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Graduate teaching assistants' use of power, face, and politeness

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GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS' USE OF POWER, FACE, AND
POLITENESS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Ambica Dhanjal Gill

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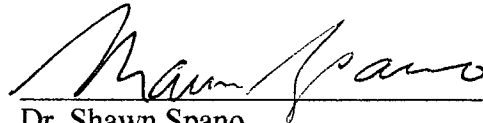
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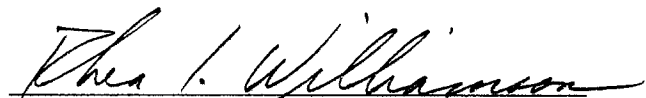


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ABSTRACT

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS' USE OF POWER, FACE, AND POLITENESS

by Ambica Dhanjal Gill

This thesis addresses the topic of graduate teaching assistants' use of power, face, and politeness with students outside the classroom. It examines the interpersonal challenges graduate teaching assistants' faced when students visit them outside of class time one-on-one to discuss a class-related issue.

Research on this subject reveals that many graduate teaching assistants were not aware of the importance of interpersonal communication in a student-teacher conversation outside of the classroom. Information obtained from graduate teaching assistants who have taught a communication studies course at the college level showed that, while they were not aware of interpersonal communication with students outside of the classroom, issues concerning the importance of effective interpersonal communication skills in student-teacher conversation were extremely significant to the effectiveness of student learning.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Introduction _____	1
II. Review of Literature _____	7
<i>Teacher-Student Interactions</i> _____	7
<i>Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)</i> _____	10
<i>Establishing Credibility</i> _____	17
<i>Power</i> _____	20
<i>Face</i> _____	27
<i>Politeness Theory</i> _____	32
<i>Brown and Levinson's Five "Superstrategies"</i> _____	33
III. Methodology and Procedure _____	38
<i>Rationale for Approach</i> _____	38
<i>Assessing the Questionnaire and Survey</i> _____	39
<i>Assessing the Interview</i> _____	41
<i>Procedure</i> _____	42
<i>Selection of the Participants</i> _____	42
<i>Conduct of Surveys</i> _____	42
<i>Conduct of Interviews</i> _____	44
IV. Analysis _____	45
<i>Summary</i> _____	45
<i>Demographics of Participants</i> _____	48
<i>Survey and Interview Data Analysis</i> _____	49
V. Implications and Conclusion _____	73
<i>Implications</i> _____	73
<i>Limitations</i> _____	77
<i>Recommendations for Further Research</i> _____	80
<i>Conclusion</i> _____	82
References _____	84
Appendices _____	88

Appendix A	88
Appendix B	89
Appendix C	93

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Most of us can recall a time when we engaged an instructor outside of class and discovered that the instructor's communicative behavior may have appeared different from what it was like inside the classroom. Perhaps the instructor appeared friendlier or perhaps, to some extent, the instructor appeared confrontational, hostile, or unapproachable. Regardless of the appearance, the encounter most likely changed our original perception of the instructor in a way that either enhanced or detracted from our image of him or her as an educator.

According to Myers (1997), effective instructors must be competent communicators in order to understand the dynamics of teacher-student communication in a way that enables them to make effective choices. Staton (1989) describes instructional communication as "the study of the human communication process as it occurs in an instructional context across subject matter, grade levels, and types of settings" (p.365). Since a great deal of time is spent interacting with students outside of class (e.g., office hours, hall way, off campus) it is important that instructors develop a better understanding of how outside

classroom communication (OCC) affects teacher-student interaction.

Teacher-student interactions occurring inside the classroom have been the focus of many empirical investigations by researchers in communication studies. Nussbaum (1992) found more than 1,000 studies (published over a 20 year period) that focused on teacher behaviors inside the classroom. Topics such as teacher credibility, immediacy behaviors, and classroom management have been compared, contrasted, and studied in order to better understand different types of communicative behaviors between teachers and students in the context of the classroom. For example, research by instructional communication scholars suggests that behaviors such as smiling, referring to student by name, vocal variety, and use of humor are critical to effective teaching in the classroom (Hunt, Stitt, & Simonds, 2003).

Currently, instructional communication research is now focused on the importance of understanding teacher-student interactions outside the classroom as well (Aylor & Oppliger, 2003). According to Aylor & Oppliger, teacher-student communication inside the classroom has been studied, tested, and evaluated multiple times. Thus, they

argue that the focus should now shift in order to examine communication occurring between teachers and students outside of the classroom environment. While many instructors are relatively familiar with communicative behaviors that focus on the one-to-many communication process typical in a classroom environment (e.g., smiling, vocal variety, calling a student by name), there is an increasing need to further explore communicative behaviors that focus on one-on-one interpersonal communication with students that takes place outside the classroom.

Most graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), however, are not prepared for interpersonal communication with students outside the classroom. Fusani (1994) found that 23% of students surveyed had never visited or ever communicated with an instructor about the class. Additionally, 50% had fewer than one or two contacts with an instructor over the course of a semester. Most students generally experience fear and intimidation when communicating with instructors inside the classroom, which may explain their lack of communication outside that environment. Furthermore, most instructors feel more comfortable speaking in front of the class rather than in the hall or in the office with a student alone (Martin et al., 2002).

According to Aylor & Oppliger (2003), there is a higher chance that a student's fear will increase when he or she interpersonally interacts with an instructor outside of the classroom. In addition, most instructors are not adequately prepared for outside classroom communication (OCC) with students because they have less interaction and are not accustomed to speaking to an individual person as opposed to a group.

Generally, the approachability of an instructor during OCC is often determined by his or her behavior inside the classroom. Wilson, Woods, & Gaff (1974) found that students interpret in-class teaching behaviors of instructors as cues to accessibility for out-of-class discussions. Thus, an instructor's ability to effectively communicate one-on-one with a student depends, to a relatively high degree, on his or her ability to communicate to the group inside the classroom.

Being in a different environment with a student can have an effect on an instructor's ability to communicate. For example, an instructor may feel comfortable speaking to a class of thirty students, yet feel uncomfortable and uncertain when speaking to a single student in one-on-one conversation. This is in part due to the difficulty for

instructors to distinguish between being an instructor inside the classroom and being one outside the classroom as well. It is like the employee of a company who stops "being" an employee and resumes his or her role as a common citizen once shift has ended. However, this analogy does not apply to the role of the instructor when he or she meets with a student outside of class. More often than not, the instructor remains the instructor to the student, regardless of the environment in which the student finds the instructor.

Based on this reasoning, the primary purpose of an instructor is to teach, regardless of whether or not he or she is in a classroom. In this respect, Kuh (1996) refers to the notion of separation between these learning environments (inside and outside the classroom) as "seamless learning environments" that encourage instructors to teach and students to view out-of-class and in-class experiences as distinct learning opportunities (p.141). Kuh observes that the process of teaching and learning is enacted through the communication that is involved, not the environment in which it takes place. As a result, the teaching profession is not limited to simply teaching in the classroom, but also extends outside the classroom as

well. Students will not perceive a difference in the role and responsibility of the teacher simply because the student finds the teacher in his or her office as opposed to in front of the class.

A variety of different communicative behaviors (e.g., immediacy, compliance gaining strategies, seeking affinity strategies) exists outside of the classroom that can further enhance teacher-student interaction and increase the level of positive perceptions of instructor empathy and trust while simultaneously increasing motivation for learning (Fusani, 1994, p. 240). Communicative behaviors such as teacher-power (Golish, 1999), face-maintenance, and politeness strategies (Trees & Manusov, 1998, p.557) have not been fully examined in past studies. Thus, future investigations may help foster an increased understanding of the dynamics in teacher-student interactions, particularly during interpersonal communication outside of the classroom.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Teacher-Student Interactions

A complete understanding of teacher power, face threats, and politeness strategies would help instructors better understand the process involved in teacher-student interactions both inside and outside of the classroom. Along the spectrum of teacher-student interactions that occur, teacher-student requests pose a significant challenge to instructors in their ability to effectively and efficiently handle particular requests made by students. Thus, requests are an excellent example of the use of teacher power, face-threats, and politeness theory put into practice.

Most teachers expect that teaching and learning will take place consistently in a cooperative atmosphere; however, that is not often the case (Hocker, 1986). Hocker describes teacher-student disagreements as a challenge for "practicing what we preach" and the ability to handle conflict in the teacher-student relationship often shapes one's teaching style (p. 74). Struggles, conflicts, and challenges often occur. Thus, an instructor's ability to

handle such challenges effectively will contribute to the ability to foster positive interactions with students.

Hocker illustrates a typical conflict scenario that takes place in an interpersonal conversation with a student concerning a grade:

Student: Could I talk with you about my grade on the first paper?

Professor: Sure, come on in.

Student: I'd like to know your criteria for an A. I worked really hard and thought I'd written an A paper but you gave me a B- on it.

Professor: Well, it was a good paper, but it had some flaws. For instance, you had a lot of proofreading errors and you didn't follow the assignment fully. You also needed to use outside material.

Student: I didn't know we had to use outside sources.

Professor: I covered that in class. You must have missed it.

Student: Oh. Well thanks.

Professor: Sure, any time.

(Teacher-student confrontations. Communication in college classrooms, Hocker, 1996, p. 71).

Hocker's example illustrates that while this scenario may appear like a routine check on a grade by a student, with the instructor's credibility left unscathed and perhaps even reinforced, this is often not the case. In such situations, the student may often feel discouraged, angry, or even frustrated with the instructor and may make certain everyone else in

the class is aware of the instructor's unfairness. If more than one student engaged the instructor in a similar dialogue, the instructor's credibility may be harmed irreparably. Hocker explains that students often report to friends that a professor was unclear in class, unfair in applying grading standards, inconsistent in interpretation of requirements, did not read the paper carefully, and/or conducted the interview in a condescending manner (Hocker, 1996). This series of negative remarks could lead to questioning the instructor's credibility while simultaneously creating a negative perception of the instructor's teaching effectiveness.

