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Abstract	<p>The chapter illuminates some of the under-explored relational aspects of (im)politeness in interpersonal pragmatics. It consists of two case studies explicating how conversational participants manifest and interpret relationships in interaction. Specifically, case study 1 illustrates how reciprocity (balancing obligations) as a social norm can be used in interpreting relationality in terms of (im)politeness. Case study 2 demonstrates how relationality is manifested in mediation interactions, where the participants evoke their interrelated relational ties and relational entitlements in order to achieve their interactional goals. The two case studies in both Japanese and Chinese, in particular, highlight the significance of studying emic concepts of relationality and related concepts, including the ‘balance sheet of obligation’ in Japanese contexts, and ‘relational ties’ and ‘relational entitlements’ in Taiwanese interactions.</p>	

(Im)politeness and Relationality

Jun Ohashi and Wei-Lin Melody Chang

1 Introduction

A series of research publications during the early 2000s, including Eelen (2001), Watts (2003) and Mills (2003), contributed to liberating politeness studies from a singular focus on investigating strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987). As a result, all sorts of relational phenomena, such as face, identity, politeness and impoliteness, all of which arise in interaction through discursive struggle, have become central themes in interpersonal pragmatics.

In this chapter, we will argue that relationships form an important basis for any investigation of (im)politeness. ‘Relationship’ is defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English (2010) as ‘the way in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected’.¹ Its Chinese and Japanese

¹ Oxford Dictionary of English, 3rd edition (2010) online. Retrieved 11 October 2015 from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/definition/english/relationship>.

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counterparts (關係 *guanxi*² and 関係 *kankei* respectively) suggest that this concept reflects a phenomenon emerging between two or more people or things. The Japanese notion of *ma* (間) further emphasises what is between people. *Ma* basically means ‘an “interval” between two (or more) spacial or temporal things and events’ (Pilgrim 1986, p. 255), and it is used in the compound 人間 (human-being), which is read *ningen*.

ningen [人間] (human being), for example, *ma* [間] (read *gen* here) implies that persons [人] (*nin*, *hito*) stand within, among, or in relationship to others. As such, the word *ma* clearly begins to take on a relational meaning—a dynamic sense of standing in, with, among, or between. (p. 256)

The notion of *ma* gives prominence to ‘in-betweenness’, and it presupposes that individuals can only exist in relation to others. In other words, the notion of *ma* does not assume static and self-contained individuals. This resonates with Blitvich and Sifianou’s (Chap. 10, this volume) discussion of (im)politeness and identity. They reject the static model of identity that is relationally unaffected in the course of interaction. In so doing, they highlight the fact that ‘identity is eminently relational and not the property of isolated individuals’ (p. 10[subject to change]), and that ‘identity emerges in interaction and is the product of relationships created through language’, building on previous work by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and Kiesling (2013).

Yet, while the importance of relationships has long been acknowledged in (im)politeness research, relationships themselves have not been the primary focus of attention until recently with the advent of interpersonal pragmatics. Locher and Graham’s (2010) edited volume, titled *Interpersonal Pragmatics*, identifies relationships as a central focus of interpersonal pragmatics. The research focus is essentially ‘the dynamics of relationships between people and how those relationships are reflected in the language choices that they make’ (Locher and Graham 2010, p. 2). In this chapter, we will look at the concept of ‘relationship’ first in Sect. 2, in particular, how the concept has developed in (im)politeness studies. In Sect. 3, we will identify some key debates and unexplored areas in interpersonal pragmatics, before presenting two case studies in Sect. 4 which demonstrate some new approaches to fill the identified empirical gaps and shed new light on what occurs between persons.

² *Guanxi* may have some negative connotations depending on the context. It may imply ‘going through the back door’. *Guanxi* itself, if used independently, is neutral. *Renji guanxi* refers to ‘interpersonal relationship’. However, in the latter phrase, the emic notions of obligation and entitlement embedded in *guanxi* are not necessarily implicated. For that reason we prefer to use the term *guanxi*.

2 Key Concept and Theories

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Before we move on to our view on relationality, it is essential to trace back how the concept of 'relationship' has developed in the field of (im)politeness. Traditionally, two key dimensions, power and distance, have been widely adopted to theorise 'relationship' or 'relationality' in linguistic research, particularly in the fields of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics. Power and distance have been long discussed as influential parameters for language production and interpretation based on the interlocutor's perceptions of the social variables in different settings. In other words, the interlocutor's linguistic choice is relevant to one's social roles (teacher/student, superior/junior) and distant/intimate status (acquaintances/strangers) with one's corresponding interactant in their interpersonal relationship. The most influential model of politeness—proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987)—is built on these two social parameters and the ranking of imposition, all of which are said to determine the interlocutor's strategies in 'politely' producing a particular speech act. Research about speech acts has become increasingly significant and many researchers have worked to develop this area. Power, distance and the ranking or degree of imposition have been found, through empirical investigation (e.g. discourse completion test or questionnaire), to be key parameters in determining the language choice of speech acts by the speakers, including in the case of requests (e.g. Blum-Kulka et al. 1985; Holtgraves and Yang 1990; Lim and Bowers 1991), apologies (Holmes 1990; Olshtain 1989; Olshtain and Cohen 1983; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984), disagreement (e.g. Beebe and Takahashi 1989) and directives (e.g. Holtgraves et al. 1989).

However, the individualistic model person whom Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) draw from in theorising politeness is insufficient to explain mutually and socially owned relational phenomena. In the research tradition where individualism is assumed and unquestioned, it follows that the 'self precedes communication, rather than being constituted in communicative practices between persons' (Baxter 2011, p. 56). Individualism, however, assumes a self-contained being and autonomous self, as defined by Baxter (2011), who takes full control over his/her language use.

According to individualism, personhood is privately owned. Cognitions, personality traits, motivations, and other psychological concepts are located inside the person and thus controlled exclusively by him or her. (pp. 55–6)

Accordingly, the definition of face which Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) employ for their face-based politeness theory is thus the desires or wants that the individualistic model person claims for themselves.

