

Communication: a literature review



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2. 0 Introduction

People communicate since they are part of society. The speech plays the main role in the communication, since it can express complicated ideas through important tone in the use of wide range of means. However the function of speech is not only convey information or messages but also connected with the interaction between people. This interaction supposed to be polite as etiquette of absolute majority of culture so that people can feel comfortable while communicate. Due to this, politeness should be applied in daily conversation. Politeness is a phenomenon that has been drawing a lot of attention in recent years. According to Huang (2008), everyone perceives as natural and understood what it means. According to many linguists, the importance of politeness strategies lies in maintaining a social order and is seen as “ a precondition of human cooperation” (Brown & Levinson, 2000, xiii). Lakoff said that the purpose of politeness is to avoid conflicts (Lakoff, 1889. 101). Politeness strategies are learned when your mother tells you to thank someone who has, for example, given you a present for your fifth birthday. It seems to be very important to stick to these conventions, which have developed since human being exists. However, the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson is widely accepted and utilized as the basis for research by the researchers in the field of not only sociolinguistics but of psychology, business, and so on (Yuka, 2009). This study will focusing on the use of

Brown and Levinson politeness strategies among University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) student and measure the frequency they used it.

2. 1 Politeness Theory/Principle

Politeness theory is the theory that accounts for the redressing of the insults to face posed by face-threatening acts to addressees. Politeness theory, derived from Goffman's (1967) understanding of "facework," suggests that all individuals hold two primary desires, positive face (the desire to be liked by others) and negative face (the desire to have one's actions unconstrained by others). In our interpersonal interactions, we occasionally threaten others' face needs, or desires, by exposing them to criticisms which is positive face threatening acts and requests which called negative face threatening acts. According to Simpson (1997), Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) is utterances that disrupt the balance of face maintenance. Thus, the manner in which we criticize or make requests of another is influenced by the degree of politeness that we wish to convey. Goffman's (1967) argued that maintaining face feels good will showed an emotional attachment to the face that we maintain and disruptions of this, or losing face, results in a loss of the internal emotional support that is protecting oneself in a social situation. Plus, maintaining it is the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward another (Mills, 2003, p. 6). Relying on a Gricean framework, proposed the Politeness Principle (PP) and elaborated on politeness as a regulative factor in communication through a set of maxims (Grice, 1989). Politeness, as found out, is a facilitating factor that influences the relation between 'self', which means the speaker, and 'other' that is the addressee and/or a third party.

Besides, it minimizing the expression of impolite beliefs as the beliefs are unpleasant or at a cost to it (Leech, 1983). Later, politeness formulated by Brown & Levinson (1978; 1987). Politeness theory has since expanded academia's perception of politeness. Besides, in an extension of Goffman's (1967) discussion of face, Brown and Levinson (1978) also used two types of face that Goffman mentioned. Another scholar Yule, (2006) defines positive face is the pro-social person you present yourself as while negative face suggests giving space to disagreement or refusal, to have freedom of action and not to be imposed by others. In addition, politeness theory by Brown & Levinson, (1978; 1987) is a dynamic theory of human behavior describing linguistic strategies associated with politeness behavior. Because of its all-encompassing nature and ability to accommodate diverse aspects of human behavior, such as cross-cultural differences, gender roles, exchange theory, and interpersonal address, this theory has been considered to be both exemplary and a desirable ideal for experimental social psychology as a whole (R. Brown, 1990).

However this study was not to examine face conceptualization as past study by Rudick (2010) which the researcher was tried to get perception of students by combining politeness strategies and face conceptual with classroom justice scales. Yet this study is just focused on the use of politeness strategies among Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) students and the frequency scale of each strategy.

2. 2 Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies

Brown and Levinson's approach is based on Goffman's study on the notion of face. Goffman (1967) defines face as an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes. The moment a certain face is taken, it will have to be lived up to. Here he coins the expressions 'to lose face' and 'to save one's face'. From these concepts, the following expressions are derived: 'to have, be in or maintain face', which stand for an internally consistent face to be in the wrong face, which refers to the situation when information clashes with the face which a person sustains; and to be 'out of face', which means that a participant's expect line is not yet prepared for a certain situation (Goffman, 1967). Goffman claims that interaction, especially face to face talk, is ruled by a mutual acceptance that participants in an encounter will tend to maintain their own face, defensive orientation, as well as other participants' faces, protective orientation. "To study face-saving", he states, "is to study the traffic rules of social interaction" (1967: 12). According to him, face-saving actions are usually standardized practices which differ from one society to another as well as among subcultures and even individuals. Despite the differences, everyone is expected to have some knowledge and experience of how face work is used. Brown and Levinson borrowed these concepts and elaborated them somewhat in order to define the strategies that speakers follow when constructing messages. They treat the aspects of face as 'basic wants', and they address the universality of the notion of face. According to them, face has a twofold character positive face, which stands for the desire to be approved of and negative face, which responds to the desire that one's actions are not hindered (Brown and Levinson 1987). They shape the term face-threatening acts (FTAs), and agree with Goffman that interlocutors will try to maintain others people's faces as well as their own.

