

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In everyday life, we make conversation intuitively to tell a story or to try to convince someone. Conversation allows people to deliver messages between individuals. The message that people communicate can be ideas, opinions, or information. Conversation works in two-ways involving a speaker and a hearer. The speaker expresses his idea through language so it can be understood by the hearer, while the hearer tries to get and understand the message well from the speaker. Conversation, usually, is affected by the culture of the speaker, where the conversation takes place, as well as whom they talk to.

In a conversation, the speaker needs to choose appropriate utterances wisely in order to complete their purpose and to make the hearer understands the message. Thus, the way in delivering message is very essential because people should know how to communicate with others properly and appropriately so that the message is delivered correctly. If it is not, a misunderstanding between individuals can occur and that can lead to threat the hearer's face. In doing conversation a strategy which is called politeness is needed to make the conversation done smoothly (Renkema and Schubert 2018).

Politeness is one of significant works in pragmatics. In a conversation, politeness contributes to social harmony, avoids social conflict (Holmes 2013), and shows awareness of the hearer's face (Yule 1996). It is a tool for people to

communicate appropriately to avoid misunderstanding in conversation. Politeness signifies linguistic features associated with the speaker's behaviour (Crystal 1995). The factors that influenced the different politeness strategies are determined by sociological variables which are social distance, power relation and the rank of the imposition (Gleason and Ratner (1998) as cited in Mansoor (2018))

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies theory has been widely applied and is applicable for languages other than English as cited by Goudarzi, et al. (2015) in their research. Furthermore, they state that their politeness model can be used for investigating the quality of interaction across social strata or class. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that higher-class groups will tend to use negative politeness than the lower-classes groups will. Higher-class speakers prefer the more elaborated and indirect forms meanwhile the lower-class speakers prefer more direct and efficient forms. They suggest that it is influenced by one of the sociological variables which is social distance. The higher-class speakers tend to perceive greater social distance between themselves and other groups whereas the lower-class speakers are built on social closeness (Brown and Levinson 1987).

Social stratification is different in every country. People in a certain country experience different access to resources and opportunities as well as they have different standards of living to another country (lumen: Boundless Sociology). Saunders (1990) generally divides three classes based on Marx and Weber; the upper-class or the high-class, the middle-class and the lower-class or the working class. This classification are ranked based on socioeconomic variables, mainly income, wealth, education and prestige (Bird and Newport 2017).

First, The upper-class or the high-class is the wealthiest. They can afford property, education, and holds political power (Shin and Lee 2010). Then, the middle-class stands between the high-class and lower-class or working-class. They usually are shopkeepers or those who have small businesses, or working as a freelance or self-employed professionals, civil servants, trained professionals workers, and those who work in large private companies (Arita 2003). Lastly, the lower-class or the working class are those people who rely on their income exclusively upon earnings from wage labour and the unemployed ones (Shin and Lee 2010).

In this study, the two social classes in *Parasite* movie (2019) are represented by the rich Park family and the poor Kim family. This movie portrays a serious wealth gap between high-class and lower-class. Park family is a high-class family who live in a mansion in the ritziest section of Seoul. In contrast, Kim family is considered as lower-class since “lower-class individuals have fewer economic resources and fewer educational opportunities” (Nemani and Rasekh 2013). In this movie, Kim family lives in semi-basement or *banjiha*, the cheapest housing option in South Korea, which represents the lowest social class. This movie also shows how they struggle without neighbour’s WiFi (*Kim Ki Woo, in the earlier scene of the movie: “We are screwed. No more free Wi-Fi...”*), the children of Kim family do not have any academic degree (*Kim Ki Woo to Min: “She (Kim Ki Jung) can't afford lessons.” and “But will they hire me? I'm not a college student.”*), mostly unemployed and only have low-paying temporary jobs as pizza box folder.

This writer is interested to investigate the politeness strategies used by the lower-class Kim family and the high-class Park family in *Parasite* movie because when watching the movie, the writer noticed some different politeness strategies used by Kim family and Park family in their conversation. For example, Kim Ki Jung directly saying “*Shut the door!*” to ask the rest of Kim family members to close the door when there is fumigation outside their living place. On the contrary, Park Dong Ik, indirectly instructs his driver to get Kim Ki Jung home by asking “*Are you free? Then give her a lift, okay?*” and Park Yeon Gyo, the mother of Park family, adds “*We don't want her going down alone at night, right?*”.

Several previous studies which investigated politeness strategies has been done by other researchers does not only in spoken language take place in real life situation (Romadyanto 2016, Zakaria 2016, Putri 2016, Handayani 2017) but also in television shows and movies (Rachmadi 2017, Ristianingrum 2018, Sari 2018) as well as in written documents (Goudarzi, Ghonsooly and Taghipour 2015) and even the theory itself (Kitamura 2000). However, it is rare to find previous studies about politeness strategies used by certain social classes.

One previous study that investigated politeness used by certain social classes is done by Kleiner (1996). This previous study examines politeness strategies and social class ethos. This study focused on comparing middle-class respondents in East Lansing and working-class respondents in Lansing in Michigan in giving direction. This previous study highlights that negative politeness strategies are most likely applied by the middle-class speakers, while working-class or lower-class prefer to express in a direct way which is bald on record.

