

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

“The Orville” (MacFarlane, 2017) is a sci-fi comedy drama television series airing on Hulu set in the 25th century. It features the lives of the crew members aboard an exploratory space vessel called the USS Orville. The ship and its crews are under the banner of the Planetary Union, an interstellar federation of spacefaring species. Being an exploratory vessel, the ship is tasked with exploring the cosmos, charting the space map, and collecting various data for the Planetary Union. The story mainly consists of the ship’s crews’ adventures into the various parts of the galaxy. These adventures may lead to many curiosities, danger, or encounters with an enemy faction. The drama parodies and pays homage to many popular contemporary sci-fi literatures that shape the current trend of the sci-fi landscape such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, and *Mass Effect*.

Similar to *Star Trek*, the series features many different alien civilizations with their own unique identities, cultures and values. The Planetary Union is a federation of spacefaring post-scarcity societies that universally holds highly egalitarian values. The Moclan, one of its client states, is a militarist society that holds highly patriarchal values which deems any feminine characteristics as abhorrent and threatens the survival of the species. Another client state, The Xelayan, is a highly academic technocratic pacifist that deemed the military as bad. The union’s sworn enemy, The Krill, is an expansionist theocratic regime that deemed every other species as a heathen deserving to be conquered. Furthermore, The Kaylons are an outsider faction consisting of machine intelligence incapable of holding any values.

The series mainly explores how people of different backgrounds interact with each other. Relating to this research, interactions between the crew members of the ship show many behaviors that can be classified as a form of politeness strategy. The Planetary Union is a federation of many different spacefaring societies with each having unique cultural values. Members of these spacefaring societies comprise the crew of the Union military, bringing their cultural backgrounds with them to Union ships, outposts with one of such ships being the main star of the series, the USS Orville. These differing cultural backgrounds mean that each person’s culture affects the way in which each person uses their respective politeness strategies to interact with others aboard the ship. Furthermore, as the USS Orville works under the

military of the Planetary Union, the ship is bound to have military style leadership inside. This style of leadership means that there is a somewhat strict and tangible hierarchy on crew members, a factor in how they use politeness strategies. Additionally, another factor to be accounted for is character's personality, as it influences their decision in choosing one's politeness strategy. Someone who is down-to-earth will make every effort to bridge the gap between their subordinates whereas someone who is arrogant will make every effort to make one instead. Finally, in relation to leadership, one's experience with leadership will affect the use of politeness strategies

In the series, the mid-level exploratory vessel USS Orville is currently led by Ed Mercer, a captain transferred to lead the ship after its former captain George Griffith retired at the start of the series. As a captain, Ed Mercer is depicted as a person who can lead and inspire his men professionally, oftentimes trying to bridge the gap between him and his fellow crew. However, when he is not available, either due to him doing terrestrial operations on the orbited planet, being kidnapped, or other reasons, there are two "substitute" captains in line to take command of the ship namely Bortus and Alara. Bortus, holding a higher rank than Alara, is usually the one responsible to lead the ship in Ed Mercer's absence whereas Alara is only present when Bortus is unavailable. This dynamic explains why there is a contrast of leadership experience between Bortus and Alara as Bortus is depicted to be experienced while Alara is depicted to be inexperienced.

As the default preferred substitute captain of the USS Orville from the two, Bortus holds the rank of second officer in the ship. His period of command is depicted in episode 1 (Old Wounds) and episode 4 (If the Stars Should Appear). He is shown as very competent in leadership as evident in him leading the USS Orville to safety through a battle with a remarkably stronger Krill destroyer in the first episode of the series (Old Wounds). Being a Moclan, he was exposed to a highly-patriarchal society and values. However, he is shown to be open to non-patriarchal, egalitarian ideas. On the other hand, Alara Khitan works as a chief security officer in the USS Orville. Her period of command is the main topic of episode 2 (Command Performance), which unlike Bortus, she is depicted as inexperienced, often showing doubts and incompetence as shown when she hesitantly ordered her crew to fetch a device in outer space only for it to blow up near the hangar bay. Her unwillingness to lead is evident when she asked Dr. Claire Finn to forge a reason (declare her as a drug addict) to make her seem unfit for leadership. Aside from her inexperience and unwillingness, she is a Xelayan, a species which prides itself as being "academic" and abhors militarism.