Therefore, the effect of FTAs will be minimized as much as possible through linguistic strategies (Brown and Levinson 1987). There are four strategies in politeness based on Brown and Levinson which are positive politeness, negative politeness, bold on record and bold off record. However, in this study, bold off record is not included because the theory is not deeply explained and difficult to collect data in classroom interaction. According to David A. Morand (2003), these difficulties will be encountered when researchers need to detect sentences based on ambiguous meaning. Based on past study by Scollon and Scollon (1995), negative politeness is often preferable than positive politeness among British people. On this study, the researcher will again use Scollon and Scollon's hypothesis to measure qualitative data among UTAR students which can be clearly stated as Asian people.

To fulfill the needs of this study the researcher applied three out of four politeness strategies. The first strategy is *positive politeness* which means an expression of solidarity which can be said as appreciating addressee's positive face and sharing the same values plus an act of sympathy towards the addressee. In other words, no inference is required (Hirschova, 2006).

Meanwhile based on Brown and Levinson (1987), positive politeness is a sender's attempt to communicate intimacy with receivers. This kind of intimacy can be noticed in a friendly and familiar conversation in which the relationship between addresser and addressee is close.

Second type is *negative politeness* which enables the speaker to avoid conflict among them while communicating by hesitating and softening the utterance with devices such as modality or indirect questions (Rudick, 2010).

To make it clear, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative

politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face. In other word, the key aspect is the addresser show respect towards the addressee by giving him/her freedom to react in a free way. In fact it used more intended enunciation in a careful way with a set of polite phrase examples *Could you,...Sorry to bother you but,...* The addresser is extremely indirect so as not to harm the addressee's negative face and hurt their feeling. Usually this strategy happened among unfamiliarity between the addresser and addressee or their different social status.

Third type is *bald on record* which can be defined as a direct way of saying things, without any minimization to the imposition, in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way (Brown and Levinson, 1978; 1987) For example " Do it!". Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that the primary reason for bald on record usage may be generally stated as whenever the speaker wants to do FTA with maximum efficiency more than s/he wants to satisfy hearer's face, even to any degree, s/he will choose the bald on record strategy.

Final type is *bald off record* which Brown and Levinson (1987) defined as a communicative act which is done in such a way that is not possible to attribute one clear communicative intention to the act. In this case, the actor leaves her/himself an " out" by providing her/himself with a number of defensible interpretations. S/he cannot be held to have committed her/himself to just one particular interpretation of her/his act. In other words, Brown and Levinson claim, the actor leaves it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret the act. Off record utterances are essential in indirect use of language. One says something that is rather general. In this case, the hearer

must make some inference to recover what was intended. For example, if somebody says “ It is hot in here”, the hidden meaning of the utterance can be a request to open the window or to switch on the air conditioner. However due to this hidden meaning and ambiguous, this strategy will not be carry out to collect data on the use of politeness among UTAR student. This statement was agree by the scholar David A. Morand (2003) in his book ‘ Gender talk at work’ by mentioned this difficulties will encounter when researcher need to detect sentences based on ambiguous meaning.

To sum up, the politeness strategies may be applied and this study and this study will investigate how student use Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) politeness strategies with their instructors based on open ended question given and finally this study will measure or calculate the frequency that student used on the three type of politeness strategies.

2. 3 Classroom interaction

Language classrooms can be seen as sociolinguistic environments (Cazden, 1988) and discourse communities (Hall and Verplaetse, 2000) in which interaction is believed to contribute to learners’ language development. According to a review of studies in the area of classroom interaction and language learning presented by Hall and Verplaetse (2000), interactive processes are not strictly individual or equivalent across learners and situations; language learning is a social enterprise, jointly constructed, and intrinsically linked to learners’ repeated and regular participation in classroom activities. Based on Ghosh (2010), classroom interaction is a practice that enhances the development of the two very important language

skills which are speaking and listening among the learners. This device helps the learner to be competent enough to think critically and share their views among their peers. A major goal of is to provide a prospective teachers with sufficient knowledge, skills and behavior to enable them to function effectively in future teaching experience. Interaction has a similar meaning in the classroom. We might define classroom interaction as a two-way process between the participants in the learning process. The teacher influences the learners and vice versa. The teacher's role is important to influence the learner. It is the responsibility of the teacher to create a learning atmosphere inside the classroom. It is through these interactive sessions that the teacher can extract responses from learners and motivate them to come out with new ideas related to the topic. Teacher is an observer who helps the learners to construct an innovative learning product through group discussions, debates and many more. Teacher also will define their self as a planner who plans out the best of the modules of interaction that would be effective to invite the learners in classroom interaction (Ghosh, 2010). Meanwhile, in vice versa which the learners are trying to influence the teacher is by students' sense of social relatedness in classroom (Connell and Wellborn, 1991). When students experience a sense of belonging at school and supportive relationships with teachers and classmates, they are motivated to participate actively and appropriately in the life of the classroom.