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Politeness, politics and diplomacy

Paul Chilton

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

ABSTRACT. The Brown–Levinson analysis of politeness phenomena is reinterpreted and applied to political texts, specifically texts in international communication. The Brown–Levinson framework explicates many aspects of verbal formulation in face-to-face interaction, but it gives the impression of treating social relations as a natural state of affairs to which interlocutors respond. The article first indicates some inherently political elements in the concept of ‘face’ (Goffman). ‘Positive face’ can be linked to identity and consensus, ‘negative face’ to territorial security, freedom of action and privacy. Political discourse can be seen to use positive- and negative-face strategies, and off-record strategies, in consensus building and in the performing of ‘face-threatening’, that is coercive, intrusive or persuasive verbal acts. Secondly, the need to extend the Brown–Levinson framework beyond interlocutor pairs to multiple audiences seen in their historical context is noted. And thirdly, these points are illustrated by means of selective analysis of speeches by Gorbachev and Reagan in which domestic and international contexts affect the verbal acts performed in what were in effect moves in the process of negotiating the 1987 INF Treaty.

KEY WORDS: critical theory, discourse, Gorbachev, inference, media, negotiation, politeness phenomena, pronouns, Reagan

LANGUAGE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Introduction

In accounts of international relations it is common to find reference to ‘signals’, ‘gestures’, ‘postures’. Within the academic discipline of political science and international relations the linguistic and semiotic tools of analysis that have been brought to bear on these matters have tended to be informal, and sometimes oversimplified. Coral Bell (1988), for instance, relies on a signals engineering approach within the Shannon–Weaver (1949) paradigm. This also seems to be the predominant framework for the authoritative work of Jervis (1976), followed by Snyder and Diesing (1977). This is a strand of inquiry that treats international communication as an encoding–decoding process. True, some states and their agents may in fact behave in this way, but it is not the whole story.

Works on diplomacy, such as Nicolson (1964) and Ostrower (1965), while

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pinpointing the face-to-face interactive phenomena that discourse analysis is able to address, do not themselves employ any precise methodological instruments. Nicolson, for instance, refers to the importance of 'understatement', and avoiding expressions perceived as 'provocative or impolite' (Nicolson, 1964: 122). And Ostrower also refers to 'understatement' and 'polite' wording. We come closer to an analytical approach in recent work on negotiation and bargaining. This is a strand of inquiry that is dissatisfied with the prevalent use of game-theoretic approaches, and advocates empirical study of negotiation behaviour. D. V. J. Bell (1988) and Cicourel (1988) join other theorists of negotiation in complaining about the lack of detailed work on the nature of verbal interaction in international negotiation. Both Bell and Cicourel are concerned with the association of language and power in such settings. Bell (1975) uses what is essentially a speech act framework. Bell (1988) and Cicourel (1988) indicate a wide range of applied linguistic approaches, including the politeness phenomena theory of Brown and Levinson (1978).

This line of inquiry converges with a similar line developed independently within applied linguistics and discourse analysis. In particular, the European school of critical linguistics and discourse analysis associated with Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew (1979), Kress and Hodge (1979), Lerman (in Davis and Walton, 1983), Mey (1985), van Dijk (e.g. 1984, 1987, 1989), Wodak (1989) and Fairclough (1989) have been concerned with the microstructure of verbal interaction as a vehicle of power relations. Fairclough gives some attention to the role of 'face' and 'politeness', as defined by Brown and Levinson, in the maintenance of power relations (Fairclough, 1989: 54–5, 66–7), and Pateman (1989, cf. also Pateman, forthcoming) notes the importance of the Brown–Levinson framework.

The aim of this paper is not to resolve the difficulties of the analysts of bargaining, negotiation and diplomacy between nations, or indeed to give a comprehensive account of discourse, discourse orders and power within nations. The purpose is to critically examine the most coherent theory of politeness available in the linguistics literature. There are two aspects to this critical approach. One aspect is concerned with pointing out that the basic assumptions of the theory are in fact assumptions about classical political concepts and about the exercise of power in political processes. The other aspect concerns the implications of this analysis—namely, the practical extension of the Brown–Levinson framework as an instrument of critical discourse analysis.

The strategies of politeness are illustrated from material derived from political speeches and public statements that have both a domestic internal audience and an internationally mediated one, and which are in varying complex ways part and parcel of the mediated 'conversation' that constitutes the ongoing discourse between publics and governments and governments and governments.

Rationality, strategy and face

'Politeness' is not merely a matter of sweetening bitter pills: the theoretical notions that have been introduced in particular by Brown and Levinson take us to the heart of political philosophy. The Brown–Levinson framework is not, however, explicit in this regard. It is presented as a universal descriptive framework. This framework allows for cultural variation arising from different weightings of the variables of social distance, status and urgency (how important an action, etc., is perceived as being in some situation). These variables are taken as given. The potential criticism is twofold: first, the role of power in relation to coercion and resistance is not incorporated; and second, politeness in verbal interaction is restricted to the micro-level of two-person exchanges, excluding macro-level socio-political processes of conflict and co-operation.

Another aspect of the Brown–Levinson framework, one that would for instance be criticized by postmodernists, is the basic assumption of rationality. Many postmodernist approaches tend to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Cognitive–pragmatic approaches, such as Sperber and Wilson (1986) tend to forget to fill the bath. In this paper I adopt the view that inference is the process by which pragmatic meanings are communicated. But I also adopt the view that these processes need to be seen in relation to the wider context of power, conflict and co-operation. If making inferences is 'rational' and power 'irrational', then the present approach takes account of both. This has implications both for postmodernist approaches (which attack rationality) and for the Sperber–Wilson relevance theory (which neglects power); this is not, however, the place to pursue the implications fully.¹

The terms in which Brown and Levinson couch the rationality assumption are revealing for the international political context. Their framework refers consistently to 'strategies' of politeness, that is, to planning by rational agents of their choice of words. The planning is 'strategic', because it is a choice of means to ends, and because it involves a calculus of risk in relation to the specific wants that constitute those ends. It is of course the non-rational nature of those 'wants' that is often, perhaps 'strategically', overlooked.

This terminology further suggests a link with critical social theory. Habermas (1984, 1987) draws a broad distinction between communicative behaviour orientated to understanding and communicative action that is *strategic*. By strategic communication Habermas means, broadly speaking, communication intended to achieve an end (hearers' actions or states of mind) without the strategic purpose being made explicit in the speaker's utterance. One objection to this line of thinking, and to the notion of linguistic manipulation in general, is that it is not clear how hearers can comprehend an utterance and yet not comprehend it. For example, if a threat is 'disguised', and the hearer responds to the utterance as a threat, then the utterance has, effectively, not been disguised.² Politeness theory is, however, able to contribute to resolving this kind of conundrum. Critical theory

can elucidate and extend politeness theory, and at the same time derive benefit for its descriptive analyses from the insights that politeness theory can offer concerning the pragmatic making of inferencing that is involved in face-to-face communication.

