Verbal Politeness Strategies in the Philippines: Motivations for Indirectness, Politeness, or Both?

Jacqueline Andrea Huggins

SIL International
jacqueline_huggins@sil.org

Abstract

Politeness strategies in speech acts has generated considerable research and debates especially concerning the notions of directness and indirectness as compared to Westerners who are considered more direct while Asians more indirect. Researchers have suggested that distinctions signal degrees of politeness; consequentially, Westerners appear less polite and Asians more polite (Sifianou 1997:46). However, researchers have found varying degrees of directness and indirectness among Western and Asian cultures (Rundquist 1992). Some research questions whether indirectness is linked to politeness. This paper, as an aid for cross-cultural workers, discusses politeness in communication charting specific examples comparing American English and Philippine English to indicate how comparable expressions of greetings, requesting, asking questions, and expressing gratitude may be considered polite in one variety of English, yet impolite in another. Verbal strategies with a focus on indirectness are also presented using Brown and Levinson's (1978/1987) four types of politeness strategies: *bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record.*

Keywords: American English, Communication, Directness, Indirectness, Linguistic politeness, Philippine English, Verbal Politeness Strategies

1.0 Introduction

In June of 1998, the author coordinated a *Cultural Awareness Seminar* in Manila for newly arrived personnel who would be conducting linguistic research in the Philippines. One of the Filipino guest lecturers, a personal friend whom I had invited to address the group of newcomers, focused on issues of linguistic etiquette. As the lecturer gave a series of examples, I soon realized that my friend was *indirectly* correcting my own inadvertent *verbal impoliteness* through the *'hypothetical'* examples she chose! Those examples will be discussed here as well as other expressions considered impolite in the Philippines. This paper will first discuss *politeness in communication* and *perceived impoliteness* charting specific examples comparing American English and Philippine English to indicate how comparable expressions of greetings, requesting, asking questions, and expressing gratitude may

be considered polite in one variety of English, yet impolite in another. Second, this paper looks into the use of verbal strategies used in some Philippine languages with a focus on indirectness in speech-acts as an entry point to understand the motivations behind its use in verbal politeness strategies. In doing so, this study will discuss indirectness in politeness strategies and then using Brown and Levinson's four types of politeness strategies: *bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record indirectness* (1978/1987), determinations will be suggested for the type of politeness strategy employed and the motivations behind its use. Third, an extended apology through the practice of nicknaming is also presented and identified for politeness strategy type. Additional examples chronicle observations made over a period of some twenty-six years in the urban environment

of Metro Manila, in the rural mountainous areas of the country and in the coastal municipality of Cagayancillo, Palawan.[1]

2.0 Politeness in Communication?

Duranti suggests that if we want to understand the role that languages play in people's lives, we have to "go beyond studying their grammar to the world of social action where words are embedded in and constitutive of specific cultural activities such as telling a story, asking for a favor, greeting, showing respect, praying, giving directions, reading, insulting, praising, arguing in court, making a toast, or explaining a political agenda" (2001/2009). For this study it means delving into the sociological realm of verbal politeness.

Sociolinguists Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson state that "politeness is the practical application of good manners and etiquette." Politeness is a way of drawing from an unwritten, culture specific code of laws by which people govern their daily interactions with one another. Their politeness theory has expanded considerably since Brown and Levinson stated that "politeness accounts for the redressing of the affronts to face posed by face-threatening acts to addressees" (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987). In the *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, Bussmann likewise describes what he considered to be at the heart of politeness: "A central concept of politeness theory is 'face', which is taken to be important to individuals in both a positive and negative aspect" (Bussman 1990). Verbal strategies therefore are designed to fulfill the face needs of the hearer and may include a polite comment or some other act of kindness to keep the line of communication open between speaker and hearer since "face is maintained by the audience not by the speaker" (Goffman 1963). Other definitions of politeness include, "a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction," (Fowley 1997) and attempting to save face for another. However, although not universal, the two aspects of face are

the basic wants in any social interaction, and so, cooperation is needed amongst the participants to maintain each other's faces to avoid or lessen embarrassment for others because of an innate human need to be thought of as a nice person. Face is the public self image that every adult tries to protect. In their 1978 book chapter, Brown and Levinson define the positive and negative aspects of *face*.

Positive Face refers to one's self-esteem and is "the want of every person that his or her wants be desirable to at least some other executors" (Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987, p. 62)

It is "The positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987, p. 61). One attends to the positive face of an interactant by employing positive politeness strategies that endorse and support the interactant's presumed positive self-image as much as possible (Bussman 1990, p. 370). Positive politeness respects a person's right to be liked, ratified, understood, and related to positively. Speech acts are designed to be more direct. One would threaten positive face by ignoring someone. Negative face, on the other hand, refers to one's freedom to act. It is the desire of every 'competent adult member' that his or her actions be unimpeded by others' actions (freedom of action and freedom

from imposition).

One preserves the negative face of an interactant by impeding or interfering with his/her actions and values as little as possible. Negative politeness respects a person's rights to act freely. Therefore, negative politeness strategies seek to protect face and allow the hearer to remain free and independent. Speech acts are designed to be more indirect to avoid confrontation, put parties at ease or make a request less infringing such as, *"If you don't mind…"* or *"If it isn't too much trouble…"* or in Kagayanen *"daw pwidi…"* (*"if possible…"*). Additional examples of negative politeness are given below in the discussion on Indirectness.

Since expressions of politeness are largely culture specific, what may be polite in one language could convey impoliteness in another. Cross-cultural mismatches can occur even when the same language is used by speakers who associate different cultural meanings with the same linguistic forms. Examples of cross-cultural mismatch are listed in Table 2.

2.1 Perceived Impoliteness

Impoliteness could be perceived even where none is intended when certain forms of directness in speech are used causing a mismatch of understanding in the same language.

Common American English expressions intended to demonstrate politeness can be easily displayed using Headland's Worldview Matrix (Headland, 1996, p. 46). Headland designed this matrix (Table 1) to compare the worldview of Agta Negrito of the northern Philippines to the worldview of Americans living in the United States. The matrix lists various items observed by people from these two cultures and indicates the differences in perceptions based on the two different worldviews:

Using Headland's Worldview Matrix, Table 2 shows speech expressions commonly used by Americans which often have different meanings and less than positive connotations for speakers of Philippine English. The expressions listed in Table 2 are perceived as impolite mainly because of the Americans' misunderstanding of Philippine English more so than the notion of Western

Table 2. Perceived Impolite Expressions

Item spoken	What an American hears or thinks	What a Filipino hears or thinks
"Have you eaten yet?"[3]	Invitation to eat	Obligation to feed someone
"Are you still upset?"	Expressing concern	Expressing anger
"Did you understand the procedure?"	*"I want to help you."*	*"I think you're dumb."*
"You're doing that wrong!"	*"I want to help you."*	*"You can't follow instructions!"*
"Excuse me."[4]	Apology	*"Get out of my way!"*
"What's up?"	Informal greeting	Suspicion
"What are you up to?"	Informal greeting	Disapproval, distrust
"How are you?"	Greeting	Confusing question.
"What are you doing here?"	*"I'm happy to see you!"*	*"You should not be here."*
"Did you see my watch?"	Asking for help	*"You took my watch?"*
"Do you agree?"	Asking for opinion	*"You have no choice but to agree."*
"What do you need?"	*"I want to help you."*	Annoyance, Disinterest *"I don't want to help you."*
"Why are you late?"	Expressing concern	Scolding
"Can you work for me tomorrow?"	Asking for help	Demanding
"I know what you mean."	Expressing affirmation	*"I know everything."*
"Thank you."	Expressing gratitude	End of transaction

directness versus Philippine or Asian indirectness.

