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FACEWORK DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND AMERICAN

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Jiajia Zheng

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FACEWORK DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND AMERICAN

By

Jiajia Zheng

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

THE FACEWORK DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND AMERICAN

By

Jiajia Zheng

The objective of this study is to test Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory and Ting-Toomey's (1988) theory on conflict face-negotiation. Specifically, the study examines the effects of relational intimacy and culture on perceived face threats and likelihood of facework strategy selection. Several hypotheses derived from the theories were tested with the subjects from the United States (N=72) and the People's Republic of China (N=79). The results can be summarized as follows: (1) Ting-Toomey's theory is partially supported by the results. The Chinese don't only use more positive politeness, indirect strategies, but also use more negative politeness than the Americans. (2) The direction of the effects of intimacy varied across different cultures. In general, Brown and Levinson's theory is only supported by the American group, that is, intimacy level is negatively associated with perceived face threats and facework for the U.S.A. group, while it is positively associated with perceived face threats and facework for the P.R.C. group.

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FACEWORK DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND AMERICAN

Introduction

The concept of face is Chinese in origin, having been used as early as the fourth century BC (Ho, 1975; Hu, 1944). In modern times, the uses of the concept of face has been widespread in English-speaking countries. Although the use of politeness strategies to manage face is assumed to be universal, the influence of cultural differences on perception of face-threat and facework strategies should not be ignored.

According to Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness theory, cultural factors might affect the weightiness of a face-threat act (FTA) by influencing perceptions of relational distance, relational power, and the ranking of the imposition of the act itself. In this regard, Brown and Levinson (1987) made a broad distinction between positive politeness cultures and negative politeness cultures.

In her face-negotiation theory, Ting-Toomey (1988) suggests that cultural factors (e.g., individualism or collectivism, low-context or high-context) may influence types of face concern and face maintenance strategies. She establishes 12 propositions to predict how cultural differences might influence face-negotiation strategy

selection. In this study, I am only interested in 8 out of her 12 propositions. The reason for this selection is that Ting-Toomey's last four propositions are particularized negotiation strategies in conflict situations, which are not directly related to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and not interested by this study. Her first eight propositions are closely related to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, and I am going to examine these eight propositions in this study.

Ting-Toomey's *Proposition 1 and 2*, as well as her *Proposition 5 and 6* posit that members of individualistic or low-context cultures (LCC) tend to express a greater degree of self-face maintenance than do members of collectivistic or high-context cultures (HCC); conversely, members of collectivistic or HC cultures tend to express a greater degree of mutual-face or other-face maintenance than do members of individualistic or LC cultures. Her *Proposition 3 and 4* posit that members of individualistic or LC cultures tend to use more autonomy-preserving strategies (negative-face need) than do members of collectivistic or HC cultures, and conversely, members of collectivistic or HC cultures tend to use more approval-seeking strategies (positive-face need) than do members of individualistic or LC cultures. Her *Proposition 7 and 8* posit that members of individualistic or LC cultures tend to use a greater degree of direct face-

negotiation strategies than do members of collectivistic or HC cultures, and conversely, members of collectivistic or HC cultures tend to use a greater degree of indirect face-negotiation strategies than do members of individualistic or LC cultures. Yet, there is very little research which has tested these propositions.

The purpose of this study is to test Brown and Levinson's predictions about the effects of culture and relational distance on facework, and also to test Ting-Toomey's eight propositions, i.e., *Proposition 1 and 2, Proposition 3 and 4, Proposition 5 and 6, and Proposition 7 and 8.*

In politeness theory, there are three situational factors which may influence the weightiness of face-threat. These three situational factors are: (1) the ranking of the imposition of the act (e.g., asking for the time is less imposing than asking for a loan); (2) the relative power of the hearer over the speaker; and (3) the degree of relational distance between the hearer and speaker. To limit variables, my research only focuses on the interaction between relational distance and cultural factors.

Therefore, in my study, the two independent variables are cultural differences and relational distance, while the dependent variables are perceived face threat, and facework strategy selection. This study is based upon the framework

of Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory, Ting-Toomey's (1988) face-negotiation theory, and some research on cultural differences (e.g., Triandis, 1986; Gudykunst, Yoon, & Nishida, 1987).

Literature Review

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Summary of politeness theory

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) offer a pan-cultural theory of politeness designed to explain a large number of remarkably detailed cross-cultural parallels in language usage. At the heart of politeness theory is the concept of face. Brown and Levinson (1978) define "face" as "the public self-image that every member of a society wants to claim for himself/herself". The concept of face has two distinguishable and related parts: positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to an actor's desire to have the approval of others. Negative face is the desire not to be imposed upon by others. All social actors would like to have both types of face wants met, but because these are social desires, they can only be satisfied by other people.

Brown and Levinson (1978) propose the existence of five general politeness strategies that vary along a continuum of "redressiveness". This refers to the extent to which the

speaker attempts to mitigate the face threat to the hearer. When presented in order from most redressive to least redressive, the strategies are (1) do not do the FTA; (2) do it off-record, that is, indirectly; (3) use negative politeness, that is, mitigate the threat to the hearer's negative face; (4) use positive politeness, that is, mitigate the threat to the positive face; and (5) do it baldly on-record, that is, explicitly without redressing either face. A speaker's choice of which strategy is a function of the threat implied by the intended act (termed its *weightiness*). Weightiness is assumed to be an additive weighing of three factors: the ranking of the imposition of the act itself, the relative power of the hearer over the speaker, and the degree of relational distance between the hearer and speaker. According to their assumption, as relational distance increases, the weightiness of a FTA will increase. Furthermore, as the weightiness increases, the speaker should choose a more polite strategy to redress the face-threat of FTA.

Previous research on intimacy and facework

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) suggest that as relational distance increases, the perceived weightiness of FTA would increase, therefore, correspondingly, facework increases. Several empirical studies have been designed to

examine the proposition about relational distance and facework.

The results of those empirical studies are very complex. In Table 1, the results of seven relevant empirical researches are summarized. Three types of findings are categorized.

The first type of finding is generally consistent with Brown and Levinson's proposition. Roloff, Janiszewski, McGrath, Burns, and Manrai's (1988) research found that "the requests of intimates are relatively less elaborate, containing fewer apologies (at least for small requests), explanations, and inducements". The results of Holtgraves and Yang's (1990) study are partially consistent with Brown and Levinson's assumption. They did find that as intimacy increased, "bald" requests increased. However, they also found that positive politeness increased, and negative politeness didn't significantly decrease.

The second type of finding indicates that there is an interaction between intimacy and request size. Leichty and Applegate (1991) and Tracy, Craig, Smith and Spisak (1984) found that Brown and Levinson's proposition was only confirmed when request size was small, otherwise, the results were opposite to the proposition. That is, when the request size was large, as intimacy increased, so did facework.

Table 1

Descriptive Summary for Studies of Effects of Intimacy on Facework

Study	Lim & Bowers (1991)	Leichty & Applegate (1991)	Holtgraves & Yang (1990)
Participants	American students N=300	Residence hall advisors N=42	American students N=78 Korean students N=64
Independent Variables	(1) Intimacy (2) Power differences (3) Right to act	(1) Intimacy (2) Power differences (3) Size of request	(1) Culture (2) Gender (3) Power differences (4) Intimacy (5) Size of request
Dependent Variable	(1) Solidarity (2) Approbation (3) Tact	(1) Positive face redress strategies (2) Autonomy redress strategies	(1) Bald (2) Positive politeness (3) Negative politeness (4) Off record
Type of Request	(1) Negative comment (2) Enforce obligation (3) Favor asking	Favor asking	Favor asking
Findings for Intimacy (As Intimacy Increases)	(1) Solidarity increases (2) Approbation increases (3) Tact increases	(1) For small requests: Positive face and autonomy redress strategies decreases; (2) For larger requests: Positive face and autonomy redress strategies increases	(1) Bald increase (2) Positive politeness increase

Table 1 (continued)

Descriptive Summary for Studies of Effects of Intimacy on Facework

Roloff & Janiszewski (1989)	Roloff et al. (1988)	Baxter (1984)	Tracy et al. (1984)
American students N=117	American students N=59	American students N=155	American students N=20
(1) Intimacy (2) Type of request	(1) Intimacy (2) Size of request	(1) Gender (2) Intimacy (3) Power differences	(1) Intimacy (2) Power differences (3) Size of request
(1) Explanation (2) Apology	Elaboration	Compliance-gaining politeness	Compliance-gaining strategies
(1) Borrowing (2) Favor asking	Favor asking	Negative comment & enforcing obligation	Favor asking
(1) For borrowing: Explanation and apology decreases (2) For favor asking: Explanation and apology increases	Elaboration decreases	Politeness increases	(1) For smaller requests: Strategies decreases; (2) For larger requests: Strategies increases

The third type of finding indicates that there is an interaction between intimacy and request type. In general, two types of request are classified: one type is favor asking, the other type is negative comment and enforcing obligation. "Favor asking" is mainly threatening to the hearer's autonomy and requester's competence; "negative comment and enforcing obligation" is mainly threatening to the hearer's competence and/or acceptance, and sometimes, it might threaten hearer's autonomy and requester's acceptance. Since two types of request threaten different kinds of face, therefore, different facework strategies are required. As shown in Table 1, the findings of empirical researches with "negative comment and enforcing obligation" hypothetical situations (e.g., the researches of Lim & Bower 1991, and Baxter 1984) are generally opposite to Brown and Levinson's proposition, that is, as intimacy increases, so does facework.

