[This document contains the author's accepted manuscript. For the publisher's version, see the link in the header of this document.]

Paper citation:

Abstract:
Identity implications theory (IIT) is applied to analyze how young adults manage identity concerns associated with the goals of initiating, intensifying, and disengaging from romantic relationships. Participants wrote their responses to one of six hypothetical romantic (re)definition scenarios, indicated whether they actually would pursue the relational goal if their scenario were real, and rated degree of threat to both parties' face. Responses were coded for positive and negative politeness strategies. Participants in different relational goal conditions perceived different face threats, varied in their likelihood of pursuing the relational goal, and employed different politeness strategies. Relationship (re)definition goal also moderated associations between perceived face threats and goal pursuit as well as politeness strategies. The findings show how multiple goal theories such as IIT can be applied to situations where relational goals are primary as well as how, to varying degrees, identity concerns shape and constrain how young adults pursue relational (re)definition goals.

Text of paper:
RUNNING HEAD: Relationship (Re)Definition Goals and Face

Identity Implications of Relationship (Re)Definition Goals: An Analysis of Face Threats and

Facework as Young Adults Initiate, Intensify, and Disengage from Romantic Relationships

Steven R. Wilson   Adrianne D. Kunkel

Scott Robson   James O. Olufowote

Jordan Soliz

Steven R. Wilson (Ph.D., Purdue University, 1989) is a professor in the Department of

Communication, Purdue University. Adrianne D. Kunkel (Ph.D., Purdue University, 2000) is an

associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Kansas, where

1

Scott Robson is a Ph.D. student. James Olufowote (Ph.D., Purdue University, 2005) is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication, Boston College. Jordan Soliz (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 2004) is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Correspondence concerning this manuscript should be addressed to Steven R. Wilson, Department of Communication, Purdue University, 100 N. University Street, BRNG 2114, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098. (Phone: 765-494-7547; FAX: 765-496-1394; E-mail: wilson25@purdue.edu).

Although change may be a constant in relationships, some moments in the development or decay of romantic relationships are particularly memorable. Young adults describe events such going on their first date, meeting their partner's parents, or breaking up for a time as "turning points" that reflected significant changes in their relational commitment (Baxter & Bullis, 1986). When asked to imagine how they would feel when initiating, intensifying, or disengaging from a romantic relationship, young adults report they would feel excited, nervous, fearful, sad, and/or courageous (Kunkel, Wilson, Olufowote, & Robson, 2003). Perhaps these varied emotions reflect that initiating, intensifying, and ending romantic relationships each are complex situations in which participants risk loosing face (Cupach & Metts, 1994) and must manage multiple, conflicting goals (O'Keefe, 1988; Schrader & Dillard, 1998).

One framework offering insight into the complexities of relationships (re)definition is Identity Implications Theory (IIT; Wilson et al., 1998; Wilson & Feng, 2007). IIT highlights the unique identity implications associated with seeking specific types of relational change. We compare what threats to face young adults associate with the goals of initiating, intensifying, or disengaging from a romantic relationship, what types of facework (i.e., means of managing both parties' face) they employ, and whether associations between face threats and facework vary depending on the particular relational goal. We show how multiple goal theories can be applied in contexts beyond those involving "instrumental" goals and shed light on some of the microdetails of how relationship (re)definition is accomplished. To set the stage, we review prior research on initiating, intensifying, and disengaging from romantic relationships, describe IIT and explain its relevance to the current project, and forward research hypotheses.

Initiating, Intensifying, and Disengaging from Romantic Relationships

Initiating, intensifying, and disengaging from romantic relationships have been explored as turning points, memory structures, and relational goals. Young adults in Western societies share similar ideas about actions or events that represent meaningful changes in the course of romantic relationships. In their classic study of turning points, Baxter and Bullis (1986) interviewed 80 college students from 40 romantic relationships independently about "all of the times that there were changes in the joint commitment level that you can recall" (p. 477). Commonly recalled turning points included meeting for the first time, going on their first date, meeting their partner's family, deciding to date exclusively, and breaking up for a period of time. Some turning points (e.g., dating exclusively, disengaging) typically prompted explicit talk about the relationship itself whereas others (e.g., going on a first date) did so only rarely.

Honeycutt, Cantrill and colleagues (Honeycutt, Cantrill, & Allen, 1992; Honeycutt, Cantrill, & Greene, 1989; Honeycutt, Cantrill, Kelly, & Lambkin, 1998) have studied "relational memory structures" or sequences of prototypical behaviors that young adults expect to occur as romantic relationships escalate or decay. Relational memory structures allow participants to make predictions about likely future actions and inferences about the meaning of implicit events. Their research shows that meeting for the first time, asking for the other's phone number, and going on a first date are actions that college students expect to occur early in romantic relationships, whereas meeting the partner's parents and talking about dating exclusively are expected to occur later as relational commitment escalates. Talking about breaking up is expected to occur midway through the process of relational decay, after actions such as arguing about little things and spending less time together. Female and male students

largely agree on how "typical" or "necessary" these actions are within developing or decaying relationships as well as when they are most likely to occur.

Complimenting this work, scholars have also investigated relational (re)definition from the perspective of "goals" or desired end states that motivate participants' actions (Kunkel et al., 2003; Mongeau, Serewicz, & Therrien, 2004; Schrader & Dillard, 1998). Actions such as asking someone on a first date or asking a dating partner to meet one's parents are meaningful, in part, because of what they signal about the current state and possible future trajectory of a romantic relationship. In their investigation of reasons for going on first dates, Mongeau et al. (2004) concluded that "reducing uncertainty about the partner, investigating romantic potential, and creating or strengthening a friendship are popular first date goals for both men and women" (p. 134). Asking someone to go on a date thus can be seen as an attempt to "initiate" a romantic relationship, whether the other party is a virtual stranger or a previous platonic friend. Asking a romantic partner to meet one's parents, thus further integrating the partner into one's larger social network, may be seen as a sign of wanting to "intensify" or escalate levels of relational commitment. Such actions are meaningful because of the goals projected to underlie them.

In the Goals-Plans-Action (GPA) model, Dillard (1990, 2004) distinguishes primary and secondary goals. Within any interaction, the primary goal is what motivates a person to speak at that point in time and hence explains why the interaction taking place. The primary goal "brackets the situation. It helps segment the flow of behavior into a meaningful unit; it says what the interaction is about" (Dillard, Segrin, & Harden, 1989, p. 69). Primary goals are not necessarily "instrumental" in nature; indeed, when asked to describe situations in which they

sought change, respondents include not just instances of trying to change another person's behavior (e.g., task goals such as seeking assistance or enforcing obligations) but also situations where they were trying to change the fundamental nature of their relationship with the other party (Cody, Canary, & Smith, 1994; Rule, Bisanz, & Kohn, 1985). Wanting to initiate, intensify, or disengage from a romantic relationship each is an example of a primary goal that provides a meaningful frame for participants to understand what is taking place as they interact.

Secondary goals are cross-situational concerns that shape/constrain whether and how individuals pursue their primary goal. Dillard et al. (1989) propose five secondary goal categories: identity, conversation management, personal resource, relational resource, and arousal management goals. Schrader and Dillard (1998) had college students read a scenario illustrating the primary goal of relational initiation, escalation, or de-escalation, recall a similar situation from their own lives, and rate the importance of the primary goal and the five secondary goals in their recalled situation. In each case, mean ratings of goal importance were above the scale midpoint both for the primary goal as well as for 3-4 secondary goals. For example, conversation management goals such as wanting to maintain face were rated as more important than the primary goal by individuals who recalled initiating romantic relationship and just as important as the primary goal by individuals who recalled escalating or de-escalating a romantic relationship. These findings indicate that multiple, potentially conflicting goals typically are present when individuals attempt to redefine a romantic relationship.

Although goals research has offered useful insights, important questions remain about the identity implications of pursuing relationship (re)definition goals. Most research has applied the GPA model to instrumental rather than relational goals, and the limited research that has

investigated relational goals typically has focused on only a single turning point such first dates (Mongeau et al., 2004) or problematic events (Samp & Solomon, 1998) rather than comparing goals underlying distinct turning points. For example, although existing research suggests that concerns about face, or the "conception of self that each person displays in particular interactions with others" (Cupach & Metts, 1994, p. 3), are salient during attempts to seek relational (re)definition, goals research has not explained why unique threats to both parties' face might be associated with the relational goals of initiating, intensifying, and disengaging from a romantic relationship. Identity Implications Theory (IIT) addresses just this question.

<center>Identity Implications of Relational (Re)definition</center>

IIT builds on Dillard's (1990, 2004) GPA model as well as Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Like the latter theory, IIT assumes that face is composed of two basic wants: the desire to have one's attributes and actions approved of by significant others (positive face) and the desire to maintain autonomy and be free from unnecessary constraints (negative face). People assess their own behavior and the actions of interactional partner(s) in terms of what is implied about both parties, in part because many actions have the potential to threaten face.

