Hello again, this is Kyle Roden, narrating this video series on Brown and Levinson’s theoretical model of Politeness. This video will cover the first type of on record, with redressive action strategies: positive politeness strategies.  
 Remember that there are two categories of on record strategies: without redressive action, otherwise known as “bald” on record, and with redressive action. Strategies with redressive action are further divided into two more types: positive and negative. Brown and Levinson describe positive politeness strategies as “redress directed to the addressee’s positive face, his perennial desire that his wants should be thought of as desirable” (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 101).

They go on to describe positive politeness strategies as being “approach based”, in contrast to the “avoidance based” negative politeness strategies. The authors state “positive politeness is approach based; it ‘anoints’ the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, S wants H’s wants” (p. 70). S means the speaker and H means the addressee.

The authors give two examples to illustrate what they mean by “S wants H’s wants” . The first is that the speaker considers the addressee to be the same and therefore will grant the addressee in-group rights and the second is that the speaker is implying that he likes the addressee so the FTA doesn’t mean a negative evaluation in general of the addressee’s face. (p. 70)

Before we look at any examples, it is important to know that Brown and Levinson state that FTAs are often addressed using more than one politeness strategy at once. The authors say that it is more often the case that positive politeness strategies are used in conjunction with negative politeness strategies while negative politeness strategies are often used alone.  
 The last thing that I need to mention before looking at examples is that positive politeness strategies are representative of the normal linguistic behavior between people in a close relationship, but with a degree of exaggeration. (p. 101) Brown and Levinson describe this as an exaggeration because if the speaker can’t “with total sincerity say ‘I want your wants’, she can at least sincerely indicate ‘I want your positive face to be satisfied’. Thus the element of insincerity in exaggerated expressions of approval or interest … is compensated for by the implication that the speaker really sincerely wants the addressee’s positive face to be enhanced.” (p. 103)  
 The figure here shows all of the types of positive politeness strategies that B&L proposed. There are 15 in total. We won’t cover all of the strategies, but we will discuss at least one example from each of the major sub-categories.   
 The first subcategory is “claim common ground”, the second is “convey that S AND H are cooperators” and the third is “Fulfil H’s want”.

The sub-categories are the wants of a speaker. They proceed from general wants on the left to more specific wants moving right. For example, if a speaker wants to “claim common ground”, they face another choice between the next three wants: “convey x is admirable or interesting”, “claim in-group membership” and “claim common point of view, opinions, etc”.

In the first example we see the speaker say:

(EX 1)“Jim, you’re really good at solving computer problems. I wonder if you could just help me with a little formatting problem I have.” (Watts, 2003)

This example is categorized as “claim common ground”. It’s further categorized as “convey X is admirable, interesting”. The specific type of strategy is number one, “Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)”

The positive politeness strategy is the underlined section. The speaker is prefacing the FTA with a compliment that does two things. First, it conveys that knowing how to solve computer problems is admirable (the first category of ‘claim common ground’) and second it conveys that Jim is admirable for having such an admirable skill (attend to H’s wants).

In this next example, we see another example of a “claim common ground” strategy, which is “claim in-group membership with H”. The strategy is underlined:

(EX 2) “Hey buddy, could you help us lift this?” (Created by Roden)

The speaker is referring to the addressee as buddy, a term which is generally used between people in a close relationship.

We can see that there is only one type of positive politeness strategy in which the speaker is claiming in-group membership with the addressee and those are realized through the “use of in-group identity markers”, strategy 4.   
 The next example of ‘claiming common ground’ that we’ll look at is an example of strategy 7, ‘claim common point of view’:

(EX 3) “I agree. Right. Manchester United played really badly last night, didn’t they? Do you reckon you could lend me a cigarette?” (Watts, 2003)

The speaker is telling the addressee that she agrees with him, which is a clear example of claiming the same point of view. She does this two more times, with “right” and seeking agreement with the question “didn’t they”.  
 The next example comes from the sub-category called “convey that S and H are cooperators”. It is further classified as “claim reflexivity” and as strategy 12, “include both S and H in the activity”. (note: example is underlined)

(EX 4) “I’m feeling really hungry. Let’s get a bite to eat.” (Watts, 2003)

The speaker wants to get something to eat and is trying to convince the addressee to agree to this by including her in the activity.   
 The last strategy that I want to mention is the only strategy belonging to the sub-category called “fulfil H’s want (for some X)”. Brown and Levinson list only one strategy in this category, “give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)”. In the following example, the speaker is offering a gift to the addressee before performing a face threatening act.

(EX 5) “Have a glass of whiskey, Lamar.” (Adapted from Watts, 2003)  
 Before we finish, remember that positive politeness strategies are directed to the positive face of the addressee. They indicate that the speaker wants what the addressee wants.  
 In the next video, I’ll talk about negative politeness strategies and go over some examples.