models speakers employ a verbal strategy to attain their interactional or personal goals. As this kind of politeness provides a freedom for the speakers to choose of a mode of action among different alternatives, she labels it as ‘Volition’. In contrast to volition, she introduces another component of politeness ‘Discernment’ which stands for socially obligatory verbal (grammatical) choices.
Ide’s development of the concept of ‘Discernment’ is based on the use of honorific forms in Japanese. BL’s theory is criticized for not providing an adequate explanation on this issue. Moreover, in other theories it is noted that Gricean maxims are continuously flouted for politeness reasons. Ide underlines that this is impossible in Japanese, as there are no socially neutral forms and the speakers must always choose between honorific and non-honorific forms. As long as the use of honorific forms is absolute, then politeness is not related to speaker’s free will and it directly indexes socio-cultural characteristics of the interactants. Hence this absolute use of honorifics brings about a view of politeness determined by social conventions, which is expressed by the Japanese term *wakimae*, where being polite to a person of a higher position, a person with power, an older person and being polite in a setting determined by the factors of participants, occasions and topics.

### 2.2.5 Yueguo Gu

Gu’s theory (1990), which is a revised form of Leech’s theory in the Chinese context explicitly connects politeness with societal norms. In contrast to the approaches of Lakoff and Leech which are descriptive and far from any connection with the moral or ethical nature of politeness, Gu emphasizes that politeness in Chinese context is essentially morally prescriptive in nature, and that rules and maxims mentioned in Leech are moral and socially sanctionable principles. In a similar vein, in discussing BL’s politeness theory, Gu argues that facework is not applied due to personal face wants, but rather due to societal norms. Hence, face is threatened not when people’s personal goals are not achieved, but rather when they fail to live up to social standards.

Within this framework Gu introduces four maxims: Self-denigration, Address, Tact and Generosity. Self-denigration is for admonishing the speaker to ‘denigrate Self and elevate Other’. The Address maxim denotes addressing the interlocutor with an appropriate address terms, where appropriateness is determined by the hearer’s social status, role and the speaker-hearer relationship. The Tact and Generosity maxims are closely related to Leech’s maxims.

### 2.2.6 Bruce Fraser and William Nolen

Fraser and Nolan (1981) introduce the ‘conversational-contract model’ into the politeness theory. They put forward that each interactant, at the beginning if a conversation, brings to that encounter a set of rights and obligations to determine what the participants can expect from each other. This interpersonal contract can be revised in the course of time due to the change in context and the historical dimension of the relationship between the parties.

Politeness, then, is considered to be a matter of obeying the current terms and conditions of the conversational contract (CC) and impoliteness is to violate them. As an interaction goes on smoothly within the terms of the CC, politeness mostly passes by unnoticed, while impoliteness is marked. Hence, politeness does
not cover any form of strategic interaction or any attempt for making the hearer feel good.

2.2.7 Richard Watts

According to Watts (1992a, 1992b, 2003) politeness is a special case of politic behavior. Bernstein’s distinction between elaborated and restricted codes and their reflection in closed and open communication systems is a significant aspect of the theoretical background of Watts’ framework: Closed groups build up “we” communities, where individuals adopt a collective identity or self, whereas in open groups, the main focus is on individual self and “I” form. Relating this distinction with Ide’s distinction of ‘Volition’ and ‘Discernment’, he argues that ‘Discernment’ plays an important role in cultures with closed communication systems, while Volition oriented cultures are more open. Hence, in this picture politeness is associated with open groups and ‘Volition’ can be seen as elaborated codes rather than group concerns, where individual choices are foregrounded. In this respect Watts differs from Ide in that he considers politeness in relation to ‘Volition’ whereas ‘Discernment’ is associated with politic behavior.

According to Watts, politeness is a subset of politic behavior which is explicitly marked and conventionalized. Therefore, the differentiation between politeness and politic behavior does not really imply a clear-cut fundamental difference. Specific linguistic forms are never ‘intrinsically polite’, so only the relationship of behavior to appropriateness conventions determines politeness.