Although alternative expressions in Table 3 do carry elements of indirectness, some Philippine English expressions considered polite are rather direct to Americans and some American

Table 1. Headland's Worldview Matrix[2]

item observed	what an American sees or thinks	what an Agta Negrito sees or thinks
blue sky	space	a dome (upside-down blue bowl)
earthquake	tectonic plates moving	wind blowing underground

[2] The Worldview Matrix is used by permission.

[3] Another consideration here is the form of direct inquiry in a country where questions are often construed as rhetorical and considered rude.

[4] Spoken by Americans after bumping into someone in a crowded place like a department store. Also used by Americans when passing between two people who are talking.

English expressions carry elements of indirectness. Thus, we understand the argument for politeness in communication more so because verbal expressions should follow culturally appropriate mores' based on learned patterns of meanings for

Table 3. Alternative Polite Expressions

Perceived Impolite Expression	Polite Cultural Expression
"Have you eaten yet?"	*"Let's eat!"*
"Are you still upset?"	*"Are you alright now?"*
"Did you understand the procedure?"	*"Tell me how you will do it." "Can you do it now?"*
"You're doing that wrong!"	*"Is that how you will do it?" "Show me how you will do it"*
"Excuse me."	(No comment required. Just smile or say, *"Sorry."*)[5]
"What's up?" [6]	(Confusing question not viewed as a greeting.) *"Hi!" Where have you been?" "Long time no see."*
"What are you up to?"	(Confusing question not viewed as a greeting.) *"Hi!" Where have you been?" "Long time no see."*
"How are you?" [7]	*"Where are you going?"/"Where are you coming from?"* [8]
"What are you doing here?"	*"Hi! Long time no see! But now see now!"*
"Did you see my watch?"	*"I misplaced my watch. Do you know where I put it?"*
"Do you agree?"	*"What is your opinion about this?"*
"What do you want?" *"What do you need?"*	*"Is there something you want to tell me?"*
"Why are you late?"	*"What time is it now?"*
"Can you work tomorrow?"	*"Do you have work to do tomorrow?"* [9]
"I know what you mean." *"I see."*	*"Ah, okay."*
"Thank you."	(Reciprocate another time to express gratitude)

Philippine English.

In the Philippines, it is expected that a visitor will dine with the family if the person happens to be in their home at a mealtime. However, in the United States asking someone if they have eaten yet or if they would like to dine with the family is often a mere formality. One does not expect the invitation to be taken seriously. In fact, in some areas it would be impolite to accept the invitation. Therefore, it could be inferred that the direct inquiry *"Have you eaten yet?"* is an indirect way of expressing, *'I hope you have already eaten.'* Conversely, the direct Philippine English invitation, *"Let's eat!"* (*"Kumain na tayo!"*) in Tagalog or (*"Maan ki!"*) in Kagayanen, would embarrass some Americans causing them

some discomfort not wanting to be an imposition.[10]

The perceived impolite expression *"Are you still upset?"* communicates disapproval by focusing on the *problem* that caused the person to become upset causing further discomfort. The alternative expression mentions the problem indirectly and focuses on more positive emotions.

Ifugao, Cebuano, Kagayanen and Tagalog speakers have said that the expression, *"Do you understand?"* in their respective languages implies that the speaker is saying to the hearer, *"You are a dumb person"* or *"I think I'm smarter than you."* Other speakers of Philippine English and American English also say that the word **understand** signals *ignorance, reprimand*, and impels the hearer to answer in the affirmative even if he or she did not understand. A house helper in Bukidnon emphasized this point. She recounted to the author how frustrating it was for her when her employer taught her a new recipe and then asked her if she understood the instructions. The helper explained that she felt forced to answer in the

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[5] If you are passing between two people, it is acceptable to say, 'Scuse' while bowing slightly with the right hand extended and palm facing sideways as a polite gesture that you intend to pass between the two interlocutors.

[6] In major cities of the Philippines where English is used more frequently, many speakers can be heard to use this expression as a greeting. However, it could still be misunderstood in environments where English is less commonly spoken.

[7] Among the Kagayanen of Palawan this English expression would be used if the addressee had been ill.

[8] No verbal reply is needed. The addressee need only to point with a raised hand in the direction in front of her or point in the direction behind her. It's as if she is saying with her hand gesture, 'I'm going in that direction ahead of me.' Or, 'I just came from that direction behind me.' No specifics are needed.

[9] This alternative expression would be used if you want someone to work an extra day for you in addition to his or her normal workday.

[10] Recently, an American colleague who has been living in the Philippines longer than the author, asked her if she wanted to eat supper with their family. The author hesitated in her response because she was wondering if she was being invited or if there was a felt obligation being expressed. In either case, whether the author accepted the invitation or not, would have been awkward after this study on verbal politeness.

affirmative even when she did not understand lest she be thought ignorant by her employer. When the finished recipe had been prepared incorrectly, her employer expressed surprise that her instructions were not understood. The frustrating situation is then exacerbated. The house helper explained that after giving new instructions, the employer should say, "*Now do you know how to do it?*" Or, "*Show me how you will do it.*" With this type of verbal construction, the helper's intellect is not threatened and she feels free to say, "*Please show me once more how to do it.*"[11]

In a conversation the author had with a speaker of an Ifugao language, the Ifugao speaker told of a group incident when a new Tagalog speaking trainer was correcting them in English by saying, "*You're doing that wrong! That's not the right way you do it!*" If a relationship is fairly new, the speaker would design his or her speech in an indirect way to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation by saying, "*Is that the way to do it?*" thereby not making a direct reference to the trainees or their mistake. An additional face-threatening speech act the Tagalog trainer employed was his use of English when all the trainees understood Tagalog, the national language. Although the trainees had an equally adequate grasp of both English and Tagalog, the speaker further impinged upon the group's positive face by correcting them in the official language thereby creating distance. The addressees wanted the speaker to be less direct and more indirect. However, if a close bond had already been established between the Tagalog trainer and trainees, more direct forms of correction would be acceptable.

Use of the expression, "*Excuse me*" by Americans when they bump into someone in a crowded context is a potentially face-threatening act in the Philippines. Bussmann describes face-threatening acts: "Acts which involve the speaker in breaking away from …. face-maintaining tendencies are known as 'face-threatening acts.' (Bussman, 1990). For an American, bumping into someone involves an invasion of their privacy and

personal space, both of which Americans highly value. The American is apologizing for not being more careful and invading the other's space. She is seeking to save face for the hearer. But in a context where there is overcrowding, it is almost impossible not to bump into someone or touch another inadvertently. So it is more permissible to infringe upon another person's private space. However, by using the expression, "*Excuse me,*" in a Philippine English context, it sends a confusing message, perhaps indicating that the invasion was intentional on the part of the speaker or that the hearer is being indirectly reprimanded for being in the speaker's pathway. Two examples emphasize this point. A Cebuano pastor was speaking before an audience of Cebuano and Americans. He recounted how difficult it was for him not to react negatively when an American woman said, "*Excuse me,*" to him after bumping into him in a crowded department store. He felt the expression registered anger on her part. In the second example, an American colleague expressed bewilderment when on several occasions it appeared to her that passersby were intentionally bumping into her in less crowded surroundings and then exclaiming loudly, "*Excuse me!*" Possibly the first person objective pronoun, "*me*" is being understood as the first person possessive pronoun, "*my.*" Nevertheless, in a crowded context where people inadvertently, yet habitually, bump into each other, any seemingly intransigent expression would be construed as impolite.