In addition to assuming humans are rational agents, politeness theory postulates that they have 'face'. This concept derives from Goffmann (1967). It is defined as a want that individuals have, rather than a right (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 67). In political discourse this means that the face factor can be both exploited and challenged. Two types of face—positive and negative—are distinguished; both have political and ethical implications. 'Positive face' is the want of a person that their wants also be wanted by others—that is, it is the desire to be integrated into some community on the basis of mutually believed values and facts. This implies that positive face phenomena may be involved in the construction of identity and consensus. Speakers may address positive face wants in verbal formulations; hearers may or may not accept those wants as satisfied. 'Negative face' is the want not to be impeded by others. This may include, for instance, the desire for territorial integrity and self-determination (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1978: 214). This implies that some concept of freedom is tacitly assumed in politeness phenomena. Speakers may verbally acknowledge the hearer's want to be free of interference, and hearers may or may not accept this want as satisfied. An extension of the principle is that hearers do not want to be disturbed. The double sense of the word 'disturbed' is relevant: any utterance that may provoke affect (rejection, hostility, criticism, for example) can be verbally mitigated. It follows that politeness phenomena can ground strategic evasion and coercion.

The Brown–Levinson framework assumes in general that speakers mutually acknowledge their mutual interest in satisfying their face wants. The term 'face' and the term 'want' seem to divert attention from substantive rights and needs. It does not pay attention to the fact that politeness phenomena may not only depend on existing power relationships in a community but also (a) constitutively reinforce them and (b) be a mechanism for manoeuvre and change in such relationships. The metaphorical terms 'common ground' and 'unimpeded' action (based on spatial and action schemas) divert attention from the fact of contestation over substantive resources of land, property, income and activity. True, Brown and Levinson include power (in the sense of status) in the calculus of politeness formulae, but the impression is given that the function of polite formulae selection is to mask or lessen social friction—friction which does arise from substantively real asymmetries. Of course, in a view of society which accepts asymmetries as natural, the present critique evaporates.

In a variant of the Brown and Levinson framework (Leech, 1983: 113ff.) the occlusion of conflict is clear. Politeness is presented as an 'antidote' to 'conflict situations' in which there are conflicting wants: 'it is a means of avoiding conflict'. Leech's Maxim of Politeness is claimed by him to 'prevent such incompatibilities from arising', and this is because it implies 'Do not [express the wish to] do what [the hearer] does not want.' This Leech calls an

'avoidance strategy', which, if mutually observed, means that there is no more conflict. However, this is a 'recipe for inactivity' (i.e. if the hearer does not perceive the speaker's wish, demand, etc.). Absolute avoidance will therefore give way to choices of language form that make the wish, demand, etc., of the speaker inferable indirectly: impositions on the hearer will be 'hedged', 'played down', etc. It is at this point that from the standpoint of a critical theory it is difficult to ignore the potential provided by politeness phenomena (and indeed by a theory that reifies them) for domination and deception.

This is not to suggest that politeness phenomena are always deceptive. They are two-faced in a different sense from Goffmann's. They may either constitute socially cohesive and cooperative action, or they may serve exploitatively strategic ends. Which is being pursued depends on contingencies. A major point is that the same linguistic resources can serve both functions, and it is this that makes linguistic domination possible. Which function is being served is not purely a linguistic matter. It is a pragmatic matter in the sense of Habermas. Participants (including analysts) in any speech event in which politeness formulations are a factor have to assess the validity of the utterance in the light of their values. The fact that politeness is constitutive of social relations can however make them difficult to either analyse or challenge.

Strategies

Brown and Levinson provide a classification of 'politeness strategies'—that is, possible choices of linguistic form—for the performing of 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs). It has been argued above that threatening face is not merely a psychological want: it is likely to be a material matter affecting physical as well as psychological rights. The following examples are therefore analysed in such a way as to bring out both the potential for accommodation and co-operation on the one hand and the potential for domination and dissimulation on the other.

The Brown–Levinson classification of strategies is as follows:

- A. avoid the FTA
- B. do the FTA
 - (i) on record
 - with no redress to face ('bald')
 - with redress to positive face
 - with redress to negative face
 - (ii) off record

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S SPEECH STRATEGIES

In this section I illustrate off-record strategies and some negative strategies in a speech by Mikhail Gorbachev, and in the following section some predominantly positive strategies in a speech of Ronald Reagan's. Both

speeches were made at a political conjuncture that can be related to the verbal strategies that can be observed.

On and off record

An 'off-record' strategy is a choice of words that fails to state the speaker's intention explicitly, though the hearer has the potential of inferring an intended meaning. Presupposition and invited implicature are important techniques, and rhetorical questions, irony, metaphor, ellipsis can lead to hearers' inferences. Off-record strategies thus rely heavily on presupposed background knowledge and the principle of relevance. Since these will vary between individuals, groups and audiences, a speaker may be taking a risk; but she also may calculate off-record tactics precisely in order to address multiple audiences simultaneously.

Another objective may be to convey information without being held accountable; and may subsequently deny, upon challenge, that she did not 'mean that'. Or the speaker may desire to withhold information, in which case the hearer may also make inferences; the speaker may subsequently, in this case also, deny that she 'meant that'. Or, again, the speaker may have to allow for threat to the face of more than one participant; the speaker may wish to make it possible for different hearers to make different, even contradictory, inferences; and the speaker may wish to be able to disavow one or both of such inferences.

Example: Gorbachev responds to an American statement

The latter case arises in situations where domestic interests have to be balanced with a government's foreign policy objectives. The importance of these two interacting factors is acknowledged in the international relations literature. Discourse analysis can clarify how such situations are managed at the micro-level.

The example examined below is a translated portion of a speech made by Mikhail Gorbachev at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986.³ Mediated statements of this type are an important element in diplomacy and bargaining. Gorbachev had two main audiences: the primary audience of the participants at the Congress, and the secondary mediated audience including the US State Department and West European foreign ministries.

The broad historical context is as follows. Gorbachev, in power for less than a year, was introducing new policy directions at home and abroad. After the Soviet walk-out in 1983 from the Geneva arms control talks, Gorbachev had met Reagan in November 1985, and restarted the talks in January 1986. On 15 January 1986 he had sought to seize the initiative in nuclear diplomacy. This move, which called for abolition of all nuclear forces by the year 2000, linked to an end to space weapons development, was a face-threatening act in various ways. In addition he addressed NATO capitals, not the US government, with offers to accept the (possibly insincere) American zero proposal on missiles in Europe. He had even offered

'intrusive' verification, a major shift, that can be seen in terms of negative face wants (intrusion into one's protective space). These moves were a major challenge to Reagan's personal commitment to the space weapons program; and they adopted proposals that the Americans themselves had previously made. The Reagan Administration seems to have been unsure how to respond, except by proposing a date for talks, which the Soviets rejected, probably because Gorbachev required a concrete treaty for internal political reasons.

