

**Cross-linguistic Transference of
Politeness Phenomena**

**(Module One)
Politeness Theories Revisited**

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Abbreviations Used

Abbreviation	Representation
ACC	Accusative
ASP	Aspect
AUX	Auxiliary
CL	Classifier
DAT	Dative
FP	Sentence Final Particle
HON	Honorific
NEG	Negative
NOM	Nominative
P	Particle
POSS	Possessive
QUES	Question Marker
TOPIC	Topic Marker

1. Introduction

The issue of politeness has attracted much attention ever since Brown and Levinson published their politeness theory in 1978. The universality of politeness has been widely discussed among scholars and a great deal of effort has been made to work out a comprehensive theory of politeness.

In this paper, I will review some politeness theories which are relative to my later study. In Chapter 3, I will look at Leech's Politeness Principle (1983) and further discuss the problem of his indirect approach to politeness phenomena. After that, a large part of pages in Chapter 4 will discuss Brown and Levinson's face-saving approach (1987), as their theory, though extensively criticized, still possesses prominent status in the field of politeness and will be the basis of my further analysis. Most of the examples in Brown and Levinson's analysis are in English, Tamil or Tzeltal, so Cantonese examples will be provided in this chapter to examine whether Brown and Levinson's theory can be applied to languages other than the three languages mentioned above. Cantonese is one of the Chinese dialects and is mainly used by people in Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province of China. Since Cantonese (the target language) and Japanese (the source language) are the two languages I will be looking at in my later research, Chapter 5 will focus on Asian politeness, i.e. Chinese (including Cantonese) politeness and Japanese politeness. To facilitate further discussion, I will give a detailed account of Cantonese in Chapter 2, including the differences between Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese as well as the presentation of Cantonese examples in this paper.

In this paper, I will not only review politeness theories, but also illustrate how these theories can be applied to real languages. Through all the exemplifications, I hope to get a clearer picture of linguistic politeness and furthermore clarify the controversial topic of universality.

2. Data

This paper involves 3 languages: Cantonese, English and Japanese. Examples in each language will be given in the course of discussions. The Cantonese data are transcribed from a TV drama 女人唔易做 (My translation: *It's Difficult to Be Women*) broadcasted in Hong Kong, while the English examples are taken from an America TV drama *Desperate Housewives*. Both dramas tell stories of women and thus are similar in contents. The sources of Japanese examples are two reference books about Japanese honorifics. Except for the English examples, the original texts in either Cantonese or Japanese will be provided together with the Romanization (in italics) and will include the literal translation of each character/phrase and the semantic translation of the whole sentence. In cases of in-text quotations of phrases, the Romanization (in italics), the semantic translation of the phrases and if necessary, the literal translation of each character/word will be put in brackets beside the originals.

There are three aspects of Cantonese which need to be clarified before we proceed to the discussions in the following chapters. First, it is always problematic to represent Cantonese in written form. Cantonese is rather a spoken dialect than a written one. There is no standard writing system to represent colloquial Cantonese (Matthew and Yip 1994). People in Hong Kong usually resort to standard Chinese when they write in formal settings. However, the representation of colloquial Cantonese in characters can still be found in magazines and novels, but there are a few characters which are exclusively used in Cantonese and Standard Chinese speakers “may find it totally unintelligible” (ibid: 6), such as ‘冇’ (*mou*⁵ without). Although the written form of colloquial Cantonese is frequently used even in newspapers, it has not yet been recognized as an official way to represent Cantonese (ibid). Moreover, not every

single word spoken in Cantonese can find the corresponding character in the writing system. For example, the verb ‘*ha¹*’ in the term ‘*ha¹* 人’ (*ha¹* bully; 人 *yen⁴* people) cannot be transcribed into Chinese character and people like to use its homophone ‘蝦’ (*ha¹* literally means ‘shrimp’) to represent it in written form (example taken from 廣州話方言詞典 1996: Guangzhou Dialect Dictionary (my translation)). Due to the above reasons, many researchers prefer not to deal with the written form and display Cantonese examples in Romanization. However, since the Cantonese examples quoted in this paper are conversations in a TV drama, I will still represent the examples with the most frequently used Chinese characters from newspapers and magazines for the benefit of readers who have knowledge of Cantonese.

Secondly, there are subtle differences in phonology and lexicalization, and these are usually regarded as two major differences between Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese. Romanization of all Cantonese examples in this paper will be provided to mark the phonological differences. Unlike the standardized Pinyin system for Mandarin Chinese, there are several Romanization systems of Cantonese in use, for example, the Yale and the International Phonetic Alphabet (Matthews and Yip 1994: 7). In this paper, I have chosen ‘The Cantonese Transliteration Scheme’ published by the Guangdong Provincial Education Department in 1960 to transcribe my data for two reasons. On the one hand, this scheme is adopted in many Chinese dictionaries with annotation of Cantonese pronunciation. On the other hand, the nine tones of Cantonese are represented by small numerical figures 1 to 9 (for example *ga³*) in this scheme, to distinguish from the 4 tones of Mandarin Chinese officially marked by the rising and falling icons (for example, *chī*, *chí*, *chǐ*, and *chì*).

Thirdly, the incorporation of English into Cantonese is a prominent characteristic of Cantonese, especially in Hong Kong. Terms like ‘book 檯’ demonstrate the fusion of English and Cantonese in one phrase. The English verb ‘book’ which means ‘to

reserve' can be combined with the Cantonese word '檯' (*toi*⁴, table) to denote 'making reservation for a table.' In some cases, only part of an English word is borrowed such as the second syllable 'port' of the verb 'report' which in Cantonese means 'to report one's misbehavior to his/her superior' (example taken from 香港粵語辭典 1997: Hong Kong Cantonese Dictionary (my translation)). For Cantonese examples in this paper, the borrowing of English words will be noted as [ENG].