In sum, the influence direction of intimacy on facework is not as simple as Brown and Levinson predicted. According to the results of several empirical researches, the direction of influence varies at different request sizes and types.

Previous research on culture and facework

According to the politeness theory, cultural factors may affect facework strategy selection by influencing the

perceptions of relational distance, power, and rank. Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) assume that there are some societies where low power difference and low distance between members of these societies are valued, and generally, less polite strategies are preferred by these cultures. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined these kind of cultures as positive politeness cultures. On the contrary, in other societies, high power difference and high distance might be valued, and more polite strategies are preferred. These are defined as negative politeness cultures. American culture is classified as a positive politeness culture. Chinese and Korean cultures are classified as negative politeness cultures.

So far, little research has examined Brown and Levinson's ideas about cultural influences on facework. From my knowledge, only Holtgraves and Yang (1990) have examined cultural differences as an independent variable combining with other independent variables (power and distance). They report that their results generally are consistent with the description of Korea as a negative politeness culture (more polite strategies preferred) and the United States as a positive politeness culture (less polite strategies preferred). Consistent with their expectation, they have found that the difference between the two most polite (negative politeness and hints) and two least polite (bald

and positive politeness) strategies to be greater for Koreans than for Americans. In their discussion, they did not explain this difference from a cultural angle.

Based on this study, further research should be developed. First, further study should explain the difference in the results of Holtgraves and Yang's study by accounting for cultural factors and the interaction between cultural factors and other relational factors. Second, since politeness theory is limited to hearer-oriented strategies, further study should not only investigate hearer-oriented strategies, but also investigate speaker-oriented strategies cross-culturally.

Although Kim and Wilson's (in press) cross-cultural comparison study is not directly designed to test Brown and Levinson's theory, their findings are relevant. They have found that to make a request, Koreans (classified as negative politeness culture by Brown and Levinson) tend to do more facework than Americans (classified as positive politeness culture). Specifically, Americans consider the direct statement strategy as the most effective way of making a request, while Koreans rate it as the least effective strategy. Koreans perceive doing facework (e.g., "concerning for not hurting the hearer's feelings", "concerning for minimizing imposition", and "concerning for avoiding negative evaluation by the hearer") to be more

effective for making a request than Americans do. In some degree, their findings supported Brown and Levinson's distinction of positive and negative politeness cultures.

Ting-Toomey's Face-Negotiation Theory

One weakness of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is that it just focuses on hearer-oriented facework strategies, that is, it does not pay attention to speaker-oriented facework strategies. For example, when a person makes a request, not only the hearer's face but also the speaker's self-face may be threatened (Wilson, 1992). The speaker may risk embarrassment (Wallston, 1976), lost power (Worchel, 1984), or reduced self-esteem (Nadler, Fisher, and Itzhak, 1983). In this kind of face-threat act, both the speaker's positive face and negative face need protection. Politeness theory did not pay much attention to speaker-oriented facework.

Some previous empirical facework studies have included the requester's face into their face concern dimension, and included self-face maintenance into their face work strategies. For example, Roloff and his colleagues' (1988, 1989) research took some self-positive face protection strategies (e.g., explanations and contingencies) into their test. Tracy et al.'s (1984) study also gave attention to the speaker's positive face need.

Ting-Toomey's (1988) face-negotiation theory includes not only hearer-oriented facework strategies, but also speaker-oriented facework strategies. This theory suggests that there are two conceptual dimensions: (1) face-concern dimension: self-face concern, other-face concern, or mutual-face concern, and (2) face-need dimension: negative face need and positive face need. Based on these two dimensions, four types of face need are distinguished: self positive-face need, self negative-face need, other's positive-face need, and other's negative-face need. Furthermore, to meet these four types of face need, four types of face maintenance strategies are classified: (1) self positive face maintenance, which aims at defending and protecting speaker's need for approval and being valued; (2) other positive face maintenance, which aims at supporting hearer's need for approval and being valued; (3) self negative face maintenance, which aims at protecting speaker's right of freedom and autonomy; and (4) other negative face maintenance, which aims at signaling speaker's respect for hearer's need for freedom and autonomy.

Ting-Toomey (1988) suggests that face concern, face need, and facework would be influenced by relational variables (such as low-high intimacy level), situational variables (such as informal-formal level, public-private level) of context, and salience (such as topic magnitude,

topic commitment). In this article, she doesn't discuss why and how these variables affect face concern, face need, and facework in detail.

She also proposes that culture might have effects on face concern, face need and facework. She assumes that the self-other dimension and the positive-face and negative-face dimension would be influenced by the cultural interpretation and the cultural expectation levels of the context. In addition, certain sets of facework suprastrategy would be favorably preferred by members of a culture more often than others. In her face-negotiation theory, cultures are classified into individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures, or low-context cultures and high-context cultures.

Individualistic Cultures and Collectivistic Cultures

Numerous cross-cultural studies (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Hofstede & Bond, 1984) have provided empirical evidence that the theoretical dimension of individualism-collectivism is a primary dimension that differentiates different clusters of cultures from an international perspective.

Hofstede and Bond's (1984) research found that the "I" identity has precedence in individualistic cultures over the "WE" identity, which takes precedence in collectivistic cultures. In individualistic societies, the emphasis is placed on individuals' initiative and achievement, while in

collectivistic societies, emphasis is placed on belonging to groups .

People in individualistic cultures tend to be universalistic and apply the same value standards to all. People in collectivistic cultures tend to be particularistic and apply different value standards for members of their groups and outsiders. Also, Triandis (1986) suggests that members of collectivistic cultures draw sharper distinctions between members of their own group and outsiders and perceive in-group relationships to be more intimate than members of individualistic cultures.

Stover (1974, 1976) found that in China, the concept of face could be interpreted as "other-directed self-esteem." People in collectivistic cultures are more likely to seek approval from others, in other words, they are more sensitive to their own and also other's positive face needs than people in individualistic cultures (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Low-context Cultures and High-context Cultures

Hall's (1976, 1983) low-context culture and high-context culture dimension serves as a good theoretical foundation to account for communication style differences across a range of cultures. According to Hall (1983) and Ting-Toomey's (1985) research, low-context cultures value individual value orientation, linear logic, direct verbal interaction, and individualistic nonverbal style. High-

context cultures value group value orientation, spiral logic, indirect verbal interaction, and contextual nonverbal style. Contextual verbal and nonverbal style means intentions and meanings are situated within the larger shared knowledge of the cultural context. In their account, Chinese culture is identified as a high-context culture, and American culture is identified as a low-context culture.

Summary: Culture and Facework

Both politeness theory and face-negotiation theory propose that culture has significant influence on face need and facework. In Table 2, the relationships between culture and facework are summarized. In general, according to politeness theory, culture affects facework by influencing the perceptions of power distance, relational distance, and request size (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987); according to face-negotiation theory, culture affects facework by influencing face concern, face need and facework strategy preference (Ting-Toomey, 1988).

Brown and Levinson (1987) made a broad distinction between positive politeness cultures which is generally compatible with individualistic, low-context cultures, and negative politeness cultures which in general is compatible with collectivistic, high-context cultures. Ting-Toomey's (1988) assumptions are not agreeable to Brown and Levinson's

politeness culture distinction. She suggests that members of individualistic, low-context cultures tend to have more autonomy need, and are more likely to use negative politeness strategy. On the contrary, members of collectivistic, high-context cultures tend to have more need for approval, and are more likely to use positive politeness strategy. Regarding this disagreement, I concur more with Ting-Toomey than with Brown and Levinson. For this theoretical disagreement, my explanations are the followings:

First, Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness continuum is questionable. According to politeness theory, at one end, the most politeness is off-record (indirectly), along the politeness continuum, which is followed by negative politeness strategy, and then positive politeness strategy. The least polite strategy is on-record (directly) which is at the other end. However, since a FTA may related to different types of face threat, it is problematic to compare different types of face threat by using one measurement, that makes judgment about which type of face threat is more serious than others. For the same reason, it is problematic to evaluate different facework strategies by using one politeness continuum. Baxter (1984) found that positive politeness was not perceived less polite than negative politeness by American respondents. In addition,

Holtgraves and Yang (1990) found that hints (indirectly) were not rated as the most polite strategy by both American and Korean participants. I think that there may not be an absolute hierarchical ranking order of facework strategies along politeness continuum, at least there is not an universal ranking order.

Second, the term of positive politeness cultures means that less polite strategies are preferred in those cultures, while the term of negative politeness cultures means that more polite strategies are preferred in those cultures (Brown and Levinson, 1978,1987). Since the politeness continuum is questionable, the more polite strategy is not necessarily negative politeness, also the less politeness strategy is not necessarily positive politeness. Therefore, I think that it might be more proper to label the positive politeness cultures as "less facework preferred cultures", and the negative politeness cultures as "more facework preferred cultures".

