

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, and research limitation.

1.1. Research Background

Politeness is an essential aspect of human interaction. In our daily lives, we use politeness when interacting with other people, especially with people we do not know, people older than us, and people having a higher position than us. Being polite means respecting and being aware of other people's feelings (Borris and Zecho, 2018). Politeness is not limited to the use of linguistic expressions such *please, thank you, or I'm sorry*. Politeness may involve a set of behaviors, customs, and language choices to maintain a positive relationship

Why do we need to be polite? What if people are impolite? Impoliteness can damage relationships. It can lead to feelings of hurt, anger, and sadness. In a workplace setting, impoliteness creates a conflict and hostile environment, prevents cooperation and collaboration, and makes people unproductive. Impolite people will find it difficult to build relationships and maintain social connections. They will find it difficult to do business. Culpeper (2001) stated that impoliteness is a negative attitude towards a specific behavior in a particular context. It is the conflict between how people expect them to be treated and how they are treated. Impoliteness causes people to lose face. It makes people feel bad, insulted, and disrespected.

People have faces and they certainly expect their faces to be respected. According to Yule (1996), face is “the public self-image” that everyone has and that everyone else must recognize. When we say something to an individual that represents a threat to his or her public self-image—called the Face Threatening Act (FTA), we may cause the person to lose face. Alternatively, we can say something else to lessen the possible threat—called Face Saving Act (FSA), that can save his or her face.

When we want to save other people, we can pay attention to their negative face wants or their positive face wants. Yule (1996) gave an example of a situation where a young neighbor was playing very loud music when a couple of old people were trying to sleep. One of them suggested a face-threatening act by saying “*I’m going to tell him to stop that awful noise right now*” (p. 61) while the other suggested a face-saving act by saying “*Perhaps, you could just ask if he is going to stop soon because it’s getting a bit late, and people need to get to sleep*” (p. 61)

Politeness exists in every culture and every society. Being polite is expected and respected in every walk of life. In business, people need to be polite and respect each other, Otherwise, their business will not run smoothly. In education, teachers and students need to respect each other. Otherwise, the teaching and learning will not run well. With politeness, people can avoid conflicts and misunderstandings in their interactions, and maintain their relationships personally and professionally.

Research on politeness has been pioneered by three prominent figures such as Brown and Levinson (1987), Lakoff (1977), and Leech (1990). However, my research study will focus on politeness strategies based on the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). A few studies on politeness strategies in the classroom settings were done by Khusnia (2007), and Xiaoqing, (2010) with similar results, i.e., positive politeness strategies were dominantly used. However, the politeness strategies in the classroom often present only the routines and are not rich in politeness strategies. Therefore, my research study will focus on politeness strategies seen in a movie as I think movies might provide more various examples of politeness strategies

Caroll (1985) argued that movies can be powerful media for widespread and intense engagement. They reflect the life, history, cultures, and values of societies. Movies sometimes address the political, socioeconomic, and cultural issues in those societies. The

contents of movies may support or challenge the norms in those societies. Therefore, movies can be powerful media, too, for teaching and learning. Movies contain pictures, music, and languages. How languages are used for communication and interaction in movies can be interesting to research especially the language use in politeness.

As stated before, the topic of Pragmatics or language use that I want to research is about politeness. I want to explore the politeness strategies used in the movie entitled “Titanic”. There are three reasons why I chose this movie for my research. First, this movie is one of the box office movies which means that this movie is most popular and watched by a great number of people. Therefore, this movie can be used as a medium for teaching and learning about politeness. Second, this movie displays characters from different socio-economic backgrounds that may provide different ways politeness strategies are manifested. Third, the movie contains subtitles that will facilitate the researcher to analyze the language use indicating politeness strategies

1.2. Research Questions

The questions in this research proposal are as follows:

- 1) What politeness strategies are used by the three main characters in Titanic movie?
- 2) Why do the main characters use such politeness strategies in their interaction?

1.3. Research Purposes

The purposes of this research proposal are as follows

- 1) to describe the politeness strategies used by the main characters in the Titanic movie
- 2) to explain the factors that influence them to use those politeness strategies in their interaction

1.4. Research Significance

Researching the issue of politeness strategies by the main characters in Titanic movie provides more concrete data related to Politeness Theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). In

turn, the data help language learners to better understand the use of politeness strategies in their everyday interactions.

1.5. Research Limitation

This research is limited to examining the politeness strategies used by the main characters in Titanic movies. The politeness strategies used by the supporting figures are not observed. The reason is that the main characters generally have more time and more dialogue in the story of the movie, and their utterance will provide more data to analyze. In addition, the relationship among the main characters is more complex because they have different social statuses, and therefore this will show the dynamic use of politeness strategies, i.e., how their politeness strategies may change depending on their relationship, social status, or situation. Furthermore, the main characters' behaviors tend to leave a deep impression on the audience which makes their use of politeness strategies more significant to understanding the plot or story in the movie.