

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Each sub-chapter in this chapter explains a specific purpose that is related to the research objectives. Sub-chapter 2.1.1 is meant for research objective 1, focusing on the most dominant types of adjacency pairs in the conversation between Harvey Specter and Michael Ross. Additionally, sub-chapter 2.1.2 is meant for objective 2, which explores Harvey Specter and Michael Ross's politeness strategies in their conversations. Lastly, the sub-chapter 2.1.3 is used to explore the influence of power relations to analyse how the power relations between the characters Harvey Specter and Michael Ross are negotiated through adjacency pair roles and politeness strategies. This theory will discuss a combination of the analysis of research questions 1 and 2 to answer the third research question.

2.1.1 Adjacency Pairs

The theory of adjacency pairs in linguistics is about two consecutive utterances that are produced by different speakers and are functionally related to each other (Levinson, 1983). Each pair consists of a first-partner component (FPP) and a second-partner component (SPP), which is expected to respond to the utterance from the FPP. Levinson (1983) also emphasised that adjacency pairs are the basic structure in the conversation because it enables to create a turn-taking between the first speaker and the second speaker. Adjacency pairs also create a function to

understand the performed social actions that occur through language, such as requesting, refusing, and offering. The relationship between the FPP and SPP is normative, which means that when the FPP has been spoken, the other speakers are socially obligated to give a certain response as SPP. Thus, to maintain the regularity of the conversation.

Structurally, adjacency pairs have several characterizations. Firstly, adjacency pairs consist of two parts that are produced by different speakers. Secondly, the two parts of the utterances are consecutive and adjacent in conversation. Thirdly, the first parts create relevant responses for the second parts. Fourthly, there is a preference organization, a tendency for certain responses that are more desirable or preferred, such as accepting an offer, while the other responses are considered dispreferred, such as rejecting an offer. They are usually accompanied by politeness strategies to indicate an excuse or delay. Therefore, the adjacency pairs are not only used to describe the structure of a conversation, but also affect the social relationship, relative power, and the use of politeness strategies between the participants.

Levinson (1983) identified the types of adjacency pairs that are commonly found in conversations. These types can be used for an analytical framework in pragmatics research, mainly to examine the dialogue interactions in film, series, and negotiation conversations.

2.1.1.1 Greeting – Greeting

These types of pairs occurred when one speaker greeted another, and then the second speaker responded to the greeting. The main function is to open the interaction and build a social relationship between the speakers. This type often shows social equality, but also can determine the social distance or formality.

2.1.1.2 Question – Answer (Expected/Non-Expected)

This adjacency type is the most common pair in the conversation. A question in the first pair of parts requires an answer from the second pair of parts. This structure is crucial for building the flow of information and can show the power relations, especially when one participant dominates the flow with a question.

2.1.1.3 Request – Acceptance/Refusal

In this type of pair, a request is usually followed by acceptance (preferred) or refusal (dispreferred), and mostly along with an explanation using politeness strategies. This type is important in a negotiation conversation because it reflects interpersonal strategy.

2.1.1.4 Offer/Invite – Acceptance/Refusal

This type is similar to the request–acceptance type, but its focus is on the offer or invitation. The response of acceptance tends to be direct. On the other side, the refusal usually uses more refined language.

2.1.1.5 Assessment – Agreement/Disagreement

This pair occurs whenever the first speaker is giving an assessment, opinion, or statement, and the second speaker responds to it with approval (preferred response) or disapproval (dispreferred response) of the first speaker's assessment.

2.1.1.6 Blame – Admission/Denial

In this pair, the complaint or the blame from FPP is often followed by the apology or denial by the SPP. This structure can show the social position and social responsibilities in the interaction.

2.1.1.7 Command – Compliance/Refusal

This type of pair showed a stronger hierarchical relationship, because a command demands compliance. If SPP responds to it with a compliance considered the preferred response, and a refusal response is considered a dispreferred response that shows resistance to the power of FPP.

2.1.2 Politeness Strategy

Politeness is the theory about the idea of a person's "face" that explains the representations of an individual's social status or image as perceived by others (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The "face" itself was divided into positive face, which is the positive self-image or personality that people want maintained, the desire to be liked, appreciated, and approved of. Meanwhile, negative face is a personal territory or people's freedom of action, the desire to be free from imposition or distraction. Speaking to the others approximately needs to consider the opponent's "face" and their relationship with the others. This theory explains that every interaction has the potential to result in face-threatening acts (FTAs), whereas someone's actions or words might undermine another's face, such as giving a refusal, which can encourage the need for polite speech to reduce the potential damage to someone's image (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), social interaction will get tense if the speaker makes a statement threatening someone's face. People typically respond in social interactions as though others respect their self-image expectations. The Face Threatening Act (FTA) occurs when a speaker behaves in a way that threatens other people's expectations of their self-image. These actions generally involve verbal and non-verbal actions, such as tone, spoken words, and even body gestures. Moreover, the interpersonal relationship and the power dynamics will be affected as a result of this dispute.