Central to our model is a highly abstract notion of 'face' which consists of two specific kinds of desires ('face-wants') attributed by interactants to one another: the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (negative face), and the desire (in some respects) to be approved of (positive face). (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 13)

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) state that '[o]ur notion of "face" is derived from that of Goffman (1967)', but Goffman's original sense of face, which has an airy, fuzzy and interdependent nature was somehow lost. Goffman defines face as 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact' (1967, p. 5), and its recognition is of an unfixed nature, 'diffusely located in the flow of events in the encounter' (p. 214). Brown and Levinson's politeness theory undermines the social and interpersonal aspects of face that Goffman emphasised in his original notions of face and face-work (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003). As a natural consequence, those analysts who study the relational aspect of interaction, in interpersonal pragmatics for instance, employ Goffman's original notion of face, and perceive selfhood to be more open to negotiation. Such selfhood can be described as a social self or interdependent self.

The focus on the individual is still prevalent in (im)politeness research, but it has been challenged by many researchers (just to name a few: Hill et al. 1986; Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988, 1989; Gu 1990; Mao 1994). Perceived social roles assigned in a given context also arguably have a significant influence upon language use in Japanese (e.g. the roles of beneficiary and benefactor in thanking [Ohashi 2013] or the roles of guest speakers at Japanese wedding receptions [Dunn 2005]), or perceived relational connections between the interactants in Chinese (e.g. *guanxi* in business contexts [Chang and Haugh 2011; Chang 2016]).

The use of 'self' or participant's perspectives in interpreting relationality in interaction thus requires a further critical look. On this particular point, Arundale (2010b) advocates the importance of distinguishing two positions in conceptualising relationships.

[on the one hand] a relationship is understood to be the aggregate of the independent individuals who comprise it, the properties of the social entity being understood as the sum of the properties of the individuals. [...] [On the other hand] a relation is understood to be a single, integral system of interdependent individuals, the properties of the social entity being understood as the non-summative properties that arise within that system, apart from the properties of the individuals. (p. 140)

In essence, the first position seeks explanations about what happens relationally in interaction from a social psychological view of individuals. The second view, on the other hand, does so from the perspective of a social system that emerges as a product of an encounter (or set of encounters).

Work by Locher and Watts (2005, 2008), for example, is representative of the first position. They use the term ‘relational work’ to highlight the negotiable nature of relationships with others, and to include any meta-pragmatic evaluations and judgments which conversational participants make during interaction or post event reflection. Locher and Watts (2008, p. 96) define ‘relational work’ as ‘all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice’. The notion of ‘relational work’ in interaction rejects any fixed *a priori* definition of what counts as polite, and thus politeness is subsumed into conversational participants’ diverse spectra of social, psychological and emotional reactions and evaluations in interaction. Conversational participants’ positive and negative reactions and evaluations depend on their understanding of what is appropriate in a given context, which is also subject to change. Therefore, what is (im)polite is not a prescriptive assignment of the labels polite or impolite, but rather (im)politeness emerges through discursive struggle (Locher and Watts 2008).

Arundale’s Face Constituting Theory (FCT) (2006, 2009, 2010a, 2013) is an example of the second position. Based on Relational Dialectics Theory (Baxter and Montgomery 1996), he defines ‘face’, in contrast to Goffman, as ‘connectedness and separateness in human relationship’ (Arundale 2009, p. 42), emphasising that ‘face is not an individual phenomenon, but rather a relational phenomenon in that face arises in the dialectic interplay between what is individual [separateness] and what is social [connectedness]’ (p. 43, brackets added by the authors).³ The second position thus seeks an explanation grounded in the ongoing tension between the two forces of separateness and connectedness.

Both positions contribute to our understanding of relationality in interpersonal pragmatics, and various interactional data should be incorporated to make sense of what occurs relationally. However, it is important for us to understand the nature of specific data obtained (e.g. naturally occurring conversations and post event interviews) and to remind ourselves of the implications and limitations of this. In the following section, some key studies on relationality will be reviewed critically to highlight key empirical gaps.

³It should be noted that Arundale’s FCT is primarily a theory of a particular aspect of relationships/relating, not ‘face’ as it is commonly understood in the field.

3 Critical Overview of Research

'Relationships' or 'relating' have been the focus of increasing attention in the field of (im)politeness and pragmatics in recent years, with an increased focus on relationality in interpersonal pragmatics (Arundale 2010b; Enfield 2009; Spencer-Oatey 2011, 2013). Here it is argued that taking a relational perspective is different from the traditional view of (im)politeness which focuses on the individual's performance (Culpeper et al. 2010), and that it should be treated as 'a key focus for pragmatics' (Enfield 2009, p. 60). In this section, we would like to address key issues and debates that have emerged in the field with regards to (im)politeness and relationality.

One of the issues that has not yet been fully addressed in the literature in interpersonal pragmatics is the reciprocal nature of human relationships. We argue that reciprocity is fundamental to human interpersonal relations. Reciprocity as a social norm creates interdependency in social relationships. Gouldner succinctly explains the norm of reciprocity in his much cited paper:

We owe others certain things because of what they have previously done for us, because of the *history of previous interaction* we have had with them. It is this kind of *obligation* which is entailed by the generalized norm of *reciprocity*. (Gouldner 1960, pp. 170–71, emphasis added)

Gouldner's account of reciprocity extends across time. In this sense, we are part of an ongoing reciprocal relationship. Goffman (1967), however, approaches this reciprocal obligation from a point of view of situated encounter, and he illustrates the rules of social interaction on the basis of face-to face talk, emphasising tacit mutual requirements in interaction.

The combined effect of the rule of self-respect and the rule of considerateness is that the person tends to conduct himself during an encounter so as to maintain both his own face and the face of the other participants. This means that the line taken by each participant is usually allowed to prevail, and each participant is allowed to carry off the role he appears to have chosen for himself. (...) This kind of mutual acceptance seems to be a basic structural feature of interaction, especially the interaction of face-to-face talk. (Goffman 1967, p. 11)

Together with his notion of face, the 'rules' of social interaction are governed by an overarching norm of reciprocity. Especially in a face-to-face interaction, conversational participants are entitled to feel good about themselves in such a way that a participant is responsible for his/her conversational partner's

positive self-projection and vice versa. For a successful interaction, that is to say, a positive relational outcome, it is expected that conversational partners are to balance their obligations with each other. Therefore, the norm of reciprocity is fundamental to relationality. However, this has rarely been taken up by researchers in interpersonal pragmatics. Case study 1 in Sect. 4.1, will thus illustrate an example of making sense of face-to-face interaction using the norm of reciprocity, specifically 'a balance sheet of obligations' as an investigative tool.