Gorbachev is speaking at the 27th Party Congress, at which domestic political face is an important element. The Congress took place in February, a date earlier proposed for a summit by the Americans and rejected by Gorbachev, who is now using it, in part, as a substitute. The speech responds to the US and also describes a comprehensive security concept. In this context the speaker has to consider face threat to his conservative hearers in the room; to his own domestic political face as legitimate leader, and to his external diplomatic face as initiator of bold and unsolicited negotiating moves; to the face of American and West European governments as mediated overhearers. The historical and the local situations are physically threatening and face-threatening, respectively: the missiles on both sides physically threaten national space; the discursual moves of offer, proposal, rejection and criticism threaten political and diplomatic face.

Both on-record and off-record strategies are evident, often in combination:

... it is necessary to take into account the reaction of the centres of power that hold in their hands the keys to the success or failure of the disarmament negotiations.

This is relatively off-record: note, for instance the 'keys' metaphor, the reliance on hearers' background knowledge to identify the 'centres of power'. This direct reference avoidance recurs throughout the speech. It does not rule out on-record, that is quite explicit and detailed, references that are critical of the United States. These tend, however, to be combined with off-record cues for implicatures:

Of course, the US ruling class, to be more exact its most egoistical groups linked to the military-industrial complex, have other aims that are clearly opposite to ours. For them disarmament spells out a loss of profits and a political risk, for us it is a blessing in all respects—economically, politically, and morally.

The advantage of these strategies is that they presuppose background beliefs and attitudes common to speaker and hearers; indeed, some of the references to the 'imperialist' United States and its 'bourgeoisie' have a predictability that suggest they had become part of a routine register for these official audiences. Since it is the Central Committee and not the US itself that is addressed directly here, these criticisms do not amount to insults. Indeed the main function of this choice of strategy appears to be to reinforce group solidarity (of the CPSU), without directly targeting (the metaphor is used advisedly) US face. As we shall see in the case of President

Reagan's address to Congress, such solidarity reinforcement can be accomplished by means of the pronoun *we*. Gorbachev also uses this pronoun in the next sentences of his speech, but he does not appear to employ it to continuously structure his speech in the way characteristic of Reagan.

This next section is an indirect, relatively off-record response to the United States.

- (1) We know our principal opponents and have accumulated a complex and extensive experience in our relations and talks with them. The day before yesterday, we received President Reagan's reply to our Statement of 15 January. The US side began to set forth its considerations in greater detail at the talks in Geneva. To be sure, we shall closely examine everything the
- (2) US side has to say on these matters. However, since the reply was received literally on the eve of the Congress, the US administration apparently expects, as we understand it, that our attitude to the US stand will be made known to the world from this rostrum.
- (3) What I can say right away is that the President's letter does not give ground for amending in any way the assessment of the international situation as had been set forth in the report before the reply was received. The report says that the elimination of nuclear arms is the goal all the nuclear powers should
- (4) strive for. In his letter the President agrees with some or other Soviet proposals and intentions as regards the issues of disarmament and security. In other words, the reply seems to contain some reassuring opinions and statements.

There are several specific FTAs. The initial one is the statement of dissatisfaction with the US response to his bold 15 January proposal. He wants to state a rejection of the conditions (SDI testing, for example) requested by the US. Contrary to this, he also actually wanted, apparently, to achieve the elimination of the missiles. He also wants to use a mediated channel (as opposed to the Geneva conference room or some recognized diplomatic channel) in order to do this.

Here are some of the ways in which the threats to face are mitigated.

(a) The speaker first (1 and 2) deals with the latter by off-record criticism of the American timing. Hearers in both audiences can infer this from background knowledge about times, places and acceptable response intervals. Delays in response can, diplomatically and conversationally, be perceived as insults.⁴ In addition, Gorbachev claims that the Americans themselves have acted in an off-record way by their timing, imputing to them the intention that he, Gorbachev, should use the Party Congress as the channel for his reply. The choice of this particular setting for the reply to the Americans is in itself significant. It is indirect, and in the Brown–Levinson sense 'off record': in the guise of a narrative *about* the US letter told *to* the Central Committee, it is interpretable, as Gorbachev must have known, as an actual response *to* the US. This does not mean that it was disclaimable or not citable in the ongoing superpower dialogue.

(b) Secondly, in (3) he rejects the American communication, impersonally and indirectly, by inviting an implicature.

(c) Third, he deals with the rejection of the American conditions by

creating in (4) some common ground (this is a positive-face strategy, considered more fully below), with disagreement being inferrable from hedges and quantifiers: 'agrees *in general* with *some or other* Soviet proposals . . . the reply *seems* to contain *some* reassuring opinions . . .'.

More specific rejections are handled by both off-record (and negative) strategies in the passage immediately following:

- (5) However, these positive pronouncements are drowning in various reservations, 'linkages' and 'conditions' which in fact block the solution of radical
- (6) problems of disarmament. Reduction in the strategic nuclear arsenals is made conditional on our consent to the Star Wars programme and reductions,
- (8) unilateral, by the way, in the Soviet conventional arms. Linked to this are also problems of regional conflicts and bilateral relations. The elimination of nuclear arms in Europe is blocked by the references to the stand taken by Great Britain and France and the demand to weaken our defences in the eastern part of the country, while the US military forces in that region remain as they are. The refusal to stop nuclear tests is justified by arguments to the effect that nuclear weapons serve as a factor of 'containment'. This is in direct contradiction with the purpose reaffirmed in the letter—the need to do away with nuclear weapons. The reluctance of the USA and its
- (5) ruling circles to embark on the path of nuclear disarmament manifests itself most clearly in the attitude to nuclear explosions the termination of which is the demand of the whole world.
- (9) To put it in a nutshell, it is hard to detect in the letter we have just received any serious readiness by the US administration to get down to solving the cardinal problems involved in eliminating the nuclear threats. It looks as if some people in Washington and elsewhere, for that matter, have got used to living side by side with nuclear weapons linking them with their plans in the international arena. However, whether they want it or not, the Western
- (8) politicians will have to answer the question: are they prepared to part with nuclear weapons at all?

Let us consider first the off-record strategies. Nowhere is the face-threatening rejection formulated explicitly and literally. But it can be inferred from the following features amongst others:

- (5) 'However', implicating opposition.
- (6) the metaphors 'drowning', 'block', 'path'.
- (7) the use of quotation marks, inviting the implicature that the speaker is rejecting the words and concepts uttered by the third party (the US); especially significant is 'containment'.
- (8) the ironic 'unilateral by the way' (ironic, because this is not by the way but background knowledge that it is a central objection), and the rhetorical question ('are they prepared . . .'), which is a special case of irony.
- (9) invited implicatures: the claim to have discovered a logical contradiction invites the inference that the speaker is rejecting the US letter, and also perhaps the inference that S is imputing bad faith, and for this reason rejecting the conditions.

