Friendship through Interaction and Interaction through Friendship: Manifestations of Positive Politeness and Footing Changes in the Interaction of Two Friends Playing Chess

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Abstract

The present study uses a video recording of two friends playing chess to observe, through the concept of *positive politeness*, what strategies the participants employ to construct and maintain their relationship as close friends during an activity that includes moments of heightened tension. The study also examines the dynamics of the particular interaction through the frameworks of *footing* and *recipient design*.

Keywords: Positive politeness, Footing, Conversation analysis

1. Introduction

How do people establish and maintain interpersonal relationship through conversation? What determines the mode of interaction? In response to these questions, there has been a growing interest in *politeness* in the area of pragmatics in the past forty years. Many theories and frameworks on politeness have been established since the early 1970s (Thomas, 1995).

Lakoff (1990), for instance, defines politeness as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange" (p. 34). Leech (1983) formulated the *Politeness Principle*, which serves "to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place" (p. 82). Perhaps the most influential conception of politeness is offered by Brown and Levinson (1978; reissued with an additional introduction in 1987; hereafter B&L), who define politeness as redressive action taken to counteract the potential damage of the face-threatening acts (FTAs). In their framework, "communication is seen as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavor" (Kasper, 1990, p. 194).

The data analyzed in this preliminary study is drawn from a video recording of interactions between two close male friends during a chess game which introduces into their communication an additional element of danger beyond what B&L refers to. This study attempts to observe how these two men maintain their relationship as close friends in their interaction by utilizing politeness, especially B&L's (1978, 1987) concept of *positive politeness*. The study also attempts to examine the dynamics of the interaction through the concepts of *footing* by Goffman (1981) and *recipient design* by Schegloff (1972) and Goodwin (1981).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Politeness Theory

The theoretical framework for this study, as mentioned above, begins with politeness theory; but because the study of politeness is so extensive as to be one of the sub-categories of pragmatics (Thomas, 1995), I would like, rather, to survey those frameworks of politeness theory that appear most relevant to the present study.

2.1.1 Lakoff's (1973) view of politeness

Lakoff (1973, p. 298) identifies three different rules that interlocutors may be following to behave politely.

> *Rule 1: Don't impose*
>
> *Rule 2: Give options*
>
> *Rule 3: Make A[ddressee] feel good*

Lakoff states that Rule 1 (Don't impose) "can be taken as meaning, Remain aloof, don't intrude into 'other people's business'" (p. 298). According to Green (1989), Rule 1 is applied to formal situations in which there is a recognized difference in status or power between the interlocutors. Imposing on someone means hindering that person from acting as he or she might desire, and such imposition should be avoided in this situation. Thus, a speaker under this rule will avoid making the interlocutor do what he or she does not wish to do, or at least try to mitigate the imposition by

apologizing or seeking permission. Such linguistic devices as passives (e.g., "Dinner is served" instead of "Would you like to eat?"), impersonal expressions (e.g., use of *we* in academic writing), and technical terms are used under this rule to keep the communication impersonal.

Rule 2 (Give options) states, "Let A[ddressee] make his own decisions – leave his options open for him" (Lakoff, 1973, p. 299). Green (1989) suggests that this rule is appropriate in situations where the interlocutors have equal status and power, but are not familiar with each other. To give options means to express opinions or requests in a way that leaves the interlocutor free to ignore them without fear of creating rejection or giving offence. Green (1989, p. 143) provides the following utterances as examples of giving options.

It *looks like* you and I got into the wrong line.

Could you *perhaps* let me see the newspaper *for a few seconds*?

Rule 3 (Make A[ddressee] feel good) is applied to interactions between close friends, as in the data analyzed here. According to Lakoff, even the closest friends need to follow certain rules of politeness in order to maintain their relationship. If a very close friend behaves with formal politeness, the addressee might well interpret it as an indication of some kind of psychological distance arising between them and might begin to wonder what has changed in their relationship. In Rule-3 situations a speaker not only shows positive interest toward the addressee by asking personal questions and expressing personal opinions, but also shows respect and trust by disclosing the circumstances of his or her own life, experience, or emotions. Hence, interlocutors employ nicknames or even friendly insulting epithets in order to maintain and promote close friendship. Green (1989) points out that using four-letter words, which are normally considered too vulgar to use in polite society, may suggest positive politeness among some groups (especially among groups of males), "in that it implies that speaker and addressee are so close that they do not have to worry about offending each other with mere words" (p. 147).

2.1.2 Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) view of politeness

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) present somewhat different views on the phenomena of politeness. The basic notion of B&L's framework is *face*, which is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987, p. 61). Face is comprised of two aspects. The first aspect is *negative face*. Negative face embraces such things as "freedom of action, and freedom from imposition" (p. 61). The second aspect is *positive face*, that is, the positive and consistent self-image that people cultivate in their desire for appreciation and approval. In their framework, politeness is seen as the result of the rational actions that people take to preserve the two aspects of the face for themselves and for their interlocutors.

Based on the concept of these two aspects of face, B&L develop a notion of two types of politeness: "Negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (1987, p. 129). It refers to linguistic strategies to recognize the interlocutor's desire for freedom from imposition. Negative politeness is realized by using hedges (e.g., "This may not be relevant, but..."), admitting the impingement (e.g., "I'm sure you must be very busy, but..."), indicating reluctance (e.g., "I normally wouldn't ask you this, but..."), begging forgiveness (e.g., "I'm sorry to bother you..."), and such (B&L, 1987, pp. 129-210).

"Positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desires that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/value resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable" (1987, p. 101). It is a communicative way of building solidarity. B&L list 15 communicative strategies to achieve positive politeness. The strategies include noticing or attending to the interlocutor (e.g., "You must be hungry, it's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?"), using in-group identity markers (e.g., in-group language, jargon, slang), joking, offering and promising (e.g., "You'll lend me your lawnmower for the weekend, I hope."), assuming or asserting reciprocity, and such (B&L, 1987, pp. 101-129).

B&L recognize five levels of strategies in committing acts that potentially threaten the participants' face (face-threatening acts, or FTAs). These strategies are arranged in terms of their directness.

Strategy 1: bald on record (most direct)

Strategy 2: positive politeness

Strategy 3: negative politeness

Strategy 4: off-record (giving hint)

Strategy 5: don't do face-threatening act (least direct)

The interlocutors determine which strategy should be used based on the seriousness of the FTA, which, in turn, involves the following three factors: 1) the social distance of the speaker and the hearer, 2) the relative power of the speaker and the hearer, and 3) the absolute ranking of impositions in the particular culture (B&L, 1987, p. 74). When the FTA is extremely serious, the least direct Strategy 5 should be employed. When the FTA is not serious at all, the most direct Strategy 1 can be used.