There are three people who have led The USS Orville; however, this study omits Ed Mercer as an object of this study due to his upbringing and competence. One of the many factors influencing the use of politeness strategies is culture (Al-Khawaldeh, 2015), in which Ed Mercer comes from a culture similar to Alara which believes in pacifism over militarism. The contrast between Alara and Bortus's leadership experience and cultural upbringing as a factor influencing the usage of politeness is the main subject of this study as this paper attempts to address what characteristics of politeness used between the characters depicted as confident and unconfident in their leadership.

1.2 Research Problems

There are three research problems raised in this study:

1. What politeness strategies are used by Alara and Bortus as substitute captains in their dialogue with crew members?
2. What are the factors that influence the politeness strategy used by Alara and Bortus?
3. How can politeness strategies affect the success of leadership of the characters?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective to this study is to discuss the types of politeness strategy used by Alara and Bortus during the period of their command using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. This study also aims to understand what factors that influence them picking one politeness strategy over the other. This study also seeks to examine how can politeness strategies affect the success of leadership of the characters according to Greenleaf's (1977) theory of Servant Leadership.

1.4 Previous Studies

There are many studies that have investigated "The Orville" from various perspectives. These studies analyzed "The Orville" through the lens of many critical theories such as post-structuralism, feminism, and other theories. These include works by Rudow (2021), and Putignano (2021). Many of the studies regarding the series were published recently, and thus they are considerably up-to-date. This is due to the fact that the TV series "The Orville" is rather new with its first season airing in 2017. However, there is an apparent lack of studies

that focuses on the linguistics perspective of this series. Future research of this series on the subject matter of linguistics is highly recommended as there are many interactions that can be analyzed through linguistic theory in this series. Despite this lack of research in “The Orville”, there are some similar studies of other literary works that implement politeness theories.

Putignano (2021) examined how “The Orville” carried feminist philosophy and how it helped to socialise feminism to the general public. The writer found that there are three themes that “The Orville” brought on the table namely reappropriation of women's worth, the direct consequence of the rehabilitation of women's identity, and reaction of women against their erasure by the patriarchy. On the first topic, namely the reappropriation of women's worth. The writer draws from the series an instance from an episode titled “about a girl” which initially shows that Bortus' and Klyden's child was born a female. It was universally thought that the Moclan species are an all male species, however it is later revealed that the Moclan species just despise femininity, deeming them as taboo and as such they forced sex reassignment surgery on all born females. In order to comply with Moclan cultural traditions, Bortus asked Dr. Finn to do a sex reassignment surgery on the baby so that she will “conform the child and make her male”. However, after watching a film, he changed his mind and believed that her daughter may be destined for greatness in the future even though she is a female. On the topic of the rehabilitation of women identity is raised in the instance of Haveena, a female Moclan outcast who is the real identity behind a renowned novelist Gondus Elden, thus proving that females are capable. The third topic is feminine erasure from history as could be seen in how Moclan has been covering up the existence of Moclan women. From the topics she found that “The Orville” as a pop culture medium has the capability of doing two things in helping feminism. One is representation towards females as there are many in “The Orville” which hold powerful positions in an egalitarian sense just like the men. Secondly, it helps in changing the normalized genre, making future works less likely to contain sexist jokes or storylines.

Rudow (2021) traced the ethical themes “The Orville” depicted as he hypothesized that Seth MacFarlane used “The Orville” as a vehicle to combat dogmatic thinking considering MacFarlane is an openly vocal atheist. At first, “The Orville” shows how the adherence of religious dogmas not only keep cultures from seeing the truth, but they also perpetuate moral wrongs as such, reason is the savior of dogma. He presented that this theme is evident in 3 different instances in the series. Society In Mad Idolatry (S1, E12) who worships Kelly, the ship's second-in-command after she healed a girl in the planet, The Regorians (S2, E5) whose faith abhors anyone who was born under a certain star and The Krills whose religion considers

every other race who doesn't worship their God 'Avis' as inferior. He further explained on each three instances further, that despite knowing the truth after Kelly's intervention, priests of society in Mad Idolatry still proselytize the religion to save power for themselves. Furthermore, the Gregorians almost killed two crew members of "The Orville" due to their beliefs whereas The Krills have become a sworn enemy to the Planetary Union due to their supremacist religion. The statement that reason is the savior of dogma is further emphasized with the progression depicted in the society of Mad Idolatry in which the more reason society has, the less they follow the religion. Contrary to his hypothesis however, he finds that "The Orville" also presented what danger unfeeling reason is capable of as in the instance when Ed was faced with the situation of Bortus' child transition. In Bortus' culture, femininity is abhorred, as such Bortus' child who is born female has to be transitioned into male. Ed's reasoning should respect the traditions of each of his crew, however, his conscience would not allow such mutilation of a child.