The intention to reject the conditions is not stated explicitly. Here at least, it is stated in an off-record manner, both in the sense of the verbal formulations and in the sense of choice of speech setting and immediate addressee. There is a two-fold political advantage to this choice of strategy. It mitigates

the rejection, but it also evades explicitly verbalized commitment on the speaker's part.

The more positive proposals to proceed with negotiations need to allow for face threat to his conservative or hawkish Party members, as well as to the intrinsic face threat of the act of proposing itself.

- (10) In accordance with an understanding reached in Geneva there will be
- (11) another meeting with the US President. The significance that we attach to it is that it ought to produce practical results in key areas of limiting and reducing armaments. There are at least two matters on which an understanding could be reached: the cessation of nuclear tests and the abolition of Soviet and US intermediate-range missiles in the European zone. And
- (12) then, as a matter of fact, if there is readiness to seek agreement, the question of the date of the meeting would be resolved of itself: we will accept any suggestion on this count. But there (12) is no sense in holding empty talks

The reference to the forthcoming summit is carefully prepared and depersonalized (10). This is an instance of mitigating negative face. Gorbachev does not state explicitly his intended actions at this conference, but invites implicatures (11). The sentence ' . . . it *ought* to produce practical results' is potentially (in English, at least) open to two interpretations: the conference is expected to produce (perhaps for the American audience), and the conference should but might well not (perhaps for the Party hawks). The same applies to 'an understanding *could* be reached'.

As was noted earlier, the question of the date of a summit was at issue. Gorbachev is tying conditions to accepting a date. What conditions? This is stated in an off-record fashion by means of (12)—that is, the implications of 'if there is readiness' and an 'empty', implications which can be calculated from the preceding parts of the texts together with background knowledge. In short, what Gorbachev is conveying here by 'readiness' and talks that are not 'empty' is the demand that the US give up the SDI and other 'linkages'.

A further feature of Gorbachev's handling of the FTA of criticism, rejection and counter-demand is the high frequency of negative-face strategies (see also Reagan's strategies below). The characteristic lexical and syntactic techniques are passivization and reflexives, nominalization, replacement of possessives by definite articles, modal hedging of various types. The main function seems to be to impersonalize S, H, and, more specifically, to avoid reference to the participant roles in the case of processes, actions and events. The following are examples:

—utterances (rather than the utterer) become the syntactic subject of sentences: 'the report says . . .', 'these positive pronouncements are . . .', 'the reply seems to contain'

—face-threatening processes (both verbal and physical) that are at issue in the international world are referred to not by finite verbs (which necessitate inconvenient, or face-threatening mention of actors, patients, beneficiaries, etc., as well as tense) but by nominalized forms:

(a) *verbal and mental processes*: 'the [vs. our] *assessment* of the international situation as had been set forth in the [vs. our] report', 'the *elimination* of nuclear arms', 'proposals', 'pronouncements', 'reserva-

tions', 'references to' 'the demand to weaken', 'arguments to the effect that', 'the refusal to stop nuclear tests', 'the reluctance to embark on', 'the solution of radical problems', 'the purpose reaffirmed in the letter', 'the reluctance manifests itself';

(b) *material processes*: 'Reduction in the strategic arsenals', 'the elimination of nuclear arms', 'the termination [of nuclear explosions]', 'the need to do away with', 'is the demand of the whole world', 'any serious readiness by the US administration'.

—hedges and vagueness of reference also serve to distance S from the proposition, lessening commitment and accountability: 'as we understand it', 'the reply *seems* to contain', 'it is hard to detect', 'it looks as if', '*some* reassuring opinions', 'some people in Washington', 'elsewhere';

—passives and reflexives: 'the reply was received', 'our attitude . . . will be made known', 'the assessment . . . as had been set forth in', 'the reply was received', 'reduction is made . . . conditional on', 'linked to this', 'the refusal . . . is justified by arguments', 'problems involved in'; 'the elimination is blocked by references to', 'the stand taken by Great Britain and France', 'the purpose reaffirmed in'; 'the reluctance manifests itself in'.

It is true that some of the passives and nominalizations can be attributed to sentence perspective; the point here is that passivization and nominalization may *additionally* serve avoidance.

Because negative strategies involve avoidance and inexplicitness, they presuppose background knowledge, and thus overlap with off-record devices.

The skilful use of off-record strategies is probably important in the management of controversial changes of policy direction. This may well be a crucial aspect of the degree of success that Gorbachev has had as a political innovator and tightrope-walker, particularly in the foreign policy sphere. The present example represents one of a series of diplomatic moves that led to the Reykjavik talks in October of 1986 and to the INF Treaty signed in December 1987. Its key feature is the use of off-record strategies to address multiple audiences and to claim a morally stronger position both in the actual conduct of the exchanges and in the substance of the rejections and counter-offers made.

Off-record strategies can be risky. Jervis (1976), Snyder and Diesing (1977) and others have noted that 'ambiguous messages' tend to be differently interpreted, especially in crises, by 'receivers', depending on beliefs and immediate interests. By concentrating only on cases of 'perception' and 'misperception', however, such accounts fail to notice the controlled, *strategic* role of off-record, differentially interpretable utterances in interstate communication. That is, cases, where 'ambiguous messages' are used manipulatively, for good or ill, are not addressed.

RONALD REAGAN'S SPEECH STRATEGIES

On record: positive and negative face

If a 'bald' on-record formulation is not appropriate or strategically advantageous, speakers may employ *redressive* strategies, oriented to positive face

wants of the hearer (H), to the negative face wants of the hearer, or both. 'Positive politeness' involves treating H as a member of the in-group, not as an alien or outsider, by indicating sharing of interests, values, reciprocal rights and obligations.

Bald on-record performance of speech acts (e.g. orders, requests) can be interpretable as an expression of power and status, as dictated by the urgency of a situation (Help!), as overcoming inhibition deriving from respect for negative face wants ('Come in!'), or as expressive of close in-group membership. In the speech quoted below Reagan says: 'And tonight I ask you to give me what 43 Governors have: Give me a line-item veto this year. Give me the authority to veto waste, and I'll take the responsibility . . .'. The mentioning of the speech act ('I ask you') and the use of the explicit form for the request (imperative 'give') can be explained by reference to a combination of these factors. In addition the explicitness of the requester-requested relationship ritually acknowledges the separation of powers.

Amongst redressive devices, the inclusive *we* is frequently used to satisfy positive face. It is important to note two possible relationships between such a strategy and the context. If there is some degree of mutually recognized comity, if people are 'close', various verbal acts will express this, and subsequent selection of positive face will be a response to it. On the other hand, verbal acts may be used, in a more strictly strategic sense, to constitutively *produce* kinds of comity—in the political domain, for example, those states of affairs that we call 'unity', 'national unity', 'rapprochement', 'understanding', 'entente', and the like. Such strategies may misfire. President Reagan used *we* (presumably with an intended inclusive interpretation) very frequently in addresses to the nation. An inclusive interpretation is not of course automatic. Material reasons for disunity and non-inclusion exist. Where such conditions exist some hearers will adopt an oppositional interpretative stance to a perceived inclusive intention.