American colleagues who have critiqued this paper have expressed that the alternative expression, "*What time is it now?*" is for them confrontational, direct and expresses disapproval more so than asking, "*Why are you late?*" They felt that the initial expression showed concern

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[11] This incident was recounted to the author by the house helper with the unspoken expectation that the author would be a go-between and relay the proper elicitation procedure to the helper's employer who is a friend of the author.

[12] When two Kagayanen are arguing and one of them resorts to using an LWC, this further exacerbates the situation.

while the latter showed sarcasm.

In conversations, Americans often affirm or empathize with the speaker by using affirmative expressions such as, "*I know, or I know what you mean*" or "*I see.*" These conventions are intended to convey polite, considerate empathy. However, repeated use can sound egotistical to Filipinos as if the speaker is focusing attention on himself and what he knows. A Filipino classmate once recounted to the author how exasperated he was by an American male who repeatedly affirmed his addressee in conversation by saying, "*I know, I know.*" One day, the classmate confronted the American asking, "*Well, what do you know?*" The bewildered American replied, "*Nothing.*"[13]

Frequent use of the expression "*Thank you*" is highly valued by American speakers of English. However, in Philippine English, it signals the end of a business transaction. It is what one says to a salesperson after a purchase. Therefore, if someone receives a gift or other good deed from another who considers her a friend, using the American thanking expression signals closure of the relationship and is similar to saying, '*You don't need to repeat this act. We are not obligated to each other.*' For a Filipino, saying '*Thank you*' creates distance. A speaker from a northern Philippine language community explained that her language has no equivalent word for *thank-you*. However, there are many ways to reciprocate a kindness. She recounted how, as a three-year-old, she and several children were each given a large cookie by a missionary. The missionary wanted to teach them how to express gratitude for the cookie by saying, '*thank-you*' in English. All of the older children mimicked the missionary's thanking expression. However, as a three-year-old, she was puzzled and unable to make the connection between the cookie and the thanking expression. So she stood there silently holding her cookie. The missionary repeatedly drilled the child, "*Say, thank-you.*" When the child did not respond, the missionary took back the cookie. In a similar situation, an intern was assigned to a Kagayanen community for one year. He commented that Kagayanen "*did not know how to express gratitude by saying 'thank you.'*" He occasionally chartered a boat and allowed Kagayanen passengers to ride free of charge when traveling to that location. Upon arrival, he recounted how the passengers disembarked and went home without any verbal expression of gratitude. When the author asked the intern if any of the passengers ever gave him gifts of fresh vegetables, fruit or dried fish, he replied that they usually did. When it was suggested that these acts of kindness were their outward expressions of gratitude, the intern replied that the thanking expression was easy to say consisting of "*just two little words.*" The intern had grown up in the vicinity of Americans and had therefore adapted to the patterned meaning of the thanking expressions used in American English.

Cross-cultural mismatches are not one-sided. Just as Filipinos may attribute different meaning patterns to expressions commonly used in American English, Americans may also misinterpret common expressions used in Philippine English. For example, a common Philippine English expression used by salespersons in department stores is the phrase, "*out of stock*". This expression is used whether or not the requested item was ever sold in the store. To an American, the expression means the item was sold there in the past but is now *sold out* and could be sold there again in the future. However, the expression represents a verbal politeness strategy used by the salesperson who is intending to convey to the customer indirectly, "*I don't know what you are looking for.*" Similar to the example in Table 2, if the shopper asks the salesperson, "*Do you know what I am looking for?*", she potentially puts the salesperson at risk of *losing face* if the salesperson does not know what the shopper is looking for.

The misunderstandings listed in Table 2 can be considered cross-cultural mismatches

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[13] It should be mentioned here that this phrase could carry the arrogant implication inferred by Filipinos. However, intonation would signal the difference.

because of unshared cultural experience between the interlocutors. Shaw's adaptation of Nida and Taber's *S.M.R. Communication Model* (Shaw, 1988), (Figures 1 & 2) stresses the importance of shared cultural experience between the Source and Receptor of a Message. The model indicates that the broader the field of shared cultural experience between the Source of the Message and the Receptor of the Message (Figure 2), the greater the degree of certainty that the message received was the message intended. The same could be said of a shared language situation. The broader the *shared cognitive environment* of both Source and *Receptor* language, the greater the likelihood will be that the message received was the message intended. What must be kept in mind is that the Receptor decodes the *Message* not based on what the Source intends but rather based on his or her own field of experience (Shaw, 2011). In the above examples of perceived impoliteness, both Source and Receptor are using what each perceives to be a shared common language, English. In actuality, each is using what could be called different dialects of English. The irony of the communication situation is that neither Source [A] (Culture A) nor Receptor [B] (Culture B) is aware that miscommunication has taken place.
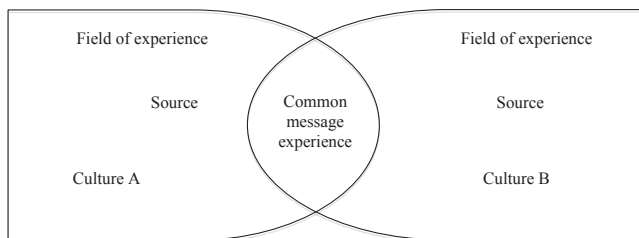

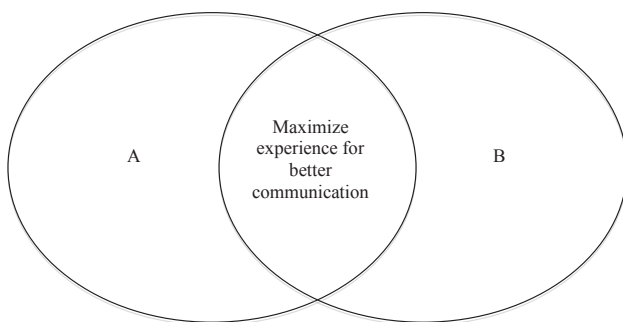*Figure 1.* The S.M.R. Model of Communication (Shaw 1988)

Figure 2. The Field of Communication (Shaw 1988)

3.0 Indirectness in Verbal Politeness Strategies

How speakers use direct and indirect speech is culture specific. In Western cultures being direct or having the courage to confront someone who has offended you is viewed as being straight, brave, assertive, self-secure, deliberate and confident. Being direct is thus generally viewed as a positive trait. Indirectness or avoiding confrontation is viewed as weakness, cowardice, insecurity and sometimes dishonesty. However, a speaker may feel impelled to make a face-threatening act in order to correct impolite behavior. In such cases, "indirect verbal strategies may be employed in order to evoke the proper response without overtly embarrassing the addressee. Verbal politeness strategies then are intended to mitigate face threats carried by certain face-threatening acts toward another" (Mills, 2003, p. 6).