According to IIT, people recognize potential face threats that could arise in any situation based on two sources of implicit knowledge. One is the constitutive rules or defining conditions for speech acts (Labov & Fanshel, 1977; Searle, 1969). When making a request, for example, a speaker implicitly assumes that there is a need for action, a need to request (i.e., the target person was not going to perform the desired action already), the possibility that the target person might be willing or feel obligated to comply (otherwise there is no point in requesting), and so forth. These assumptions have implications for both parties' face. By assuming that a

target person might be willing to perform an action that the target otherwise would not have performed, for instance, a speaker places some degree of constraint on the target's autonomy (negative face). Because these implicit assumptions are contestable (e.g., the target of a request may not see any need for action or feel willing/obligated to act), performing speech acts also may lead to questions or disagreements that can threaten face (Ifert, 2000; Jacobs & Jackson, 1983).

In addition to rules for speech acts, people draw on their understanding of primary goals as a second source of implicit knowledge to identify potential threats to face. IIT assumes that the rules for speech acts have different implications for both parties' identities when framed by different primary goals (Wilson et al., 1998). According to the "need for action" rule, a speaker who makes a request presumes that there is a reason why the requested action needs to be performed (Searle, 1969). A student who says "I'd like you to meet my parents" to a casual dating partner plausibly could be seen as pursuing the goal of relational intensification. If this occurred early in a dating relationship, questions could be raised about whether greater relational commitment actually is needed at this time (e.g., is the speaker trying to intensify the relationship too quickly, perhaps because s/he is insecure or needy). Alternatively, a student who says "I think we should take a break from seeing each other for a while" to a romantic partner likely would be seen as pursuing the goal of relational disengagement, which almost certainly would lead to questions about why the dating relationship needed to change (e.g., is the partner somehow inadequate). Put simply, the same rule (need for action) has different implications for both parties' identities depending on the primary goal defining the interaction. As a second example, a speaker who offers an invitation presumes that the other party

plausibly might be willing to accept. If a student asked a classmate "would you like to go see a movie sometime?" but the classmate appeared reluctant, reasons for the lack of willingness could threaten the speaker's face (e.g., is the student not physically attractive). By analyzing what the rules for speech acts imply when framed by the goals of initiating, intensifying, or terminating a romantic relationship, it is possible to predict which face threats might arise in each case (see Kunkel et al, 2003 for a detailed analysis of potential face threats associated with each relationship goal).

IIT assumes that speakers often must manage multiple, conflicting goals such as pursuing relational (re)definition while maintaining both parties' face. Like politeness theory, IIT assumes that face wants are interdependent and speakers usually have some motivation to mitigate threat to the hearer's face. Politeness theory does recognize that face concerns may be set aside when urgency is great; similarly, the GPA model assumes that when the primary goal (e.g., getting out of an unwanted relationship) is very important, speakers may communicate clearly and directly despite face-related concerns. When the relational partner is perceived to have violated an obligation, speakers may even desire to attack their partner's face (Cai & Wilson, 2000).

Finally, IIT assumes that a broad range of message features function as "facework" or actions designed to make what one is doing consistent with face (Goffman, 1967). One element of facework is whether to pursue the relational (re)definition goal. In the language of politeness theory, speakers may choose not to perform the "face-threatening act" (FTA) when perceived face threat is great; similarly, the GPA model assumes that speakers may decide not to pursue a primary goal when important secondary goals could be jeopardized.

When relationship (re)definition goals are pursued, speakers' language choices are assumed to reflect concerns about maintaining both parties' face. Early research developed typologies of verbal strategies for creating affinity (Bell & Daly, 1984) or disengaging from romantic relationships (Baxter, 1982; Cody, 1982). Although these typologies implicitly recognized the importance of identity concerns (e.g., Cody's typology includes both negative identity management and positive tone strategies), they have been criticized for being ad-hoc lists without any overarching theoretical framework (Kellermann & Cole, 1994). In this study, we assess the types of politeness strategies that students include in messages designed to initiate, intensify, or disengage from romantic relationships. Politeness is "the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward another" (Mills, 2003, p. 6). Positive politeness strategies such as giving compliments or emphasizing similarities mitigate against threats to the other's positive face wants; negative politeness strategies such as hedging or apologizing redress threats to the other's negative face wants (Brown & Levinson, 1987). IIT assumes that such verbal strategies may be used to redress threats to one's own as well as to the hearer's (relational partner's) face.

Kunkel et al. (2003) report the only investigation that has applied IIT to relationship (re)definition goals. In their first study, participants provided open-ended reports of the face concerns and emotions they anticipated after reading a scenario involving relational initiation, intensification, or disengagement. Themes in their responses, along with a theoretical analysis of the rules for speech acts and primary goals, were used to identity eight different potential threats to the participant's and their romantic partner's positive and negative face. Closed-ended scales measuring these potential face concerns were administered to different

participants in a second study. Participants associated unique sets of face threats with each of the three relationship goals and varied how directly they asked for what they wanted in light of these differences.

The current study extends Kunkel et al.'s (2003) initial investigation in three important respects. First, we use two scenarios per relationship (re)definition goal whereas Kunkel et al. only used one scenario in order to provide a stronger test of whether face threats are associated with a relationship (re)definition goal rather than with just the specific scenario representing that goal.[1] Second, we examine facework at a more mirco level, exploring use of particular linguistic forms of politeness rather than global ratings of message directness. Third, we assess whether associations between perceived face threats and facework strategies vary across relationship (re)definition goals. Given that participants may place more or less emphasis on supporting face depending on the type of relationship (re)definition being sought, it is possible that perceived face threats are a better predictor of politeness strategies for some relational goals than for others.

Based on this rationale, we forward four hypotheses and two research question. We expect that *participants will perceive different potential threats to their own positive and negative face, as well as to their partner's positive and negative face, depending on whether they imagine initiating, intensify*ing, or *disengaging from a romantic relationship* (H1). Although this hypothesis is stated non-directionally, we can predict how perceptions for many of the potential face threats identified by Kunkel et al. (2003) will vary across goals. As suggested by our discussion of speech act rules and primary goals, we expect (a) participants who imagine initiating a romantic relationship will perceive the greatest threat that they might not appear

attractive to the other, (b) those who imagine intensifying a romantic relationship to perceive the greatest threat of appearing overly dependent, and (c) those who imagine disengaging from a romantic relationship to perceive the greatest threat making their partner appear inadequate.

Besides perceived face threats, we expect that participants in the three relationship goal conditions also will vary in terms of facework. Because young adults on average place greater importance on face maintenance than on the primary goal when initiating a romantic relationship whereas they weight both goals about equally when intensifying or disengaging from a romantic relationship (Schrader & Dillard, 1998), we predict that *participants who imagine intensifying or disengaging from a romantic relationship will be more likely than those who imagine initiating a relationship to report that they would actually talk to the other party (i.e., pursue the relational goal) if the situation were real* (H2). Although politeness strategies should be present in most messages seeking relational change given the complex nature of relational (re)definition, the specific strategies used also may vary depending on the relationship goal. For example, an individual might include statements of caring ("I care about you very much, but…") as a form of positive politeness when seeking to disengage from a romantic relationship, but saying "I care about you very much" may be too risky for someone who wants to intensify a romantic relationship yet is uncertain whether his/her casual dating partner feels the same way (Knobloch & Carpenter-Theune, 2004). Given that specific strategies may be more or less suited to different relationship goals, we ask: *do participants in the initiating, intensifying, and disengaging conditions differ in their use of positive and negative politeness strategies* (RQ1)?

Finally, we investigate perceived face threats and facework. Based on politeness theory, we predict that *participants who report that they would not pursue the relational goal if the scenario were real perceive greater overall face threat than those who report that they would pursue the relational goal (H3).* Politeness theory also suggests that *as the overall level of perceived face threat increases, participants will include positive and negative politeness strategies in their messages more frequently* (H4). Finally, participants may have varying motivation to mitigate face threats depending on the particular relationship (re)definition goal. Hence, we ask: *does the strength of association between perceived face threats and pursuing the relational goal or politeness strategies vary depending on whether participants imagine initiating, intensifying, or disengaging from a romantic relationship* (RQ2)?

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students enrolled in communication courses at two large Midwestern universities (*N* = 598; 342 women, 255 men, one no response) participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 53 years with an average age of 21.43 (*SD* = 3.19). Most were sophomores (*N* = 116, 19%), juniors (*N* = 163, 27%) or seniors (N = 287, 48%). In terms of ethnicity, the majority indicated they were European-American (*N* = 443; 74%).

