

Research Digest: Social Development

Manusov, V., Koenig, J., & Trees, A. R. (2004). Do unto others? Conversational moves and perceptions of attentiveness toward other face in accounting sequences between friends. *Human Communication Association, 30*, 514-539.

Accounting, a form of communicative action for addressing problematic situations, has long been linked with the concerns with restoring or protecting the accounteer's face in conversation. The researchers explored the explicit relationship between accounting practices and how both the accounteer and elicitor may judge differently how the conversation moves and the various perspectives both people may have on the conversation. By extending previous research, the researchers proposed three hypotheses based on direct interaction and varying degrees of perception.

Forty three pairs of friends who had known each other for an average of 1 ¼ years from communication classes at the University of Washington were recruited as either an account giver or the account elicitor. The friends were told that the study was to understand how people talk to one another and were given two possible topics to discuss in which the elicitor brought up one of the friend's failure events. Past research has indicated that relationship type affects the nature of facework with regards to accounting and that actual talk allowed the researchers to compare measures across the conversations. Participants "completed a measure drawn from Trees and Manusov (1998), which assessed other-oriented face-attentiveness by both self and other" (p. 522) as well as assessed closeness and demographic information.

Perception of other-directed facework within account sequences such as concessions, refusals, excuses, and honoring or sympathizing were the main choices in linguistic strategies for all three account phases. Moreover, accounters' and elicitors' judgments varied with regard to the different types of face-attentiveness. In addition, the relationship between account complexity and judgments of face-attentiveness may be linked to lower perceptions of negative face-attentiveness. Longer sequences of communication also give insight into the implications of account complexity.

The current research provides evidence of the relationship between account sequences and other-facework. Future research is needed to identify better coding schemes that may more accurately assess face perceptions in a natural environment.

This Research Digest is a product of the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools. The research presented is a sample of state-of-the-art research conducted in the area of Social Development in Children/Adolescents by faculty at UNL. For more information on the Center, please contact Holly Sexton at hsexton1@unl.edu