6  Indirectness and Euphemism

6.1  Introduction

The relationship between production of indirect and euphemistic language use and variability in its motivation and formation in different cultures have been noted by many scholars (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1991; Mc Glone and Batchelor, 2003 among others). Studies on indirectness are concentrated on two main trends: polite indirectness in the service of face management, and indirectness as a communication strategy in interpersonal relationships. BL (1987) construct a universal linguistic link between degree of politeness and degree of indirectness where motivation of indirectness through which individuals do not make all their beliefs and desires explicit is considered as a desire to be polite.

The second view on indirectness underlines its strategic, regulatory aspect employed not necessarily for politeness, but for the smoothness of a social interaction. Tannen (1981, 1986, 1990) defines indirectness as a component of conversational style and identifies two benefits of indirectness in interpersonal communication: defensiveness and rapport style. Defensiveness refers to a speaker’s preference not to go on record in order to be able to disclaim, rescind, or modify his/her utterance if it does not meet with a positive response. For Holtgraves (1997:633) “it is a linguistic manifestation of manipulativeness” providing deniability to the speaker. The rapport benefit of indirectness results from the pleasant experience of being understood without explaining oneself. In other words, by requiring the hearer to guess unstated meaning, indirectness contributes to a sense of involvement through mutual participation in sense making.

Embracing both perspectives, Obeng (1994:42) defines verbal indirectness as “communicational strategy in which interactants abstain from directness in order to obviate crisis or in order to communicate “difficulty”, and thus make their utterances consistent with face and politeness”. Indirectness is indeed multifunctional in talking on delicate topics. Firstly, it helps respondents detach themselves from negative events and/or socially stigmatized topics. Secondly, “indirectness strategies may help to minimize and sometimes totally eliminate risks of open confrontation and thereby help to protect the face of interactional
participants” (Obeng, 1997:202). Thus, avoiding direct disputes through indirectness, interactants maintain smooth relationships with the other parties in the interaction. Thirdly, when the respondents are asked to talk about risky topics, indirectness can help them to express their covert resistance against the invasion of their private territory in face-threatening situations.

Moving the focus to the formulation of indirectness, indirect style of interaction will be discussed with reference to euphemistic aspect of indirectness. Euphemism is the act of substituting a mild, indirect term in place of an embarrassing or unpleasant expression. The general tendency in the definition of euphemism is to describe it as a linguistic substitution category derived from a speaker’s hesitancy to offend an addressee (See Crystal, 1997; Rawson, 1981). Mey (1993:50), for instance, defines euphemism as “talking about something in terms that are deliberately chosen to pre-empt any negative reaction on the part of the receiver”. This definition restricts the illocutionary function of euphemism to other-oriented politeness and ignores the speakers’ need to save their own face. However, referring to a distasteful and/or socially stigmatized subject is a threat to positive face and this affects both parties. On the one hand, the hearer’s positive face is at stake as she considers the speaker to be disrespectful towards her. On the other hand, the speaker’s face is threatened by the negative consequences of the words deriving from the articulation of undesirable words. Thus, it can be concluded that in case of talk on a distasteful topic, there are two main motives for employing euphemism; to minimize the threat to the hearer’s face, and to protect the speaker’s own face, which result in rather precautionary face-management strategies. McGlone and Batchelor (2003) investigated the influence of these hearer–oriented and speaker-oriented face motives on euphemistic usage in an experimental study. They reported that euphemisms were used to describe undesirable topics more frequently among subjects who were informed that their identities would be disclosed to the recipient. Their results, thus, suggest that subjects tend to use euphemism more frequently for protective self-presentation purposes than for the face wants of their hearers.

The purpose of this chapter is to deepen insights into the ways in which indirectness and euphemistic expressions are effective in image construction in line with protective self-presentation, where speakers are not trying to make a favorable impression or fend off an attack to their face, but try to avoid damage to their established or assumed social identities. Indirectness interacts with euphemism in several figurative forms both to avoid revealing personal information and minimize the effect of face threatening situations. A detailed account of euphemistic reduplications, where non-preferred expressions are shown to be concealed by ambiguity will be further provided by qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The following section provides a systematic analysis of euphemistic structures, where Warren’s (1992) model is taken as a basis for four main methods of euphemistic construction. Section 3 concentrates on euphemistic reduplications, whose regular and easily observable structures allow straightforward qualitative and quantitative analyses. Section 4 concludes with discussion of the findings.
6.2 Euphemistic Indirectness

For the analysis of the euphemistic cases in the TWIST corpus, Warren’s (1992) model of euphemistic structures was adopted. The model was derived from five hundred examples from two euphemistic dictionaries in English (Spears, 1981; Neaman & Silver, 1983). Warren formulated a model embracing both formal and semantic innovations enabling a speaker to denote a sensitive issue in a tactful and/or veiled manner. There is no explanation whether these examples are fictitious or taken from natural data. She uses “euphemism” as an “umbrella” term to denote a wide range of linguistic maneuvers to handle delicate issues. Warren designates four main ways in which euphemisms may be constructed to yield either a new form, which is sequence of phonemes or morphemes not previously used in the language in question, or a new sense for an established form:

1. Word-formation devices
2. Phonemic modification
3. Loan words
4. Semantic Innovation

Warren mentioned the possibility of the employment of some other minor methods such as omission, or replacement of some unarticulated noise in speech to catch the examples that do not fit into the model. However, problems arose as some cases of euphemism that I came across in the TWIST corpus failed to fit into any of the suggested categories, and some of her subcategories did not exist in the TWIST corpus. Thus, some of the methods were either excluded as they were not represented in the TWIST, or some additional categories were added to fit some examples into the classification. As a result, while elliptical structures, circumlocution, and indexical expressions were added to the model, blends, acronyms, back slang, abbreviation, reversals, understatements and overstatements are deleted from the original model. Figure 1 presents the classification of euphemistic structures in TWIST.
Figure 1. Classification of devices for construction of euphemism in TWIST.

6.2.1 Word Formation Devices

6.2.1.1 Compounding

Compounding stands for combining two individually innocuous words to form a euphemism for an undesirable word. Consider the following examples in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compounding as euphemism</th>
<th>Established Sense</th>
<th>Euphemistic Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Hak deliği</em> (Hole permitted by God)</td>
<td>Female genital organ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ana vatan</em> (Mother land)</td>
<td>Female genital organ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ayıp yer</em> (Shameful place)</td>
<td>Female genital organ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ay hali</em> (Monthly situation)</td>
<td>Menstruation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ay başı</em> (Beginning of a month)</td>
<td>Menstruation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Muayyen günler</em> (Definite days)</td>
<td>Menstruation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1.2 Derivation

It is the modification of a term in a foreign language to form a standard word in another language. The expression “*regl olmak*” (to become regl) is also widely used in popular media and women magazines. In colloquial use of spoken Turkish, however, it is transformed to “*renkli olmak*” (to be colored) by uneducated speakers.
6.2.1.3 Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is a type of word that sounds like the thing it is describing. Onomatopoetic sounds in the TWIST corpus are employed to refer to the sounds occurring during the act of sexual intercourse. In the following example, the speaker talks about her sex life with her husband acknowledging that her doctor advised them to have sexual intercourse more frequently and free from any birth control method.