2.1.3 Correspondence between Lakoff's rules and B&L's strategies

Although the notion of politeness is often associated only with formal or informal behavior and many scholars similarly recognize politeness as such, Lakoff and B&L see the manner in which close friends show their respect for one another

as an inherent extension of the normal notion of politeness (formal and informal) that regulates interactions among non-intimates (Green, 1989).

Green (1989) suggests that B&L's Strategy 1 (*bald on record*) corresponds to Lakoff's Rule 3 (*Make A feel good*), because expressing something baldly on record implies that the speaker and the addressee are so close and share so much that what is face-threatening to outsiders is not threatening to them at all. Lakoff's Rule 3 and B&L's Strategy 2 (*positive politeness*) apparently correspond to each other as well. Green suggests that B&L's Strategy 3 (*negative politeness*) and 4 (*off-record*) roughly correspond to Lakoff's Rule 2 (*Give options*), since stating something off-record and attaining negative politeness include either providing the addressee with various possible interpretations of the speaker's utterance or "at least attempting to mitigate any impositions that are unavoidable from S's [speaker's] point of view" (Green, 1989, p. 145). B&L's Strategy 5 (*don't do face-threatening act*) corresponds to Lakoff's Rule 1 (*Don't impose*). Figure 2.1 summarizes the correspondence between Lakoff's rules and B&L's strategies.

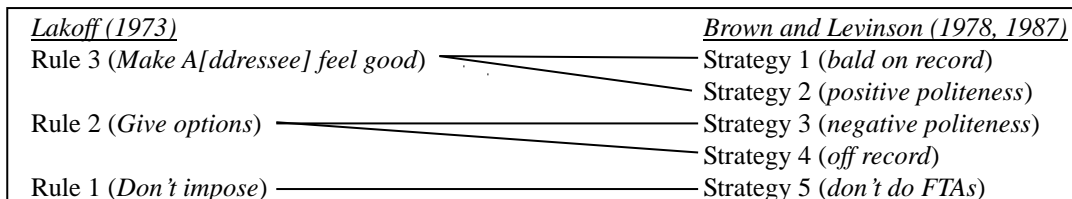| *Lakoff (1973)*	*Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987)*
Rule 3 (*Make A[ddressee] feel good*)	Strategy 1 (*bald on record*)
	Strategy 2 (*positive politeness*)
Rule 2 (*Give options*)	Strategy 3 (*negative politeness*)
	Strategy 4 (*off record*)
Rule 1 (*Don't impose*)	Strategy 5 (*don't do FTAs*)

Figure 2.1 Correspondence between Lakoff's rules and B&L's strategies based on Green (1989)

2.2 Footing

The second framework that is referred to in the analysis of the current data is *footing*. Goffman (1981) introduces and illustrates the concept of footing by alluding to President Nixon's joshing the female correspondent, Miss Thomas, about her slacks in the course of a news conference. In doing this, President Nixon shifted Miss Thomas' social role in the news conference from that of a correspondent into that of an individual female. By commenting on Miss Thomas' slacks, President Nixon displayed "the contemporary social definition that women must always be ready to receive comments on their 'appearance'" (p. 125) and manipulated Miss Thomas into a pirouette as if she were "a feature of female modeling in fashion shows" (p. 156).

Goffman (1981) attempts to characterize changes of footing as follows (p. 128):

1. *Participant's alignment, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self is somehow at issue.*

2. *The projection can be held across a strip of behavior that is less long than a grammatical sentence, or longer. So sentence grammar won't help us all that much, although it seems clear that a cognitive unit of some kind is involved, minimally, perhaps, a "phonemic clause." Prosodic, not syntactic, segments are implied.*

3. *A continuum must be considered from gross changes in stance to the most subtle shifts in tone that can be perceived.*

4. *For speakers, code switching is usually involved, and if not this then at least the sound markers that linguists study: pitch, volume, rhythm, stress, tonal quality.*

5. *The bracketing of a "higher level" phase or episode of interaction is commonly involved, the new footing having a liminal role, serving as a buffer between more substantially sustained episodes.*

For Goffman, footing refers to "the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p. 128). He points out that interlocutors during their conversation are constantly changing the footing of their talk.

In order to further his discussion on footing, Goffman elaborates the roles of hearer (*participation framework*) and of speaker (*production format*). According to Goffman, the notion of a hearer is divided into *ratified hearer* and *unratified hearer*. A ratified hearer is someone who has "official status" (p. 131) as a participant. A ratified hearer, then, is categorized into *addressed recipient* and *unaddressed recipient*. An addressed recipient is the primary recipient in the audience, to whom a story is told or a speech act is directed. An unratified hearer may be called a *by-stander*. By-standers are unratified hearers who have access (visual, aural, or both) to the encounter. By-standers can be either *over-hearers* or *eavesdroppers*. Over-hearers are those who hear the encounter unintentionally, and eavesdroppers are those who purposely do so. Figure 2.2 below summarizes the roles of hearers by Goffman.

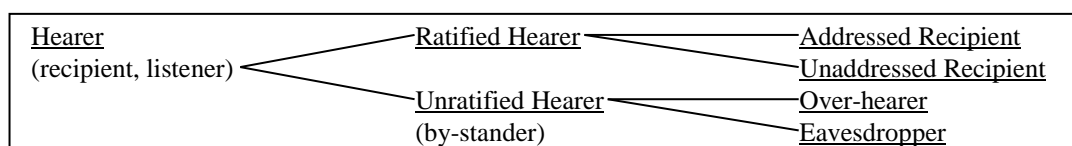| Hearer (recipient, listener)	Ratified Hearer	Addressed Recipient
		Unaddressed Recipient
	Unratified Hearer (by-stander)	Over-hearer
		Eavesdropper

Figure 2.2 Roles of hearers by Goffman (1981)

Goffman categorizes the notion of *speaker* into *animator*, *author*, and *principal*. An animator is someone who functions as "the sounding box" (p. 144), that is, someone who physically gives voice to messages by moving his vocal organ. An

author is the one who selects the sentiments and the words that are being expressed. A principal is "someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say" (p. 144). Goffman suggests that these notions of animator, author, and principal constitute the production format of an utterance.

In relation to the production format, Goffman introduces the notion of *embedding*. While uttered words have a main utterer, the main utterer may have many voices and may include numerous embedded utterances which he presents as having been presented by an embedded utterer. Thus, embedding is present when one employs such spoken form as direct quotation and indirect speech.