2.2.8 Sara Mills

Sara Mills (2002, 2003) introduces a more community-based, discourse-level model of both gender and linguistic politeness within the framework of Third Wave feminist linguistics, which is a form of anti-essentialist analysis, critical of Second Wave feminist linguists such as Dale Spender, Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen for their focus on ‘homogeneous women’s language’ rather than considering gender in terms of differential linguistic behavior of males and females as groups. She draws on a model of the relation between speakers and their communities of practice which is more concerned with the discourse level.

Mills argue that politeness as a concept is not neutral, but is already classed and gendered through the construction of a set of particular classed, raced and gendered positions. Thus, stereotypes of gender and class may impinge on assessments of linguistic behavior made by both scholars and interlocutors. Her point is that class is not a simple determinant of politeness norms, but politeness is a crucial element in constituting class differences. In analyzing politeness in relation to gender, it is very superficial to simply analyze males’ and females’ use of politeness strategies within particular interactions; what must be focused on in politeness studies in relation to gender is the gendered domains of speech acts and the perceived norms of the community of practice.
2.3 Some Observations

This overview of different theoretical perspectives on politeness by sketching their main positions and distinctive aspects revealed a few common characteristics: politeness is a significant tool in social indexing and it functions as a strategic means of conflict-avoidance.

BL’s model is a well-designed and impressive model that brings together identity concerns, situational influences and discourse strategies. Many studies have tested their theory or applied it in different cultures and research arenas since their original publication. From a theoretical perspective, some problems have been found. For instance, Matsumoto (1989) argued that Gricean focus on propositional content in BL’s politeness theory is inappropriate for language where the speaker’s attitudes toward the social context are lexically encoded into an utterance as in the case of Japanese. Other researchers, for example, Ochs (1984), states the Gricean premise that an addressee must recognize the intention of a speaker’s utterance (Grice 1957) and contrasts Grice’s view by pointing out that certain societies give more importance to the consequences of an utterance than identifying the speaker’s underlying intent.

BL argue that there is a hierarchical ranking of politeness strategies, with off-record being the most face-redressive, followed by negative, and then positive politeness. This view, however, does not always hold across cultures and has been criticized by various scholars such as Blum-Kulka (1991) who put forward that there was no clear ranking of these strategies as a result of analyzing data gathered from questionnaires to Israeli respondents.

Cross-cultural studies have also underlined the Anglo-centric bias of BL model conforming a strongly agentivistic paradigm. For Goffman, face is a public property that is only assigned to individuals depending on their interactional behavior, whereas BL characterize face as an image that belongs to the individual, to the self. Such a self-oriented characterization of face can be problematic in non-western contexts which conform predominantly to the pressure of external social and cultural norms. It is argued that BL’s notion of politeness is far from covering the notion of politeness of non-western cultures where the discourse focus is not upon individualism, but upon group identity (Matsumo 1989; Ide, 1989; Mao 1994), and where politeness associates with different moral meanings, concerns and values (Gu, 1990; Bayraktarolu and Sifianou, 2001; Kasper, 1990; Chen, 2001). Another objection echoed by many (see Gu, 1990; Ide,1989; Matsumoto, 1988; 1989; Ting-Tookey, 1988) is that the concept of negative politeness is derived from individualistic natured Western society, but that this approach can not be successfully applied to collectivist cultures where the group interests are emphasized and takes precedence over individual interests.

Many of the above-mentioned researchers have criticized both over-extension and limitations of the use of the term ‘face’ in BL’s politeness theory. Three main conceptual problems can be identified with respect to the notion of face in BL’s politeness theory. Firstly, although facework is seen to provide the underlying dynamic, the theory limits itself to only one set of strategic possibilities, namely, politeness. However, speaker-oriented facework can also be achieved without politeness intentions. Secondly, as a consequence of the first limitation, the
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politeness theory neglects issues of face aggravation by focusing only on face protection and mitigation of potential threat. Thirdly, while the politeness theory proposes that both self- and other self-directed strategies are possible, BL clearly neglect self-directed facework strategies in their analysis.