Data in Japanese are easier to transcribe. The original Japanese texts will be written with the combination of *Hiragana* (Japanese syllabary) and *Kanji* (Chinese characters). In addition, the Hepburn Romanization system is adopted. When the *Hiragana* 'へ' (*he*), 'は' (*ha*) and 'を' (*wo*) are used as particles, they will be marked as [e], [wa] and [o] respectively.

In the next chapter, Leech's Politeness Principle will be reviewed.

3. Leech

3.1 Summary

Grice (1975: 45-46) accounts for the process of efficient communication with the following maxims, known as the Cooperative Principle (CP).

1. Quantity: (i) Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
(ii) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
2. Quality: (i) Do not say what you believe to be false.
(ii) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
3. Relation: (i) Be relevant.
4. Manner: (i) Avoid obscurity of expression.
(ii) Avoid ambiguity.
(iii) Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
(iv) Be orderly.

As a complement to Grice's CP, Leech (1983) proposes the Politeness Principle (PP) to explain why people sometimes fail to observe the CP. According to Leech (1983: 82), if the CP is adopted to facilitate communication, the PP is aimed to "maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place." He demonstrates how the PP "rescues" (Leech 1983: 80) the CP from a vulnerable position with the following example:

- A: We'll all miss Bill and Agatha, won't we?
B: Well, we'll all miss Bill.

Speaker B's reply apparently breaches Maxim of Quantity since B responds to only part of A's utterance. However, B purposefully avoids the mention of Agatha in

order to be polite. Therefore, the PP (a principle of higher order) overtakes the CP in situations where politeness toward the hearer or the referent is necessary.

Leech (1983:123-27) furthermore summarizes five pragmatic parameters by which we can decide the degree of politeness (or “tact” in Leech’s expression) appropriate to an action A.

1. The greater the cost of action A to the hearer is, the more polite the speaker should be;
2. The greater the social distance between the hearer and speaker is, the more polite the speaker should be;
3. The more authoritative the hearer is, the more polite the speaker should be;
4. The more options available to a hearer, the more polite an utterance is; and
5. The more indirect an utterance is, the more polite it is.

With these five parameters as premise, Leech’s PP (1983: 132) consists of six maxims as follows:

- (I) TACT MAXIM:
 - (a) Minimize cost to *other* [(b) Maximize benefit to *other*]
- (II) GENEROSITY MAXIM:
 - (a) Minimize benefit to *self* [(b) Maximize cost to *self*]
- (III) APPROBATION MAXIM
 - (a) Minimize dispraise of *other* [(b) Maximize praise of *other*]
- (IV) MODESTY MAXIM
 - (a) Minimize praise of *self* [(b) Maximize dispraise of *self*]
- (V) AGREEMENT MAXIM
 - (a) Minimize disagreement between *self and other*
 - [(b) Maximize agreement between *self and other*]
- (VI) SYMPATHY MAXIM
 - (a) Minimize antipathy between *self and other*
 - [(b) Maximize sympathy between *self and other*]

Among the above maxims, (I) and (III) are more powerful than the others because

“politeness is focused more strongly on *other* than on *self*” (Leech 1983: 133). In addition, the sub-maxim (a) is more influential than (b) under each category, because “negative politeness...is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness” (Leech 1983: 133). According to Leech (1983: 83-84), negative politeness is aimed at “minimizing the impoliteness of impolite illocution” and positive politeness at “maximizing the politeness of polite illocutions.”

3.2 Critique of Leech

The applicability of Leech’s PP to real language has been widely questioned (Taylor and Cameron 1987; Jucker 1988; Watts et al. 1992; Locher 2004). His “indirectness approach” (Held 1992: 32), that is the association between the PP and the violation of the CP seems problematic. To exemplify the Modesty Maxim, Leech (1983) quotes (from Miller 1967: 289-90) a conversation between two Japanese women in which the visitor keeps praising the splendid garden of the hostess while the hostess repeatedly denies the praise. The hostess’ denial, if her garden is really gorgeous, might breach the Quality Maxim of the CP (Do not say what you believe to be false) in order to observe the Modesty Maxim of the PP (Minimize the praise of self). The visitor might observe the Approbation Maxim of the PP (maximize the praise of other) at the expense of the CP if she in fact does not have such a high opinion of the garden. However, not every language exchange can be analyzed by the PP. Consider this sentence: “You must come and have dinner with us” (Leech 1983: 133). This direct invitation does observe the Generosity Maxim of PP, but it apparently does not violate the CP. Therefore, “(a) direct utterance can be the appropriate polite form in a specific context, while indirectness could even be impolite” (Locher 2004: 65). The problem of indirectness, also found in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) face-saving theory, will be further elaborated and exemplified in Section 4.2.

Despite being criticized for the indirectness approach, Leech's contribution to politeness theory cannot be overlooked. He distinguishes between "absolute politeness" and "relative politeness" (Leech 1983: 83-84). By "absolute politeness" Leech (1983: 83) refers to "politeness, as a scale...having a negative and positive pole." However, "relative politeness" (ibid.) is variable according to the norms we adopt to examine it. These norms can be cultural. For example, people regard Japanese people as "very polite in comparison with Europeans" (Leech 1983: 84). Such politeness can also be determined by different gender roles in society. In Japan, for instance, men and women observe politeness in different ways. To sum up, the concept of politeness might be universal ("abstract politeness" in Leech's term) while norms adopted to define politeness within a society or strategies used to realize it might be different from language to language ("relative politeness"). This point of view has significant implication for my later analysis (Module 3) of the translation of politeness features from one language into another.

