| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

A Descriptive Study on Filipino Language Politeness in High School Students' Interaction

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| **ABSTRACT**

Language politeness is vital in Philippine communication, reflecting hierarchical social structures and cultural values. This study explores (1) the politeness strategies students use in school contexts and (2) differences in strategies when interacting with male versus female peers. High school students speaking Binisayang Surigaonon, Cebuano, Butuanon, Bisaya, and Kamayo demonstrate an awareness of Filipino norms, favoring indirect language to show respect, avoid conflict, and maintain harmony. Common markers include "please," compliments, and formal titles, with minimal gender differences, indicating shared respect-based communication. Educators are encouraged to promote balanced language use by combining direct and indirect approaches, incorporating role-playing and interactive activities to help students adapt politeness strategies across contexts. This adaptability supports students' intercultural communication skills and aligns with cultural expectations, fostering social and academic growth in multilingual settings.

1. Introduction

Language politeness is an essential aspect of communication, particularly in culturally rich societies like the Philippines, where the hierarchical social structures influence speech patterns (Victoria, 2008; Gan et al., 2015; Bonvillain, 2019). Furthermore, it is known that the Philippines is home to multilingual communities, wherein there are 186 languages (Borlongan, 2023). And among that is the Filipino language, which is the national language of the Philippines. Filipino is the standardized form of Tagalog and is taught in all formal educational institutions (Language Data for the Philippines - Translators Without Borders, 2022).

However, many Filipino students grow up speaking other Philippine languages or dialects—such as Cebuano, Ilocano, Waray, Bicol, Kamayo, and Binisayang Surigaonon—which makes it their first language (L1), and shifting to Filipino language in school might affect the way they express politeness (David, 2009; Wa-Mbaleka et al., 2014). This language shift could influence the effectiveness and authenticity of politeness strategies as students may be less familiar with expressing nuanced politeness in their second or third language, even though it is being taught in schools, and many regional Philippine languages have specific terms, honorifics, and polite structures that convey respect within culturally contextualized frameworks (Victoria, 2008; Yuarata, 2015). When students communicate in a language that is not their primary one, their ability to use these culturally ingrained politeness strategies may be limited or may not align with their natural communication style.

Understanding how Filipino students express respect and navigate social power dynamics through language aligns with prior research in linguistics and sociolinguistics, which highlights the importance of politeness as a mechanism for maintaining social harmony. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987), which suggests that individuals use politeness strategies to manage face-threatening acts, has been foundational in studying politeness across cultures. Other studies indicate that language politeness varies significantly across cultural contexts, often reflecting societal values, power structures, and social roles (Ye, 2019; Xafizovna, 2021). In the Philippine context, previous studies reveal that indirectness and honorifics are frequently used to demonstrate respect,

especially in interactions with authority figures or elders (Serafica, 2022; Tuplano, 2023). However, most of these studies focus on adult interactions, leaving the politeness strategies of younger populations, such as high school students, largely unexplored. This gap highlights the need for a closer examination of how politeness manifests among Filipino youth, especially in the dynamic setting of secondary education.

This lack of focus on Filipino youth highlights the need for a closer examination of how language politeness manifests among high school students whose Filipino language is not their L1, especially in their diverse interactions within a school setting. Although existing studies explore the role of respect in language use in the Philippines, few have investigated how adolescents express politeness or how these expressions are affected by peer versus teacher interactions (Aruta, 2019). Additionally, there is limited literature on how factors such as age and gender influence politeness strategies among Filipino students. Addressing these gaps contributes new insights into the ways that young Filipinos navigate social expectations in language within their school environments, offering a more nuanced understanding of language use in this age group.

On this view, the current research aims to examine the Filipino language politeness of high school students, which the Filipino language is not their L1, in everyday communication in the school, specifically focusing on how they navigate formal and informal contexts. Understanding these strategies can offer insights into the students' social behaviors and how they align with cultural norms, particularly in using a language that is. Moreover, the study explores how factors such as gender, age, and the type of relationship between communicators may impact the choice of politeness strategies in both peer-to-peer and student-teacher interactions.

2. Literature Review
The study of language politeness, particularly within the context of Filipino culture, is an essential area of sociolinguistics. Understanding how high school students navigate politeness can provide insights into their social interactions, cultural values, and linguistic choices. This review examines existing literature on language politeness strategies and the distinctions between formal and informal language politeness.