Both politeness theory and negotiation theory agree that certain facework strategies may be more preferred in a culture than in others. For example, Ting-Toomey (1988) suggests that members of individualistic or high-context cultures tend to use a greater degree of direct face-negotiation strategies, while on the contrary, members of

collectivistic cultures tend to use a greater degree of indirect face-negotiation strategies.

There is little empirical research to test cultural influence on facework. Nomura and Barnlund's (1983) findings are consistent with Ting-Toomey's proposition, that is, the members of collectivistic or high-context cultures tend to withdraw from face-threat situations, or do a FTA indirectly. Holtgraves and Yang's (1990) study is designed to examine Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, inconsistent with Brown and Levinson's propositions, Holtgraves and Yang (1990) have found that negative politeness are perceived as significantly more polite than are hints. We can conclude that use of hint as a strategy may not mean that there is more concern about the hearer's negative face. In high-context cultures, preference of using hints does not mean that there is a high respect to other's autonomy as politeness theory supposed. The interpretation could be that there is a high need for mutual face support, not just other's negative face, but also, may be more important, self positive face. For the persons in high-context or collectivistic cultures, hint is the best way to support mutual faces. Since the speaker does not make a request directly, the hearer could reject the request in the same way without threatening both sides' face.

Table 2

Descriptive Summary of Facework Differences between
Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures

Authors	Key Constructs of "Face"	Individualistic, Low-Context Cultures	Collectivistic, High-Context Cultures
Hofstede & Bond (1984)	Identity	emphasis on "I" identity	emphasis on "WE" identity
Triandis (1986)	Value Standards	universalistic value standards	particularistic value standards
Bond & Lee (1981)	Orientation	self-oriented	other-oriented group-oriented
Brown & Levinson (1987)	Culture Distinction	positive politeness cultures	negative politeness culture
Brown & Levinson (1987)	Strategies Preferred	(1) positive politeness (2) directly	(1) negative politeness (2) indirectly
Brown & Levinson (1987)	Perceived Power Distance	small	large
Brown & Levinson (1987)	Perceived Relational Distance	small	large
Ting-Toomey (1988)	Face Concern	self-face concern	other-face concern mutual face concern
Ting-Toomey (1988)	Face Need	autonomy (negative face need)	approval, acceptance (positive face need)
Ting-Toomey (1988)	Strategies Preferred	(1) negative politeness (2) self-face maintenance (3) directly	(1) positive politeness (2) mutual face maintenance (3) indirectly

Hypotheses

According to communication theories, any selection of a communication strategy is based upon predictions about hearer's reaction and speakers' self image, and any change of prediction may change communication strategy selection. My assumption is that the intimacy level between the speaker and the hearer may determine the speaker's predictions about type and degree of face threat of a FTA, thereby, the predictions may mainly influence speaker's facework.

I will explore three types of face threat of a request: other's negative face threat, other's positive face threat, and self face threat. Brown and Levinson (1978) only mentioned the first two types of face threat in their work. The studies conducted by Craig, Tracy and Spisak (1986) and Wilson (1992) suggest that an act of making a request potentially questions the responsibility, competence, independence of the requester. In other words, a request does not only threaten the hearer's face, but also threatens the speaker's positive face. Thus, speaker-oriented facework strategies (e.g., explanation, making excuses) would be used for self face maintenance. My first hypothesis is to test my assumption.

Hypothesis 1: Cross-culturally there is a strong correlation between speaker's prediction of face threat and facework strategy selection. Specifically, the degree of

perceived hearer's negative face threat is positively correlated with use of the "negative politeness" strategy; the degree of perceived hearer's positive face threat is positively correlated with use of the "positive politeness" strategy; the degree of perceived self face threat is positively correlated with use of the "self face maintenance" strategy. All kinds of face threat are negatively correlated with "directly" strategy, whereas they are positively correlated with "indirectly", and "don't do FTA" strategies.

The following hypotheses are to determine whether culture has effects on facework, specifically, the following four hypotheses are to test Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Proposition 3 and 4* which state that members of individualistic, low-context cultures would tend to perceive more negative-face need and use more autonomy-preserving strategies than would members of collectivistic, high-context cultures, and conversely, the latter would tend to perceive more positive face need and use more approval-seeking strategies than do the former (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 2: Compared with Chinese, Americans are more likely to perceived higher degree of other's negative face threat.

Hypothesis 3: Compared with Americans, Chinese are more likely to perceived higher degree of other's positive face threat.

Hypothesis 4: Compared with Chinese, Americans are more likely to use negative politeness.

Hypothesis 5: Compared with Americans, Chinese are more likely to use positive politeness.

The following two hypotheses are to test Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Proposition 1 and 2*, and *Proposition 5 and 6*, which state that the former tend to express a greater degree of self-face maintenance than do the latter, and the latter tend to express a greater degree of mutual-face or other-face maintenance than do the former (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 6: Compared with Chinese, Americans are more likely to perceived higher degree of self face threat.

Hypothesis 7: Compared with Chinese, Americans are more likely to use self face maintenance.

The following hypotheses are to test Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Proposition 7 and 8* which state that members of individualistic, low-context cultures tend to use a greater degree of direct face-negotiation strategies than do members of collectivistic, high-context cultures. And the latter tend to use a greater degree of indirect face-negotiation strategies than do the former (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 8: Compared with Chinese, Americans are more likely use the "directly" strategy.

Hypothesis 9: Compared with Americans, Chinese are more likely to use the "indirectly" strategy.

Hypothesis 10: Compared with Americans, Chinese are more likely to use the "don't do FTA" strategy.

The next hypotheses are to test Brown and Levinson's (1987) prediction that as relational distance increases, so does facework. By reviewing previous empirical studies, this prediction is only partially supported, that is, as relational distance increases, so does negative politeness. I predict that intimacy has a main effect on negative politeness use. Also the effect of intimacy is less influenced by culture, because in both individualistic and collectivistic cultures, as two people grow closer, they become more and more interdependent and willing to help each other, and they become more willing to tolerate a certain level of imposition (Lim, 1989).

Hypothesis 11: Cross-culturally, as intimacy level increases, perceived other's negative face threat decreases.

Hypothesis 12: Cross-culturally, as intimacy level increases, likelihood of negative politeness strategy decreases. The following hypotheses are to determine whether the effects of intimacy on facework are influenced by

culture, in other words, whether there is an interaction between cultural factor and relational factor on facework. Brown and Levinson (1987) assume that as relational distance between speaker and hearer increases, so does facework. Their rationale is that as relational distance increases, perceived magnitude of face threat of a FTA increases, then more facework is needed.

I think that Brown and Levinson's assumption is too simple to predict the likelihood of facework strategies. I assume that relational distance might affect facework by influencing (1) predicted degree of other's positive face need, (2) expected degree of self-face need being satisfied, and (3) perceived degree of obligation to satisfy other's positive face need. For collectivistic, high-context cultures, as intimacy level increases, positive politeness and self-face maintenance would increase. The reasons could be as the follows: (1) As shown in Table 2, people in collectivistic cultures tend to be group-oriented, and be particularistic and apply different value standards for members of their groups and outsiders (Triandis, 1986). Consequently, they tend to be more sensitive to changes of relational distance. (2) Since they are group-oriented, they have much more need to be approved, and to accept other in close relationships than in distant relationships. They would perceive greater degree of obligation to satisfy

other's positive face need, predict greater degree of other's positive face need, and expect greater degree of self-face need to be satisfied in close relationships than in distant relationships. Therefore, they tend to do more facework, especially positive politeness and self-face maintenance in close relationships than in distant relationships. In other words, in collectivistic cultures, intimacy level is positively associated with positive politeness and self-face maintenance.

For individualistic, low-context cultures, I assume that as intimacy level increases, positive politeness and self-face maintenance would decrease, or it would have no great change. The reasons could be that (1) People in individualistic cultures tend to be universalistic and apply the same value standards to all, therefore, they would be not so sensitive to changes of relational distance as people in collectivistic cultures; (2) They do not expect so much need to be approved of in close relationships as people in collectivistic cultures do. Also they do not think it is necessary to do more facework in close relationships. They perceive less obligation to satisfy other's positive face need in close relationships than in distant relationships (Lim, 1989).

Based on my assumptions, the next four hypotheses are the followings:

Hypothesis 13: As intimacy level increases, perceived degree of other's positive face threat would increase for Chinese, but decrease or not change for Americans.

Hypothesis 14: As intimacy level increases, perceived degree of self-face threat would increase for Chinese, but decrease or not change for Americans.

Hypothesis 15: As intimacy level increases, the likelihood of use positive politeness strategy would increase for Chinese, but decrease or not change for Americans.

Hypothesis 16: As intimacy level increases, the likelihood of use self-face maintenance would increase for Chinese, but decrease or not change for Americans.

Method

Overview

This study evaluated hypotheses about effects of culture and relational distance on perceived face threats and likelihood of facework strategy selection. A 3 x 2 factorial design (three levels of intimacy: close friend, friend, and acquaintance, by two cultural groups: American and Chinese) was used for this study. Two cultural groups are selected: subjects from the U.S.A. and subjects from

People's Republic of China. Intimacy level is manipulated by the questionnaires. To increase external validity, participants responded to one of three different request situations (the data then were collapsed across these situations). Hence, each participant responded to one of nine different hypothetical scenarios, crossing three levels of intimacy with three different situations. A pretest was used to check perceived request size in each scenario by the two cultural groups. Perceived level of intimacy was checked and controlled.