Procedures

In order to fulfill a research requirement or to receive extra credit, participants completed a "romantic relationships goals questionnaire." Participation lasted between forty minutes and one hour. After preliminary instructions were provided, each participant received an informed consent form, as well as a packet of materials that randomly assigned him or her

to one of six scenarios involving relational (re)definition. Two of the six scenarios instantiated each of the three relationship goals (i.e., initiation, intensification, and disengagement).

Instrumentation

The Romantic Relationship Goals Questionnaire was divided into four separate sections: general background items, relationship goals, message construction, and face threats. Participants also completed an individual-difference measure not relevant to the current report.

General background items. The general background items obtained demographic information about the participants, including sex, age, year in school, and ethnicity.

Relationship goals. Depending on the version of the questionnaire, participants responded to a hypothetical scenario in which they imagined initiating, intensifying, or disengaging from a romantic relationship. There were two scenarios for each goal [see Table 1: initiation (total N = 202; 92 "seen in class" scenario, 110 "met at friend's" scenario), intensification (total N = 199; 91 "date exclusively" scenario, 108 "meet parents" scenario), or disengagement (total N = 197; 91 "boring/avoiding" scenario, 106 "arguing/alternatives" scenario]. After participants read one of these six scenarios, they indicated on seven-point semantic differential scales the extent to which they thought the situation was: (1) unrealistic to realistic, (2) difficult to imagine themselves in to easy to imagine themselves in, (3) unreasonable to reasonable, (4) something that could never happen to them to something that could easily happen to them, and (5) unbelievable to believable (α = .87). Responses to the five questions were summed and divided by the number of items to retain the original 1-7 scale

(higher scores = greater perceived realism). Across the 6 scenarios, participants felt that their situation was realistic (*M* = 5.68).[2]

Message construction and pursuing the primary (relational) goal. After responding to the "realism" items, participants wrote out in detail exactly what they would say to their (potential) partner ("Chris") in trying to attain their assigned relational (re)definition goal. After writing their message, participants completed a dichotomous measure of whether they actually would pursue the relationship goal. Specifically, participants were asked to circle "No" or "Yes" in response to the following question: "If this were a real situation, would you actually confront Chris and talk to him/her about the situation?" Following this question, participants were given 10 blank lines to record their explanations for why they would (not) pursue the relational goal.

Face threats. Participants responded to a total of 40 seven-point Likert scales, with five items designed to assess the degree to which seeking relationship change might threaten each the eight specific face threats identified by Kunkel et al. (2003). Specifically, they indicated the degree to which initiating, intensifying, or disengaging might threaten: (1) the partner's negative face, whereby the partner might be pressured to comply (e.g., "Chris might feel pushed into agreeing with what I want in this situation," α = .87), (2) the participant's own negative face, whereby the participant might feel that he or she was precluding future relationships with other partners (e.g., "By asking this now, I might end up feeling like I was boxed into this relationship," α = .86), (3) the participant's own negative face, whereby the participant might feel that he or she was losing a desirable current relationship (e.g., "By making this request, I could end up feeling I had made the wrong decision," α = .83), (4) the partner's positive face, whereby the participant might make the partner appear inadequate

15

(e.g., "By saying what I did in this situation, I might make it seem like something must be wrong with Chris," α = .87), (5) the participant's own positive face, whereby he or she might worry about appearing physically attractive to the other party (e.g., "I would be very concerned about making myself appear physically attractive to Chris in this situation," α = .94), (6) the participant's own positive face, whereby he or she might appear to be too forward (e.g., "I would be concerned that Chris might think that I was being too forward by talking to him/her in this situation," α = .83), (7) the participant's own positive face, whereby he or she might appear to be overly dependent (e.g., "I could make myself appear very needy by asking what I did in this situation," α = .85), and (8) the participant's own positive face, whereby he or she might look insensitive (e.g., "By saying what I did, I may appear to be insensitive in this situation," α = .93). All seven-point Likert scales were bounded by the endpoints "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7), with larger scores indicating higher perceived face threat. Items tapping different face threats were intermixed. To ensure that the measure for each face threat was unidimensional, separate principal axis factor analyses were conducted on the 5 items tapping each face threat. In all eight cases, only one factor with an eigenvalue > 1.00 emerged. Responses to items constituting each scale were summed and averaged by the number of items to retain the 1-7 scale.

Message Coding

Written messages were analyzed to identify strategies that mitigated threats to the hypothetical partner's positive or negative face. Brown and Levinson (1987) identified 15 positive politeness strategies, five of which appeared to occur with some regularity in a preliminary scan of our data and hence were analyzed in the current study. *Giving compliments*

16

refers to complimenting the partner's physical or non-physical attributes, acknowledging enjoyment of the partner's company, or making mere statements of liking. *Demonstrating nonsuperficial interest in partner's affairs* refers to statements that are more substantive than simple "how are you?" and "what's going on?" types of statements because they demonstrate an interest in the partner's life and/or affairs. *Demonstrating similarity and common ground* represents phrases where the participant is stating a similarity between him- or herself and the partner or something they share in common. *Making statements of caring or affect* involves messages demonstrating that the participant cares deeply about the partner. These messages are more intense than those classified as 'giving complements' because they expressed liking. *Avoiding blaming partner* refers to messages constructed to avoid blaming the partner for a negative situation or to absolve the partner of responsibility for a negative situation. Examples of these five positive politeness strategies appear in Table 2.[3]

Brown and Levinson (1987) identify 10 negative politeness strategies, four of which were utilized in the current study. *Hedging* refers to words or clauses (e.g., "I think," "maybe") that make a statement or request more tentative in nature. *Managing imposition* strategies are those which specifically focus on softening the constraints placed on the partner by explicitly recognizing or minimizing the impact of the imposition, providing different options or a less than definite time frame (e.g., "let's go out *sometime*"), or giving the partner the option of not accepting or not having to make an immediate decision. *Apologizing for request/imposition* are strategies where the participant offers a direct apology to the partner for constraining his/her autonomy. *Soliciting partner's input in sought directive* occurs when the participant *explicitly* asks the partner for feedback about the request (see Table 2 for examples).[4]

Two coders (the third and fifth authors) and the second author initially worked together to develop rules for identifying and classifying positive and negative politeness strategies. In total, 60 messages from each relational goal (n = 180) were used during this process. Following this, the two coders independently coded a subset of 20 messages from each relational goal (n = 60) for specific politeness strategies. As a test of reliability, percentage of agreement was computed separately for positive and for negative politeness strategies within each relational goal by calculating a ratio of the strategies coded the same by the two coders divided by the total number of strategies coded. For example, if both coders identified two instances of giving compliments and one instance of demonstrating interest in a written message, but only one coder also identified an instance of avoiding blame, then agreement for positive politeness strategies would be 75% (3/4) for that message. To take chance agreement into account, Cohen's kappa coefficients were calculated. Fleiss (1981) describes kappas over .75 as reflecting "excellent" levels of agreement. Agreement and kappa coefficients were excellent for positive politeness strategies (initiating: 94%, kappa = .93; intensifying: 87%, kappa = .84; terminating: 95%, kappa = .94) and for negative politeness strategies (initiating: 89%, kappa = .86; intensifying: 86%, kappa = .83; terminating: 86%, kappa = .83).

After achieving reliability, most remaining messages (n = 508), including messages utilized for training, were divided equally between the two coders to independently read and categorize into politeness strategies. As a check for coder drift, the final 30 messages (10 from each relational goal) were read and analyzed by both coders. Once again, agreement and kappa coefficients were excellent for both positive (initiating: 97%, kappa = .96; intensifying: 93%,

kappa = .92; terminating: 100%, kappa = 1.0) and negative politeness strategies (initiating: 94%, kappa = .93; intensifying: 86%, kappa = .83; terminating: 93%, kappa = .91).

Results

Descriptive information for perceptions of the eight potential face threats within and across relationship (re)definition goals appears in Table 3. Frequencies and percentages for participants' use of positive and negative politeness strategies within and across goal conditions appear in Tables 4 and 5. Coders identified a total of 621 positive politeness strategies in the messages written by the 598 participants. Across goal conditions, 60% of participants included at least one positive politeness strategy in their written message. Coders identified a total of 1350 negative politeness strategies in the 598 written messages. Across goal conditions, 86% of participants included at least one negative politeness strategy.

Relationship (Re)Definition Goals and Face Threats

Hypothesis 1 predicted that participants who imagined initiating, intensifying, and disengaging from romantic relationships would perceive different threats to their own and their partner's face. To assess this hypothesis, we conducted a 3 (Type of Relationship Goal) x 8 (Type of Face Threat) mixed-model ANOVA with repeated measures on the second factor. Degree of face threat served as the dependent variable. Because Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant, $W = .40$, $X^2 (27) = 526.99$, $p < .001$, Greenhouse-Geisser corrections to degrees of freedom were used for all within-subjects effects (see Keppel & Wickens, 2004).