Other previous studies referenced are studies that implement similar topics and theory that the writer uses. Siwi (2020). analyzed the politeness strategies used by the character Elanor Young and Nick Young in "Crazy Rich Asians". The theory used by Siwi is known as Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy theory which is identical to the theory that the writer uses. The subject of this study also falls under the category of film, which is the genre that the writer's subject ("The Orville") is most closely related to. She found that the characters used all four of the politeness strategies. However, the most used politeness strategy is positive politeness, followed in order by negative politeness, off-record politeness and bald on record politeness.

Furthermore, Mulyono (2016) examined the politeness principle used by the characters in a cartoon movie titled "Stand by Me Doraemon". It serves as reference to alternative theory regarding politeness that is other than Brown and Levinson's Politeness strategy theory. This paper explores the use of politeness maxims in utterances that has its base from the politeness principle theory. These maxims include but are not limited to tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy maxim. Politeness principle also has a politeness scale which includes formality scale, hesitancy scale, and equality scale. It was found that in the cartoon movie "Stand by Me Doraemon" there are 25 politeness principles namely 1 tact maxim, 3 generosity maxim, 6 approbation maxim, 1 modesty maxim, 2 agreement maxim, 3 sympathy maxim, 2 formality scale, 4 hesitancy scale, and 3 equality scale.

Hardiyani (2011) analyzed the politeness strategies used by characters in the film *Ugly Truth*. Using descriptive analysis technique, she analyzed characters' utterances with Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness as its theoretical basis, which is identical to the theoretical basis that the writer intends to use. It is found that the characters in the film used all four politeness strategies. This study found status in the workplace either lower or higher will not become a main factor in choosing one's politeness strategy. People of the lower status can use an equal politeness strategy as the people of higher status. However, to ensure good communication, it is better for people of lower status to use polite utterances.

Septyaningsih (2007) analyzed the positive politeness strategy used in the film "In Good Company". There she analyzed the kinds of positive politeness used, and the factors influencing its usage. This research is only focusing on one of the four of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory which means the scope is narrower compared to other studies in the list. The study is categorized as a descriptive qualitative study and used purposive sampling as its sampling technique. It is concluded that there are 15 strategies of positive politeness used by the characters in the movie. These are attending to the hearer (4 data), exaggerating approval (1 data), intensifying interest to the hearer interests (1 data), using in-group identity markers (4 data), seeking agreement (1 data), avoiding disagreement (5 data), raising common ground (2 data), joking to put hearer at ease (4 data), asserting the speaker's knowledge of and concerning for the hearer's wants (1 data), offering / promising (1 data), being optimistic (1 data), including both speaker and hearer in the activity (1 data), giving or asking for reasons (2 data), asserting reciprocal exchange/this for that (1 data) and giving gifts to hearer (1 data).

Nasihin (2014) conducted a study on Politeness Strategies Used by the Main Character in the movie "Black Swan". This study used a qualitative approach by utilizing document analysis. Nasihin used Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory to examine the film. He found that Nina performed all four types of politeness strategies in the film. He discovered that Nina has 78 utterances in the film that utilized politeness strategies. The most used politeness strategy is positive politeness which was used 47 times (60% of all politeness strategies used), followed in order by bald-on-record which was used 12 times (15%), negative politeness which was used 10 times (13%), and off-record politeness which was used 9 times (12%). Nina's generous usage of positive politeness is caused by her wish to maintain relationships with other characters and show cooperation.