Subjects were supposed to make a request to a target person. Intimacy level between requester and target was manipulated by the questionnaire. Requesters' perception of type and degree of face-threat by this request were measured. Request messages illustrating six facework strategies were provided to the subject. Subjects' likelihood of using facework strategies was measured.

Two analysis techniques (two-way factorial ANOVA and Pearson r) were used to examine the hypotheses.

Participants

Two groups of subjects were selected based upon their cultural background. The U.S.A. group was composed of 72 undergraduate students (25 males, 47 females) enrolled in a communication course at Michigan State University in Fall

Semester 1993. They participated in this study in order to fulfill a course requirement. Any foreign student, or any student who was born or grew up in a foreign country was not included in this group. The average age of this group was 22.

The Chinese group was composed of 79 Chinese students (46 males, 30 females) from P.R. China who were studying at Michigan State University. A Chinese student directory printed by Chinese Students and Scholars Association was used as a sampling frame. Each first name of four names on the directory was selected as a subject. Since most of Chinese subjects were graduate students, the average age was 30. The average of years living in the U.S.A. was around 3 years. The questionnaires were delivered to the subjects with return envelopes and stamps. The return rate was 88%. In sum, N=151 participants (79 Chinese, 72 Americans) completed the experiment. These participants were orderly divided across the six experimental conditions (cell size range from 23 to 28).

Pretest: Selection of Requests

In order to increase internal validity and to control the extraneous variable request size, a pretest was done before the experiment. Two small cultural groups were set for the pretest. In the pretest, the subjects were different from the subjects were used in the experiment. The U.S.A.

group was composed of 24 students who were enrolled in a sociology course (SOC 216) in the summer of 1993 at Michigan State University. The P.R. China group was composed of 19 Chinese students who attended a Chinese students poem recital and picnic party in the summer of 1993. This pretest was used to check perceived request size for both cultural groups. Subjects were asked to rank a set of requests (e.g., borrow \$5 for making copies in library, borrow \$100 for rent payment, ask for a ride, ask for repaying a loan, borrow class notes, ask other to re-do a project work) from the largest request to the smallest request.

The result of this pretest showed that both cultural groups perceived equal size of these requests except "borrow \$100 for rent payment" (the U.S.A. group perceived a larger request than the P.R.C. group) and "asking for repayment" (the P.R.C. group perceived a larger request than the U.S.A. group). However, according to the results of t-test, $p > .05$, the significance of the differences are on the margin, and there is no significant difference on perceived realistic of the requests between two cultural groups (see Table 3).

Based on the pretest, three requests were chosen as request scenarios for the questionnaires. These were (a) "borrowing \$5 for making copies in library", (b) "asking for repaying a loan", and (c) "asking someone to re-do a project work" (see Appendix A).

Table 3

Means of Perceived Request Size and Perceived Realistic of Requests in Pretest

Requests	Mean of Perceived Request Size			Mean of Perceived Realistic		
	1=largest request			1=not realistic		
	6=smallest request			7=very realistic		
	U.S.A. N=28	P.R.C. N=23	t-test p	U.S.A. N=28	P.R.C. N=23	t-test p
Borrow \$100 for rent	1.96	2.65	.074	3.41	3.91	.240
Ask re-do a project work	2.75	2.48	.559	4.79	4.42	.539
Ask for repay a loan	3.21	2.48	.052	5.48	4.90	.086
Ask for a ride	3.68	3.22	.302	5.14	5.35	.682
Borrow \$5 for copy	4.46	4.74	.351	4.95	5.26	.559
Borrow class notes	5.04	5.43	.202	5.96	5.67	.539

Overview of Experimental Procedures

The intimacy level between requester and target was manipulated by questionnaire. Nine questionnaires were developed to represent nine different situations. In addition to three different requests, one from three target persons who represented three levels of intimacy (best friend, friend, and acquaintance) appeared in each request (see Appendix A). The questionnaires were originally created in English, then translated into Chinese by a professional translator. Back translation was used to check the identity of these two language versions.

A set of communication intimacy items (e.g., frequency of communication with the target; frequency of discussing personal problem with the target) developed by Roloff et al. (1988) was used to check manipulated intimacy and control for perceived intimacy. The subjects of both cultural groups were asked to rate level of communication intimacy with the imaged target person.

The subjects of both cultural groups were asked to imagine one out of these nine request situations, to predict type and degree of face threats initiated by this request, and to rate likelihood of sixteen different request messages or actions which instantiated six facework strategies.

Independent Variables

Two independent variables were in this factorial design: the cultural factor and the relational factor.

The cultural factor was operated by two groups of subjects from two different cultures: American and Chinese. The American culture and the Chinese culture are at opposite poles of cultural dimensions such as individualism-collectivism (Hofstede, 1980) and low-context versus high-context (Hall, 1976).

The manipulated variable was relational distance between requester and target. Subjects were supposed to make

a request to a target person considered to be a best friend, or a friend, or an acquaintance.

Dependent Variables and Measures

In order to test my hypotheses, two sets of dependent variables are measured.

Perceived face threat. One set of variables was perceived face threats. Three types of perceived face threat (other's negative face threat, other's positive face threat, and self face threat) were distinguished and measured: (a) "Perceived other's negative face threat" refers to how much the requester predicts that the target person would feel being imposed by his/her request; (b) "Perceived other's positive face threat" refers to how much the requester predicts that the target person would feel he/she was not approved by the requester; © "Perceived self face threat" refers to how much the requester would feel he/she was not liked or not valued by the target person because of making the request.

Three items were designed to measure each type of perceived face threat. A 7-point scale—*Strongly Agree*(7)--*Strongly Disagree*(1) was employed to measure perceived degree of face-threat of each type of face threat at each request situation and each intimacy level. "Strongly agree" indicated the largest face threat, "strongly disagree" indicated a smallest face threat.

Facework strategies. The other set of dependent variables was rating likelihood of facework strategies. Combining the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory and face maintenance strategies of Ting-Toomey's (1988) face-negotiation theory, six facework strategies were developed for this research. They were "don't do FTA", "indirectly", "negative politeness", "positive politeness", "self face maintenance", and "directly". Sixteen request messages or actions were written to illustrate these six facework strategies. One item was used for the strategy of "don't do FTA", three items were used for each of the other five facework strategies.

"Don't do FTA" strategy is indicated by the item that requester tries to avoid performing the face threatening action. The "indirectly" strategy includes those messages in which requester never states the request outright, but instead drops hints to the other person, or makes the request indirectly. The "negative politeness" strategy includes those messages in which requester asks about the ability of the target to provide the needed assistance, or the requester accompanies a request with an option of rejection, or with an apology. The "positive politeness" strategy includes those messages in which the requester tries to be close or to get on "common ground" with the

target or the requester promises to do a favor for the target before asking the request. The "self face maintenance" strategy includes those messages in which requester makes explanations or excuses, or implies that the need for help is just a matter of temporary bad luck, or mentions his or her own efforts prior to the request, or emphasizes his or her reliability. The "directly" strategy includes those messages in which requester just directly states the request.

Sixteen request messages or actions were presented to the subjects of both groups. The subjects were asked to rate their likelihood of using each face work strategy in each request situation and each intimacy level. A 7-point scale--*Very Unlikely*(1)--*Very Likely*(7)-- was used to measure likelihood.

Controlled Variables

There were three controlled variables: relational power, request size, and perceived intimacy.

Politeness theory (1978) proposed that there are three situational factors (relational distance, relational power, and request size) which may influence the weightiness of face-threat of a FTA. In this study, only the relational distance factor was of interest. The other two situational factors--relational power and request size--were held constant.

Relational power. The relationship between requester and target was controlled by the scenarios. The relationship was supposed to be equal in relational power, or with the same social status, such as classmate, or roommate, etc.

Request size. The pretest was used to select request situations. Three items were employed in the questionnaire to measure perceived request size for each request situation.

Perceived intimacy. Since intimacy labels are culturally and personally based, they may be somewhat imprecise. These imprecise labels, which must influence the manipulation of intimacy level, may threaten the internal validity of this study. In order to increase internal validity, a set of communication intimacy items (e.g., frequency of communication with the target; frequency of discussing personal problem with the target, etc.) developed by Roloff et al. (1988) was used to measure and control the variable of perceived intimacy.

Manipulation Checks

Perceived intimacy was measured at three levels, in order to check if the manipulated variable—intimacy—has been manipulated. A 3 X 2 ANOVA crossing manipulated intimacy and culture was used for this manipulation check. The independent variables were manipulated intimacy and culture, the dependent variable was perceived intimacy. The results

show that the manipulation of intimacy has a significant main effect on perceived intimacy, $F(2,143)=138.45$, $p<.001$, $\text{Eta}^2=.629$ (for the U.S.A. group, $M=5.71$ for best friend, $M=4.63$ for friend, $M=2.51$ for acquaintance; for P.R. China group, $M=5.19$ for best friend, $M=3.73$ for friend, $M=1.82$ for acquaintance). It indicates that the manipulation of intimacy level was effective.