The second issue is the ongoing debate between the interactional and social-cognitive perspectives on theorising (im)politeness and face (see also O'Driscoll, Chap. 5 this volume). Spencer-Oatey (2013) argues that while many scholars are taking a social constructionist perspective in theorising face and (im)politeness (Locher and Watts 2005; Bargiela-Chiappini and Haugh 2009; Haugh and Bargiela-Chiappini 2010; Arundale 2010a), it is essential to also take a sociocognitive perspective into consideration (Chang 2016; Haugh 2009a, 2010).

On the latter view, communicative practices are processed and understood through the situated social orientations of individual participants based on their experiences with cognitive interpretations.

The sociocognitive construct of face-as-relationship is argued to be constitutive of interaction in that it influences recipient design of sequences of social action,⁴ which is what occasions relational practices in the first place. According to Arundale's FCT, the cognitive-interactive grounding of face-as-relationship lies in the cultural construal of connectedness and separateness, for instance, relational ties and relational entitlement⁵ in the Chinese business context, as it is these sociocognitive constructs that underpin the manifestation of face/relationship in interaction. That is to say, face/relationship is both constituted in and constitutive of interaction. Or put differently, face/relationship can be both a 'cause' of behaviour and an 'effect', since if 'a mental representation of face/relationship was employed when formulating an utterance, then face/relationship is a cause of some sort' (Hahn and Hatfield 2011, p. 1305). The former refers to a person's interpretations of relational ties and separation, which are conjointly co-constituted through sequences of interaction with others

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⁴ Recipient design refers to 'a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants' (Sacks et al. 1974, p. 727).

⁵ Relational ties and relational entitlement emerged as key aspects of face-as-relationship in Chang's (2016) analysis of business interactions. This will be further discussed in the case study in Sect. 4.2.

(Arundale 2010a), while the latter refers to expectations in regard to face entering into interaction through recipient design (Haugh 2009a, 2010).

According to FCT, although the 'interpretation of face is perforce always an interpretation formed by an individual' (Arundale 2013, p. 18), face interpretations are themselves (conjointly) co-constituted. Participants, however, can (conjointly) co-constitute interpretations of face at three different levels: direct face interpretations, displaced face interpretations and reflexive face interpretations (Arundale 2010a, p. 2090). These interpretations reflect the cognitive states of individuals when interacting with others. A direct face interpreting is defined as a participant's own provisional or operative interpreting of face which is interactionally achieved or conjointly co-constituted in talk with another participant, while a displaced face interpreting refers to a participant's interpreting of another participant's direct face interpreting. A reflexive face interpreting involves one participant forming an interpreting of the other participant's interpreting of the first participant's direct face interpreting (Arundale 2010a, p. 2090). In recent work, Arundale (2013) has further explicated these three levels of face interpreting, describing them as 'my interpreting of our-connection-and-separation-at-this-moment' (direct interpreting), 'my interpreting of your interpreting of our-connection-and-separation-at-this-moment' (displaced interpreting) and 'my interpreting of your interpreting of my interpreting of our-connection-and-separation-at-this-moment' (reflexive interpreting) (p. 18).

A third issue is that relational work may intersect with the emergence of identities. Relational work and identities in interactional pragmatics are conceptualised as interdependently related through the individual–social dialectic (Haugh et al. 2015, p. 78). According to Arundale (2009, p. 40; 2010a, p. 2085), 'what is individual in nature and what is in social in nature are fully interdependent, while at the same time, individual phenomena and social phenomena are distinct and functionally contradictory poles of human experience'. Arundale (2010a) thus suggests that '[a] relationship is a phenomenon conceptualized in terms of a social system, whereas identity is a phenomenon conceptualized in terms of an individual system, (...)' (p. 2091). Building on the interactional approach, which focuses on participants' interpretations and evaluations of persons and relationships in locally situated discourse (Arundale 1999, 2006, 2010a, b; Chang and Haugh 2011, 2013; Haugh 2007, 2010), recent work by Haugh et al. (2015) has also drawn a clear analytical distinction between identities and relationships in examining the participants' interpretations and evaluations of persons and relationships in computer mediated communication. It is argued in their analysis that while relational practices and identities are interdependent, they should be

analytically theorised in distinct positions. Relevant definitions of identities and relationships are as follows:

Identities are defined as arising through interpretations and evaluations of persons (or summative aggregations of persons in the case of collective identities). Such evaluations work to 'cast' a person (or a group of persons) into 'a category with associated characteristics or features' (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998, p. 3) [...]

A relationship refers to a non-summative system of two or more persons. It broadly involves 'establishing and maintaining of connection between two otherwise separate individuals' (Arundale 2010b, p. 138), in systems ranging from dyads to relatively closed social grouping through to large, diffuse social networks. In Arundale (2010b, p. 140), the 'reciprocal conditionality or systemic interdependence' of the persons that constitute that relationship. This means that relationships cannot be fully explicated in terms of the identities of persons in interactions. (Haugh et al. 2015, pp. 78–9)

In other words, it is argued that persons should be conceptualised as dialectically constructed through relationships (Arundale 2006, 2009, 2010a, b). Persons are consequently defined as socially constructed individuals in a particular social/relational network.

Taking the example of face which has commonly been the focus of (im)politeness research, it has long been theorised as a claimed or desirable self-image, building on Goffman's (1967) seminal work. The grounding of face in notions of identity (Locher 2008; Spencer-Oatey 2007, 2009) is thus a logical development of Goffman's original formulation. However, it is arguably problematic if face, the core of relational practice and im/politeness, is treated only as a personal belonging without taking interpersonal relationships into account. He and Zhang (2011), in examining face, reduce the notion of relationship to relational identities and thereby emphasise individual attributes. However, such an analysis highlights only one's social attributes within a social network but neglects the level of the actual relationship between the persons, thereby arguably overly constraining our understanding of face (Haugh 2013, pp. 11–12). That is to say, face can involve not only an awareness of one's position within a network of relationships with others, but also those relationships in themselves (Chang and Haugh 2011, 2013). Thus, while identities and relationships are dialectically interrelated, it is essential not to conflate these two when theorising (im)politeness (Haugh et al. 2015, p. 79). Both should be taken analytically as distinct concepts so to avoid under-analysing relationality itself in examining relational practices in interpersonal pragmatics.