A speaker selects specific verbal strategies from a range or spectrum of directness to indirectness and from politeness to impoliteness depending on the particular circumstances for the purpose of mitigating face. In potentially face-threatening situations, the speaker uses verbal strategies to minimize face threats, feels the need to confront someone but designs a verbal strategy by using indirect speech to soften the confrontation and save face for the hearer. From a Western perspective, this kind of politeness strategy is especially marked in many Asian contexts. One illustrative anecdote will suffice here: The author and two fellow conference participants (a Japanese and a Thai) in Thailand were taking pictures on the well manicured lawn of the Royal Palace in Bangkok. A palace guard sauntered over and whispered something to the Thai woman which she later translated for us as, "*Other people don't do like that.*" This was an indirect and polite way of softening a potentially face-threatening situation. A Westerner might otherwise expect a much more direct command such as '*Hey! Get off the grass!*'

Of course "some impositions are greater than others and in some cases concern for *face* can be overridden in times of danger or great urgency"

(Mesthrie, 2000). A story is told how deceased Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay, upon his visit to the island of Cebu, felt it would be impolite to refuse the baskets of mangoes given to him as a gift from the people of Cebu. His plane left the island grossly overweight from the added gift of fruit and crashed, killing all onboard.

4. 0 Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)

A face-threatening act is an act that inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker or both by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other. At minimum, there must be at least one of the face threatening acts associated with an utterance. It is also possible to have multiple acts working within a single utterance (Mills, 2003). Face-threatening acts have several dimensions: negative face-threatening acts with damage to speaker or hearer and positive face-threatening acts with damage to speaker or hearer.

Negative face is threatened when an individual does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their interlocutor's freedom of action. It can cause damage to either the speaker or the hearer, and makes one of the interlocutors submit their will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are impeded when negative face is threatened (Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987).

An act that affirms or denies a future act of hearer (H) creates pressure on H to either perform or not perform the act. Examples include: orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, or warnings. In Table 2, asking someone, "*Can you work for me tomorrow?*" is perceived by H as demanding, of S impeding H's freedom to choose or not choose to work. However, the polite wording, "*Do you have work tomorrow?*" prevents the threat to H's negative face and allows H the right and option to choose to work. Another threat to H's negative face would be for speaker (S) to express sentiments of H or H's belongings. Examples include compliments.

Among the Kagayanen, if someone compliments another's house, the hearer will respond by saying the opposite, that it is ugly or ordinary. Expressing the opposite or reverse of a direct compliment is a type of verbal strategy that serves two purposes. It releases H from incurring a debt to S. It is also an indirect confrontation to persuade S not to use expressions that are considered taboo, in the sense that they call attention to H, which potentially damages H's negative face. Americans also use this convention to avoid appearing conceited or incurring a debt of gratitude toward S. For example, if you compliment a woman's dress, she might respond, "*This old thing!*" thereby deflecting pressure to accept the compliment. If you compliment a Kagayanen baby, you can often hear the parent mutter, *pwira uli 'go back'*, or *'reverse'* to deflect any ominous consequences. The author has heard this and the following response, "*That's funny, because everyone else says she's ugly.*" It is also culturally inappropriate among Kagayanen to make a compliment about the food at a banquet. The belief is that calling attention to the food might prevent the food from lasting until all have eaten. The proper time to compliment a meal is the following day. A guest needs only to tell one person how much they enjoyed the food the previous day. The news will spread by word of mouth until it reaches the banquet host. However, most Kagayanen do not make complimentary comments about the food at a banquet lest they incur a debt to the banquet host. Instead, they will leave a token donation with the host.[14]

A *negative face threatening act* that causes damage to S is an act that shows that S is succumbing to the power of H. Examples include: expressing thanks, accepting a thank you or apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, a response to H's violation of social etiquette, or S commits himself or herself to something he or she does not

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[14] Twenty years ago, the token donation tended to be P5 or P10. Today, guests will press a folded P20 or P50 bill into the hand of the banquet host before leaving with the words, "Muli kay en." or "Muna ame." ("We're leaving now." or "We'll go ahead.") Only a foreigner would say, "Salamat." ("Thank you.") along with their donation before leaving.

want to do. Verbal expressions of thanks, like what was mentioned in Table 2, are potentially negative face-threatening acts when expressed to a friend because it incurs a debt on the part of H rather than allowing H the freedom of reciprocating at a future time. However, expressing a '*thank-you*' to a store clerk after a purchase is appropriate because it ends the transaction and any future obligation.

Positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not care about their interactant's feelings, wants, or does not want what the other wants. Positive face-threatening acts can also cause damage to both S and H. When an individual is forced to be separated from others so that their well-being is treated less importantly, positive face is threatened.

A PFTA causing damage to H is an act that expresses S's negative assessment of H's positive face or an element of his/her positive face. S can display this disapproval in two ways. The first approach is for S to directly or indirectly indicate that he/she dislikes some aspect of H's possessions, desires, or personal attributes. An act that expresses S's sentiments of H or H's belongings causes pressure on H. Examples include: compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, or expressions of strong negative emotion toward the hearer (e.g. hatred, anger, distrust), offers and promises. The author's personal experience with a PFTA was when someone made the following comment, "*Did you know that the plaid design on your skirt does not match up properly at the seam?*" We can understand why some might see a lady with her slip showing beneath her skirt and not comment for fear of threatening her positive face. In the following example, S considers conformity a strong enough value to venture a potential threat to H's positive face. S does this indirectly and almost as a compliment so as not to cause too much damage to H's positive face.

A young girl had gone to the provincial capital city and returned with a popular hairstyle like that of young girls living in the city. Her friends began to shun her. Subsequently, while present in a gathering of women in the author's home, the eldest women spoke loudly asking the author if she had noticed "*a certain young girl who had recently returned from afar and now looks like somebody famous.*" The following day the young girl dyed her hair back to its original black and wore it pulled back so that the new layered haircut was not evident. Immediately, her companions (S) began telling her (H) how much they had liked her new modern hairstyle and chided her for changing it. They were using another verbal strategy where one says the opposite or the reverse of what was intended and motivated someone to conform. If H had given S a valid reason for her new hairstyle, i.e. making a presentation before the governing board in the provincial capital, then S would be succumbing to H whom S thought was not conforming to other young people on the island. Damage would have been to both parties. However, the young girl made no comment but reluctantly changed her hairstyle.

A PFTA shows that the speaker is in some sense wrong, and unable to control himself. Examples include apologies. In this act, S is damaging his or her own face by admitting that he or she regrets one of his or her previous acts. Other examples include: acceptance of a compliment, inability to control one's physical self, inability to control one's emotional self [This prevents S from admitting any wrong when H is clearly affected by something S has said or done.], self-humiliation, and confessions.

5.0 Four Types of Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) outline four main types of verbal politeness strategies employed for mitigating face threats: *bald on-record* (BOR), *negative politeness* (NPI), *positive politeness* (PPI), *off-record indirectness* (ORI).

