

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Politeness Strategy

Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of politeness strategy places more emphasis on the face. The 'face' is the physical representation of an individual's image to the public. Moreover, politeness has a close relation to social distance or closeness between the speaker and the hearer, and several social factors relate to social distance including power and age (Yule, 1996).

There are 2 kinds of 'face' according to Brown and Levinson (1987): the positive face and the negative face. The positive face deals with the need to be accepted; liked; and treated as they are in the same group by others, while the negative face deals with the need to be independent, to have freedom of action and freedom from imposition. In short, the positive face is the need to be connected, while the negative face is the need to be independent (Yule, 1996).

2.1.2 Strategies for doing FTAs

Within everyday communication, people are generally expected to behave in a manner that demonstrates respect for others and expects to be respected in return. However, some actions might hurt another's 'self-image'; those that threaten another

individual's 'face' are defined as the Face Threatening Act (Yule, 1999). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), certain actions threatening the addressee or the speaker's face wants are defined as Face Threatening Acts (FTA). There are several categories of face threatened according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory: those that threaten the addressee's (H) face, and those that threaten the speaker's (S) face.

During interactions, some acts might threaten both the Speaker (S) and the Hearer (H) faces; thus, several strategies are formulated to minimize the face threat. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), strategies for doing FTA fall into 4: Bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record.

1. Bald on record

Bald on record can be applied when the speaker wants to do the Face Threatening Acts (FTA) with maximum efficiency (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Bald on record can be practiced by the speaker by speaking directly, clearly, and briefly. Besides it can also be practiced to show an urgency or sympathy. For example, (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 96-101):

- 1) Great urgency: *Your pants are on fire!*
- 2) Task-oriented: *Come home right now!*
- 3) Bald on record imperatives: *Do not worry about me.*
- 4) Bald on record imperatives in offers: *Do not bother, I will clean it up.*

2. Positive politeness

By including and treating listeners as friends or fellow group members, positive politeness seeks to bring out the best in them (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Commonly, positive politeness occurs in a group of people who have a close relationship. In addition, this strategy is applied in order to prevent awkwardness in their conversation. Brown and Levinson (1987) classified positive politeness strategy into 15 sub-strategies: (1) Notice, attend to H interest; (2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H); (3) Intensify interest to H; (4) Use in-group identity markers; (5) Seek Agreement; (6) Avoid disagreement; (7) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground; (8) Joke; (9) Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants; (10) Offer, promise; (11) Be optimistic; (12) Include both S and H in the activity; (13) Give (or ask for) reasons; (14) Assume or assert reciprocity; (15) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation). For example (Brown and Levinson, 1987:103-107):

- 1) Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods): *You must be hungry, it's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?*
- 2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H): *What a fantastic garden you have!*
- 3) Intensify interest to H: *I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? — a huge mess all over the place, the phone is off the hook and clothes are scattered all over ...*

3. Negative politeness

Negative politeness deals with satisfying the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In negative politeness, there is a social distance and awkwardness between the speaker's and the hearer's conversation, and negative politeness is applied to break down those distances and awkwardness. Moreover, there are 10 sub-strategies of negative politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987): (1) Be conventionally indirect; (2) question, Hedge; (3) Be pessimistic; (4) Minimize the imposition; (5) Give deference; (6) Apologize; (7) Impersonalize S and H: Avoid the pronouns 'I' and 'you'; (8) State the FTA as a general rule; (9) Nominalize; (10) Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H. For example (Brown and Levinson, 1987:132-174):

- 1) Be conventionally indirect: *There would not I suppose be any chance of your being able to lend me your car for just a few minutes, would there?*
- 2) Question, hedge: *Do me a favour, will you?*
- 3) Be pessimistic: *I do not suppose there would be any possibility of you...*

4. Off record

Off-record strategy, often referred to as the indirect strategy, can be practiced by violating Grice's maxims (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This strategy is used to avoid performing FTA by allowing the addressee of the message to interpret it in his or her own unique way. For example (Brown and Levinson, 1987:213-220):

- 1) Give hints: *It is cold here* (shut the window).
- 2) Understate: *It was pretty horrified.*
- 3) Overstate: *Why are you always smoking?*

2.1.4 Factors Influencing the Use of Strategies

The two categories listed by Brown and Levinson (1987) for the factors affecting the implementation of the politeness strategy are: the payoff, and the circumstances (P, D, R).