A study conducted by Noviani (2014) on politeness strategies in the film *Uptown Girls* analyzed politeness strategies used in utterances by the characters in the film. This research is descriptive qualitative that uses Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory. This research aims to identify the politeness strategy used by the main character, and describe the politeness principle that influences the preference of one's politeness strategy. Sources are pulled from two places, first is a website that contains the script of the movie and second is from books and journals. She made a discovery that the main characters in *Uptown Girls* mostly used positive politeness strategy as they are used 17 times. The second position is held by negative politeness which was used 10 times. The third position is held by bald on record which was used 9 times. The final position is held by off record which was used only 5 times. Positive politeness becomes the most used politeness strategy because Molly is trying her best to reduce gap between her and Ray so that they can be closer together. Beyond that, it is also discovered that tact maxim is the most applied in the character's utterances with it being used 15 times. The second position is held by agreement maxim which was used 11 times. The third position is held by generosity maxim which was used 7 times. The last position is held by approbation maxim which was used only 6 times. The last position is held by modesty maxim which was used only 2 times. The reason why tact maxim is most used is because Molly is concerned to not cost others (like Ray) to show that she appreciates and respects the hearer (like Ray).

Wibowo (2017) analyzed Bruce Wayne's politeness strategies in the Movie 'Batman Begins'. This study used Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies theory. This study investigates a character that uses different politeness strategies to create two different images/persona of himself. This study aims to differentiate between the politeness strategies that the main character used when assuming a superhero persona and when not assuming a superhero persona.

Lam, C. (2011) in his research of politeness in student-team emails analyzed how a leader's usage of linguistic politeness in emails affects trust in their subordinates. The study revealed that the use of linguistic politeness positively affected the trust of subordinates on their leader compared to those who did not use them. It also found specifics such as that politeness which mitigates FTA but does not add semantic content pairs well with directive speech acts whereas those who do pair well with indirect speech acts.

A study by Liden, et al. (2008) on the topic of Servant Leadership found that using the 7-factor model of Greenleaf's Servant Leadership theory in a pool of an organizational sample

of 182 individuals, servant leadership makes a unique contribution at the individual level beyond that of the usual transformational leadership. Servant leadership was revealed to be a good measuring tool to subordinate organizational commitment and in-role performance.

Abu Bakar, H., and McCann, R. M. (2015) found that in data of 510 employees, 65 workgroups, and 3 organizations in Malaysia, servant leadership affected group member's performance positively. The writer believes that Servant Leadership is consistent with the culture of politeness in Malaysia namely "budi pekerti". which states that elders are expected to interact with compassion, wisdom and demonstrate a participative style of leadership while the young are expected to return it with greater sense of respect and humility. The research revealed that this concept of "budi pekerti" also works well in leader-subordinate dyadic relationships as evident in that servant leadership's positive effects are more pronounced when leader-member's interactions are high in politeness. Unlike other research in the field where the study of "politeness" culture in servant leadership applies liberal values of the west this study serves to compare how it works in the east which shows a degree of cross-cultural validity to servant leadership.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is pioneering the examination of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness in relation to leadership in science fiction. Understanding the link between politeness theory and contrasting depiction of leadership experience will provide new insights on the characteristics of politeness use between people of high and low leadership experience. This linguistic comparison offers new insights in the field of pragmatics, specifically in the theory of politeness as it analyzes not only the proportion but also the factors influencing its use in relation to leadership. In its analysis, this study's use of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theoretical aspects such as "FTA" and "faces" can serve as a reference to students conducting future studies in the fields of politeness. Moreover, this comparison will also help contribute to the ongoing debate on what kind of leader is better at reaching organizational goals by identifying linguistic patterns indicated in a fictional depiction of competence in leadership. A fictional depiction albeit not factive (not real) is intrinsically a form of "ideal" by creating "possible worlds" of the writer (Kimmel, 1996), as such "The Orville" depicted the writer's (and in effect, western societies') "ideal" leadership in characters depicted as competent leaders. Additionally, This study can be used as reference by readers on how the application

of pragmatics concepts in literature provide additional depth on character development and believability in a literature.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is mainly concerned with how the 2 “substitute captains” of the USS Orville interact in superior-subordinate settings, namely Bortus and Alara Khitan during their period of command using the politeness strategy theory. This means that parties and characters affiliated with planetary union outside of the two characters of the USS Orville during their period of command will not be included in this study. Utterances used as the subject of the study are only limited to that classifiable under the politeness strategies theory, and only during the period of command. This means that every utterance which has no FTA (no “hearer” such as monologue), or during the period of which the aforementioned characters are relieved of command will not be the subject of this paper’s analysis.