CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Theories that are used are Politeness Strategy by Brown and Levinson, and Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication by Young Yun Kim. The reason why this research uses these theories is that Brown and Levinson provide a systematic Face-threatening Act and a clear taxonomy of strategies. Moreover, Young Yun Kim also provides eight key concepts that are applicable in daily interaction of interethnic communication, so it helps to see boarder sight of context that caused FTA. Using the eight key concepts of CTIEC by Young Yun Kim (2017), the researcher can determine the distance, power, and rank of imposition based on associative communication behavior of interethnic communication, which later can influence the use of politeness strategies based on politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987).

2.1.1 Face-threatening Act (FTA) and Politeness Strategy

a) The concept of Face

According to Brown and Levinson, each person has their own "face." This face is the "self-image" displayed by a person when interacting with others (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Face is also a notion that can be embraced or humiliated. It's emotionally invested, that can be saved, lost, or enhanced (p. 62). Brown and Levinson view face not as a fixed social norm but as a set of individual wants that may or may not be satisfied, depending on the context and communicative goals.

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b) Negative and Positive Face

Brown and Levinson use the terms negative and positive differently with the actual meaning. Positive face is the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others (p.62). Meanwhile, negative politeness is the want of every adult member that his action be unimpeded by others (p.62). Negative face is the wants that claim territories, rights to non-distraction, and freedom of choosing what they want. Meanwhile, a positive face is when someone's self-image is appreciated and approved of by a social group.

c) Face-threatening Act (FTA)

Brown and Levinson indicate S as a 'Speaker' and H for the 'Hearer' or someone the S speaks to. People can be threatened by someone's utterances, gestures, or body language. When someone's face is threatened, it can be identified as the Face-threatening Act (FTA). When someone interacts verbally, both faces can be harmed or threatened by the words of others, whether it threatens the speaker or the hearer of the utterances. In terms of politeness strategy,

According to Brown and Levinson, there are several types of Face-threatening Acts based on H's negative face or positive face. Hearer's negative face is threatened when: 1) H is pressured by S (Order and Request, Suggestion, Advice, reminding, threats, warnings, and dares) 2) S act that is predicate positive act on H, and ask H to reject or accept them (Offers and Promises) and 3) Those act that is asked H to do something (Compliments,

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expressions of envy or admiration and expression of strong emotion such as hatred, anger, lust)

In contrast, type of Face-threatening Act that threat Hearer's positive face are 1) Those that show S negative evaluation of some aspect of H (Expression of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints, and reprimands, accusations, insult, and contradictions or disagreement), 2) action that shows carelessness to H (Violence, taboo topic discussion and sensitive topic and use of address terms and other status-marked identification in initial encounters) (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61)

Face, therefore, can also threaten the speaker's face in several locations. Brown and Levinson stated that those that offend S's negative face, such as expressing thanks, apology, excuses, acceptance of offers, and unwilling promises or offers, are part of Face-threatening acts that threaten the Speaker's Negative face. Besides, those that directly damage S's positive face, such as apologies, acceptance of a compliment, breakdown of physical control, self-humiliation, shuffling or cowering, acting stupid, confessions, admission, and emotional leakage, are part of the utterance that can threaten the Speaker's positive face.

d) Politeness Strategy

Brown and Levinson later introduced the theory called Politeness strategies, where the utterance can save the speaker or hearer's face and fix cultural distance, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, reduce conflict, and

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maintain closeness in interethnic communication (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

i. Bald on Record

According to Brown and Levinson, a speaker can apply on record if they want to say something clearly and directly state their intention to the hearer. It is usually used when the speaker has a close relationship with the listener, or when clarity and efficiency are necessary, such as in urgent situations (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 94).

ii. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a strategy that appeals to the positive face of the hearer. This kind of utterance can make people feel valued, loved, and appreciated (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 101). It usually helps to create closeness between the speaker and the hearer. Brown and Levinson state that there are the "common ground" strategies of positive politeness involved: 1) Notice, attend to H's interests, wants, needs, goods, 2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H), 3) Intensify interest in 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, 15) Give (or ask for) reasons, 14)