Correspondingly, what separates effective and ineffective instructors is not the absence of disruptive behavior, but rather how an instructor responds to what occurs outside of the classroom (Jones, 1986). Since instructors often engage students outside the classroom, it is important that instructors understand the role of power, face, and politeness during such interpersonal communication. By understanding how these communicative variables affect interpersonal communication and interaction outside the classroom, the connection between

interpersonal communication outside the classroom and its impact on an instructor's ability to engage in effective instructional communication inside the classroom can be better understood. This understanding may assist instructors in effectively responding to student challenges.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

Reliance on GTAs has made an impact on basic communication studies courses, particularly public speaking (Roach, 1999). Statistics indicate that GTAs play an active and important role as educators in undergraduate studies. From 1976-1995, the total number of instruction and/or research assistants in institutions of higher education increased by 35% (U.S. Department of Education (1998) cited by Roach, 1999). This increase reflects a trend that GTAs are increasingly participating in the education of university students.

Teaching college students can be challenging for even the most experienced of instructors. Therefore, it is imperative that GTAs are well trained and understand the effectiveness of quality instructional communication inside the classroom. GTAs are trained and expected to understand communication competencies, to explain course concepts and

assignments clearly, and to adhere to general expectations of classroom conversations (Morgan & Wilson, 2003). While most GTA training programs do this, GTAs are still often left with little or no knowledge with respect to handling interpersonal communication outside of class. Communicating interpersonal with a student effectively can enhance and further the learning process. It also establishes a rapport with the students that contributes to the overall credibility of the GTA, which in turn increases the GTA's confidence (i.e., perception of his or her ability to teach).

Currently, most GTA programs focus primarily on the delivery of the subject material to the class. However, despite the increase in GTA training overall, the literature indicates that GTAs are still given little or no preparation for communicating with students outside of class (Golish, 1999). Training limitations, combined with a lack of teaching experience, pose vital challenges to a GTA's ability to teach (Roach, 1999). Since there is little interaction that occurs outside the classroom through interpersonal dialogue, investigating and understanding interpersonal communicative teaching behaviors should help

prepare and train GTAs to teach communication effectively (Chory-Assad, 2002).

Feezel & Myers (1997), created a 21-item scale measuring four areas of GTA teacher communication concerns (class orientation, role conflict, communicating with students, and credibility). These four areas suggest that GTAs are still struggling and are concerned with their teaching performance. The study regarded a communication concern as a positive construct. Thus, the study found that GTAs with higher levels of concerns about communication had positive attitudes about their teaching career generally and also learned to explore different methods of teaching. Additionally, variables such as prior experience, newness to the area, familiarity with subject, and age were likely to contribute to different areas of concern with GTAs and are likely to create gaps in dialogue between the GTA and the student (Feezel & Myers, 1997). Feezel and Myers (1997) found that one major concern that created "gaps in dialogue" between teacher and student was the GTA's ability to effectively communicate credibility and respect as an instructor. Researchers found this often occurred whether a student felt the GTA was credible or not, since the mere

perception of not being credible resulted in an instructor's inability to perform effectively.

Conversations are often studied as the means by which relationships are created and maintained through interaction (Step & Finucane, 2002). According to Step & Finucane (2002), daily talk is a rich index of information that can be used to illustrate and explain communicative structures that are innate in various relationships. This is important since there is a need for direct and clear communication in order for a GTA to communicate interpersonally with a student inside or outside the classroom.

In order for teaching and learning to take place, it is important that GTAs communicate their message as clearly and concisely as possible and that the ability to have an interpersonal dialogue becomes more comfortable over time. As a result, the GTA will conceptualize that it is important to be direct and clear in communication, but also important to remain open to the student's request.

This is not only true in regards to instructional communication but with interpersonal communication as well. The view of teaching as an unpredictable and cognitively complex activity is characterized by decision-making,

negotiation for meaning, and reflection to the constantly changing needs of students (Chamberlin, 2000). This process of making appropriate educational decisions should become easier as GTAs begin to understand the importance of interpersonal communication.

The following depicts a typical dialogue between a GTA and a student within an interpersonal context:

Student: Hi. Professor Smith? Could I talk to you about my speech today?

GTA: Sure, come on in. What's going on?

Student: Well, I am not sure if I am ready for the speech today. I really don't feel ready. Is it possible I can go on Monday instead?

GTA: Do you have your outline ready or is it because you're nervous or have anxiety?

Student: Yeah. I have everything prepared. I don't think I am ready to speak. I could be nervous. Monday will be better for me.

GTA: Well, I see. Okay, so you will be ready on Monday . . . for sure?

Student: YES. I will be ready to speak on Monday.

GTA: Okay, then I will change your date to Monday.

Student: Thanks! I really appreciate it. I will be great, you will see!

In the above example, the GTA has compromised his or her original position by making an exception for this particular student. By extending the student's speech date, the instructor has indirectly implied that feelings of speech anxiety are legitimate reasons that warrant an extension of time. This poses a problem since coping with

anxiety is an integral part of learning the art of public speaking. Thus, in addition to compromising the GTA's classroom policy, he or she may also have squandered a valuable "teaching moment" that would have benefited the student.

In teacher-student relationships, a student's interactions with a teacher are often based on a need or desire to alter or change the teacher's choices or attitude about an assignment. For instance, changing grades, extending assignment dates, or even altering projects are a few examples of motives and/or needs students attempt to resolve. In this context, the teacher is considered a goal directed choice-maker at the center of the communication process (Step & Finucane, 2002). Stated differently, the student creates the goal or the need for change (e.g., the change in speech date as in the above example), which leaves the power to execute the goal or change in the hands of the instructor (e.g., the changing of the date). As a result, teachers and students go through a process of meeting one another, exchanging information, and developing understanding of the subject matter through interpersonal interaction (Frymier & Houser, 2000).

The importance of effective interpersonal communicative ability does not limit itself solely to interaction outside the classroom but can also play an important role in the management of the class itself. Most GTAs have a difficult time exchanging information, having a discussion in class, and developing understanding of subject material (Frymier & Houser, 2000). For example, researchers found that GTAs use more compliance gaining strategies overall than experienced instructors and tend to appeal to rules (Roach, 1999). Thus, an emphasis on interpersonal interaction with students in the training of GTAs will further enhance the GTA's ability to effectively engage students in class as well.

Wheless, Barraclough, and Stewart (1983) define compliance gaining as "the communicative behavior in which an agent engages so as to elicit from a target some agent selected behavior" (Golish & Olson, 2000, p.301). This refers to any action or interaction in which a "message source attempts to induce a target individual to perform some desired behavior that the target otherwise might not perform" (p.11). Rules strategies suggest that GTAs gain compliance from their students through university policies, codes, or through someone of higher authority than

themselves. This gives rise to the students' perception that the university requires them to do a particular assignment and the GTA has no power to contravene the university's policy. As a result, the credibility of the GTA is diminished as he or she is viewed as a pawn of the university without any independent power and the purpose of the assignment may therefore become meaningless.

Establishing Credibility

GTA training research reveals that among a GTA's greatest fears or uncertainties in teaching is establishing credibility with students (Golish, 1999). GTAs assume that students perceive them as less credible than professors. For example, in a focus group conducted of prior GTAs who subsequently became new faculty members, one instructor stated that he purposefully never told his students he was a GTA because he thought it would affect his credibility as an instructor (Golish, 1999). Despite such strategies by instructors, researchers have found successful ways for GTAs to establish credibility with students.

The interaction that occurs during teacher-student relationships is important to understand, especially with new teachers like GTAs. This is primarily because GTAs are inexperienced with the strategies used by students to

challenge the GTA's decision-making ability. Furthermore, GTAs lack first hand experience with students' compliance gaining strategies. These compliance-gaining strategies test the GTA's use of power to make rational decisions in regards to student needs or requests such as changing or altering an assignment. All of these factors can potentially damage a GTA's credibility as an instructor.

A GTA's credibility as an instructor can enhance and facilitate teacher-student interaction (Chamberlin, 2000). McCroskey (1974) suggests that there are three primary dimensions of credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and perceived caring.

The competence dimension of credibility requires that an instructor possess knowledge and/or expertise of a particular subject. Thus, if a student questions or challenges a GTA regarding a grade, the GTA should be competent enough to provide a reasonable and knowledgeable explanation for issuing that grade to the particular student. This shows that the GTA not only possesses the knowledge to give reasons for a grade, but also must have the ability to present the justification for the grade during interpersonal interaction.

The second dimension of credibility is the trustworthiness of the teacher. This dimension suggests that teachers should be trustworthy enough to give a rational and fair decision on an assignment or about a certain situation. For example, if a student misses a persuasive speech and did not have an opportunity to call in advance to notify the GTA, the student may want to make up the assignment. The student trusts and expects that the instructor will be fair in establishing a second opportunity for a persuasive speech due to the student's situation.

The third dimension of credibility is caring. Teachers should be able to communicate to students that they care about them and it is important they do well in the course. This dimension is illustrated through acts of immediacy and politeness in conversation. As a result, students come to believe the teacher is credible because he or she cares about their success. McCroskey demonstrates that credibility is a process that is multidimensional and that through the process of establishing credibility, GTAs can build a sense of power with their students.

Power

The concept of power has received a significant amount of attention in the field of instructional communication (Golish & Olson, 2000). Past research has focused on the use of power by teachers, student perception of the use of power, and teacher attempts to control student behavior in the classroom (Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1985). McCroskey et.al. (1985) proposed that students' perceptions of power are the measurement of how power is employed in the classroom by the instructor. McCroskey and Richmond (1984) indicate that a teacher's power exists only if students believe power is present and accept power being employed. This means that student perception of how power is used in the classroom is the criterion that reflects the instructor's ability to employ power with students. Thus, a class of students may perceive that an instructor is not using power because the use of power in the classroom is not seen as intimidating or threatening.

