CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, gap phenomena, problem statement, research objectives, and previous studies to show the novelty and significance of the study. The background of the study attempts to explain why the topic is interesting for the researcher to consider, then presents the results of previous studies that discuss issues related to the research topic. The research objectives clearly define the goals to be achieved based on the proposed research statement. The significance of the study highlights the benefits and contributions expected from the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Language serves not only as a medium of transmitting information but also as an instrument for establishing social relationships and negotiating meaning in everyday interactions. The way individuals use language reflects their personality, principles, and social identity. In this regard, politeness strategies are significant in maintaining positive relationships with others. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness emphasizes the concept of "face" or social value. To preserve face, speakers adopt politeness strategies that foster familiarity, avoid threatening the interlocutor's positive face, and build harmonious interactions. Among these, positive politeness strategies are particularly relevant because they emphasize solidarity, closeness, and friendliness in communication.

In the current digital era, verbal interaction is no longer limited to face-to-face communication, but has also developed in online media, such as podcasts. Podcasts are audio recordings of communications that are listened to by the general public through portable audio equipment such as headphones, earbuds, and so on. Radio recordings that can inform listeners with just their voice became the initial model of this podcast (Rime et al., 2022). Podcasts offer a more spontaneous and

in-depth conversational format compared to other types of media, such as television interviews or journalistic writing. Podcasts give speakers more space to speak, which allows them to analyse the politeness strategies used. The Endgame Podcast, hosted by Gita Wirjawan, is one such platform that invites prominent figures to share their perspectives. In this context, positive politeness strategies frequently emerge as tools to build rapport not only with the interviewer but also with the broader audience.

It has been demonstrated that humility, when considered as a personal value, is closely related to positive politeness. This concept is reflected in speech through openness to others, acknowledgment of one's limitations, and avoidance of superiority. From a linguistic perspective, the manifestation of humility can be articulated through the employment of inclusive language, attentiveness to the interlocutor, and modest self-presentation. Elliott (2010) identifies humility as comprising openness, self-forgetfulness, modest self-assessment, and a focus on others. These aspects are consistent with the principles of positive politeness, suggesting that humility may serve as the psychological foundation for such strategies.

The present study focuses on Jessica Tan, Co-CEO of Ping An Group, who appeared on Gita Wirjawan's Endgame Podcast. She has achieved notable professional success while maintaining an image of humility and approachability. Media reports have highlighted her concern for social issues and her unpretentious communication style. Public responses to the podcast have frequently characterized her as "humble," aligning with these media portrayals. Despite her notable achievements, Jessica Tan frequently understates her accomplishments, places significant emphasis on collaboration, and conveys empathy in her speeches. The remarkable congruence between media portrayals and public perceptions renders her a compelling subject for an examination of the relationship between politeness strategies and humility.

The podcast's audience responses serve to further substantiate this notion. Her listeners lauded her unpretentious tone, judicious selection of vocabulary, and

predilection for collective triumph over individual acknowledgment. These perceptions suggest that humility is not only evident in her personal character but also linguistically manifested through her positive politeness strategies. Hence, Jessica Tan provides a concrete example of how politeness and humility intertwine in modern public conversations.

Jessica Tan demonstrates a communication style that is full of empathy, compassion, warmth, non-dominant, and generally unassuming demeanor. Her speech is characterized by a heightened level of caution and a pronounced emphasis on collaborative success. A similar phenomenon was observed among podcast listeners, suggesting a shared perspective among this demographic. The comments in the video column characterized Jessica as a "humble" individual. In addition to being expressed by the interviewer, in the podcast comment section many people also agreed with this image of humility.

Many viewers appreciated Tan's manner of speech, which was perceived as demonstrating a sense of humility despite her significant accomplishments. The account @anissaadah5997 made the following salient comment: "She used the word 'fortunately' on multiple occasions, which is indicative of her humility." Similarly, the account @BestFitSquareChannel stated that Jessica Tan "exhibited both confidence and humility." This observation serves to substantiate the notion that the humility exhibited by the researcher in her discourse is not merely a subjective interpretation, but rather, it is a perception that is consistently shared by the broader public. The selection of Jessica Tan as the subject of this study is considered relevant and authentic to investigate the relationship between good politeness strategies and humility because her speaking style is consistent with media narratives, as well as supportive public perceptions.