In international discourse positive face was arguably a factor in super-power relations in the cold war period. It was often pointed out that Soviet leaders had a strong desire to be acknowledged as included in an international community (cf. Steele and Chomsky, 1984: 62ff.). The significance of 'detente' in the 1970s was that the Soviet Union was accepted to a degree into normal international dialogue, after a deliberate policy of exclusion, a policy which returned in the early 1980s, when the Soviet Union was sometimes publicly branded as ethically beyond the pale. The significance of Gorbachev's foreign policy was that he re-established the Soviet Union's rights as an interlocutor.

This is not to say that the only factors are linguistic, but the following two points are relevant. First, conflict and co-operation is at least in part constituted, and undermined, by and through discourse. Secondly, refusal to address positive face can be a cause of breakdown in co-operation, and can certainly exacerbate the breakdown if the initial cause is elsewhere (e.g. in some specific action). Since paying positive face presupposes reciprocal rights and obligations, to abandon it is dangerous, because it can imply that S has abandoned co-operative norms or is accusing H of having done so.

'Negative politeness . . . is oriented mainly towards partially satisfying (redressing) H's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination.'⁵ This formulation is intended to apply to individual-to-individual interactions. The point is that in such interactions any utterances that imply transgression of such basic wants will tend to be accompanied by apologies, deference markers, hedges on expressions of imposition or coercion, etc. (cf. examples from Gorbachev discussed above). Many of these devices have become conventionalized, and Brown and Levinson would regard them therefore as 'on-record': e.g. 'would you mind doing . . .?' What are the political implications of this?

First, the formulation depends on the crucial political concepts of claims of territory and self-determination. These concepts it applies to individuals and takes as given, that is as beyond critique, claims of integrity and autonomy. It thus foregrounds the supposed territoriality and self-centredness of individuals, and may to that extent be a reflection of a particular culture or ideology. A society that foregrounds such individualism may well be characterized by the prevalence of politeness formulae oriented to negative face.

Secondly, such politeness strategies may be strategic in Habermas's sense. That is, such formulae, especially perhaps the conventionalized ones, may be deployed in order to achieve and mask material intrusions and impositions. They are not of course fool-proof, immune to challenge; but formulae such as 'would you mind doing X?' are not *readily* answerable with 'No'.⁶

Thirdly, if one transfers the analysis to intercourse between social groups in societies divided by race, region, class, gender, etc., the terms of the formulation become explicit, instead of metaphorical. At issue are the rights of groups and individuals to assert their own, or to deny another's, 'claims of territory' and 'self-determination'. Negative and positive politeness phenomena will appear unproblematic if the analyst makes a prior assumption that there exists consensus as to rights over territory, resources and action.

Strategies addressing positive face

A politician seeking to establish what we refer to as a sense of national unity will use positive politeness strategies. The sense of unity or community may already exist for some hearers; for others it may be in doubt; others may take an oppositional stance. In the first case, any face-threatening act will need to be mitigated to preserve positive face; in the second case, positive face, additionally, strengthened; in the third, positive-face strategies may be an attempt to convert, but will always risk being interpreted as manipulative. The use and reception of positive-face strategies will depend on contingent facts of the political situation, and any analysis will need to pay attention to specific context. A national crisis, or an internal political crisis for a government, for example, is a major threat to positive face that may be mitigated by corresponding verbal strategies claiming 'common ground'. In the next section two important strategies are considered in relation to a particular

historical conjuncture: (i) noticing features of H, including hyperbolic empathy; and (ii) in-group identity markers.

Example: Reagan creates positive togetherness

On 4 February 1986, three weeks after Gorbachev's 15 January speech, and three weeks before Gorbachev's speech to the 27th Party Congress, President Reagan gave his state of the union message before the joint session of the American Congress. Like Gorbachev's speech this was a symbolic national event, and addressed multiple audiences, at home and abroad. The Administration was indecisive: on the choice of a new strategic missile system, on the objectives of their negotiations with the USSR. Congressional elections were in the offing. The president was still promoting the space shield (SDI) fantasy against many critics and the threat that Congress would cut the program, while his insistence on linking the program with strategic arms reductions was resented by the Soviets. And in January the loss of the *Challenger* space shuttle had been a major shock to national technological pride. It was to be expected therefore that the presidential relationship with Congress, the refurbishing of national face, and the maintaining of the stance on Star Wars would be important elements of the speech. The management of these elements involves positive face redressive strategies.

(i) *Praise*. S may notice some feature of H's person, possessions, beliefs, values or needs that H might be presumed to want approved. In the following several useful (to the president) effects are achieved, but one is based on this strategy:

- (1) Mr Speaker . . . may I point out that tonight marks the tenth and last state of
- (2) the union message that you have presided over. And on behalf of the
- (3) American people, I want to salute you for your service to Congress and
- (4) country. Here's to you.⁷

The act here is that of congratulating, and toasting (though the latter is only partially enacted). The communicative situation includes, in addition, not only the people present in the chamber on that evening, but all hearers and readers to whom the event was relayed simultaneously or subsequently by print or electronic mediation. Further, although the president and his advisors can be assumed to know this, it is not necessarily the case that all hearers know that he knows it. This means that the President's paying positive face to Mr Speaker stands a chance of being interpreted not merely as a conventionalized ritual, but as one small piece of evidence of 'common ground' between Congress and President. Because congratulating is also threatening to negative face, the formulation (1) is hedged ('*may I point out*'). 'On behalf' at (2) conventionally justifies the toaster's act, but in this instance also reproduces the political relationship between president and people. The '*I want to salute*' at (3) can then address face needs by an explicit ('bald on record') speech act and simulated toast (4). This synthetic construction of a specific social situation in which non-present hearers are

provided with verbal cues that can be interpreted as implying their presence recurs throughout the speech.⁸

Brown and Levinson note the use of hyperbolic expressions of empathy with H. This is often done by intensifying adverbs (*incredibly, fantastically, and the like*). Hyperbole also involves metaphor. Hyperbolic meanings are inferred from metaphor with reference to some conceptual schema that involves grading and evaluation (such as high/low, live/dead, corresponding to good/bad). However, the line between literal and metaphorical, hyperbolic and non-hyperbolic here clearly depends on the background concepts and attitudes of hearers. For instance

[America is] the greatest country on earth

is literal and true for some hearers (and the speaker), literal and untrue for others, whereas some may reject the presupposed concept of greatness. Metaphorical examples occurring in the speech are:

... undying faith, the future will be ours, a mighty river of good works, Everest beckons, towering talent.

An even more hyperbolic display is provided toward the end of the speech, when the President addresses four young people present in the chamber, and presented as manifestations of the 'American dream' of personal and national achievement, which is in turn linked by the speaker with the 'enterprise' of SDI. This section both mentions and presupposes values, needs, beliefs, attributes.