Language Politeness Strategies
Language politeness has long been recognized as a fundamental aspect of social interactions, particularly in collectivist societies where hierarchical social structures are prominent. Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) Politeness Theory is widely regarded as a foundational framework in this area, emphasizing that individuals employ various strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts, depending on the social dynamics between speakers. In particular, Brown and Levinson categorize politeness strategies into four types: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. These strategies differ in their directness, with bald-on-record strategies being the most direct and off-record being the least, often employing indirect hints. Positive politeness aims to build camaraderie, while negative politeness seeks to avoid imposition. These strategies have been widely applied in cross-cultural contexts to examine how politeness is embedded in communication practices, with the goal of understanding underlying social hierarchies, relationship dynamics, and culturally rooted communication norms.

In the Philippine context, politeness strategies have been a significant focus in linguistics, as language use often reflects cultural values such as pakikisama (smooth interpersonal relations) and hiya (a sense of propriety or shame) (Ravago, 2024). Santos (2022) noted that Filipino speakers frequently use indirect language, euphemisms, and honorifics as politeness strategies, especially in interactions with authority figures. Further, it is emphasized that Filipinos, particularly Tagalog speakers, utilize po and opo, honorifics unique to Filipino culture, to signify respect, particularly when addressing older individuals or those in positions of power (Colin-Jones, et al., 2021; Cariño, 2020). Politeness among Filipino adolescents can differ from adults, noting that while they retain honorifics, they often combine these with informal expressions in peer contexts, showing adaptability and blending of modern and traditional politeness norms (Llorica & Sosas, 2022).

In the Filipino context, politeness is deeply intertwined with cultural norms (Ravago, et al., 2024). Various studies highlight that Filipino speaker often utilize indirectness and euphemisms as part of their politeness strategies. This is particularly evident in high school settings, where students might employ strategies such as: 1) Address Terms – the use of honorifics (e.g., "po" and "opo") to convey respect, especially towards elders or authority figures (Velasco, 2023). 2) Mitigation – phrasing requests or refusals in a way that softens the impact (Boccagni, et al., 2020), such as using "maybe" or "could you possibly." 3) Compliments and Small Talk - engaging in light conversation or complimenting peers to build rapport and ease communication (Tenedero, 2022; Colin-Jones, Colin-Jones, & Mojarro, 2021).

Formal and Informal Language Politeness
Formal and informal politeness are key dimensions in understanding language use, with formality often dictated by the context, the social status of interlocutors, and the nature of the relationship between them (Svobodová, 2017; Jdetawy & Hamzah, 2020;

Ben Maazane et al., 2015). Formal language politeness generally involves structured and respectful speech patterns that convey deference, while informal politeness emphasizes familiarity and ease, reflecting social proximity rather than hierarchy (Brown & Levinson, 1999; Brown, & Levinson, 1987; Pratama, 2019). In educational settings, this distinction becomes more pronounced as students often navigate formal language when communicating with teachers and shift to informal language in peer interactions (Iwasaki, 2011; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). Furthermore, Lasan (2016) notes that formality is not only a matter of linguistic choice but also reflects social alignment, as students adapt their language based on whether they seek to convey solidarity or deference.

However, a pressing issue in this area of study is the influence of students' first language on their use of formal and informal politeness strategies. While Filipino and English are the primary languages of instruction in Philippine schools, many students come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and may rely on regional languages in informal settings, which may affect their politeness strategies. Syam et al., (2022) suggest that understanding how students navigate these languages in both formal and informal interactions could provide valuable insights into the sociolinguistic dynamics. This study, therefore, aims to address this gap by examining how high school students express politeness within the limitations of the formal language policies of their schools while accommodating their linguistic diversity.

In summary, the literature indicates that politeness strategies among Filipino speakers are multifaceted, drawing from cultural values such as respect and smooth interpersonal relations, often expressed through honorifics, indirectness, and strategic language shifts between formal and informal contexts. While research has largely focused on adult interactions, studies on Filipino adolescents, particularly in educational settings, remain limited. This gap is further emphasized by the absence of studies examining how students navigate politeness when they must communicate in languages that may not be their first language, such as Filipino or English.

