The label *linguistic etiquette* refers to the practice in any speech community of organizing linguistic action so that it is seen as appropriate to the current communicative event. The scope of phenomena assembled under this label is thus much broader than what is suggested by the dictionary definition of *etiquette*, which restricts the term to denote “the formal rules of proper behaviour” (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1978: 373). Etiquette manuals from Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *De civilitate morum puerilium* (1530) to the latest edition of *The Amy Vanderbilt Complete Book of Etiquette* (Vanderbilt and Baldridge, 1978) do not cover verbal routines such as the “rules for ritual insult” enacted among inner city African–American adolescents (Labov, 1972), yet they fall under the proposed definition. A related and more widely used term, *(linguistic) politeness*, is equally problematic because of its connotation of “deference” and “refined” behavior (e.g., Green, 1992a). For lack of preferable alternatives, both terms will be used interchangeably.

The somewhat nebulous definition proposed initially is indicative of much disagreement about the theoretical status and scope of linguistic etiquette. For most authors, politeness is a feature of language use (cf. the subtitle of Brown and Levinson’s *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*). The action-theoretical view of politeness shared by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and Leech (1983) firmly places linguistic etiquette in the arena of language use. Yet the same authors classify decontextualized speech acts as inherently polite or impolite. Fraser (1990: 233), commenting that the politeness of linguistic acts is determined by their occurrence in communicative contexts rather than by inherent properties, pushes the issue even further by noting that being “polite” is attributable only to speakers, not to language. But since social judgments are made on the basis of speakers’ conduct, it is the conduct itself, whether in form of language use or other behaviors, that is routinely assessed as more or less polite relative to community values and norms. From a cross-linguistic perspective, Coulmas argues that language systems may be described as differentially polite, depending on the number of means specialized for politeness marking (1992: 321) and the level of delicacy encoded in polite forms. Watts, Ide, and Ehlich (1992) suggest that politeness operates at all three levels of analysis – in language systems, usage, and use, as implied by the title of their volume *Politeness in Language*.

A useful and fairly uncontroversial first distinction is between first-order and second-order politeness (Watts, Ide, and Ehlich, 1992: 3). *First-order politeness* refers to politeness as a folk notion: How do members of a community perceive and classify action in terms of politeness? Such assessments and classifications manifest themselves in etiquette manuals, the do’s and dont’s in socializing interaction, metapragmatic comments on what is and is not polite behavior, and so forth – what Fraser (1990) refers to as the “social norm view” of politeness. *Second-order politeness* is a theoretical construct, located within a theory of social behavior and language use. The distinction is thus methodological,
because it specifies the relationship between statements about linguistic etiquette at different levels of analysis. The relationship is one of data to theory, as noted by Hobart from a social-anthropological perspective ("indigenous classifications in use are part of the empirical evidence," 1987: 36). First-order politeness phenomena, be they observable behavior or action-guiding cognitions crystallized as "core cultural concepts" (Wierzbicka, 1991), are the material on which researchers base their theorizing. In their unanalyzed form, core cultural concepts are like folk beliefs: They have no explanatory value in themselves, but need to be explained through second-order politeness theory—just as linguistic productions or grammaticality judgments need explanation through linguistic theory. Once analyzed in their historical and sociocultural context, such core concepts provide frameworks to explain practices of linguistic action in the community. Thus Mao (1994) demonstrated how Chinese interlocutors orient themselves towards the face notions lian and mianzi in giving and receiving invitations and offers (for further analysis of mianzi in conversational interaction, see Chen, 1990, 1991; in speech–act realization, Kasper, 1995). Observationally and descriptively adequate accounts of first-order politeness are needed in order for politeness theory to be firmly anchored in the communicative practices and conceptualizations of speech communities.