2.3 Recipient Design

In connection with the concept of footing, another framework that this study refers to is *recipient design*. The term denotes that utterers 'design' their speech based on who their recipients are. This concept was introduced by Schegloff (1972). Duranti (1997) articulates the concept in that "speakers design their speech according to their on-going evaluation of their recipient as a member of a particular group or class" (p. 299). Duranti points out that recipient design plays a significant role in the content of interaction as well as in the definition of referents. When one uses eye gaze to indicate the primary recipient of the utterance, the visual aspect of the interaction can provide us with the precise moment the utterer chooses a new recipient (Duranti, 1997; Goodwin, 1981).

3. Ethnographic Background

3.1 Billy and Tom (and I)

The participants in the data analyzed in this paper are Billy and Tom. Billy is in his late-20s and Tom is in his mid-50s. They met through a mutual friend seven years ago, and have been very close friends since then. They are living in the same building, but in different apartments. Since Billy has a roommate and Tom is living alone, Billy goes to Tom's to do such daily things as taking a shower and cooking. They therefore meet virtually every day. Other than playing chess as in the current data, they often cook, eat, talk, play on computer, and watch movies together. They have taken several trips together as well.

Billy sees his relationship with Tom as "very good friends"; one of few friendships that he knows will last forever. According to Billy, they have a very open friendship. Billy says they can tell anything to each other, including "dirty old secrets." Billy also says that it is very interesting being around Tom and that Tom is a very caring, giving, intelligent person of whom he can ask various things first when he has questions about problems in life. Billy sees Tom as a father figure who has given him a lot of things that he never receives from his natural father. In response to my question, "How would you describe Tom's personality?" Billy described Tom as "liberal, free-spirited, private, sensitive in a good sense, very affectionate."

Tom considers Billy a very special friend, and a "lover in an unconventional sense." Tom, as a gay man, thinks of himself as a mentor to Billy, and says that he holds Billy in the highest regard. Tom also thinks of Billy as a very good-natured person and playful. Tom feels that Billy underestimates his own personal ability because of the experiences he had in school. According to Tom, Billy's teachers treated him as "incapable," and this caused him to develop a sense of inferiority concerning his intellectual abilities. In response to the question, "How would you describe Billy's personality?" Tom says that Billy "cares a lot about what others think of him" and is a little shy, but playful nonetheless, smart, loving, giving, and considerate.

I first met Tom about a year ago and have visited Tom's about once a week since then. Because Billy visits Tom almost daily, I came to know Billy as well. When I visit Tom, Billy, Tom, and I normally chat about daily affairs, have a meal, or watch TV. I consider Tom and Billy very close friends with whom I can share daily issues, problems and concerns.

3.2 Billy, Tom, and Chess Games

Billy and Tom started playing chess together about a year and a half ago. Billy had asked Tom to teach him how to play; Billy had always been interested in chess and wanted to learn it. As a child, Billy used to see his uncle and cousin play chess, but he never tried to play himself until he met Tom because he thought chess would be too difficult for him. Tom started playing chess as a child and played it quite intensively while at college; Tom had not played chess since, however, until Billy proposed that he teach him how to play.

Tom recalls that it was somewhat difficult for him to teach Billy chess. Tom wanted to teach by explicitly explaining strategies, but Billy found this method uncongenial; he wanted to learn hands on, through actual play. Thus, instead of explaining what other possible moves there were, Tom learned simply to shake his head to indicate whenever Billy made a bad move. After a few months, Billy won his first game with Tom and then, a month later, two games in a row!

One day about nine months ago, Billy suggested a chess tournament between the two of them, and that is how their three-hundred-game chess tournament started. In the first hundred games, Billy won sixteen games with eight draws; in the second, Billy won seventeen games with six draws; in the third hundred, Billy won a full twenty-six games.

Now, even after this tournament, they still keep score and play chess almost once a day – sometimes even three or four times a day. Billy says that he enjoys the competitiveness of the games and feels a certain level of camaraderie and togetherness with Tom while playing. He highly appreciates Tom's companionship and the fact that Tom enjoys playing chess with him over and over again whenever they have time. Billy says that chess is a "thinking game" and that he gets a feeling of accomplishment – especially when he wins. Billy thinks that Tom is a very good teacher and that no one

else could have taught him chess as well as Tom did. Billy recalls that he was somewhat reluctant to play chess when he first started, because it appeared too difficult for him and because Tom beat him in only a few moves. Tom, however, encouraged him to try again and again until he started to feel that chess was not so difficult after all. Billy feels grateful for all of this now.

Tom views chess with Billy as the "common ground on which friendship is planted." Tom says that his interest in playing chess is more about playing it *with Billy* than just playing chess. Tom says that Billy is a good learner and that he enjoys passing on some knowledge to Billy and seeing him, someone he cares about, grow. He thinks Billy's playing chess and getting better at it have contributed to improving his sense of self-esteem, and this seems to be borne out in Billy's recently enrolling in algebra classes at a community college. Tom recalls that, in the past, he was able to make some "silly" moves while playing chess with Billy because he was able to recover from them without losing the game. Now that Billy's game has improved, however, Tom says this is no longer the case. Tom says his chess games with Billy are getting more and more interesting because Billy is getting better and better at it. Tom, however, thinks that Billy is still not yet good at 'end game' (i.e., pursuing the king to get checkmate or managing to get stalemate).

Both Billy and Tom agree that they don't talk much during their chess games. When they do talk, however, they say it is either about some chess move or yelling in connection with the game.

4. Methods for Data Analysis and Brief Description of the Game

Several chess sessions between Billy and Tom were videotaped for the present study. Usually I, as the observer, did the videotaping, as in the case of the particular chess game which serves as the main subject of analysis here. In this case, a monopod and a video camera were used for recording, and I was not actively involved in Billy and Tom's interaction. It seemed that the action of videotaping the game did not affect the structure of the interaction one way or another. My presence, however, did in some way, since both Billy and Tom included me occasionally in the interaction, and this seemed to have some effect on their interaction. In other recordings in which Tom used a tripod and video-recorded the chess games, interestingly, they seldom interacted with the camera as they did with me.

Unfortunately the chess pieces and their movement failed to appear clearly in the recording. Since these movements seemed important for the analysis of the interaction, I asked Billy and Tom to replay the game as they watched the recording. At that time, in the transcription, we carefully noted in writing the various movements of the pieces. Since I am not familiar with chess, I had Billy and Tom remark about whether they thought the various moves were good or bad and note the feelings they had in the course of those plays. The transcription was checked for wording and spelling by a native speaker of English prior to the analysis phase. I also interviewed Billy and Tom, and asked them to express the feelings they had for each other and for their chess sessions. These interviews were audio-recorded and summarized in the ethnographic background section above.