4. Brown and Levinson

4.1 Summary

Brown and Levinson (1987) develop their politeness theory from the notion of face proposed by Goffman (1967). They define face as “the public self image that every member wants to claim for himself” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 61). According to them, a rational agent who can think logically and can use his/her language to achieve a certain goal has two different faces. One is the positive face which is the desire to be wanted and recognized among a group, while the other is the negative face which is the want to be undisturbed by others. For example, if we make a compliment to a friend on his/her new hair style, his/her positive face is thus satisfied. On the contrary, if we ask a favour from a friend, his/her negative face is threatened.

Based on the definition of face, Brown and Levinson (1987: 65) further propose that in our daily life, some acts unavoidably “run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker.” They term these as face-threatening acts (FTA). The contradiction between the need to perform a FTA and the desire to satisfy the face wants leads to the following politeness strategies to lessen the potential threat of the act (Brown and Levinson 1987: 69):

1. Do the FTA bald on record without redressive action;
2. Do the FTA on record with positive politeness as redressive action;
3. Do the FTA on record with negative politeness as redressive action;
4. Do the FTA off record (indirectly);
5. Don't do the FTA.

The more risky a FTA is, the greater the number of strategies needed before a decision is made on how to deal with the FTA. A rational agent, before doing a FTA, will estimate the potential risk a FTA might cause and choose the most suitable strategy

among those available. A wrong choice of politeness strategy might make a FTA look more threatening than it actually is. As a result, Brown and Levinson (1987: 74) introduce three variables which influence the seriousness of a FTA: (1) the social distance (D) of S and H, (2) the relative power (P) of S and H, and (3) the absolute ranking (R) of impositions in the particular culture. They also work out a formula using these three variables to calculate the weightiness (W) of a FTA (Brown and Levinson 1987: 76):

$$W = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R$$

In the following section, I will exemplify how Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies are realized linguistically with examples from Cantonese and English.

4.2 Exemplification

In this section, I will cite some cases to demonstrate the politeness strategies Brown and Levinson (1987) propose to mitigate a FTA. The majority of the data cited in this section are in Cantonese, since Brown and Levinson (1987) have given many English instances in their analysis of politeness strategies. Moreover, discussion will focus on strategy 2 (positive politeness), strategy 3 (negative politeness) and strategy 4 (off record). Strategy 1 (bald-on-record), according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 95-96), is adopted in "cases of great urgency" to communicate and thus no redressive work can be observed. Strategy 5 (Don't do the FTA) presents no data for analysis since no FTA is observed and thus no politeness is applied.

4.2.1 Positive Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987: 101) define positive politeness as "redress directed to the

addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants...should be thought of as desirable." Positive politeness is "approach-based" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 70). Therefore, it is realized mainly by claiming the common ground or sameness with the addressee. For instance, speaker (S) can claim common ground with hearer (H) by expressing that H's want or interest is admirable, as the following example shows.

- (1) 啲 咖啡 好 香 喎
di¹ *ga³féi¹* *hou²* *hêng¹* *wo⁵*
the coffee very fragrant FP
- 不過 咁 夜 飲
bed⁷guo³ *gam³* *ye⁶* *yem²*
but so late drink
- 你 唔 驚 瞓 唔 著 咩 ?
néi⁵ *m⁴* *gêng¹* *fen³* *m⁴* *zêg⁶* *mé¹*
you not afraid sleep not ASP FP

The coffee smells good. But aren't you afraid of spending a sleepless night if you drink coffee so late at night?
(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

After being served a cup of coffee by the hearer, the speaker wants to make a comment on the disadvantage of drinking coffee at a late hour. However, in order to minimize the face-threatening aspect of such a comment, the speaker complements the quality of the coffee the hearer has made before she makes her comments. Common ground can also be claimed by using "in-group identity markers" among which address forms are most frequently used (Brown and Levinson 1987: 107). The following dialogue between a separated couple (although not yet officially divorced) demonstrates positive politeness.

(2) A: 文生 咩 事 呀 ?
 man⁴ sang¹ mé¹ xi⁶ a³
 Man-Mr. what matter FP

B: 老婆
 lou⁵ po⁴
 wife

A: 唔好 叫 我 老婆
 m⁴ hou² giu³ ngo⁵ lou⁵ po⁴
 do not call me wife

我哋 分咗居 嘞
 ngo⁵ déi⁶ fen¹-zo²-gêu¹ la³
 we separate-ASP-reside FP

A: What do you want, Mr. Man?

B: Darling!

A: Don't call me darling. We are separated.

(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

Speaker B, the husband, is going to plead for his wife's assistance in settling a business argument between his and her company. Therefore, he calls his wife "Darling" to claim common ground, although they are separated. However, his wife reminds him of their separation and asks him not to use such an intimate address. Positive politeness can also be observed in the following sentence by an old lady who urges her great granddaughter to take some Chinese medicine.

(3) 飲啦 飲啦 乖啦 乖 豬 嚟 架
 yem²-la¹ yem²-la¹ guai¹-la¹ guai¹ ju¹ lei⁴ ga³
 drink-FP drink-FP good-FP good pig FP FP

Drink! Drink! Good girl! My dear piggy!

(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

Here the term ‘豬’ (*ju¹* pig) in Cantonese is usually used to express intimacy among family or friends. Using address forms to claim in-group membership is also common in English as Example (4) demonstrates.

(4) Honey, can you take this in for me? (From *Desperate Housewives*)

In the above example, a husband is asking his wife to get some photos developed for him, so he uses the intimate term to lessen the potential FTA. Another strategy to minimize FTA is “token agreement” by which Brown and Levinson (1987: 113) mean “mechanisms of pretending to agree.” In the following conversation, Speaker A adopts two politeness strategies, one of which is token agreement.