Compliance gaining "focuses on message selection rather than on message impact" (McQuillen et. al., 1984, cited by Golish, 1999, p. 12). By focusing on the type of message sent as opposed to the impact of the message, in addition to the situation and the person involved, an

instructor increases his or her ability of gaining compliance because the instructor has framed the persuasive message based on the interpersonal conversation. Kellerman & Cole (1994) contend that compliance gaining is a captivating line of persuasion because it centers on a variety of interpersonal communication situations by focusing on the message rather than the impact of the message. Thus, a GTA is capable of persuading and managing his or her students through acts of persuasion that are polite, concrete, and less obtrusive.

Traditionally, in the field of communication studies, persuading an individual is considered a linear process whereby a sender controls the encounter by exerting influence on a receiver (McQuillen et. al., 1984, cited by Golish, 1999). Currently, communication scholars identify this approach to social influence as primordial because it ignores the interdependent and transactional nature of communication (Miller & Burgoon 1978, cited by Golish, 1999). Since communication involves a series of contingencies, it is important to understand that communication is a co-constructed process occurring between individuals. Thus, the use of power in the classroom is not only determined by the instructor, but also influenced by

students' perception. As a result, both the GTA and student are co-creating the notion of power through their interactions.

Literature in GTA training indicates that the willingness to communicate with students inside the classroom is often challenging for a new GTA (Roach, 1999). Roach asserts that GTA willingness to communicate is significantly related to perceptions of nonverbal immediacy. In addition, as GTA communication apprehension increases, student perception of GTA nonverbal immediacy and GTA power use decreases. In this study, Roach (1999) found that a GTA's state of anxiety in the classroom is negatively correlated with a student's rating of instruction, affective learning, perceptions of GTA nonverbal immediacy, and perceptions of GTA reward power, referent power use, and expert power that were engaged between teacher-student interactions inside the classroom.

Nonetheless, there has not been much debate about power between teacher and student in an interpersonal context. According to Mannheim (1950), "power is present whenever and wherever social pressures operate on the individual to induce desired conduct" (p.46). This explains why the use of power can be present, paradoxically, in

situations inside and outside the classroom (Hocker, 1986). An instructor's ability to persuade a student to do an assignment, pay attention in class, or even have a student participate in class discussion, can be challenging for most GTAs. Thus, teachers must be "classroom commandos" who facilitate effective teaching with students and their learning environment through compliance and power (Lu, 1997, p.12). As a result, it is important that GTAs are aware of the power role they enact with students.

Roach (1997) contends that while many training programs offer insight into teaching strategies, limited attention is given to the role of power. Since most GTAs frequently sense they have less power than experienced professors, they often experience difficulty with communicating authority to their students (Golish, 2002). This causes problems in teacher-student interactions because students can behave inappropriately in class and a GTA would have a difficult time asserting his or her power and authority. This difficulty extends outside the classroom when students confront the GTA as the formality and sense of control inherent with being in a classroom does not assist the GTA.

With respect to such interactions outside the classroom, power can be evaluated from a GTA perspective in relation to the interpersonal interaction with his or her students outside the classroom. French and Raven's five types of power provide an illustration as to the types of power GTAs generally rely on during interpersonal interactions with students.

French and Raven's (1960) five types of power are listed as follows:

1. Reward power- Attributed on the basis of control of rewards
2. Coercive power- Attributed due to the ability to punish
3. Legitimate power- Attributed because of the role
4. Referent power- Attributed on the basis of a group's identification with a person as their leaders
5. Expert power- Attributed on the basis of knowledge

Adapted from: Richmond, V.P. & McCroskey, J.C., (1992) Power in the classroom: Communication, Control, and Concern. *Communication Quarterly*, 41, 265.

A GTA with a relatively high degree of self-concept as an instructor (e.g., familiarity, knowledge, experience) may be inclined to use expert power, in addition to predisposing the student to believe he or she is the referent power source. Thus, in a challenging situation

with a student, the GTA determines the final decision because he or she is regarded as the expert on the class subject. Alternatively, he or she is the one who can be referred to when solving a class related problem.

On the other hand, legitimate power displays a GTA's authority by the role he or she plays as an instructor. In this case, the GTA has a legitimate position of power that enables the GTA to make decisions because of the GTA's role as an instructor in relation to the student. Thus, the GTA decides what is legitimate or illegitimate based on the interpersonal situation.

With respect to coercive and reward power, if a student decided he or she did not want to comply or listen to the GTA, the GTA is likely to use coercive power by threatening the student with punishment. Lastly, in order to increase student-learning (e.g., group activity, extra assignments, exercises) GTAs would use reward power (e.g., extra credit points) to increase student motivation and learning.

One particular study that evaluated student use of power with their instructors studied student use of power and the compliance gaining strategies that were used in the classroom through persuasion (Golish and Olson, 2000).

Rather than focusing on the old model of persuasion as a linear process, researchers focused on persuasion as a compliance-gaining act with active agents that exert control over a receiver. In this study, students were viewed as active agents of persuasion. These persuasive strategies (e.g., asking the instructor to change a grade or extend the due date for an assignment) influenced the teacher's response. Thus, students employ persuasive strategies to change or alter a GTA's decision by creating effective compliance gaining strategies.

The results of the study revealed that there is an association between students' overall use of power and their perceptions of instructor use of power (Golish & Olson, 2000). This suggests that students' perceptions of teacher power can influence them to use compliance gaining strategies with their teachers. Thus, students may feel more inclined to use compliance gaining strategies with GTAs because they perceive them to have less power.

Most teacher-student power studies do not address the different communicative behaviors that affect power in an interpersonal conversation. According to Hendrix (1995), during interpersonal conversations, GTAs feel students will take advantage of them or try to influence them because

they are GTAs and not experienced professors. This suggests that GTAs encounter difficulty addressing power in the classroom as well as in face-to-face interactions with students.

If a student requests to change a grade on his or her speech, GTAs face the challenge of how to respond properly and politely to the student. The training a GTA undergoes often falls short of adequately preparing him or her for this task. Rather, GTA training is directed primarily toward lesson planning and other procedural aspects of teaching, and not the subtlety and complexity of interpersonal interaction with students. As a result, lack of interpersonal communication skills undermine GTA competency, credibility, and indirectly has an effect on power and authority.

Face

According to Martinson (1996) "face is something that is emotionally invested, it can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and it must constantly be attended to during interaction" (p.3). Brown and Levinson (1978) divide face into positive face and negative face. Positive face is the desire of an individual that his or her wants and needs be popular with others (Martinson, p.4), as well as having

one's own attributes and actions approved by significant others (Wilson, 2002).

For example, GTAs want students to perceive them as competent, credible, and caring teachers. Thus the GTA will often use positive politeness to be liked when a student is using compliance gaining strategies in a conversation. Martinson often describes this process as conveying an appreciation of the hearer's wants and needs or an expression of some similarity and reciprocity between speaker and hearer (p.4). For instance, in the previous scenario between GTA and student concerning the speech date change, the student is requesting a date change for his or her speech using compliance gaining strategies. The teacher responds through positive politeness to address the student's face. Thus, the speaker is protecting the hearer's face by indicating that at some level the speaker recognizes the hearer's wants and needs. As a result, the teacher is protecting the student from feeling foolish or embarrassed by granting his or her intended request.

On the other hand, negative face is to maintain one's own autonomy by resisting challenge (Wilson, 2002). For example, in the same scenario, the GTA might respond with negative politeness by stating that "I'm sorry but the

speech is due today and you should be ready to present it. It's okay to be nervous, you'll do fine." This statement indicates to the student that it is normal to be nervous and that the student was well prepared enough to speak the day of the speech. However, at the same time, this response would threaten the student's (hearer's) face because the request had been denied. While the GTA attempted to be polite to the best of his or her ability, this denial and subsequent face threat could still elicit feelings of resentment and possibly anger towards the GTA. This can often hinder prospective conversations as face can affect social interactions.

Face is identified as a defenseless resource in social interaction because it can be threatened, enhanced, maintained, and bargained over during interpersonal conversation (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Yokochi, Masumoto, & Taki, 2000). The amount of face threat created by any speech act is a linear function of three variables: 1) Distance refers to the degree of familiarity between the message source and target; 2) Power refers to the degree of status or control the message source has in relationship to the target; 3) Ranking of degree of imposition refers to the extent to which a speech act, within a particular

situation and cultural context, interferes with the target's desire to maintain face (Wilson, 2002).

Relational distance is the degree of familiarity with a person (Wilson, 2002). In the speech date change scenario, the student and GTA have a significant relational distance during conversation. Since the GTA and student do not typically share the same social status, the dynamic of their social distance means that a threat to a GTA's face is of a higher degree than a threat to a student's face. Martinson (1996) points out that "a small 'd' (little social distance) is associated with the giving and receiving of positive face as between friends or those of equal status" (p.5). Since most GTA ages are closer to college students than seasoned professors, their social distance is not as detached from students as older, more experienced professors would be. Thus, GTAs may experience more threats to face than instructors because students perceive a closer relational distance to the GTA than they would to an experienced professor.

During a face-threatening act (FTA), power refers to the degree of status or control a message source has in relation to the target individual (Wilson, 2002). Face threatening acts can have an influence on how power is

employed during interpersonal interactions with a student. Kanter and Stein (1979) observed, "One of the great insights of classical, social, and political theory was that power always involves a relationship, it always consists of interaction and, therefore, can never be one-sided or unilateral" (p.6). Both the GTA and student are directing face threats toward each other. For example, a student threatens a GTA's face when the student makes a request that imposes on the GTA's ability to efficiently administer an assignment on schedule. On the other hand, a GTA's negative response to the student's request can also threaten the student's face during interaction. Thus, face can directly or indirectly influence the interpersonal interaction between the GTA and student.

In this context, a GTA has the ultimate control over what the student wants (good grades, fairness, etc.). For instance, when the student requests a change to his or her speech date, the GTA is put in a position of power and authority to make a decision.