Addressing this issue with the current study is essential, as it could lead to more inclusive and accurate educational and linguistic strategies that respect the linguistic backgrounds of students. Expanding the scope to consider multilingualism and regional language influences may also enrich the findings, allowing educators and researchers to foster environments that support authentic communication and respect the cultural identities of learners..

3. Methodology
3.1 Research Design
A descriptive research design was utilized to explore the usage of politeness strategies among Filipino high school students. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe descriptive research design as a type of research approach used to systematically describe characteristics of a population, situation, or phenomenon. Rather than focusing on why something happens (causation), descriptive research aims to provide an accurate account of what exists, how variables are distributed, or how phenomena manifest within a given population. Through this design, language politeness behaviors were assessed through a structured questionnaire. The data was collected to quantify the frequency and types of politeness strategies used in verbal interactions.

3.2 Research Locale
The research was conducted in three public high schools in Surigao Del Sur—one in the municipality of Tagbina and two in Barobo. These locations were chosen for their accessibility to the researcher and its diverse student population which provides a comprehensive view of language politeness among students in different settings.

3.2 Research Participants
The demographic profile of participants is characterized by four tables discussing the age, gender, grade level, and language at home. The age profile of participants shows a distribution skewed towards younger participants, with the majority of individuals aged between 12 and 14 years. Specifically, age 12 has the highest frequency (43 participants), representing 27.922% of the sample, closely followed by age 14 with 42 participants, making up 27.273%. Age 13 is also notable, comprising 19.481% with 30 participants. Collectively, these three age groups (12, 13, and 14) account for nearly 75% of the total participants, indicating that the sample primarily consists of early adolescents. The frequency decreases significantly as age increases, with fewer participants in the older age brackets. For instance, ages 15, 16, and 17 collectively constitute approximately 23.377%, with age 15 participants comprising 11.039% (17 individuals), age 16 comprising 3.247% (5 individuals), and age 17 comprising 9.091% (14 individuals). The least represented ages are 18, 19, and 20, each with only one participant (0.649%), making them a minor segment of the sample.

Furthermore, the gender profile of participants reveals a slight predominance of female participants, with 83 out of the 154 total participants identifying as female, representing 53.896% of the sample. Male participants, on the other hand, make up 46.104% of the sample with a frequency of 71 individuals. This nearly balanced distribution, with females only slightly outnumbering males, suggests that the sample is fairly representative in terms of gender, although there is a minor tilt toward female participation.

The grade level profile in shows that the participants are primarily concentrated in Grade 7, with 69 out of 154 participants (44.805%) at this level. This strong representation from Grade 7 indicates that nearly half of the sample consists of younger students at the beginning of their secondary education. Grade 9 has the second-highest frequency, with 39 participants (25.325%), followed by Grade 12 with 17 participants (11.039%) and Grade 10 with 15 participants (9.740%). Grade 8 has a smaller representation, with 12 participants (7.792%). Only one participant each represents Grade 11 and an unspecified (or missing) category, both accounting for 0.649% of the total sample.

Furthermore, the language profile in Table 1 indicates that the majority of participants predominantly speak Binisayang Surigaonon at home, with 115 out of 154 participants (74.675%) identifying this as their primary home language. This strong preference for Binisayang Surigaonon suggests that it is the most common language in the participants' community, potentially serving as a cultural or regional standard among the population surveyed. Other languages spoken at home include Kamayo and Bisaya, with 19 participants (12.338%) and 18 participants (11.688%), respectively. These languages also have notable representation but are used by a significantly smaller portion of the sample compared to Binisayang Surigaonon. Finally, Binisayang Cebuano and Binisayang Butuanon are each spoken by just one participant (0.649% each), making them the least represented languages in this sample.

Table 1. Language at home *of the participants*

Language at home	Frequency	Percent
Binisayang Surigaonon	115	74.675
Kamayo	19	12.338
Bisaya	18	11.688
Binisayang Cebuano	1	0.649
Binisayang Butuanon	1	0.649
Total	154	100.000

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Politeness Strategies with Peers

4.1.1 Use of direct language

Table 1A. Use of direct language

1A	Frequency	Percent
Never	12	7.792
Rarely	32	20.779
Sometimes	72	46.753
Often	22	14.286
Always	16	10.390
Total	154	100.00

Table 1A shows the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use direct language in communication. The most common response, "Sometimes," was chosen by 46.753% of participants, indicating a moderate use of direct language. Meanwhile, 20.779% reported using direct language "Rarely," and 14.286% "Often," with smaller percentages at the extremes, with 10.390% using it "Always" and 7.792% "Never."