- (5) A: 你 專登 嚟 南丫 島
nei⁵ jun¹ deng¹ lei⁴ nam⁴ a¹ dou²
 you intentionally come Lamma island
- 買 我嘅 茶果 架 ?
mai⁵ ngo⁵-gé³ ca⁴ guo² ga⁴
 buy I-POSS Tea Cake FP
- B: 係呀 不過 我 仲 知道 咧
hei⁶ a³ bed⁷ guo³ ngo⁵ zung⁶ ji¹ dou³ lé⁴
 Yes-FP but I furthermore know FP
- 小齊嘅 阿爺 以前 好 威風 架
xiu² cei⁴-gé³ a³ yé⁴ yi⁵ qin⁴ hou² wei¹ fung¹ ga³
 Chi-POSS grandpa ago very awe-inspiring FP

A: You came all the way to Lamma Island to buy the Tea Cake I made?

B: Yes...but I also know that Chi's grand father was very outstanding.

(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

Speaker B actually comes to Lamma Island to ask speaker A to persuade a group of

grocery merchants to sell her company's products. However, she does not say “no” directly to Speaker A's question. Instead, she pretends to agree and furthermore attends to Speaker A's positive face by praising speaker A's husband (that is, Chi's grandfather) before she formally raises her request.

4.2.2 Negative Politeness

Negative politeness, according to Brown and Levinson (1987: 129), is “redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded.” Unlike the “approach-based” positive politeness, negative politeness is “avoidance-based” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 70). As a result, it is realized by the speaker's showing recognition and respect toward the addressee's negative faces.

One way to achieve negative politeness while performing a FTA is to “minimize the imposition” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 176) as the following example shows:

(6) 其實	好	小	事	嚟	架	咋
<i>kéi⁴sed⁶</i>	<i>hou²</i>	<i>xiu²</i>	<i>xi⁶</i>	<i>lei⁴</i>	<i>ga³</i>	<i>za³</i>
actually	very	trivial	matter	P	FP	FP
你	都	可以	幫到手	架		
<i>nei⁵</i>	<i>dou¹</i>	<i>ho²yi⁵</i>	<i>bong¹-dou³-seo²</i>	<i>ga³</i>		
you	also	can	give-ASP-hand	FP		
你	淨係	需要	call	晒		
<i>nei⁵</i>	<i>jing⁶hei⁶</i>	<i>sêu¹yi³</i>	<i>call</i>	<i>sai³</i>		
you	only-BE	need	call(ENG)	entirely		
所有	藥行-嘅	老闆	出嚟			
<i>so²yeo⁵</i>	<i>yêk⁶hong⁴-ge³</i>	<i>lou⁵ban²</i>	<i>cêd¹lei⁴</i>			
all	grocery-POSS	boss	come out			

It's actually just a very trivial matter. You can help too. The only thing you have to do is ask all grocery merchants out to dinner.
(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

The above speaker obviously wants to ask a favour from the addressee, but she uses expressions like ‘小’ (*xiu²* trivial) and ‘淨係’ (*jing⁶hei⁶* only) to show that the imposition is not in fact very serious. Besides, the Cantonese sentence-final particle ‘㗎’ (*za³*, a combination of 嘅 [*zé¹*] and 呀 [*a³*]) also plays the role of minimizing the imposition. The sentence-final particle [*zé¹*] bears the meaning of “just /only,” while the particle [*a³*] has the function of “softening statement or question” (Matthews and Yip 1994: 340). Therefore, the combination of [*zé¹*] and [*a³*], which is [*za³*] in Example (6), is a special device to achieve negative politeness in Cantonese.

Again, like positive politeness, address forms are commonly used to achieve negative politeness.

(7)	海	小姐	你	唔得	閒	嘅
	<i>hoi²</i>	<i>xiu²zé²</i>	<i>néi⁵</i>	<i>m⁴-deg¹</i>	<i>han⁴</i>	<i>gé³</i>
	Hoi	Miss	you	not-can	free	FP
	我哋	係	呢度	傾	都	得
	<i>ngo⁵dei⁶</i>	<i>hei</i>	<i>ni¹dou⁶</i>	<i>king¹</i>	<i>dou¹</i>	<i>deg¹</i>
	we	at	here	chat	also	ok
						架 嘞
						<i>ga³ la³</i>
						FP FP

Miss Hoi, if you are busy, we can talk about this matter here.
(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

The speaker usually addresses Miss Hoi by her first name, Hilda. However, here he switches to [Miss + surname] because he would like to discuss some business stuff after office hours with her and so gives deference to Hilda by using an honorific address that could satisfy her negative face. The following is a more complicated

example with more than one kind of negative politeness observed.

- (8) 先生 呢度 唔俾 著 鞋 架 喎
xin¹sang¹ *ni¹dou⁶* *m⁴-béi²* *zêg⁶* *hai⁴* *ga⁴* *wo⁴*
 Sir here not-allow wear shoe FP FP
- 麻煩 你 除 咗 對 鞋
ma⁴fan⁴ *nei⁵* *cêu⁴* *zo²* *dêu³* *hai⁴*
trouble *you* *take off* *ASP* *CL* *shoe*
- 先 入去 呀 唔該
xin¹ *yeb⁶hêu³* *a³* *m⁴goi¹*
 first go in FP please

Sir, shoes are not allowed here (at a swimming pool). Would you mind taking off your shoes before entering, please?

(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

First of all, the speaker uses an honorific term ‘先生’ (*xin¹sang¹* Sir) to address a customer at a clubhouse. Then, a modal verb of prohibition 唔俾 (*m⁴-béi²* not allow) is used to give instruction on pool side rules. According to Matthews and Yip (1994: 231), the modal verb ‘唔准’ (*m⁴zên²*) means “not allow”; here its alternative ‘唔俾’ (*m⁴-béi²*) is adopted. This term “is usually used impersonally, without a subject” (ibid) and impersonalization is one way to “dissociate S, H from the particular infringement” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 190). If we try to translate this impersonalized Cantonese sentence into semantically equivalent English, we will get a passive voice sentence (*shoes are not allowed here*) which is another way in negative politeness to avoid mentioning the people involved in a FTA (Brown and Levinson 1987: 194). The following example demonstrates another form of passive voice to achieve negative politeness.