In addition to the challenges faced by the GTA with regard to his or her dual role as both teacher and student, the degree of imposition placed on a GTA by a student's request can also impact interpersonal communication outside

the classroom. Ranking of degree of imposition refers to the extent to which a speech act, within a particular situation and cultural context, interferes with the target's desire to maintain face (Wilson, 2000). Martinson (1996) describes this situation as having to tell an employee his or her position has been terminated. Similarly, in the classroom, asking for clarification of textbook material ranks as a much lower imposition than asking for a change of grade since the degree of face threat to the student is much higher with respect to the latter request. Thus the degree of imposition with the request depends upon both the totality of the circumstances of the situation as well as the cultural context in which the face threat is being made.

Politeness Theory

Politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978) is concerned with the nature of "politeness" during interaction. Politeness theory posits that all speakers want to maintain face during interaction. The type of politeness strategy used can have an effect on an individual's face during conversation. For instance, if a student requests to turn an assignment in late to the teacher, the teacher is obligated to use some strategy to

respond to the request. The response might include, "It's okay as long as you send it via e-mail tonight I will give you credit for the assignment." The teacher uses negative politeness to save the student's face during interaction and shares a commonality to ensure the student's request is recognized. By complying with the student's request, the instructor accepts a negative face threat from the student and strives to maintain that face by requesting constraints (send it via e-mail tonight). Instead, if the teacher had said, "No, the assignment is due today" or "I don't accept late assignments," this type of response could maintain the negative face threat of the teacher, but hurt his/her positive face. As a result, Brown and Levinson (1987) presented various superstrategies that would assist people in identifying and eliminating face threats.

Brown and Levinson's Five "Superstrategies" for Doing FTAs

In 1987 Brown and Levinson introduced five "superstrategies" that assisted speakers on which politeness strategy worked best in accordance to distance, power, and rank of an individual. Brown and Levinson describe this process as going "on record" or "off record" (Wilson, 2002). "On record" is when a person makes a clear and concise statement (e.g., "no, you cannot change your

speech date"). An "off record" statement would be something indirect and ambiguous (such as, "well, I see where you are coming from. I am not sure how you are going to make up these points").

In the previous scenario, the GTA who used a bald on record strategy made no effort to minimize threats to the student's face. The comfort and face of the student was immaterial to the GTA and reiteration of the classroom policy of on time assignments was paramount. The GTA who used a positive politeness strategy recognized the student's need to have mutual respect. The GTA continued to hold the due date of the assignment as important and yet gave the student the opportunity to turn in the assignment by the end of night rather than completely refusing the request. The GTA who used the negative politeness strategy continued to recognize and respect the student; however, the GTA made it obvious to the student that the request imposed upon the GTA's ability to efficiently have assignments turned in on time. Lastly, the off record strategy involved the GTA indirectly responding to the student's request. This can often take away any imposing behavior on the GTA and would help the student realize that

it was his or her mistake for not having the assignment ready on time.

The following chart shows examples of five superstrategies that are often used to respond to a face-threatening act during an office visit. The chart helps explain how each statement during a face-threatening act can change when using different strategies. The student in this scenario has missed an assignment and would like to make up the points. However, the GTA is stuck in a predicament as to what to say to the student about his or her situation using positive and negative politeness strategies.

Superstrategy	Definition/Example
1. Do the FTA bald, without redress	State the FTA in the most direct, clear, and concise Example: "No you can not make up your assignment."
2. Do the FTA using positive politeness	Give assurance that the message source values the target and wants what the target wants. Example: "I understand that you missed your assignment. I am sure we can work something out for you to get all your points, I want you to succeed."
3. Do the FTA using negative politeness	Give assurance that the message source respects the target's freedom and will interfere with it as little as possible. Example: "This time I will let you make up the points, but please try your best to finish the assignment on time."
4. Do the FTA off-record	Do the FTA so that the message source intent is ambiguous. Example: "I'm sure we can find some way for you to make up the points."
5. Don't do the FTA FTA.	Choose not to perform the Example: say nothing

(Seeking and resisting compliance: Why people say what they say when trying to influence others, Wilson, 2002, p. 34).

In summary, three potential research questions were derived based on an analysis of the current research on GTA training and politeness theory. The first research question was derived on the basis of communication studies GTA perceptions of power in relation to other instructors. The second research question was intended to explore how GTAs manage face threats and the types of politeness strategies they use with students outside of the classroom. It is important to use face and politeness collectively because politeness and face are co-dependent in this study. Lastly, the third research question explores the interpersonal challenges GTAs face with students outside the classroom.

RQ1: How do GTAs perceive their power with their students outside the classroom in relation to other instructors?

RQ2: How do GTAs use politeness to manage face threats during interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom?

RQ3: What potential challenges do GTAs face in interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom?

CHAPTER III

Methodology and Procedure

An assessment of the extent literature on power, face, and politeness theory revealed little about communicative behaviors that effect interpersonal interactions between students and GTAs. Prior literature on teacher-student interactions included a spectrum of different communicative behaviors used inside the classroom by GTAs (e.g., immediacy, compliance gaining strategies, humor, vocal variety). However, literature on teacher-student interaction did not fully address communicative behaviors used outside the classroom during one-on-one interpersonal conversation with a student (i.e., power, face, and politeness). This chapter will discuss the rationale for the methodology and the procedure used in this study.

Rationale for Approach

This study was specifically designed to evaluate interpersonal communication skills utilized by GTAs outside the classroom and to explore various communicative behaviors (i.e., power, face, and politeness) that occurred during a challenging situation between a student and a GTA. The goal of this study was to identify a spectrum of

politeness strategies that GTAs used during interpersonal interaction with students outside the classroom and identify potential GTA training strategies that could be used to better prepare GTAs for dealing with challenging interactions with their students.

The specific methodology that was selected for this study included a preliminary questionnaire, survey, and interview. This methodology was well suited for creating an atmosphere that demonstrated pre-teaching experience through the preliminary questionnaire, types of communicative strategies used throughout the survey, and lastly, a series of in-depth interviews that explored each GTA's situation independent of other GTAs with an inquiry to evaluate the collaborative nature of the teacher-student interaction taking place.

Assessing the Questionnaire and Survey

The questionnaire began by inquiring about each GTA's personal background as an instructor (i.e., demographics and overall experience in teaching). The purpose of the questionnaire was to find the overall average demographical range of all GTAs that participated in this study. This assisted in providing data that reflected the participants in the study, as well as the general population of GTAs in

practice. The questionnaire was assessed on the basis of descriptive statistics that took each response to a question and averaged the results into an overall mean of demographics.

The politeness and power survey further gauged the GTAs experience and opinions about the use of power, face and politeness with students outside of the classroom through a multi-faceted likert scale questioning process. The survey used in this study was adapted from Wilson, Aleman & Leatham's (1998) investigation into communicative behaviors in face work. Each communicative behavior was tested and evaluated in a short scenario (e.g., conversing with a student outside of class) along with several Likert type statements that measured a participant's opinions regarding appropriate or most likely action taken in that scenario.

The politeness and power survey was assessed through descriptive statistics that evaluated each on a likert statement ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) and an averaged overall mean in the results. This process assisted in providing data that illustrated the likelihood of power, face, and politeness being used by GTAs.

Assessing the Interview

The interview process helped create an atmosphere of mutual respect with the participant in addition to enhancing clarification of participant responses in the qualitative section inquiry on the survey. This methodology is particularly well suited to elicit responses to each case-by-case scenario through the interpersonal perceptions of the GTA and his or her self-concept as an instructor. The GTAs were asked to further illustrate responses to student request scenarios. Each response was pre-coded to determine if the response included the use of power and if GTAs responses indicated a high or low use of politeness strategies with students. The responses to the interview questions were categorized into various sections that illustrated each variable (i.e., power, face, and politeness) that was being evaluated for the purposes of this study. Subsequent to each GTA response being coded and categorized, research questions were re-evaluated to make a connection between power, face, and politeness used by GTAs outside the classroom.

Procedure

This section includes a discussion of the selection of participants, conduct of the surveys, and conduct of interviews.

Selection of the Participants

The participants in this study included 6 San Jose State University communication studies GTAs, and 10 Minnesota State University communication studies GTAs. The participants included those GTAs that were graduate students and teaching assistants in the program. The GTAs in this study taught individual courses in public speaking or related undergraduate course in communication studies. All participants completed a preliminary questionnaire, a politeness and power survey, and consent form for the process of data collection. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the 6 GTAs from San Jose State University who participated in the interview portion of the study.

Conduct of Surveys

The initial selection of participants for this study included a wide range of universities across the United States with similar GTA training programs in communication studies. Politeness and power surveys were distributed to

Bowling Green State University, San Francisco State University, Minnesota State University, and San Jose State University. Of the four state universities, two responded and were included in this study as participants. All potential volunteers were informed of the purpose of the study and asked to include preliminary questionnaire information regarding demographics and personal experience as a GTA in their department.

San Jose State University surveys were distributed to the participants during the bi-weekly GTA meetings held at the university. San Jose State University GTAs were asked to complete all sections of the preliminary questionnaire and complete the politeness and power survey. Furthermore, San Jose State University GTAs were asked if they were interested in participating in a recorded and transcribed interview process regarding their interpersonal experiences with students outside of the classroom.

Minnesota State University surveys were distributed by mail with a self addressed stamped envelope. Minnesota State University GTAs were asked to complete all portions of the preliminary questionnaire and politeness and power surveys. The participants completed all aspects of the study at a GTA training meeting that was held at its own

respective university. Completed surveys and forms were mailed accordingly and arrived for analysis. Interview requests were not made on the basis of distance; however, Minnesota State University GTAs were asked to complete the qualitative portion of the politeness and power survey.