- (5) After all we've done so far, let no one say that this nation cannot reach the destiny of our dreams. America believes, America is ready, America can win the race to the future—and we shall.
- (5) The American dream is a song of hope that rings through the night winter air; vivid, tender music that warms our hearts when the least among us
- (6) aspire to the greatest things: to venture a daring enterprise; to unearth new beauty in music, literature, and art; to discover a new universe inside a tiny silicon chip or a single human cell.
- (5) We see the dream coming true in the spirit of discovery of Richard Cavoli. All his life he's been enthralled by the mysteries of medicine. And, Richard, we know that the experiment that you began in high school was
- (5) launched and lost last week, yet our dream lives. And as long as it's real,
- (7) work of noble note will yet be done, work that could reduce the harmful
- (7) effect of X-rays on patients and enable astronomers to view the golden gateways of the farthest stars.
- (5) We see the dream glow in the towering talent of a 12-year-old, Tyrone Ford. A child prodigy of gospel music, he has surmounted personal adversity to become an accomplished pianist and singer. He also directs the chorus of three churches and has performed at the Kennedy Center. With
- (7) God as your composer, Tyrone, your music will be the music of angels.
- (5) We see the dream being saved by the courage of the 13-year-old Shelby
- (6) Butler, honor student and member of her school's safety patrol. Seeing another girl freeze in terror before an out-of-control school bus, she risked

her life and pulled her to safety. With bravery like yours, Shelby, Americans need never fear for our future.

- (5) And we see the dream born again in the joyful compassion of a 13-year-old, Trevor Ferrell. Two years ago, age 11, watching men and women bedding down in abandoned doorways—on television he was watching—Trevor left his suburban Philadelphia home to bring blankets and food to the helpless and homeless. And now 250 people help him fulfil his nightly vigil.
- (7) Trevor, yours is the spirit of brotherly love. Would you four stand up for a moment?
- (5) Thank you, thank you. You are heroes of our hearts. We look at you and know it's true: In this land of dreams fulfilled, where greater dreams may be imagined, nothing is impossible, no victory is beyond our reach, no glory will ever be too great

The allusion to religious values and practices is achieved through lexical choices (7), e.g. 'born again', 'golden gateways', marked word order ('work of noble note will yet be done'), and lexical as well as syntactic repetition, most noticeably at (5). The repetition of 'we see the dream' is associated with evangelical preaching style.

There is thus a concentration of stylistic effects evoking the 'common ground' presupposed as the background knowledge of hearers. This religious background is linked, syntactically and lexically, with certain secular values, beliefs, recent experiences and socio-political issues generally known in the contemporary political discourse. There are frequent evocations of individualism and heroism at (6). And these are in an off-record way linked to two other themes.

One is the individualist ethic and the private market ideology, which is presupposed in the presentation for applause of the boy who tended 'the helpless and homeless'. The alliterative phrase is not idle: it serves to restrict (off-record) the category of the homeless to those who cannot help themselves. But more important is the presupposed framework of values. For consider the possible implicatures of Reagan's presentation of this individual as an exemplar. In one frame of interpretation the implicature might be: this boy's work was inadequate and exposes the inadequacy of social provision for the homeless. But the preferred frame of reference, cued by Reagan's formulation: social provision is not necessary, the homeless are cared for by individual acts of charity. This interpretative frame of values is already elaborated in an earlier portion of the speech which dwells on the evils of 'dependency'.

The other theme is the *Challenger* disaster: Reagan alludes to an experiment launched with the space shuttle by the schoolboy Cavoli. This exemplar is used to reconstruct common national confidence. But there is also a link with the Star Wars theme, a theme which involves a major FTA, both with regard to the domestic and to the potential Soviet audiences.

Considerable effort is going into satisfying positive face in the sense of incorporating the mass audience as well as the four young individuals presented as its tokens. But there is a further dimension. Politeness theory claims that attention to face is deployed to mitigate FTAs. It is apparent

from the speech that the major FTA is Reagan's request to Congress to increase the armaments budget, specifically the SDI budget. The request is mitigated by references, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, to supposed common ground. The main technique in the examples discussed so far is off-record, but what is being addressed and/or constructed are positive face wants of communal identity.

(ii) *Pronouns*. Some of the examples in (i) may be seen as 'In-group identity markers'—classified by Brown and Levinson as positive politeness strategies. They may take the form, for instance, of pronouns, address forms, informality markers, dialect and register. The examples in (i) above include religious register. The use of the pronouns *we*, *us*, *our(s)* is particularly prominent in President Reagan's speeches as a means of constructing togetherness.⁹ All the pronouns used can be seen not just as a means of responding to face wants, but as a means of constructing a socio-political configuration. Some negative- as well as positive-face concerns are involved in the following analyses.

You has to be handled carefully, since its use may infringe on negative face, e.g. privacy. In the present example the primary addressee is evidently Congress. Constitutionally, President and Congress are separate and potentially opposed. When S refers to Congress as a body the potential face risk is mitigated by perspective shift and assertion of cooperation, for example:

... I want to salute you for your service to Congress and country. Here's to you.

I have *come* to review *with you* the progress of *our* nation, to speak of unfinished work, and to set *our* sights on the future. I am pleased to report the state of *our* Union . . .

Here the first 'you', 'your', 'to you' clearly pick out Mr Speaker, as we have seen. In 'review with *you*', however, it seems to me to be unclear whether this would be interpretable as referring to Mr Speaker or to the Congress as a body. At any rate the introduction of the report on the Union, a face-threatening act (cf. the bringing of news), is mitigated by a shift, via this ambiguous 'with you', to 'our'. The latter is evidently intended as inclusive in the sense that it includes not only the President and his immediate audience, but the entire nation.

The strategic use of pronouns can seek to assimilate or exclude others to a social universe, as well as respond to existing face needs. Since this speech is also a media display for a remote audience, an integration of individuals and groups (e.g. the President and Congress, President and the nation) can be *represented* without being immediately verifiable for the audience.

To some extent the pronominal universe for the President is constituted by the doctrine of the separation of powers. It is also politically affected by the relationship of executive and legislature together vis-a-vis the 'American people'. The presidential problematic in discourse is to preserve yet bridge these domains.

The personal pronouns have as their interpretable referents: President

Reagan, Mr Speaker, Congress, the government, the American people, the victims of the *Challenger* disaster, political prisoners in certain countries, the four young persons present in the chamber. The pronouns serve to pick out these individuals and groups in two ways: to define them as addressee (*you*) or as referent (*she, he, it, they*); to constitute and differentiate groupings either including or excluding the speaker. This is not to say that the pronoun use is either constant or clear throughout. These elements and their relationships are summarized in Figure 1.