1. The Payoffs

The payoff is a priority consideration, meaning each strategy has different advantages. Thus, the speaker can choose any more advantageous strategy. The higher the possibilities of FTA, the more S will choose to apply the higher strategy to minimize face threats. Furthermore, the use of payoffs also influenced by the context and the relationship between the interlocutors.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are several advantages that the S can get for going on record, such as clarity, perspicuousness, demonstrable non-manipulativeness, and efficiency (the speaker can claim that other things are more important than face) which can be useful in a situation where urgency for clear communication takes place over considering politeness. While going off record, the speaker can achieve their goals without directly imposing on the addressee, which can be useful to maintain harmony and avoid direct conflict. Furthermore, the payoff for going off record includes the potential denial, and reduced the potential conflict caused by confrontation.

Furthermore, the payoff of positive politeness is to express solidarity towards the addressee, build strong social bonds, satisfy H's positive face in some respect (the desire to be liked and admired), and express a sense of mutual cooperation. As for the negative politeness, the payoff is to minimize any potential threat to the addressee, reduce the risk of offending the addressee, and show respect which can lead the addressee to feel respected.

2. The Circumstances

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this factor is associated with sociological variables which involve 3 factors:

1. Social distance between the speaker and the hearer (D).

It has to do with how close the speaker and hearer are to one another; the more interaction, the closer they are.

2. Relative power between the speaker and the hearer (P).

It has to do with the capability to dominate someone in front of them. The term "dominance" does not always refer to a person's relationship with another person; it can also refer to a person's place in society.

3. Absolute ranking of imposition (R).

Maintaining the disruption level specified in the Face Threatening Acts.

2.2 Research Methods

The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. The research data are taken from conversations in Kwan's novel *China Rich Girlfriend* (CRG) published in 2015. I used the first edition of *China Rich Girlfriend* novel, published by Allen & Unwin which consists of 378 pages.

2.2.1 Population and Sample

The primary data used to conduct this study was taken from a particular conversation in CRG. The population data is taken from all of Rachel's utterances in CRG. Applying the purposive random sampling technique to select the data, the sampling data will be taken from Rachel's utterances containing FTA and politeness strategies in CRG. I will apply the theory of Politeness Strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) to classify Rachel's utterances into several strategies of politeness. Furthermore, I will investigate how sociological variables affect Rachel's decision to practice the politeness strategy using the theory of politeness derived by Brown and Levinson (1987), and George Yule (1996).

2.2.2 Method of Collecting Data

In collecting the data, I employed document and record analysis. This method of collecting data is allowed me to review existing documents, such as novels to collect the data. There are several steps that I used to collect the data: First, read the novel several times. Second, looking for every Rachel conversation in the novel. Then,

highlighting the utterances that contained politeness strategy. Fourth, collecting the whole findings and classifying them based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness.

2.2.3 Method of Analyzing Data

In analyzing the data, I employed the content analysis method by Gbrich (2006) using an ethnographic approach. According to Gbrich (2006), content analysis is a systematic coding and categorizing approach used to examine large amounts of existing textual data in order to identify the word usage, trends, patterns, frequency, and relationship. Ethnographic content analysis refers to a method for retrieving and analyzing documents for their significance and meaning in context. There are several steps that I used to analyze the data:

1. Applying Brown and Levinson's theory to classify the data into various categories of politeness strategies and present the data in a table.
2. Outlining Rachel's reasons for using a different politeness strategy in her speech.
3. Elaborating how Rachel's utterances are influenced by several factors in practicing certain politeness strategies.
4. Concluding the analysis.