Despite the similarity on the issue discussed, this study is different from the previous study. The writer is interested to compare politeness strategies used by high-class speakers and lower-class speakers in a movie. The writer tries to identify the type of politeness strategies used by the lower-class Kim family and the high-class Park family in *Parasite* movie (2019) by using politeness strategies theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987).

The writer uses a movie to be analyzed which is *Parasite* movie. *Parasite* or *gisaengchung* is a South Korean tragicomedy thriller movie which was released in 2019. The director of this movie is Bong Joon Ho, who portrays social issues such as a wealth gap in social class in his works. The reason why *Parasite* movie is worth to be studied is because this movie won the Academy Awards at the *Oscars 2020*, including *Best Picture*, *Directing*, *International Feature Film*, and *Writing (Original Screenplay)*. *Parasite* was also the first non-English language film to win the *Best Picture* award and the first South Korean movie to win the *International Feature Film* award (Dove 2020). *Parasite* movie portrays two families with different classes. The lower-class Kim family becomes the new employees in Park family's household.

Another reason why the writer chose the object for the research is the story of the movie. The story follows Kim Ki Woo (who later called Kevin), the son of Kim family, taking over Min (his friend) to be an English tutor for the daughter of Park family, Da Hye. Then he introduces Jessica (who is a fake identity of his sister Kim Ki Jung) to Choi Yeon Gyo, the mother who looks for an art therapist for her son, Da Song. After that, the fake Jessica frames the Park family's driver, Yoon,

and introduces the fake VIP driver who is actually her father, Kim Ki Taek, the father of Kim family. Finally, the Kim family plans to get rid of the housekeeper of Park family, Moon Gwang, by making her seem sickly due to a peach fuzz allergy, which paves the way for the mother of Kim family, Park Chung Sook, to take over her job. Things are going well until Moon Gwang shows up while Park family is away for camping and Kim family is chilling in Park family's house. The plot goes off the rail when Kim family finds out that Moon Gwang comes because of her husband, Geun Sae, who has secretly been living in the bunker for four years. Both lower-class families are fighting each other and accidentally get Moon Gwang fatally injured then died. On the other hand, Park family remain unaware. On the final scene, Geun Sae appears at Da Song's birthday party and makes chaos, trying to kill Park Chung Sook and other guests. When Park Dong Ik recoils at Geun Sae's dead body, Kim Ki Taek kills him, then flees the scene. Later, Ki Woo discovers that his father is alive and living in the bunker. This movie ends with Park family leaves their house and Kim family goes back to their semi-basement apartment.

The writer interested to analyze the English subtitle of *Parasite* movie as the data which contains politeness strategies between the lower-class Kim family and the high-class Park family, among Kim family, among Park family, spoken by Kim family to others, and spoken by Park family to others in this movie. The writer retyped the English subtitle of this movie which translated on Viu application. Viu is a streaming platform that provides the latest premium Korean dramas, variety shows and other Asian programs. The reason why the writer used Viu is that Viu

has its official translator so the translation is accurate compared to other stream platforms.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

1. What type of politeness strategies are used by Kim family as the lower-class speakers and Park family as the high-class speakers in *Parasite* movie (2019)?
2. Why do Kim family as the lower-class speakers and Park family as the high-class speakers in *Parasite* movie (2019) use the certain type of politeness strategies?

1.3 Objective of the Study

1. To identify the type of politeness strategies are used by Kim family as the lower-class speakers and Park family as the high-class speakers in *Parasite* movie (2019).
2. To explain why Kim family as the lower-class speakers and Park family as the high-class speakers in *Parasite* movie (2019) use the certain type of politeness strategies.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is divided into two; for theoretical use and practical use. For theoretical use, this study may contribute to provide brief information in one of pragmatics areas that applies in a movie, especially presenting an idea of comparing politeness strategies between social classes. Meanwhile, for practical use, this study is hopefully can be a useful reference for students,

especially students who take linguistics as their major, in conducting a research in area of pragmatics.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

Politeness strategies is chosen to be the topic of this present study which focuses only on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies theory. This study will identify politeness strategies used by the lower-class Kim family and the high-class Park family in *Parasite* movie (2019). This study will not cover other linguistic phenomena that not related to politeness strategies and other characters in that movie. Furthermore, since the data is the English subtitle of Korean movie, the translation could be the limitation of this study.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The writer presents some key terms in order to give the best explaining toward the issue discussed:

- Politeness Strategies : a theory of strategies used by people in conversation smoothly in order to build the harmonious interpersonal relationship (Brown and Levinson 1987)
- Power Relation : a relationship in which influences the speaker choose their language depends on whether the hearer has higher status or lower status (Holmes 2013)
- Rank of imposition : a degree of difficulty of the request depends in the situation. (Brown and Levinson 1987)
- Social distance : a degree of intimacy among different groups due to social class, race or ethnicity, gender or sexuality (Boxer 1993).

- Social class : a social category which ranked based on socioeconomic variables, mainly income, wealth, education and prestige (Bird and Newport 2017).