FACE NEEDS

Goffman (1967)

Face is “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”.

Brown & Levinson’s Concept of Politeness (1978)

- Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that in order to meet Face needs a speaker will adopt Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies
- Politeness strategies are used to preserve the other speaker’s FACE: the respect you have for yourself, maintaining self-esteem in public/private situations, eg. embarrassment or feeling uncomfortable.
- Face Threatening Acts: acts which infringe on the hearer’s need to maintain his/her self-esteem (face), to be and feel respected.
- Face Saving Acts: Speakers develop politeness strategies for dealing with situations where face may be lost.

Positive Face Needs

- **Positive Face Needs** means that we want to be liked and approved of (hence the way we use greetings, compliments and appropriate terms of address).
- **Hello! How are you? Good to see you!**
- **Greetings like this will meet Positive Face Needs**

Negative Face Needs

- **Negative Face Needs** means that a considerate person will wrap up unpleasant requests/orders by using hedges (“It’s sort of difficult but…”) and apologies (“I’m sorry but would you mind if…”), thus avoiding face threatening behaviour.
- So interaction like this means that a person’s negative face needs have been met

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**Diagram:**

1. Without redressive action, bald
2. Positive Politeness
3. Negative Politeness
4. Off record
5. Don’t do the FTA

**Legend:**

- On record
- With redressive action