- (9) I'm very sorry to hear that, but unfortunately, I am completely booked right now. (From *Desperate Housewives*)

In Sentence (9), a doctor is trying to explain to a patient why he cannot see her today by using passive voice. The passive voice here is used to “avoid the blaming of explicit others (including oneself)” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 194). In addition to passive voice, tense can also be used to “distance S from H or from the particular FTA” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 204).

- (10) Well, I just was wondering, if, um, if there was any chance that, um, you would, um, I just wanted to ask if... (From *Desperate Housewives*)

When asking a man out for dinner, the speaker in Example (10) adopts “remote past tenses” (Brown and Levinson 1987: 204) to distance herself from a current request.

4.2.3 Off Record

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 69), to go off record with a FTA means that the utterance contains more than one possible intention, so that the speaker cannot be held responsible for a particular interpretation of the utterance and neither can the hearer be blamed for not getting the meaning exactly intended by the speaker. Many indirect expressions belong to this category. For instance, if one says “It’s cold in here,” he/she might imply a request to shut the window for him/her (example taken from Brown and Levinson 1987: 215). The speaker in Example (11) rejects an offer of food by going off record.

- (11) Actually I just had dinner. (From *Desperate Housewives*)

In Cantonese, the same usage of indirect expressions to reject an offer can also be found as the following example shows.

- (12) A: 你 都 趁 熱 食 一 件 啦
néi⁵ dou¹ cen³ yid⁶ xig⁶ yed¹ gin⁶ la¹
 you also take advantage of hot eat one CL FP
- B: 我 好 少 食 甜
ngo⁵ hou² xiu² xig⁶ tim⁴
 I very little eat sweet

A: Take one (cake) while it's still hot.

B: I seldom eat sweet food.

4.3 Critique of Brown and Levinson

Although Brown and Levinson's face-saving theory has been widely recognized, there are some criticisms on the over-simplification and over-generalization of their theory. In this section, I will look at two aspects of these criticisms and furthermore exemplify their validity by instances from the same sources cited in section 4.2.

First of all, the variables D, P and R adopted by Brown and Levinson to calculate the seriousness of a FTA have been criticized as being an over-simplification (Watts at al. 1992; Werkhofer 1992; Locher 2004). Brown and Levinson do not take into account the fact of "communication being interactional and dynamic" (Locher 2004: 69). Also, they seem to "exclude the factors such as habit and routine or factors emerging from the dynamics of the interaction" (Werkhofer 1992: 168). It may be that D, P and R play a crucial role in verbal interaction. Nevertheless, they are not the only factors that influence the linguistic realization of politeness. A lot more factors might enter the interaction since communication is a dynamic process.

To exemplify the insufficiency of D, P and R, I would like to cite two examples

uttered by two speakers to achieve the same goal (i.e. asking passers-by to fill in a questionnaire).

- (13) A: 小姐 唔好意思 阻 你 一 分鐘
xiu²zé² *m⁴hou²yi³xi³* *zo²* *néi⁵* *yed¹* *fen¹zung¹*
Miss sorry disturb you one minute
- 我 係 Pluto 個人 護理 代理
ngo⁵ *hei⁶* *Pluto* *go³yen⁴* *wu⁶léi⁵* *doi⁶léi⁵*
I BE Pluto (Name) personal care agent
- 有限 公司
yeo⁵han⁶ *gung¹xi¹*
limited company
- 同 你 做 個 問卷 調查
tung⁴ *néi⁵* *zou⁶* *go³* *men⁶giin²* *diu⁶ca⁴*
with you make CL questionnaire survey

Miss, excuse me. It will just take one minute. I am from Pluto Company Ltd. and would like you to complete a questionnaire.
(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

- (14) B: 兩 位 靚女 有冇 時間
lêng⁵ *wei⁶* *lêng³nêu⁵* *yeo⁵-mou⁵* *xi⁴gan¹*
two CL beautiful girl have-not have time
- 做 個 問答 遊戲 呀
zou⁶ *go³* *men⁶dab³* *yeo⁴héi³* *a³*
make CL quiz game FP
- 唔會 阻 你 好 多 時間 架 咋
m⁴-wui⁵ *zo²* *néi⁵* *hou²do¹* *xi⁴gan¹* *ga³* *za³*
not-will disturb you very much time FP FP
- 幾 條 問題 噃
gêi² *tiu⁴* *men⁶tei⁴* *zé¹*
several CL question FP

Two beautiful girls, do you have time for a quiz game? It won't take you too much time. Only a few questions.
(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

Both speaker A and B are staff of the same company doing a questionnaire for their new product and the addressees of both utterances are just passers-by in the street. Therefore, in both utterances, the D value is high and the P value is low since addressers and addressees are unknown to each other. The R value is high because asking strangers in the street to stop and spend a few minutes filling in a questionnaire is a disturbance to the addressees. We have the same D, P and R values for the two utterances and should get the same output of linguistic politeness. However, the realization of linguistic politeness in these two utterances is obviously different. Speaker A in Example (13) tries to minimize the request by attending to the hearer's negative face. The honorific address form '小姐' (xiu^2ze^2 Miss) is first used to show respect and then an apology '唔好意思' ($m^4hou^2yi^3xi^3$ excuse me) is adopted to "beg forgiveness" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 189) before the FTA is performed. Moreover, the expression '一分鐘' ($yed^1-fen^1zung^1$ one minute) also helps to minimize the imposition. On the contrary, speaker B in Example (14) uses positive politeness to start a conversation. Instead of using an honorific, speaker B addresses the passers-by by an intimate term '靚女' ($leng^3neu^5$ beautiful girl) which attends to the addressees' positive face of being recognized. In addition to positive politeness, speaker B switches to negative politeness by using the sentence-final particles '咋' (za^3) and '嘛' (ze^1) which bear the meaning of "only" to minimize the imposition. The positive politeness adopted by speaker B to start a conversation might not work if the addressee is a well-dressed lady who works as a lawyer in a big company, because she might regard such expression as flippant and her negative face might be offended. For such an addressee, speaker A's choice of politeness strategy seems more suitable.