The ANOVA revealed a small but statistically significant main effect for Relationship Goal Type, $F (2, 576) = 17.29$, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .02$, indicating that, across types of face threat, participants perceived greater overall potential face threat when pursuing some goals than

others. A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who imagined initiating a romantic relationship perceived less overall threat to both parties' face than did those who imagined intensifying or disengaging from a relationship, while the latter two groups did not differ significantly from each other (see Table 3). A large main effect for Type of Face Threat also was obtained, F (5.78, 3329.06) = 236.53, $p < .001$, $\eta_2 = .14$, indicating that, across goals, some types of face were threatened to a greater extent than other types. Across goal conditions, participants perceived that seeking relationship (re)definition created the greatest threat to the hypothetical partner's autonomy or negative face ($M = 4.19$ on the 7-point scale; see Table 3). However, participants also perceived moderate levels of threat to their own negative face (i.e., that they might later regret losing their current relationship) and their own positive face (i.e., that they might appear too forward or not appear attractive to the partner) across goal conditions, indicating that they typically saw some potential for multiple face threats.

Consistent with H1, the ANOVA also detected a large, statistically significant Type of Goal x Type of Face Threat interaction, F (11.56, 3329.06) = 183.91, $p < .001$, $\eta_2 = .22$, reflecting that the degree to which specific types of face were threatened varied substantially depending on the type of relationship goal. To interpret this two-way interaction, separate ONEWAY ANOVAs and Tukey post-hoc comparisons were conducted to explore the effects of relationship goals on each of the eight types of face threat (see Table 3). Type of relationship goal exerted a large, statistically significant effect on ratings of 7 of the 8 face threats, explaining 16-54% of the variance in participants' ratings for these face threats. The direction of differences in mean scores generally is consistent with expectations. For example, participants who imagined initiating a romantic relationship perceived greater threat of not appearing attractive, those

who imagined intensifying perceived greater threat of appearing overly dependent, and those

who imagined terminating perceived greater threat of making the partner appear inadequate

compared to participants in the other two goal conditions. A subsidiary analysis showed that

participant sex did not qualify these findings because females and males associated very similar

face threats with each of the three relationship goals.[5]

Two additional follow-up analyses were conducted to clarify the effect of relationship

(re)definition goals on perceived face threats. Because perceived scenario realism varied

slightly across goals (see footnote 2), a 3 (Goals) x 8 (Type of Face Threat) mixed-model

ANCOVA was conducted with realism as a covariate. Perceived realism was not significantly

associated with degree of perceived of face threat, $F (1, 573) = 0.94$, $p = .33$, $\eta_2 = .002$. The main

effects for Goal Type and Type of Face Threat as well as the two-way Goal x Face Threat

interaction were statistically significant, and virtually identical in size, after controlling for

perceived realism.

To assess whether perceived face threats were associated with relationship

(re)definition goals, as opposed to specific scenarios instantiating those goals, we also

conducted separate ONEWAY ANOVAs with "Scenario" as the independent variable and each of

the eight face threats as the dependent variable. Tukey post-hoc tests were performed across

the six scenarios to assess whether the two scenarios instantiating each goal differed in terms

of the degree to which each type of face was perceived to be threatened. For example, we

assessed whether the two initiating scenarios -- "saw in class" and "met at a friend's" -- differed

in terms of the degree to which participants perceived they were imposing on the other party.

We did the same for the two intensifying and the two disengaging scenarios. With 3 goals and 8

21

face threats, 24 pairwise comparisons between scenarios instantiating the same goal were examined. The two scenarios instantiating each goal condition did not differ significantly in 21 of these 24 cases. Given that we had strong statistical power to detect what Cohen (1988) would label as a medium-size difference (d = .50) in this analysis,[6] it appears that perceived face threats are associated with relationship (re)definition goals rather than with the specific scenarios instantiating each goal.

Relationship (Re)Definition Goals and Facework

Pursuing the relationship goal. Hypothesis 2, which predicted that a larger percentage of participants in the initiating condition would indicate that they "would not" pursue the relationship goal if their scenario were real as compared to those in the intensifying and disengaging condition, was assessed via 3 x 2 X^2 analysis crossing Goal Type (initiating, intensifying, or disengaging) with Pursuing the Relationship Goal (no, yes). Although nearly two-thirds of participants (64%) who imagined initiating a romantic relationship indicated that they would talk to the other person and ask him or her out if their scenario had been a real situation, this rate of goal pursuit was lower than for participants who imagined intensifying (86%) and disengaging from (97%) a romantic relationship, X^2 (2) = 76.47, p < .001, Contingency Coefficient = .34. Although males (74%) were more likely than females (59%) to say that they would ask the other person out in the initiating condition, both sexes were more likely to say they would not pursue the relational goal in the initiating as opposed to the intensifying or disengaging conditions.[7] When asked to explain why they not would ask Chris out, several participants who said "no" in the initiating condition expressed concerns about their own positive face – e.g., "I tend to be a little timid and shy with people that I don't know because I am worried about if

they will like me" or "I am scared of rejection and take it personally." Others implicated

negative face, such as one participant who wrote "Not wanting to overstep any boundaries –

especially since it is unclear whether Chris is dating/seeing anyone else."

Politeness strategies. Research Question 1 asked whether participants would vary the

specific types of positive and negative politeness strategies they used depending on whether

they imagined initiating, intensifying, or terminating a romantic relationship. A 3 x 5 X_2 was

conducted crossing goals (initiating, intensifying, or disengaging) and positive politeness

strategies (giving compliments, demonstrating interest, demonstrating similarity,

demonstrating caring, and absolving blame; see Table 4). The analysis was significant, X_2 (8) =

52.70, p < .01, Contingency Coefficient = .30, indicating that frequencies for positive politeness

strategies varied across goals. Inspection of residuals (expected – observed frequencies)

revealed that participants in the initiating and intensifying condition demonstrated interest

more often than would be expected by chance whereas those in the disengaging condition did

so far less frequently than chance would dictate. In contrast, participants in the disengaging

condition gave compliments and demonstrated caring more frequently than would be expected

by chance, whereas those in the initiating gave compliments and those in the intensifying

condition expressed caring less frequently than chance would dictate. Participants in different

conditions varied in terms of the specific forms of positive politeness they tended to use.

A 3 x 4 X_2 also was conducted crossing goals and negative politeness strategies (hedging,

managing imposition, apologizing, and soliciting input; see Table 5). A significant effect for

relational goals was obtained, X_2 (6) = 29.23, *p* < .01, Contingency Coefficient = .15, indicating

that frequencies for negative politeness strategies also varied across goals. Inspection of

23

residuals revealed that participants in the initiating condition solicited input more often and those in the intensifying condition did so less often than would be expected due to chance. Participants in the intensifying condition used managing imposition strategies more frequently than would be expected by chance, whereas those in the disengaging condition did so less frequently than chance would dictate. Finally, participants in the terminating condition used hedges more frequently than expected by chance, whereas those in the initiating and intensifying conditions hedged less than would be expected due to chance. Participants in the three goal conditions also differed in their use of specific negative politeness strategies.

Perceived Face Threats and Facework

Pursuing the relationship goal. Hypothesis 3 predicted that participants who indicated that they "would not" pursue the relational goal will perceive greater total perceived face threat compared to those who indicated they "would" pursue the goal. Research Question 2 asked whether associations between goal pursuit and degree of perceived face threat might vary depending on the particular relationship goal. To assess H3 and RQ2, we performed MANOVAs with goal pursuit ("no" vs. "yes") as the independent variable and the 8 types of face threat as the dependent variable. MANOVAs were conducted separately within each goal condition.

In the *initiating* condition, the multivariate main effect for goal pursuit was statistically significant, Wilks' Lambda = 0.88, $F(8, 187) = 3.27$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .12$, reflecting that participants who indicated that they "would not" pursue the relationship goal ($n = 72$) perceived significantly greater overall face threat compared to those who "would" ($n = 124$). To clarify this group difference, follow-up independent-groups t-tests were conducted comparing participants

who "would not" vs. "would" pursue the goal in terms of how they perceived each of the 8 threats to their own and the other party's face (see Table 6). In all 8 cases, students who said they would not pursue the relationship goal reported significantly greater perceived face threat than those who would do so. Effect sizes (d) ranged from .31 to .74.

In the *intensifying* condition, a statistically significant multivariate main effect also was detected, Wilks' Lambda = .91, $F (8, 181) = 2.12$, $p < .05$, $\eta_2 = .09$, reflecting that participants who would not pursue the relational goal ($n = 28$) perceived significantly greater overall face threat compared to those who would ($n = 162$). When t-tests were conducted on individual face threats, however, 7 of the 8 comparisons were not statistically significant at $p < .05$ (Cohen's d ranged from -.22 to .21). The only significant difference was that participants in the initiating condition who would not pursue the relational goal ($M = 4.23$, SD = 1.67) perceived greater risk of appearing overly dependent compared to those who would ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.33$), $t (196) = 2.02$, p < .05, $d = .42$. Students who judged that they "would not" pursue the primary goal perceived trying to intensify a romantic relationship to be more threatening to one specific aspect of their own positive face compared to those who "would" do so.