Conduct of Interviews

San Jose State University GTAs were interviewed and asked follow-up questions regarding their responses to the fill-in qualitative portion of the politeness and power survey. The purpose of these interviews was to further understand the communicative behaviors GTAs used during interpersonal conversations, particularly in responding to student requests outside of the classroom. The interview was also designed to have the GTAs elaborate on their responses to the fill-in portion of the politeness survey corresponding to the hypothetical scenario presented. The interviews were conducted in the communication studies department teaching assistants' office. The interviews were done on an individual basis, recorded, and then later transcribed with permission of the participants in order to preserve an accurate account of the information obtained during the interview process.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis

Summary

This study addressed three main questions: 1) how do GTAs perceive their power in relation to other instructors with respect to interpersonal communication with students outside of class; 2) how do GTAs use politeness to manage face threats during interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom; and 3) what potential challenges do GTAs face in interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom?

In order to answer the first question, each GTA was asked to complete a power and politeness survey that evaluated the GTA's use of power during interpersonal interaction with students. Additionally, San Jose State University GTAs were interviewed and asked to further explain the role of power as illustrated in their particular answers to the survey questions and the types of power they employed with students during interpersonal interactions. French and Raven's (1960) five types of power (i.e., reward power, coercive power, legitimate power-

referent power, expert power) were used to code the different types of power GTAs used during interaction.

To determine a GTA's use of power during interpersonal interaction with a student, each GTA received a politeness and power survey that consisted of various statements referencing power. Each GTA was asked to circle the number (1-less likely to 5-most likely) on a likert scale that best corresponded with their assessment of the particular statement.

The total number of statements in relation to power were evaluated and analyzed to determine the existence of power. The results, in relation to the amount of points presented on the likert scale, indicated that power was not a concern for GTAs during outside class communication. Instead, GTA responses indicated that they felt their credibility as an instructor was an important factor in responding to student requests and formulating responses to those requests.

Such sentiment was illustrated in a number of GTA responses to the survey. In one example, a significant percentage of the GTAs surveyed indicated that they felt it was more important that the student perceive the GTA as being fair and reasonable as opposed to authoritative. In

fact, GTA responses to the survey demonstrated that GTAs were more interested in generating student motivation for the subject matter as opposed to maintaining authority and control over assignments and class policies.

The second research question was posed to evaluate GTAs' use of politeness strategies and possible face threats made to students in response to student requests. Each GTA was asked to complete a fill-in survey questionnaire. The questionnaire asked each GTA to respond to a given scenario (e.g., a student's request for a speech date change). The survey then required the GTA to rely on past experiences and give a response to the student making the request. The responses were encoded using Brown and Levinson (1987) four superstrategies (i.e., bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record) to determine if the GTA used a politeness strategy in his or her response to the student and the type of politeness strategy that was used.

The third research question asked what potential challenges GTAs faced during outside classroom communication with students and potential GTA training strategies that would help improve GTA-student interpersonal communication. Each GTA was asked to complete

a survey that evaluated interpersonal challenges they had with students during interpersonal interactions. As a result of the interviews with San Jose State University GTAs, those GTAs had an opportunity to elaborate on personal opinions and perspectives regarding interpersonal challenges they faced when dealing with students outside of class during interpersonal one-on-one interaction.

Demographics of Participants

Analysis of the surveys and interviews focused primarily on the research questions and assessed GTAs' use of power, face, and politeness in dealing with requests made by students outside of class.

Based on data gathered through the preliminary questionnaire, the age range of the participants varied to a relatively high degree from 23 years of age to GTAs in their early 50's. The average age of the participants was 28.4 years. Furthermore, there appeared to be a predominance of female participants (n = 11) in the study and a minority of male (n = 5) participants. The ethnic and cultural background consisted of a majority of individuals who considered themselves of European-American background (n = 10) while the remaining participants identified with non-European American heritage (n = 6). Furthermore, a

minority of participants held jobs outside of the GTA program. The range of teaching experience fluctuated between 1 to 2 years with the average of experience at 1.3 years.

Survey and Interview Data Analysis

The data from the GTA interview questions and the survey on power, face, and politeness strategies data, were examined to answer the three research questions. The interview data was collected from San Jose State University GTAs' whereas the politeness survey data were collected from both San Jose State University and Minnesota State University GTAs. All data were transcribed, evaluated, and analyzed for purposes of this study.

The responses relevant to the first research question exemplified GTAs' perceptions of power with their students outside the classroom. The survey, interview data, and the fill-in portion of the politeness surveys provided insights into GTA perceptions of power in relation to other instructors and provided valuable insight into the types of power being used by GTAs during interpersonal interaction with students outside the classroom.

The interview data corresponding to the San Jose State University GTAs indicate that those GTAs did not perceive

themselves to have less power than accredited professors. For example, when asked if they felt they had less power than accredited professors, GTAs stated that "No, I feel we have the same amount of power teaching a public speaking course." This is further established in responses given under section 2 of the politeness and power survey. For instance, in response to the statement "students often take advantage of me," GTAs indicated a strong disagreement with the statement because they felt that students did not necessarily take advantage of them despite the fact that they were not accredited instructors ($M= 4.3125$; $SD= .79320$). The GTAs felt that they were just as competent and capable as their accredited counterparts to teach an undergraduate class in communication.

However, interviews with the GTAs indicated that while the GTAs used authoritative strategies to convey their messages to their students, they were not consciously aware of the various types of power they used with students during interpersonal interactions outside the classroom. This was apparent during interviews with GTAs when they were asked, "do you feel as a graduate teaching assistant you have less power than an actual professor?" One particular GTA stated, "Yes, I think I have the same amount

of power as other professors who teach the same course" and also reinforced "I do not use power with my students during conversation." However, later in the interview, this GTA stated, when asked whether students challenge her, "No, I am the one that issues grades, therefore they have to do what I tell them." Such responses to questions made it difficult to identify whether GTAs were consciously aware of their use of power or perhaps the types of power they employed with students outside of the classroom.

Furthermore, data provided by the politeness and power survey indicate that most GTAs, when asked whether they experienced any difficulty maintaining authority during teacher-student interaction, were unaware of their use of power during interpersonal interactions ($M = 3.6875$, $SD = 1.13835$). The survey data analysis corresponding to the first section of the survey (i.e., responses to grade change situation) conclude that the responses to the use of power on the likert scale ranged from 1.00 to 3.33, with an overall mean of 1.8750. This indicates that GTAs felt they did not use power or, alternatively, were unaware of the use of power during interpersonal interaction with students outside the classroom ($M = 1.8750$, $SD = .60706$). Survey data analyses corresponding to the second section of the

survey (i.e., general "I-like" statements) also indicate a low use of power with students during interpersonal interaction outside the classroom ($M = 2.7750, SD = .34545$). As a result, both the survey and interview data indicate that GTAs were unaware of their use of power with students outside the classroom.

However, in addition to the interviews, the GTA responses to the fill-in portion of the politeness survey revealed that the GTAs were indirectly using power with their students during interaction. This is implicitly demonstrated through the answers to questions provided on the politeness survey. When asked whether it was important to be fair to each student in relation to the whole class, GTAs responded that they attempted to treat each student fairly ($M = 1.3125; SD = .47871$). GTAs also responded in the survey that they refrained from putting students down through the use of blatant authority ($M = 4.500; SD = .63246$). When asked whether it was important that students perceive the GTAs as fair and reasonable instructors, GTAs were also in agreement ($M = 1.9375; SD = .68007$).

The qualitative data demonstrated that GTAs continued to reference power in different variations (i.e., expert, legitimate, referent, coercive, reward,) through the

language they used and the types of politeness strategies employed despite GTAs lack of awareness that they were doing so. This was demonstrated in the survey data in GTA responses to "I feel it was important to demonstrate authority while still remaining polite," GTA responses indicate that they wanted to be polite yet not adversely affect their authority and credibility by the use of politeness ($M = 2.1250$, $SD = 1.20416$).

In regards to credibility, interviews with the GTAs indicate that they felt credibility was an important factor in determining their effectiveness as an instructor. This was also evidenced in the politeness survey when GTAs were asked if they felt that students took the grades issued by the GTAs seriously. Responses to this survey question indicate that GTAs were uncertain as to whether or not students believed the grades the GTAs issued were credible, which potentially affected the GTAs' self perception as effective instructors ($M = 3.9375$; $SD = 1.06262$).

Although power use was not apparent to the GTAs during their interaction, it was certainly a factor that could potentially harm or affect a student's motivation and enthusiasm to perform well in the class. In response to the question, "I feel it is important to be fair to each

student in relationship to the whole class," GTAs had a strong agreement on the issue of fairness ($M = 1.3125$, $SD = .47871$). For example, GTAs stated that they did not want to be unfair to the rest of the class because a student making the request was unprepared for his or her assignment the day it was due when other students labored to complete their assignments on time.

This difficulty may stem from the conflict between addressing the particular student's request during interpersonal interaction while giving consideration to other students in the class who have completed their work on time and adhered to classroom policy. Indeed, in response to specific survey questions such as "I have a difficult time maintaining my authority in teacher-student interactions," many GTAs agreed ($M = 3.6875$; $SD = 1.13835$). The survey results also indicate when GTAs were asked whether it was more important to be fair even if it meant an inconvenience to the student; GTA responses also indicate a strong agreement ($M = 1.5625$, $SD = .62915$). Additionally, the GTAs explained that they felt it was important that the student feel that the GTA was a fair and reasonable instructor ($M = 1.9375$, $SD = .68007$).

The responses to the second research question indicate how GTAs use politeness strategies to manage face threats during interpersonal communication with students outside the classroom. The interview data and fill-in portion of the politeness survey demonstrate that GTAs used different types of politeness strategies. The different types of politeness strategies (i.e., bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record) that were used depended on the amount of face threat that was created during a speech act.

The interview data indicated that GTAs used different forms of politeness strategies in order to produce different results depending on the context of the interaction in regards to the particular student. This was indicated when GTAs stated that past interactions and experiences with students affected the type of politeness strategy used by the GTA in relation to that particular student. GTAs strongly agreed when asked whether they would meet the student's request if it were reasonable ($M=1.4375$; $SD=.51235$). An assessment of reasonableness of a request by a particular student implicitly requires an assessment of the student's previous reputation and

participation in the class prior to the actual making of the request.