First-order politeness data come from a wide variety of sources, most of them observational or experimental studies of the current practices in communities or groups within larger communities (see below), carried out within the theoretical and methodological traditions of several disciplines: linguistic pragmatics, sociolinguistics, the social psychology of language, psycholinguistics, developmental psychology, communications, and anthropology. Studies adopting a historical perspective on linguistic etiquette in particular communities and in literature are likewise gaining ground; e.g., politeness in the Ancient Orient, Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, and the German Early Modern period (see Ehlich, 1992; also Beetz, 1990, for the latter period, and Elias, 1977, for a social history of manners in Europe); in the Nibelungenlied (Rings, 1987); Chaucer (Eun, 1974; Sell, 1985a, b); Shakespeare's four major tragedies (Brown and Gilman, 1989) and Henry VIII (Magnusson, 1992); in the works of Lessing (Claus, 1983); Rabelais (Morrison, 1988); Stendhal (Crouzet, 1980); Hemingway (Hardy, 1991); seventeenth–century England and France (Klein, 1990) and the eighteenth-century philosophers, Berkeley and Shaftesbury (Klein, 1986); Islamic culture (Ostrup, 1929); in languages such as Chinese (Yuan, Kuiper, and Shaogu, 1990; Song–Cen, 1991); French (Kremos, 1955; Krings, 1961; Held, 1988); Old Greek (Zilliacus, 1949); Japanese (Wenger, 1983); Korean (Soh, 1985); Old Polish (Wojtak, 1989); Russian (Popov, 1985); and classical Sanskrit (Van De Walle, 1991).

Politeness and the Cooperative Principle

A matter of controversy is the relationship of politeness to the Gricean Cooperative Principle (CP) (Grice, 1975). Views reach from entirely subsuming politeness under the CP to affording the CP and politeness equal status. According to Green (1992a, b), politeness, defined as "considerateness," is one of many maxims representing "instantiations in a context of the Cooperative Principle" (1992a: 6), on the same epistemological footing with the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance, and manner. Consequently, violating the politeness maxim gives rise to conversational inference, just as in the case of any other maxim—a point also made by Matsumoto (1989) with respect to inappropriate use of honorifics in Japanese.

In the best articulated politeness theory to date, Brown and Levinson postulate the Cooperative Principle and its four maxims as a "presumptive framework" assumed by conversationalists about the nature of talk (1987:4). Quite unlike Green (1992b), they do not view politeness as yet another conversational maxim but rather as a motivating force for maxim violation. The reason for language users not to follow the most efficient course of action, as they would do by observing the Gricean maxims, is their concern for face (see below). While observance of the CP and concern for face are both underpinned by actors’ rational orientations, these orientations are of quite different status. The CP represents participants’ orientation to get on with the business of talk, or any other kind of linguistic (inter)action, in an optimally economical and efficient manner. Face, in its most general sense, encapsulates participants’ mutual recognition as social members. Attending to face may be at odds with the CP, such as when a speaker violates the maxim of quantity or manner by being indirect.

It is important that Brown and Levinson’s view of politeness is not coextensive with attending to face concerns but considerably more narrow: Politeness operates only when face interests are at risk, and actors are therefore required to make strategic choices about how to handle imminent face threat. It
is only these strategic options of handling face-threat that are called “politeness” in Brown and Levinson’s theory. Their proposal is consequently referred to by Fraser (1990) as the “face-saving view” of politeness.

While politeness thus has a secondary status vis-à-vis the CP in Green’s (1992a, b) and Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theories, Lakoff (1973) and, in a much elaborated version, Leech (1983) see politeness as a coordinate construct to the CP. For Lakoff, pragmatic competence is constituted by two major “rules”: “1. Be clear. 2. Be polite,” where clarity amounts to a condensed version of the Gricean maxims, while politeness serves to avoid conflict between participants. In Leech’s proposal of an “interpersonal rhetori,” the CP is complemented by a politeness principle (PP): “Minimize the expression of impolite beliefs” (1983: 79). Both CP and PP are “first-order principles,” each elaborated by a set of “contributory maxims”: the Gricean maxims in the case of the CP, and six maxims of politeness – the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy – in the case of the PP (pp. 131 ff.). The “conversational maxim view” (Fraser, 1990) of politeness thus comes in different versions, depending on how the relationship between the CP and politeness is conceptualized.

Yet another, perhaps the broadest view of politeness has been proposed by Fraser (1990) with his notion of the conversational contract (CC). On this view, politeness is seen neither as complementing the CP, nor as motivating deviation from it, but as the default setting in conversational encounters: “being polite constitutes operating within the then–current terms and conditions of the CC” (1990: 233). But since the same is true for the CP, mutatis mutandis (“being cooperative involves abiding by the CC,” p. 233), and the difference between being cooperative and being polite is never explained, the conversational contract view appears to be predicated on an equation of “being cooperative = being polite = abiding by the CC,” which does little to clarify, let alone present in empirically testable format, the interaction of communicative efficiency and relational concerns in linguistic exchange.