Nearly all participants in the *disengaging* condition indicated that they "would" pursue the relational goal; indeed, only five students indicated that they would not talk with their partner if they were really in the scenario. This occurred despite the fact that seeking to disengage from a romantic relationship was perceived to be the most face threatening of all three relationship (re)definition goals (see Table 3). When asked to explain why they would confront their partner, many participants wrote about the importance of "being happy." One participant explained that "There is no point in my staying in a dead-end relationship that I'm

not happy in. It's not healthy and life is too short" and a second wrote "Not to sound selfish but if my being in a relationship would not make me happy then why be in one?" Several participants stated that being happy was more important than avoiding potential threat to their partner's face, in comments such as "It's not worth sacrificing my happiness because I'm afraid I'd be hurting feelings" and "Someone has to realize that we're not right together and you can't waste time to just spare feelings." Several participants talked about the importance of not "wasting time" (i.e., not imposing unnecessarily on both parties' negative face), e.g., "If it is not working, it is better to know as soon as possible so you aren't wasting each other's time." Because virtually all participants indicated they would pursue the relational goal, we could not compare perceived face threats by those who "would not" versus "would" do so in the disengaging condition.

In sum, H3 received strong support in the initiating condition and limited support in the intensifying condition. In response to RQ2, type of relationship goal influenced whether students who would not pursue the primary goal perceived greater threat to both parties' face (initiating) or only to their own positive face (intensifying), and also whether H3 could be tested at all (i.e., whether a substantial percentage of students believed they would not pursue the primary goal).

Politeness strategies. Hypothesis 4 predicted that as overall level of perceived face threat increased, participants more frequently would include positive and negative politeness strategies in their messages seeking relationship (re)definition. Research Question 2 asked whether the strength of association between perceived face threats and politeness strategy would vary depending on the relationship goal. To address H4 and RQ2, we analyzed

Wilson, S. R., Kunkel, A. D., Robson, S., Olufowote, J. O., & Soliz, J. (2009). Identity implications of relationship (re)definition goals: An analysis of face threats and facework as young adults initiate, intensify, and disengage from romantic relationships. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28, 32-61. Publisher's official version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0261927X08325746. Open Access version: http://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/dspace/.

associations between levels of perceived face threat and frequencies for politeness strategies separately within each of the three goal conditions. Given that there were 8 types of face threat and 9 politeness strategies, 72 correlations were computed in each case. Because frequency distributions for all 9 politeness strategies were positively skewed, raw frequencies were log transformed before computing correlations (see Keppel & Wickens, 2004). Table 7 displays the correlations that were statistically significant ($p < .05$, 2 tailed) within each of the three goal conditions. Sample sizes ranged from $N = 190\text{-}202$ in these analyses. Assuming $N = 190$ and $p < .05$ (2-tailed), we had excellent statistical power (.93) to detect associations of the size that Cohen (1988) labels as a medium effect ($r = .24$) but limited power (.28) to detect small associations ($r = .10$).

In the *initiating* condition, 12 of the 72 correlations were statistically significant (see the correlations in bold typeface in Table 7). These 12 correlations fall between small ($r = .10$) and medium ($r = .24$) effects. Nine are positive, indicating that the degree to which participants perceived that they were threatening their own and the other party's face by initiating is directly associated with the frequency with which they used politeness strategies. For example, the more participants perceived that they might be imposing on the other person, might appear too forward, might not appear attractive, and might lose a chance at this relationship, the more frequently they included hedges in their date requests. The only exception to this pattern occurred for the positive politeness strategy "showing interest." The more participants perceived that they might appear overly dependent, look insensitive, or lose a chance at this relationship, the less they asked about the other person's day-to-day activities (perhaps because this could have been seen as a ploy leading up to asking the other person out). With

this one exception, results from the initiating condition are consistent with the claim that greater perceived face threat is associated with greater use of politeness strategies (H4).

In the *intensifying* condition, only 3 of the 72 correlations were statistically significant (see the correlations in engraved typeface in Table 7). Given the $p < .05$ significance level, one would expect 3.6 correlations out of 72 tests to be statistically significant simply due to chance (Type I error) even if perceived face threat and politeness strategies were not related in the larger population. Hence, there is no support for H4 in the intensifying condition.

In the *disengaging* condition, 7 of the 81 correlations were statistically significant (see the correlations in italics in Table 7). Unexpectedly, all 7 correlations are negative, indicating that increased perceived face threat is associated with fewer politeness strategies. Given that correlational nature of these data, it is possible these findings reflect the effect of messages on face threats rather than the vice versa. For example, participants who solicited their partner's input more frequently when asking to end their romantic relationship may have been less likely to subsequently feel that they had made their partner look inadequate, looked insensitive themselves, or that they might later regret losing the relationship compared to those who did not solicit their partner's input precisely because the former group made some attempt to include the partner in the decision. In any case, findings in the disengaging condition run contrary to H4. Regarding RQ2, associations between face threats and politeness strategies vary not only in magnitude, but also in direction, depending on the particular relationship (re)definition goal.

Discussion

This study applies Identity Implications Theory (IIT) to analyze identity concerns that shape and constrain how young adults pursue relationship (re)definition goals. Participants read a hypothetical scenario in which they imagined wanting to initiate, intensify, or disengage from a romantic relationship, described what they would say in the situation, and reported perceived threats to their own and their partner's face. Findings offer insights about identity concerns that young adults associate with each of these relational goals as well some of the micro-practices that are used to manage them. Initially we summarize the types of face threats and politeness strategies that tend to occur with each relationship goal and then discuss how IIT might account for these findings. Along the way we discuss limitations and directions for future research.

Participants in the initiating condition were very concerned about their own positive face, perceiving a potential risk of being rejected by the hypothetical partner who might not find them to be attractive. They also perceived moderate risk of pressuring the other party (see Table 3). About one-third of participants in the initiation condition indicated they would not pursue the relational goal (i.e., ask the other person out) if their scenario were a real-life situation. Participants in this condition expressed interest in the other and solicited the other's input more frequently than those in the other two goal conditions. Initiation also was the goal condition in which perceived face threats shared the strongest associations with facework. Participants who said they "would not" pursue the relational goal perceived greater risk of all 8 types of face threat compared to those who said they "would" do so (see Table 6). As degree of perceived threat to their own and the potential partner's face increased, participants in the initiating condition included more positive and negative politeness strategies in their written

messages. Participants in the intensification condition perceived moderate threat to their hypothetical partner's negative face (feeling pressured) as well as to their own positive face (e.g., appearing overly dependent) and negative face (e.g., precluding future relationships, possibly losing the current relationship). Students in this condition were more likely than chance to demonstrate interest in their partners and to manage the extent to which they were imposing on them (e.g., by giving them the option of not making an immediate decision); they were less likely to explicitly ask what their partner thought about their request or to explicitly express caring or affection compared to those in other conditions. Students who said they "would not" talk with their partner about intensifying commitment if the scenario were real perceived greater threat that they might appear overly dependent, but no greater risk to their partner's face, compared to those who said they "would" talk to their partner. Few associations were detected between perceived face threats and politeness strategies in the intensifying condition.

Participants charged with disengaging from their imagined dating relationships perceived the highest overall level of threat to both parties' face (see Table 3). These participants perceived moderate risk of constraining their partner's autonomy, making their partner look inadequate, losing a relationship that they would later regret, and appearing insensitive. Despite this, virtually all (97%) students in the disengaging condition indicated that they would pursue the relational goal if their scenario were real. Participants in this condition hedged, gave compliments, and expressed caring more frequently than those in the other goal conditions. However, perhaps aware of possible counter-persuasion efforts by their hypothetical partner, they managed impositions and expressed interest in their partner's lives

30

less often than would be expected by chance. In the disengaging condition, as perceptions of threat to one's own or the other party's face increased, use of politeness strategies such as apologizing or soliciting input actually decreased (contrary to what would be expected based on politeness theory). It merits note that this occurred even though the disengaging scenarios did not include instances where the partner clearly was responsible for problems with the relationship (e.g., infidelity) where it might have made sense that participants would feel little desire to support their partner's face.