Additionally, GTAs also used different politeness strategies to convey their message clearly and concisely to the student while attempting to deliver the message in the least obtrusive way possible. GTAs indicated strong agreement for this general sentiment in response to such questions as "In a situation it is very important I do not hurt the student's feelings with my message. . ." (M= 1.3125; SD= .79320). This need to effectively and clearly communicate with students during interpersonal interaction appeared to be fueled by the GTA's desire to ensure that the particular student making the request understood the reasoning for the GTA's approval or disapproval of the specific request (M= 1.3125; SD= .47871). Furthermore, GTAs also felt the need to clearly explain their reasoning for a decision to grant or deny a request in order to ensure that the GTA's message did not result in the particular student generating a dislike for the GTA. This was evident from the agreement among GTAs in response to questions such as whether it was important that the GTA's message not cause the student to dislike him or her (M= 3.6875; SD= .60208).

The responses to the third research question illustrated the potential challenges GTAs face during interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom. The process of categorizing of recurring themes was used to determine the various interpersonal challenges GTAs faced with students outside of class. The interview data indicate a few challenges that GTAs face during interpersonal interaction with students. Among these, three were recurring: 1) increasing and maintaining student motivation; 2) reconciling the simultaneous dual role of GTA and student; and 3) maintaining credibility through the use of clear, concise and complete communication with the student. This will be explained further in the discussion chapter.

Issues of power, face, and politeness were further examined through surveys and content analysis of interviews conducted with San Jose State University GTAs. Responses to the first research question illustrated how GTAs perceived power with their students outside the classroom in relation to other instructors. The responses also provided valuable insights into the types of power being used by the GTAs during interaction with students outside the classroom during interpersonal interaction.

Of interest was the general sentiment among San Jose State GTAs that they perceived no threat to their authority even when interacting with a student outside the protection of the classroom environment. The GTAs stated that not only did they not feel any threat to their authority; they also did not experience any significant degree of fear or intimidation primarily because of the ability to issue grades. One GTA stated, for example, " ...even though I'm a teaching assistant, I still have the power over their grades. They might think they can manipulate me, but at the end of the semester I am the instructor and I issue them their grade..." The GTAs explained during the interview that this was primarily due to their perception that they were the instructor in the course and therefore ultimately had the power to make the decision to grant or deny the student's request since they had power over what grade the student received. The overall average of the politeness survey results on power also indicated that GTAs did not feel their authority was being threatened whenever a student made a request or that power was a concern at all during interaction ($M= 1.8750$; $SD= .60706$).

According to French and Raven's (1960) five types of power, the above exemplifies the use of legitimate power

coupled with the use of reward and coercive power (see discussion below) by the San Jose State GTAs. This is illustrated by the GTAs' responses that they derived their sense of power through their sense of identification as the instructor of the course and their ability to issue grades to the students.

However, what is of interest is that, while the above responses reflected the use of legitimate power through identification with the role of the instructor, the GTAs interviewed also stated that they were reluctant to tell the students they were in fact GTAs and not accredited professors. One GTA, when asked whether he or she disclosed the fact of being a GTA rather than an accredited instructor, responded "Rarely. I think it's important to protect your vulnerability as an instructor because I feel that my credibility and authority can be affected if the students know that I'm a GTA rather than an accredited professor." Thus, the legitimate power use of the GTAs was limited by their perception that they lacked the credibility of an "actual" university professor. According to the five types of power, this limitation of the perceptions of the GTAs in relation to the power of accredited professors is an example of expert power. The

GTAs were limited by their belief that by virtue of being a GTA, they were inherently less knowledgeable in the subject compared to their accredited counterparts, which they assumed would subsequently affect their credibility with the student if the student knew this fact. Therefore, the reluctance of the GTA to volunteer the information to the student would adversely affect the student's perception of his or her power because he or she could potentially be viewed as less of an expert in the subject matter of the course.

While the GTA's credibility as an instructor may be adversely affected by their perception of expert power, the GTAs responded that they still believed they had a sense of authority similar to an accredited instructor because they had the power to issue grades to the student. As stated by the GTA above and reaffirmed by the following response given by another GTA during the interview, "I am the one who still grades and evaluates them. Therefore, I still have the authority as the instructor." This is an example of French and Raven's (1960) reward and coercive power. The GTAs felt that because they had the power to issue grades, their ability to reward or punish a student by giving a good or bad grade reestablished their authority. Thus, the

GTAs, while they may have not perceived themselves as experts compared to accredited instructors, still maintained their authority because they could reward or not reward students through the power of issuing grades.

Furthermore, like the use of reward or legitimate power, GTAs stated that they felt no threat to their authority during interpersonal interactions outside the classroom because they were the ones students would reference. French and Raven (1960) would categorize this type of power as referent power. Referent power can be described as the person most referenced to in regards to the course material. For example, one GTA stated "Students will come and visit me during office hours when they had a question about one of their speech assignments. This makes me think that students wanted help on improving their speaking ability and that's why they came." In this case, the GTA is the instructor and primary source of information, which enables him or her to be regarded as the expert in the particular subject.

It should be noted that there is a distinction between expert power and referent power. Expert power deals primarily with the GTAs' expertise in the subject compared to accredited instructors, whereas referent power relates

to the GTAs' power to maintain credibility and respect in accordance with the virtues of the personal attributes of the GTAs in which the students identify themselves. Thus, while the GTAs might not feel like experts in relation to accredited instructors, the use of referent power could be an indicator of their ability to be perceived as experts by students.

Responses to the second research question demonstrated how GTAs use politeness strategies to manage face threats during interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom. A further analysis of the interview data showed that GTAs used different types of politeness strategies during interpersonal interaction outside the classroom. The types of politeness strategies (i.e., bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off record) that were used depended on the amount of face threat created by a speech act based on three variables: 1) Distance-the amount of relational distance between the GTA and student; 2) Power-the degree of power the GTA has during a FTA; and 3) Ranking of degree of imposition- the particular request made by the student (Wilson, 1992, p.).

Generally, GTAs stated that it was important to be polite to students. One GTA stated "It's important that I

am polite and diplomatic with my students. I give them an opportunity to vent their feelings and not interrupt them. Then I give that student the reason why they received the grade that they did and address how they can improve their grade in the future. I try to be as straightforward and honest as possible while at the same time, I try to remain polite so I don't hurt their feelings." While the above indicates the importance GTAs attribute to being polite, the above statement also indicates the importance the GTA places on being straightforward with the student as well.

Generally, the GTAs' responses to the request were based on the following formula: they would 1) look at the requirement of the assignment; 2) let the student explain his or her situation or perspective regarding the assignment; and 3) try to compromise with the student's request so both the student and GTA could agree on a solution.

According to Brown and Levinson's (1978) five superstrategies, this type of response to the student's request was identified as positive politeness. The GTA used a positive politeness strategy to help the student recognize that the GTA held a mutual respect and reciprocity for the student and was considerate of the

student's feelings about the student's requests. This is demonstrated by a GTA when he or she evaluated the requirements of the assignment, allowed the student to explain the situation, and finally made a compromise with the student on the request. Thus, a GTA employing a positive politeness strategy may respond to a student request by saying "Sure you can change your speech date if you really need to, but you do realize that it may cost you some points right? So I can expect you in my office hours Wednesday morning to give your make up speech?" In this statement, the GTA has assumed agreement through the use of positive politeness in that the student may have points deducted and will come in at a specific time to perform the speech all while maintaining mutual respect for the student. Therefore, through the use of positive politeness, the GTAs were able to compromise with their students while at the same time maintaining mutual respect.

Additionally, a complete analysis of the fill-in portion of the politeness survey indicated that changing a speech date depended on the severity of the situation (i.e., ranking of imposition). In this case, the GTAs felt that changing a speech date because a student was not "up to" giving a speech was not a legitimate reason for

allowing the student to change his or her speech. In fact, GTAs stated that in order to change a speech date, the situation needed to be extremely serious since changing a speech date had an adverse effect on the administration and allocation of class time.

In the fill-in portion of the survey, this was reflected when GTAs responded "I will only allow you to do your speech on a later day, but I will take off a letter grade for each day missed unless you provide a written document that states you were seriously sick or there was a family emergency." The most valid reasons for changing a speech date included family emergencies or severe illness that limited the student to be able to perform his or her speech. As a result, the subsequent granting or denial of a request to change a speech date depended on the severity of the situation and the ranking of imposition made on the GTA.

According to Brown and Levinson's (1978) four super-strategies, when GTAs were asked to change a speech date for an illegitimate reason, GTAs responded to the request being made as bald on record. Bald on record refers to the idea that the GTA has no concern for maintaining or minimizing the student's face whatsoever.

The primary reason GTAs used bald on record strategies was to reiterate class rules and structure of the speech assignment. GTAs stated in response to the fill-in portion of the survey, "Based on your prior performance in class, I cannot expect to accommodate you," or alternatively "I expect you to give your speech on the date it was assigned." An analysis of GTA interviews indicated that GTAs used bald on record strategies without any redress to respond to illegitimate requests for a speech change by students.

Consequently, the GTAs' response to illegitimate requests to change a speech date could potentially end in a face threat during the interaction. In fact, GTAs described that speech change requests, like the one provided in the fill-in portion of the survey, were unacceptable and did not conform to the GTAs' high expectations of the responsibility of college students to be prepared to complete assignments on time. As a result, GTAs stated that a student's need to request a speech date change would result in a late speech and ultimately result in a lower grade.

Although positive politeness was not one of the frequently used politeness strategies employed during

interpersonal interaction, the interview results indicated that GTAs used a high amount of negative politeness to convey their messages to student requests. A negative politeness strategy is one that attempts to acknowledge a person's individual autonomy when making a face threat in order to minimize the negative impact upon the hearer (in this case, the student making the request).