Universality and Relativity in Politeness Theory

The range of politeness theories – what are the phenomena they serve to explain, intra– and interculturally – has been yet another issue of contention among students of linguistic etiquette. Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983) explicitly assert universal status for their proposed theories. Reviewing their approaches and offering his own, Fraser (1990) provides no discussion of the purported universality and thus implicitly affirms the universality claim. By contrast, Green (1992a, b) argues cogently for the universal applicability of the CP. Since, on her view, the conversational maxims are instantiations of the CP, demonstrated nonapplicability of some maxim or other in a particular cultural setting would not invalidate the CP itself. While thus conceding that conversational maxims may be culturally specialized, Green holds that cultural variation in maxim applicability is more likely to be an effect of different cultural values on the specific shape of a maxim than a question of whether a particular maxim is observed at all.

Politeness and the Notion of Face

Views opposing the universal availability of the proposed politeness constructs have mostly taken issue with the cornerstone of Brown and Levinson’s theory, their notions of negative and positive face. Negative face is defined as “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non–distraction –i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition.” Positive face refers to “the positive consistent self–image or ‘personality’(crucially including the desire that this self–image be appreciated and approved) claimed by interactants” (1987:61). The two complementary sides of face have been referred to by other authors as “distance vs. involvement” (Tannen, 1986), “deference vs. solidarity” (R. and S. B. K. Scollon, 1983), “autonomy vs. connection” (Green, 1992b), “self–determination vs. acceptance,” or “personal vs. interpersonal face” (Janney and Arndt, 1992).

Politeness is activity serving to enhance, maintain, or protect face: Addressing negative face results in negative politeness (“deference politeness,” R. and S. B. K. Scollon, 1983), manifest in indirectness, formality, emphasis of social distance, and respect for the interlocutor’s entitlements and resources. Positive face gives rise to positive politeness (“solidarity politeness,” R. and S. B. K. Scollon, 1983), displayed in directness, informal language use, emphasis of common ground, appreciation of the interlocutor, her actions, possessions, etc. Positive or negative politeness strategies are redressive
action, used to mitigate the face-threat which a linguistic act might pose for the interlocutor. In Brown and Levinson's theory, face-threatening acts are speech acts which clearly involve an interpersonal dimension – directives, commissives, and expressives, in Searle's (1976) classification. According to Green (1992a), all linguistic action involves face-threat of some kind; therefore politeness strategies are ubiquitously called for.

Different kinds of complaint have been voiced against the role of face in Brown and Levinson's theory. The common denominator of these objections is that the intended universality of the theory is untenable.

The first type of objection accepts the derivative role of politeness from face, but argues against the notion of face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61, my emphasis). This social–psychological notion with its emphasis on individuals’ self-generated projection of their favored persona has been contrasted, first, with the earlier formulation proposed by Goffman (1967). Goffman's (sociological) construct describes face as a public rather than personal property, “on loan” from society rather than an unalienable possession, and a negotiable outcome of social interaction (cf. Aston, 1988; Mao, 1994). The interpersonal orientation of Goffman's face concept is deemed more compatible with “nonwestern” face constructs (see Hu, 1944; Ho, 1975; Gu, 1990; Mao, 1994, for Chinese; Ervin-Tripp, Nakamura, and Guo, forthcoming, for a comparison of face concepts in English, French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean).

Acknowledging the different premium placed on individuals’ desires and social recognition by Anglo-American societies and Chinese and Japanese communities, Mao proposes a relative face orientation:

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

(1994: 472, my emphasis)

Whereas Mao's face constructs thus embrace the relative placement of individuals in social hierarchies, other authors view the notions of face and place as mutually exclusive. Both Matsumoto (1988, 1989) and Ide (1989) complain that Brown and Levinson's face constructs do not capture the principles of Japanese interaction because they do not include the acknowledgement of social relationships (“social relativism” “proper place occupancy,” Lebra, 1976). Whereas Matsumoto rejects the notion of negative face as being inapplicable to Japanese culture (a position also supported by Ervin-Tripp et al., forthcoming), Ide accepts the validity of positive and negative face, but suggests that this model be complemented by a component called discernment (wakimae), signalling social relationships. Politeness in any society comprises a “volitional” component (strategic politeness attending to face concerns) and discernment, or social marking. These two components of politeness are regarded as universals; communities differ in the emphasis they put on each. Thus for Japanese interlocutors, “place” purportedly takes precedence before “face” (Ide, 1989).

