

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the foundation of the research by outlining the background, research questions, objectives, significance, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In modern communication, language is used not only to convey information, but also to build, maintain, and negotiate social relationships in socially meaningful ways. In this interpersonal dimension, politeness plays a central role in creating social harmony and minimizing potential conflict between speakers. Leech (2014) explains that politeness operates as a communicative principle that helps speakers manage interpersonal tension and show consideration for others. Similarly, Locher and Larina (2019) view politeness as a relational practice in which speakers continuously negotiate respect and empathy according to the situation. These perspectives indicate that politeness is closely connected to how speakers position themselves and others within an interaction, rather than simply to the choice of particular linguistic forms. For example, when people from different cultural backgrounds communicate, an expression that is considered polite in one culture may be interpreted differently in another. Therefore, politeness strategies are needed to help speakers maintain harmonious communication and avoid misunderstanding.

As communication increasingly takes place in digitally mediated and publicly accessible spaces, interactions often involve speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Placencia and Kádár (2017) point out that norms of politeness are culturally shaped and may vary across communities, which can lead to different interpretations of the same utterance in intercultural settings. In global online communication, English is frequently used as a shared medium among speakers who do not share the same first language. Demir (2021) notes that in such contexts, speakers rely on pragmatic strategies to maintain cooperation and mutual understanding, even when their cultural expectations and linguistic

resources differ. This suggest that politeness becomes a key resource for managing social relations in cross-cultural and digitally mediated interaction. Among various digital platform, YouTube provides naturally occurring interactions that are publicly accessible, making it an appropriate platform for analyzing politeness in authentic cross-cultural communication.

In informal and spontaneous communication, speakers are often required to make immediate decisions about how direct or indirect they should be, how they express agreement or disagreement, and how they respond to others' actions. Sudewi et al. (2023) emphasize that politeness is highly context dependent and shaped by social values and situational factors surrounding the interaction. Likewise, Pratiwi, Tristiana, and Fikria (2022) explain that familiarity between participants, perceived roles, and communicative goals influence the selection of politeness strategies. These observations highlight the relevance of sociological factors in guiding how speakers choose to frame their utterances in naturally occurring interaction.

One form of digital communication that reflects these features is the YouTube food vlog. In this genre, speakers engage in casual, real time conversation while sharing food in a public and unscripted setting. Androutsopoulos (2014) observes that communication on online platforms is shaped by the peresence of both an immediate interlocutor and wider audience, which makes speakers more aware of how they present themselves socially. When participants come from different cultural backgrounds, food vlogs become space where speakers negotiate roles, familiarity, and expectations in front of viewers. This public visibility encourages speakers to maintain a positive social image while also managing their relationship with their conversational partner, making the use of politeness strategies more observable in interaction.

Previous studies have examined politeness strategies in various communication cotexts. Pratiwi et al. (2022) investigated politeness strategies in classroom interaction, analyzed politeness in online communication, and discussed the unique characteristics of digital interaction. These studies show that politeness plays an important role in maintaining interpersonal relationships in

different settings. However, most previous studies focused on formal, structured, or evaluative communication. Therefore, limited attention has been given to spontaneous cross-cultural interactions in YouTube food vlogs, where speakers naturally negotiate interpersonal relationships while interacting real time.

Based on this gap, the present study focuses on a pragmatic analysis of politeness strategies in selected cross-cultural food vlogs on YouTube. The study aims to identify the types of politeness strategies used by speakers and to analyze how sociological factors influence their choices during interaction. By examining several instances of naturally occurring and publicly shared conversations, this research seeks to provide a broader understanding of how interpersonal relations are managed in cross-cultural digital communication and to contribute to contemporary discussions in pragmatic studies.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are types of politeness strategies used by speakers in cross cultural food vlog interactions on YouTube?
2. How do the sociological variables influence the speakers' choice of politeness strategies in selected cross-cultural food vlog interactions on YouTube?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are formulated to describe the focus and aims of the research as follows:

1. To identify the types of politeness strategies used by speakers in cross-cultural food vlogs on YouTube based on Brown and Levinson's framework.
2. To analyze how the sociological variables influence the speakers' choice of politeness strategies in selected cross-cultural food vlog interactions on YouTube.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study carries both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of pragmatics by providing findings from real communication data on the use of politeness strategies and sociological factors in cross-cultural interactions within YouTube food vlogs, based on Brown and

Levinson's framework, which helps enrich the understanding of politeness in informal and digital communication contexts. Practically, this study can serve as reference for students, educators, and content creators to better understand how politeness strategies influence communication in cross-cultural settings and to support the development of pragmatic awareness for English users in real-life digital interactions.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is Pragmatics, particularly the analysis of politeness strategies in cross-cultural communication on YouTube. The analysis applies Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework to identify the types of politeness strategies and to analyze the sociological factors influencing the speakers' choice in interaction.

This study is limited to selected cross-cultural food vlogs on YouTube that feature spontaneous verbal interactions between speakers from different cultural backgrounds. The analysis focuses solely on verbal utterances produced by both the hosts and the guests during the interaction, excluding non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, gestures, and intonation in order to maintain emphasis on linguistic politeness strategies. Furthermore, the findings are confined to the selected data and are not intended to be generalized beyond the contexts examined.