The chess game analyzed in the present study took place as usual in Tom's living room and lasted about fifty minutes. The game proceeded evenly in the beginning, with both players making good moves. As the game went on, however, Tom allowed his pieces to become more and more exposed so that Billy's move that took place about 30 minutes into the game (in line 244 of the transcription), according to them, marked the point of Billy's victory in the game. It was here also that Tom decided to seek a stalemate and gave Billy some trouble indeed in pursuing his king. In the end, however, Billy succeeded in winning by checkmate.

5. Constructing Positive Politeness

As with other chess games between Billy and Tom, the interaction analyzed here does not appear 'conversational' because the total time spent in verbal communication is relatively small and many of the interlocutors' utterances are not intended as, and in fact are not, an exchange of information. Goffman (1981) maintains that the notion of a conversational encounter is not sufficient in dealing with situations in which verbal actions take place. As examples of such situations in which words play a peripheral role, Goffman refers to the interaction of two mechanics working on a car, and incidentally, game encounters such as playing bridge, and he calls such interactions *coordinated task activity* as compared to conversation. Chess clearly parallels bridge in integrating the present encounter, so that this particular interaction should be classed in Goffman's scheme as a coordinated task activity rather than as a conversation or speech event. Goffman suggests that it is the contextual matrix that makes utterances in a coordinated task activity meaningful.

The data here also include verbal exchanges, and when we project these exchanges into the context of the chess game and our participants' relationship, we observe several politeness strategies at work, especially strategies that would exemplify positive politeness in the participants' verbal behavior. In this section, these politeness strategies will be isolated in order to see precisely how they are realized in the two friends' verbal exchanges. In doing this we will be keeping in view the linguistic realizations of politeness suggested by B&L (1978, 1987).

5.1 In-group Identity Markers

B&L suggests that the use of in-group identity markers figures as one of the linguistic representations of positive politeness. Through such identity markers, a speaker can implicitly declare the common ground shared with the hearer. In our data, Billy and Tom regularly use such in-group identity markers as 'address forms' and 'slang.' As for address forms, Billy calls Tom "Blanche," and "man"; and Tom calls Billy "fucknobber", "big boy", and such, as appear in the excerpts from the transcription below. (B: Billy, T: Tom; the numbers in front are those used in the original transcription.)

    13 B: °yea you <u>tra</u>pped yourself B<u>lan</u>che.∘

    80 B: come on <u>ma::</u>n. (1.0) let's get the↑<u>sho::w</u> on the road.

    251 T: FUCKNOBBER (1.0) you cheated while I was over fixing the food

    291 T: come on <u>get</u> me <u>bit</u>ch

    345 T: ((with a Russian accent)) are you ↑coming to <u>get</u> me big ↑↓<u>bo:y</u>?

"Blanche," according to them, is a character from a movie they are both familiar with. In this movie an archetypically evil woman abuses and mistreats her sister, Blanche, berating her with how terrible she is. By calling Tom "Blanche," Billy makes use of their shared knowledge to imply in an obvious joke how terrible Tom is.

The uses of "man," "bitch," and "fucknobber" in the second, third, and the fourth examples overlap with the use of slang. We will deal with slang later, but for now it is clear that in addressing one another with such abusive terms as "bitch" and "fucknobber" they are actually expressing affection and closeness they feel in their relationship.

It is not clear whether or not Tom's use of "big boy" in the last example above is an expression of friendly closeness, since Tom utters the phrase in an affected Russian accent, and in doing so projects a different persona. For this reason, the use of special tones and accents will also be discussed later.

Billy and Tom also employ slang as in-group identity markers.

    145 B: ∘fucker∘

    146 T: ((laughs)) hu hu

    209 B: what the ↑fuck (2.0) I didn't even ↑see that

    305 T: ((*smiles, looking around*)) yeah ↑<u>fuck</u>nobber

    324 B: COME ON MA::N (1.0) I'm gonna ↑<u>kick</u> your ↑<u>a::</u>ss ((laughs)) haha

It is evident that the slang used here functions as an expression of closeness. It is simply impossible to imagine such slang appearing in situations of formal conversation as, for example, between a shop clerk and a customer. One interesting thing to notice is how, when such insulting slang appears, either the speaker or the addressee often smiles or laughs. In line 145, after Billy pops off with the word "fucker," Tom laughs. Again in line 305, we have Tom with a smile uttering the word "fucknobber." And yet again in line 324, after Billy outs with the insulting phrase, "I'm gonna kick your ass," Billy himself laughs. It may be that these laughs and smiles following upon impolite address forms or slang function as redressive acts of FTAs or as indications that neither the speaker nor the addressee is taking any of it seriously in a literal sense.

5.2 Use of Shared Knowledge

As regards in-group identity markers, a speaker may elicit shared connotations and shared attitudes that he and the hearer entertain toward certain things or situations (B&L, 1987). The present data, however, do not show obvious instances of the kind of shared knowledge for which B&L offers examples (p. 111), in which the use of brand names stresses the shared knowledge between speaker and hearer.

    Got any Winstons?

    I came to borrow some Allisons if you've got any.

There are more subtle instances, however, in which Billy and Tom make use of shared knowledge in the present data. One example is the use of "Blanche" already mentioned above. Another instance arises when Billy sings a phrase in a lower voice in line 7.

    7 B: ((sings in a low voice, with an accent)) no:where to ru::n to <u>baby</u> (0.5) no:where to hi::de <u>baby</u>

This song, according to Billy and Tom, also appeared in a movie they saw together. On the one hand, therefore, Billy's singing this phrase alludes to and confirms a shared experience; and on the other has a further dimension in that "nowhere to run to baby, nowhere to hide baby" suggests that Billy is hot on the trail of Tom's bishop and about to take him, and Tom gets the message. This supposition is confirmed by the subsequent interview and also by the data itself (lines 13-18):

    13 B: [°yea you <u>tra</u>pped yourself B<u>lan</u>che.∘

    14 T: [((*glances at B*))

    15 T: trap yourself

    16 B: you <u>trap</u> yourself=

    17 T: =↑WHY [if I moved this thing out of the [↑WAY=

    18   [((*points the bishop*))   [((*looks at B*))

The interaction above occurs right after Billy sings the phrase. After Billy says, "You trapped yourself," Tom objects saying, "Why, if I moved this thing out of the way?" pointing to the bishop. Billy sings the same phrase again later (in lines 20 and 28), and then finally takes the bishop. With the capture of Tom's bishop, Billy doesn't sing the phrase again.