The results also show that culture has main effect on perceived intimacy, $F(1,143)=18.39$, $p<.001$, $\text{Eta}^2=.036$. The subjects in the P.R. China group perceived significantly lower intimacy than the subjects in the U.S.A. group across three intimacy levels. Hierarchical regression was conducted to determine whether the difference of perceived intimacy between two groups had any effect on the dependent variables. The procedure of regression was that perceived intimacy was entered at the first step, then culture and manipulated intimacy were entered at the second step, and finally the interaction between culture and manipulated intimacy was entered at the third step. The results show that (a) there was no significant effect of perceived intimacy on the dependent variables; (b) after controlling for perceived intimacy, the main effects and interaction between culture and manipulated intimacy were no different from the results of the ANOVA reported below. The results of this evaluation indicate that the difference of perceived

intimacy between two cultural groups did not significantly influence perceived face threat and likelihood of face work strategy selection.

Reliability Check

Reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was used to check inter-item correlation coefficient for each variable. The results showed that the measurement of each variable, except the negative politeness strategy, was acceptable (see Table 6).

Analysis

Correlation r was used to test Hypothesis 1. This analysis compared a set of scores of perceived face threat and a set of scores of likelihood of facework strategies. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each perceived face threat and likelihood of each facework strategy. The mean scores comparisons were made between cultural groups, and among three intimacy levels. Then two-way factorial ANOVA was used to discover whether relational distance and culture have any main effect separately, and also whether these two independent variables were interacting and producing a cumulative effect. This procedure was used to test the remaining hypotheses.

Results

Correlation between Face Threat and facework

Hypothesis 1 predicts that cross-culturally the degree of perceived face threat would be strongly correlated to the likelihood of facework strategy. To evaluate this hypothesis, Pearson r was employed. As is apparent in Tables 4 and 5, the results are consistent with my first hypothesis. For both cultural groups, the degree of perceived other's negative face threat is positively correlated to the likelihood of negative politeness (U.S.A. group: $r=.20$, $p<.05$; P.R.C. group: $r=.34$, $p<.01$), the degree of other's positive face threat is positively correlated to the likelihood of positive politeness (U.S.A. group: $r=.32$, $p<.01$; P.R.C. group: $r=.48$, $p<.001$), and the degree of perceived self face threat is positively correlated to the likelihood of self face maintenance (U.S.A. group: $r=.59$, $p<.001$; P.R.C. group: $r=.48$, $p<.001$). The degrees of three types of perceived face threat are significantly positively correlated to "don't do FTA" and "indirectly" strategies. The degree of three types of perceived face threat are significantly negatively correlated to the likelihood of "directly" strategy, except perceived negative face threat in the P.R.C. group.

Effect of Culture

Hypotheses 2, 3, 4, and 5 are to test Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Proposition 3 and 4*. ANOVA was used to test these four hypotheses. As shown in Table 6, the result is consistent with Hypothesis 2 which predicts that Americans perceived significantly higher degree of other's negative face threat than Chinese, $F(1,145)=5.63$, $p<.05$, $Eta^2=.36$. Hypothesis 3 is confirmed by the result, $F(1,145)=18.90$, $p<.001$, $Eta^2=.11$. It means that Chinese perceived significantly higher degree of other's positive face threat than Americans. The result is inconsistent with Hypothesis 4 which predicts that Americans are more likely to use negative politeness than Chinese. Opposite to this hypothesis, Chinese rate significantly higher likelihood of using negative politeness strategy than Americans do, $F(1,145)=4.02$, $p<.05$, $Eta^2=.026$. Hypothesis 5 is confirmed by the result, $F(1,145)=4.93$, $p<.05$, $Eta^2=.032$. It means that Chinese are more likely to use positive politeness strategy than Americans.

Table 4

Correlations between Experimental Variables for U.S.A. Participants

Experimental Variables	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) Manipulated Intimacy	-.36**	-.40**	-.40**	-.08	-.18	-.12	-.20*	-.21*	.14
(2) Negative Face Threat	---	.70**	.82**	.39**	.31**	.20*	.42**	.51**	-.38**
(3) Positive Face Threat		---	.77**	.36**	.28**	.19	.32**	.43**	-.33**
(4) Self-face Threat			---	.42**	.41**	.33**	.36**	.59**	-.44**
(5) Don't Do FTA				---	.37**	.15	-.11	.24*	-.26*
(6) Indirectly					---	.37**	.09	.31**	-.01
(7) Negative Politeness						---	.17	.33**	-.16
(8) Positive Politeness							---	.24*	-.01
(9) Self-face Maintenance								---	-.26*
(10) Directly									---

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 5

Correlations between Experimental Variables for P.R.C. Participants

Experimental Variables	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) Manipulated Intimacy	-.13	.20*	.22*	.12	.21*	-.10	.06	.24*	.06
(2) Negative Face Threat	---	.27**	.43**	.21*	.22*	.34**	.23*	.26**	-.09
(3) Positive Face Threat		---	.77**	.34**	.39**	-.08	.48**	.46**	-.30**
(4) Self-face Threat			---	.53**	.43**	.03	.28**	.45**	-.53**
(5) Don't Do FTA				---	.53**	.03	.28**	.45**	-.53**
(6) Indirectly					---	.02	.59**	.58**	-.28**
(7) Negative Politeness						---	.11	.14	.22*
(8) Positive Politeness							---	.61**	-.10
(9) Self-face Maintenance								---	-.16
(10) Directly									---

Note. *= $p<.05$; **= $p<.01$

Table 6

Effects of Culture on Perceived Face Threat and Likelihood of Facework Strategy

Dependent Variables	All Subjects	U.S.A. Subjects	P.R.C. Subjects	F	p	Alpha
Perceived Face Threat						
Other's Positive Face Threat	2.5 (1.37)	2.7 (1.49)	2.2 (1.20)	5.63	.019	0.80
Other's Negative Face Threat	3.6 (1.61)	3.0 (1.28)	4.1 (1.73)	18.90	.000	0.76
Self-face Threat	3.2 (1.56)	2.8 (1.42)	3.6 (1.59)	11.84	.001	0.81
Likelihood of Strategy						
Don't Do FTA	3.2 (2.15)	2.7 (1.92)	3.6 (2.26)	7.17	.008	
Indirectly	2.8 (2.15)	2.4 (1.15)	3.1 (1.58)	12.41	.001	0.65
Negative Politeness	3.9 (1.42)	3.7 (1.26)	4.1 (1.52)	4.02	.047	0.53
Positive Politeness	3.7 (1.55)	3.4 (1.18)	4.0 (1.80)	4.93	.028	0.64
Self-face Maintenance	4.3 (1.45)	4.2 (1.23)	4.4 (1.63)	0.34	.562	0.62
Directly	3.4 (1.82)	3.4 (1.83)	3.3 (1.82)	0.29	.589	0.80

Note. N=151 (72 U.S.A. participants, 79 P.R.C. participants). Numbers outside parentheses are mean scores; numbers inside parentheses are standard deviations. Higher mean scores indicate higher degree of perceived face threat or higher likelihood of facework strategy.

Hypotheses 6 and 7 are to test Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Proposition 1 and 2* and *Proposition 5 and 6*. ANOVA was used to test these two hypotheses. Both hypotheses are not confirmed by the results. Opposite to Hypothesis 6, Chinese perceive significantly higher degree of self face threat than Americans did, $F(1,145)=11.84$, $p<.01$, $Eta^2=.068$. Regarding to Hypothesis 7, the result indicates that there is no significant difference on likelihood of self face maintenance between two cultural groups.

Hypotheses 8, 9, and 10 are to determine whether culture has any effect on the likelihood of "directly", "indirectly", and "don't do FTA" strategies. ANOVA was used to test these three hypotheses. As shown in Table 6, Hypothesis 8 is not confirmed. The result indicates that there is no significant difference on likelihood of "directly" strategy between the two cultural groups. Hypothesis 9 is confirmed by the result, $F(1,145)=12.41$, $p<.01$, $Eta^2=.078$. It means that Chinese are more likely to use "indirectly" strategy than Americans. The result is consistent with Hypothesis 10, $F(1,145)=7.17$, $p<.01$, $Eta^2=.048$. It means that Chinese are more likely to use "don't do FTA" strategy than Americans.

Effect of Intimacy

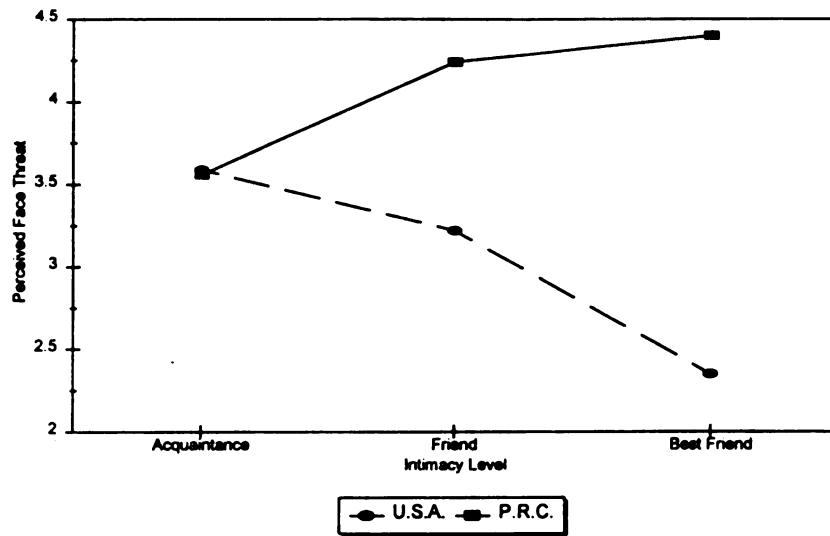
Hypothesis 11 is confirmed by the result, that is, cross-culturally as intimacy level increases, perceived

other's negative face threat decreases, $F(2,145)=5.37$, $p<.01$, $\text{Eta}^2=.068$. Hypothesis 12 is not supported by the result, that is, as intimacy level increases, likelihood of negative politeness strategy doesn't significantly decrease.