and effective. Schulze (1985, cited in Locher 2004: 69) comments that it is insufficient that “(o)nly S’s cognitive apparatus is described, while H has to contribute to the interaction as well,” so we have to take into consider many other factors besides D, P and R when we discuss the linguistic realization of politeness. The above examples illustrate that D, P and R alone are not sufficient for a comprehensive account of linguistic politeness. Factors such as the participants’ education background, physical appearance and “psychological attitude” (Ide 1989: 240) might need to be taken into consideration.

The other aspect of Brown and Levinson’s theory that has been widely criticized is the over-generalization that “indirectness...[is] the ultimate realization of politeness” (Locher 2004: 68). Held (1992:139) classifies the face-saving theory proposed by Brown and Levinson as an “indirectness approach” because they regard the violation of Grice’s CP as the only source of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson, a speaker adopts politeness strategies in order to compensate a face-threatening act. This intention of the addresser has been questioned by many scholars. Werkhofer (1992:169) suggests that Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness “rules out the case of neutral or pro-social intent.” Locher (2004) also disagrees with the emphasis on conflict caused by a potential FTA in Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory. Indeed, many scholars (Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988) have suggested that linguistic realization of politeness does not necessarily have anything to do with a FTA. Even if there is no FTA, linguistic politeness might be observed. Let me exemplify by the Cantonese term ‘靚女’ (*léng³nêu⁵* beautiful girl). As we have seen in Example (14), the term ‘靚女’ (*léng³nêu⁵* beautiful girl) is used as a positive politeness strategy to redress the hearer’s positive face before a request is raised. In Cantonese, ‘靚女’ (*léng³nêu⁵* beautiful girl) or ‘靚姐’ (*léng³zé¹* beautiful sister) are commonly used terms in local markets where vendors solicit female shoppers to buy their products.

However, these terms can be uttered as a mere greeting without any FTA present.

(15) 靚女	補完習	嘞?
<i>léng³nêu⁵</i>	<i>bou²-yun⁴-zab⁶</i>	<i>la³</i>
beautiful girl	make up-ASP-study	FP

Beautiful girl, finished your revision?
(From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

In Example (15), the speaker greets his little niece with the term ‘靚女’ (*léng³nêu⁵* beautiful girl) when there is no potential threat to the little girl’s face. We can find a similar example in the English expression “Hello my dear” as a mere greeting (example taken from Karasumi 2001: 23).

Although Brown and Levinson’s face saving approach to dealing with politeness is criticized for their over-simplification and over-generalization, they have proposed many feasible politeness strategies that can be used in data analysis, and I have exemplified a number of these in Section 4.2. They also bring our attention to the fact that face threatening acts are one of the sources where politeness is realized. Their insightful observation and analysis of linguistic politeness still have a considerable influence on other researchers. As a result, in my later research on translation of politeness features, their politeness strategies might be integrated to some extent into my own system of analysis of linguistic politeness.

5. Asian Politeness

Although Brown and Levinson (1987) claim the universality of their politeness theory, many scholars, especially those who study politeness in Asian languages, have questioned whether their theory can be applied to languages other than Western ones (Matsumoto 1988; Ide 1989; Gu 1990; Pan 2000). The most controversial argument is about the concept of face. It has been argued that Brown and Levinson construct their theory on individualistic cultures like North America where face represents self's public image and is independent of others. However, in collectivistic cultures such as China and Japan, face is not only a facet of the individual, but rather an interdependent concept. Therefore, Chinese people care more about what others expect self to do than what self wants to do (Pan 2000: 18). The diverse concepts of face are reflected in the different observances of politeness in different cultures. North Americans observe negative politeness due to self's respect to the addressee's desire for independence, while Chinese observe negative politeness under the restriction of "the social norm of respecting hierarchical order" (Pan 2000: 11). Gu (1990) points out that the characteristic which distinguishes Chinese politeness from the one Brown and Levinson propose is that politeness in Brown and Levinson is an instrument to do face work, whereas Chinese politeness is a set of moral norms which regulate people's acts. Ide's (1989) review of Japanese politeness also leads to the conclusion that the normative aspect of politeness is emphasized more in Japanese culture.

In this chapter, I will review politeness theories related to Chinese and Japanese. For Chinese, Gu's (1990) politeness maxims and Pan's discourse analysis will be discussed. Gu's maxims (1990: 237) are based on "modern Chinese" (the standardized language used by mass media and schools in Mainland China). To facilitate further discussion, I will also cite examples from Cantonese (one of the

target languages in my later study) and discuss whether Gu's maxims can be applied to Cantonese. In addition, I will look at Ide's (1989) dichotomous aspects of politeness and Matsumoto's (1988: 411) "relation-acknowledging devices" in the discussion of Japanese politeness (the source language of my later study).

5.1 Chinese Politeness

5.1.1 Gu

According to Gu (1990: 239), *limao* (the Chinese counterpart of the term “politeness”) consists of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement. He believes that Brown and Levinson’s model cannot fully account for Chinese politeness because politeness in Chinese is not only instrumental (i.e. redressing a FTA) but also normative. Therefore, politeness is interpreted in Chinese culture as “a sanctioned belief that an individual’s social behaviour ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement” (ibid: 245). Unlike the rational agent on whom Brown and Levinson construct their theory, face of Chinese is threatened only “when self cannot live up to what s/he has claimed for, or when what self has done is likely to incur ill fame or reputation” (Gu 1990:242).