While many studies have examined politeness in diverse contexts, little research has specifically explored its connection to humility. Previous works, such as those by Novita Sari & Sutopo (2024) on *Spider-Man: Far from Home*, Marfirah and Ambalegin (2023) on *Turning Red*, and Sagita (2024) on Taylor Swift and Martin McDonagh, generally focused on identifying strategies used in films or

interviews. These studies confirmed the frequent use of positive politeness strategies but did not investigate their psychological or personal underpinnings. Thus, there remains a gap in linking politeness with humility as a personal trait manifested in communication.

There are some similarities between this study and previous studies. First, by identifying some of the sub-strategies used, this study also discusses positive politeness strategies. Second, the descriptive qualitative research approach and the politeness theory created by Brown and Levinson (1987) are used in this study. However, there are important differences from previous studies.

The present study aims to analyze how Jessica Tan's use of positive politeness strategies in the Endgame Podcast reflects her humility. This research makes a significant contribution to the field of interpersonal pragmatics and linguistics by deepening the understanding of the relationship between communication strategies, politeness, and personal character such as humility.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The podcast entitled How She Leads Half A Million Employee podcast - Jessica Tan, Endgame #205 (Luminaries), as the object of the research will be examined using politeness strategies as an analysis tool. Therefore, the researcher concentrated on the positive politeness strategies used in the research object based on the background information mentioned above. The researcher formulated three study questions to limit this problem. The following are the research questions:

1. What types of positive politeness strategies used by Jessica Tan during an interview on the Endgame Podcast on Gita Wirjawan's YouTube channel?
2. How does Jessica Tan's use of positive politeness strategies relate to reflecting humility?

1.3 Research Objective

Following the statement of the problem above, this research aims to find the answer to the research questions. There are:

1. To find out positive politeness strategies applied by Jessica Tan during the Interview on Endgame Podcast.

2. To analyse how the use of positive politeness strategies in maintaining public self-image applied by Jessica Tan is related to humility on Gita Wirjawan's YouTube channel.

1.4 Research Significances

This research adds to the understanding that language is not just a means of communication. But it is also a way to express personal characteristics, in this case humility. This is important for communication because the way a person speaks can affect the audience's perception of his personality and credibility. This research offers several benefits in terms of significance:

1. Theoretically

   This research enriches the study of positive politeness strategies with a wider range by looking at the aspect of its relationship with the concept of humility which is still rarely explored in pragmatics studies. So, this research offers a new perspective on how politeness in communication is not only strategic but also reflects the psychological aspects and character of a person.

2. Practically

   Leaders, speakers, and experts gain insight into how humility can build stronger relationships with their audiences. and can be used as a reference for communication studies. Especially in developing a more effective and memorable communication style. It also shows that language can help build a better self-image, which is relevant in the digital media era, as conversations often occur in public spaces. Help people understand the importance of politeness and good communication in creating more harmonious relationships.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Keywords are provided to help readers understand the terminology used by the authors in this study.

a. Pragmatics

Studies examining speaker meaning tend to focus on contextual meaning. What is conveyed is more important than what is said. This is because spoken words sometimes contain implicit messages (Yule, 1996).

b. Politeness

Politeness is a social strategy used to save face (the positive social value that an individual place on himself/herself in a particular interaction). Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as behaviour that reduces the threat (either positive or negative) to another person's face. Meaning that it is a way to reduce the risk of conflict or confrontation that often occurs in interpersonal interactions

c. Face

According to (Goffman, 1967), the face is an image of oneself, which is formed by socially accepted characteristics. It is a form of self-expression and influences how others see you.

d. Politeness Strategy

A concept introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987) to explain how individuals use language to maintain "face" or self-image in social interactions.

e. Positive Politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), Positive Politeness Strategies are politeness strategies to maintain a positive face for the interlocutor by showing closeness, attention, and respect. Through friendly expressions, compliments, and inclusion, as well as language that shows solidarity, this approach is used to build close relationships.

f. Humility

Humility is the ability to admit one's own mistakes, imperfection, limitations, and being ready to accept new suggestions, ideas and information (Elliott, 2010)

g. Podcast

Podcast is an abbreviation of Pod and Broadcasting which refers to the Apple iPod device which was the first platform for distributing podcasts, while Broadcasting means transmission or broadcasting. Simply put, podcast is a technology used to distribute, receive, and listen to on-demand content produced by professional and amateur radio broadcasters (Silaban et al., 2020).