Context: Infertility
(D=Dilek, Nevin=N)

(1)  
D:  Değil mi? *Ama inanmayacakolson o zamana kadar hani çocukları çok severim ama, hep sanki atıyorumd. Yani, daha sonra diye...Çok önemli oldu böyle birdenbire çocuk sahibi olmak. Dedim ki bende “Aa çocuk sahibi olamam, bu çok önemli bir sey. Olamazsam ne olur falan.*
N:  Tabi, tabi.
D:  Ay, biz yemedik, içmedik. *Atiti, patiti, (ellerini ileri geri hareket ettirir) inanmazsanız.*
N:  Sure, sure
D:  Isn’t it so? But believe it or not, I had been postponing it until that event, though I like children a lot. I mean saying later, later…Then it became very important to have a child. I started to say I won’t be able to have a baby, it is very important for me. What would happen if I could not etc.
N:  Sure, sure
D:  Well, we didn’t eat and drink, but we did only *choo choo choo, choo* (Moving her hands back and forth) you may not believe…

Here Dilek tries to create both visual and auditory imagery by creating onomatopoeic sounds to denote sexual intercourse. By moving her hand back and forth, she visualizes the work of an engine, a locomotive by producing sounds “*atiti patiti, atiti patiti*”.

6.2.2 Phonemic Modification

This means modification and alteration of the form of the offensive words according to certain rules. Among the wide range of phonemic modifications, only phonemic replacement exists in the TWIST corpus.

6.2.2.1 Phonemic Replacement
Phonemic replacement stands for euphemistic mispronunciation. That is to say, offensive words are modified or changed by phonemic replacement, omission and/or insertion. Consider the following examples in the TWIST corpus in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonemic Replacement</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sıkir ➔ İltir</td>
<td>deletion of /s/ and replacement of /ı/ with /k/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Göt ➔ Döt</td>
<td>replacement of /g/ with /d/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bok ➔ Mok</td>
<td>replacement of /b/ with /m/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popo ➔ Toto</td>
<td>replacement of /p/ with /t/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in the examples (Table 2), it is possible to talk about multiple operations to distort the form of the offensive words. As an exception, the last example features over-euphemism. Although *popo* is a rather euphemistic, polite version of buttocks, it has undergone another modification to decrease the unpleasantness of the word.

### 6.2.3 Loan Words

In the case of sensitive topics, switching from the native language to a foreign language may help to diminish the difficulty of articulating undesirable words. This is a typical way of constructing euphemism especially in the Groningen setting. Women tend to use Dutch terms as they talk about genital organs during their narration. However, inclusion of these cases may be disputable, as the reason for this usage may not be purely euphemistic. They simply may not remember a proper Turkish term for body parts and genital organs. For instance, a Dutch term, “baarmoeder” used in place of *rahim* (womb) in Turkish and an English term “penis” instead of the male genital organ. Dutch slang verb “neuken” is also used in case of anger or a critical situation to refer to sexual intercourse. Actually this Dutch verb is highly vulgar to articulate in a public speech, but its negative effect is released and softened as it is a loan word. Those examples are rather rare when compared to the amount of other euphemistic formations.

### 6.2.4 Semantic Innovations

According to Warren (1992) semantic innovation refers to the creation of a novel contextual meaning from the available set of meanings. Similarly, Clark and Clark (1979) mention “contextual expressions” whose senses rely on the time, place, and circumstances in which they are uttered. Clark (1992:310) puts forward that “most contextual expressions are word innovations that are formed from well established words or morphemes”.

6.2.4.1 *Particularization*

Particularization, a frequently used device to form a euphemism is to employ a general term in which its context has to be particularized to make sense. In Warren’s (1992:138) terms, “the referents of the euphemistic sense must be a subcategory of the referents of the dictionary sense from which it derives”. Warren mentions four types of particularization in the sense of retrieving some particular argument, retrieving the manner, retrieving a relevant subcategory and the subcategory of an argument. It is possible to discern different examples of particularization in the TWIST corpus such as nouns retrieving a relevant subcategory in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 respectively:

**Table 3**

*Particularization in NP form*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established Sense</th>
<th>Euphemistic Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>İş (business)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaziyet (situation)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konu (subject)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bez (cloth)</td>
<td>pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kız (Girl)</td>
<td>virgin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kızlık (hymen)</td>
<td>virginity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evlilik (marriage)</td>
<td>sex life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kırmızı lamba (red light)</td>
<td>brothel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4**

*Particularization in Adjectival form*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established Sense</th>
<th>Euphemistic Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mor ve bursuşuk (purple and wrinkled)</td>
<td>male genital organ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5**

*Particularization in VP form*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established Sense</th>
<th>Euphemistic Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beraber Olmak (to be together))</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatmak (to lie down)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatağa girmek (to enter into the bed)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karı koca olmak (to become husband and wife)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yikanmak (to take a (canonical) shower)</td>
<td>sexual intercourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bez görmek (to see the pieces of cloth)</td>
<td>virginity control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Çarşaf görmek (to see the sheet)</td>
<td>virginity control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatak toplamak (to make the bed)</td>
<td>virginity control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirlemenmek (to get dirty)</td>
<td>menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastalannmak (to get sick)</td>
<td>menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalkmak (to raise(penis))</td>
<td>to get an erection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.4.2 Metaphors

“If a word is applied to referents which are not in its conventional class of referents, it is felt to have a non-literal meaning. If the justification for this switch of referent set is that the new type of referent has at least one property in common with the old type” (Warren, 1992:146). In other words, it is the act of giving a thing a name that belongs to something else. Ortony (1975) states three communicative functions that metaphor might serve. Firstly, metaphors allow people to express difficult or impossible words. “Inexpressibility”, then, constitutes an encouraging support for the necessity of metaphors in critical situations. A second possible function of metaphors is that they provide a compact means of communication by conveying a great deal of information encapsulated within the lexical items. Finally, metaphors help to build a more vivid picture of a situation or a state than might be expressed by a direct mode of communication. Taboos constitute a good domain for studying metaphor production to express displeasing and offensive words. Table 6 presents some examples from the corpus.