In order to expound the concept of politeness in Chinese, Gu (1990: 245) proposes the following maxims on the basis of Leech’s Politeness Principle (1983).

1. The Tact Maxim
2. The Generosity Maxim
3. The Self-denigration Maxim
4. The Address Maxim

The Tact Maxim and The Generosity Maxim are adapted from Leech’s Politeness Principle (abbreviated as PP hereafter) with some modifications. Under Leech’s PP, as summarized in Section 3.1, Tact Maxim is other-centered (Minimize cost to *other* [Maximize benefit to *other*]) while Generosity Maxim is self-centered (Minimize benefit to *self* [Maximize cost to *self*]). However, this distinction of *other* and *self* is dismissed in Gu’s politeness maxims. Instead, Gu (1990: 245) applies The Tact Maxim to account for impositives (requests) and The Generosity Maxim for

commissives (offerings). The speaker's impositive is in turn the hearer's commissive and vice versa. As a result, these two maxims are complementary. In impositives, the speaker "observes the Tact Maxim in performing them, while [the hearer] observes the Generosity Maxim in responding to S's acts" (ibid: 252). On the contrary, the speaker is regulated by the Generosity Maxim in commissives while the hearer by the Tact Maxim.

Gu (1990: 245) further divides the Tact Maxim and the Generosity Maxim respectively into two levels and rewrites these two maxims in the following way:

1. The Tact Maxim (for impositives)
 - (i) At the motivational level - Minimize cost to other
 - (ii) At the conversational level - Maximize benefit received
2. The Generosity Maxim (for commissives)
 - (i) At the motivational level - Maximize benefit to other
 - (ii) At the conversational level - Minimize cost to self

Sub-maxims (i) which are adopted from Leech's Tact Maxim regulate the motivation and manner of the speaker, while the newly added sub-maxims (ii) regulate the speech behavior. Gu (1990: 252-53) exemplifies the distinction between sub-maxims (i) and (ii) with a conversation between a mother (A) and her perspective son-in-law (B). (A) wants to invite (B) to have dinner with her family but (B) refuses the offer several times in fear of causing too much trouble to (A). However, (A) tries to persuade (B) with reasons like 'dishes are all ready-made' and 'if you do not come, we all the same have meal.' The invitation of (A) can be interpreted as a commissive. Hence, (A) should observe the Generosity Maxim in inviting (B) whereas (B) should follow the Tact Maxim in accepting the offer. This explains why (A) uses the above-mentioned reasons in the interaction. Although at the motivation level (A) intends to maximize the benefit to (B) in performing an invitation, at the conversation level she minimizes

the cost to herself in order to “[make] it easier for [the hearer] to accept the offer” (Gu 1990: 245).

In addition to the Tact Maxim and the Generosity Maxim, Chinese people also observe the Self-denigration Maxim which consists of two sub-maxims: (a) denigrate self and (b) elevate other (Gu 1990: 246-49). The terms ‘self’ and ‘other’ not only refer to the addresser and addressee, but also bear implicit reference to, for example, the addresser’s / addressee’s act, family and property, just to name a few. The complexity of denigration / elevation system in Chinese and in its dialect Cantonese as well usually arouses confusion among foreigners. In a current TV programme about Korean cuisine broadcasted in Hong Kong, a Korean who has lived in Hong Kong for many years and is fluent in Cantonese refers to her own daughter as ‘千金’ (*qin¹gam¹*). The term ‘千金’ (*qin¹gam¹*) which literally means ‘a thousand pieces of gold’ is a deferential term used to refer to other’s daughters. According to Gu (ibid: 246), elevation of self “is construed as being ‘arrogant’, ‘boasting’, or ‘self-conceited’,” and although unintentional, the Korean mother may be giving this impression. As a result, to clearly distinguish ‘self’ from ‘other’ and furthermore to properly observe the Self-denigration Maxim is significant in Chinese and Cantonese politeness.

Although some of the denigration or elevation terms, for example ‘鄙人’ (*bǐrén* humble self; *bǐ*: despicable, *rén*: person), are so obsolete that they are seldom used nowadays, some are still currently in common use, especially as formal language (example taken from Gu 1990: 248). Gu (ibid: 247-48) has enumerated a few examples in modern Chinese, some of which also appear in Cantonese. For instance, the character ‘貴’ (*guèi³*, precious) can be added in front of ‘姓’ (*xìng³*, surname), ‘庚’ (*gēng²*, age) or ‘校’ (*hào⁶*, school) to elevate objects related to the addressees. In Hong Kong, when we enquire the occupation of people whom we

first meet, their occupations are usually referred to as ‘盛行’ (*xing⁶ hong⁴*; *xing⁶*: prosperous; *hong⁴*: occupation) which is more formal and deferential (example cited from Matthews and Yip 1994: 372).

Finally, it is also important in Chinese culture to “address...interlocutor with an appropriate address term” (Gu 1990: 248). Therefore, Chinese also observe the Address Maxim as one of the politeness principles. According to Gu (1990: 249), the address system in modern Chinese can be divided into five categories as follows:

- (a) vocative use of proper names;
- (b) vocative use of kinship terms;
- (c) vocative use of occupational titles;
- (d) vocative use of governmental titles;
- (e) address politeness markers.