Interaction between Culture and Intimacy

Hypotheses 13 and 14 are to determine whether there is an interaction between culture and intimacy on perceived face threats. Two-way ANOVA was used. Hypothesis 13 is confirmed by the result, $F(2,145)=6.27$, $p<.01$, $\text{Eta}^2=.071$. As shown in Figure 1, in a distant relationship, the two groups perceive almost the same degree of other's positive face threat. As intimacy increases, perceived other's positive face threat decreases for Americans, whereas it increases for Chinese. This pattern also is reflected in the correlations shown in Tables 4 and 5, where manipulated intimacy is negatively related to perceived other's positive face threat for Americans, but positively related for Chinese. Hypothesis 14 is confirmed by the result, $F(2,145)=7.34$, $p<.01$, $\text{Eta}^2=.085$. As shown in Figure 2, in a distant relationship, there is little difference between the two cultural groups. As intimacy increases, Americans perceive lower degree of self face threat, while Chinese perceive higher degree of self face threat. Again, the same pattern is evident in the correlations between manipulated

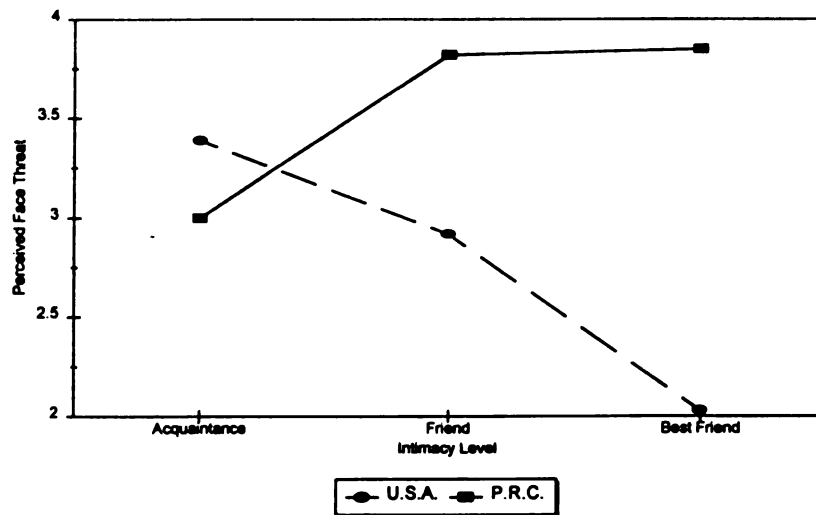
intimacy and self face threat for Americans versus Chinese participants (compare Tables 4 and 5). Hypotheses 15 and 16 are to determine whether there is an interaction between culture and intimacy on likelihood of positive politeness strategy and self face maintenance. Two-way ANOVA was conducted to test these two hypotheses. Hypothesis 15 is not confirmed by the result. There is no significant interaction between culture and intimacy on likelihood of positive politeness. Hypothesis 16 is confirmed by the result. As shown in Figure 3, the interaction for self-face maintenance strategies is significant, $F(2,145)=3.94$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta}^2=.051$. The results indicate that in a distant relationship, Chinese are less likely to use self face maintenance than Americans. However as intimacy level increases, the likelihood increases for Chinese, while it decreases for Americans. Furthermore, there is another finding shown in Figure 4, the interaction for "indirectly" strategy is significant, $F(2,145)=3.06$, $p<.05$, $\text{Eta}^2=.037$. In distant relationships, there is no difference between two groups. As intimacy levels increases, Americans become less likely to use hint, whereas Chinese become more likely to use hint. Once again, these interactions also are apparent in correlations between intimacy and politeness strategies for Americans versus Chinese participants (compare Tables 4 and 5).



$F(2,145)=6.27, p<.01$

Figure 1

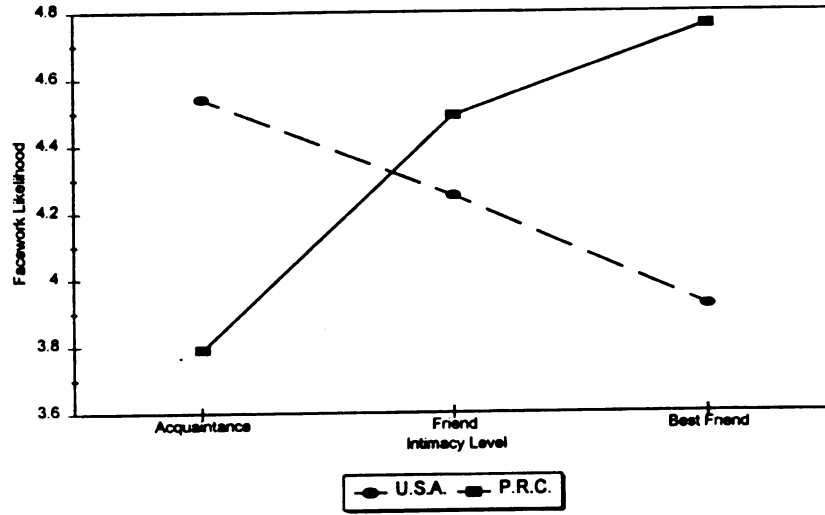
Interaction of Culture and Intimacy on
Perceived Positive Face Threat



$F(2,145)=7.34 p<.01$

Figure 2

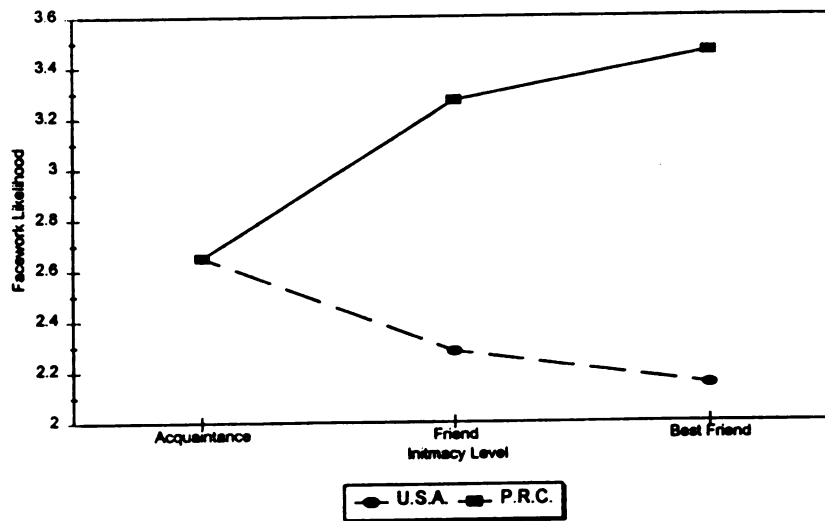
Interaction of Culture and Intimacy on
Perceived Self-face Threat



$F(2,145)=3.94, p<.05$

Figure 3

Interaction of Culture and Intimacy on Self-face Maintenance



$F(2,145)=3.94, p<.05$

Figure 4

Interaction of Culture and Intimacy on Off-Record Strategy

In general, the results in Tables 4 and 5 indicate that except negative face threat and likelihood of negative politeness, intimacy level is negatively correlated to perceived face threats and facework for the U.S.A. group, while it is positively correlated to them for the P.R.C. group. There is also a tendency that as intimacy level increases, the cultural differences increase.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to test Brown and Levinson's predictions about the effects of culture and relational factor on facework, and also to test some propositions from Ting-Toomey's face-negotiation theory. Specifically, this study aims at determining whether a cultural factor and a relational factor—intimacy—have effects on requesters' perceived face threat and likelihood facework strategy when individuals make a request.

The results of this study are summarized and discussed as the followings:

My Hypothesis 1 assumed that cross-culturally requesters' perceived face threat would be positively correlated to likelihood of facework, and negatively correlated to "directly" request making. The results are

consistent with the hypothesis, but some of the correlations are not as high as I expected. My explanation is that as requester select facework strategies, it is not necessary to only choose the facework strategy which is matched with the type of face threat he/she predicted. For instance, when a requester perceived a strong other's negative face threat, he/she might not only use negative politeness, but also use self face maintenance to mitigate the face-threat. Based on the results shown in Tables 4 and 5, cross-culturally, of these three types of perceived face threats, perceived positive face threat and self face threat are better predictors of all types of facework strategies.