The broken line in Figure 1 represents the physical, spatial limits of the Congress chamber, the continuous lines the putative social groupings produced or reproduced by the pronouns in discourse. A and P (and G) are in the wider world linked by the media (some of A are of course also in the chamber). When Reagan shifts from one pronoun to another in referring to the same individual (S), as he does skilfully for example in addressing the four juveniles, this is indicated in parentheses.

One thing this makes clear is that the President belongs to two *we* groups. He is petitioning Congress and therefore shares common ground with that body; but he still expresses separation in the relation between government and Congress, using a *we* interpretable exclusively. Equally important is the relationship of Congress to the American people, and the government to the American people. On the other hand it is often unclear when *we* can be interpreted as referring to Congress, it is often unclear whether it can also be interpreted by hearers as referring to the American people, and vice versa. The 'common ground' Reagan is creating pronominally is indicated in the intersection of the *we*-spaces in the diagram. Politically the effect is (a) to overcome the separation with Congress, (b) to claim identity with 'the people', and (c) to have this constructed presidential-congressional-national unity mediated not only to domestic but also to foreign hearers.

It is also clear that Gorbachev is constructed as outside the *we*-group in this pronominal space. An important corollary of the in-group aspect of positive face strategies is that it also defines the out-group. This is not made explicit in the original Brown-Levinson framework, but it becomes significant in speech contexts which have both a domestic audience and a mediated foreign audience. The *we* is then exclusive for the latter, as potentially are attributes, values and beliefs mentioned for positive-face construction. A supplementary tendency is to make a particular foreign policy stance a linked part of the constructed national *we*. Reagan did in fact so link domestic and arms control issues in this speech in the following way.

The opening of the speech contains this sentence:

We pause together to mourn and honor the valor of our seven Challenger heroes. And I hope that we are now ready to do what they would want us to do: Go forward America and reach for the stars . . .

Since the space-shuttle disaster was a major blow to national pride much verbal effort goes into reconstructing it. But reasserting national pioneering and technological values also serves to consolidate Reagan's personal negotiating stance vis-a-vis the Soviet demand to drop the space weapons pro-

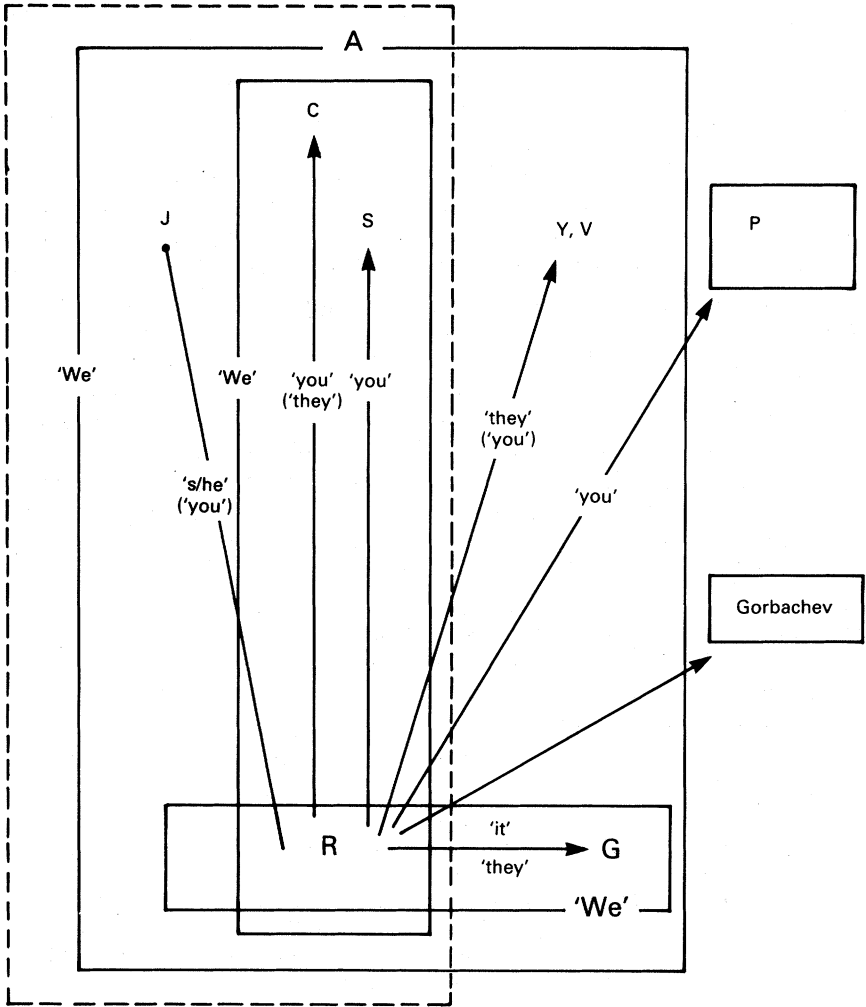


FIGURE 1. Pronoun use and relationships between individuals and groups

KEY

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| C: Congress | P: Politically approved hearers |
| S: Mr Speaker | J: the four juveniles (Cavoli, Ford, Butler, Ferrell) |
| R: Reagan | Y: the younger generation |
| G: Government | V: Victims of <i>Challenger</i> accident |
| A: the American people | |

gramme. Later in the speech the space weapons programme is mentioned along with other national attributes and values: SDI is presented as an intrinsic part of the value system, alongside love of family, private enterprise, freedom, justice and peace. This is a message to the Soviet Union as

well as to the American people, as is suggested by a momentary shift to an objectivizing reference:

So, yes, *this nation* remains fully committed to America's space program.

This phrasing can be analysed as a negative rather than, or conceivably as well as, a positive strategy. Reagan is performing an FTA with respect to at least two audiences. (a) With respect to the Congress (and the American public), he is stating his own policy, his own commitment to SDI, which, as he knows, is increasingly opposed by Congress. The 'this nation' formulation, as distinct from, for example, 'I' or even 'we', avoids direct reference to the accountable agent. It may also be seen as a positive strategy with respect to the same audience, insofar as the sentence expresses what is presupposed to be a common-ground commitment to certain goals and values. (b) With respect to the potential Soviet audience this is also an FTA. For the Soviet Union, either SDI was a new weapon with which it would be unacceptably costly to compete; or it was an *offer* (Reagan said it would be available 'at cost' to Soviets), in which case it was an imposition on negative face wants. In using the depersonalized reference, Reagan is claiming a national commitment to the policy, and simultaneously softening a statement that he is adhering to his negotiating position. The phrase 'this nation' also suggests diplomatic register. For all these reasons the phrase appears to be intended for external as well as internal consumption.

After this there is a return to *we*, which outside observers may interpret exclusively:

We're going forward with our shuttle flights. We're going forward to build our space station. And we're going forward with research on a new Orient Express

And the same technology transforming our lives can solve the greatest problem of the 20th century. A security shield can one day render nuclear weapons obsolete . . . Let us speak of our deepest longing for the future: to leave our children a land that is free and just and a world at peace. It is my hope that our fireside summit in Geneva and Mr Gorbachev's upcoming visit to America can lead to a more stable relationship. Surely no people on Earth hate war or love peace more than we Americans.

