

# Chapter One

## Introduction

This research is an attempt to reveal the politeness strategy related to both positive and negative faces. This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, the scope of the study, method of the research, clarification of terms, and the research paper organization.

### 1.1 The Background to The Study

Language is used as the media of communication and language use is not purposeless (Eggins 1994). However, it implies that there is a reason why language is used in communication and a text. Eggins (1994) also states that the basic purpose that language has evolved to serve is to enable us to make meaning with each other. Therefore, it can be said that language is used in order to help human communication, so they can convey their meaning without, or at least reduce, misunderstanding.

Moreover, language in terms of its usage has its own rules or norms. Communicating or conveying the meaning is a definitely human need. Yet, in fulfilling their needs, people should appreciate and sympathize with others to be honored. In other words, people should not use language carelessly without considering the situation and people they are speaking with. This idea is in line with Firth (1935) which states that once people speak to others, they are in a relatively determined context and they are not free just to say what they please.

In every situation, people need to consider politeness as one of the main factors within an interaction. Therefore, politeness can be conceptualized as a

strategy of conflict avoidance or as a strategy to construct co-operative social interaction. In other words, politeness is used in order to save someone from 'losing face'.

In a similar vein, the concept "face" is something that can be invested, enhanced, maintained, and lost as emotional. Every individual has two types of face, namely, positive and negative. In addition, most speech acts inherently threaten either the hearer's or speaker's face-wants, and politeness is applied for repairing those face threatening acts (FTA). In most studies concerning linguistic politeness, it can be concluded that there are four main strategies to perform politeness in order to save face: positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record politeness, and bald on-record.

Politeness is a part of culture that cannot be separated from language as a tool of communication. However, because language itself can be categorized into oral and written language, politeness should be applied whether in oral and written language. Here, this study investigates the appropriate strategies which are applied in certain case at author's point of view, and to investigate the social implications that are achieved by using such a strategy toward the positive and negative faces. The chosen text to be analyzed was the novel entitled *Bapakku Arab, Ibuku Cina, Aku..... (Sebuah Novel Untuk Bercermin)* by Dina F. Al Masyhur.

In addition, the strategies of politeness that are used in the novel are something that is important to be analyzed. It is realized that the cases were truly fiction since it was taken from a fiction novel, but the novel itself was a kind of novel

whose the story was close to the reality and everyday life. Moreover, the author raised real issues in which the cases had a possibility to occur in real life.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The problems to be investigated in this study are formulated as follow:

1. What are the politeness strategies used by the main character in this novel?
2. What is the most commonly used strategy of politeness by the main character?
3. What are the social implications of the strategies to the faces?

## 1.3 The Scope of The Study

According to what was mentioned above, the strategies of politeness that were studied only within the novel entitled *Bapakku Arab, Ibuku Cina, Aku.....(Sebuah Novel Untuk Bercermin)* by Dina F. Al Masyhur. Moreover, this study does not investigate all parts, dialogues or attitudes in the novel. It is limited to the dialogues and attitudes of the main character which applied the strategies of politeness.

Furthermore, the study uses the politeness theory. Several appropriate politeness theories from the experts have guided the politeness perception and action. One of the theories that supports the study is from Robin Lakoff (1973). However, Lakoff is among the first to adopt Grice's construct of conversational Principle in an effort to account for politeness rules. Fraser (1990) states that although Lakoff does

not briefly describe the definition of politeness, the definition is implied that she sees politeness as the avoidance of offence.

#### **1.4 Method of The Research**

Mainly, the study employs a qualitative research design embracing the characteristics of a case study in the form of text analysis. This text analysis has been drawn on the work of politeness theory. Qualitative approach is applied due to this approach provides way to understand meaning from a text which refers to participant's perspective (Maxwell 1996), and it is accordance with the aim of this study.

However, it is believed that a qualitative approach can give a systematic, factual and accurate data of research. Moreover, this approach is the best for understanding a phenomenon in context-specific settings (Hoepfl 1997). It is in line with Maxwell (1996) mentions that:

“The purpose of qualitative research design were to understand the meaning of events, situations, and action; to understand the particular context has on; to identify unanticipated phenomena and influence and generate new grounded theories; to understand the process by which events actions take place; and to develop causal explanations of the events, situations, and action”

To analyze data, I went through some procedures in order to gain the needed data and analyze the data so that the conclusions can be reached. While in analyzing the data, I conducted some steps of analysis to get the needed.

Meanwhile, in describing the data, a descriptive method was used in this study. The whole data were analyzed and interpreted until the answers were obtained.

On this method, Nawawi (1983) explains that descriptive method is a process to obtain solutions which are observed by describing subject's condition or the object of the research (private, institution, society) at that moment based on the fact emerged. To make it understandable, the analysis is arranged in a table form.

### 1.5 Clarification of Terms:

To avoid the possibility of misunderstanding to the problem investigated, I should clarify the terms used in this research:

1. **Politeness:** Lakoff (1990) describes politeness as a system of interpersonal relations that is designed as interaction facility to minimize the potential for conflict and confrontation in human interaction.
2. **Face:** Goffman (1967) describes face as something that is emotionally invested. It can be lost, maintained and enhanced.
3. **Speech act:** Fromkin (1990) defines speech acts as every kind and form of utterance, and also Faerch and Kasper (1984) defines speech acts as verbal acts within a given socio-cultural community and its institution.
4. **Face threatening acts:** action and behavior that potentially threat to lose one's face.

## **1.6 The Research Paper Organization**

Chapter One introduces the background of the problems that are investigated in this study. It also gives a slight description about the politeness strategies.

Chapter Two covers some related theories which stand as foundation of the study. The theories are reviewed in this chapter are about Politeness Theories, and Novel and its elements.

Chapter Three begins with the research method which is adopted for the study. It covers a data source, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Four provides a detailed framework for data representations. It begins by representing the finding data and its brief explanation. This chapter also presents the discussion of the study.

Chapter Five consists of two parts which are conclusions and suggestion. The first puts forward conclusion from findings and discussion from the previous chapter. The second is about the suggestion for the sake of further research.