This tendency towards moderate use of direct language suggests that students may be mindful of social norms, balancing clarity with politeness. Given that Filipino is not their first language, students may adapt their speech to avoid coming across as too assertive, aligning with social expectations for politeness and indirectness. This cautious approach to directness likely reflects their awareness of maintaining respect and harmonious interactions, crucial for social cohesion in multicultural or multilingual settings.

4.1.2 Use of indirect language

Table 1B. Use of indirect language

1B	Frequency	Percent
Never	8	5.195
Rarely	9	5.844
Sometimes	50	32.468
Often	48	31.169
Always	39	25.325
Total	154	100.00

Table 1B presents the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use indirect language in communication. A substantial portion of the students report frequent use of indirect language, with 31.169% choosing "Often" and 25.325% "Always." Additionally, 32.468% report using indirect language "Sometimes," while only small percentages selected "Rarely" (5.844%) or "Never" (5.195%).

This strong preference for indirect language suggests that students are attuned to social and cultural expectations of politeness, especially in a language that is not their native tongue. Indirect language often serves to soften requests, avoid confrontation, and show respect, indicating that these students likely value maintaining respectful and harmonious interactions. Their reliance on indirectness may also reflect an adaptation to Filipino language norms, where indirect speech can convey politeness, minimize misunderstandings, and enhance rapport, especially in a multilingual, culturally diverse context.

4.1.3 Offering compliments

Table 1C. Offering compliments

1C	Frequency	Percent
Never	7	4.545
Rarely	8	5.195
Sometimes	26	16.883
Often	54	35.065
Always	59	38.312
Total	154	100.000

Table 1C shows the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, offer compliments. The data indicates that 35.065% of participants "Often" offer compliments, while 38.312% "Always" do so, meaning that over 73% of students regularly engage in this positive form of communication. Fewer participants report offering compliments "Sometimes" (16.883%), "Rarely" (5.195%), or "Never" (4.545%).

This strong tendency to offer compliments implies that students recognize the role of positive reinforcement and appreciation in maintaining polite and supportive interactions. For students communicating in a non-native language, frequent complimenting may be a strategy to build rapport and express goodwill, which helps in overcoming potential language barriers and establishing a warm social atmosphere. The data suggests that students are likely adopting and even amplifying socially positive behaviors, such as complimenting, as part of their language politeness repertoire, facilitating smoother interpersonal relationships in their multilingual context.

4.1.4 Asking for favors using "please"

Table 1D. Asking for favors using "please"

1D	Frequency	Percent
Never	8	5.195
Rarely	19	12.338
Sometimes	39	25.325
Often	46	29.870
Always	42	27.273
Total	154	100.00

Furthermore, table 1D reflects how frequently high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use "please" when asking for favors. A significant portion of participants demonstrates frequent politeness in their requests, with 29.870% using "please" "Often" and 27.273% using it "Always." Additionally, 25.325% report using "please" "Sometimes," while smaller groups "Rarely" (12.338%) or "Never" (5.195%) include this polite expression.

The frequent use of "please" suggests that these students are highly conscious of maintaining politeness in their requests, an essential aspect of courteous communication. For students communicating in a non-native language, using "please" may serve as a straightforward way to show respect and mitigate any perceived imposition. This habitual politeness, even in a second language, indicates that students are attuned to social etiquette and interpersonal harmony, leveraging polite language as a tool to foster positive social interactions and reduce any friction that might arise from cultural or linguistic differences.

4.1.5 Avoiding direct confrontation

Table 1E. *Avoiding direct confrontation*

1E	Frequency	Percent
Never	11	7.143
Rarely	38	24.675
Sometimes	39	25.325
Often	56	36.364
Always	10	6.494
Total	154	100.000

Table 1E provides insight into how frequently high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, avoid direct confrontation in their interactions. The table shows that 36.364% of students "Often" avoid direct confrontation, while 25.325% do so "Sometimes." A smaller portion "Rarely" avoids confrontation (24.675%), with fewer students indicating they "Never" (7.143%) or "Always" (6.494%) avoid it.