The final key issue is that emotion/emotivity or the affective quality of reactions has been relatively neglected in much of the theorisation of face and (im) politeness to date (Spencer-Oatey 2011; Culpeper 2011; Culpeper et al. 2010; Kádár and Haugh 2013). Although Goffman's (1967) seminal work suggests that face is emotionally sensitive, leading to outcomes such as feeling good, bad, ashamed, embarrassed and chagrined (pp. 6–7), work on the role of emotions themselves in interpersonal pragmatics have been remarkably limited (see Locher and Langlotz, Chap. 12 this volume). Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2002, 2007, 2008), Ruhi (2009a, 2009b), Culpeper (2011), Langlotz and Locher (2013) and Chang (2016) are some of the researchers in interpersonal pragmatics who draw attention to the importance of emotions. In Spencer-Oatey's theory of Rapport Management (2000, 2002, 2007, 2008), for instance, it is claimed that emotions naturally arise when there is an expectation associated with social behaviours, and thus emotion is the product of interactions in which face is involved. If one's perceptions of others' behaviour are not in conformity with one's expectations, some emotional reactions might arise (Spencer-Oatey 2007, p. 644). She also examines 'rapport-sensitive' incidents in which either negative or positive 'noticeable impact' could arise, such as feeling annoyed, embarrassed, proud, happy, etc., in order to explore the interactional concerns which underlie people's reactions (Spencer-Oatey 2002, p. 534; cited in Spencer-Oatey 2011, p. 3568). Similarly, Culpeper (2011, pp. 63–5) has collected a number of emotional labels which he associates with offences involving 'quality face', 'equity rights' and 'association right' based on Spencer-Oatey's (2002) original rapport management categories. He suggests that self-conscious emotions dominate all his data, but that other-condemning emotions, such as anger, take on increased importance during incidents involving equity rights, which are more to do with others and have less implications for oneself.

The issue of emotion in interpersonal pragmatics is also addressed by Langlotz and Locher (2013). In their paper, they propose a multimodal approach by which analysts committed to a discursive approach might develop an analysis of the display of emotions by participants. One of the key arguments is that emotions are signalled through composite signals in addition to, or in complement with, verbal talk. Another key claim is that inclusion of emotional cues in the analysis, such as gestures or facial expressions, is needed in order to improve our understanding of interpersonal relationships, and thus that the analysis of displays of emotions should play a central role in interpersonal pragmatics.

Chang's (2016) recent study of face practices in a business context found that our understanding of emotion/emotivity should not be overly constrained in the theorisation of face and/or relational practices, at least in the analysis of business interactions, to simply a response or outcome of interaction. According

to Chang (2016), displays of emotion/emotivity can also be constitutive of the interaction when face is involved, either in claiming or offering face, and so invariably enters into the recipient design of turns in interactional sequences. She argues that since the notion of face originates from Chinese emic concepts, it should come as no surprise that it is a fundamentally emotively invested construct, as, when we trace back to the emic perspective on face, we find it involves key folk notions of emotivity in Chinese, such as *ganqing/renqing* (emotive quality/human emotion) and *chengyi* (sincerity). The emic concept of face in Chinese, *mianzi*, according to Chang and Holt (1994), is defined as showing emotional concern. By “[g]iving” and “claiming” *mianzi*, relational participants acknowledge the mutual bond between them, thereby showing emotional support’ (p. 109). On the other hand, acknowledging emotivity (*ganqing/renqing*) entails mutual obligations within a reciprocal relation (*guanxi*), and so face (*mianzi*) can thus be employed as a relational resource in interaction (Chang and Holt 1994; Hsiang 1974). In other words, these face practices originate from emic collocations in which emotivity inheres, meaning that *mianzi* is thus inherently emotively invested. Since these folk notions of emotivity in Chinese are at the core of a sociocognitive construct of face, they are more than simply the outcome of face practices, but are also elements driving face and relational practices in the interaction in the first place.

Such findings lend support to Ruhi’s (2007, 2009a, b) work, which also draws significant attention to the links between face, affect and the self-presentational choices that people make to effect outcomes that are in line with their goals both during and after an interaction. For instance, interlocutors sometimes display irritation and concern for the other through rising tones that indicate the impact of affective responses to self/other-presentation. According to Ruhi (2009a, b), affect grounds face and relational work. It is also suggested that displays of feelings, that is, emotive discourse, can become an important dimension of face in social interaction, as showing feelings can be used strategically to achieve interactional goals (Chang and Haugh 2011; Işık-Güler and Ruhi 2010, p. 633; Ruhi, 2009b, p. 107).

Taking account of the issues raised above in relation to (im)politeness and relationality, two case studies are presented in the following section.

4 Case Studies

Case study 1 specifically aims to illustrate how reciprocity, or balancing obligations as a social norm (thus an unmarked phenomenon), can be used in interpreting relationality in relation to (im)politeness. Case study 2 aims to

demonstrate how relationality is manifested in mediation interactions, where the participants evoke their interrelated relational ties and relational entitlements in order to achieve their interactional goals.

4.1 Case Study 1: Balancing Obligations

The first case study investigates: (1) whether the conversational participants observe reciprocity, or in other words, whether they balance obligations in interaction, and (2) the extent to which reciprocity contributes to participants' positive or negative evaluations of the interaction. Therefore, it aims to explicate the relationship between reciprocity and participants' positive or negative evaluations concerning the interaction they engaged in.

The following example is drawn from a data set of a research project in progress.

A: Female 68 years old (housewife, learning Italian at a Japanese university)

B: Female 49 years old (administration staff member in a Japanese university)

A was recruited as a participant when she was visiting the annual cultural festival at a Japanese university, enjoying food and drink. She has been taking Italian language subjects in this university as an adult learner over the last three years. B is an administrative staff member of the university, and she volunteered to be a participant in the project. In a relatively small meeting room, a table and two chairs are set in close proximity with a video and audio recorder. The participants were put in this rather artificial situation where they felt obliged to fill time to avoid awkward moments, silence and communication breakdown. It is, therefore, expected that they make some kinds of effort to engage in small talk.