For example, negative politeness can be illustrated with such responses to student requests as "I'm really sorry that you're not feeling up to giving your speech today and I wish I could give you another date, but why don't you give it a try today anyway? I realize you may not feel up to giving the speech right now, but if I made an exception for you I would have to make an exception for everyone and that wouldn't be fair." Through the use of a negative politeness strategy, the GTA attempts to minimize the threat on the student's face while still recognizing the student's autonomy by indirectly placing the justification for the denial of the request on the class as a whole and upon the implications of maintaining fairness.

Additionally, negative politeness strategies were used to address fairness issues with respect to the class as a whole. Although it was important that students believe the

GTA was fair and reasonable, it was equally important that the GTA appeared fair and reasonable to the whole class, regardless of whether the student making the request was affected by the decision. This is also referred to as an off-record strategy, which attributes the consequences of granting or denying the student's request to the student's other classmates. The GTA would explain why denying or granting the request would either help or be unfair to the other students in the class therefore legitimizing the GTA's decision in terms of overall utility with respect to the other students. This was reflected in the interview responses when GTAs explained that they told students they understood the student's personal situation, but that it would be unfair to the other students in the class to give that particular student an extension for an assignment that was not given to others.

While the above examples pertaining to both negative and positive politeness strategies are potential responses that GTAs may use in interacting with students interpersonally outside of the classroom, it should be noted that there are a number of variations in responses that could be employed. The ones referenced are thus examples of an infinite number of possible ways to use both

positive and negative politeness when responding to student requests.

Responses to the third research question, in addition to the responses given by San Jose State GTAs during the interview portion of the study, exemplified the potential challenges GTAs face during interpersonal communication with their students outside the classroom. These potential challenges were transcribed during the interview and finally categorized into three concerns that could possibly help GTA training coordinators, scholars, and educators further research and improve GTA training programs.

One major concern that was repeatedly discussed during interviews with GTAs was lack of student motivation to visit instructors outside of class time. GTAs affirmed that students who were interested in visiting them during office hours appreciated the importance and significance of the course. For example, one GTA stated "I feel good when a student visits me because the student is taking the time to interact and is interested in talking about their speech." This was reflected when GTAs acknowledged that an office visit itself was an indicator of success in the course whether the office visit was positive or negative. GTAs stated that they were in fact excited yet nervous at the

same time when students engaged them outside of class because outside classroom interaction occurred less frequently than they anticipated. One GTA reflected "I am excited that they are interested about talking about a problem, but I still feel nervous because I'm unsure about where the direction of the conversation might go." Part of the nervousness GTAs experienced was attributable to the fact that GTAs felt they did not have enough experience interacting with students outside of class since it rarely occurred and, when it eventually did occur, GTAs felt useful and resourceful in providing information to the student. As a result, GTAs reiterated that generating and encouraging student motivation to visit GTAs outside of class time to go over material or voice concerns was a significant challenge for them that would need to be addressed.

A second concern discussed with the GTAs was a conflict of balancing the role of teacher and that of student during interpersonal interaction. GTAs felt that it was often difficult for them to be firm and straightforward in their responses to student requests because they were also students themselves. The GTAs explained that it was intimidating and uncomfortable to make requests to their

instructors, thus they felt that their students would feel the same fear and intimidation when making a request. This generated feelings of empathy with the students who approached the GTAs with requests that tended to interfere with their ability to exercise their role as the instructor of the course. One GTA reflected, "I sometimes feel bad for them because I understand how they feel since I was once in their shoes and I understand that they have other classes as well and that things come up in life as well that sometimes takes priority over giving a speech." Consequently, the GTAs felt that the dual role of being a student and instructor was challenging for them especially during interpersonal interaction. As a result, the GTAs recognized the importance of adequate GTA training that would address this conflict.

The third concern that was discussed during the interviews with the GTAs was the need to maintain their credibility as an instructor through the use of clear, concise, and complete language in order to facilitate learning and to deal with interpersonal interactions with students. GTAs stated that it was often difficult for them to maintain their credibility as an instructor because they felt students frequently challenged them when making a

request. For example, one particular GTA stated "I often feel that when students come to me with a request to change a speech date that maybe I didn't make myself clear at the beginning of the semester that once you pick a date you can't change it unless it's an emergency."

GTAs explained during the interviews that when students made requests to change a class assignment, it often made the GTAs feel that their credibility was being jeopardized because of the request. The GTAs believed that by making such requests for speech date or grade changes, the students felt the GTAs were an easy target due to their lack of teaching experience and their designation as a GTA as opposed to an accredited instructor. This was true regardless of the fact that the students were told by the GTA at the beginning of the semester that there would be no late assignments accepted in the course. Moreover, the GTAs stated that by being clear, concise, and complete in their message, students would understand that it was their responsibility to do the assignment on time and not request a later date when they were aware it was against course policy to make such requests.

CHAPTER V

Implications and Conclusion

Implications

In order to improve GTA training programs, it is important that GTA coordinators recognize and implement interpersonal teaching strategies that are directly and indirectly related to GTAs' use of power, face, and politeness during interpersonal communication outside the classroom.

The results in this study indicated that many GTAs are unaware of the teaching strategies they routinely used outside the classroom with students during interpersonal interaction. When asked if they thought power was a factor in their responses to student requests, more than 50% of GTAs stated that they were not aware of the use of power in interpersonal communication. This lack of awareness and uncertainty suggests that GTA training programs are not adequately preparing GTAs for interpersonal interaction with students outside the classroom. Thus, it is important that GTA training coordinators implement practical strategies to prepare GTAs for interpersonal interactions with students outside the classroom during one-on-one interaction.

The results of this study generated several suggestions for implementing practical interpersonal GTA training. The first suggestion for implementing practical interpersonal GTA training skills comes in the form of providing case studies. Generally, case studies cover a wide range of issues that occur in real interaction. They are presented in hypothetical fact patterns that assist students (in this case GTAs) to analyze the potential solutions for the issues raised by the facts. Case studies have a distinct advantage in training GTAs because they stand for the notion that there is not one ultimate way to resolve a potential issue, but multiple ways in which an issue could be resolved amicably.

This process will give the GTAs an array of different interpersonal strategies to use during similar interactions with students. By implementing more case studies into GTA training, GTAs would have an opportunity to practice resolving various interpersonal challenges they will likely face when confronted by student requests outside the classroom before these confrontations actually arise. As a result, case studies would provide GTAs with a repertoire of interpersonal interactions that will further develop

problem solving and decision-making skills during interpersonal interactions with students.

A second suggestion that would help increase interpersonal training in GTA programs would be interpersonal simulations. A simulation is typically designed to implement practical fictitious scenarios that help GTAs analyze various problems (e.g., grade change, alter assignment, speech date change). These scenarios will assist GTAs in preparing responses to students that will effectively resolve the issues or concerns of the student in the least face-threatening manner. These simulations help prepare GTAs for the interpersonal problems they might encounter when they are responding to student requests. Therefore, the GTAs would be able to take what they've learned during the particular simulations and apply those techniques during an interpersonal interaction with a real student.

Additionally, role-playing is another type of simulation that could be used in GTA training. Role-playing is when two or more parties are given a particular role that will be affected by the topic being discussed. This is usually established with a list of objectives that need to be addressed. This can be enacted in a distinct situation,

setting, and time where both the student and teacher engage in an interpersonal conversation that attempts to resolve an issue. Typically, the roles are structured and formatted in a way that brings realism to the issues that need to be studied and practiced. This will enable the GTAs to learn and develop practical interpersonal communication strategies that will assist them when they respond to student requests. This will also challenge the GTAs to deal with complex matters, such as interpersonal challenges, with a wide range of possible solutions instead of limiting themselves to a single solution. As a result, the GTAs will be able to take the skills learned through the use of role-playing exercises and apply them to actual interpersonal communication with their students outside of the classroom.

Finally, an additional practical suggestion to implement in GTA training would be a process known as self-reflection. The self-reflection method will assist GTAs to observe their own internal processing system that typically enables them to make the decisions they make as instructors. This will help GTAs explore the behavioral responses that they are currently using with students and learn how to modify those behavioral responses when necessary. This can be established through a series of

techniques such as 1) writing in a journal with self reflection questions and having the GTA respond to the questions (e.g., how does my interpersonal interaction with a student affect his or her learning?), 2) have shared experiences through dialogue (e.g., speak with other GTAs in the program) and 3) peer mentoring (e.g., speak to those who have experience in teaching). All these techniques would help GTAs become aware of their teaching effectiveness outside the classroom. This will also become apparent when the GTAs become aware of how their responses to students' requests affect student motivation to learn and continue the course. Thus, continuous self assessment of activities with self-reflection will enable GTAs to better understand themselves as an instructor and help them implement interpersonal communicative self strategies that will assist them to become more effective educators during interpersonal interactions.

Limitations

The limitations in this study were set both by the small number of participants and the lack of representation in terms of gender, age, and culture with respect to the participants in this current analysis. Like many studies, there is often a challenge to uncover all variables that

could possibly affect the results of the particular study. This can often be controlled through various types of methodology. In this particular case, an experimental design was not used, which could have produced different results. Instead, the methodology used in this study was an application of a survey and interview. Nevertheless, regardless of the method used, the data obtained in any study can make a difference in current research.

The first limitation of this study was the small sample size. Given that 16 participants were involved in this study, it was difficult to generalize the results of the research questions posed to a larger group of GTAs. Having more GTAs participate in this study could have furthered the results. Perhaps a larger sample size could have demonstrated a stronger connection between GTAs' use of power, face, and politeness during interpersonal communication outside the classroom. However, due to time limitations and the lack of GTA programs within the State and UC systems, the number of participants actually surveyed and interviewed was limited in number.

The second limitation of this study was the variable of age. The age of the participants ranged from 23 to over 50 with the average age of participants at 28.4. Because of

this, a substantial number of the participants were in relatively the same peer group as the students they instructed, which may have potentially affected the use of power, face, and politeness in relation to outside classroom interaction between the younger GTA and the typical college-aged student. A study with a broader age group of GTAs would be better suited to measure how GTAs with a broader generational gap from their students use power, face, and politeness. Older GTAs, with more life and professional experience, may deal with student requests and conflicts differently and be perceived differently by younger students. Thus, the ability to communicate effectively with students during interpersonal interaction may be less, or perhaps more, face threatening to older GTAs.