This distribution suggests that students tend to approach conflicts cautiously, with a preference for indirectness in confrontational situations. For students communicating in a second language, avoiding direct confrontation could be a strategy to reduce misunderstandings, as well as to align with the cultural emphasis on respect and harmony prevalent in Filipino social norms. This tendency reflects an awareness of interpersonal boundaries and an adaptive approach to maintaining positive relationships, which is central to their language politeness practices and helps minimize potential friction in social interactions.

4.1.6 Using humor to soften requests

Table 1F. Using humor *to soften requests*

1F	Frequency	Percent
Never	19	12.338
Rarely	25	16.234
Sometimes	40	25.974
Often	43	27.922
Always	27	17.532
Total	154	100.000

Table 1F shows the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use humor to soften their requests. The data reveals that a substantial portion of students incorporate humor in their requests regularly, with 27.922% doing so "Often" and 17.532% "Always." Meanwhile, 25.974% use humor "Sometimes," while smaller groups report using humor "Rarely" (16.234%) or "Never" (12.338%).

This tendency to use humor as a softening device implies a nuanced approach to politeness among these students. For non-native speakers, humor can be a valuable tool to make requests less imposing, helping to create a friendly atmosphere and reducing the potential for misunderstandings in a second language. By softening requests, students show awareness of politeness strategies that align with Filipino social values of warmth and amiability, suggesting that humor plays a constructive role in their language politeness practices and serves as a bridge to establish rapport and ease communication.

4.2 Politeness Strategies with Teachers

4.2.1 Formal greetings

Table 2A. Formal greetings

2A	Frequency	Percent
Never	1	0.649
Rarely	4	2.597
Sometimes	18	11.688
Often	37	24.026
Always	94	61.039
Total	154	100.000

Table 2A shows the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use formal greetings in their interactions. The data reveals a strong inclination toward formality, with 61.039% of participants "Always" using formal greetings and an additional 24.026% using them "Often." A smaller segment uses formal greetings "Sometimes" (11.688%), "Rarely" (2.597%), or "Never" (0.649%).

This high frequency of formal greetings suggests that students prioritize respectful, polite interactions, likely influenced by cultural norms that emphasize formalities as a sign of respect. For students who are not native Filipino speakers, using formal greetings can serve as a strategy to bridge any cultural or linguistic gaps, showing deference and a positive attitude toward social etiquette. This tendency indicates that these students recognize the importance of formal greetings in establishing a polite and respectful tone, which is essential for maintaining social harmony and fostering positive interactions, particularly in multicultural or linguistically diverse settings.

4.2.2 Use of formal titles

Table 2B. Use of formal titles

2B	Frequency	Percent
Never	8	5.195
Rarely	11	7.143
Sometimes	9	5.844
Often	29	18.831
Always	97	62.987
Total	154	100.000

Table 2B highlights the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use formal titles in their interactions. The data reveals that a substantial majority, 62.987%, "Always" use formal titles, while an additional 18.831% do so "Often." In contrast, smaller groups use formal titles "Sometimes" (5.844%), "Rarely" (7.143%), or "Never" (5.195%).

This strong preference for formal titles reflects a high level of respect for social hierarchy and polite address, which aligns with Filipino cultural norms that emphasize respect, particularly when interacting with authority figures or elders. For non-native Filipino speakers, using formal titles may also be a conscious strategy to adhere to Filipino politeness standards, demonstrating awareness of and adaptation to cultural expectations. This tendency suggests that students place importance on courteous communication, reinforcing the values of respect and proper address, which are central to maintaining harmonious relationships in both social and academic contexts.

4.2.3 Asking for permission

Table 2C. Asking for permission

2C	Frequency	Percent
Never	3	1.948
Rarely	9	5.844
Sometimes	29	18.831
Often	47	30.519
Always	66	42.857
Total	154	100.000

Table 2C shows the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, ask for permission in their interactions. The data indicates a strong inclination toward this polite behavior, with 42.857% of participants "Always" asking for permission and 30.519% doing so "Often." Fewer students engage in this behavior "Sometimes" (18.831%), "Rarely" (5.844%), or "Never" (1.948%).