A started the conversation with an apology for having drunk some beer and thus that she may be under the influence of alcohol. She jokingly said that '*tanoshi sugi chau kamo shire masen*' (I may enjoy [chatting with you] more than I should). B responded by saying '*iidesune*' (That's good). Cheerful laughter continues while they talk about beer and other alcohol sold at the festival. None of them disclosed their identity until B answered, 'I am an administrative staff here' in response to A's question, 'Are you working for this project?' After a significant pause of three seconds, B initiated a topic with the following question⁶:

⁶Key for abbreviations: Ag: agreement; Ans: answer; COP: copulative verbs; D: denial; FB: Feedback; Hon: Honorific form; Hum: Humble form; IP: interactional particles; N: Nodding; Passive: passive form; P-suffix: Polite verb suffix; Q: question; Qm: question marker; SD: self denigration; Sta-V: stative verb; Tag: tag question; @: laughing.

(1)

B(16): nanika sakki ohanashisaretete italia go wo yatte rashitan desu ka?
something a moment ago Hon-talk Passive-Hon Italian O do Hon COP Qm
 (Well, a moment ago, I heard you saying that you learnt Italian, didn't you?) Q

A(17): iyaiya ano open karejji shite masu yone? Italia, de, watashi wa italiago de
no no well open college do P-suffix IP Italy and I S Italian
 (No, no. Well, you are offering an open college [programme], aren't you?
 Italy, and I took Italian,) Ans

B(18): a-sounandesu ka
B:N ah is that so Qm
 (Ah, is that so.) FB

A(19): kochirani dakara maishuu uka[ga]
here therefore every week Hum-come
 (and I come here every week.)

B(20): [ira]shiterun desu ne
B:N Hon-come COP IP
 (so you come).

A(21): yoru anoo:: ukagatte orimashite=
night well Hum-come Hum-Sta-V
 (I have been coming here at night.)

B(22): =ah::ah::
FB A:N FB

A(23): maru san nen tatte ima yonenme desu
a whole three year do now the 4th COP
 (for a whole three years and now the fourth year.)

B(24): ah soo desu ka
B:N ah so cop Qm
 (Is that so?) FB

A(25): sonowariniwa zenzen shabere nai=
for that degree absolutely speak Pote. neg
 (I cannot speak the language at all to that degree,) SD

B(26): =EH? [ie ie]@
no no
 (eh? none? No, no.) D

A(27): [desu]kedo @
COP but
 (but,) 421

B(16) breaks the silence by asking A about A's Italian language learning experience, as B earlier overheard A and the researcher talking about this at the far end of the corridor. This is B's contribution to engage in interaction with A, perhaps in an attempt to end the previous awkward silence. It is labelled as Q (question) at the right end of the transcriptions as shown above. This Q is not necessarily information seeking but it is significant as a relational contribution. A(17) responds with *iya iya* (no, no), which does not deny her Italian language experience, but plays down her skill.⁷ She then reminds B of the Italian language subjects that the university offers, saying that 'you are offering open college [programmes], aren't you?', to which B quickly nods (B:N denotes B nods). A then makes it clear that she takes Italian language there. B interjects with an *aizuchi*, '*sounandesu ka*' (Is that so) in B(18), and A continues to say that she comes to the University every week (A19) at night (A21). Note that in B(20), *irassharu*, honorific form of *kuru* (to come) is uttered responding to and almost simultaneously with A(19), *ukaga*, the stem of the humble form of *iku* (go) which is, in effect, cut off by B(20). A(21) then completes the sentence, and B(22) reacts with an *aizuchi*. Here, social norms of denigrating self (I go [humble form]), and elevating other (you come [honorific form]) is observed as unmarked phenomena of balancing obligation (Ohashi 2013, also Kádár 2007 notes this phenomena in relation to Chinese). A(23) continues to talk about her experience learning Italian language, stating that this year marks the fourth year she has been learning it, accompanying nodding at the end of her utterance. A(17)–A(23) constitute an answer to B's initial Q. This is labelled as Ans (answer), and B's interjections of feedback (*aizuchi*, backchanneling) are labelled as FB. B(24) interjects with further FB, *soodesuka* (Is that so?) along with a nod. A(25) comments that her competency in Italian is not commensurate with the long time she has spent learning Italian. Whether her statement is true or not is debatable, but what is important to note is that her self-denigration (labelled as SD) is expected here and denial (D) of that self-denigration is expected as a response. B(26) reacts with emphatic voice, *EH?* and *ie ie* (no no) while A(27) completes the sentence. It is observed that A and B balance obligations, 'self denigration–denial' and they are also marked by reciprocating laughter, @. 'Self-denigration–denial' is a common form of relational work in Japanese (see Ohashi 2013 for further examples). It appears that, at least locally, they balance obligations.

The conversation goes on for the next seven minutes, but due to limitations of space, let us turn our attention to data from quantitative analysis in order

⁷ See Ohashi (2013) for the use of denial as a self-denigration in thanking episodes in Japanese. Self-denigration is a significant form of relational work and politic behavior in many contexts in Japanese.

to see to what extent the participants contribute to the interaction. As shown above, asking a question (Q), *aizuchi* or back-channelling as feedback (FB), nods (N), self-denigration (SD) and laughter (@) are all important forms of relational work. Also in adjacency pairs such as 'question-answer' and 'self-denigration-denial', the second pair part 'answer' and 'denial' respectively, are expected by convention. This is in a wider sense a realisation of their reciprocal obligations. Therefore, it is hypothesised that conversational participants are likely to have positive evaluations of a given conversation, or at least they will not have negative ones, if they balance these interactional obligations. To see if the balancing of obligations is related to positive evaluation of the conversation, the participants were interviewed separately after their conversational session. In the individual follow up interview, the following four questions were asked.

- (1) What did you and your partner talk about? (Who initiated the conversation? What did s/he say? How did you respond? And then ...)
- (2) How do you evaluate the conversation with your partner? (If they do not know, can they give any adjectives to describe the conversation.)
- (3) How do you rate the conversation between you and your partner (1-the least pleasant to 5-the most pleasant)?
- (4) What contributed to your negative/positive impressions of the conversation?

