

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Searle's Illocutionary Acts

Searle's classification of the Illocutionary Acts explains the communicative intentions behind speakers' utterances through their speech acts. Therefore, Searle (1979) classified illocutionary acts into five types based on the intended functions of utterances, the relationship between language and reality, and sincerity conditions.

1. *Assertive*. This illocutionary act emphasizes the speaker's statement to be truthful and shows sincerity: *e.g.*, suggesting, claiming, asserting, complaining, reporting, and boasting. All assertive illocutions are propositional, including both true and false. Assertive boasting is considered impolite.
2. *Directives*. It consists of the speaker's attempt to get the hearer to perform some actions, such as advising, commanding, requesting, inviting, begging, asking, and ordering. The sincerity condition of want, wish, or desire is applicable here.
3. *Commissive*. This illocutionary act commits the speaker to do some future actions. The obligation falls on the speaker: *e.g.*, promising, offering, and vowing. The sincerity condition that applies here is intention, which is performed for others.

4. *Expressive*. It is expressions of the speaker's psychological state toward a certain situation: *e.g.*, praising, thanking, condoling, congratulating, apologizing, welcoming, and deploring.
5. *Declarations* are features that define the implementation leading to greater alignment between propositional content and reality: *e.g.*, resigning, naming, appointing, sentencing, dismissing, etc.

2.1.2 Politeness Maxim

Politeness is recognized as a tool for maintaining positive social relationships by considering others' feelings. It functions to express solidarity and reduce conflict between speakers. Leech (1983, p. 82) introduced the Politeness Principle, which is highly regulated to maintain social harmony and interpersonal relationships between speakers.

The Politeness Principle suggests that speakers engage in interpersonal communication by balancing costs and benefits rather than focusing on face management. According to Leech (1983) the utterances employed by speakers tend to minimize impoliteness and maximize politeness. This principle is expressed through six politeness maxims, containing the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. Each maxim portrays a distinct dimension of polite beliefs by minimizing costs or maximizing benefits between speakers.

The following sub-chapter will explain each maxim along with an example and analysis.

2.1.2.1 Tact Maxim

The tact maxim focuses on minimizing cost and maximizing benefits to others. It is relevant to Searle's directive and commissive illocutionary acts such as requests, offers, and suggestions. The utterances are realized when the speaker considers the request and softens an imposition. By reducing the imposition, speakers can make their utterances more polite and less face-threatening. For example, a speaker forms a request by saying, "Would you mind..." demonstrating the Tact maxim. The speaker is framing the request with an indirect form in terms of the hearer's potential discomfort. Leech (1983, p. 109) mentioned that the indirect form functions to reduce the imposition. In peer interaction, Tact is particularly relevant where maintaining social harmony is a priority.

2.1.2.2 Generosity Maxim

The generosity maxim concerns minimizing benefit to self and maximizing cost to self. According to Leech (1983) the generosity maxim is also associated with Searle's directive and commissive speech acts. In utterances, it is realized when the speaker offers help and prioritizes the hearer's needs without expecting feedback. For example, an offer, "I can lend you my car," and an invitation, "You must come and have dinner with us." These examples frame the action as a benefit to the hearer and put the cost on the speaker. Generosity focuses on the speaker's willingness to take the cost for the hearer's benefit. The use of this maxim acts as a signal for solidarity and care through focusing on others' benefit.

2.1.2.3 Approbation Maxim

The approbation maxim focuses on minimizing criticism and maximizing praise for others. It is commonly realized through expressive and assertive illocutionary acts. This maxim suggests avoiding offensive remarks about the hearer, while compliments are highly appreciated. It functions to validate the hearer's worth or actions and is realized through direct compliments, admiration, or positive assessments. For example, "What a marvelous meal you cooked!" when the speaker directly compliments the hearer's meal. The focus of this maxim is not only on giving compliments but also on demonstrating respect and recognition of the hearer's achievements or actions. This maxim builds solidarity by creating a positive interpersonal atmosphere and maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships.

2.1.2.4 Modesty Maxim

The modesty maxim focuses on minimizing praise of themselves and maximizing self-deprecation. Unlike the approbation maxim, which stated direct praise toward the hearer, modesty put a direct criticism of the speaker. It is relevant to Searle's expressive and assertive illocutionary acts. In interpersonal conflict, modesty functions as a repair strategy. Moreover, self-dispraise is generally acceptable, but self-praise is inappropriate. For example, the speaker says, "How stupid of me!" is more acceptable than praising themselves, "How clever of me!" Another example is when the speaker minimizes praise of themselves, "Please accept this small gift as a token of our esteem."