This approach is used in analyzing every utterance found in adjacency pairs, focusing on analyzing how language strategies are used to reduce FTA and how these strategies can assert the writerity of the power structure that has been formed and be negotiated. Consequently, the frequency with which these two figures apply language strategies can reveal patterns of strategy that correlate with their relative positions of power. There are four main types of politeness strategies, each with its own sub-strategies. The following is an explanation alongside examples taken directly from Brown & Levinson (1987):

2.1.2.1 Bald On-Record

As explained by Brown and Levinson (1987), the bald-on-record politeness strategy is the most direct. Bald-on-record is aiming to shame, intimidate, or make the others 'faces feel threatened. For the result, the bald-on-record is usually only heard between close-relationship conversations, such as between the superior and their subordinates. Bald-on-record usually occurs in several circumstances, such as direct orders, urgency, sympathetic advice, and granting permission for something

requested. In this strategy, there are some sub-strategies, which are: 1) Urgency/Desperation, 2) Speaker-Focused Interaction, 3) Closeness, 4) Direct ordering/commanding, 5) Direct impoliteness, 6) Requesting/asking, 7) Warning/advice. For instance, "*Open the door!*" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It could possibly threaten the hearer's positive face if the hearer has a higher position than the speaker. This strategy could lead to discomfort, which can lead to ruin the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

2.1.2.2 Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a strategy of paying attention to the positive self-image in the hearer by reinforcing a good relationship with others. People tend to use a positive politeness strategy to communicate their needs, desires, and attention. As Brown and Levinson (1987) state, this kind of strategy is considered impolite. This strategy has fifteen sub-strategies, which are: 1) Notice and attend to the hearer, 2) Exaggerate (interest, approval with the hearer), 3) Intensify interest to the hearer, 4) Use in-group identity markers, 5) Seek agreement, 6) Avoid disagreement (white lies or pretending to agree), 7) Presuppose or assert common ground, 8) Joke, 9) Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge or concern for hearer's wants, 10) Offer or promise, 11) Be optimistic, 12) Include both speaker and hearer (we and us), 13) Give or ask for reason, 14) Assume or assert reciprocity, 15) Give gifts to hearer (sympathy and cooperation). For example, "*Hey, mate!*" The use of the address form "*mate*" can show us to some extent, the sense of friendliness. However, it might threaten someone's positive face if the hearer finds it assertive.

2.1.2.3 Negative Politeness

Negative politeness strategy is used for minimizing or avoiding threats to the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This strategy uses indirect language and hedging to soften some requests or demands. Therefore, it can identify the social distance and unequal power between the people who use it. Even though one considers using an apology or indirect language to soften the intention, in certain situations, it can cause some awkwardness. Therefore, the speaker uses a negative politeness strategy if they want to sound more polite than we would using a positive politeness strategy. This strategy has ten sub-strategies to point out the formality, hesitation, and indirectness, which are: 1) Be conventionally indirect, 2) Question and hedges, 3) Be pessimistic, 4) Minimise the imposition, 5) Give deference (Sir, Ma'a, Your Honor), 6) Apologize, (7) Impersonalize both speaker and hearer, 8) State the FTA as a general rule, 9) Nominalize, 10) Record it as the party who bears the debt (*"I owe you big apologies"*). For example, *"Could you pass the salt?"* The utterance contains coercion and respect for the hearer, which we can assume that the speaker and the hearer barely know each other, so it helps to minimize the imposition.

2.1.2.4 Off-Record

The strategy of off-record is usually considered as an indirect speech act and is often used to show their criticisms or complaints. The strategy allows speakers to employ implicit or deceptive language tactics to assist the hearer in elaborating the intentions in a certain context (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This strategy allows the speaker to avoid their obligation to threatening acts, so they can apply this

strategy and let the hearer choose the response. Off-record differentiate fifteen sub-strategies, such as 1) Giving hints, 2) Giving association clues, 3) Presuppose, 4) Understate, 5) Oversate, 6) Use tautologies (obvious truth), 7) Use contradictions, 8) Be ironic, 9) Use metaphors, 10) Use rhetorical questions, 11) Be ambiguous, 12) Be vague, 13) Over-generalize, 14) Displace hearer, 15) Be incomplete. For example, *"It feels hot in here, doesn't it?"* It can be used to save face from the responsibility and can indicate to someone to give hints or clues.