There were no significant discrepancies between A and B in their views on Question (1), but A responded to it, saying '*dochira kara tomonaku*' ([topics] emerged organically [so it is not a matter of who initiated the conversation]), while B said '*watashino houkato omoimasu*' (I think I did [initiate the conversation]). In fact, B chose Italian language as a topic as she overheard that A was learning it. She said she asked A about her Italian language learning experience, because she thought it was '*bunan de sashisawariga nai topikku*' (a safe and non-evasive topic).

In relation to Questions 2, 3 and 4, A evaluated the conversation 4 out of 5, and she said '*tanoshikatta desune*' (it was enjoyable), but she thought she spoke a lot and wondered if B enjoyed the conversation as much as she did. A said '*tada watashi ni awasete irudakenanokana toiu tokoroga wakaranainde*' (I wasn't sure if she was simply being agreeable with my interests). B, on the other hand, evaluated the conversation rather negatively, 2 out of 5. B described the conversation as '*kiwo tsukau kaiwadatta*' (It was a careful and mindful conversation [from my side]). She elaborated on this by explaining that she was mindful of her duty to make sure the interlocutor was happy. She also said, 'she was a lot older than me and looked a little worried, and I tried to make her feel comfortable'.

Table 11.1 Balance sheet of obligations

	A (F68)	B (F49)
Q: Question	3	2
Ans: Answer	2	3
FB: aizuchi (back-channelling)	12 (13%)	82 (87%)
@: laugh	7 (37%)	12 (63%)
N: Nodding	67 (41%)	97 (59%)
TQ: tag question, じゃないですか、sentence final particles ね、よね、よ	35 (51%)	33 (49%)
Ag: Agreement そうですね	11 (46%)	13 (54%)
Honorifics	5 (4)	3 (5)
SD: Self denigration	3	0
D: Denial	0	3
Total	105 (32%)	217 (67%)
Final character count	4476 (60%)	1773 (40%)

Let us see how their comments and evaluations on their interaction are reflected in counts of these different forms of relational work (Table 11.1).

As previously discussed, asking a question (Q) is relationally significant and an answer is obligatory. A opted for Q three times and B twice, and all Qs were answered. There was a disparity in the distribution of feedback (FB), as in *aizuchi* (back-channelling). B invested in FB significantly more than A. It is a reflection of A's dominance which is made clear at the bottom of the column, in the final character count⁸—A(60%):B(40%), even though it is clear that B's contribution in FB is disproportionately greater than A's. B also invested more in @ (laughter) and N (nodding) than A did, although this was to a lesser degree. TQ (tag questions and sentence final particles) and Ag (agreement) are also relationally effective. If we consider B's frequent use of these tokens (FB, @ and N) in light of B's comments in the follow-up interview, the following points are revealed. B commented that, '*aiteni hobo 100% awasete, aitega tanoshikunaru youna obanashini naruyouni shita*' (I gave my full attention to my interlocutor's interest to make her happy). B's negative evaluation of the interaction appears to be related to her self-imposed caretaker role. She did not enjoy the talk with A, but invested in FB, @ and N in an attempt to make A feel happy and comfortable. It is also true that B's caretaker role is reflected in the imbalanced distribution in those tokens (FB, @ and N) in the balance sheet. A also thought that A spoke significantly more than B, something which is objectively true. This imbalance also led A to wonder if B really enjoyed the conversation with her (and in fact B didn't) and this suggests that A and B observed reciprocal obligations. In other words, reciprocity is in place

⁸ This is a count of each participant's utterances by character as a unit.

for their evaluation of the conversation. It can be said, then, that even though balanced obligations are not achieved, the conversational participants seem to observe their reciprocal obligations. An imbalance in the balance sheet may lead to a negative evaluation of interaction, and thus impoliteness may arise. Although this is necessarily a preliminary case study and requires more data involving speakers of various languages, the notion of reciprocal obligations and the balance sheet of obligation may be useful tools in analysing the role of relationships in interaction with respect to (im)politeness.

4.2 Case Study 2: Relational Ties and Relational Entitlements

The following example illustrates the dialectic interplay of relational ties and relational entitlement in a mediation setting, where the involved participants were seeking a mutually agreeable financial compensation between the at-fault party and the victim party over a death caused by a car accident (Chang 2016).⁹

(2) [100727_12:3:08]
1 Wu: %Ci ci% to woo kuí jín tǎi-piáu ah guá
this time then have several people represent PRT I
(.)i sī kiò guá kû-kong ah lí tse tsik-kong
3sg be call me granduncle PRT you this granduncle
lîng-guā mài tsham tī tsia lui hònn(.)ah to guá
in addition N mix in here CP PRT PRT just I
í kuân-puè lâi >kā< tàu- kuan-sim tsit-tsām tǎi-tsi
as senior come ASP help concern this C matter
hònn(.)ah to guan tǎi-piáu lâi kā lín lâi- gī-uân

⁹Transcription symbols and abbreviations used in morphological glosses (Jefferson 2004)

(.) micro-pause
- cut-off of prior sound in a word
underlining stressed word or part of word
>< rushed or compressed talk
% code-switch (between Taiwanese and Mandarin Chinese)

Abbreviations used in morphological glosses (Wu 2004)

ASSC Associative (-de)
CP Complement
C Classifier
INT Interjection
N Negation
PRT Particle
Q Question marker

