BOOK REVIEWS

○ F. BARGIELA-CHIAPPINI AND M. HAUGH (EDS.), *FACE, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION*
(LONDON, EQUINOX. 2009. PP, XII, 331)

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This book is about face(work), a key concept in politeness research. 'Face as relational and interactive phenomena' is the main theme of the book. Many of the contributors revisit, from various perspectives, Goffman's (1955, p. 213) original definition of face: the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact'.

The book advocates a paradigm shift, namely that face(work) research be grounded in both "social constructionism" - 'where meaning comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world' (p.16, as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 8) - and "interpretivism" - 'where social reality is regarded as the product of processes by which social actors negotiate the meanings for actions and situations' (p.16, as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 11). In these paradigms, face is considered as being beyond individual possession. This marks a shift from a notion of "face" as an a priori entity to a notion of 'face' which emerges and is co-constructed in interaction. By re-articulating the distinction between first-order politeness (what is made sense of by conversational participants) and second-order politeness (what is made sense of by analysts), the book identifies a need to put interactional data and participant perspectives at the centre of the investigation of face. I welcome this move and congratulate the editors.

The book consists of 16 chapters of which the first (introduction) and the last (conclusion and future implications) are executed with enthusiasm and the paradigm shift is clearly articulated by Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini, respectively. The thirty-page introduction by Haugh has an excellent overview of research on face. He clearly sets a direction for future research.

> An investigation of the ways in which face is *co-constituted in* as well as *constitutive of* interaction thus lies at the heart of this collection. In this way, then, we are proposing that research on face and facework be shifted to an epistemology grounded in social constructionism (p.15).

The remainder of the chapters are divided into three sections. In Part I, 'Face and interaction', Arundale, in Chapter 2 of the book, proposes Face Constitution Theory to compensate Goffman's 'summative and rule-following model' (p.52) which may not be fit for analysing facework in social constructionist perspectives. Reiter investigates, in Chapter 3, how face emerges in an intercultural service call between an Urguayan agent and an Argentinean client. This chapter is well grounded in the new direction which the book is proposing and it demonstrates that issues of "power" are manifested in facework in this business context. In Chapter 4, Haugh and Watanabe investigate business meetings in Japanese firms in Australia. They use the Japanese folk notion of face, *kao,* and its related face idioms to explain how face in Japanese emerges in interaction. The study follows the book's direction and provides rich contextual description, however, the chapter would have made a much stronger case if *kao* and other face related idioms in Japanese first-order politeness phenomena had been actually used by the conversationalists. Anchimbe, in Chapter 5, investigates face saving strategies used by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and French President Jacques Chirac at the time of the invasion of Iraq. Data for the analysis are tv interviews given on CBS, CNN and the BBC. The discussion illustrates various linguistic avoidance strategies used in saving political face, and it reminds us that facework in political discourse is quite different to that in other social encounters. Koutlaki, in the last chapter of Part 1, analyses conversations in social encounters in Persian. She attempts to interpret her conversational data based on what she called the principles of Persian politeness. She includes a first-order account of interactional data, but runs the risk of being essentialist. Overall, amongst the contributors in this section, there is a substantial divergence of approach to face and facework, representing a breadth of expertise and experience. My only concern is that many of the investigations on first-order face are, in fact, supported by neither turn-by-turn interactional data nor conversational participants' accounts.

Part II (Face, identity and self) approaches interactional data (except for Chapters 9,10 and 11) from a cognitive perspective. The first three chapters focus on Self face or Self presentation, in other words, face wants for Self. In Chapter 7, Spencer-Oatey analyses intercultural business meetings which took place in the UK involving British staff, Chinese delegations from mainland China, and an interpreter. She highlights some conflicting situations between the British and the Chinese and elucidates the importance of "face needs of self" and 'self presentation' in interaction, referring to the post-event interview comments. Ruhi's paper in Chapter 8 is about first-order politeness, Turkish face idioms, which she has collected from various conversational data including institutional and family settings and popular TV dramas. The significance of this research is that it uses face idioms which are actually uttered by conversational participants. Ruhi finds that face idioms tend to be used