Table 6
Metaphoric expressions used to replace taboo words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Metaphoric Sense</th>
<th>Evaluative Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deprem (Earthquake)</td>
<td>Sexual intercourse</td>
<td>similarity as movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fındık (Nut)</td>
<td>(female) genital organ</td>
<td>similar in shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horoz (Cock)</td>
<td>masculinity</td>
<td>similar in sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eşek (Donkey)</td>
<td>males harsh in sex</td>
<td>similarity in character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurt (Wolf)</td>
<td>male successful in sex</td>
<td>similarity in attribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuzu (Lamb)</td>
<td>male unsuccessful in sex</td>
<td>similarity in manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bağlanmak (To be tied)</td>
<td>to be sexually incapable</td>
<td>incapacity of erection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Çözülmek (To be untied)</td>
<td>to be sexually active</td>
<td>capacity of erection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uyanmak (To wake up)</td>
<td>to get an erection (penis)</td>
<td>similarity in action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kızlık patlaması (Explosion of hymen)</td>
<td>Being a woman</td>
<td>similarity in severity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aslan ağzı (Lion’s mouth)</td>
<td>(female) genital organ</td>
<td>both difficult to attain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.4.3 Metonyms

Metonymy can be considered as a “name-change” in which the name of one thing that is closely associated with another is used in the place of it. Lakoff and Turner (1989:103) state that “via metonymy, one can refer to one entity in a schema by referring to another entity in the same schema”. Metonymy expresses contiguity, possession, degree, proximity. The important thing here is to belong to the same group, species, etc. Synecdoche can be included in metonymy, and it refers to the
substitution of the part for the whole or of the whole for the part. Some theorists identify a particular kind of metonym as synecdoche. Roman Jakobson argues that whilst both of these involve a part standing for a whole, in metonymy the relation is internal (sail for ship) whereas in synecdoche the relation is external (pen for writer) (see in Lechte, 1994:63). In recent cognitive linguistics discussion, the sharp line between the partonomy (the part-of relation) and the taxonomy (the kind-of relation) is generalized (see Eco, 1984; Tversky, 1990). Hence, the range of metonymy was expanded and synecdoche has been regarded as a subtype of metonymy.

The corpus is quite productive, especially in the case of whole-part relation in order to denote genital organs, as illustrated in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Metonymic Sense Represents Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organlar (Organs)</td>
<td>Genital organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt taraf (Lower part)</td>
<td>Genital organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alt (Below)</td>
<td>Genital organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arka (Behind)</td>
<td>Anus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vücut (Body)</td>
<td>Male/female genital organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baş (Head)</td>
<td>Male genital organ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ham (2001:21) argues that the contextually dependent expression “thing” [male/female sexual organs etc.] can be considered as metonymic. In Turkish the expression şey (thing) is used in the form of a “euphemistic filler” or a substitute element especially in critical situations. It functions as a reference to objects, events, actions and situations, and gives vagueness to the meaning due to a number of alternatives it provides. In our study, şey as a euphemistic filler appears to be the most common euphemistic device used to refer to genital organs, sexual intercourse, nuptial night. Here is an example from our corpus:

"Şey" in replace with sexual intercourse and male genital organ:
Context: Nuptial night
(İ=İnci, Ş=Şeyma)

(2) İ: Eşim bağlı çıkı, biz iki gece şey olmadı.
İnt: Ne demek bağlı çıkı?
İ: Nası bağlı çıhiyolar yenge?
Ş: Bağlıklarımız. Nikah oluyo, hoca nikahı
İ: İmam nikahi olurken bağlıyollarımız eş eşı eşimişi...Yani şeyleri o gece kalkmiyomuş

İ: My husband was tied, we, şey (sexual intercourse) didn’t happen for two nights.
İnt: What do you mean by he was tied?
İ: How do they become tied auntie? (Asking to another speaker)
They are said to get tied. When the marriage takes place, I mean when the religious ceremony takes place. When we get married someone is said to tie our hus hus husbands… I mean their şey (penis) does not become erect that night.

6.2.4.4 Implications

Warren (1992: 143) defines implications as “the connection between the conventional and novel sets of referents is that of an antecedent to a consequent (if x is valid, then y is (probably) valid too”). She also points out the differences between particularizations and implications in that implications unlike particularizations can be secondary senses. Moreover, novel referents must be properly included in the conventional set of referents in case of particularizations, whilst this need not be so in the case of implications. Here are some examples from the data illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8
Analysis of implications with respect to established sense and euphemistic sense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Established Sense</th>
<th>New Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eli eline değmek</td>
<td>to become closer</td>
<td>to have sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to touch someone’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hand)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutlu etmek</td>
<td>to satisfy</td>
<td>to satisfy one sexually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(to make someone happy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermek (to give)</td>
<td>to give</td>
<td>to agree on sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almak (to take)</td>
<td>to obtain</td>
<td>to persuade to have sex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.5 Other Categories that were Added to Warren’s Model

6.2.5.1 Elliptical Structures

Elliptical structures stand for grammatically incomplete expressions that require the reader to add concepts in order to finish the thought. Taboo topics require deliberate omission of some aspect of language form whose meaning is unpleasant, distasteful, but can be understood from the context of that form. In this way, the speaker gets rid of the burden of using these words and triggers the inference mechanism of the hearers. Hence, the communication is handled smoothly through a tacit agreement of “guess work” between the parties. The examples below are offered to illustrate elliptical structures on taboo topics where the speakers very often delete some words that they avoid to articulate references, such as male/female genital organs and sexual intercourse.
Indirectness and Euphemism

Context: Nuptial night
(S= Saniye, G=Gülderen)

(3)  S: Çok korkmuştum. Aplam dedi ki tam gidecek aman bacım ehm kimseye bi ehm ah çührungma, o bu gece olsun.
Int: Ele güne karşı.
S: He, ele güne garışı dişini sık, bu gece olsun.
G: Yani naaapin, edin bu işi bitirin.
S: Ha, bitirin. Ondan sonra, biz ehm S. direkman yapmak, ondan aplam gitti, herkes gitti direk yapmak. Ben istemedim. Ben ilk hasta konuşmak istedim, o direk o işi... (gülerek) Ben istemiyodum.
S: I was really scared. Just before leaving, my sister said “oh my sister uhm, don’t give a single squeak, uhm, let him make it tonight”.
Int: For form’s sake.
S: Yeah, for the form’s sake, just tolerate him patiently and let it happen tonight.
G: So, she means do your best to finish this business not to be evocative in our environment.
G: Yeah it means finish this business no-matter what happens.
S: Huhum, finish Ø[it/sexual intercourse].Then, S Ø[wanted] to do Ø[it/sexual intercourse] immediately. Then, my sister left, everyone left, he immediately Ø[wanted] to do Ø[sex]. I didn’t want Ø[sex]. I firstly wanted to speak, but he immediately Ø[wanted to do] that business... I didn’t want Ø[it/sex]

In the following example speaker L omits the rest of the sentence by stopping it in midcourse so that the statement is unfinished. L mentions that she usually takes the initiative in her sex life with her husband. While she is talking about her manner to persuade her husband, she does not complete her last sentence and leaves the rest of her story to imagination of the hearer.