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Assume or assert reciprocity, 15) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

iii. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness, on the other hand, is oriented toward satisfying the hearer's negative face. This strategy aims to maintain a person's claim to territory and self-determination (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp.129-131). It is usually expressed through indirect utterances, hedging, or other ways to minimize imposition. There are also strategies that Brown and Levinson propose (1987, p. 132 -210) that this research has summarized below: 1) Be conventionally indirect, 2) Question, hedge, 3) Be pessimistic, 4) Minimize the imposition, 5) Give deference, 6) Apologize, 7) Impersonate S and H, 8) State the FTA as a general rule, 9) Normalize, 10) Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H.

iv. Off Records

In contrast to on-record, off-record strategies tend to be more implicit and do not directly state what the speaker means. Brown and Levinson (Brown & Levinson, 1987) explain that off-record strategies can include metaphor, irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, and any other utterances where the speaker hints at meaning without saying it directly. Strategy that is applied as bald off records are 1) Give hints, 2) Give association clues, 3) Presuppose, 4)

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Understate and Overstate, 5) Use tautologies, 6) Use contradictions, 7) Use metaphors, 8) Use rhetorical questions, 9) Be ambiguous, 10) Over-generalize, 11) Displaced, and 12) Be incomplete.

e) Sociological variables: Distance (D), Power (P), and Rank of Imposition (R)

Brown and Levinson have assessed the seriousness of an FTA by determining social distance (D), relative power (P), and the absolute ranking (R). The seriousness is shown in how an utterance risks both S's face and H's face. Distance (D) is a symmetrical factor where it happened between S and H; both of them must feel the distance created during the conversation. It shows how close or distant the social relationship between S and H. The closer the relationship of the character, the smaller the distance they have. It leads to more friendly, close-knit types of utterances. Power (P) is an asymmetrical factor that can be different for S or H. It is pictured how big the power H or S has in conversation. If H has a higher status, H might potentially have a bigger special ability and impact towards S. Two kinds of sources that lead to power identity are material (over economic distribution and physical force) and metaphysical control (over the actions of others, by virtue of metaphysical force subscribed to by those others). The higher H's power towards S, the more polite S has to be. The last one is the Imposition ranking (R). Rank is determined by the culture and the situation in the conversation. It shows how heavy someone's wants or desires are. Rank of imposition is relatively stagnant in one culture unless there is an obligation to do something, have responsibility towards

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something or someone, or enjoy helping others. These sociological structures can be concluded:

i. The 'social distance' (D) of S and H (a symmetric relation)

ii. The relative 'power' (P) of S and H (an asymmetric relation)

iii. The absolute ranking (R) of impositions on the culture.

2.1.2 Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication (CTIEC)

The contextual theory of interethnic communication by Young Yun Kim (2017) provides a deeper comprehension of associative and dissociative communication behavior of communicators when interacting with individuals in different ethnic groups (Kim, 2017, p. 2) 8 key concepts of contextual factors can be used to analyze the FTA factor by determining whether the language use is associative or dissociative. They are: 1) Identity Inclusivity and Exclusivity, 2) Identity Security / Insecurity, 3) Ethnic Proximity / Distance, 4) Shared/ Separate Goal Structure, 5) Personal Network Integration, 6) Institutional Equity / Inequity, 7) Relative Ingroup Strength, 8) Environmental Stress.

a) Associative and Dissociative Continuum of CTIEC)

In the Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication (CTIEC), communicators encounter associative and dissociative acts. Communicators act associatively when they perceive and respond to others as unique individuals while displaying friendly facial expressions. In contrast, they will act dissociatively when it is based on a categorical, stereotypical that accentuates differences. Such as: Subtle facial, vocal, and bodily expression of lack of interest, disrespect, arrogance, and anger. According to Young Yun

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Kim. These two themes of encoding and decoding behavior can be summarized in 3 axioms (p.7).

i. Associating and congruent behavior serve as an associative relation function, where the utterances foster mutual understanding, cooperation, and convergence.

ii. Categorical and Incongruent behavior serve dissociative relational function, where utterances foster behavior such as misunderstanding, competition, and divergence.

