

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers research background, statement of problems, research objective, research significance, and definition of key terms.

### 1.1 Research Background

Being social creatures, humans spend their entire lives in the company of other people. People engage in ongoing social interaction involving all types of communication as members of society. Holmes (1992, as cited in Nasution, 2015) stated that language provides a number of ways of expressing the same thing, enabling one to convey their intention in different ways. It means that in expressing a language in everyday communication, humans will describe, mention, explain or tell things about life by using different kinds of ways depending on the context. Kasper (1997, as cited in Senowarsito, 2013) defined the pragmatic perspective as knowledge beyond the level of grammar and use of communicative action, and the ability to use language appropriately according to context.

Socio-cultural, interactional, and strategic competences are interconnected facets of language and communication. Socio-cultural competence involves understanding and respecting cultural norms in communication. Interactional competence entails engaging in meaningful interactions and interpreting verbal and nonverbal cues. Strategic competence focuses on employing communication strategies for effective outcomes. Together, these competences contribute to the ability to use language appropriately within specific contexts, adapting to cultural expectations, navigating social interactions, and achieving desired communicative goals, hence socio-cultural, interactional, and strategic competences can refer to the speaker's pragmatic knowledge.

Barron (2003) gives a comprehensive definition of the term pragmatic competence as the knowledge of the available linguistic resources in a language for the realization of certain illocutions, knowledge of speech acts

sequential aspects, and contextual use of a language's linguistic resources. One of the fundamental principles within the field of pragmatics, specifically in Speech Act Theory is politeness. Mills (2003) defined it as the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face-threatening acts toward the listener. In the realm of social interaction, it is crucial for individuals to be cognizant of the emotional states and the well-being of others. This sensitivity to others' "faces," or public self-images, allows individuals to navigate social dynamics with care and respect, ultimately contributing to the maintenance of harmonious and fulfilling relationships. According to Yule (1996), face means the public self- image of a person. In everyday conversations, it is advisable for individuals to avoid an act that may threaten others faces. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), acts that infringe on the hearers need to maintain his/her self-esteem, and be respected is called "Face-Threatening Acts or FTAs. To preserve and protect an individual's dignity and public image, it is necessary for people to employ strategies of politeness.

In our everyday lives, we navigate social interactions using different strategies to express ourselves and maintain positive relationships with others. Politeness plays a crucial role in shaping our language choices and how we interact with people. Politeness strategies are often used in reallife situation in order to maintain each other's faces. It becomes even more interesting when we explore how individuals adapt their politeness strategies in different situations. Celebrities, in particular, navigate a wide array of social interactions, both public and private, requiring them to employ a diverse range of politeness strategies. One prominent figure who exemplifies this is Taylor Swift, the beloved music icon whose Netflix documentary 'Miss Americana' provides a compelling opportunity to analyze politeness strategies. The documentary shows Swift's personal and professional life, showcasing various social contexts where different politeness strategies may be observed. By examining how Swift navigates these contexts like how she interacts with different groups of people gives us valuable insights into the complex dynamics of language use and the importance of politeness in communication. This study examines the politeness strategies

employed by Taylor Swift, shedding light on the subtleties and implications behind her words specifically when she is behind the stage.

'Miss Americana' is a film documenter. A documenter is responsible for capturing real- life events, stories, or subjects through the medium of film or video. Documenters typically conduct research, plan and outline the documentary's content, film interviews or footage, and edit the collected material to create a cohesive and engaging documentary film. They may focus on a wide range of topics, including social issues, historical events, cultural phenomena, or personal narratives, hence it is a suitable object to be analyzed in terms of its types and functions of politeness strategies. In this research, the researchers analyzed politeness strategies used by Taylor Swift in her documenter *Miss Americana*. The main objective of this study is to discover what the types of politeness strategies used the most by Taylor Swift behind the stage in her documentary *Miss Americana*.

Taylor Swift is a great choice for this research because she is not just a famous singer but she is also someone that so many people look up to. People really pay attention to how she acts, both when she is performing on stage and when she is behind the stage. This documenter about her, 'Miss Americana,' gives us a close look at her life and how she talks to people. It is like a behind-the-scenes view of Taylor Swift. By studying how she uses good manners and communication tricks, we can learn a lot about how famous people, like her, deal with different situations. This research isn't just about Taylor Swift but it's also about understanding how people like her talk and behave when they are not in the spotlight.

The study of politeness strategies has been done several times before. The last decade or so has witnessed the steady rise in research on politeness strategies. In 2016, Andri Siburian studied the politeness strategies used in Soimah Talkshow in TRANS TV. Through the method of descriptive qualitative method, he found that the types of Politeness found in the theory by Brown and Levinson namely Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald on Record Strategy and