Context: Sex life
(N=Nehir)

(4)  N: Ben yani öyle zaman olayo ki A. dönüyo sırını yatıyo, ben ona başliyom, hadi şöyle böyle. Arkadan önden gidiklarken gidiklarken, ben ona...
N: I sometimes, I mean, A turns his back and sleeps. Then, I start to initiate, come on, I say this, I say that. As I tickle and tickle his back and so forth...

6.2.5.2 Circumlocution

As the name implies, circumlocution refers to "talking around" something, usually by supplying a descriptive phrase in place of a name. Circumlocutions are
mainly useful as euphemisms in conversational situations to hint at something without stating it. The following cases illustrate the situation in the TWIST corpus. Consider the following examples from our corpus in Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>New Euphemistic Sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>İki bacak arası (The place between the two legs)</td>
<td>Male/female genital organs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erkeklerde olan (The thing that men have)</td>
<td>Male genital organ/penis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daha önce gördmediğin bir şey (The thing that you never saw before)</td>
<td>Male genital organ/penis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadınlarnın yaşadığı şey (The thing that women experience)</td>
<td>menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her ay başına gelen şey (The thing that you experience every month)</td>
<td>menstruation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her evli kadının yaşadığı şey (The thing every (married) woman experienced)</td>
<td>nuptial night event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.2.5.3 Deictic Expressions

Indexical expressions are those expressions whose references depend on time, place and the local circumstances in which they are uttered and/or those to which they apply. Having shifting references, indexical expressions allow a speaker to say that x means what I say it means and, at the same time, x also means what you think it means (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970). Objective expressions are, thus, formed in such a way that the speaker and the hearer have a tacit agreement on which the meaning of x would be eligible for the present situations. Turkish women widely employ indexical expressions (especially there, it) to refer to genitalia in their narratives. In relation to euphemistic use of indexical expressions I have the following example from our corpus:

**Context:** Menstruation

(S=Saniye)

(5) **S:** [...] Ondan sonra ben olmuştum, tuvalete gittim şıe orda bi kanama olduğunu farkettim. [...] Ondan sona yengem vardı bi tane köyden gelme, bu başka bi yengem. O bana dedi ki yoh göz gorhıma ,salak dedi, bi şey değil dedi, bez verdi. Bezi napacağımı da bilmiyorım, orana koy dedi.

**S:** [...] Then I had had my period. I went to the toilet and I realized that there/place was bleeding. Then I had an aunt coming from a village, this was my other aunt. She said don’t get scared idiot! It is not important she said and gave me a piece of rag. I didn’t know what to do with that rag. Put it there she said.
Likewise, some reduplications containing indexical expressions and/or demonstratives (Şöyle şöyle, böyle böyle, şu bu, şöyle böyle) are employed to denote the manner of actions related with the taboo topics implicitly. A detailed analysis of euphemistic reduplications will be given in the following section.

6.3 Euphemistic Reduplications

Reduplication constructions are often employed as an equivocal alternative to a dispreferred expression. Unfavorable expressions are thus concealed by ambiguity. In this section, I am concerned with euphemistic expression in line with protective self-presentation, where speakers are not trying to make a favorable impression or fend off an attack to their face, but try to avoid damage to their established or assumed social identities.

A very effective strategy of protective self-presentation is minimal self-disclosure, which allows the speaker to avoid revealing personal information without offending their interlocutor by a flat-out refusal. Self-disclosure is defined as “information about oneself that is verbally communicated to another” (Holtgraves, 1990: 192), and is an important factor in interpersonal relations. Coates (1996) discusses self-disclosure as a key component of women friendship underlying the fact that disclosing personal information is always risky, but is at the same time an important element in close relationships. Sousa-Poza and Rohrberg (1976) distinguish direct from indirect disclosures. Direct self-disclosures are utterances expressing a speaker’s self-view explicitly (“I am proud of myself”), whereas indirect disclosures can only be inferred by the hearer (e.g., pride can be inferred from ‘I won last year’s college championship in chess’). Apart from these kinds of observation, little systematic attention has been paid to the language of self-disclosure and the question of how people do or do not self-disclose, although self-disclosure has been a topic of research for over thirty years within the domain of social, personality, and clinical psychology and communication studies (Holtgraves, 1990).

The readiness to self-disclose depends on the intimacy of the participants, situational factors, and, importantly, the sensitivity of the topic of conversation. Catania (1999), for instance, reports respondents’ reluctance to self-disclose in sexological interviews, evidenced in refusals to answer, falsifications of answers, and so forth, when questioned about miscarriage, masturbation, abortion, sexual dysfunction, extramarital sex, rape, same gender sex, and anal intercourse (see also Catania et al., 1996; Catania, 1997). Such questions thus constitute serious threats to the respondent’s face.

The collectivist norms of Turkish society that impinge especially on women strongly discourage self-disclosure on sexual topics. Yet, those cultural norms can also be used to prevent refusals as described by Catania. By arranging a situation where custom and values discourage uncooperative behavior, I elicited talk on women’s health that involved disclosures on rather sensitive topics, which were produced with a variety of protective self-presentation strategies. In this section, I will focus on one of those strategies: the euphemistic use of vague reduplicative structures.
Euphemistic reduplications require full participation of the listeners as ‘guess workers’ in Leech’s terms (1983: 30). The implicature created by ambiguous expressions forces the listeners to infer the most likely interpretation. Since all implicatures are probabilistic (Leech, 1983), this fact always provides the speaker with an opportunity to reject listeners’ interpretations of what she meant. The speaker can thus defer some of the responsibility for the talk to her listeners.

This tactic also allows speakers to reflect their implicit reluctance to share personal information. With this purpose, speakers do not openly refuse to answer, but they follow an informal rational problem-solving strategy through vague expressions in the form of reduplications. Moreover, euphemistic reduplications stimulate the notion of cooperation as a minimal condition among people using language on critical topics. Respondents ostensibly follow the rules of interaction by pretending to answer questions without any refusals, but with uncertain, indecisive expressions through reduplications. They employ circumlocution (Goffman, 1967) with the help of reduplications to manage face-threatening questions.

6.3.1 Euphemistic Use of Vague Reduplication

Structures in Turkish

The Turkish language offers a rich repertoire of reduplications, which are generally restricted to informal spoken discourse. My investigation will include reduplication with m-sound, şu bu, şöyle böyle, böyle böyle, şöyle şöyle, and falan filan. Reduplications generally require the immediate repetition of a word or part of a word; some reduplicative structures, however, so-called “separate reduplications” (Hatiboğlu 1981: 23), allow VP-insertion inside and after the reduplicative expressions, as in şöyle oldu böyle oldu (“it happened this way, it happened that way”) or şunu dedi bunu dedi (“he/she said this, he/she said that”). This kind of reduplication is the most frequent in our data.