2.4 Face and Facework in Turkish Culture

There has been particular interest for the idea that differences among people’s face wants can be related to cultural factors. BL’s assumption, which is said to be universal, that all the ways of talk are grounded in rules of considerateness, is challenged by a host of studies with respect to cross-cultural comparison (Carrel and Konneker, 1981; House and Kasper, 1981; Scollon and Scollon, 1981, 1995; among others) and gender (Christie, 2001, 2002; Mills, 2002, 2003; among others) differences with regards to use of and social effects of politeness and more broadly with respect to the social importance imposed on a set of face wants. It would be appropriate to have a look at the concept of face in Turkish culture.

The notion of face (yüzd in Turkish) is a fundamental part of social interaction among Turkish speakers, as illustrated in the following idiomatic expressions containing face notions: yüzsz (lit.) faceless, (fig.) cheeky, shameless; yüz karsı (lit.) the black of one’s face, (fig.) shame, dishonor; yüz vermek, (lit.) to give face, (fig.) to spoil a person; yüzün kızartmak (lit.) to make one’s face blush, (fig.) to demean or humiliate one’s self; yüzün u ağartmak (lit.) to brighten one’s face, (fig.) to make one proud (see Moran, 1989).

According to Ruhi and İşik (2005) face in Turkish refers to

(1) the whole face considered as a surface or as the color of the skin of the face, as when people can/cannot claim specific positively valued attributes or as when they (may) feel embarrassed due to (possible) failure to meet self- or other-imposed behavioral expectations;
(2) the eyes as when a person can/cannot look someone in the eye in issues related to behavioral expectations.

Hence, the first component of the definition stands for the projection of the desired social image and claims to situation-specific social identities (‘face as self-presentation’) whereas the second one indicates social worth and debt-sensitivities in social relationship (‘relational face’).

In this study, I take the notion of face as the cognitive concept having a key role in the interpretation of social conduct and self-presentation in relation to honor/shame duality. I therefore argue that honor/shame and reputation are culturally defined. Face in Turkish culture is regarded as the equivalent of honor and refers to a person’s social reputation, prestige, esteem, intrinsic worth, and moral integrity. Honor implies the risk of shame for speakers themselves and for the wider context of their social relations. Face is thus considered as externally determined and evaluated, and as a public and interpersonal notion, in contrast to being a private or personal matter. It is, in Goffman’s terms, a public property.
The implicit idea in the honor-shame duality is the protection of women, and consequently the protection of the family honor through controlling women’s sexuality, because the actual components of honor are different for women and men. For example, when we consider the cultural code of honor and shame, we see that there are separate words for honor in Turkish. They are: şeref and namus. While şeref refers to a man’s reputation as a participant in the community, namus stands for “his reputation as determined by the chastity of the women in the family” (Özgür and Sunar, 1982:350). The risk of shame requiring chaste behavior is associated with women’s honor, whilst men are expected to protect his family from insults and threads. Within this cultural frame, Turkish women have to be publicly self-conscious depending on their culturally determined gender role, and their status both in the family and in the society. They should work towards sustaining the social status and the honor of their family, because the concept of honor plays a substantial role in the lives of both men and women in Turkish society. Man’s honor is inextricably tied to a woman and can be harmed through the behavior of his woman and children.