The third limitation of the current analysis, and quite possibly the most significant in this study, was the inability to address how cultural differences influences the data. Given that San Jose State University is located in the Bay Area, the diversity among GTAs and students is considerably greater than most other metropolitan areas. A majority of GTAs at Minnesota State University were European-American, which could have contributed to a

difference in results due to the varying differences in culture and world-view. Culture has a direct influence on the way we teach, analyze, and present information in the classroom. The way in which GTAs communicate outside of the classroom is likewise also determined in large measure by culture. For example, some cultures are more likely to be verbally polite in society, whereas other cultures may have different politeness strategies. The culture and ethnicity of the student is also an important variable in terms of perception as well. Thus, further studies in this area should take culture into account when measuring power, face, and politeness during interpersonal interaction with students outside of the classroom.

Recommendations for Further Research

Results in this study indicated the need for further inquiry into the nature of power, face, and politeness strategies used by GTAs. Additionally, other factors that were discussed earlier in the limitation section need to be further addressed in subsequent studies in this area.

Interpersonal strategies need to be developed that would assist GTAs in becoming more comfortable and aware of how their responses to student requests using power, face, and politeness can have an effect on student willingness to

learn. Thus, the suggestions below deserve further attention.

The first suggestion would be to increase the number of participants in various state university systems in order to compare GTAs less populated areas with their metropolitan counterparts. Cultural differences exist in relation to geographical and demographical variations. Thus, GTAs in more urban settings may have different social values and interpersonal dispositions than their metropolitan counterparts. A subsequent study that takes this variation into account can offer valuable insight into the differences between urban and metropolitan teaching environments and the effect on interpersonal communication between GTAs and students in those areas.

The second suggestion, which has its basis in the first, would be to acquire a wider range of demographics among the GTA participants in the study in order to take into the account of the effect of gender and age in terms of power, face, and politeness. A study that incorporates a wider degree of variation in terms of demographics would be better able to gauge the differences in interpersonal communication effectiveness across cultures, age groups, and gender.

The third suggestion would be to measure the effect of culture and ethnicity of the GTA and student during outside classroom communication. Such an assessment would allow scholars to better understand the significance of culture on interpersonal interaction between GTAs and students outside the classroom.

Conclusion

This study has generated valuable insight into the dynamics of interpersonal interactions between GTAs and students outside the classroom. The findings established that power, face, and politeness played a significant role in GTA responses to student requests. While this study treated power, face, and politeness as mutually exclusive variables to be measured and assessed separately, in actual practice, these factors blend together in a continuous process of interpersonal interaction between GTAs and students. Given that interpersonal interaction with students outside the classroom by GTAs will undoubtedly occur throughout a GTA's teaching program, if not his or her teaching career, a training program that accounts for interpersonal interaction outside of the classroom would better serve the needs of GTAs to be effective instructors. This will not only improve inside the classroom

environment, but in any environment that enables them to teach and disseminate knowledge about their particular subject area. While further research is encouraged to take these factors into account when developing subsequent training programs, the focus of this study was to assess the degree of power, face and politeness usage by GTAs in outside classroom interaction.

Notwithstanding the importance of power, face, and politeness, other interpersonal communicative behaviors also need to be further examined in order to explore the various intricacies that affect teaching and learning outside the classroom environment.

Teaching can be a challenging and yet very fulfilling career. By developing training programs that enable GTAs to successfully teach and interact with their students inside as well as outside the classroom, both students as well as GTAs will benefit by a more comprehensive training approach. But more importantly, as teaching and learning are phenomena that cannot be confined to a finite space such as the classroom, it is important that students be taught by instructors who are effective in addressing their needs and concerns irrespective of the environment in which teaching and learning takes place.

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Appendix A

Preliminary Graduate Teaching Assistant Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. This survey is completely anonymous, thus your answers will remain confidential.

1. Your Age: _____ (years)
2. Your Sex: Male Female
3. Are you currently a graduate teaching assistant in the university? YES NO
4. How long have you been a graduate teaching assistant (GTA)?
_____ (years)
5. What is the highest level of education you completed?

6. Select all that describes your ethnic racial background?
(Select all that apply).
 - a. African-American
 - b. Native-American/American Indian
 - c. Asian-American (circle one: Korean Japanese Chinese
Filipino Indian).
 - d. Pacific Islander
 - e. European-American
 - f. Hispanic-American
 - g. Other (Please specify) _____
7. What languages do you speak besides English?

8. Do you have an outside job in addition to college?
 - a. If yes: What is the job:

 - b. If yes: How many hours a week do you typically work at
this job _____
9. Where do you currently live?
City: _____ State _____
10. How long have you lived there? _____ (years)

Appendix B

Politeness and Power Communication Survey

Section 1

Directions: This section asks you to respond to a hypothetical situation where you are confronted with a student's request to do something for him/her in regards to coursework (i.e., grade change, extension of assignment, make-up assignments, clarification of feedback). As you read the following hypothetical, try to place yourself in it, thinking about how you would actually feel and what you would say if a student made such a request of you. After you read the hypothetical, complete all of the questions that follow:

Speech Date Change Situation

You've known your student, Shawn, for two months. Shawn is a student that typically comes late to class, often turns in assignments late, and never comes to your office for feedback on her/his grade. Shawn missed the sign up day for her/his first speech, which resulted in her/him having to give her/his speech on the first day of speeches, for which she/he was also unprepared. Now, on the same day Shawn is assigned to give her/his second speech, Shawn comes to your office requesting a date change. Shawn states that while she/he has an outline and visual aid prepared, she/he does not feel "up to" giving a speech today and stated that she/he would do better on her/his speech Wednesday. You respond to Shawn.

In the space that follows, write out what you would say to Shawn. Rather than just providing a paraphrase or summary, write out the exact words you believe you would use in this situation.

1. If this were a real situation, would you let Shawn change her/his speech date because she/he felt she/he would do better on Wednesday?

Circle one: Yes No

2. If Shawn did not have a reputation (i.e., being late, turning in late assignments, missed last speech sign up date) in class, would that change your response to her/his speech dates change?

Circle one: Yes No

If you answered "yes," explain why you would change your response. If you answered "No" explain why it would not change your response.

Section 2

Directions: In this section, a few statements will be presented which relate to the situation previously described. Please circle the number that indicates your level of agreement with each statement.

1. In this situation, I feel it is very important that I respond to the student's request as clear and concise as possible.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

2. In this situation, I feel it is more important to demonstrate authority and still remain polite.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

3. In this situation, I feel it is more important to be consistent rather than being liked.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

4. In this situation, it is more important to be fair even if it means inconveniencing the student.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

5. In this situation, it is very important I do not hurt the student's feelings with my message.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

6. In this situation, it is important that the student feel I am fair and reasonable.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

7. In this situation, it is very important I make the student feel comfortable when making his/her request.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

8. In this situation, credibility is an important element in my decision.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

9. In this situation, it is very important that my message does not cause the student to dislike me.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

10. In this situation, it is important that the student understand the reason for my decision.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Section 3

Directions: Using the scale below, indicate to what degree you agree/disagree with each statement.

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

_____ 1. I feel uncomfortable when a student makes a request like the above scenario

- _____ 2. I feel it is important I give my student the benefit of the doubt in a troubled situation.
- _____ 3. I feel it is important to be fair to each student in relation to the whole class.
- _____ 4. I feel that students often make excuses when they make a request.
- _____ 5. I feel that my credibility is affected when student questions my ability.
- _____ 6. I take responsibility for my grading.
- _____ 7. If my students fail, I feel partly responsible.
- _____ 8. I try to meet the student's request if it is reasonable.
- _____ 9. I care if a student likes me as an instructor.
- _____ 10. I have a difficult time maintain my authority in teacher student conversation.
- _____ 11. Students do not take me seriously when I assign grades.
- _____ 12. I rarely change my opinion on a grade.
- _____ 13. I am easily convinced.
- _____ 14. I take responsibility for my actions.
- _____ 15. It is often difficult for me to be in a conflict situation.
- _____ 16. I do not like to impose my views and opinions on others.
- _____ 17. I care about other people's views and opinions.
- _____ 18. I am a reasonable person.
- _____ 19. I do not like when others impose on me.
- _____ 20. People often take advantage of me.
- _____ 21. I am usually polite when I ask people for favors.
- _____ 22. I often put people down.
- _____ 23. I am more of a listener than a speaker.
- _____ 24. I often trust reason rather than feelings.
- _____ 25. I easily sympathize with other people.
- _____ 26. I am easily affected by emotions

Appendix C

Graduate Teaching Assistant Interview Questions

Please keep in mind interviews are anonymous. Any information provided to the researcher, will be kept confidential and private for the protection of your identity as a participant.

1. How do you feel when a student visits you during office hours to discuss a problem, conflict, or request? Why?
2. Do you feel scared or intimidated by the student? What did you know about the student? Assumptions? Explain.
3. Do you tell your students that you are a graduate teaching assistant at the university? If not, why? If yes, how do you tell your students?
4. Do you feel, as a graduate teaching assistant, students perceive you to have less power than an actual professor?
5. Discuss a time a student came to your office after class about a problem, conflict, and request pertaining to a grade, class assignment, or speech.
6. What did you say to the student about his or her problem, conflict, or request?
7. Did the student feel upset or angry at your response? If yes, what did you say? If no, what did you say?
8. When a student challenges your grading criteria, what do you say to him or her? Are you polite and if so please explain?
9. Do you feel the student is threatening your authority as an instructor? How so?
10. Do you feel your credibility as an instructor is often affected by student concerns? How?

11. Do you feel that you are just as able, as a professor with a M.A. or Ph.D. to teach a course like public speaking?
12. Do you feel your students think you are competent and effective instructor?