2.1.2.5 Agreement Maxim

The agreement maxim focuses on minimizing disagreement and maximizing agreement. It aligns with Searle's assertive illocutionary acts. People tend to exaggerate agreement or mitigate disagreement by expressing partial agreement. It functions to maintain social harmony by being in line with the hearer's position. It is realized by giving responses such as "yeah, you are right" or agreeing with the hearer's opinion. For example, people may give a full agreement with "Yes, definitely" or soften the disagreement, "Yes, well written as a whole, but there are some rather boring patches, don't you think?" When total disagreement cannot be avoided, it should be softened by giving partial agreement.

2.1.2.6 Sympathy Maxim

The sympathy maxim focuses on minimizing antipathy and maximizing sympathy for others. It is relevant to Searle's assertive illocutionary acts. Leech (1983, p. 138) stated that the sympathy maxim explains why both congratulating and condolences are courteous speech acts. This maxim is realized by acknowledging or expressing concern for the hearer's emotional state. Rather than remaining emotionally neutral, speakers are expected to show empathy and emotional support, particularly when the hearer experiences success or hardship. For example, "I'm terribly sorry to hear about your cat." Among the six maxims, the sympathy maxim leans more toward solidarity. It is particularly relevant in close relationships as a bridge to mark solidarity and relational closeness.

2.1.3 Gender and Politeness

Politeness has often been related to gender, where it is assumed that women are more polite than men. As Mills (2003) mentioned, this is because the manner is perceived as a woman's prerogative. Holmes (1995) argues that women and men use language differently. She proposed that women commonly use language to build and maintain solidarity, while men tend to use language as an instrument to acquire and share information, and focus more on authority. In practice, women tend to use affirmative strategies, such as compliments. They focus on relative closeness and concern with making connections. Holmes (1995) also stated that women give and receive more compliments than men. They tend to seek involvement to develop personal relationships and apologize more than men. Furthermore, men tend to be more competitive in interaction and focus on seeking independence. Men's strategies are more self-oriented than those of women, who are other-oriented.

Holmes (1995) reveals three social dimensions that shape politeness behavior: social distance, power, and formality. Social distance refers to the degree of closeness between speakers. The closer the relationship, the more polite the behavior becomes other-oriented. In addition, power determines hierarchical differences between speakers. Subordinates demonstrate more respect for a superior, while those who are in power may use more direct language. Moreover, formality is defined as a situational register of the interaction. In a formal context, communication focuses on role and tends to use negative politeness, while in an informal context, it emphasizes positive politeness.

2.2 Research Method

2.2.1 Type of Research

This study applied a qualitative descriptive design. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative study focuses on the meaning and interpretation of language rather than measuring linguistic features. It is well-suited to this study as it allows for in-depth, contextualized analysis. This approach enables a detailed examination of how gender influenced the use of the politeness maxim among characters. This design is consistent with previous studies of politeness in media.

2.2.2 Data Source

The primary data for this study are Yuri and Dae's English utterances that contain Leech's politeness maxim. It is drawn from the Netflix series *XO, Kitty* Season 1, with a total of ten episodes. Yuri and Dae are Korean characters who speak English as their non-native language in an international school.

2.2.3 Population and Sample

The population of this study is composed of Korean English speakers in TV series dialogue. The sample is taken purposively from the population, consisting of two Korean student characters, Yuri and Dae, from the *XO, Kitty* series Season 1, focusing only on their English utterances. The purposive sampling is selected because it is relevant to the study. Creswell (2014) stated that purposive sampling is guided by specific criteria that suit the research questions. The sample consists of utterances that consist of Leech's politeness maxim. Yuri and Dae fulfill all the

criteria as Korean students who speak and interact in English, making them the most suitable characters for the purpose of this study.

2.2.4 Method of Data Collection

This study employed the observation method to collect the data. The data will be collected by watching all episodes in XO, Kitty, Season 1. Only English utterances employed by Yuri and Dae were selected. The dialogue will then be transcribed. To help with accurate transcription, a subtitle will be used as a supporting tool. A coding sheet was used to record each utterance alongside the episode, timestamp, character, hearer, illocutionary acts, maxim category, and contextual notes. To ensure accuracy, clear selection criteria were applied consistently throughout the observation. Moreover, the data analysis will be reviewed with the advisor to ensure accuracy.

2.2.5 Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a distributional method, involving classifying data relevance to identify systematic patterns. The steps of analysis are as follows: *first*, dialogue from XO, Kitty Season 1 was transcribed by watching all episodes. Only English utterances employed by Yuri and Dae were selected. Each dialogue is then read in full context and classified through Searle's illocutionary acts, consisting of assertive, directive, commissive, and expressive. The identified illocutions will then be classified through Leech's six politeness maxims. When it realized that an utterance appeared to have more than one maxim, the most prominent maxim was

used to determine the final category. The frequency of each maxim by each character was calculated to enable systematic comparison between Yuri and Dae.

The distribution patterns were then interpreted in relation to gender using Holmes' framework on gender and politeness. Holmes (1995) Social dimensions were applied to determine the contextual concept. The interpretation included arguments on gender differences in Korean speech. All findings were presented as tendencies rather than being conclusive.