546 PRT PRT then we represent come give you come MLC¹⁰
 547 *tann ũ tǎi-tsì sin tsáu ah* (.) hònn sǎo-í guá
 548 now have matter first leave PRT PRT so I
 549 *tī siūnn- kóng kin-á-jit >khuànn ē-tàng tú-hó< khuànn*
 550 ASP think CP today see if can just see if
 551 *ē-tàng tú-hó tak-ke- > tak-ke-< ũ tsit ê* (.)
 552 can just give everyone everyone have one ASSC
 553 %Chiu xiensheng% mai- %women do buyao keqi hònn
 554 (surname) Mr N we all N modest PRT
 555 *jiran fasheng do yijing shiqing fasheng dajia jiu*
 556 since occur all already matter occur everyone then
 557 *(.)yao(.).lai zenmeyang lai jie jue% hònn(.).ah guá*
 558 need come how come resolve PRT PRT I
 559 *siong-sin lí a-kū tī tē-hng siōng kā lán tsiah*
 560 believe your uncle ASP local in with we these
 561 *tak-ke long tsin kuan-sim tē-hng ah guá khuànn*
 562 everyone all very care local PRT I see
 563 *(.)hoo lín a-kū lái lái kóng tse uē ah guan*
 564 give your uncle come come say some words PRT our
 565 *lín tǎi-piáu hònn >lai<(.).lai siang*
 566 (surname)representative PRT come come mutual
 567 *hong-bīn lái %go-tong% tsit-ē >ah lán< ũ*
 568 sides come communicate a little bit PRT we have
 569 *būn-tē bō-kín tak-ke thē-tshut-lái thó-lūn ah*
 570 questions okay everyone raise CP discuss PRT
 571 *guá tse tsok su-gí sing gah lín khui-tiūnn hònn ah*
 572 I this as emcee first help you open PRT PRT
 573 *lín tsài tshiánn lín- °####°*
 574 you then please you-
 575 ‘This time we have a few representatives. Me, he called me
 576 granduncle (maternal) ((pointing to the at-fault party)) and you
 577 [call me] granduncle (paternal) ((pointing to Chen, the victim
 578 party’s representative)). But [we] don’t mix [the relationship
 579 between Chen and me] here. I, as a senior, come to [help] care
 580 about this matter. We represent [on behalf of the victims and
 581 the people at fault] to come to..... the MLC¹¹ (Tsai) has something
 582 on so he has already left. I am thinking that if today everyone is
 583 able to have a....., Mr Chiu, don’t *keqi* (be modest/to hold back),
 584 since this matter has occurred, [let’s see] how to resolve [this
 585 issue]. I believe that your uncle (D) and we all care about the

¹⁰ Member of Legislative Council

¹¹ xxxxx

local (matters). I think, let your uncle speak [first] and let
representative Lin host the mutual negotiation with everyone. It's
okay if you have any questions. Everyone can bring up [your
questions] for discussion. I, as the emcee, take the opening
[speech], and all of you please-'

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This excerpt begins when the chair of the mediation committee, Wu, takes the
role of host and gives an official opening speech, along with a brief introduc-
tion of himself and the participants. By doing so, Wu starts by acknowledg-
ing the footings of the involved participants in the interaction. Particularly
in the case of multiparty interaction, when there are numerous participant
footings, different participation footings can lead to multiple meanings and
evaluations (Haugh 2013; cf. Goffman 1981). In the following analysis we
consider how relationality in this particular setting is evoked by the Chair of
the committee in this introductory turn, in particular, how relational ties and
relational entitlements between the participants are accomplished via three
main social actions.

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Firstly, the chair, Wu, establishes the way in which he should be addressed
by the co-participants. Wu explicitly states his relationship to the at-fault
party (Kuo and Kong) and then the victim's party (Chen) in this negotiation
before the mediation formally begins. The context and their respective social
distance thus become salient through use of the address terms employed in
the introduction (Su 2009, p. 329). In this case, it highlights his insider rela-
tionship with the participants (Pan and Kádár 2010), as well as decreasing
the social distance between himself and the named participants, since terms
of address are drawn on to establish associations or connections between
the participants in the mediation session. In other words, the use of address
terms mirrors their claimed psychological connections, and thereby implicitly
invokes the relational ties amongst the participants, as well as minimising
their relational distance, in order to engage the participants in the mediation
(Yang 2007; Ye 2004). On the other hand, Wu also specifies himself as an
'elder member' within both their relative and contextual relationships, and
thereby casts himself as having certain entitlements in this context. According
to Chinese traditional beliefs, a person with a superior or an elder role, for
instance, should be highly respected (Sung 2001; Sung and Kim 2009).

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Secondly, Wu, code-switches to Mandarin Chinese to address the son of
the victim (Chiu), who is in his early twenties, presupposing that Mandarin
Chinese is Chiu's dominant language (Su 2009, p. 320), as it is the most
common dialect among younger people in Taiwanese society nowadays. Wu
asks Chiu not to be *keqi* during the mediation, which refers to not showing

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any 'restraint in expressing one's wants or acknowledging one's own abilities' (Haugh 2006, p. 20; cf. Chang and Haugh 2011). This imperative directive involves asking Chiu to freely express his opinions and the desired amount of compensation, and thus leaves open negotiation space for Lu and Chiu. This directive thus serves as an implicit acknowledgement of Chiu as the beneficiary of the compensation, showing concern for Chiu's speaking rights in the mediation.

Thirdly, Wu subsequently code-switches back to Taiwanese dialect in the talk that follows, and in doing so, acknowledges Lu's participation in the mediation, and Lu's concern and care about this matter. At this point, it appears Wu is treating Chiu as the direct recipient of the comment and yet, simultaneously, Lu is evidently treated as the indirect addressee through the code-switching back to Taiwanese, thereby implicitly assuming Lu will speak up for Chiu as he is his senior (i.e. being Chiu's uncle). Instead of inviting Chiu to speak, then Chiu is welcomed to ask or raise any concerns in the discussion following between Lu, the IA (the insurance agent) and Lin (the at-fault party's advocate). In other words, Wu creates a particular participation footing for Lu, as occupying the primary negotiation role in this interaction on the side of the victim. The comments indirectly addressed to Lu thus implicitly serve as a compliment and give face (*mianzi*) through elevating Lu's personal character by alluding to his voluntary participation in the mediation. On the other hand, through issuing the compliment of giving the speaking turn to Lu, Wu at the same time attributes institutional authority to himself by asserting the right to select the next speaker. Wu simultaneously displays his relational entitlement to take the leading position in this meditation context, as well as highlighting Lu's and Chiu's (the victim party) entitlements that arise from being relationally connected with Liu, and being the beneficiary respectively. Wu thus endorses interactionally what might have been previously assumed by the participants in relation to their participation footings. However, Wu goes further in complimenting a side participant, namely, Lu, in order to achieve particular situational goals in the mediation.