iii. Association and dissociation cannot be performed fully. People are not fully associative or dissociative; they are hardly associative or dissociative instead.

b) Eight Concepts of CTIEC

CTIEC sees interethnic communication as an open system that consists of layers: Behavior, communicator, situation, and environment. All the layers that happened are impactful on each other and not a one-way relationship. CTIEC Eight Theorems are proposed for empirical theory, linking each conceptual factor with dissociative and associative behavior. Together, these eight concepts explain the dynamic and behavior-context in interethnic communication. The eight concepts are defined by 1) The communicator (Identity inclusivity/exclusivity and Identity Security/Insecurity), 2) The Situation (Ethnic Proximity/Distance, Shared/Separated Goal Structure, and Personal Network Integration) and

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3) The Environment (Institutional Equity/Inequity, Relative Ingroup Strength, and Environmental Stress)

i. Identity Inclusivity/ Exclusivity

Refers to the tendency of individuals to categorize people other than their group as ingroup or outgroup members. Inclusive identity tends to give associative behavior. In the context of interethnic communication, it sees other people as "Undifferentiated items in a unified social category" (Kim, 2017, p.7) It influences more friendly conversation and more open sharing about differences in interethnic communications. On the other hand, Inclusivity is when someone sees people as unique individuals and easily sees differences in people's ethnicity. This behavior influences more friendly conversation and more open sharing about differences in interethnic communications.

In the correlation of FTA of politeness strategy theory, people with identity inclusivity tend to be more open and easily get along with out-group individuals. This can create a face-saving act or non-FTA utterances. In contrast, exclusive people see people as dissimilar beings from them and could create an awkwardness between the ingroup and outgroup ethnicity when performing interethnic communication. Subjective ethnic group leads to dissociative behavior or a threat to the other ethnic group (Kim, 2017, p. 8)

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ii. Identity Security / Insecurity

Refers to the overall “Ego strength” (Lazarus, 1966, as cited in Kim Yun, 2017, p. 9). It is the inner resource on how someone allows for qualities of flexibility and relaxedness in one’s behavior. Identity security indicates an individual’s overall sense of self-confidence or self-esteem in their own ethnicity and describes someone who is overall self-confident (Van De Brouncke, as cited in Kim Yun, 2017, p. 9). While identity insecurity is when someone manifests as a feeling of inferiority or defensiveness when interacting with others ethnically dissimilar. This can cause defensive behavior and make one easily offended by someone’s dissimilar behavior. Defensive in context is when someone cuts someone's utterances, correcting people’s utterances, and giving offensive comments. (Kim, 2017, p. 9)

People with identity security are described as someone who is overall self-confident (Van De Brouncke, as cited in Kim Yun, 2017). They feel safe with their culture, identity, and ethnicity. Therefore, they do not feel threatened by any outgroup and act calmer and are not easily insulted. In comparison, Identity insecurity is often found as someone who is not feeling safe around outgroups because their group feels easily threatened or outcompeted, or fear of losing their cultural tradition. Even more, fear of being dominated or devalued by another group. Someone with identity insecurity can

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lead to an FTA because people with identity insecurities are often defensive and easily offended by someone's utterances or behavior.

iii. Ethnic Proximity / Distance

Individuals come to an interethnic communication situation with differing ethnic characteristics. Each communicator has Extrinsic and Intrinsic Ethnic Markers (Kim, 2017). Extrinsic ethnic markers are divided into skin color, hair, face shape, and someone else's clothing. Besides, Intrinsic markers are beliefs and values that are oriented in ethnic groups (Kim Yun, 2017, p. 10). Kim Yun (2017) stated that People tend to be more associative when the communicators feel that they share the same or even higher extrinsic and/ or intrinsic ethnic markers. The more similar the ethnic markers, the more associate for achieve ethnic proximity.