Generally, reduplications have been treated as grammatical or semantic objects considered to be used to express intensity, plurality, repetition or continuation, or diminution (see Key, 1965; Moravcsik, 1978; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Kiyomi, 1995). The conventionalized reduplication structures in Turkish all involve expressions that function as semantically unspecific placeholders for more specific, often longer and more detailed expressions. Their reference has to be deduced from the context and from the participants’ socio-cultural and interpersonal common ground. This enables them to be used as shorthand devices with a possible positive-politeness function (by virtue of invoking common ground, cf. BL, 1987), but also makes them available for euphemistic reference to unpleasant or taboo subject matter.

I will illustrate euphemistic and time/effort-saving uses with two examples from our interviews with Turkish women, first a euphemistic use (example (6)), then a ‘neutral’ time/effort-saving use (example (7)).

Context: Nuptial night (sensitive topic)
Indirectness and Euphemism

(T=Tijen)

(6) Int: Size hiç kimse bir şey anlatmadı mı? Yani dini yönden de mesela?

T: İşte söyle yapacan, böyle yapacan. Şunu söyle yapın bunu böyle yapın. Gideceğiniz gün söylediğiniz, önceden hazırlanmadık da.

Int: Didn’t anyone ever talk with you about the sex? I mean, at least about the religious aspect?

T: So, you will do it this way, you will do it that way. Do this this way, do that that way. They explained everything on the day we left. We didn’t prepare beforehand.

The implicit interpersonal meanings in these utterances can be paraphrased as follows:

a. I use the reduplication because I do not want to give the details about my personal life (minimal self-disclosure).

b. I use the reduplication because I want to signal my reluctance to speak further on this topic (minimal self-disclosure and negative politeness).

c. I use the reduplication, as a “token agreement” (BL, 1987) or to avoid disagreement with you on being involved in this interaction, rather than a blatant “no” (protecting hearer’s positive face).

d. I use the reduplication because I don’t want to use dispreferred expressions in front of you (politeness for the sake of speaker’s positive face and for hearer’s negative face).

e. I use the reduplication, because I want you to infer the meaning of my utterance. I employ indirectness through ambiguity. I always have a chance to say “I didn’t mean that” (addressing speaker’s and hearer’s positive face).

Context: Marriage story of a woman (innocuous topic)

(A=Aydan)

(7) Int: Ee, görücü usulüyle evlendiniz. Hiç görmediniz mi yani?


Int: So, you got married by arranged marriage. I mean, didn’t you ever see him before?

A: No, but my parents had already seen him. Those people around me etc. I mean they all said he is a nice one, they said this, they said that.

Here the same reduplication as above is used in a neutral context and now conveys different interpersonal meanings:

a. I use the reduplication because I do not want to waste time and effort on the further details.

b. I use the reduplication because I do not want to bore you with the details.

c. I use the reduplication, because I want to trigger your “inference mechanism” thus inviting a joint construction of meaning.
When respondents become distressed due to experiencing negative emotional reactions to questions in sensitive topics, they may begin to change their self-presentation in a way that reduces threat or distress. In talk on innocuous topics, reduplications are often used to save time or effort, whereas in sensitive topics they are mostly used euphemistically to avoid undesirable expressions.

### 6.3.2 Uses of Reduplication Constructions

In this section I will discuss the lexicogrammatical characteristics and the uses of the six reduplication constructions I identified in my data: reduplication with m-sound, şu bu, şöyle böyle, böyle böyle, şöyle şöyle, and falan filan. Table 10 provides an overview of their translations and conversational English equivalents. I will argue that each one of them can be used in a pragmatically ‘neutral’ way as a time- or effort-saving device, but can also serve the speaker’s protective self-presentation by euphemistically skirting a bothersome issue. In illustrating the range of uses of reduplications, I use fictitious examples along with instances from my corpus.

Table 10

| Reduplication constructions in Turkish and conversational English equivalents |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Constructions          | Translations and Conversational English Equivalents            |
| reduplication with m   | and so on, so-and-so such, kind of, sort of                   |
| şu bu                  | (lit.) that this; sort of, kind of, so-and-so; and so on, or something like that |
| şöyle böyle            | such and such a, about, kind of, and so on                    |
| böyle böyle             | in this way, in this manner, things like that; blah blah blah (in quotes) |
| şöyle şöyle            | like this, in this way, such and such                          |
| falan filan            | and so on, so-and-so, such, kind of, sort of, and things like that |

#### 6.3.2.1 Reduplication with m-sound

This reduplication consists of repeating a word, but prefixing it with an m-sound in the second token. If the initial sound is a vowel, the process is accomplished by m-insertion. Otherwise, the first consonant of word is replaced with m-sound. The structure usually involves nouns, but other word classes, for instance, verbs or adjectives, can also be reduplicated in this way. In its realization, the second token retains the number and agreement features of the original word.

(8)  kitap mitap (consonant initial NP)

     book (NP) mook (NP)
Semantically, reduplication with m-sound means ‘and so on’, ‘so-and-so ‘such’, ‘kind of’, ‘sort of’ depending on the meaning of the first part of the reduplicative form being ahead of m-insertion. The designation of the meaning of whole reduplication is construed as a natural semantic extension of this original form. For instance, in the following example:

(9) \textit{Dün kitap mitap aldım.}  
Yesterday, books and so on I bought. (paraphrase: Yesterday, I bought books and things).

The meaning of kitap mitap is defined by the meaning of kitap, the original form within reduplication. The second part of the reduplication invites the hearer to construct a set of similar items as the referent (in this case probably school materials) for the expression ‘mitap’, which is not a regular lexical item of the Turkish language.

Reduplication with m-sound allows the speaker to give less than the amount of information requested, while still appearing cooperative. It indicates that the speaker does not wish to specify or elaborate, but instead appeals to the participants’ common ground for inferring the intended meaning. In this way the speaker can save time and unnecessary processing effort for all participants; but she can also allude vaguely (‘euphemistically’) to a taboo referent, as illustrated in example (10) from the TWIST data.

Context: Preference for male or female doctor (innocuous topic with embedded sensitive topic)  
(G= Güler, H= Hesna)

(10) \textit{Int: Tercihiniz var mı illa bayan olsun erkek olsun?}  
[...]
G: Ne bileyim gadıandan adam çekinmiyo. Erkek olunca çekiniliyo yani.  
H: Valla, yat deyince yatıveriyom, hiç ses etmiyom.  
<Yahalalar>  
G: Yatıyıon ya mecbur yani.  
H: Evdekin tepiniyor, mepiniyor hareket... Buna bi şey demiyyom giz!  
Ona gorku belası yat deyince hemen dahiyom ayahlarını gancaya.