Concerning this socio-cultural frame, it is not surprising to observe (as we shall see) that the female discourse is woven around honor and shame as my respondents talk on sexuality or other sensitive topics. “Multiple consciousness” of Turkish women about face management is also reflected in their facework strategies because they try to manage the risk of shame not only for their own account, but also for the wider range of their social relationships. Hence, by maintaining their face and protecting their honor, Turkish women also avoid bringing shame to themselves and to their families. This kind of facework will become evident when speakers are compelled to disclose intimate information on topics that are not freely talked about in ‘polite company’. As speaking about sexual experiences or gynecological problems and procedures is such a taboo and its sanction is doubled when the close-knitted Turkish communities, where massive flow of information is the main factor of social control, are taken into consideration, Turkish women resort to preventative and corrective actions. Preventative actions are geared toward preventing or minimizing threats evoked through the interviewer’s opening a discussion on socially stigmatized topics. Considering that being involved in such a conversation can be a social risk, respondents try to avoid the threat to the self’s face which represents both the respondents themselves and their wider social contacts. However, if the respondents feel offended for being in such a conversation and being interviewed on a socially stigmatized topic, then the facework strategies are built for the reconstruction of the damaged image or ‘reframing’ plans.

The notions of face and self-image in Turkish culture correspond to distinct ingroup and outgroup relationships, strong interpersonal bonds, commitments and moral values. In this sense, as proclaimed by Zeyrek (2001), Turkish culture displays relatedness and group consciousness where “self” is defined in relation to individuals’ relationships with others. For instance, especially in rural areas, this “interdependent self” is observable in women’s nicknames, which are specifically effective if there is more than one person having the same name. Women are nicknamed in relation to their husband’s name or his job/characteristics unless they have an outstanding personal or physical trait. For instance, Jilet’in Aliye (Razor’s Aliye) which means “Aliye the Razor’s wife” is a good example where “razor”
stands for her husband’s nickname as he is an aggressive, quarrelsome fellow. Depending on the interdependent nature of self, reputation is seen as a social attribute, which is externally supervised, valued or devaluated by other members of community. The interdependent notion of self features individuals as connected to the social context so that people try to fulfill social and cultural obligations to become a part of a community, rather than defining themselves with their personal characteristics and achievement. Their reputation is consequently associated with their social contacts.

As a result, the way women verbalize and situate their experience as text provides a resource for the self. The experiences of inequality in social conduct and subordination that circumscribe the life of women give rise to a moral-grounded facework in human interactions. Being the product of external conditions of existence, the habitus of self will, therefore, develop similar features, similar way of thinking, acting and perceiving the world. To what extent is this self unique and agentive as long as we are talking about speaker-oriented face where collective intentionality precedes individual intentionality? Borrowing Ide’s notion of “discernment”, we can say that the strategy of "discernment" has taken precedence over that of “volition” as a socially-culturally determined behavior directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between the individuals of the social group during the ongoing process of interaction. In other words, the notion of “discernment” is not linguistically but culturally operative in Turkish society. Politeness and politeness norms among Turkish women are used both to ensure smooth interaction and to avoid any harm to social reputation. Hence, politeness is used to enhance other’s social standing and “feminine voice emerges with great clarity, defining the self and proclaiming its worth on the basis of the ability to care for and protect others” (Gilligan, 1982:79).

2.5 An Alternative Analysis of Facework

The significance of different scholars’ contribution is indisputable with regard to their highlighting different aspects of politeness and notions of face across different cultures. The notion of speaker-oriented facework requires a combined framework consisting of politeness theory and self-presentation theory. In the first instance, my data highlight a range of self-presentational claims that are virtually ignored in politeness theory. For example, there are specific situations where people want to be seen as intimidating, needy, dependent, rather than desiring to be seen as pleasant and likable (see Jones and Pittman, 1982). Moreover, the significance of distinguishing between self- and other-directed facework determines the strategies, as they vary depending on whose face is being threatened. The main importance is also given on avoidance strategies available to the speaker to minimize the threat of a specific FTA for the hearer, but theorists are not concerned with what happened if a person’s face is threaten or his/her image is under risk and what kind of face-saving strategies s/he is going to employ as a speaker. The identity claims of a speaker, what BL might think of, is competitive and provide conflicting aspects of positive and negative face, since supporting one aspect of face will lead to one attack on another.
A common conflict in everyday life is the clashing images between immediate context and wider social context, where a person’s desire to be honest in the wider social context can be hampered by immediate remedies to ‘save the day’ in the immediate context. Consequently, both within the self and between people, various aspects of face come into tension with each other and it is very restrictive to explain them all within the framework of positive and negative face strategies.