5.3 Joke

According to B&L, joking is a fundamental technique for constructing positive politeness, for "jokes are based on mutual shared background knowledge and values" (p. 124). But the simple fact of joking may imply positive politeness as an already existing fact between the interlocutors, and therefore something not in need of construction. Nevertheless, the joking still has the function of putting the hearer "at ease" (p. 124). In the current data, we can observe some instances of joking, as in lines 327-328.

326 (14.0) (B: *looking at T fixing food in the kitchen*)

327 B: I'll have my ↑broc-↑broccoli al- al ↑dente (1.0) ((mimics Italian)) xxxxxxxxxxxx=

328 T: =okay well let me get a ↑hammer and I'll put some ↑dents in it then

Here Billy says he wants his broccoli *al dente* and mimics Italian. In response, Tom plays with the sound *al dente* and behaves as if he were an ignorant English speaker who does not know what *al dente* means: "okay, well let me get a hammer and *I'll* put some *dents* in it then." Tom could not have responded this way if he had not been familiar with Billy's mode of communication.

5.4 Exaggeration

B&L suggest that the speaker may claim common ground with the hearer by exaggerating interest, approval or sympathy (pp. 104-107). They also remark that this is frequently achieved through "exaggerated intonation, stress, and other aspects of prosodics, as well as with intensifying modifiers" (p. 104). B&L's examples follow (p. 107):

There were a *million* people in the Co-op tonight!

I've *never* seen such a row!

In our data, we observe instances of exaggeration through intonation and stress, as illustrated in the quotes below:

139 B: BECAUSE you showed me because you showed me that↑ONE site

140   and I didn't ↑like it

141 T: yeah I showed you like a ↑million sites on [line

142 B: [you showed me ↑ONE site (0.2) and it ↑SUCKED=

185 B: ah PE::RFECT move.

The examples above are obviously not entirely similar to those of B&L in that the expressions of exaggeration occur in response to the feelings of competitiveness. We can see, however, that these exaggerations enhance conversational interest and in so doing, reinforce the atmosphere of closeness that Billy and Tom enjoy.

5.5 Imperatives

We have seen how Billy and Tom employ some of the linguistic strategies illustrated by B&L in order to construct and maintain positive politeness. The use of the bald-on-record strategy often occurs as the ultimate indication that the speaker and the hearer are so close that they are not offended by mere words. B&L suggest that bald-on-record strategies are represented by the use of imperatives as below (pp. 94-101).

Lend me a hand here.

Bring me wine, Jeeves.

We observe a frequent use of imperatives in the current data:

204 B: come on ↑dude

242 T: ((*somewhat smiling*)) shut up ºthis isn't even fairº

274 T: ↑come on don't think here too long

Billy and Tom can apparently engage in these somewhat 'rude' imperatives because of the competitive nature of chess and its context. It is also true that imperatives are allowed because the parties understand that there is no risk of offence. This kind of 'rudeness' may simply be an acceptable aspect of their communication.

6. Concealing Embarrassment – A Function of Stress, Pitch, and Accent

So far, we have seen how Billy and Tom employ positive politeness and bald-on-record strategies to construct, maintain, and confirm their relationship as close friends. The use of these strategies was mostly 'positive' in that they seemed quite unaware of their own or the other's face-threatening feelings. There seem, however, to be some instances of the use of positive politeness 'negatively' as it were, especially in Tom's remarks in which he employs different stress, pitch, or accent to conceal feelings of embarrassment.

Before reviewing these instances, however, we need to note that Tom seems to use accents for more than just concealing embarrassment. For instance:

134 T: ↑↓yeah you know (0.5) somebody namely me was telling you for a year and a half

135   [xxx you should play with other people

136 B: [↑BOOGI BOOGI BOOGI

137 T: ((mimics)) >↑<u>no::</u> I don't want to play with other people. <u>no::</u> I don't wanna play on line<

138 T: then when you finally find out it's <u>FU:N</u>

It seems that Tom mimics Billy's voice here to tease him or perhaps even to embarrass him. Billy interrupts Tom's utterance probably because he senses that Tom is saying something that is potentially embarrassing for him. Tom's use of accent here may have the simple effect of creating interest in the interaction. In order to distinguish this use of accent from that which indicates possible embarrassment, for the following analysis, we will focus on the way Tom speaks about the current chess game.

As mentioned above, the game starts off evenly in the beginning. As the game proceeds, however, Tom allows his pieces to become more exposed, and this was confirmed in the interview and also by Tom's remark during the game:

84 T: °I'm really exposed°

And in the interaction below, Tom uses the accented speech style for the first time:

106 B: where's your move?

107 T: ((*points at a pawn then looks at B*))

108 B: your ↑pawn up

109 T: ◦hmmm◦ ((with accents)) ◦xxxxxxx it's coming to get you [((whispery)) ki ki ki ki◦

110   [((*moves his fingers on the board*))

One interesting thing to note is that Tom admits in the interview that he was actually not threatening Billy's pieces at all. It appears then that Tom was trying to hide his weakness by accented speech (and even with his finger gestures). Losing a game is potentially embarrassing for both men, but more so for Tom since he taught Billy how to play chess in the first place and generally has more experience at chess play.

Tom engages in the use of accent again in line 129.

127 B: ((sings)) tu tu tu…. [◦you want me to move this one up there [it's not gonna happen°

128   [((*points at a piece*))   [((*looks at T*))

129 T: ((with a childish accent))↑yeah I wanted you to move that up there=

In this interaction, Billy discovers what moves Tom wants to make on the chessboard and declines to move his piece as Tom would like. In this way, Billy hit the mark, something potentially embarrassing for Tom.

In line 208, however, Tom takes Billy's castle with his bishop and evens up the game as regards the value of the pieces. Tom then goes on to explain what was wrong with Billy's last move.

226 T: ↑↓YEAH you- I moved my ↑<u>bi</u>shop up there to ↑threaten your: (.) ↑<u>ca</u>stle and you come'n

227   moved your ↑<u>paw</u>n down to threaten my ↑<u>bi</u>shop.

Tom does not accent his speech in any special way in this explanation, and he sounds, by his intonation, even confident, speaking as if he were a teacher explaining to the student his problems.