\textit{Int:} Do you have any preferences [for the gynecologist] as male or female?  
[...]
G: I don’t know, one does not fear a woman. I mean, a male doctor causes hesitation.  
H: By God! As he says “lie down”, I immediately lie down without any objection.  
<Yahalalar>  
G: Sure you lie down, you have to.
H: I struggle with the one at home, I react... But I don’t say anything to HIM! For the fear of darn illness, when he says “lie down”, I hang my feet up on the hooks.

In this example, H alludes to resistance against her husband demanding sexual intercourse. The speaker refrains from giving a more exact representation of the events, leaving it to her listeners’ inference and imagination. She accomplishes this through the reduplication with m-sound, which thus allows her to reveal intimate information without actually going on record as having done so.

6.3.2.2 ᵇu ᵇu

This is a very common spoken form of reduplication derived from demonstrative pronouns ˢu (‘that’) and ᵇu (‘this’). According to the dictionary of the Turkish Linguistic Society (1988) it means “some people and objects”. ˢu ᵇu appears to play an important role in connection with loose use of language. It generally occurs as object NP or subject NP of an utterance and tolerates derivational suffixation. The structure also allows VP insertion inside or after the ˢu ᵇu construction as in the example ᵇu geldi ᵇu geldi (‘(some) people came’). Similar to reduplication with m-sound, ˢu ᵇu in post-position means ‘and so on’, ‘so-and-so’ ‘such’, ‘kind of’, ‘sort of’ and acts as a natural semantic extension of the speech preceding it. Its function is to furnish flexibility by providing a vague alternative to an unknown, cumbersome, or undesirable more specific expression. The fictitious three examples below illustrate the syntactic options.

(11) ˢu ᵇu karış rsa iş yürümez. (as subject NP)
    If others interfere in (the situation), it does not work.

(12) ˢu(nu) aldım ᵇu(nu) aldım, tüm param bitirdim. (as object NP)
    I bought this and I bought that and I spent all my money.

(13) Doktor bir ilaç ˢu ᵇu yazdı mı? (ˢu ᵇu following a constituent)
    Did the doctor prescribe a medicine or something like that?

The following example from our data illustrates the euphemistic use of ᵇu:

Context: Menstruation
(A= Aydan)
Ex. (14)

A: Well, generally, when we were at secondary school, there were girls bigger than us. They had already menstruated and so on. So, they used to say if you have pain, *this will happen, that will happen*. I mean, somehow they used to explain it among friends.

In this example, A avoids specifying the information she got from the older girls. This interpretation is supported by the fact that she adds a paraphrase (‘somehow they used to explain it among friends’) in which she uses a different vague expression. Apparently she is not minimizing her efforts (using *şu bu* as a shorthand expression), but skirting the ‘culturally unsayable’ elements of her story with a euphemistic use of *şu bu*.

6.3.2.3 Böyle böyle

*Böyle böyle* means ‘in this way, in this manner’ and can be used deictically (see 15 below) or anaphorically in reported speech as a reference to shared knowledge (see 16). In particular, *böyle böyle* can be used as shorthand for standard, understood opening sequences in reported conversations in the form of a cataphoric reference to the subsequent portion of the narration as in (see 17 below). It can also be used in the form of an adverbial that marks a gradual happening (see 18), and it can function as a semantic extension of previous discourse, especially in oral narration, as in (19).

(15) *Bak, camları böyle böyle silersen daha temiz gözüküyor.*
Look! If you clean the windows *in this way*, they look much cleaner.

You know the troubles I had because of him. I couldn’t put up with him anymore. The next day I immediately saw the boss and “the situation is such and such, Mr. Ahmet” I said.

(17) *Doktora gittim, böyle böyle doktor bey dedim. Benim ayaklardan çok şikayetim var bana ilaç yaz dedim.*
I went to the doctor, “[blah blah blah], Doctor,” I said, “I have lots of complaints about my feet. Prescribe me some medicine”, I said.

(18) *Böyle böyle bu işi de öğreneceksin.*
Gradually, you will learn this job as well.

(19) *Küçük kız bütün günü ormanda geçirdi. Çiçek topladı, kuşlarla sohbet etti, irmak kıyısındaki kurbağaları izledi. Böyle böyle, saatler çabucak ilerledi, hava kararmaya başladı.*
The little girl spent the whole day in the forest. She picked some flowers, talked with the birds and watched the frogs on the riverbank. *In that manner*, the time passed rapidly and it started to get dark.
The following example from our data shows a euphemistic use of böyle böyle:

Context: Menstruation
(Ş=Şeyma)

(20) Ş: Ben biliyodum yani ben hiç hiç bir şey biliyodum yani çocukum. Anneme söyledim, annem dedi ki tamam dedi, kızım dedi, ben dedi, sana dedi bez vereyim dedi.

Int: Him. Anlatmadı yani size.

Ş: Anlatmadı. Sadece böyle verdi, omdan sonra bunu böyle böyle kullan dedi.

Ş: I didn’t know, I mean, I really didn’t know anything. I told to my mum. Mum said okay, she said, my girl, she said, let me, she said, give you a pad, she said.

Int: Mhm. So she did not tell you anything.

Ş: No, she didn’t. She only gave it to me and said use it this way.

In (20) the speaker reports her mother’s explanation how to use a sanitary pad, but avoids actually repeating the words. Böyle böyle in this example denotes manner and refers to common knowledge between the interviewer and Ş, who are both women. Ş thus assumes that a female hearer should know about the details of menstruation and can thus easily infer the content of a mother’s explanation about how to use a sanitary pad. In this way, the speaker avoids this unpleasantly intimate issue.

6.3.2.4 Şöyle böyle

Şöyle böyle can be used to signal looseness in the use of a wide range of different sentence elements. In general, şöyle böyle provides a blurred expression rather than giving clear-cut, straightforward explanations in describing manner, situation or state. The seven uses of şöyle böyle with fictitious examples below illustrate the grammatical options in using şöyle böyle.

(21) Şöyle böyle with numerals

şöyle böyle 9 yıl Hollanda’da yaşiyorum.

I have been living in the Netherlands for about nine years.

(22) Şöyle böyle as an adjectival phrase:

A: İngilizcen nasılt?
B: Şöyle böyle

A: How is your English?
B: Not so good/bad. (So, so)

(23) Şöyle ... böyle as an adjectival phrase preceding NP

şöyle araba böyle araba diye tanıtılır, ben de aldım.
They promoted it as such and such a car and I bought it.

(24) Şöyle ... böyle as an adjectival phrase preceding Adj
Şöyle yakışıklı böyle yakışıklı
He is this much handsome, that much handsome.