These types of verbal strategy, rather than minimizing a face threatening act, is actually FTA-oriented, offers no redressive action, enlists

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[15] The woman had to repeat her comment three times before the author caught on and realized she was referring to the young girl who had recently returned from the provincial capital.

public pressure, and gets credit for honesty and outspokenness. It was mentioned that a Westerner might expect a much more direct and amplified command from the palace guard, '*Hey! Get off the grass!*' representing an example of a BOR verbal strategy. A Kagayanen described a typical scenario of a person requesting to buy on credit at the local store. It was mentioned that if this was the first time the requester had asked to purchase on credit at that particular store, the proprietor would be suspicious assuming the requester had already exhausted their credit line at other stores and probably had not yet paid off their previous debts. Therefore, the requester had come to this particular store to get credit after none was allowed elsewhere. In this type of scenario, the proprietor would be very direct and inquire rhetorically, "*Where have you purchased on credit in the past since you've never come here before? Go back to that store and ask to purchase on credit there!*" Although the proprietor does not state overtly that she will not give credit to the requester, by the use of a rhetorical question, she leaves no way out for the requester but minimizes the face threatening utterance. The proprietor avoids the danger of seeming manipulative or being misunderstood and therefore feels justified in using a BOR strategy because the requester might not eventually pay the debt.

Deceased Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay avoided using a BOR strategy by stating that the added weight was a prohibited imposition. Had he used a BOR strategy, the gift would have been flatly refused.

NPI involves being conventionally indirect, minimizes imposition on H, and helps to avoid any future debt between S and H by keeping social distance and not getting too familiar with the addressee. NPI pays respect or deference to H and begs forgiveness assuming that he or she may be intruding on H in response for the face-threatening act. "*I don't mean to bother you, but can I ask a quick question?*" ("*Pwede po bang magtanong?*") are examples of using NPI verbal strategy. The motivation is to accomplish one's desires.

PPI strategies seek to claim common ground and solidarity between S and H by minimizing any threatening aspect, assuring that S is considered to be of the same kind as H. Criticism may lose much of its sting if done in a way that asserts mutual friendship. The more indirect the verbal politeness strategy, the more options that are available from which to choose. When S includes himself or herself equally as a participant in the request or offer, it may lessen the potential for face-threatening act debt. Following is a list of PPI verbal strategy types that could be employed:

- Notice and attend to the wants, interests, needs, and goods of H
- Exaggerate interest, approval, and sympathy with H.
- Intensify interest for H.
- Use in-group identity markers: Address forms. Use of in-group language or dialect. Use of jargon or slang. Use contraction and ellipsis.
- Seek agreement: safe topics, repetition
- Avoid disagreement: Token agreement, Pseudo agreement, White lies, Hedging opinions
- Offer, promise, fulfill H's want for some X
- Give gifts to H

The comment whispered by the Royal Palace guard to the Thai conference participant, "*Other people don't do like that.*" is an example of ORIs which invite conversational but give S the opportunity to evade responsibility by claiming that H's interpretation of the utterance as a face-threatening act is wrong. At the time of the incident, the Thai conference participant was extremely embarrassed at the guard's comment. She waited until the guard was well out of sight before she told her companions that the three of them should not have been on the lawn taking photos of each other. When the author asked the Thai participant how the palace guard related this information to her, she was reluctant to say because he spoke in Thai. She added that what he said would sound strange in English. When pressed for an English translation

of his comment, she gave the equivalent, "*Other people don't do like that.*" After analyzing the comment, the Thai participant's embarrassment was somewhat relieved when she learned that neither the Japanese participant nor the American author were embarrassed by the palace guard's gentle rebuke. In fact, the incident was related to the entire conference whose topic was *Linguistic Politeness.* A list of ORI verbal strategy types is found below with the particular strategies used by the guard underlined:

- Give <u>hints</u>, <u>insinuations</u>, irony, metaphor
- Give <u>association</u> clues
- <u>Presuppose</u>
- <u>Understate</u>
- Overstate
- <u>Use Tautologies</u> (other/people)
- Use Contradictions
- <u>Be Ironic</u>
- Use Metaphors
- Use Rhetorical Questions
- <u>Be Vague or Ambiguous</u>
- <u>Over-generalize</u>
- <u>Be incomplete, use ellipsis</u>

6.0 Choosing Politeness Strategies

In deciding which verbal politeness strategy to use, the speaker runs through the individual payoffs of each strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987). Paul Grice argues that all conversationalists are rational beings who are primarily interested in the efficient conveying of messages. Brown and Levinson use Grice's argument in their *politeness theory* by saying that

> rational agents will choose the same politeness strategy as any other would under the same circumstances to try to mitigate face. They show the available range of verbal politeness strategies to redress loss of face. Since FTA have the ability to mutually threaten face [S>H ~ H<S], therefore rational agents seek to avoid face-threatening acts or will try to use certain strategies to minimize the threat (Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987).

When we design ways of confronting, persuading, or softening the impact of negative information, we are choosing to employ certain verbal politeness strategies. The pastor mentioned above was educating the Americans in his audience in much the same way that my friend was educating me by using an example of a face-threatening speech act that Americans unwittingly employ.

Other politeness strategies include using honorific particles, flattery or addressing someone in the third person. Choosing the right timing or allowing considerable time to pass before bringing up a painful incident is also a form of verbal strategy. In the following examples a determination will be made, based on the above descriptions, to identify which of the four types of verbal politeness strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson is being employed in each example including the motivation behind its use.

Honorifics and special pronoun use are examples of negative politeness indirectness (NPI). Verbal strategies are employed to keep social distance; S does not become too familiar with H, pays respect, and gives deference by assuming that he or she might be intruding on H. Two honorific particles, *po*[16] and *ho* are used in the Tagalog language of the Philippines. In examples 1 and 2, *po* is the formal honorific particle of respect used when addressing someone of a superior status such as one's parents, teachers, government officials, law enforcement personnel and other leaders. It is especially employed in greetings and when making requests. Ho is the informal or colloquial honorific particle of respect generally used when addressing strangers or someone who is much older. However, many Filipino speakers will use *po* in both situations. English equivalents are Mr., Sir, Miss, Ma'am, or Madam. The motivation is to be thought of as a nice and polite person. Languages of the southern Philippines, i.e.

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[16] Some Filipinos say that "po" is derived from "apo," ('lord' or 'grandfather'). In some northern Philippine languages "apo" is used as a title with the word for God, i.e. "Apo Dios" ('Lord God').

Kagayanen, typically do not use honorific particles. However, Kagayanen do use polite indirect terms of direct address that will be discussed below.

Other forms of negative politeness indirectness in Tagalog are the special uses of second and third person plural pronouns, *kayo* and *sila*. The second person plural pronoun *kayo* is the pronoun of respect used by a younger person when addressing an older person and S and H are face to face. In Example 1 below, *kayo* is also used with the respect particle *po*. In both examples (1) and (2) the addressee is a single individual, although the pronoun is plural.

1. "Tuloy   po   kayo."
   tuloy   HON   2 PL,ABS
   continue   ---   you
   "Come in please."
2. "Good-bye,   mag-ingat   kayo."
   English.loan   mag=ingat   2 PL,ABS
   good-bye   AF, IRR=care   you

   "Good-bye and take care!"

The third person plural pronoun *sila* can also be used as a pronoun of respect, especially when H is unseen by S, as in Example 3 when answering the telephone. The same expression would also be used for an unseen visitor at the door.

3. "Sino   po   sila?"
   INT   HON   3 PL, ABS
   who   ---   they
   "Who is calling please?"