Concerning all these abovementioned circumstances, self-presentation strategies and the politeness strategies are combined to preserve the social distance and to minimize the damage that has been done after desired entities have been threatened or to preserve the social distance. Different categories of self-presentation theory (i.e. offensive styles of self-presentation) can help us to take into account both the full range of identity concerns people have in interaction and their strategies of self-directed and other-directed politeness. On the one hand, people’s self and other identity concerns are so complicated that many aspects of facework can be neglected if we consider only psychological aspects of a certain interaction. On the other hand, language in facework is so multifunctional, so complex that linguistic theories are far from covering purposeful strategies in facework, different varieties of face wants (i.e. situation, personality, culture), and different strategies for desired entities.

2.6 Facework in Self-presentation Theory

Several classifications of impression management have been suggested by researchers. A widely accepted classification of impression management behaviors distinguishes assertive and defensive tactics (Tedeschi and Lindskold, 1976; Tedeschi and Norman, 1985). Tedeschi and colleagues define assertive self-presentation as behavior aimed at establishing particular identities in the eyes of others, and defensive self-presentation as actions taken to reestablish a positive identity or remove negative typifications.

Arkin (1981) developed a similar classification between acquisitive and protective behaviors. Acquisitive self-presentation is associated with social approval and is largely synonymous with assertive self-presentation. Protective self-presentation implies very careful and conservative behavior aimed at avoiding disapproval, and includes modest self-descriptions, the use of uncertain expressions, and a reduction in the frequency of social interaction.

Later, styles of self-presentation were associated with self-esteem; that is a typical style of individuals with low in self-esteem and another typical style of individuals with high in self-esteem have been identified by Baumeister, Tice and Hutton (1989). These classifications have not systematically been related to each other. The literature based on a correlation between low esteem and self-presentation clearly suggests that protective self-presentation should be considered as an additional dimension which may be referred to as offensive self-presentation. Several self-presentational behaviors do not match any of the self-presentational tactics described in the literature. An integrative framework of self-presentational style, taking into account the similarities and differences of the established taxonomies as well as other derived aspects of self-presentation such as offensive self-presentation has been suggested by Schütz (1998a).
In Schütz’s taxonomy, an important dimension of classifying self-presentation provides a person’s effort to look good as opposed to efforts not to look bad. In the taxonomy suggested by Schütz, behaviors are distinguished on the basis of (a) intentions not to give any negative impressions and (b) intentions to achieve positive impressions (see figure 1). Thus, the behavioral categorization made by Schütz is explained as positive and negative facework in politeness theory. While BL focus on face protection and mitigation strategies, Schütz considers facework in a wider perspective by taking into consideration a wider range of identity claims through her additional categories.

![Figure 2. Schütz’s taxonomy of self-presentation](image)

The continuum of self-presentation from active to passive style can be scaled as follows:
2.6.1 Assertive Self-presentation

Assertive self-presentation covers active, but not aggressive efforts to establish positive impressions. Actors performing assertive self-presentation project self-images desirable to them in a given situation. Assertiveness can be claimed either verbally or non verbally. Assertive behavior is explicitly contrasted to passive behavior, which is attributed to people who fail to express their true thoughts and feelings, allowing them to be dominated or humiliated by others, and who comply with the requests or demands of others even when they do not want to. Under the category of assertive self-presentation, Schütz (1998a) includes the following behaviors:

Ingratiation

Jones (1964) has suggested that ingratiation may be regarded as an illicit interpersonal tactic that can be used to secure benefits (or to avoid harm from others). Jones describes four modes of ingratiation: (1) complimentary other enhancement, designed to accent the strengths and virtues of the other, (2) opinion conformity or agreeing with the opinions of the other, (3) rendering favors, making nice things for others, and (4) attractive self-presentations in self-descriptions, explicitly presenting oneself in ways designed to create an attractive image. Ingratiation is a distinct sub-area of impression management because it aims at gaining attractiveness and it emphasizes pleasing others and the salience of short-term personal profit.