This pattern suggests that the majority of these students recognize the importance of seeking permission as a polite and respectful practice, especially in a formal or educational context. For students whose primary language differs from Filipino, consistently asking for permission may reflect both an awareness of social expectations and a conscious effort to show deference to authority figures or peers. This tendency underscores their understanding of and adaptation to Filipino cultural norms around respect, contributing to a respectful and harmonious environment in interactions that require acknowledgment of others' authority or autonomy.

4.2.4 Apologizing when making a request

Table 2D. Apologizing when making a request

2D	Frequency	Percent
Never	4	2.597
Rarely	11	7.143
Sometimes	30	19.481
Often	52	33.766
Always	57	37.013
Total	154	100.000

Table 2D presents the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, apologize when making a request. The data reveals that 37.013% of participants "Always" apologize when making a request, and 33.766% do so "Often." A notable 19.481% apologize "Sometimes," while smaller groups apologize "Rarely" (7.143%) or "Never" (2.597%).

This pattern suggests that the majority of students place significant value on apologizing as a polite strategy when making requests, highlighting their awareness of the importance of mitigating the impact of their requests on others. Apologizing before or during a request is a common strategy in Filipino culture to show respect and deference, particularly in contexts involving potential inconvenience or imposition. For non-native Filipino speakers, the frequent use of apologies may reflect their adaptation to these cultural norms, signaling politeness and an effort to maintain positive interpersonal relationships. This behavior also indicates a high level of consideration for others, emphasizing the students' recognition of social etiquette in their communication.

4.2.5 Offering appreciation

Table 2E. Offering appreciation

2E	Frequency	Percent
Never	2	1.299
Rarely	4	2.597
Sometimes	17	11.039
Often	42	27.273
Always	89	57.792
Total	154	100.000

Table 2E shows the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, offer appreciation. A significant majority, 57.792%, "Always" offer appreciation, followed by 27.273% who "Often" express gratitude. A smaller portion, 11.039%, do so "Sometimes," while only 2.597% "Rarely" offer appreciation, and 1.299% "Never" do so.

This data indicates that offering appreciation is a deeply ingrained behavior among these students, with the vast majority regularly expressing gratitude. The high percentage of students who always or often offer appreciation suggests that they understand the importance of acknowledging kindness, help, or positive actions, which is a fundamental aspect of politeness in communication. For non-native Filipino speakers, this could reflect a strong cultural influence, as expressions of gratitude are highly valued in Filipino society. Additionally, the frequent use of appreciation in their language could be seen as a way to reinforce positive social bonds and convey respect to others, demonstrating the students' commitment to maintaining polite and considerate communication.

4.2.6 Use of polite words

Table 2F. Use of polite words

2F	Frequency	Percent
Never	2	1.299
Rarely	5	3.247
Sometimes	23	14.935
Often	55	35.714
Always	69	44.805
Total	154	100.000

Table 2F illustrates the frequency with which high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, use polite words in their communication. A majority of 44.805% of students report using polite words "Always," followed by 35.714% who do so "Often." A smaller group, 14.935%, uses polite words "Sometimes," while 3.247% do so "Rarely," and 1.299% "Never" use polite words.

The data indicates that the use of polite language is a strong habit among the students, with over 80% of them regularly incorporating polite words into their communication. This frequent use of polite language suggests that these students are aware of and value politeness in their interactions, which is essential for maintaining respectful and harmonious social relationships. For students whose first language is not Filipino, this could also reflect the influence of Filipino cultural norms, where using polite expressions is an important aspect of social etiquette. Furthermore, the tendency to use polite language "Always" or "Often" indicates that these students understand the importance of showing respect and consideration in both formal and informal settings, reinforcing the role of politeness as a key element in their communication practices.

4.3 Differences in the politeness strategies employed when interacting of male and female students

4.3.1 Students with Peers

Table 5. Politeness Strategies with Peers

N=154	Value (Likelihood ratio)	df	p
Use of direct language	1.262	4	0.868
Use of indirect language	1.652	4	0.799
Offering compliments	5.258	4	0.262
Asking for favors using please	4.665	4	0.323
Avoiding direct confrontation	2.624	4	0.622
Using humor to soften requests	6.615	4	0.158

Table 5 presents different politeness strategies employed by high school students whose first language is not Filipino, specifically distinguishing between their use of different strategies when interacting with peers. The Likelihood Ratios and p-values are used to assess whether there are significant differences in how male and female students employ these strategies.