when "self is evaluated or projected with respect to behavioural expectations and norms regarding role relationships and interactional goals" (p.171). Using an open-ended survey involving 64 teachers and administrators in various educational institutions in China, Gao, in Chapter 9, reveals how the participants distinguish emic notions of face in Chinese, *mianzi* and *lian*. *Mian zi* manifests Chinese 'self respect, self-esteem, self-love, vanity, pride, and self defence' (p.177), and 'the literal translation of Lian is face' (pp.179-180). Gao reports that loss of *lian* is much more severe than loss of *mian zi,* and *lian* is only used in limited contexts where morality and ethics are of concern. In Chapter 10, Holtgraves approaches face from the experimental research perspective of social-psychology. He argues for Brown and Levinson's *a priori* claims of the calculability of the seriousness of an FTA (face threatening act) by 'distance', 'power' and 'rating of imposition' (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 244). However, I find this perspective not compatible with the focus of this book. In Chapter 11, Kozin, drawing on an exegesis of notions of face according to Goffman – 'pragmatics of self-presentation' (p.210) - and Levinas – 'overwhelming responsibility [ethical imperative] for the Other' (p.210), identifies a link between the two in his application of 'traumatic face' (dehumanised face resulting from an extremely severe human experience). This leads us to the realisation that what "face" researchers deal with is in fact a model of face which assumes morality, social responsibility and reciprocity.

Part III (Face, norms and society) has four chapters which employ a socio-cultural approach. In Chapter 12, Ting-Toomey begins with a case study featuring a Japanese company president's welcome speech to American sales people. (It is not clear whether the case study is authentic or fabricated). Although the study seeks to highlight the potential for cross-cultural conflict in an attempt to reduce it, the concepts of face and cultural values which have been assumed by Ting-Toomey tend to be predetermined categorisations (i.e. Japanese vs. American; collectivism vs. individualism). Chapter 13 by Lim discusses normative aspects of face in Korea, but similarly employs an unproductive stereotyping; for example: 'Korea, like most other East Asian countries, is a relativist society that takes a holistic approach to the world' (p.251), 'Easterners approach the world holistically, whereas most Westerners see the world analytically' (p.251). In Chapter 14, Terkourafi, attempts to relate the sociological notions of *Gemeinshaft* and *Gesellshaft* to Face1 (insider account of face and social values) and Face2 (universalising outsider account of face and social values) in contemporary Greek society. Such sociological notions have potential as investigative tools in a globalising world where emic and etic constantly negotiate their boundaries and where transnational reality comes to the fore. In the final chapter of Part III, Ukosakul looks into Thai face related idioms from an emic perspective but the chapter lacks interactional data and falls short of what the book initially proposed to achieve. However, like other papers which

attempt to give an emic account of face in various languages, this chapter provides ample face idioms (representations of first-order politeness) with which many politeness researchers may be unfamiliar.

Overall, there is a discrepancy between what the book proposes, 'a shift to grounding research on face in interaction' (p.17), and what it actually offers. Some chapters suffer from an abundance of pre-existing cultural categorisations and a lack of interactional data. Interestingly in the concluding chapter, Bargiela-Chiappini warns of the danger of 'impos[ing] categories external to the situation' (p.323), and offers a clear direction for face and politeness researchers to follow.

> An ethnomethodological approach to face(work) that zooms into the detail, the systematic and the routine of everyday encounters could provide new insights on human interaction that do not depend on the super-imposition of 'cultural' constructs but emerge fresh from the sense-making activities of the participants (p.323).

She emphasises that researchers can benefit from approaches employed by conversation analysis and ethnomethodology, and claims that the theoretical shift can close the growing gap between researchers' and interactants' interpretations of 'what is going on in talk' (p.319) in face and politeness research. I welcome this move and I do hope that all researchers begin questioning such pre-existing dichotomies as East and West, collectivism and individualism, etc. as well as their embedded pre-existing assumptions, and that they begin 'placing interaction at the centre of the analysis' (p.5) as the editors stress. This book is timely and I cannot agree more with what it advocates. Although it has not quite achieved what it proposes, the book is a trendsetting publication on the study of politeness and face.

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