FTA happens when someone has ethnic distance behavior by seeing someone's ethnic markers discriminatively. Grummperz (1978, as cited in Kim Yun, 2017, p. 10) stated how dissociative and associative behavior arise from differences and similarities between interethnic speech patterns. When someone performs ethnic proximity, they tend to be more open with humor and adapt to the situations around them. Someone with this behavior usually uses more impolite language. In contrast, when someone keeps their behavior as ethnic distance, they will act stiff and not easily adapt to

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someone's behavior. This could indicate that someone with ethnic distance is perceiving more FTA.

iv. Shared / Separate Goal Structure

This point refers to the shared or separated goal structure underlying interethnic interactions. If someone has the same goal structure, communication and interaction will be more associative. Brewer and Schneider (1990, as cited in Kim Yun, 2017, p. 11) state that when the group members share the same goal structure, cooperative choices are significantly increased. Meanwhile, communicators who are interacting without any common purpose or interest are likely to display dissociative behavior (Kim Yun, 2017, p. 11). FTA occurs when someone is being non-cooperative in interethnic communication. When members of the ethnic group are not aware of the goals of other ethnic groups, there is no cooperative interaction between them.

v. Personal Network Integration

Personal network integration is the degree to which someone has tolerance for others. Pettigrew & Tropp (2011, as cited in Kim Yun, 2017, p. 11) stated that people who share a friend with more than one ethnicity will more easily achieve associative behavior of interethnic communication. The more powerful someone's ingroup, the bigger the tendency to keep the ethnic identity and see outgroup norms as a threat to their 'face'. This context can increase the

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possibility of FTA, especially when someone shows dissociative behavior such as refusal, direct correction, and insisting on group value to the outgroup. With that, a personal network interaction role is to define how individuals maintain politeness to save the interaction harmony.

vi. Institutional Equity / Inequity

Institutional equity and inequity are the issues of how we respect the ethnic groups. If individuals in an ethnic group are likely to be similar to other groups, dissociative action will increase. When institutionalized inequalities exist, FTAs become more salient and more easily triggered, because individuals from subordinated groups are more sensitive to threats to face, while dominant-group members tend to communicate more directly and impose more power in interaction (Kim Yun, 2017, p. 12.

vii. Relative Ingroup Strength

Relative Ingroup Strength refers to how strong the group of individuals is compared to other groups (Kim Yun, 2017, p. 13). Relative ingroup strength influences how people manage face and perform FTAs in intercultural interactions. When an ethnic group is large, cohesive, and well-established, its members feel more secure in their identity and therefore tend to use more dissociative behaviors, including more direct or less mitigated speech that may

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contain FTAs. In contrast, members of weaker or smaller minority groups, who rely more on smooth interethnic relations, usually adopt more associative behaviors. They avoid FTAs by using more politeness strategies and accommodation to maintain harmony with dominant outgroups. Thus, the strength of one's in-group shapes whether communicators feel the need to soften, avoid, or freely perform face-threatening acts.

viii. Environmental Stress

Environmental stress pertains to the tension in an organization. Community, or society at large (Kim Yun, 2017, p. 14). Interethnic dissociation is likely to increase when the environment is under duress due to events that are linked to one or more outgroups and when society undergoes certain challenging circumstances caused by economic hardship, shortage of resources, or involvement in an international crisis. When the environmental stresses are high, the individual tends to feel their ethnic identity is threatened, so it is easier for them to see someone's behavior as aggressive and judgmental. This influences dissociative behaviors, such as defensiveness, which lead to the FTA. In conclusion, environmental stress can cause an individual's sensitivity to FTA and its tendency to maintain harmony or strengthen the distance between groups.

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2.2. Research Methodology

2.2.1 Type of Research

This research is a qualitative & descriptive approach, using the Politeness Strategy and Face-threatening Acts (FTA) research approach and Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication (CTIEC). A qualitative descriptive study is a suitable approach when the research aims to better understand a topic that is still not well explored, rather than explaining a specific phenomenon. (Bradshaw et al., 2017).

The descriptive design allows the researcher to systematically identify and interpret patterns of linguistic behavior without manipulating variables, making it suitable for examining naturally occurring dialogue. Rather than assuming that politeness strategies always maintain harmony, this study investigates how such strategies function in different contexts, including their effectiveness in mitigating conflict or managing cultural tension. The researcher also considers qualitative research to see politeness strategies in interethnic communication in more detail, integrating distance and power factors.