Jones and Pittman (1982) have suggested that in addition to being motivated to have others like them (ingratiation), people also want to be morally worthy. Helping others, neglecting one’s own interests, or engaging in similar behavior represents a desire to appear morally worthy. An individual wants to be respected and admired for his integrity and moral values. He wants to be seen as “honest, disciplined, charitable and self-abnegating” (Pittman and Pittman, 1980:13).

Self-promotion

Showing successful performances or claiming such performances in the past are means of conveying the impression of competency to observers (Jones and Pittman, 1982). The self-promoter seeks attributions of competence, usually in one specific area such as knowledge or athletic performances. Tactics similar to self-promotion have been observed by other researchers. For instance, “basking in reflected glory” (Cialdini et al., 1976, Cialdini and Richardson, 1980) refers to
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attempts to “look good” by associating oneself with those who are evaluated positively (Cialdini and de Nicholas, 1989). Two other tactics have been labeled “entitlements” and “enhancements” (Schlenker, 1975). Employing entitlements, people associate themselves with positive events; and with enhancements, they try to persuade others that events in which they are involved are more positive than they appear at first. To do so people attempt to maximize their responsibility for the event and the desirability of the event itself.

Another common assertive tactic observed in studies on campaigning politicians’ self-presentation is showing strength or power (Schütz, 1998a). The main aim is to manage a prestigious impression. Unlike the tactic of intimidation, a power display is not used to create fear, it is used to assure the audiences that speaker has a potential to create positive outcomes. As it comes to linguistic features of individuals’ speech within the dynamics of interaction (dominance in conversation), certain interactional features take on characteristic patterns such as interruption, topic control, talking time and so forth.

Speakers can also identify themselves with a specific group that is evaluated positively by the actor (Schütz, 1998a). This strategy includes verbal claims of membership and the use of symbolic self-completion. By using any of the innumerable ways to convey in-group membership, the speaker can implicitly claim the common ground with the hearer that is carried by that definition of the group. BL discuss identification under the title of “use in-group identity markers”, and this topic includes in-group usages of address forms, of language or dialect, of jargon or slang, and of ellipsis (BL, 1987:106).

2.6.2 Offensive Self-presentation

According to Schütz, offensiveness displays an aggressive way of positive self-presentation in order to establish a desired image (1998). People employ offensive self-presentation by using domination or insulting others in order to make themselves look good. Attacking others and presenting themselves as superior are the main methods to convey desired impressions.

Ironic statements or critical evaluation of a third party

If a speaker wants to damage the face of a hearer and does it indirectly, he must give him some hints and hope that the hearer could correctly interpret what the speaker implies. The main way to do it is to employ conversational implicatures. Saying the opposite of what he means, the speaker can indirectly convey his intended meaning through ironic statements. As a second tactic, the speaker may use an oblique allusion involving a veiled reflection of hearer’s character or behavior. He may articulate his criticism about an image or a third person in such an indirect way that he does not engage in any verbal dueling with other parties.

Criticizing the questioner

In this form of offensive self-presentation, the actor criticizes a person who raised a critical question in order to reduce the impact of criticism.
**Chapter 2**

**Attack the source of criticism**

The source of criticism could possibly be a person who has negatively evaluated the subject or a publication whose critical comment is cited. By attacking the source’s competency or credibility, actors can manage to look superior to observers. If a politician, for instance, comes across published evidence that contradicts his argument, he may call the respective article or book unscholarly or biased as can be seen in many of the talk shows on Turkish televisions.

**Determining the topic of discussion**

This offensive technique includes both attempts to change the topic of discussion and attempts to prevent others from changing the topic (Schütz, 1998). This technique can be accomplished overtly by stating “I do not want to talk about this” or “Let’s talk about”… The goal may also be less obvious; the speakers may begin their statements by seemingly answering the respective question and then redirecting the argument to another topic, or they may talk without allowing turn takings and thus prevent others from joining the discussions and changing the topics. In other words, they control the interaction and avoid topics that do not allow them to create desired impressions.