Neither the strong place instead of face position (Matsumoto) nor the weak place before face variety (Ide) have yet received empirical support. While the comprehensive literature on honorifics in Japanese (Coulmas, 1992; Matsumoto, 1993; see also references in Yoshinaga, Maeshiba, and Takahashi, 1992) attests the importance of social marking, it does not speak to the issue of (negative) face. At the same time, the literature on speech act realization in Japanese documents differential strategy use depending on context factors (e.g., Barnlund and Yoshioka, 1990, on apologies; Ikoma and Shimamura, 1993, on refusals; Ikoma, 1993, on expressions of gratitude; Kitao, 1990; Takahashi, 1992, on requests; Takahashi and Beebe, 1993, on corrections). Since a great number of the identified strategies are recognizably negative politeness strategies (e.g., oisogashii tokoro “you must be busy,” moshiwake arimasenga “excuse me” to preface a request; apologetic expressions such as sumimasen (deshita), gomeiwaku o okase si mashita for conveying gratitude), the claim that negative face wants are absent in Japanese interaction is difficult to maintain. The assumption that social indexing may be more prevalent in some languages than others is well supported by the fact that in
Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean, Thai, Javanese, and others, relationship marking is grammatized in highly complex morphological systems, whereas such specialization is only rudimentary in European languages. A more problematic issue than the cross-linguistic comparison of obligatory social indexing is Ide's (1989) conjecture that Japanese linguistic etiquette emphasizes “discernment” more than strategic politeness. To date, no studies have been carried out to support this position, and indeed no measure has been proposed to test Ide's hypothesis. Furthermore, data-based studies on the use of honorifics reveal that, rather than being used invariably to index a specific social relationship, honorific use can alter in the same encounter, depending on the particular attitude the speaker wishes to convey (Cook, 1993, 1994). Empirical observation thus contradicts the claim that speakers “submit passively to the requirements of the system” (Hill et al., 1986: 348) once a particular status relationship has been identified. Rather than being entirely predetermined, social indexing remains a sociolinguistic choice, even when there is a strong statistical preference for particular usage. The forms actually chosen depend on the current state of the “conversational contract” (Fraser, 1990) and appear thus as more dynamic and “volitional” than static views of honorific language use suggest. From this perspective, unmarked use of honorifics simply reflects speakers' adherence to accepted politeness norms (cf. Green, 1992b).

Yet another line of criticism denies the role of face in politeness altogether. Watts (1989) asserts that, rather than being motivated by face concerns, politeness is located in the wider context of politicking behavior, understood as (linguistic) activity serving to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. With special reference to Chinese politeness, Gu (1990) argues that politeness is more appropriately seen as adherence to social norms than attending to individual's face wants. While these authors’ proposals are thus at variance with Brown and Levinson's individualistic notion of face, they are quite compatible with the relative face concept proposed by Mao (1994).

**Face and Self**

Writers who recognize a role for face in linguistic etiquette have recently pointed out that face can be correctly understood only in the context of notions of self, emphasizing that such notions are necessarily informed by culturally varying perceptions of personhood and relationships between an individual and society. While a comprehensive review of studies on self concepts in different communities points to a consistent opposition between *interdependent* and *independent* notions of self (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), an alternative view questions the adequacy of categorizing cross-culturally varying self-orientations according to these categories, or even as ordered on a continuum between these. Thus Rosenberger (1989) argues against the popular belief of a consistent sociocentric self concept in the Japanese community, and for a dialectic model which captures the switches of the Japanese self (*jibun*) between opposing orientations: “group productivity, personal accomplishment harmony or affection, and pure impulse or gratification” (1989: 89f.). Switching between these modes is brought about through the flow of a person's vital energy (ki) and actualization according to a social, spatial, and temporal context (see also Lebra, 1993). The key difference between “Western” and Japanese notions of self thus rests not so much in “independent”/“egocentric” vs “interdependent”/“sociocentric” orientations but in the diverging beliefs about the unity of self: The “Western” ideal of a consistent self that transcends conflicting contextual demands, and the Japanese ideal of an accommodative self that optimally responds to varying contexts and purposes. The ideological character of the “Western” construction of a consistent self has been illustrated in a lucid analysis of team sport in the US (Green, 1992b), demonstrating how athletes are required to switch from the individualistic orientation prevalent in the society at large to a strongly group-oriented, hierarchical subculture. The facility by which these adjustments are performed suggests that “Western” selves are more contextually sensitive than presumed by folk beliefs as well as some scientific models of self, e.g., in Freudian or Jungian psychodynamic theory. It is therefore important for research on linguistic etiquette to explore practices of social marking and strategic politeness in different groups and speech events within larger cultural communities in order to establish *intraculturally* varying orientations of self and face. Such research is not only indispensable for descriptively adequate accounts of politeness within and across cultures but also a necessary safeguard against unhelpful stereotyping along the received lines of “Eastern” and “Western” ways of perceiving personhood and social relations.
Variables in Linguistic Etiquette