2.2.2 Data Source

The data source of this study is the conversation between two ethnic groups in the movie “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”. Whether it is between the main characters, Toula Portokalos, a Greek-American, and Ian Miller, an Anglo-American, or the conversation between Portokalos and a member of the Miller family. Both ethnic groups have a distinct cultural background that is valid for the data, that include strategies of politeness.

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The main data of this research were collected from the script of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" which was obtained from an online transcript https://movies.fandom.com/wiki/My_Big_Fat_Greek_Wedding/Transcript. Regarding the validity of the data, the researcher ensures it by cross-checking the dialogue with the original movie to confirm the accuracy of the utterance. To ensure reliability, the data selection is consistently conducted by applying the Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication and politeness strategies. Therefore, despite the use of online sources, the data trustworthiness is maintained.

2.2.3 Population and Sample

The population in this research involved every utterance of conversation that contained an interethnic difference in communicative contextual background based on the Contextual Theory of Interethnic Communication (CTIEC) that potentially raises a conflict, such as ethnic mark differences, identity differences, and different understandings between the Anglo-American and Greek-American ethnic groups.

The selected sample data consists of utterances that most clearly represent the occurrence of Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) and politeness strategies based on sociolinguistic variables (D, P, R) factors. The sample helps to show the functions of politeness strategies based on the parameters of the theoretical framework

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2.2.4 Method of Collecting Data

The sampling method is purposive sampling. This approach helps the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the topic (Tajik et al., 2024). By examining the data most relevant to the topic and research question, the sample data could help to focus on a detailed understanding. To mine the data, the researcher first collects all the utterances that involve two different ethnic groups, specifically Greek American and Anglo-American. With reference to CTIEC, the researcher filters the data that contains different ethnic marks and identity, different power (P), distance (D), and Rank of Imposition (R) as the population of the research.

Lastly, the chosen sample is representative of how politeness strategies function, especially in interethnic communication. The classification of the data is based on the theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson (1987), namely FTA theory, positive and negative FTAs, and strategies employed during conversation, such as bald-on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record. Each datum was analyzed using. The main tool of data collection is observation. The researcher will carefully watch the movie, transcribe the dialogue, and then select utterances based on the research focus. Notes will be taken regarding the speaker, addressee, and situational context of each utterance. The source of data is the movie script and the movie itself, watched repeatedly to ensure accuracy.

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2.2.5 Method of Analyzing Data

This research applies a descriptive method in the study. The descriptive method of data analysis is the initial stage used to describe and summarize data (Sarmento & Costa, 2017). To answer the first research question, the researcher will investigate the kind of politeness strategies that are used in the conversation. First, the researcher must watch the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002) thoroughly. While watching the movie, the researcher will pay attention to the script originally provided by the movie and write it down by taking notes and combining it with the transcript available online. Secondly, by the conversation, examine the utterances that have the potential to be data. The data that is gathered is limited to the conversation that occurred between two different or dissimilar ethnicities: Greek American characters and Anglo-American characters.

After gathering the data, it is possible to define the kind of politeness strategies that are used in the conversation to highlight the function of politeness strategies in interethnic communication. The researcher will also consider the D, P, and R factors to determine politeness use. Each utterance is further analyzed to determine whether it is performed on record or off record, with or without redressive action, and whether it employs positive politeness or negative politeness strategies(Brown & Levinson, 1987) After the classification process, the researcher analyzes the form of politeness strategies used by applying sociological factors analysis to identify the reasons for choosing a particular politeness strategy and the potential benefits it provides in mitigating cultural clashes.

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After the politeness strategies are determined, it is possible to highlight cultural and interethnic communications, and the researcher will investigate the contextual background of the utterances. The context includes the communicators, the situation, and the environment of the conversation (Kim, 2017). Associative utterances are performed as a mitigation through politeness strategies based on the eight key concepts of CTIEC of Young Yun Kim (2017). This analysis will help to see that the cultural background can also influence the classification of politeness strategies, especially in interethnic communication, and to prove that politeness strategies indeed have a vital function to mitigate conflict.

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