### 2.6.3 Defensive Self-presentation

Defensive self-presentation could be necessary to minimize the damage that has been done after desired entities have been threatened or damaged (Tedeschi and Norman, 1985). In the situations in which persons’ own performance or the events they are involved in have conveyed undesired images of themselves to others, defensive tactics can be employed to reduce negative impact of such events. However in general, the main reason leading to defensive reactions is that of a person held responsible for an event that is publicly evaluated negatively. Schütz (1998) uses four questions to understand the circumstances that give rise to defensive behavior in terms of reliability of the event, the moral nature of occurrence, the level of involvement and possible reaction scenarios: Did the event take place at all? Is the event to be evaluated negatively? Did the person in question cause the event? Could the actor have reacted differently? Usually a person involved in a bad event will try to soften the facts and try to supply as little negative information on herself as she can.

**Denial**

“It did not happen” is the main statement of this tactic. In order to give socially desirable responses people distort their self-disclosures to maintain or enhance their social image. Schlenker (1980:138) defines this situation as “the defense of nonoccurrence”. Here the actor tries to persuade the others that the event under consideration did not occur.

**Reframing**

The person admits that a certain event has happened but argues that it should not be seen in a negative way. The main statement is “It was different” or “It was
Many Faces of Facework

not so bad”. The speaker may attempt to present his faults as little as possible, if there are any. In other words, actors attempt directly to minimize the negativity of the event. The event is described as less (or not at all) harmful, untoward, bad, costly, important, improper, meaningful, significant, offensive, or whatever, than it might appear from a worst-case reading (Schlenker, 1980:144). For instance, in transgression situations, a mugger argues that the victim wasn’t hurt too badly, a student who cheats may argue that it did not affect anyone else’s grade, a child who has broken his car might say that it was very old. Hence, skillful actors can even transform a potentially undesirable event from something negative to something positive by the help of humorous manner.

**Dissociation**

The main statement is “it was not me”. People using dissociation accept that a negative event has taken place, but affirm that they haven’t caused it. Tedeschi and Riess (1981) called this behavior “denial of agency.” The speaker might even claim not to be associated with the event in question. Cialdini and Richardson (1980) studied on this behavior; college students referred to their university football team as “we” in case of a winning score, but said “they lost” when the team had not been successful. Schlenker (1980: 138) called this situation “defense of noncausation”. The actor accepts that an undesirable event occurred, but attempts to show that he or she was in no way responsible for it.

**Justification**

The main statement is “it was legitimate”. Speakers using justifications admit that they caused a negative event. However, they would like to believe and persuade the others that it was inevitable or justified, and that they shouldn’t be blamed. Justification depends on a social comparison processes in which the actor tries to minimize the undesirability of the event by comparing his or her own situation with that of others who do the same thing. “Everybody does it”, or “others do worse things” are the typical statements of justification tactics. The conclusion is that if everybody does it, it must be reasonably normal or acceptable (see Schlenker 1980: 145).

**Excuses**

“I couldn’t help it” is the common statement of this tactic. The speaker accepts responsibility for a negative event, but he lists extenuating circumstances. Excuses allow actors to admit that an undesirable event occurred, that their own actions in some way caused the consequences, but they are not really as responsible for the event as it might appear (Schlenker 1980: 140). Thus, excuses are an attempt to reduce one’s responsibility in a negative event. Extenuating circumstances are the major category of excuse. They not only shift some of the responsibility for the event from the actor, but also allow him to claim reduced freedom of decision, or reduced competence at the time of the event. Such explanations are based on a variety of excuses: “I couldn’t help it. I was drunk, stoned, coerced, under strain, sick, mentally ill, tired” and so on. These circumstances vary in their effectiveness in excusing the actor, depending on the situation.
Apologies

