CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In speaking, people will definitely perform certain strategies in order to make certain impressions. One of the strategies is concerned with the politeness in speaking. Politeness in language is defined by Olmen (2017) as "the ways in which language is employed in a conversation to show consideration for the feelings and desires of one's interlocutors to create interpersonal relationship" (para. 1). There are plenty of strategies to use when dealing with politeness. However, in this thesis, the kind of politeness to discuss is related to pragmatics field.

Pragmatics is "the study of language that focuses on conversational implicature, which means it studies the process in which the speaker implies and a listener infers" (Study.com, n.d.). In terms of pragmatics, politeness strategy is "the way people speak using certain strategies in order not to threaten the hearer's face" (Nordquist, 2017).

Particularly, I would like to analyse how people may end up in conflict(s) if they miscalculate certain politeness strategies. The theory of politeness strategy I apply is that of Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson's. One of the theories states that in order not to offend the hearer, the speaker may use in-group identity marker to claim solidarity (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 107-108). Thus, the hearer will not feel offended because of the feeling that the hearer is close, in terms of relationship, to the speaker. Such a strategy is crucial in our daily lives considering that in speaking, people mostly do not want to offend others. Brown and Levinson state that there are three important aspects to consider prior to performing certain politeness strategies. They are: the rate of imposition (R), distance (D), and power (P).

The rate of imposition is the rank of imposition that the speaker would make because of the level of approval in the situation. As an example, the rate of imposition is considered high when a speaker is asking for a big favor, while it is considered as low when a speaker is asking for a small favor. The distance aspect deals with the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. For example, when a boy talks to his close friend, they have a close distance between each other. The last one is power, which is concerned with the rank between participants. For instance: a house helper has to talk politely to her employer. By paying huge attention to the R, D, and P elements, the likelihood of the occurrence of conflict(s) can be evaded (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 77).

After the R, D, and P aspects have been taken into consideration, the politeness strategies comprising of bald on record, on record indicating positive

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politeness, on record indicating negative politeness, and off record are applied. All of these strategies have their own way of practice and different effects to achieve.

To show how the theory works, I choose a TV series entitled *Merlin* to be my data source in this thesis. I gather the data from the episodes in Seasons 1 to 5 of the TV series focusing on the scenes that include a number of politeness strategies. *Merlin* TV series tells about the journey of Merlin, a young warlock, in the kingdom of Camelot, which is ruled by King Uther. As magic is not allowed in Camelot, Merlin has to disguise himself as a servant. Apparently, Merlin is destined to protect Arthur, Uther's son, because it is said that Arthur will be the next king of Camelot. In his journey, Merlin is also guided by his ward, Gaius, who is always by Merlin's side.

I take the data from this TV series because *Merlin* is set in the olden days where there were still plenty of kingdoms. Thus, politeness strategy is very crucial in speaking considering that the subordinates must respect and obey the superordinates, who are the king and his family. Furthermore, since one of the crucial aspects in politeness strategies is power, I find that there are a number of conflicts arising out of the miscalculation of politeness strategy in terms of power in the particular TV series.

The significance of my analysis is to make people aware of the role of politeness strategies in speaking. By reading my analysis, people will be able to know how conflicts may arise out of the miscalculations of the R, D, and P aspects. Thus, it is desirable that people take the R, D, and P aspects into consideration before speaking in order to maintain good relationship with others. This thesis is also significant as it will make people aware of which politeness strategy has the highest chance of

creating conflicts. Therefore, they can calculate effective politeness strategy to apply

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in order to avoid having conflicts with others.

(Words: 784)

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem that I would like to analyse in this thesis are as follows:

1. What types of politeness strategy are miscalculated by the characters in *Merlin*?

2. How does the miscalculation of the politeness strategy lead to the occurrence of conflicts in *Merlin*?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis are as follows:

1. to find out about the types of politeness strategy that are miscalculated by the characters in *Merlin*.

2. to reveal how the miscalculation of politeness strategy can lead to the occurrence of conflicts in *Merlin*.

1.4. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is Introduction, which presents Background of the Study together with Statements of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is Literature Review, which is concerned with the theories I use to support the analysis. Chapter Three is

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Methods of Research, where I explain the method used in my analysis, along with the steps in conducting the analysis. A sample analysis is also provided in this chapter to give a clearer explanation about how to analyse my data. Chapter Four is the analysis of the occurrence of conflict due to miscalculation of politeness strategy in *Merlin* Seasons 1 to 5, where I put all the data and its analysis. Chapter Five is Conclusion. The thesis ends with References, in which I put all the references that I use in my analysis followed by Appendices.