(25) Şöyle ... böyle as an adverbial phrase preceding VP
Şöyle denedim böyle denedim, sorunu çözdüm.
I tried this way and that way, and solved the problem.

(26) Şöyle böyle as a semantic extension
Evi temizledim, bulaşıkları yıkadım, üstü yaptım şöyle böyle derken hava karardı.
I cleaned the house, washed the dishes, ironed, and so forth, and then it got dark.

(27) Şöyle böyle as a semantic extension with direct quotation
“Ben okumak ıstemiyorum, çalışmak ıstiyorum, evleneceğim şöyle böyle”
bir sürü şey söyledi.
“I don’t want to attend my school, I want to work, I will get married, and so forth” he said many things.

Again I provide an example of euphemistic use from our data:
Context: Nuptial night
(A=Aydan)

A: There was a woman, Zehra. She sat next to me and talked about many things. I mean, “you should do it this way, you should do it that way.” […] I mean when she said that in a marriage “this happens or that happens, and it happens this way or that way”, I was perplexed.

In this example, reduplication with şöyle böyle (and, not marked by bolding here, with şu bu) indicates that A is not intending a literal interpretation of her utterance. It could be argued in this case that the reduplication construction stands in place of an extensive stretch of talk and thus serves as a shorthand reference to what was actually said. It is very clear, however, that A distances herself emphatically from the contents of this quoted speech (witness, for instance, comments “I was perplexed”), suggesting that she avoids repeating the exact wording and contents. I have therefore considered this a euphemistic use.
6.3.2.5 Şöyle şöße

According to the dictionary of the Turkish Linguistic Society (1988), şöyle şöyle means ‘like this’ or ‘in this way’. Şöyle şöyle is mainly used deictically to denote manner and style in describing an action. The interpretation can be contextually given by gestures. Like böyle böyle, it can also be used as a referring expression in reported speech to mark known, understood, or contextually given information. The following two examples illustrate.

(29) Oğlum, şöyle şöyle yazsana! Neden kalemi düzgün tutmuyorsun?  My son, write like this! Why don’t you hold the pencil properly?

(30) Polise gittim, şöyle şöyle marka ve renkte arabam kayıp dedim.  I went to the police and said that my car of such and such color and brand is missing.

In the first example above the speaker demonstrates the proper way to write, using şöyle şöyle to refer indexically to her physical demonstration. In the second example, the speaker omits the car’s color as irrelevant detail. In both cases, the most plausible interpretation of the pragmatic function of şöyle şöyle is that of a time/effort-saving device. Example (31) from our data illustrates a euphemistic use of this reduplication construction.

Context: Nuptial night  
(G=Güler, İ=İmdat, H=Hesna)


G: Yoh, valla bana hiç gösteren olmadı.
İ: Bana da gösteren olmadı hiç.
Int: Kimse bi şey söylededi?
İ: Kimse bi şey söylededi.
Int: E, arkadaşlarınızdan vs. Size anlattılar mı?
H: Şimdi hep annatyorlar da o zaman heç annatmadılar.
G: Kızları yanım koymazlardı yanındı thm, şey beller diyə...
H: Benim yanma gyz bile getirmediler. [...]  

Int: Okay, then you got married to a man whose hand you hadn’t touched before. You were inexperienced. You shared the same bed with this
man that night. Didn’t anyone tell you anything, saying look my girl, you will do this or you will take the canonical shower… Didn’t anyone teach you anything?

G: No, I swear, no one taught me anything.

İ: No one taught me either.

İnt: Didn’t anyone ever tell you anything?

İ: No one told me anything.

İnt: Uhm, some of your friends, did they tell you anything?

H: Now they are telling everything, but in our times, they didn’t.

G: They didn’t let the girls sit with the women, as they might have learned inappropriate things.

H: I didn’t even speak with the girls. […]

I arrived home as a bride for the first time then, it is a shame to say, [neyse] well it happened [neyse]. I went to the bathroom. I was having a bath. Oh! I didn’t know how to take a shower. How could I take a canonical shower? He said to me, don’t you know? he said. Your father, he said, is a pilgrim, he said. Are you deceiving me? he asked. Hey! I really don’t know. The sin of my father will be upon your neck, I said. Then he said, you should do it in this way. So since then…

Hesna in example (31) avoids giving the details about the canonical shower bath, invoking common knowledge instead, to have her listeners infer her intended meaning. The canonical shower is a detailed religious ritual and a very private issue at the beginning of a woman’s sexual life. The speaker mentioned it while she was talking about her innocence and naïveté on her nuptial night. Her eagerness to manage this talk without mentioning the intimate details and her reluctance to talk about her nuptial night are also evidenced in her frequent use of neyse (“anyway”, “anyhow”).

6.3.2.6 Falan filan

Similar to reduplication with m-sound, falan filan means ‘and so on’, ‘so-and-so’ ‘such’, ‘kind of’, ‘sort of’ depending on the meaning of the word preceding it. The meaning of falan filan is derived as a natural semantic extension of the word preceding it. For instance, in the following fictitious example, it is interpreted as referring to any items that would be likely to be bought along with fruit:

(32) Meyva falan filan saks alma. Evde hersey var.
Don’t buy fruit and things like that. We have everything at home.

There are very few instances of falan filan in my corpus:

Context: Marriage story of a woman
(A=Aydan)

(33) Int: Ee, gürçü usulüyle evlendiniz. Hiç görmediniz mi yani?

Int: So, you got married by arranged marriage. I mean, didn’t you ever see him before?

A: No, but my parents had already seen him. Those people around me and so on. I mean they all said he is a nice one, they said this, they said that.

In example (33), there is no sense of avoidance and thus no question of the reduplication being used euphemistically. The speaker uses *falan filan* simply as a time/effort-saving device.

### 6.3.3 Distributional Analyses

In this section, I will present distributional evidence supporting my claim that the reduplication constructions investigated in this study often serve the function of protecting the speaker’s face and accordingly they occur more in sensitive topics than in innocuous topics. Before I do so, I discuss the corpus of talk and the reliability of my analysis.

#### 6.3.3.1 Amount of Talk on Sensitive and Innocuous Topics

The talk in the fourteen transcribed interviews was categorized according to topics. In addition to the global topic structure induced by the interviewer’s questions, the topic coding included imbedded occurrences of different topics in the interviewees’ answers. The numbers of words spoken on sensitive and innocuous topics was almost equal in both groups, indicating that the interviews succeeded surprisingly well in eliciting talk on sensitive topics. Sensitive topics and innocuous topics accounted for 50.4% and 49.6% of the talk respectively in the Groningen group. Sensitive and innocuous topics covered 49% and 51% of the talk respectively in the Ankara group. Only one of the 53 women refused to answer questions on sensitive topics.