The final possibility is to take full responsibility for a negative event. Apologies could save a person’s image as honest, and responsible (Schütz, 1998). In an apology, actors admit blameworthiness for an undesirable event, but simultaneously attempt to obtain a pardon or reduce the negative repercussions from the audiences. Apologies are designed to convince the audience that the undesirable event shouldn’t be considered a fair representation what the actor is “really like” as a person (Schlenker, 1980:154). Goffman (1971:141) puts forward this point in defining one of the five elements of apology, which states that “clarification that one recognizes what the appropriate conduct should have been and sympathizes with the application of negative sanctions for such a rule violation”. Similarly, in Turkish it is very common to apologize before articulating unwanted words such as swears, taboo words, slang words, words for genital organs etc. These preemptive apologies imply that the speaker knows that this word is improper for this situation, but he has to use it in this context. Hence, an apology offers an actor the opportunity to accept blame for a predicament and if successful, it allows the actor to leave the undesirable event behind and present a reformed identity to the audience.

This work is an attempt for establishing the theoretical basis for speculation of the sort we deal with. Although our framework could hardly be said to predict all the details in conversation analysis, it does suggest a more abstract level of explanation of conversational analysis on critical/taboo topics.

2.6.4 Protective Self-presentation

People engaging in self-presentation often avoid situations that could be embarrassing or humiliating and thus forgo certain opportunities to convey favorable impressions. The main goal of self-presentation has been described as creating desired impressions. Protective behavior, however, aims at less. In other words, the person does not try to look good or favorable, but simply not to look bad. Efforts are not devoted to establishing desired impressions, but to avoiding damage to established or assumed social identities.

Avoiding public attention
Avoiding attention is considered to be a means of trying to avoid criticism.

Minimal self-disclosure
Self-disclosure is the willingness to share information about one’s personal states, dispositions, events of the past, and plans for the future (Derlega and Grzelak, 1979). Thus, it is the fundamental means of group interaction. In order to give others little opportunity for criticizing, the cautious approach is to say as little as possible.

Cautious self-description
People engaging in protective self-presentation try not to draw attention to their abilities and avoid the risk of positive self-presentation, which would expose
them to the possibility of negative evaluation in the case of future failure (Baumeister et al., 1989). Speakers rather reduce standards and describe themselves modestly.

**Minimizing social interaction**

The fear of being evaluated negatively may result in avoidance of social interactions because not interacting with others reduces the risk of leaving negative impressions, just as it reduces the chances of conveying favorable ones.

**Remaining silent**

When one says little or nothing in social interactions, there is little probability of saying something wrong. Hence again the risk of negative evaluation is reduced (see Schlenker and Leary, 1985).

**Passive but friendly interaction**

Establishing an image in pleasant and friendly terms, partners may limit others to uncritical responses (see Schlenker and Leary, 1985).

### 2.7 Conclusion

The aim of this literature review is threefold: to review and critique the two approaches, showing how the limitations of each could be offset by the strengths of the other; and to offer the beginnings of a communicative theory of facework, one that takes account of the full range of identity concerns people have in interaction and that attends to the ways these concerns are expressed in people’s discourse practices. BL’s politeness theory provides us with a rich, linguistically elaborated sense of how two very general identity concerns are displayed; it does not, however, give an adequate picture of the complexity of the identity issues that motivate communicative behavior. Such a picture comes more into focus when we look at how the study of face has been approached in several socio-psychological research areas. But, while self-presentation occurs in social situations, it is studied as a one-way phenomenon. Self-presentation theory largely ignores the fact that social situations involve at least two people. Not only is each person presenting his self; each person is orienting to the other(s) and presenting how he or she sees the other(s). Thus, it can be suggested that a relative face orientation construct can be posited to address a broader range of face and identity concerns shaping our interactional behaviors. Only in this way a coherent facework frame can be developed that extends BL’s pioneering work. This reformulation could potentially account for all facework possibilities (i.e. self-oriented facework as well as other-oriented facework) and embrace both social identity and individual autonomy compartments of face.