Indirectness in direct address among Kagayanen is a kind of negative politeness indirectness strategy. "*Manong*" 'older brother' or "*Manang*" 'older sister' are used as referential terms for addressees who are slightly older than the S. "*Tatay*" 'father' or "*Nanay*" 'mother' are referents used when H is in the same age category as S's parents. "*Lolo*" 'grandfather' or "*Lola*' 'grandmother' are used when H is much older. Peers address each other by their common referential name or "*bansag*" 'nickname' used in the community. When addressing a younger male or female, it is acceptable to use "*Akay*" 'girl' or "*Atong*" 'boy'. Again, as mentioned above, indirectness in direct address identifies *negative politeness indirectness* which motivates S to keep social distance from H and not become too

familiar with H as would be the case in addressing someone's husband.

If a Kagayanen woman's husband is slightly older than the author, the woman would refer to her husband as the author's older brother, "*manong no*," ('your older-brother') or "*tatay no*," ('your father') if the woman's husband is in that age category with reference to the author. This convention caused considerable confusion in the early days when middle-aged women were constantly referring to the *author's older brother* or the *author's father*, neither of whom have ever been to the island.[17]

Young newly married couples address each other with an indirect referential term and rarely by their given name. The husband will address his new wife as "*Akay*" ('Girl') and the wife will address her new husband as "*Daddy*," "*Papa*" or "*Manong,*" ('Older Brother'). When a woman refers to her husband in public, she will use his "*bansag*" 'nickname' which depends on H. Married couples address each other using *formal distance* forms with reference to their children. The husband addresses his wife as "*Inay No*," 'Your Mother' (see example 4). The wife addresses her husband as "*Amay No*," 'Your Father' (examples 4 and 5). Kagayanen say these forms of indirect address show respect for one's spouse in front of their children.[18] However, married couples continue to use these formal forms of indirect address when their children are not present and even after the children are grown and no longer living at home. The forms for father "*amay*" and mother "*inay*" are the unfamiliar distance forms

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[17] Kagayanen women would say, "Your father laid the cement floor of your house." Or, "Your older brother repaired your rain tank while you were gone."

[18] According to SIL linguist, Khor Lee Kee who has lived among the Obo Manobo of the southern island of Mindanao, it is disrespectful for children to say their parents' given names. Therefore, when Obo Manobo children enroll in school and are asked for their parents' names, they typically remain silent, which their teachers often interpret as ignorance. Among Kagayanens, whose language has been classified in the Manobo language family, it is not disrespectful for children to say their parents' given names.

of address. The intimate familiar referential forms are "nanay," 'mother' and "*tatay*," 'father'. Furthermore, it could be assumed that these forms of direct address are motivated by a desire to be polite and show respect rather than a desire to maintain unfamiliarity or distance. However, some Kagayanen have suggested that the use of unfamiliar distance forms of address signal the intention of S to avoid calling attention to a spouse and thereby recognition by the unseen spirit realm.

4. "Inay No! Manaw ka di anay."[19]
   inay 2SG,NABS AF,IRR=panaw 2SG,ABS DIR, NS TMP
   mother you walk you here first
   "Your Mother! Come here for a minute."

5. "Amay No! May gangita ki kaon."
   amay 2SG,NABS EXT ga=ngita OBL 2SG, OBL
   father your there.is AF=look.for --- you
   "Your Father! Someone is looking for you."

In the Introduction to this paper it was mentioned that the author's verbal behavior was being corrected indirectly when examples were given of verbal infractions typically made when using American English in a Philippine context. Indirectness is also a type of politeness strategy used by Kagayanen to confront or persuade a change in thinking or behavior. This type of strategy identifies a PFTA which potentially threatens the face of H. This strategy is accomplished by using examples representing the undesirable speech act or behavior. The example could come from S or from H inadvertently. The speaker waits for an opportune time to mention an incident. Usually some time has gone by (possibly years) since the infraction occurred. At first, the hearer might not even remember the incident. When *correcting by using an example*, the example could include telling a story, a proverb, a bit of gossip, or by speaking indirectly in the hearing of the person using a *third person* referential pronoun. Sometimes an example may surface from the perpetrator herself inadvertently in ordinary conversation. S then seizing the opportunity, would interject, "*Yes, just like the time when you ...*" When H realizes that she is being confronted with her own example, no response is needed and she need not feel intimidated, threatened, apologetic or defensive. The confrontation has taken place indirectly. The

case is settled and closed. S's motivation is to evoke a change in behavior. Similarly with apologies, it could take S years to find the opportune verbal circumstance in which to interject an apology.[20]

Blum-Kulka suggest that indirectness and politeness might not represent parallel dimensions and indirectness does not necessarily imply politeness. In her study comparing English and Hebrew requests, respondents judged that the most indirect requesting strategies were not the most polite. The strategies rated as most polite, on a scale of politeness, were conventional indirect requests ('*on record*' indirectness); the strategies rated as most indirect, on a scale of indirectness, were hints used for requests ('*off record'* indirectness). Respondents rated indirectness and politeness in two separate categories (Blum-Kulka, 1987).

The term Kagayanen use for indirect speech when you want to make a request is "*dail-dail.*" The root form of the word means 'way,' 'means,' or 'reason' by which something is done. When a speaker requests something or asks a favor, he or she never mentions the subject directly, but uses 'small talk' or 'flattery' gradually building up to the request. This verbal politeness strategy identifies PPI because S seeks to minimize any threatening aspect in order to accomplish his or her desires. In the context of giving advice to someone who plans to request credit at a local store, S in Example 6 suggests the intentional use of *dail-dail*. The motivation is to appeal to the positive face of H in order to obtain credit at their store.

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[19] *anay* is a politeness particle used at the end of some sentences to soften statements that might otherwise sound like imperatives. The anay politeness particle is not discussed in this paper.

[20] The author's experience was through a third-party possibly acting as a go-between. When the author mentioned a name remotely connected to an incident that occurred 10 years prior, the third-party interjected, "Oh, by the way, that person said she wasn't feeling well that day when she made the comment about the child. Similar experiences have occurred over the years identifying a set strategy type.

[21] Some sociologists have called this approach the "hand on the doorknob speech." A requester will visit a person from whom they plan to make a request. They could spend an hour making small talk. When they stand up about to leave, as an afterthought, they will interject their request.

6. "Dail-dail   ka   nang na   isturya tak basi   mangutang
dail-dail   2SG,ABS   PTC LK   isturya CON ADV AF, IRR=utang
flatter   you   just/only --- talk   because maybe debt/owe
kani ."
TMP
later
"Just use flattery talk because maybe (you) can buy on credit afterward."

Other uses for PPI among Kagayanen include procuring help and softening the impact of negative information.

Indirect expressions of disapproval are employed to correct unacceptable behavior in lieu of a direct confrontation. Unacceptable behavior could include various kinds of infractions, such as being lazy, not taking care of one's family, or committing adultery. An oral traditional story teaching a related value could be told in the offender's presence by his or her peers. Sometimes, just the first few lines of a proverb are uttered. If the person does not catch on that he or she is the intended addressee of the proverb, he may be confronted publicly by someone giving a speech who is using the details of the offense with a third person referential pronoun. A lazy person could be nicknamed with the name of another well-known lazy person in the community. This happens most often with children but could also include adults. Expressing disapproval of someone's actions whether directly or indirectly is an example of BOI utterance. This type of strategy enlists public pressure, is H-oriented, and leaves no way for H to minimize the face-threatening act. Like the young girl with the city hairstyle and the conference participants on the Royal Palace lawn, the motivation is to evoke a change in behavior more fitting with societal norms.