Any theory of politeness has built into it the sociolinguistic axiom that politeness investment varies according to contextual factors. The two most elaborated theories, Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983), concur in this regard. First, they identify the same factors as independent variables in politeness marking: social distance (Brown and Levinson, Leech), social power (Brown and Levinson) or authority (Leech), and the degree of imposition associated with a given face-threatening act (Brown and Levinson) or the costs and benefits of an act (Leech). Second, both theories posit a linear relationship between these factors and politeness investment. Third, they both assume a positive correlation between politeness and indirectness.

Data-based studies lend strong support to the identified context variables, whereas the correlational issues are problematic. Each of the proposed factors represents a composite construct which is culturally and contextually elaborated and weighted. Social power includes factors such as:

- interlocutors’ relative positions in social hierarchies (Becker, 1982; Becker and Smenner, 1986; Becker, Kimmel, and Bevill, 1989; Beebe and Takahashi, 1989a, b; Bryan and Gallois, 1992; Ervin-Tripp, O’Connor, and Rosenberg, 1984; Hill et al., 1986; Lampi, 1993; McMullen and Krahn, 1985; Morand, 1991; Pearson, 1988; Takahashi and Beebe, 1993);
- language impairment (Abbeduto, 1984; Bates and Wilson, 1981; Bliss, 1992; Rimac, 1986; Stemmer, 1994; Stemmer, Giroux, and Joannette, 1994).

Social distance (Boxer, 1993; Delisle, 1986; Garcia, 1992; J. H. and K. C. Hill, 1978; McMullen and Krahn, 1985; Miller, 1991; Morosawa, 1990) has been demonstrated to affect politeness in a more complex way than theoretically predicted. Reviewing a number of studies on speech act realization, Wolfson (e.g., 1989) concludes that rather than correlating in a linear fashion, social distance and politeness are related in a reverse bell-shaped curve (“bulge”): Most politeness appears to be expended in negotiable relationships with familiars but nonintimates, such as coworkers and friends. In more fixed relationships at opposite ends of the social distance continuum, intimates and strangers, politeness is found to decrease. More recent evidence for the bulge hypothesis comes from studies on complaining (Olshtain and Weinbach, 1993) and expressions of gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993).

While there is a comprehensive literature on the impact of social variables on politeness implementation, much less research exists on the influence of psychological factors. To some extent, this may simply reflect the fact that demographic variables are easy to identify whereas (social–) psychological factors are not. Ciliberti (1993) argues that interactional style is as much a product of participants’ cultural background as of personality, and an analogous argument can be made for demographic profiles and personal variables. Sluorski (1985) demonstrates that familiarity (= social distance) has to be distinguished from affect (= psychological distance), a hypothesis supported by
historical evidence from a study of politeness in Shakespearian tragedies (Brown and Gilman, 1989; on the impact of affect see also Boxer, 1993; Camras, Pristo, and Brown, 1985; Haviland, 1989; Sussman & Rosenfeld, 1982).