As we have seen above, Tom seems to accent his speech in special ways in potentially embarrassing situations and to reassert his own voice in non-face-threatening situations. One hypothesis here is that Tom accents his speech in special ways in order to project a different persona. In other words, in his use of specially accented speech and in projecting a different persona, Tom may be functioning as an *animator* – a mere *sounding box* – but not as an *author* or *principal*, who takes responsibility for the wording or the meaning of his speech. As an animator, he can free himself from the role of author or principal and in this way psychologically reduce the level of embarrassment he is facing. Apart from the production format, B&L suggest that a number of languages make use of phonetic properties of speech as politeness tactics, for instance, palatalization of consonants in Basque and Japanese, and falsetto in high face-threatening situations in Tzeltal and Tamil. B&L maintain that the use of falsetto in enormously face-threatening situations is not random, but is intrinsic and that there may be a "universal association between high pitch and tentativeness" (p. 173).

As the game proceeds, just before line 230, Billy takes Tom's castle with his bishop, and this, according to them, essentially marks the beginning of Billy's victory in the game. Tom either complains about Billy's previous move or provokes Billy repeating his "come on" phrases.

242 T: ((*somewhat smiling*)) shut up °this isn't even fair°

251 T: FUCKNOBBER (1.0) you cheated while I was over fixing the food

274 T: ↑come on don't think here too long

291 T: come on <u>get</u> me <u>bit</u>ch

As Billy starts to put Tom's king in check (lines 266, 271, 282, and 307), Tom catches a fly (line 318) and goes to the kitchen. As Tom comes back from the kitchen, he starts talking with accented speech again.

342 T: ◦okay now what are you gonna ↑do about it.◦

343 B: ◦um…◦

344 T: ((with supposedly a Russian accent)) big ↑↓<u>bo:y</u>

345 T: ((with a Russian accent)) are you ↑coming to <u>get</u> me big ↑↓<u>bo:y</u>?

346   ((*exaggerated facial expression*))

352 T: ((with a Russian accent)) ∘comin' to ↑get me big ↑boy∘

354 T: ((with a Russian accent)) oh don't put me in ↑<u>check</u> with your ↑<u>bishop</u> big ↑↓<u>bo:y</u>

355   ((*exaggerated way, looking at B*))

360 T: ((with an accent)) don't run another pawn down and get a↑<u>queen</u> big ↑↓boy (1.5)

361   ((*exaggerated way, moving his head, looking at B*))

362   stop↑<u>torturing</u> me ↑↓Ethel

363 B: ∘I don't think I'm gonna ↑do that∘

In the excerpts above, Tom speaks with a Russian accent (according to Tom during the interview) and also says, "Stop torturing me, Ethel" (a phrase drawn from a TV show). Tom is losing the game, and it is possible that he is projecting another persona in order to reduce his embarrassment. It is not clear, however, why he assumes a "Russian" accent. It is possible that the event that discontinued the game (i.e., Tom catching a fly and going to the kitchen) may have somehow triggered his use of the accent. When Tom said, "Don't run another pawn down and get a queen, big boy. Stop torturing me Ethel," it was discovered interestingly in the interview that he actually wanted Billy to move his pawn forward, since stalemate was otherwise not possible. Billy resisted Tom's ploy, saying, "I don't think I'm gonna do that" (line 363). This resistance, however, was perhaps less face-threatening than the rejection in lines 127-129, because here Tom is just the animator of the utterance, and the psychological author or principal is his Russian persona or the TV persona he projects.

Tom persists with accented speech in lines 367-368:

367 T: ((with an accent)) ↑come o::::::n

368 T: ((with an accent)) you can do anything. (.) can't we all just be <u>friends</u>

This last utterance (line 368), according to Tom, is a paraphrase of Rodney King's famous statement.

At line 426, Billy breaks wind. The focus of attention immediately shifts away from the chessboard action. This event also seems to have changed the footing structure. At this point, Tom stops using accented speech and starts suggesting possible moves.

448 T: ↑okay come o::n (.) just move your ↑bishop up there

453 T: ∘it's not so hard∘

462 T: you wanna get me away from the ↑<u>pawn</u> so you can get the pawn ↑<u>down</u> there

In response to Tom's series of suggestions, Billy, who was playfully celebrating his prospective win, changes his footing as well. As Tom stands up to pick up their chess score chart, Billy says:

466 B: DON'T HELP ME OUT

467 T: I'm ↑not helping you out

468   ((*looks at the sheets and points at them*))

469 B: ∘I'll figure this up myself∘

Here, the previous 'winner-loser' relationship seems superseded by the 'teacher-student' relationship. There are at least two possible reasons for this footing change. One is Tom's consciousness of the time, since he knew that we were working within the constraints of a sixty-minute video cassette. He remarks in this respect in line 418:

418 T: [come and ↑get me (.) before we run out of the ↑tape=

Also, as mentioned above, it was Tom who called attention back to the chessboard after the interruption caused by Billy's 'breaking wind.' He says:

448 T: ↑okay come o::n (.) just move your ↑bishop up there

Since the game was almost over, it was now up to Billy either to succeed or fail in achieving checkmate. With a view to our time constraints, Tom, therefore, may have tried to finish the game by suggesting possible moves to Billy.

Both Billy and Tom agree that Billy is not yet good at pursuing end game, that is, achieving checkmate, and this is the other possible reason for the footing change. The shared knowledge that Billy is not yet skillful at end-game pursuit and that considerable time had already passed in seeking checkmate may have naturally promoted the change in footing structure.

7. Participation Framework

7.1 I as an Addressed Recipient

In this section, we will focus on the participation framework during the chess game and especially on the role of myself as an observer. As mentioned above in the ethnographic background section, I did not participate actively in the interaction. Since I had received permission to video-record Billy and Tom's interaction and I was the only person who was observing the chess game, nevertheless, I was a *ratified hearer* in Goffman's term; I had the 'official status' to

observe the encounter. I was an *unaddresssed recipient* most of the time during the chess game, since the game was between Tom and Billy. There were some instances, however, in which the interlocutors licensed me (or the video camera) as an *addressed recipient*. The two excerpts below are examples of such instances:

176 B: ((*laughs, reaches his arm, and pats T's head,* [*looks at the camera*))

177   [he even combed his [↑hair today. (.) he didn't have to

178 T: [↑he::::::y

179   ((*still looking at the board*))

180 B: ↑work must've been on a trip to the [↑grocery store ((laughs)) ha ha ha ha ha

181   [((*looks at the camera*))

213 B: YOU ARE ↑<u>CHEA:</u>TING AGAIN ↑<u>BLA:</u>NCHE

214 T: [let's go to the tape

215   [((*looks at the camera*))

216 B: ◦yeah◦ (.) ↑BLA:NCHE ↑CHEA:TS ALL THE TIME

In the first example, Billy pats Tom's head and says, "*He* even combed *his* hair today. *He* didn't have to work…" The use of the third-person pronouns "he" and "his" in Billy's utterance clearly indicates that his words are addressed either to me or the camera. Billy also looks at the camera when he pats Tom's head and speaks (Figure 7.1, captured from the video-recording).