On this view, the politeness strategies employed by male and female high school students, whose first language is not Filipino, reveal a consistent pattern of no significant gender differences across various politeness strategies. As such, the direct and indirect language utilize by male and female students suggest that these communication styles are not gendered in this context, and both genders perceive directness and indirectness as acceptable approaches to maintaining politeness. It indicates a shared understanding of these strategies as normative behaviors, influenced perhaps by the broader cultural or social setting rather than gender-based expectations.

Similarly, both genders show an equal tendency to use compliments, indicating that this strategy is universally accepted and utilized by both male and female students. The lack of gender-based differences suggests that offering compliments is seen as a common and culturally ingrained politeness strategy. Also, both male and female students use the politeness marker "please" with

similar frequency when asking for favors. This reinforces the idea that politeness markers, such as "please," are learned as part of social conventions rather than being influenced by gender. It suggests that both genders view this form of politeness as essential in maintaining respectful interactions.

The use of avoidance strategies to prevent direct confrontation is another behavior shared equally between male and female students. This suggests that the desire to maintain harmony and avoid conflict is a universally adopted approach, irrespective of gender, in peer interactions. Additionally, using humor to soften requests is employed by both male and female students at similar rates. The fact that humor does not significantly vary between genders suggests that humor is a shared strategy for diffusing tension and making requests less demanding, highlighting a common tool for maintaining politeness in peer interactions.

4.3.2 Students with Teachers

Table 6. Politeness Strategies with Teachers

N=154	Value (Likelihood ratio)	df	p
Formal greetings	8.465	3	0.037
Use of formal titles	5.819	4	0.213
Asking for permission	11.540	4	0.021
Apologizing when making a request	9.220	4	0.056
Offering appreciation	6.225	4	0.183
Use of polite words (e.g., "po/opo")	11.054	4	0.026

Table 6 reveals significant gender differences in formal greetings, asking for permission, and use of polite words, with each p-value below the 0.05 threshold.

Wherein, the significant difference in formal greetings suggests that one gender may use formal greetings with teachers more consistently than the other, possibly reflecting varying comfort levels or social expectations in how they initiate interactions with authority figures. In addition, asking for permission (p = 0.021) indicates a gender difference in asking for permission, hinting that either male or female students may feel more compelled to seek teacher approval, perhaps due to differing perceptions of authority or adherence to formal structures. The use of polite words (e.g., "po/opo") (p = 0.026) also signifies that one gender may emphasize these respectful expressions more frequently. This variation could reflect a deeper cultural or social expectation around formality or respect in interactions with teachers.

On the other hand, the remaining strategies—use of formal titles, apologizing when making requests, and offering appreciation—show no significant gender difference. This implies that both male and female students are equally likely to use these strategies, suggesting that showing respect through titles, apologies, and gratitude may be uniformly valued in student-teacher interaction.

5. Conclusion
The study reveals that high school students from Surigao del Sur, who predominantly speak regional languages such as Binisayang Surigaonon, Kamayo, and Bisaya, exhibit a strong inclination toward politeness in communication. Despite using Filipino as their second language, they adeptly navigate cultural norms through strategies like indirect speech, formal greetings, and avoiding confrontations. Their interactions, whether among peers or with teachers, demonstrate adaptability and respect, underscoring their awareness of social expectations and values. Interestingly, no significant gender-based differences were observed, suggesting a shared cultural adherence to politeness norms among male and female students alike.

However, the study acknowledges several limitations. Its geographic scope was confined to three public high schools in Surigao del Sur, which may not fully represent linguistic and cultural diversity across the Philippines. The study primarily focused on Filipino language politeness, without delving deeply into the influence of students' first languages. Additionally, the age range of participants limited insights into how politeness strategies might vary across high school levels. Reliance on self-reported data introduced potential response biases, and the school-based context restricted the exploration of politeness in other social settings.

In addressing these gaps, future research should expand its geographic coverage to include schools from diverse Philippine regions and examine how students' first languages influence their politeness strategies. Incorporating older students would provide

insights into the evolution of these strategies across educational stages. Direct observations or recordings of interactions could offer more accurate assessments, while exploring politeness in non-school contexts, such as family or community settings, would enrich understanding of students' communication practices in various social environments.

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