In addition to these participant variables, features of linguistic acts themselves – the “imposition,” or costs and benefits accruing from them – shape politeness enactment. For several speech acts, the elements of the composite construct “imposition” have been identified, for instance, in:

- requesting: urgency (Hermann, 1982; Morosawa, 1990), legitimacy (Hermann, 1982; Hoppe–Graff et al., 1985; House, 1989; Blum–Kulka and House, 1989; Hirokawa, Mickey, and Miura, 1991), the likelihood of the hearer’s compliance and the speaker’s psychological difficulty in carrying out the request (Blum–Kulka and House, 1989);
- apologizing: perceived severity of the offence, subsuming obligation to apologize and likelihood of apology being accepted (House, 1989; Olshtain, 1989; Vollmer and Olshtain, 1989; Bergman and Kasper, 1993);
- thanking: indebtedness, comprising the degree of received benefit and trouble undergone by the benefactor (Miyake, 1993; Ikoma, 1993);
- complaining: magnitude of social obligation violated by the offender (Olshtain, and Weinbach, 1993).

Participant factors and properties of contextualized linguistic action interact in complex ways and vary cross–culturally in their impact on linguistic politeness. For instance, in request performance, Israeli speakers varied their strategy selection according to requestive goal, age, and power (Blum–Kulka, Gerson and Danet, 1985); Japanese and German speakers modified their requests according to legitimacy and the likelihood of the hearer’s compliance, but the German not the Japanese speakers made their strategy selection also contingent on urgency (Hermann, 1982; Morosawa, 1990); Israelis, Germans, and Argentinians differed in their perceptions of interlocutors’ rights and obligations, the likelihood of the hearer’s compliance, and the speaker’s difficulty in performing the request (Blum–Kulka and House, 1989); requestees’ obligation to comply was perceived as higher by American than by Japanese raters (Shimamura, 1993).

Just as the relationship between context variables and politeness varies intra–and interculturally, so does the relationship between patterns of linguistic action and their politeness value. Negative politeness strategies were perceived as more polite by Japanese residing in the US than by Japanese in Japan (Kitao, 1990). Japanese and Americans also gave different appropriateness judgments of requests with and without supportive moves (Shimamura, 1993). A particularly intriguing issue is the relationship between indirectness and politeness. Contrary to theory–derived predictions, it was conventional indirectness (e.g., preparatory strategies such as “can/could you”) rather than nonconventional indirectness (hinting) that was rated most polite by Israeli, American (Blum–Kulka, 1987), and German (House, 1986) judges. The preference for conventional indirectness appears to be motivated by the balance struck between clarity and consideration, and low processing costs to the hearer. Consistent with this finding, Weizman (1985, 1989, 1993) has suggested that nonconventional indirectness is not motivated by politeness at all but by the “deniability potential” inherent in ambiguous language use.

**Discourse Context**

Rather than isolating specific context variables and examining their impact on politeness, a large body of literature explores the linguistic etiquette of different discourse contexts. Such contexts include:

1979; Chick, 1989; Ellis, 1992; Heath, 1983; Loerscher and Schulze, 1988; Sadow and Maxwell, 1983; White, 1989), consumer service agencies (Johnson and Fawcett, 1987), sermons (Dzameshie, 1992); citizen–bureaucracy interaction (Hero, 1986), opinion poll interviews (Johnstone, 1991; Johnstone, Ferrara, and Bean, 1992), church business meetings (Pearson, 1988);

- workplace communication (Bryan and Gallois, 1992; Chick, 1986, 1989; Clyne, Bell, and Neil, 1991; Holmqvist and Andersen, 1987; Myers, 1991; Nunes, 1981) and other professional interaction, e.g., aviation discourse (Linde 1988a, b), business negotiations (Ehlich and Wagner, forthcoming; Stalpers, forthcoming; Yamada, 1990), sales negotiations (Lampi, 1993), organizational interaction (Morand, 1991), sports teams (Green, 1992; Jones, 1992);

- interpersonal discourse, e.g., family dinners (Blum–Kulka, 1990; Blum–Kulka and Sheffer, 1993; Perlmann, 1984; Wilhite, 1983); dinner entertainment (Befu, 1986), phatic communion (Coupland, Coupland, and Robinson, 1992), intimate conversation (Frank, 1988), interpersonal decision-making (Scheerhorn, 1991/2);


The common message from these different studies is that linguistic etiquette is both a highly context–sensitive aspect of human communication and one that shapes context and participants’ relationships. Politeness is thus not only determined by the current state of the conversational contract but a context–creating and modifying force in its own right.

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