

Homework #1

Ling495

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Due: October 31, 2017

Read the article on “Politeness Theory” at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness_theory (note, the link should take you to the page). Briefly answer the following questions:

1. Characterize the difference between positive face and negative face;
2. Give a general characterization of a face-threatening act, whether positive or negative;
3. What is the difference between positive politeness and negative politeness?
4. Under what circumstances would a speaker perform a face-threatening act bald on-record?
5. Under what circumstances would a speaker tend to choose to perform a speech act off-record?
6. The same utterance can signal very different properties of certain relationships. Consider a pair of teenage brothers; one says to the other “Hey, stupid! Pass the mashed potatoes.” What can you infer about their relationship? Suppose, on the other hand, you have a married couple and the wife says exactly the same thing to the husband. What would you conclude about their relationship. Discuss how the same utterance can be used to signal very different things depending on the relationship between the participants.
7. Explain the concept of redress and consider the following case: A homeless person comes up to me when I leave a Wawa and asks for change. I

say “Sorry, I don’t have any change.” Does the homeless person have standing? Why did I include negative redress?