Just before the interaction in the second example, Tom captures Billy's castle, and Billy blames Tom by saying, "You are cheating again, Blanche." Tom looks at the camera (Figure 7.2) and says, "Let's go to the tape." In response to Tom's utterance, Billy says, "Yeah," and "Blanche cheats all the time" in the simple present tense, as if he were explaining to me or to the camera that Tom often cheats at chess.

Figure 7.1 "He even combed his hair today…"   Figure 7.2 "Let's go to the tape."

Tom's utterance in line 148 seems to present a similar framework:

148 T: I think we need to get video of ↑Billy playing a chess game [on ↑line
149   [((*looks at the camera, nods*))

In this particular utterance, the pronoun "we" serves as the subject of the embedded clause, and "Billy" is placed in the same clause. This implies that Billy is not a part of "we," but "we" here includes "Tom and me (the observer)". The gaze of Tom's eye and his nod confirm this interpretation of "we."

It appears then, from the examples above, that the interlocutors' gazing at the camera implies a change of participation framework, namely the shift of my role or that of the camera from that of an unaddressed recipient to that of an addressed one.

7.2 I as the Audience

It was suggested in the section above that I serve as an addressed recipient when Billy and Tom either singly or together turn their eyes to the camera. If this is the case, I (or the camera) seem to play two roles as an addressed recipient. The first role is that of *audience* – audience in the common notion of the word; someone according to whose knowledge and expectations the performers behave.

7 B: ((sings in a low voice, with an accent)) no:where to ru::n to <u>baby</u> (0.5) no:where to hi::de <u>baby</u>
8   (3.0)
9   ((*looks at the camera and winks*))
10 B: I always sing like that

In this example, Billy sings in line 7, and says, "I always sing like that" in the simple present tense, as in the example we have already seen in line 216. Here he behaves as if he were giving a prologue in a play, providing the audience with context for the subsequent play.

249 B: I won ((shouts)) [WHOO::::[::::
250   [((*raises his fist victoriously, looking at the camera*))
251 T: [FUCKNOBBER (1.0) you cheated while I was over fixing the food
252   [((*looks at B with his body thrust forward*))

287 B: a:hahaha ((*moves a bishop and takes T's piece, looks at the camera and raises his fist up*))

In the examples above, Billy raises his fist in cerebration of his prospective victory (Figure 7.3 for lines 249-250 and Figure 7.4 for line 287). He raises his fist as an athlete would upon winning a great victory over his opponents or setting a great record. An athlete may raise his fist spontaneously as a simple human expression of triumph. When the gesture and its meaning are very closely associated, however, the gesture becomes the sign of victory itself to the audience. In any event, the athlete's gesture may be a part of the audience's expectation, and here Billy seems to have vaunted his victory before his audience (me or the camera). In the first example, Tom, in turn, seems to be playing the loser, shouting "fucknobber" with a special emphasis of intonation and stress and thrusting his body forward (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 "I won! Whooo!" "Fucknobber"

Figure 7.4 "a:hahaha…"

The display to the audience is more apparent in the next example (Figure 7.5):

317 T: °wa wa wai wai.. wait just a minute I wanna get this fly°
318 T: [x   [got it
319   [((*catches the fly, shows his palm to the camera* [*looks at B*))
320 T: ((*leaves the board*))
321 B: oh yeah just showed off to the camera that's just amazing
322 T: °I hate bugs°

Figure 7.5 Tom showing his palm to the camera

7.3 I as a Mediator

The second role I seem to play as an addressed recipient is that of *mediator*. I did not, of course, actually 'mediate' anything because I was not an active participant in the interaction. When something embarrassing or possibly dangerous to the harmony of the interaction between the two interlocutors takes place, however, Billy and Tom seem to try to reassert harmony by addressing the issue to me or to the camera (or possibly even to potential viewers of the recording).

One such possibly dangerous instance occurs when Billy reaches over and gathers together the pieces Tom had captured:

42 B: ((*looks at the pieces T took*)) (1.0)
43   you gotta [keep your pieces   [together that's confusing
44   [((*grabs T's pieces*)) [((*puts them on the chess box*))=
45 T: =((*grabs the pieces on the chess box*))
46   >°I'll keep them°< over here
47   ((*and throws them on the other side of the board angrily*))
48 B: ((*disgustedly looks at T*))
49 T: ((*looks at B*))
50   ((*both look at each other*))
51 T: ((*grabs the bag of pretzel, somewhat smiling*))

```
52  B: ((points T with [his index finger))
53  T:                    [xxx xxxx
54  B: ((still pointing at T)) [TANTRUM
55                            [((looks at the camera))
56  T: ((opens the bag of pretzel))
57     ∘I'm not doing all that well this game∘
58  B: OBSERVE [OBSERVE the animal ºxxxº
59                   [((looks at the camera))
```

The high level of face threat in this interaction can be observed in line 48, when Billy disgustedly looks at Tom, who threw and scattered the chess pieces, and in line 50 (Figure 7.6), when both look each other in the eyes. Billy then points at Tom with his index finger and says, "Tantrum. Observe, observe the animal" looking at the camera (Figure 7.7). Since "the animal" here indicates Tom, it is assumed that the imperative "observe" is addressed either to the camera or to me. It appears that Billy avoided a direct dealing with this embarrassing moment by turning his attention to the camera. It is also possible to interpret Billy's action as trying to deal with the face-threatening situation by seeking approval from me or from other potential viewers for his innocence in not doing anything wrong. Calling Tom "the animal" might have functioned as a joke, and hence, may have contributed to mitigating the embarrassment. It is important to note that Tom was also probably aware of the face-threatening moment: Tom picks up a bag of pretzels with a smile on his face (line 51), and this probably enabled him to turn away from the embarrassment. Please note how he adds, "I'm not doing all that well this game" (line 57), probably meaning this as a follow-up excuse for angrily giving the chess pieces a toss.

Figure 7.6 Both looking at each other   Figure 7.7 "Tantrum. Observe, observe the animal."