Except for Hypothesis 4, Ting-Toomey's (1988) *Proposition 3 and 4* are generally supported by my results. As shown in Table 6, Chinese perceive a higher degree of positive face threat than Americans. Conversely, Americans perceive a higher degree of negative face threat than Chinese. For the likelihood of facework strategy, my result is consistent with Hypothesis 5, that Chinese are more likely to use positive politeness strategy than Americans. However, Hypothesis 4 is not confirmed by the results. Americans do not present higher likelihood of using negative politeness. Opposite to my hypothesis, Chinese have higher likelihood to use negative politeness.

Why do Americans perceive higher degree of negative face threat than Chinese, but don't present higher likelihood of using negative politeness than Chinese? The explanations for the results could be that: (1) Americans don't see negative politeness as viable, but by looking at the means in Table 6, for the U.S.A. participants, negative politeness strategy is ranked as the second high likely, which is higher than that of positive politeness strategy. Therefore, it indicates that Americans do rate negative politeness strategy as fairly likely to be used. In this sense, Ting-Toomey's prediction is partially supported. (2) Even though Americans perceive higher degree of negative face threat, they might prefer to use positive politeness and self face maintenance to mitigate the negative face threat instead of using negative politeness. As shown in Table 6, for the U.S.A. participants, the correlation between perceived negative face threat and negative politeness is only $r=.20$, $p<.05$, which is the weakest correlation of all correlations between perceived negative face threat and facework strategies (e.g., correlation with self face maintenance is the strongest one, $r=.51$, $p<.001$; with positive politeness $r=.42$, $p<.001$). On the contrary, Chinese perceive less other's negative face threat than American, but they rate higher likelihood of negative politeness strategy than Americans. Those findings might

partially support Brown and Levinson's (1987) culture distinction, that is, the members of the positive politeness cultures (what the U.S. culture is classified) prefer to use positive politeness to redress face threats, and the members of the negative politeness cultures (what the Chinese culture is classified) prefer to use negative politeness to redress face threat.

Ting-Toomey's *Proposition 1 and 2*, and *Proposition 5 and 6*, which propose that members of individualistic cultures tend to have more self-face concern and to be more likely to use self-face maintenance, are not supported by the ANOVA tests. Opposite to Hypothesis 6, Chinese perceive higher degree of self-face threat than Americans. Hypothesis 7 is also not confirmed by the result, that is, there is no significant difference between two cultural groups on the likelihood of self-face maintenance. But by looking at means in Table 6, for the U.S.A. participants, the mean of likelihood of self-face maintenance is ranked as the highest likely to be used, even though is slightly lower than the mean of the P.R.C. participants. Moreover, as shown in Figure 3, Americans don't tend to use self-face maintenance at all levels of intimacy. At distant relationships, Americans are much more likely to use self-face maintenance than Chinese; but at close relationships, Americans are less

likely to use self-face maintenance than Chinese. In this sense, Ting-Toomey's proposition is partially supported.

Ting-Toomey's *Proposition 7 and 8*, which predict that members of individualistic cultures are more likely to use direct strategy and less likely to use hint and avoidance than members of collectivistic cultures, are supported by my results. Hypothesis 8 is not confirmed by the ANOVA test, that is, no significant difference on likelihood of "directly" between two cultural groups is found. But by looking at the means in Table 6, for the U.S.A. participants, the mean of "directly" is much higher than the means of "indirectly", "don't do FTA", and the same with the means of positive politeness. On the contrary, for the P.R.C. participants, the mean of "directly" is much lower than the means of "don't do FTA", and positive politeness, almost the same with the mean of "indirectly". These results indicate that Americans do rate "directly" strategy as fairly likely to be used. In this sense, Ting-Toomey's propositions are mainly supported.

Regarding to the effect of intimacy on perceived negative face threat and likelihood of negative politeness, Hypothesis 11 is confirmed, that is, the intimacy level is negatively associated with perceived negative face threat. Hypothesis 12 is not confirmed. Cross-culturally, the change of relational distance has no significant influence on

likelihood of negative politeness strategy. Culture differences has main effect on this dependent variable.

Except for Hypothesis 15, my hypotheses about an interaction between the cultural factor and relational factor are generally supported by the results. As shown in Figure 1, 2, 3, and 4, in distant relationships, two cultural groups show a small difference on their perceived face threat and their likelihood of doing facework; in close relationships, there is a large difference between two groups. These findings are consistent with my assumptions that the members in collectivistic culture have more need to be approved in close relationships than in distant relationships, therefore, they tend to use more self face maintenance and hint in close relationships than in distant relationships. Conversely, the members of individualistic culture tend to perceive less face threat in close relationships than in distant relationships, therefore, they are less likely to use self face maintenance and hint in close relationships than in distant relationships.

My findings indicate that the directions of the effects of intimacy varied across different cultures. It implies that Brown and Levinson's prediction about intimacy negatively associated with facework might have some cultural bias, in that it might be true only for individualistic cultures, but not for collectivistic cultures. As shown in

Tables 4 and 5, and Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4, in many cases, intimacy level is negatively associated with perceived face threats and facework for the U.S.A. group (that is, consistent with Brown and Levinson's prediction), while it is positively associated with perceived face threats and facework for the P.R.C. group (that is, inconsistent with Brown and Levinson's prediction).

In order to test this reasoning more directly, future research is suggested to use the subjects who are from the countries with the individualistic cultures (or low-context cultures) but other than the U.S.A., and the subjects who are from the countries with the collectivistic cultures (or high-context cultures) but other than the P.R. China.

Furthermore, a subsidiary analysis indicates that the direction of the effects of intimacy varied across different types of request. It implies that Brown and Levinson's prediction might have a request type bias, in that the prediction might be true only for the request type of asking for a favor, but not for the request type of enforcing obligation. In my study design, the three different request situations represented two types of request: asking for a favor vs. enforcing obligation. In general, as relational distance increases, facework increases in the "money borrowing" situation—asking for a favor (that is, consistent with Brown and Levinson's prediction), but facework

decreased or remained constant in the "asking for loan repayment" and " Asking for re-do work" situations—enforcing obligation (that is, inconsistent with Brown and Levinson's prediction).

Again, to test this reasoning more directly, further research is recommend that hypothetical request situation could be different kinds of favor-asking and enforcing obligation, other than the situations I used in this study. Moreover, other than favor-asking and enforcing obligation, different types of request situation are suggested to use to test this reasoning.

Aside from findings relevant to the hypotheses, the other results merit note. The Chinese participants indicated that they were more likely than the American participants to use nearly all types of politeness (see Table 6, and Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4). The explanations for the results could be that (1) the Chinese participants perceived larger relational distance across three intimacy levels than the American participants did; (2) the Chinese participants perceived larger size of requests than the American participants did, especially for the request type of enforcing obligation and negative comment; (3) the Chinese might tend to grade higher likelihood for all types of politeness than the American participants did.

I should note some limitations of this study. First, since I could not have the Chinese sample from the country of the P.R.C., the participants of the P.R.C. group are Chinese graduate students in Michigan State University who are originally from the P.R.C. This group of subjects might be different from the people who are living in the P.R.C.

Second, there are differences on the participants' age and gender between two cultural groups. The participants of the P.R.C. group are older and have more males than U.S.A. group. T-tests were used to determine whether there is a significant difference on perceived face threat and likelihood of facework between male and female participants. No significant difference was found, except that American female participants were more likely to use negative politeness than American male participants. Correlations were used to determine whether age differences are associated with the differences on perceived face threat and likelihood of facework. No significant correlations were found, except that for Chinese participants, age was positively correlated to perceived negative face threat ($r=.27$, $p<.05$), and for American participants, age was negatively correlated to likelihood of negative politeness ($r=-.22$, $p<.05$). Based on these tests, the differences on age and gender do not appear to be a major problem for this study.

Third, the set of request situations is mixed up with two types of request (asking for a favor and enforcing obligation). It might have an effect on perceived face threat and facework, which might moderate or even distort the main effects of culture and intimacy.

Fourth, a questionnaire was used for my experiment. Hence, social desirability might have influenced the results, since participants' answer might be different from their acting in the real world.

In conclusion, my results provide some partial support for Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory and Ting-Toomey's (1988) face-negotiation theory. I believe that their approach are particularly useful for cross-cultural communication study and social psychology study. Based on my study, I think that their hypotheses and propositions might be too simple to cover the complicated reality. Further studies are recommended on facework in different types of request and using the subjects who are from individualistic and collectivistic cultures but other than the U.S.A. and the P.R.C.

APPENDIX A

Text of the Three Hypothetical Requesting Situations

(1) Money Borrowing

Imagine that you are in main library and want to cope articles from recent issues of some academic journals. It costs \$5 to copy those articles. When you search for money, you notice that you have forgotten to bring your wallet. You really need those articles as soon as possible for your term paper. Just then, you happen to notice your best friend (friend, acquaintance) sitting nearby. Now you decide to ask him/her to lend you \$5.

(2) Loan Repayment

Imagine that your best friend (friend, acquaintance) borrowed \$20 from you a month ago and promised to repay the money in a week. However, he/she has not repaid it to you now. You feel that you have to remind him/her of it.

