

THE RELATIONAL COMPONENT IN FACE-THREATENING ACTS: A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Author **Silvia Emilia Plăcintar**

Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania , emilia.placintar@yahoo.com [ORCID: 0000-0002-4164-5345](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4164-5345)

Abstract:

This study starts from the classic face politeness model of Brown and Levinson (1987), with focus on face-threatening acts in isolation, and complements it with alternative paradigms that view face and facework from a relational and interactional perspective. Next, the paper introduces a framework of linguistic strategies for the expression of relational meaning to analyse the choices that language users make to convey an attitude of affective involvement in concrete instances of social interaction. These models are then applied in the interpretation of two corpora of business letters produced by Romanian and by Finnish students of business English in response to the same communicative situation that requires the formulation of these speech acts: giving bad news and providing reasons for it, making a request, and making a commitment. The analysis is guided by two questions: (1) What are the linguistic strategies engaged for the expression of affect? (2) Is culture a factor that influences how respondents view / use language? The findings of the comparative analysis point to marked differences in the primary function of language as employed by the two groups of respondents. While Finns view language predominantly for the transactional purpose with minimal expression of relational meaning, Romanians use it primarily as a means of building rapport by engaging frequently interpersonal markers of mitigation, politeness and solidarity.

Keywords: *Face; Facework; Politeness; Relational meaning; Rapport management.*