Another likely face-threatening situation takes place when Tom teases Billy about playing chess on line (lines 137-138):

```
134  T: ↑↓yeah you know (0.5) somebody namely me was telling you for a year and a half
135      [xxx you should play with other people
136  B: [↑BOOGI BOOGI BOOGI
137  T: ((mimics)) >↑no:: I don't want to play with other people. no:: I don't wanna play on line<
138  T: then when you [finally find out it's FU:N
139  B:                [BECAUSE you showed me  because you showed me that↑ONE site
140     and I didn't↑like it
141  T: yeah I showed you like a ↑million sites on [line
142  B:                                            [you showed me↑ONE site (0.2) and it ↑SUCKED=
143  T: =((reaches to the pretzel bag))
144  T: ((tries to prevent B from getting pretzels from the bag))
145  B: ∘fucker∘
146  T: ((laughs)) hu [hu
147                   [((ties the pretzel bag))
148  T: I think we need to get video of ↑Billy playing a chess game [on ↑line
149                                                                 [((looks at the camera, nods))
```

In line 139, Billy interrupts Tom's tease, saying, "Because you showed me, because you showed me that one site and I didn't like it," to which Tom responds, "Yeah, I showed you like a million sites on line." Billy's indignation emerges when he again interrupts Tom's previous utterance and says with special emphasis, "You showed me one site and it sucked." (Note that "I didn't like it" is replaced with the stronger remark "it sucked" with an added emphasis.) Tom, however, does not stop teasing Billy – when Billy reaches for the pretzels, Tom tries to prevent him (Figure 7.8). Tom directed his attention to the camera (lines 148-149) probably because he realized that Billy was upset and tried to mitigate the situation. He might also have been trying to save his positive face by including me through the use of "we," and in this way seeking my approval.

Figure 7.8 Tom trying to prevent Billy from getting pretzel from the bag

Yet another possibly embarrassing moment emerges when Billy "breaks wind" (R: Researcher):

426 XX ((gas, *both look at the camera*))
427 T: ∘dyu get that?∘
428 ((R: *laughing*))
429 B: that's dis↑gusting ↑TOM=
430 T: = ↑↓BILLY
431   ((*looking at B*))
432 B: that's so gross on↑CAMERA?=
433   ((*looking at T*))
434 T: =that's a↑stereo microphone (.) ((laughs)) HA [HA HA HA…
435 B: [oh, ↑↓I (.) ↑↓THINK (.) it's VERY
436 T: ↑YEAH this is
437 B:↑OBVI[OUS
438 T: [this is ↑stereo [microphone
439 B: [WHO IT CAME FROM WE'LL P↑↓LA::Y IT BACK=
440 T: =yeah go ↑back [to the sound meter
441 B: [↑↓YEAH (.) you are [POO:::::: XXX
442   [((*facial expression, makes noise with lips*))
443 T: [((*smiles looking at B*))
444 B: ↑so ↑obvious=
445 T: =go back to the sound meter

Their embarrassment is clear because they both immediately look over at the camera (Figure 7.9) following the sound. Here, the camera clearly serves as a mediator in that it functions as an outside agent reconciling two contrary opinions.

It appears, however, that the camera also functions as audience in this situation. Both Billy and Tom knew that the recording had a larger potential audience and would be viewed by any number of people in the course of this study. 'Breaking wind' in public has well-known negative connotations, and so it is quite possible that they were, in a sense, required to behave as they did on the tape because of the presence of the camera. They call out each other's name aloud in lines 429-430.

Figure 7.9 Billy and Tom looking at the camera after the sound of the gas

8. Summary and Limitations of the Study

The first part the study attempted to observe how the two friends, Billy and Tom, constructed and maintained their relationship as close friends by employing such rules and strategies as those presented by Lakoff (1973) and B&L (1978, 1987) – namely Lakoff's Rule 3 (*Make A[ddressee] feel good*), B&L's Strategy 1 (*bald on record*), and Strategy 2 (*positive politeness*). The rule and strategies for constructing positive politeness were realized in the data through the uses of in-group identity markers, shared knowledge, jokes, exaggeration, and imperatives.

The closeness of Billy and Tom's friendship was observed through the linguistic realization of the rule and strategies above. For this reason it was most likely that their friendship was close enough not to be jeopardized by mere words. Nevertheless, they seemed to perceive the subtle signs of disharmony when they arose in the course of their interaction and took steps to employ strategies to mitigate the disharmony or to prevent it before it emerged. One such strategy was the laughter or smiles that arose after the use of vulgar slang. Another was Tom's use of different stress, pitch, and accent. It was suggested that Tom's use of different accents was a manifestation of his projecting different personas. Employing different personas seemed to enable him to function as an *animator* – a mere *sounding box*, and this probably made it possible for Tom to reduce the level of embarrassment he was facing. It was also suggested that Tom's use of accent characterized the change of footing structure – the two men's relative relationship in the encounter as 'winner-loser' and 'teacher-student.'

The second part of the study (Section 7) examined the participation framework in the interaction, especially the role of the researcher as an observer. It was suggested that the gaze the interlocutors (Billy and Tom) directed at me (the camera), licensed me as an addressed recipient of the utterances although I was an unaddressed recipient most of the time during the chess game. This observation corresponds to the suggestion by Goodwin (1981) and Duranti (1997) on recipient design. It was also proposed that I (the camera) might have been playing two roles as an addressed recipient: the audience and the mediator. I functioned as the audience when the interlocutors behaved in such a way as to evaluate the knowledge and the expectations of me (the camera) or of other potential viewers. I functioned as a mediator when there was something face-threatening or possibly dangerous to the harmony of the interaction between the two interlocutors. In this sense, directing their gaze to the camera perhaps functioned as one of the means for the interlocutors to save face, along with laughter and smiles and the employment of different personas through accentuation and tonality.

The primary limitation of this study was, in my view, its high degree of interpretive subjectivity. Although I tried to capture the data's recurrent features, the choice of such features and their categorization were my own and subjective and arbitrary to that extent. The data remain open, therefore, to other interpretation.

Another problem probably arose with my lack of knowledge of the psychoanalytic paradigm. I did my best, in so far as possible, to correlate the linguistic features with the non-verbal features (gestures, facial expressions, and so forth) present in the data. I do not feel, however, that I was able to relate the events observed in the data to the ethnographic information or to the personalities of Billy and Tom as effectively as I might have.

One question sprang to mind as I was completing the analysis: Did Billy and Tom interact the way they did in the data because of their friendship, or did they do so (apparently subconsciously) in order actually to construct their relationship as close friends? In other words, which came first, their friendship or their interaction? I thought about it for a while and had to conclude that it actually went both ways. One thing is for sure: The data shows that they confirm and reconfirm their friendship through linguistic and non-linguistic interaction, and this in turn contributes to making their close friendship even closer. I am confident for this reason that Billy and Tom's friendship is even closer now at this moment than when I was collecting the data with them.

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