Because it stresses the importance of analyzing the particular primary goal that defines an interaction, IIT helps make sense of these findings. Phrases such as "I wondered if you'd want to go to a party with me next Saturday," "I don't want to date anyone else but you" and "I'm sorry, but I don't think we should see each other any more" cue up culturally-viable explanations for what is going on – i.e., relational goals that have different implications regarding the current state and possible future of a romantic relationship. By analyzing what the rules for speech acts imply when framed by different relational goals, IIT offers testable predictions about which threats to one's own and the partner's positive and negative face should be seen as most likely to occur when participants initiate, intensify, or disengage from a romantic relationship. Results from our study, which used multiple scenarios per goal, confirmed many of these predictions, which helps alleviate concern that findings from an earlier study (Kunkel et al., 2003) reflected the particular scenario that was used instantiating each goal rather than differences between goals themselves. Because participants were randomly assigned to goal conditions, we also can be confident that variations in primary goals are causing variations in perceived face threats.

By acknowledging that the relative importance put on accomplishing the relational goal vs. maintaining face may differ across relational goals (Schrader & Dillard, 1998), IIT also suggests why face threats might lead young adults to avoid pursing relational (re)definition in some cases (e.g., initiating) but not in others (e.g., disengaging). Written rationales from some students in the initiating condition suggest that they would refrain from asking out someone they did not know well because of the possibility of rejection. In contrast, many students in the disengaging condition said they would confront someone they had been dating about their dissatisfaction with the relationship because being happy was more important than the possibility of hurt feelings. Although suggestive, one limitation of the current study is that we did not have participants describe their goals or rate the importance of multiple goals in their scenario. Doing so in future research would provide a more direct test of this assumption from IIT.

One surprising finding was that type of relationship goal moderated not only the strength but even the direction of association between perceived face threats and politeness strategies (see Table 7). In the initiation condition, where most significant associations were positive, it seems plausible that participants were (unconsciously) tailoring their messages in light of potential face threats (i.e., face threats → verbal strategies). In the disengaging condition, where significant associations were negative, it seems plausible that participants were reporting perceived consequences of direct or blunt messages they had just constructed (i.e., verbal strategies → face threats). Because we measured perceived face threats and politeness strategies in a crosssectional design, we cannot be certain about the direction of causation in either condition.

Future research might employ longitudinal designs to investigate possible reciprocal relationships between face threats and facework. Students might keep structured diaries (e.g., Duck, Rutt, Hurst, & Strejc, 1991) about their romantic relationships, describing conversations in which they and/or their partner sought changes in their relationship as well as their goals, concerns and feelings before and after such conversations. Diary studies also might show the relevance of IIT to relationships with less linear trajectories, such as when an individual asks out an "ex" romantic partner. Given that prior studies (Wilson et al., 1998, Wilson & Kunkel, 2000) have applied IIT to the goal of giving advice, an alternative approach would be to bring dating couples into the lab, instruct one member of each couple to offer his/her partner advice during a conversation about what was going on in their lives, and assess how the advice was given as well as goals and perceived face threats before, during and after the conversation (for similar designs, see Jones & Worth, 2006; Sillars, Roberts, Leonard, & Dunn, 2000). Such a design would shed light on how participants adapt (perhaps without awareness) message features in light of perceived face threats while also constantly updating perceptions of face threats in light of anticipated and perceived responses from their partner to what they already have said and done.

Aside from limits already acknowledged, we used hypothetical scenarios and gathered written messages stripped of paraverbal features that also influence judgments of politeness (Dillard, Wilson, Tusing, & Kinney, 1997; Laplante & Ambady, 2001). Actual episodes of initiation, intensification, and disengagement would feature dialogues rather than monologues and might be comprised of multiple conversations. Despite this, we are confident that our detailed coding of politeness strategies in written messages offers insights into what dialogues

about relationship (re)definition would be like; indeed, prior research demonstrates moderate

correspondence between qualities of the messages people write in response to hypothetical

scenarios and what they say during role plays or naturalistic interactions (e.g., Applegate, 1980,

1982). Our findings thus clarify the identity concerns that young adults associate with three

relationship (re)definition goals and show how to varying degrees these concerns shape and

constrain what verbal strategies are used to pursue each goal.

References

Applegate, J. L. (1980). Person- and position-centered communication in the day-care center. In

    N. K. Denzin (Ed.), *Studies in symbolic interaction* (Vol. 3, pp. 59-65). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Applegate, J. L. (1982). The impact of construct system development on communication and

    impression formation in persuasive contexts. *Communication Monographs, 49*, 277-289.

Baxter, L. A. (1982). Strategies for ending relationships: Two studies. *Western Journal of Speech*

    Communication, 46, 233-242.

Baxter, L. A., & Bullis, C. (1986). Turning points in developing romantic relationships. *Human*

    Communication Research, 12, 469-493.

Bell, R. A., & Daly, J. A. (1984). The affinity-seeking function of communication. *Communication*

    Monographs, 51, 91-115.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage.* Cambridge,

    UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cai, D. A., & Wilson, S. R. (2000). Identity implications of influence goals: A cross-cultural

    comparison of interaction goals and facework. *Communication Studies, 51,* 307-328.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ:

    Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cody, M. (1982). A typology of disengagement strategies and an examination of the role

    intimacy, reactions to inequity and relational problems play in strategy selection.

    Communication Monographs, 49, 148-170.

Cody, M. J., Canary, D. J., & Smith, S. W. (1994). Compliance-gaining goals: An inductive analysis of actors' goal types, strategies, and successes. In J. A. Daly & J. M. Wiemann (Eds.), *Strategic interpersonal communication* (pp. 33-90). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. (1994). *Facework.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dillard, J. P. (1990). A goal-driven model of interpersonal influence. In J. P. Dillard (Ed.), *Seeking compliance: The production of interpersonal influence messages* (pp. 41-56). Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick.

Dillard, J. P. (2004). The goals-plans-action model of interpersonal influence. In J. S. Seiter & R. H. Gass (Eds.), *Perspectives on persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining* (pp 185-206). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Dillard, J. P., Segrin, C., & Harden, J. M. (1989). Primary and secondary goals in the production of interpersonal influence messages. *Communication Monographs, 56,* 19-38.

Dillard, J. P., Wilson, S. R., Tusing, K. J., & Kinney, T. A. (1997). Politeness judgments in personal relationships. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 16*, 297-325.

Duck, S., Rutt, D. J., Hurst, M. H., & Strejc, H. (1991). Some evident truths about conversations in everyday relationships: All communications are not created equal. *Human Communication Research, 18,* 228-267.

Fleiss, J. L. (1981). *Statistical methods for rates and proportions*. New York: John Wiley.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior.* Chicago: Adrine.

Honeycutt, J. M., Cantrill, J. G., & Allen, T. (1992). Memory structures for relational decay: A cognitive test of sequencing of de-escalating actins and stages. *Human Communication Research, 18,* 528-562.

Honeycutt, J. M., Cantrill, J. G., & Greene, R. W. (1989). Memory structures for relational

escalation: A cognitive test of the sequencing of relational actions and stages. *Human

Communication Research, 16,* 62-90.

Honeycutt, J. M., Cantrill, J. G., Kelly, P., & Lambkin, D. (1998). How do I love thee? Let me

consider my options: Cognition, verbal strategies, and the escalation of intimacy. *Human

Communication Research, 25,* 39-63.

Ifert, D. E. (2000). Resistance to interpersonal requests: A summary and critique of recent

research. In M. E. Roloff (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 23* (pp. 125-161). Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jacobs, S., & Jackson, S. (1983). Strategy and structure in conversational influence attempts.

Communication Monographs, 50, 285-304.

Jones, S., & Wirth, J. G. (2006). How does the comforting process work? An empirical test of an

appraisal-based model of comforting. *Human Communication Research, 32,* 217-243.

Keppel, G., & Wickens, T. D. (2004). *Design and analysis: A researcher's handbook* (4th ed.).

Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Kellermann, K., & Cole, T. (1994). Classifying compliance-gaining messages: Taxonomic disorder

and strategic confusion. *Communication Theory, 4,* 3-60.

Knobloch, L. E., & Carpenter-Theune, K. E. (2004). Topic avoidance in developing romantic

relationships: Associations with intimacy and relational uncertainty. *Communication

Research, 31,* 173-205.

Kunkel, A. D., Wilson, S. R., Olufowote, J., & Robson, S. (2003). Identity implications of influence goals: Initiating, intensifying, and ending romantic relationships. *Western Journal of Communication, 67*, 382-412.

Labov, W., & Fanshel, D. (1977). *Therapeutic discourse: Psychotherapy as conversation*. New York: Academic Press.

Laplante, D., & Ambady, N. (2003). On how things are said: Voice tone, voice intensity, verbal content, and perceptions of politeness. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 22*, 434-441.

Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and politeness*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Mongeau, P. A., Serewicz, M. C. M., & Therrien, L. F. (2004). Goals for cross-sex first dates: Identification, measurement, and influence of contextual factors. *Communication Monographs, 71,* 121-147.