The setting up of a participation framework through Wu's three key actions in his opening turn acknowledges the roles and attendant responsibilities of the participants, but also acknowledges their relational entitlements as well as the speaking rights of the involved participants. Managing the participation footings and rights in institutional contexts is expected in Chinese settings (Gu 2011), and so failing to define the situational goal might be considered as a failing on the part of the institutional mediation system. In other words, it is critical to recognise the interrelated ties, entitlements and speaking rights of the involved participants, so that the involved participants are able

to act accordingly without violating their perceived institutional (relational) entitlements and obligations, and thus achieve their interactional goals in a more harmonious manner (Spencer-Oatey 2005, 2009). The setting up of the participation framework is arguably interpretable as orienting to face and so constitutes a face practice in the negotiation context, since invoking the participants' footings appropriately is critical for acknowledging their relational entitlements.

Wu volunteered the following comment after the interactional recording:
 (3)
 38 Wu: %*zhe tiaojie dai ganqing* (.) *dai difang*
 this mediation carry emotive quality carry local
 renshi de qingmian (.) *wo shi qian*
 human matter ASSC emotive face I be former
 xianyiyuan-%
 MLC
 'This mediation involves emotive quality and the emotive face
 from the local people. I am the former MLC'

Wu explicitly claims that the negotiation requires *ganqing* (emotive quality) as well as *qingmian* (emotive face). In other words, the display of an emotive stance, such as showing sympathy, empathy or consideration, and face concerns are significant strategies in facilitating negotiations and achieving mutually agreeable resolutions. On the other hand, Wu also explicitly indicates his position as a former MLC, relating his important role in broader society and his relational ties (*guanxi*) with people who are involved, through which he shows his reflexive awareness of the significant role in this mediation.

What can be seen here is that the practice of establishing a participation framework is a means of co-constituting the basic parameters of the participant's relational ties and entitlement, so that the individuals are aware of their interconnectivity as well as their speaking rights, vis-à-vis their respective interactional footings. This constitutes one way in which relationality can be legitimately invoked in this interaction, with any subsequent evaluations of (im)polite behaviour being grounded in this participation framework.

4.3 Summary

The first case study demonstrates that the balance sheet of obligations can reveal imbalances in the use of some conversational tokens. B invested significantly more in FB (Feedback: aizuchi, back-channelling), N (Nodding)

and @ (laughter). In light of the norm of reciprocity, such imbalanced areas are marked and may constitute (im)politeness phenomena. The follow-up interviews reveal that B who invested more in FB, N and @ in fact evaluated the conversation negatively. She described the conversation as '*kio tsukau hanashi*' (careful and mindful conversation), and it seems that she did not enjoy it. A, even though she enjoyed the conversation with B, wondered if B was genuinely involved in the conversation. The balance sheet of obligations as a hypothetical norm of interaction, therefore, can be a useful tool to identify phenomena requiring further investigation and explanation. Through the process of deploying the balance sheet in analysing interaction and cross-examination with follow-up interview data, the researcher does not have to impose his/her etic interpretation. Some marked features identified in the balance sheet are mapped with the participants' meta-pragmatic evaluations, therefore, the researcher can achieve his/her second order interpretation in view of participants' first order understandings.

The second case study demonstrates how relationality is evoked through the dialectic interplay of relational ties and entitlement. The data has shown that the chair of the committee initiated the mediation session by establishing a participation framework, namely, allocating the participants' speaking authority as well as acknowledging their various responsibilities. By allocating the speaking authority and responsibility at the very beginning of his opening speech, he attempted to evoke the involved participants' awareness of each individual's footing in this particular social environment, that is, the interactional positions, which encompass different roles and responsibilities across the participants (Goffman 1981). There are arguably two underlying purposes for allocating their interactional footings in this way. On one hand, the participants are acknowledged vis-à-vis the interconnected relationships between all parties, that is, their relational ties (*guanxi*). For instance, while the chair of the committee initiated the mediation session, he specifically mentioned the people with whom he has familial relations by using specific terms of address. By so doing, the involved participants are reminded of their insider relationships as well as their relational ties (*guanxi*). Therefore, the emic concepts relating to their relational ties, such as *ganqing/renqing* (emotivity) are also evoked, and consequently a sense of mutual favour and obligations is implicitly suggested.

On the other hand, through this allocation of interactional footings, all the participants are acknowledged vis-à-vis each individual's rights to speak and make proposals. Through this practice the committee chair thus also co-constitutes each participant's relational entitlements, and therefore highlights the relationality inevitably involved when evoking different interactional positions. However, it is important to note that this entitlement only exists in the context of these situated relationships, rather than constituting a component

of their individual identities. For example, in the analysis presented, the chair of the committee invokes the power to allocate the speaking rights vis-à-vis the involved participants in the mediation context. Moreover, in the same analysis where the chair acknowledged the relationship between Lu and Liu (the deceased victim), Lu was given the speaking authority in the brother–sister relationship with Liu, although the main beneficiary of the compensation is Chiu. Lu then obtained the relational entitlements on behalf of Chiu through the acknowledgement of his contextual footing for the entire mediation.

5 Conclusion and Future Directions

In this chapter, the relatively under-explored relational aspects of (im)politeness have been discussed and exemplified. The two case studies in both Japanese and Chinese, in particular, have highlighted the significance of studying emic concepts of relationality and related concepts, including the balance sheet of obligation in Japanese contexts, and relational ties and relational entitlements in Taiwanese interactions. It has thus been proposed that (im)politeness should be analysed and interpreted through an emic lens in order to tease out the nuances of relationality arising in interpersonal interactions across different cultural contexts. In so doing, we arguably avoid an under-theorisation of (im)politeness through simply imposing the researcher's etic interpretation on data. We have also suggested that emotion/emotivity, which have not been given sufficient attention to date, should be incorporated into our understanding of relational phenomena. We have argued that it is important to theorise and analyse relationality and identities as distinct phenomena in their own right, even though the co-construction of identities and relational practices is interdependently related through individual–social dialectic in interaction itself. We have thus suggested complementing the traditional focus on relational identities of relational practices, with a greater focus on the actual relationships between the persons themselves in future research. In this way, it is hoped that this chapter has highlighted another window into understanding interpersonal reality in various contexts across languages and cultures.

AU9

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