#### 6.3.3.2 Reliability of the Classification of Reduplications as Euphemistic and Time Saving

The 67 cases of reduplications (44 in the Ankara group, 23 in the Groningen group) were classified as euphemistic or as time/effort-saving on the basis of our understanding of the speaker’s intention in the context of the interview. In addition to drawing on my knowledge of the groups and the speakers of each group, I relied heavily on the discourse context. A reliability test was conducted with 40 cases (60%) in the following way: The cases were presented to 32 academically-trained native speakers of Turkish, who had agreed to serve as co-coders. To keep their task manageable, the cases were divided into four sets, each of which contained ten
instances of reduplications. Each set was given to eight coders. The coders were asked to decide whether the functions of reduplications in the given situations were euphemistic (E) or time/effort-saving (T). A training session consisting of four cases with explanations of the researchers’ judgments was given prior to the test.

For 33 of the 40 reduplication examples in the test, the majority (five or more) of the coders agreed with the authors’ judgment. The remaining seven cases had all been coded as euphemistic (E) by the authors, but as time/effort-saving devices (T) by the majority of the coders. In total 141 (44%) of the 320 judgments from the coders were T-codings, compared to only 27.5% for our codings. Note that the coders were not instructed as to the percentages of T- and E-cases. They may therefore have expected an equal distribution (50% for each category, as in the training) and thus may have been biased against classifying all our E-cases as euphemistic.

A closer look at the instances where a majority disagreed with my coding shows that they are not associated with just one of the reduplication expressions; they involved m-sound (2 cases), şöyle böyle (2 cases), böyle böyle (2 cases), and şu bu (1 case). These problematic cases were reconsidered with more context than was feasible to give to the coders, in order to use a maximum of background information and better understand the group dynamics. The seven cases were also discussed with a group of linguistically-trained native-speakers of Turkish. At the end of this process, four of the seven E-cases were changed to (T). The remaining three cases all came from the fragment cited as example (23) in section 3; I have argued there why I (still) consider those uses of şu bu and şöyle böyle to be euphemistic.

6.3.3.3 Sensitive Topics as Triggers of Euphemistic Reduplication

Figure 2 shows that all forms of reduplication occurred more often in sensitive topic contexts than with innocuous topics in both groups. Overall, 50 of the 63 reduplications were used in sensitive topics. This pattern shown by both groups was 31 of 44 cases (70%) for the Ankara group and 19 out of 23 cases (83%) for the Groningen group.
Figure 2. Use of the five types of reduplications in sensitive and innocuous topics in the Ankara and the Groningen groups.

The higher likelihood of reduplications in sensitive topic contexts is not an artifact of more talk on those topics: as noted previously above, sensitive and innocuous topics accounted for roughly the same amounts of talk (50% each in the Groningen group and 49% versus 51% in the Ankara group). Adjusting the comparison for the difference in number of words, I observed in the Ankara group for an average on 1.69 reduplications per 1000 words in sensitive topics, but only .68 in innocuous topics. And for the Groningen group .66 sensitive topics and .14 for sensitive and innocuous topics respectively.

Turning now to the hypothesis that sensitive topics trigger euphemistic uses of reduplications, I have to show that the increased use of reduplications in the context of sensitive topics is due not to a higher number of time/effort-saving uses, but to euphemistic uses. Figure 2 shows this to be overwhelmingly the case, with a ratio of 27:0 (for euphemistic versus time/effort-saving uses) in sensitive topics, compared to 4:13 in innocuous topics, a significantly non-random distribution in the Ankara group. The ratio (for euphemistic versus time/effort-saving uses) was 17:2 in the sensitive topics and 0:4 in innocuous topics in the Groningen group.
6.3.3.4 Reduplications in Quoted Speech

While coding our data, I was struck by the abundance of direct quotations in the women’s narrative accounts. As I want to interpret the use of euphemisms in terms of protective self-presentation, it seems important to separate the speaker’s own text, reporting her own experiences and attitudes, from quoted speech, presenting (‘demonstrating’ in Clark and Gerrig’s 1990 terms) what someone else said in a certain situation. In direct quotation, form and contents of the talk are attributed to the quoted speaker (see, for instance, Coulmas, 1986)
The presence of direct quotation thus provides us with an additional testing ground for our interpretation of time-saving and euphemistic uses of reduplications. If what I have labeled euphemistic uses serve self-protective functions, they should occur more frequently in the speakers’ own talk than in quoted talk. Figure 4 shows that they do. The speakers’ own text contains mostly euphemistic uses of reduplications (17 of the 22 cases or 77.3% in the Ankara group and 13 of the 23 cases or 57% in the Groningen group), compared to a more substantial number of shorthand uses in quoted speech, where only 14 of the 22 uses (63.6%) in the Ankara group and 6 of the 10 uses (60%) in the Groningen group are euphemistic. This difference may reflect random variation, as it fails to reach statistical significance. Given the small sample size (67 cases), however, it may instead be due to the limited power to detect an effect that may be less pronounced than the one I found for the distribution across sensitive and innocuous topics.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter portrays a range of information on how displacement of self through narration can locate a speaker in a back garden of a society fenced by cultural meanings, normative practices, and social values that create social identity. Hence, what I have tried to show here is the speakers’ self-presentation behavior as the artifact of culture-specific normative expectations, which affected their discourse composition and style of interaction. Within this frame, three aspects of indirectness were illuminated: (a) importance of context (b) management of indirectness in social interactions (c) effects of indirectness on interpersonal relationships. The management of face threatening topics is realized through
massive use of indirectness which is, in normal circumstances, considered to be a conventional device of politeness. In this chapter, however, I tried to account for speakers’ use of indirectness in terms of self-presentation strategies by showing how they employ indirectness to dissociate themselves from unpleasantness of the situation, and to establish a positive image indicating that they mind the face concerns of both parties of a communicative situation. Hence, indirectness in discourse not only reflects different choices as to formulation of utterances, but also different involvement and identification in an interactional situation.

Moreover, the analysis of a particular kind of euphemistic expressions, Turkish reduplication structures (reduplication with m-sound, şu bu, şöyle böyle, böyle böyle, şöyle şöyle, and falan filan) has shown that speakers use them not only as time/effort-saving shorthand devices, but also employ them strategically to achieve face-saving obliqueness. I have demonstrated this with in-depth discussions of examples from my interview data and with distributional analyses based on a classification that was tested for reliability with a panel of native speakers.

Reduplicative constructions occurred mostly in the context of topics containing a potential risk to the interviewee’s face. In those contexts, they were used predominantly as face-saving euphemistic expressions to minimize self-disclosure. Euphemistic uses also occurred slightly more often in utterances that can be attributed to the speaker’s own voice than in quoted speech, where there is less need for face protection, as form and content of the utterance are attributed to the quoted speaker.