An act that affirms or denies a future act of H creates pressure on H to either perform or not perform the act is an NFTA damaging H's negative face. Therefore H uses a negative politeness indirectness strategy by giving S a vague indirect response to a face-threatening inquiry. H is motivated by the need to remain free and her actions unimpeded. Examples for use of this kind strategy include; orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, or warnings.   Examples 7 and 8 are

illustrations of polite refusals when the question expresses uncertainty or the expected answer is a negative. Intonation alone expresses the difference between the following rhetorical question and an imperative construction since the wording would be identical. The inquiry in Examples 7-10 could be understood by H as *orders, requests, suggestions, advice, or reminders* that H should attend the dance. The reported speech particle in Example 8 refers to S.

7. Question:
"Dili ka   mag-atin   ta   miting kani   kilem?"
NEG 2SG,ABS AF, IRR=attend ACC meeting TMP   night
No   you   attend   ---   meeting later   night
"Aren't you going to attend the meeting later tonight?"
Response: "Mlaman   san   kani."
AG, IRR=know DET, NH   TMP
know   that   later
"That will be known later."
Meaning: *("I'm not planning to attend [but I don't want to say that outright].")*

8. Question:
"Mwag   ka   sinayaw   kani?"
AG,IRR=watch 2SG,ABS   -in- =sayaw   TMP
watch   you   NOM=dance later
"Are you going to watch the dance later?"
Response:
"Mwag   sinayaw   kon!"
AG, IRR=watch -in- =sayaw RS
watch   dance   ---
"Watch the dance, she says!"

Meaning: *("I'm not going to the dance tonight.")*

If the addressee is planning to attend, a question expressing uncertainty would receive a response such as that below in Example 9.

9. Question:
"Dili   ka   mwag   ta   sinayaw   kani?"
NEG 2SG, ABS AG,IRR=watch ACC NMR=sayaw TMP
Not   you   watch   the   ---   = dance   later
"Aren't you going to watch the dance later?"
Response:
"Dili mwag   daw!"
NEG AG,IRR=watch   RS
not   =watch   ---
"Not watch, she says!"
Meaning: *("Of course I'm going to the dance tonight!")*

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[22] "daw" is the Tagalog RS particle. It is not known why Kagayanens uses the Tagalog RS particle here rather than the Kagayanen RS particle "kon." Possibly, "kon" was not used because in this construction with the negative "dili," using "kon" would imply that someone else other than the speaker made the comment that the addressee would not attend.

In Example 10, a positive response without the question of uncertainty would be direct:

10. Question:

"Mwag   ka   sinayaw   kani?"
AG,IRR=watch 2SG, ABS -in- =sayaw TMP
watch   you   NOM=dance later

"Are you going to watch the dance later?"

Response:

"Ee, mwag   a"
AFF   AG-IRR=watch 1SG, ABS
yes watch   I

"Yes, I will watch."

When communicating negative information, indirectness is employed to soften the impact. This is similar to the English idiom "making small talk". Often times, if the bearer of the negative information is also the causer, they will elicit the help of a third party or go-between. In Examples 11-14 S uses small talk as an ORI verbal strategy similar to dail-dail to soften the impact of negative news that a man's son has died in a New Year's Day firecracker accident. The father was aware of the accident, knew his son had been hospitalized, and was accompanied by the mother. Examples 11, 12, 13 and 14 reflect the verbal strategy used by the relative who was chosen to tell the father that his youngest son had died. This strategy follows ORI because S first seeks common ground and solidarity with H. S appeals to the fact that S and H are of the same kind, family, and begins his verbal strategy with this mutuality to lessen the impact of S's impending negative news on an elderly man. S includes himself equally as a participant in the negative information. Notice also that S uses a polite yet distant referential address for the son who has just passed away rather than saying "your son" or mentioning the boy's given name:

11. "Tay,   ino   sid-anan   no?"
tay   INT   sid-anan   2SG,NABS
father what fish-thing you

"Father, what is your fish viand (today)?"

12. "Tay, nlaman   no   Dyos   gibit ta
tay   EXP, R=alam 2SG,NABS Dyos AF,R=ibit GEN
father know   you   God   hold   ---
ate   na   kabui."
1,PL,INC,POSS LK kabui
our   ---   life

"Father, you know God holds our life."

13. "Kaysan pakamang din daw makem   ki
TMP   PAT, R=take 3,SG,ERG ADV ADJ=old 1,PL,INC,ABS
sometimes take he when old we
en   daw maskin bata   ki pa."
CMP CON maskin bata   1,PL,INC,ABS, ADV
now and even-though child we   still/yet

"Sometimes he takes (life) when we are old already and even when we are still young."

14. "Tay, atong ya   ula   en."
tay   atong DET,F NEG-EXT CMP
father boy   that   none   now

"Father, the boy is no more."

Before choosing a verbal politeness strategy S will first weigh the effects of the damage to S and H. One elaborate example of a PPI verbal strategy that could be likened to an *extended apology* is the practice of the *bansagan* 'nicknaming' (Huggins, 1999). It is used in a particular kind of face-threatening situation. The root word *bansag* means 'to put a reputation on'. The *bansag* is the common referential name by which people are known in the community. The *bansag* originates at a drinking bout "*sumsuman*" when an unmarried male 'takes the floor' and tells of an escapade he had with a young lady that includes some precarious incident. The men who are present will then take a particular feature from the story that represents the female and will *bansagan* ('nickname') the young man with this representative feature. The *bansag* could also be an expletive the young lady yelled out during the encounter. The young storyteller may or may not identify the female. If he does not later marry his female suitor in the story, she risks losing-face and being shamed in the community. The *bansag* is a way of pacifying the jilted female and avoiding a public confrontation, which could occur even after the young man has already married someone else and has children. Under Kagayanen custom law, such a confrontation is the legal practice known as *pagaw ('snatch, claim.')* A jilted female has the legal right to *pagaw* her former suitor at any time. *Pagaw* is especially invoked if the jilted female never marries and has no one to support her. *Pagaw* involves the following four steps:

1. "*manaik*" 'go up' The jilted female enters the house of intended male who is now married.

2. "*mambal*" 'speak' The jilted female says, "*Bawien ko ake na sawa.*" 'I am reclaiming my husband.'

3. "*mabat*" 'answer' The now married former suitor responds choosing one of three possible options:

   a) "Palangga ko ake i na pamilya. Dili a muyog ki kaon. Manaw ka nang en."
   'I love my family. I will not accompany you. Just leave now.'

   b) "Palangga ta kaw pa. Muyog a ki kaon."
   'I still love you. I will accompany you.'

   c) "Palangga ta kyo tanan. Pwidi ka matinir di tingeb ki kami."
   'I love you all. You can live here together with us.'

4. "*mabang/matag*" 'help/give'. The man agrees to support the woman financially or he will give her a one-time payment of money.

   If the man responds with option a), he would then fear harm to himself or his family should the woman decide to go to a "*manugsisti*", 'sorcerer' if she is refused now a second time. The woman could also file a complaint with the municipal authorities which any man would prefer to avoid. A complainant could win a monetary settlement. This kind of custom law case was still listed in the municipal law books as late as the 1990s.