O'Keefe, B. J. (1988). The logic of message design: Individual differences in reasoning about communication. *Communication Monographs, 55,* 80-104.

Samp, J. A., & Solomon, D. H. (1998). Communicative responses to problematic events in close relationships I: The variety and characteristics of goals. *Communication Research, 25*, 66-95.

Schrader, D. C., & Dillard, J. P. (1998). Goals structure and interpersonal influence. *Communication Studies, 49,* 276-293.

Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sillars, A., Roberts, L. J., Leonard, K. E., & Dun, T. (2000). Cognition during marital conflict: The

relationship of thought and talk. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 17*, 479-

502.

Wilson, S. R., Aleman, C. G., & Leatham, G. B. (1998). Identity implications of influence goals: A

revised analysis of face-threatening acts and application to seeking compliance with

same-sex friends. *Human Communication Research, 25,* 64-96.

Wilson, S. R., & Feng, H. (2007). Interaction goals and message production: Conceptual and

methodological developments. In D. Roskos-Ewoldsen & J. Monahan (Eds.),

Communication and social cognition (pp. 71-95). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wilson, S. R., & Kunkel, A. W. (2000). Identity implications of influence goals: Similarities in

perceived face threats and facework across sex and close relationships. *Journal of*

Language and Social Psychology, 19, 195-221.

Footnotes

1Half of the data analyzed in this study (i.e., responses to three of the six scenarios) was reported in Kunkel et al. (2003, Study 2), whereas the other half was gathered for this study. Aside from gathering new data, we report several findings that were not presented in Kunkel et al.'s earlier report, including analyses of politeness strategies and whether associations between perceived face threats and facework vary depending on the relationship (re)definition goal.

2To assess whether perceptions of realism varied across scenarios instantiating the three goals, we conducted a ONEWAY ANOVA with realism scores as the dependent variable and goal type (initiating, intensifying, disengaging) as the independent variable. Data from the two scenarios instantiating each goal were collapsed. Type of Goal exerted a small but statistically significant effect on realism ratings, $F(2, 593) = 13.25$, $p < .01$, $\eta_2 = 04$. A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that participants who imagined disengaging ($M = 5.93$) perceived their scenario as more realistic than those who imagined intensifying ($M = 5.69$), who in turn perceived their scenario as more realistic than those who imagined initiating ($M = 5.40$). Despite this main effect, participants in all three conditions perceived their scenario as realistic. For example, 89% (178 of 201) of participants in the "initiating" condition rated their scenario at the scale midpoint (4.00) or higher on the seven-point realism scale.

3In terms of correspondence between Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies and the five strategies that we coded: our "demonstrating non-superficial interest" is derived from their "exaggerate interest" and "intensify interest" strategies, and our "demonstrate similarity" is derived from their "presuppose/assert common ground." Our "give

compliments" and "make statements of caring" are derived from their "express approval" as well as "give gifts" strategies. Brown and Levinson note that the latter includes not only tangible gifts but statements that address the other's desire to be cared about (p. 129). Finally, our "avoid blaming partner" corresponds loosely to their "avoid disagreement" strategy in that blaming the other is likely to lead to disagreement.

[4]In terms of correspondence between Brown and Levinson's (1987) negative politeness strategies and the four strategies that we coded: our "hedge" strategy is derived from their extensive discussion of hedging; our manage the imposition is derived from their "minimize imposition;" our "apologize" is derived from their "apologize" strategize; and our "solicit the partner's input" is derived from their "don't assume the other's willingness – question."

[5]To assess possible sex differences, we conducted a 3 (Goal Type) x 2 (Sex) x 8 (Type of Face Threat) mixed-model ANOVA with repeated measures on the last factor. A small main effect for sex, $F (1, 572) = 12.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .01$, reflected that across goals and types of face threats, male students ($M = 3.46$) perceived seeking any type of relationship (re)definition to be potentially more face threatening than did females ($M = 3.19$). The three-way Goal x Sex x Type of Face Threat interaction also was statistically significant, $F (11.56, 3305.06) = 2.98$, $p > .001$, $\eta^2 = .01$, though the effect also was small. Follow-up 3 (Goal) x 2 (Sex) factorial ANOVAs were run separately for each of the 8 face threats. Small, but statistically significant, two-way interactions were obtained for 3 of the 8 face threats: making their partner appear inadequate, $F (2, 579) = 3.10$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, not appearing attractive, $F (2, 591) = 4.29$, $p < .02$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and appearing too forward, $F (2, 590) = 6.17$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Post-hoc analyses revealed that the effect of goals on perceived face threat in two of these three cases was virtually identical for females

and males. In the third case, females perceived greater risk of appearing too forward in the

initiation ($M = 3.48$) and intensification ($M = 3.65$) than in the termination ($M = 3.04$) condition,

$F(2, 338) = 6.09$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$, whereas ratings by males did not differ significantly across

goals ($M = 3.36, 3.56,$ and 3.79 in the initiating, intensifying, and terminating condition), $F(2,$

$252) = 2.02$. $p = .14$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Because this was the only case where sex qualified which goal

conditions differed significantly, it appears that female and male students associated largely

similar sets of potential face threats with each relationship (re)definition goal.

[6]The Tukey post-hoc test adjusts the critical value for pair-wise comparisons to reduce

inflation of the family-wise Type I error rate when conducting all possible pair-wise

comparisons (Keppel & Wickens, 2004). Given this adjusted critical value, statistical power is

lower than it would be for an independent-groups t-test. However, even if we assume that the

critical value for each pair-wise comparison corresponded with an alpha level of $p < .01$ rather

than .05, and also $n_1 = 90$ for the first scenario instantiating each goal and $n_2 = 100$ for the

second scenario instantiating the same goal (the approximate sample sizes in each goal

condition), statistical power to detect a medium-size difference ($d = .50$) between pairs of

scenarios still was .80.

[7]To assess possible sex differences, we conducted 3 (Goal) x 2 (Don't do/Do the FTA) chi-

square analyses separately for female and male students. For females, the effect of goal type

was significant, $X^2(2) = 62.79$, $p < .001$, Contingency Coefficient = .40, reflecting that only 59%

of females in the initiating condition indicated they would do the FTA as compared to 87% and

97% of females in the intensifying and terminating condition. Although less pronounced, the

effect of goal type also was significant for males, $X^2(2) = 18.24$, $p < .001$, Contingency

42

Coefficient = .26, reflecting that 74% of males in the initiating condition indicated they would

do the FTA as opposed to 85% and 98% of males in the intensifying and terminating conditions.

Table 1

Romantic Relationship Scenarios: Two Per Goal

Goal	Scenario #1: Seen in Class	Scenario #2: Met at Friend's
Initiation	You and Chris both are students in a class of about 50 students. You have been interested in Chris for a while. In fact, you are sure that you would very much like to ask Chris out on a date. At this point, you are not even sure that Chris knows your name or even who you are. The semester is almost over and you are realizing that if you are going to ask Chris out, you had better do it soon. So, you finally have the courage and you are ready to try to initiate this relationship. You speak to Chris.	You met Chris at a friend's house last week. Even though you only talked to Chris briefly, you are interested in getting to know Chris better. In fact, you are sure that you would very much like to ask Chris out on a date. Earlier this week you asked your friend about Chris, but your friend was not sure whether Chris was seeing anyone else. Tonight you ran into Chris at a party. Chris is about ready to leave, and you are not sure when you will see Chris again. You realize that if you are going to ask Chris out, you had better do it now. So, you work up the courage and are ready to initiate the relationship. You speak to Chris.
Goal	Scenario #3: Date Exclusively	Scenario #4: Meet Parents
Intensification	You have been casually dating Chris for several months. You are beginning to realize that you really like being with Chris. In fact, you are starting to think that you may be falling in love with Chris. You would really like to try to formalize your commitment and intensify your current relationship. In fact, it seems like the time is right for you and Chris to agree to date exclusively (i.e., not date anyone else). At this point, however, you are unsure if Chris feels the same way about you. So, you finally have the courage and you are ready to try to intensify this relationship. You speak to Chris.	You and Chris have been casually dating for about six months. You are beginning to realize that you really enjoy being with Chris. In fact, you are starting to think that you may be falling in love. You would really like to try to formalize your commitment and intensify your relationship with Chris. In fact, you have been thinking that the time is right for Chris to meet your parent(s). You realize that everyone involved will likely take this as a sign that your relationship with Chris is becoming serious. You are not sure how Chris will feel about intensifying your relationship, but you have finally gotten the courage to ask Chris to take the step of meeting your parents. You speak to Chris.