2.1.3 Social Context Influencing Politeness Strategy

This concept is used to analyse the formation of power dominance that arises in the negotiation conversation between the two characters. This analysis will show how Harvey establishes power that he has and how Michael attempts to balance his position towards Harvey. The analytical focus is on the function of language as a tool for constructing power relations, not merely as the result of negotiation. Brown & Levinson (1987) explain that when speakers perform face-threatening acts (FTAs), their choice of politeness strategy is influenced by three main factors:

2.1.3.1 Social Distance

Social distance is a perceived measurement of closeness or solidarity based on factors such as shared social attributes and social symmetry of similarity between the speaker and the hearer. As Brown and Levinson explained, the social distance is not just about the closeness between the speaker and the hearer, but it is also used to signify or adjust the level of intimacy with the hearer. Social distance (D) is evaluated based on the frequency of interaction and the social attributes. The more

frequent the interaction, the more the social attributes imply an increase in social distance between the speaker and the hearer.

2.1.3.2 Relative Power

Relative power (P) refers to the ability of individuals to influence, control, or gain benefit over others. It is considered through 2 main factors, firstly, there is material control, which is the speaker's ability to encompass the writerity over the economic and physical resources, and the second is metaphysical control, which is the writerity that influences others' behaviour through the writerity, social reputation, or social role (Brown and Levinson, 1987). A higher degree of metaphysical and material control over someone usually requires a lower-status opponent to show deference, a behaviour to respect someone powerful.

2.1.3.3 Ranking of Imposition

The ranking of imposition (R) explains the level of difficulty caused by a person's actions or desire to protect their face to others. The rank of imposition is determined by several factors, including various cultural and situational factors, and the level of burden or influence on the hearer (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The measurement of perceived demand is highly dependent on the socio-cultural context. What is considered a small demand in one culture may be considered a great demand in another.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Research Design

In this research, the writer applied both descriptive qualitative approaches to examine the implementation of adjacency pairs, politeness strategy, and its factors, focusing on the difference in power (P). A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on interpreting the meaning, social function, and communication strategies used in interactions, rather than on data quantification, and qualitative research methods offer flexibility in the information and feelings (Ugwu & Eze, 2023).

2.2.2 Data Source, Population and Sample

The data used in this research is the spoken conversation between characters Harvey Specter and Michael Ross from the American TV series *Suits*, Season 1 (2011), episodes 1 and 2. The data source is from the series's transcripts with English subtitles. The population of the data consists of all conversations produced between the characters of Harvey Specter and Michael Ross, whereas the data sample focuses on conversations with an argument and negotiation context only. However, the writer used the application of purposive sampling to determine the dominant sample employed in this research (Paton, 2002).

2.2.4 Method of Collecting Data

The data was collected using the observation method by observing and accessing the series *Suits* Season 1, episode 1 and 2 via Netflix: <https://www.netflix.com/id/title/70195800>. The writer also used the English subtitles of the series to support in collecting data, which can be accessed at:

<https://subdl.com/subtitle/sd1300060/suits/first-season>. The conversations between both characters were noted in a spreadsheet and annotated before heading to the data analysis process based on the research question. The researcher recorded key observations, including the features of the conversations and the factors that may influence them. These data then functioned as the main source for subsequent analysis.

2.2.4 Method of Analyzing Data

This study employs a descriptive-analytical method to explain the linguistic phenomena used by Michael in responding to Harvey's utterances through the use of dispreferred responses. In analysing data that has already been collected, the researcher interprets the patterns in the data, processes the organizing, and classifies them into several categories based on the theory used. The first step is data limitation, each conversation was classified according to the type of dispreferred adjacency pairs by character Michael Ross as the second pair part that was found in the conversation structure. After that, the writer will take the results of the analysis of the dispreferred response in adjacency pairs that appear to analyse the social factors. The subsequent process involves analysing the types of politeness strategies used in the adjacency pairs based on Brown & Levinson's (1983) theory. Workplace context conversations are analysed for the dominance of politeness strategy use to examine the influence of existing social factors. The researcher will explain the dispreferred response of each type of adjacency pair and politeness used to deliver the dispreferred response in order to analyse the relationship between the combination of adjacency pairs and existing politeness strategies with power

relations in conversations between superiors and subordinates in the work environment. Other specific supporting theories can also be included to support the analysis and research findings. The final step is to summarise the findings of the analysis that has been carried out regarding the existing adjacency pairs, the politeness strategies used by both characters, and the existing social factors or power relations.