   However, through the practice of nicknaming "*bansagan*", the young man and the members of his subsequent family equally bear the shame, or honor depending on how one looks at the situation, taking on a referential *nickname* characterizing a feature of the man's tryst with his former female suitor. Most people in the community are unaware of the origins of male *bansags* or the identities of the female suitors.

   An example of a *bansag* is "*Ñiog*"[23] 'coconut'. In the retelling of the escapade, if the incident took place in a coconut plantation, someone at the drinking bout would suggest "*Ñiog*" as an appropriate bansag for the young storyteller. From then on, the young man would be known by the nickname, "*Ñiog.*" When he later

marries, he would be referred to in the community as "*Tatay Ñiog,*" 'Father "*Ñiog*" ' . (Lit: 'Father Coconut') His wife would be called "*Sawa "Ñiog,*" 'Wife of "*Ñiog.*" ' Their children would be known in the community as "*Mga Bata "Ñiog,*" 'Children of "*Ñiog*" '. Even their house would be referred to as "*Balay "Ñiog,*" 'House of "*Ñiog*" '. The author was told that in most cases, the jilted female is adequately appeased through use of the *bansag* and will usually leave the man and his family alone. Since it is not known at the time of the *bansagan* whether or not the young man will later marry the young lady in the escapade, his *wearing* the *bansag* is not affected should he decide to marry her. What is suggested here is that nicknaming is a type of PPI. Below is the list of PPI strategies suggested by Brown and Levinson with the strategies used in nicknaming underlined:

- Notice and <u>attend to H's wants, interests, needs, and goods</u>
- <u>Exaggerate interest, approval, and sympathy with H.</u>
- <u>Intensify interest to H.</u>
- <u>Use in-group identity markers: Address forms. Use of in-group language or dialect. Use of jargon or slang.</u> Use contraction and ellipsis.
- <u>Seek agreement:</u> safe topics, repetition
- <u>Avoid disagreement: Token agreement, Pseudo agreement,</u> White lies, Hedging opinions
- <u>Offer, promise, fulfill H's want for some X</u>
- <u>Give gifts to H.</u>

   It might also appear that the practice of nicknaming is a type of rite-of-passage and an element of control over the behavior of young men.

7. Conclusion

   The aim of this paper was to present some examples of verbal politeness strategies used in the Philippines. Examples included comparing American English and Philippine English illustrating the cross-cultural mismatch

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[23] This is a fictitious nickname.

in understanding comparable forms of greetings, requesting, asking questions and expressing gratitude using the thanking convention. Examples from the Kagayanen language of Palawan were also presented using Brown and Levinson's four types of politeness strategies: *bald on-record indirectness, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record indirectness.* Determinations were made as to verbal strategy type and motivation for use. Further research could be conducted among other language groups in the Philippines to look for similarities or differences in verbal politeness strategies employed among them or to describe other types of indirectness that might be used comparable to the indirect *extended apology* through the practice of nicknaming used among the Kagayanen of Palawan.

The comparison chart in Table 2 and Table 3 could be expanded to include Kagayanen expressions. However, since the examples in Table 2 represented a cross-cultural mismatch between two dialects of English, it is not likely that comparable English expressions would exist among Kagayanen. However, it might be helpful to know how Kagayanen have experienced any of the *English* expressions listed in Table 2 and what comparable expressions they might use further describing Kagayanen verbal politeness strategies. For instance, the informal American English colloquial greeting, "*Long time no see*," and its Philippine English response, "*but now see now*," when first experienced by a Kagayanen from a Tagalog speaker, the Kagayanen was offended and wondered why her Tagalog speaking friend was suddenly using an unfamiliar English expression with her to which the Kagayanen did not know how she ought to respond. After discussing the greeting in relation to this paper, the Kagayanen speaker understood her Tagalog friend was merely greeting her. This reiterates the *S. M. R. Communication Model.* The Kagayanen grew up on Cagayancillo Island, where the expression had not been used, and has only been living in the provincial capital city as an adult. Therefore, they did not share enough cultural experience in common concerning greetings in cities.

Finally, a kind of extended verbal apology was presented describing the practice of nicknaming as a form of verbal politeness in a potentially face threatening act of jilting. And although Americans continue to use the apologetic convention, "*Excuse me*," when they bump into someone inadvertently and Filipinos continue to be perplexed by it, some Filipinos have begun using the expression in much the same way as it is used by American English speakers indicating attempts at bridging the cross-cultural gap thereby relaxing some tensions in verbal etiquette between American English and Philippine English speakers. In relation to the thanking convention, the author recently has heard Filipinos say, "*We know that Americans like to hear the 'Thank-you' expression. So we use it*." Furthermore, Fres-Felix's award winning teen novel, '*Sup?*' a title capturing a popular African American abbreviated greeting, '*What's Up?*' (Fres-Felix 2001), has moved this previously perceived impolite English expression into everyday Philippine English in many major cities. These current observations suggest that follow-up research could be conducted to determine the extent and kinds of changes that are taking place in verbal politeness strategies in the Philippines and which ones are here to stay. These strategies appear to be a combination of directness, indirectness, and politeness like a verbal dance between Speaker and Hearer weighing the benefits and choosing the strategies that will get one's desires accomplished. Today, influences of modernization, globalization, the media, and the ever-growing research on verbal politeness strategies, suggest that politeness issues are being tested, adjusted and reconstructed.

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[24] This young adult novella written in English by a Filipino author won the Pilar Perez Medallion award in 2001.

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Appendix: Transcription convention used by SIL International

A	ACTOR semantic macro-role		LK	linker
ABS	absolutive case		LOC	locative semantic role
ACC	accusative case		MP	Modifier phrase
ADJ	adjective		NABS	non-absolutive case
ADJR	adjectivizer		NEG	negative
ADV	adverb		NUM	numeral
AFF	affirmative		NOM	nominalizer
APL	Applicative		OBL	oblique
APT	aptative mode		ORD	ordinal number
ATT	marker of speaker's attitude		p	plural
BEN	BENEFICIARY semantic role		PL	plural marker
CAUS	causative		POSS	possessive
CM	completive aspect marker -- "already"		PP	prepositional phrase
			R	realis
CONT	continuous		REC	recipient semantic role
CTR	contrast		RED	reduplication
D1	deictic near speaker		REL	Relative clause
D2	deictic near addressee		RP	Referring phrase
D3	near both speaker and addressee		RQ	rhetorical question
D4	far away out of sight		RS	reported speech
DEF	definite demonstrative		S	singular
DET	determiner		SP	specific
DIST	distributive aspect		SPAT	spatial marker
EMPH	emphatic		SUPL	superlative
ERG	ergative case		SURP	surprise
EXCL	exclusive		TH	THEME semantic role
EXST	existential		U	UNDERGOER semantic macrorole
FRT	fronted			
G	generic		XC	Exclamatory suffix
GEN	genitive case		1	first person
GER	gerund		2	second person
I	Instrumental voice		3	third person
INC	incompletive aspect		,	separates different grammatical categories
INCL	inclusive			
INDEF	indefinite		.	two word gloss for one Kagayanen word
INJ	interjection			
INST	instrument semantic role		=	separates morphemes
INT	intensifier		-	glottal stop in the Kagayanen text line
ITRR	interrogative			
IR	irrealis modality		---	non-equivalence
L	location voice			