Off-record Strategy was found in (STS) in Trans TV. There are four types of politeness that is used in STS. They are positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald on record strategy and off-record strategy. There are (41, 3%) positive politeness, (26, 0%) negative politeness, (17, 3%) bald on record strategy, (15, 2%) off record strategy used in Soimah STS. Positive politeness is the most widely used in STS. Supriyanta, and Imam (2017) wrote an analysis of politeness strategies used by Claire Peterson in *The Boy Next Door* movie, in their study on the politeness strategies proposed by the Brown and Levinson, they found the presence of 37 utterances containing politeness strategies used by Claire Peterson. In detail, she uses the strategy of bald on record seventimes or 18.9%, positive politeness 20 times or 54%, negative politeness 9 times or 24.4%, and off-record once or 2.7%. The most frequent politeness strategy used by Claire Peterson is “offer and promise” which belongs to positive politeness strategy through discourse analysis. In 2020, Dr. Joel M. Torres in his study of politeness strategies used by The Voice of the Philippines coaches with emphasis on their genders and exposures to Western culture. Using descriptive qualitative method, Coaches’ utterances were classified following Brown and Levinson’s (1987) Politeness Strategies which include (a) bald on record, (b) perform speech acts using positive politeness, (c) perform speech acts using negative politeness, (d) indirect speech act or off-record. Results show that the coaches performed positive politeness (66.23%), negative politeness (20.58%), bald on record (10.29%) and off record (3.43%). Comparisons on the coaches, politeness strategies when they are grouped according to genders and exposures to Western culture were also explored.

A significant research gap exists in the exploration of Politeness Strategies used by public figures, particularly in the context of politeness strategies employed behind the stage. Although previous research has delved into the study of politeness strategies, the majority of these studies have focused on analyzing interactions or public performances mostly on stage. Since the object of this research will be a Taylor Swift documenter hence the data found will be providing behind the stage conversations as well, expanding beyond the typical

on-stage discussions that have been the primary focus of previous research. By addressing this research gap, the current study aims to contribute a unique perspective by using and focusing on the behind-the-stage politeness strategies of public figures, with a particular focus on Taylor Swift. This comparative approach will provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of politeness and its adaptation to different social contexts, thereby enhancing our understanding of interpersonal communication and paving the way for future research in this area.

### **1.2 Statement of Problem**

From the background of this research above, the researcher formulates that there are two questions that will be the main focuses on this research, as follow:

1. What are the politeness strategies used by Taylor Swift in *Miss Americana: Behind the Stage*
2. What are the factors influencing the politeness strategies used by Taylor Swift in *Miss Americana: Behind the Stage*?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

Based from the research questions formulated above, the researcher focusses on two primary objectives in this study, as follow:

1. To examine the types of politeness strategies used by Taylor Swift in *Miss Americana: Behind the Stage*.
2. To analyze the factors influencing the politeness strategies used by Taylor Swift in *Miss Americana: Behind the Stage*.

### **1.4 Research Significance**

The researcher expects that the results of this study can be useful and bring some benefits for the use of language theoretically and practically.

#### **1. Theoretically**

This research involves exploring and analyzing the underlying principles and concepts related to politeness. It seeks to uncover the theoretical frameworks and models that explain how politeness is manifested in different contexts. In this study, researchers may draw upon established theories of politeness, using Brown

and Levinson (1987) Politeness Theory to provide a theoretical foundation for their analysis. By examining Taylor Swift's behavior behind the stage and on stage, the research can contribute to the theoretical understanding of politeness by demonstrating how these theories are applicable in real-life scenarios.

## 2. Practically

This research aims to provide concrete examples and observations that can be used as a reference for individuals who wish to improve their own communication skills or navigate social interactions more effectively. For example, the research may uncover specific language choices, nonverbal cues, or interaction patterns that reflect Taylor Swift's adaptation to different contexts. These practical insights can be valuable for readers and writers seeking to enhance their understanding and application of politeness in various situations.

### 1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid miss-understanding of specific terms used in this study, the definition of key terms are as follows:

#### 1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics delves into the analysis of how individuals convey meaning through language as speaker (or writer), and how this meaning is interpreted by listener (or reader). According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the role context plays in speaker- (or utterance-) meaning.

#### 2. Face/Public Self-Image

Goffman's (1955) elucidation of face within the framework of face theory, where he delineates it as "The positive public image [we] seek to establish in social interactions." This perspective conceptualizes face as synonymous with 'self-image'. Consequently, the inclination to safeguard our self-image and present a favorable portrayal of ourselves to others emerges as a fundamental aspect of human interaction. As a social being, we naturally want to protect how we see ourselves and project a positive vibe to those around us.



### **3. Face Threatening Act (FTA)**

Face Threatening Act (FTA) wherein communication possesses the potential to undermine an individual's sense of dignity or impinge upon their desire for positive social regard, commonly referred to as "face." Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasizing that FTAs may pose a threat to either the speaker's or the listener's face, be it in terms of positive or negative social identities.

### **4. Politeness Strategies**

Politeness strategies are communication strategies employed to save the self-image of others, serving as a form of Face Saving Act (FSA). Brown and Levinson identified four key strategies to help minimize the impact on the listener's sense of dignity when face-threatening situations arise. These strategies come in handy when we want to steer clear of embarrassing someone or making them feel uneasy. The four politeness strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson are: Bald on-record, Positive politeness, Negative politeness, and Off-record.

### **5. Documentary**

A documentary is a type of mass media program that presents factual information about real-life events, people, or issues through the use of interviews, narration, and footage. Documentaries aim to inform, educate, and sometimes persuade viewers by providing an in-depth exploration of the subject matter (Smith & Johnson, 2022). Documentaries can vary in style and approach, ranging from historical narratives to investigative reports and personal stories.