(3) Re-do Project

Imagine that you have been assigned to a group project in one of your classes. It is important to you that you get a good grade in this class. The final grade will depend to a great extent on how well the group project turns out. You were designated by the course instructor to be the leader of the group. One group member, who is your best friend (friend, acquaintance), has done such poor job that the group grade is in jeopardy. You need to get him/her to re-do his/her part of the project in the remaining time before the final project is due.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Items for Measuring Perceived Face Threat

Other's negative face threat (Alpha=.80)

For three hypothetical situations:

- B1. He/she would perceive your request as a difficult one with which to comply.
- B4. Your request would be perceived by him/her as an unreasonable infringement.
- B7. Given your request, he/she would feel that you are imposing on him/her.

Other's positive face threat (Alpha=.76)

For "money borrowing" situation:

- B2. He/she might think that his/her public image would be damaged if he/she rejected your request.
- B5. He/she may feel good about himself/herself since he/she has chance to help you.
- B8. He/she might think that his/her self-esteem would be damaged if he/she rejected your request.

For "loan repayment" and "re-do project: situations:

- B2. Your request would potentially damage his/her public image.
- B5. He/She may feel embarrassed about himself/herself, because of your request.
- B8. Your request would reflect negatively on his/her abilities and efforts.

Self face threat (Alpha=.81)

For three hypothetical situations

- B3. Your request may create a negative image of yourself in his/her mind.
- B6. You would feel embarrassed about making this request.
- B9. Your request would reflect negatively on your abilities and efforts.

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire Items for Measuring Likelihood of Facework Strategy

(1) Money Borrowing Situation

Do not do FTA (One item)

C1. You decide not to borrow money from him/her.

Indirectly (Alpha=.65)

C5. You explain your problem in detail to him/her without mentioning the request. (e.g., "See, I am collecting articles for my term paper. I didn't realize that I did not have my wallet with me until I brought these journals to the copy center. It looks like I'll have to leave these journals here and go back to get some money, but I am afraid these journals may have been taken by someone else when I get back.")

C10. You do not state your request outright, but instead drop hints to him/her. (e.g., "I was going to copy some articles here, but I forgot to bring my wallet with me.")

C16. You tell him/her that you have been looking for your roommate in library for a while, in order to borrow some money to make copies. At this moment, you haven't found your roommate yet.

Negative politeness (Alpha=.53)

C2. You accompany your request with an apology for having to ask for a help. (e.g., "I'm sorry to bother you, but I was wondering if I could borrow \$5 to copy some articles.")

C11. You ask him/her if he/she has extra money before mentioning your request.

- C15. You state your request, making it clear to him/her that he/she can feel free to say NO. (e.g., "Could you please lend me \$5? but if you don't have any extra money, that's OK, I can ask someone else.")

Positive politeness (Alpha=.64)

- C6. You are friendly toward him/her to get him/her in the right frame of mind before mentioning your request. (e.g., "Hi, how are you? You look great today! I like your shirt! Hey, I wanted to copy some articles, but I forgot to bring my wallet. Could you please lend me \$5?")
- C7. You accompany the request with a promise of your help to him/her in the future. (e.g., "Could I borrow \$5 to make some copies? If you need any help, you can feel free to come to me.")
- C13. You indicate how important his/her help is to you personally. (e.g., "Can I borrow \$5 to make some copies? I 'd really appreciate it. You'd be saving my life, because otherwise, I might not finish my paper on time.")

Self face maintenance (Alpha=.62)

- C3. You make explanations or excuses for not having your wallet with you. (e.g., "I need these articles for my paper which is due tomorrow, but I forget my wallet and I just don't have time to go back and get it. Could you lend me \$5?")
- C4. You mention your own efforts prior to the request. (e.g., "I forgot to bring my wallet, could you please lend me \$5? I intended to go back to get my wallet, but I just realized that I forgot the key of my apartment also.")
- C8. You explain the situation and imply that your need for help is just an accidental matter. (e.g., "Can I borrow \$5 to make some copies? I usually put my wallet in a pocket of my jacket, but today it is too warm to wear a jacket, so I forgot to bring my wallet.")

Directly (Alpha=.80)

- C9. You directly state the request to him/her. (e.g., "Hi! How are you doing? Can I borrow \$5 to make some copies?")
- C12. You state the request to him/her in a casual tone. (e.g., "Hi! How's it going? Any chance you could loan me \$5 so I can make some copies?")
- C14. You simply and plainly ask him/her for help. (e.g., "Would you lend me \$5?")

(2) Loan Repayment Situation

Do not do FTA (One item)

- C1. You wouldn't ask him/her to repay the loan. You pretend that you have forgotten it.

Indirectly (Alpha=.65)

- C5. You aren't very friendly to him/her until he/she gets the hint that you are mad with his/her delay in repaying you.
- C10. You don't state your request outright, but instead drop hints to him/her. (e.g., "I have run out of cash, and I really need to pay some bills.")
- C16. You mention that someone else always keeps his/her promise to repay the loan without mentioning his/her delay in repayment.

Negative politeness (Alpha=.53)

- C2. You accompany your request with an apology for reminding him/her to repay the loan. (e.g., "I am sorry to mention this, but I really need some money right now. Do you remember that you borrowed \$20 a month ago? Could you please repay it now?")
- C11. You ask him/her if he/she has any financial problems before mentioning your request. (e.g., "Are

you low on cash recently? If not, could you repay my loan?")

- C15. You state the request, making it clear to him/her that the choice is up to him/her as to whether the loan is repaid right away. (e.g., "Could you repay my loan? But if you are low on cash, you can repay it another time.")

Positive politeness (Alpha=.64)

- C6. You try to be friendly toward him/her to get him/her in the right frame of mind before mentioning the request. (e.g., "Hi! How is your semester going? You look great today! Hey, you know something, I have run out of cash. Could you repay my loan?")
- C7. Before mentioning the request, you ask why he/she hasn't repaid the loan as he/she promised.
- C13. You accompany the request with a statement that you do not think he/she is the type of person who normally borrows money and then does not repay it for long periods of time. (e.g., "Could you repay the loan? I know that you must have forgotten it, because you are not the type of person who always delays repayment.")

Self face maintenance (Alpha=.62)

- C3. You describe how badly you need some money right away, otherwise, you would not press him/her. (e.g., "I wouldn't press you to repay the loan, but I have run out of cash and I really need some money to pay my bills.")
- C4. You indicate that you are just doing a routine check, that the request does not mean that you are pressing him/her to repay. (e.g., "Did you borrow \$20 from me a month ago? I just wanted to make sure I remembered correctly. I'm not pressing you to repay it right now.")
- C8. You state that you understand the financial problems he/she faces, you won't urge him/her to repay. (e.g.,

"I understand that you are facing some financial problems, I won't press you to repay the loan.")

Directly (Alpha=.80)

C9. You directly state your request. (e.g., "I would like you to repay the loan.")

C12. You simply tell him/her that it is the time for him/her to repay the loan.

C14. You simply inform him/her that he/she should repay the loan right away. (e.g., "You promised that you would repay the loan in a week, but more than four weeks have passed. Could you repay it now?")

(3) Re-do Project Situation

Do not do FTA (One item)

C1. You wouldn't ask him/her to re-do his/her work.

Indirectly (Alpha=.65)

C5. You aren't very friendly to him/her until he/she gets the hint that you are aren't very pleased with the quality of his/her work.

C10. You don't say a word to him/her and simply re-do his/her work without telling him/her about it.

C16. You recount a fictitious occurrence about being in another group where one person re-did his part of work because of his poor job without mentioning your own group's problem.

Negative politeness (Alpha=.53)

C2. You accompany your request with an apology for reminding him/her to do more work. (e.g., "I am sorry for having to ask you to re-do your part of work.")

C11. You ask him/her how busy his/her schedule is before mentioning your request. (e.g., "Are you really busy these days? Could you please re-do your project work?")

- C15. You state the request, making it clear to him/her that the choice is up to him/her as to whether to re-do the project work.

Positive politeness (Alpha=.64)

- C6. You tell him/her how much the rest of group will appreciate his/her re-doing the project work. (e.g., "If you re-do your work, our group project will get a good grade. All of our group members will really appreciate your re-doing your part of work.")
- C7. You affirm that he/she has put reasonable time and effort on his/her work before asking him/her to re-do his/her work. (e.g., "I know that you have put reasonable time and effort on your project work, but I think that if you re-do some parts of your work, our project will be much better than this one.")
- C13. You indicate how important it is to you personally to get a good grade out of the class and ask him/her to help you out as a personal favor. (e.g., "This class is very important for me. I need to get a good grade out of this class. Would you please re-do your work as a favor to me?")

Self face maintenance (Alpha=.62)

- C3. You accompany your request with a statement showing that you understand the kinds of time pressures and demands he/she faces. (e.g., "I understand that you have tight schedule and it is not easy for you to do this kind of project, but I think that you should re-do your part of work.")
- C4. You tell him/her that it is your obligation as a group leader to ask him/her to re-do work.
- C8. You present the concern not as your own but as a concern of fellow group members. (e.g., "Could you please re-do your part of project work? It is not that I'm concerned but that rest of our group is worried.")

Directly (Alpha=.80)

C9. You directly state your request. (e.g., "You should re-do your work.")

C12. You simply tell him/her that he/she has to re-do his/her work.

C14. You simply inform him/her that he/she should re-do the project work.

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