Goal	Scenario #5: Boring/Avoiding	Scenario #6: Arguing/Alternatives
Disengagement	You have been seriously dating Chris for several months. You are starting to realize that things are not the same as when you started dating. In fact, you are very unhappy with how the relationship has been going. Every time you talk to Chris, you find the conversations uninteresting and boring. Lately, you have been trying to avoid contact with Chris and it's starting to get very awkward. It seems like it might be time to end this relationship. So, you finally have the courage and you are ready to try to get out of this relationship. You speak to Chris.	You and Chris have been seriously dating for about six months. You are starting to realize that your feelings for Chris have changed. It seems like the two of you have been arguing a lot, and you often do not enjoy spending time with Chris. Recently you have realized that there are other people whom you would be more interested in spending time with. It seems like it might be time to end this relationship. So you get up the courage to try to get out of your relationship with Chris. You speak to Chris.

Table 2

Categories and Examples of Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies

Positive Politeness Strategies	
Category	*Verbatim Examples*
Giving compliments	"I think you are a great person." "We have had a great time together."
Demonstrating non-superficial interest in partner's affairs	"How was your week at work?" "How did you do on the last test?"
Demonstrating similarity and common ground	"We've been dating for several months now." "My brothers and you would have a lot to talk about."
Making statements of caring or affect	"I care about you very much." "I love you, and will always love you."
Avoiding blaming partner	"It's not you." "It is nothing that you did in particular."
Negative Politeness Strategies	
Category	*Verbatim Examples*
Hedging	"I *don't think* I have the same feelings for you." "We should *maybe* plan a little get away trip." "I was *wondering* if *maybe* you would want to go out?"
Managing imposition	"I realize this may make you uncomfortable." "Maybe lunch or dinner *sometime*?" "If you don't want to, you don't have to." "We can still be friends."
Apologizing for request/imposition	"*I'm sorry* but I think it's for the best." "*I'm really sorry* but things have changed too much."
Soliciting partner's input in sought directive	"I need to know how you feel about all these things." "I was wondering how you feel about that?" "Would it be cool with you to start dating more often?"

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Face Threats Within and Across Relationship (Re)Definition Goals

Type of Face Threat	Initiating M	(SD)	Intensifying M	(SD)	Disengaging M	(SD)	Across Goals M	(SD)	Eta^2 for Goal Main Effect
(1) Impose on Partner	3.48[a]	(1.34)	4.27[b]	(1.31)	4.84[c]	(1.14)	4.19	(1.38)	.16
(2) Preclude Future Relationships	2.41[a]	(1.16)	3.90[b]	(1.43)	2.42[a]	(1.24)	2.91	(1.46)	.23
(3) Lose Current Relationship	3.26[a]	(1.23)	3.80[b]	(1.37)	4.60[c]	(1.28)	3.88	(1.40)	.15
(4) Make Partner Appear Inadequate	1.78[a]	(0.80)	1.98[b]	(0.87)	3.52[c]	(1.40)	2.42	(1.31)	.35
(5) Not Appear Attractive	5.40[a]	(1.24)	3.75[b]	(1.70)	2.56[c]	(1.43)	3.92	(1.88)	.39
(6) Appear Overly Dependent	2.55[a]	(1.21)	3.75[b]	(1.39)	2.41[a]	(1.07)	2.90	(1.37)	.19
(7) Appear Insensitive	1.88[a]	(0.86)	2.02[a]	(0.98)	4.50[b]	(2.79)	2.79	(1.64)	.54
(8) Appear Too Forward	3.43	(1.44)	3.61	(1.30)	3.33	(1.23)	3.46	(1.33)	.01
Across Face Threats	3.09[a]	(0.84)	3.36[b]	(0.89)	3.53[b]	(0.81)	3.30	(0.87)	.06

Note: $N = 202$ respondents for initiating, 199 for intensifying, 197 for terminating, and 598 across goals. Within rows, means for goal conditions with different superscripts are significantly different at p < .05 via the Tukey post-hoc test.

Wilson, S. R., Kunkel, A. D., Robson, S., Olufowote, J. O., & Soliz, J. (2009). Identity implications of relationship (re)definition goals: An analysis of face threats and facework as young adults initiate, intensify, and disengage from romantic relationships. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28, 32-61. Publisher's official version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0261927X08325746

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Positive Politeness Strategies Within and Across Relationship (Re)Definition Goals

	Initiate		Intensify		Terminate		Across Goals	
Strategy Type	*f*	(%)	*f*	(%)	*f*	(%)	*f*	(%)
Give Compliments	71	(25)	65	(28)	85	(33)	221	(29)
Demonstrate Interest	62	(18)	58	(18)	15	(05)	135	(13)
Demonstrate Similarity	48	(23)	38	(19)	34	(17)	120	(20)
Demonstrate Caring	47	(17)	22	(09)	57	(34)	126	(16)
Absolve Blame	04	(02)	04	(02)	11	(05)	19	(03)
Total Pos. Strategies	232	(73)	187	(58)	202	(58)	621	(60)

f = frequency of occurrence (# of strategies of that type in that condition); % = % of messages in that condition containing 1 or more strategies of that type.

Wilson, S. R., Kunkel, A. D., Robson, S., Olufowote, J. O., & Soliz, J. (2009). Identity implications of relationship (re)definition goals: An analysis of face threats and facework as young adults initiate, intensify, and disengage from romantic relationships. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28, 32-61. Publisher's official version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0261927X08325746

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Negative Politeness Strategies Within and Across Relationship (Re)Definition Goals

	Initiate		Intensify		Terminate		Across Goals	
Strategy Type	*f*	(%)	*f*	(%)	*f*	(%)	*f*	(%)
Hedge	178	(57)	186	(68)	236	(69)	600	(61)
Manage Imposition	115	(41)	159	(50)	100	(40)	374	(45)
Apologize	11	(06)	18	(08)	20	(09)	49	(07)
Solicit Input	121	(51)	93	(41)	113	(46)	327	(46)
Total Neg. Strategies	425	(83)	456	(85)	469	(90)	1350	(86)

f = frequency of occurrence (# of strategies of that type in that condition); % = % of messages in that condition containing 1 or more strategies of that type.

Wilson, S. R., Kunkel, A. D., Robson, S., Olufowote, J. O., & Soliz, J. (2009). Identity implications of relationship (re)definition goals: An analysis of face threats and facework as young adults initiate, intensify, and disengage from romantic relationships. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28, 32-61. Publisher's official version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0261927X08325746

Table 6

Perceived Face Threats by Participants in the Initiating Condition who "Would" versus "Would Not" do the FTA

Type of Face Threat	"Would not" do the FTA		"Would" do the FTA		Group Comparison		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
(1) Impose on Partner	3.75	1.47	3.29	1.24	2.36	.02	.47
(2) Preclude Future Relationships	2.61	1.23	2.26	1.07	2.09	.04	.31
(3) Lose Current Relationship	3.61	1.22	3.03	1.20	3.28	.001	.48
(4) Make Partner Appear Inadequate	1.95	0.88	1.67	0.74	2.36	.02	.37
(5) Not Appear Attractive	5.66	1.25	5.26	1.23	2.20	.03	.32
(6) Appear Overly Dependent	2.98	1.45	2.28	0.97	3.67	.001	.61
(7) Appear Insensitive	2.08	0.94	1.77	0.81	2.47	.02	.36
(8) Appear Too Forward	4.04	1.54	3.04	1.23	4.71	.001	.74

Note: $N = 197$ participants (72 who "would not" do the FTA; 127 who "would" do the FTA).

Table 7

Correlations between Perceived Face Threats and Frequencies of Politeness Strategies within Three Goal Conditions

Politeness					Type of Face Threat			
Strategy	Impose	Preclude	Inadequate	Attractive?	Dependent	Lose	Insensitive	Forward
Compliment					.16			
Show Interest					**-.17**	**-.16**/-.16	**-.14**	
Show Similarity	**.16**				**.14**			
Show Caring	-.16			.20				
Absolve Blame								-.14
Hedge	**.16**				**.16**	**.15**		**.15**
Manage Imposition								
Apologize		-.16	**.18**	-.15			**.16**	**.17**
Solicit Input			-.15			-.19	-.19	

Note: Impose = Impose on Other Party; Preclude = Preclude Future Relationships, Inadequate = Make Other Appear Inadequate; Attractive? = Appear Attractive to Other? Dependent = Appear Overly Dependent; Lose = Lose Current Relationship; Insensitive = Look Insensitive; Forward = Look too Forward; Total FT = Total Perceived Face Threat. Only correlations statistically significant at p < .05 (2-tail) are shown. Correlations in **bold** typeface are from the initiating condition; those in engrave typeface are from the intensifying condition; those in *italics* are from the terminating condition. *N* = 190-202.

Wilson, S. R., Kunkel, A. D., Robson, S., Olufowote, J. O., & Soliz, J. (2009). Identity implications of relationship (re)definition goals: An analysis of face threats and facework as young adults initiate, intensify, and disengage from romantic relationships. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28, 32-61. Publisher's official version: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0261927X08325746