In such contexts, it is often difficult to distinguish between the redressing of positive face—here with respect to the American people, and the presentation of positive face—here, both with respect to Reagan's presentation of himself to Congress and other Americans, and his presentation of America to the outside world, especially to possible Soviet observers.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

The texts

The texts discussed reflect just one episode in the diplomacy preceding the signing of the INF Treaty in December 1987. The following suggestions and working hypotheses emerge.

First, both leaders have to deal with threats to their own positive and

negative face. The threat to positive face can be thought of in terms of threat to personal political credibility, political consensus and national identity in the domestic arena, and in terms of the fear of exclusion from the international community; the threat to negative face can be thought of in terms of threat to national security. Both leaders have to perform FTAs affecting the positive and negative face of their several audiences.

Second, in this episode there seem to be differences between the leaders' styles. The analysis was qualitative rather than statistical, but the following hypotheses are suggested. In Reagan's speech, positive strategies appear to predominate. Though knowingly overheard by an international audience, the President addresses needs of credibility, consensus and national identity. The foreign policy position on SDI is closely linked to these needs. In general the orientation is to self, to the national group, and it personalizes. In Gorbachev's speech off-record and negative strategies predominate. Though addressing the Central Committee, there are several FTAs addressing the US overhearers, and Gorbachev is more obviously using this forum for international communication. The orientation is to the US and to world security issues. The style objectivizes rather than personalizes.

Third, it is possible that Gorbachev's off-record and negative devices constitutes a more fluid and more easily modifiable position than Reagan's ideologically committed discourse. Off-record and negative devices may also serve another of Gorbachev's major discourse problems—that of reformulating Soviet ideological discourse while maintaining credibility. Reagan's commitment to SDI was so closely interwoven with positive face issues that it was difficult to abandon, and in fact was abandoned only when it was taken out of Reagan's hands by Congress. A feature of Gorbachev's career has been the ability to change course without apparently losing face.

The Brown–Levinson framework

The Brown–Levinson framework has been modified in the following way.

First, the dyadic individualism of the Brown–Levinson formulation has been extended to include political leaders addressing collective but diverse audiences, and state-to-state communication indirectly mediated by symbolic political representatives. An important modification of the Brown–Levinson framework is to acknowledge variable interpretive possibilities available to different hearers and overhearers, and to acknowledge that in the context of national and international politics speakers are both aware of this fact, and either accommodate it or exploit it.

Second, the concept of strategy has been given a political sense as a consequence of drawing out the inherently political sense of the notions of claiming common ground (positive face) and avoidance of intrusion into the other's ground or territory (negative face). These two aspects can be regarded as goal-oriented *strategies* of social and political action. The linguistic formulations related to them can, however, be seen as *tactics*—as local means, moves or manoeuvres, constrained by factors of time, place and participants and steered by long-range, goal-oriented or strategic ends.

In other words, I have situated the Brown–Levinson ‘strategies’ in the frame of social action in general, and recategorized politeness formulations themselves as ‘tactics’.

Third, this modification makes it possible to relate the description of politeness phenomena to critical social theory. It also means that while many of the linguistic formulations of politeness can be described and classified out of context, their strategic and tactical import can be described only *in* context. More accurately, they can be *contested* only in context, since analysts seeking to describe such import are already acting within a system of values and beliefs. Discourse analysis itself is thus a form of social action, even if marginal, which addresses validity claims of speakers.

Fourth, the study of politeness phenomena helps to explain how strategic goals can be aimed at and sometimes achieved through verbal tactics. Politeness formulations are universal and pervasive in everyday intercourse, largely conventionalized and often benign. The preferred response is reciprocal politeness, without critical challenge. These social conventions and psychological habituations facilitate the use of politeness formulations in situations where power is skewed, facts are dissimulated, or goals kept out of sight.

Finally, attention should be given to the military metaphor. ‘Strategy’ and ‘tactics’ imply conflict. However, politeness phenomena can and do also have a co-operative function, as has been noted. Thus claiming common ground and avoiding incursion can also constitute, in certain circumstances, the reality of common ground and non-incursion. However, those circumstances are conditioned in two ways. Either the distribution of resources, power, access to information and platform is of no consequence to the interaction in question, as in some phatic and diplomatic communication. Or it is of consequence, but is not sufficiently asymmetrical to render claims of common ground and respect for personal boundaries open to charges of insincerity or dissimulation. Politeness has both a conflictual and a co-operative face.

It is no accident and not a mere etymological curiosity that politeness can be seen as verbal action within a polity and between polities, that to be polite is to be politic, to be politic is to be political, and to be political is to have policy. The discourse analyst has to be impolite enough to disclose these connections.

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PAUL CHILTON is Senior Lecturer in the Department of French Studies, University of Warwick, UK. From 1988–90 he was visiting fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University,

California. In addition to work on French Renaissance literature he has published articles on critical linguistics, a collection of essays entitled *Orwellian Language and the Media*, and (as editor and contributor) *Language and the Nuclear Arms Debate*. He is currently preparing a book on metaphor and international relations.

NOTES

1. For critical reviews of Sperber and Wilson, cf. Mey and Talbot (1986) and Pateman (1986).
2. On this argument, cf. Trevor Pateman, *Essays on Language, Mind and Politics* (forthcoming), also *UEA Papers in Linguistics*.
3. Mikhail Gorbachev, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, pp. 86–7. As usual in such citations the translation situation needs to be accounted for. It is possible there are significant differences between Russian and English politeness phenomena. The point here, however, is not to compare source and translation. The practice of mass-mediation of translated text creates context of meaning for anglophone audiences that can be considered independently. The issue here is off-record meanings perceivable as such by anglophone hearers and readers.
4. This applies in the diplomatic conversations between states, just as it does in face-to-face conversations. A classic case is Lloyd George's 'Mansion House' threat to Germany in 1911, issued because of German 'insolence' in failing to answer a British communiqué for 17 days. In the present example, Gorbachev enables hearers to figure out a much longer length of time.
5. Brown and Levinson (1978: 75).
6. Cf. Pateman (forthcoming), *Essays on Language, Mind and Politics*.
7. *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*. Washington, Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 135–40.
8. Cf. Fairclough's notion of 'synthetic personalization' (Fairclough, 1989: 217–18).
9. On the role of pronouns in relations of power and solidarity cf. Brown and Gilman (1972). In the speech in question the frequencies are:

<i>it, its</i>	4	(includes processes, facts, etc.)
<i>she, her, hers</i>	4	(one of these has 'America' as referent)
<i>he, him, his</i>	6	
<i>they, them, their, theirs</i>	20	(mainly have American people as referent)
<i>you, your, yours</i>	27	
<i>I, me, my</i>	39	
<i>we, us, our, ours</i>	154	
	254	

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