Cantonese, as one of the Chinese dialects, has similar address system but differs slightly in usage. Similar to modern Chinese, proper name in Cantonese is also arranged in order of [surname + first name] which is different from the [first name + surname] order in English. Gu (1990: 250) explains that the Chinese surname “can be used alone by people outside the family” without other titles. In Cantonese, however, formal acquaintances are addressed by [surname + politeness title / occupational title] such as ‘陳小姐’ (*cen⁴ xiu²ze²* Miss Chan; *cen⁴*: surname, *xiu²ze²*: Miss) or ‘陳醫生’ (*cen⁴ yi¹seng¹* Dr. Chan; *cen⁴*: surname, *yi¹seng¹*: Dr.). On less formal occasions, we can address our acquaintances by their surname or one of the characters of their first name (if the addressee’s first name consists of two Chinese characters) but usually with an intimacy prefix *a³*-, such as *a³-cen⁴* (*cen⁴*: surname) or *a³-ming⁴* (*ming⁴*: first name). The prefix *a³*- can also be applied to English name of one syllable, say *a³-Joe* (Matthews and Yip 1994).

Inside the family, a complicated system of kinship terms is applied to distinguish whether the relationship is related to mother's or father's family, as Cantonese has different words for uncle-on-mother's-side and uncle-on-father's-side, for example, and different vocative terms for each of these words. Nevertheless, as family size becomes smaller in modern society especially in Hong Kong, the address system of kinship terms is also being simplified (Pan 1993; Matthews and Yip 1994). Terms which are used to address members in a nuclear family are still frequently used nowadays. Although some kinship terms are less used to address kin, they can be used to address non-kin people and this generalized reference system is frequently used in Hong Kong. For example, '阿婆' (a^3-po^4 grandmother) is used to address elderly women and '阿姨' (a^3-yi^4 auntie) to address "a friend's mother or one's parents' friends (Matthews and Yip 1994: 374). The term '阿孀' (a^3-sem^2 uncle's wife) refers to women of middle age, but it is seldom used directly to address middle-aged females. Instead, '阿姐' ($a^3-zé^1$ elder sister) is more frequently adopted for the sake of politeness. In addition, '姐' ($zé^2$ elder sister) and '哥' (go^1 elder brother) can be added after a person's name to address people who are senior either in age or in position such as '玲姐' (*Ling- zé²*) or '偉哥' (*Wei- go¹*) (examples taken from *It's Difficult to Be Women*). Again, this usage can be applied to English name as well such as 'Hilda 姐' (*Hilda- zé²*) (ibid).

Some occupational titles and governmental titles are also frequently used as address forms in Cantonese. For example, we can use '老師' (lou^5-xi^1 teacher) to directly address teachers without referring to their names. The term '師傅' (xi^1-fu^6 master) is also a common address form to address craftsmen such as decorators, chefs and car mechanics. For civil servants, we can address them by their governmental titles, such as '特首' (deg^6-xeo^2 ; deg^6 : special, xeo^2 : leader). This term can be used to address the Chief Executives of Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative

Regions. The Secretaries of different Bureaus can also be addressed directly by their governmental titles, i.e. ‘部長’ (*bou⁶zêng²* Secretary).

According to Gu (1990: 249), “address politeness markers”, the last category of Chinese address system, can be divided into two sub-groups: solidarity boosters and honorifics. The Chinese term ‘同志’ (*tóngzhì*, comrade) is a prevalent solidarity booster in China. Because this term originally refers to fellow members of a socialist or communist party, people in Hong Kong seldom address each other with it. Instead, the same term in Cantonese (*tung⁴ju³*) which bears different meaning in Hong Kong is used to refer to homosexuals. In Hong Kong, certain groups do have their own solidarity boosters to address members in their group. For instance, gangsters address each other as ‘兄弟’ (*hing¹dei⁶*, elder and younger brothers). Besides, people of the same religious sect call one another ‘弟兄姐妹’ (*dei⁶hing¹ji²mui⁶*, brothers and sisters). We usually use the collective term ‘兄弟’ (*hing¹dei⁶*) to refer to elder and younger brothers at the same time, but here ‘兄弟’ (*hing¹dei⁶*) is reversed into ‘弟兄’ (*dei⁶hing¹*) when people address their religious companions to avoid confusion with the term ‘兄弟’ (*hing¹dei⁶*) which is a solidarity booster for gangsters. As for honorifics, Cantonese has a few ways to address people without mentioning the addressee’s name. We can use ‘先生’ (*xin¹xang¹* Sir) for male addressees whose names are unknown. For female addressees, ‘小姐’ (*xiu²zé²*) is equivalent to ‘Miss’, ‘女士’ (*nêu⁵xi⁶*) to ‘Ms’ and ‘太太’ (*tai³tai²*) to ‘Mrs’ in English. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4, ‘靚女’ (*lêng³nêu²* beautiful girl) is frequently adopted by merchants to address their customers regardless of age and appearance. According to Brown and Levinson’s definition (1987), the adoption of the term ‘靚女’ (*lêng³nêu²* beautiful girl) is to redress a FTA (i.e. soliciting customers) by attending to their positive face.

Unlike Brown and Levinson’s instrumental interpretation of face work and Leech’s

descriptive principles of politeness, Gu (1990) emphasizes the connection between social norms and politeness to account for politeness phenomena in Chinese. The normative characteristic of Chinese politeness contradicts the universality Brown and Levinson claim for politeness phenomena and provides new insights into the issue of linguistic politeness.

5.1.2 Pan

Based on the power difference (P) and distance (D) among interlocutors in different contexts, Scollon and Scollon (1995: 44-47) propose three types of politeness systems which are termed “deference politeness system”, “solidarity politeness system” and “hierarchical politeness system” respectively. In a deference politeness system, interlocutors who regard each other as equals in status adopt independence strategies (i.e. negative politeness in Brown and Levinson’s term) in interactions. Therefore, there is no power difference (- P), but the relationship between participants is distant (+ D). This kind of politeness system can easily be observed in the first encounter of two professionals who address each other with deferential terms such as [Mr. / Ms + surname] because they do not know each other. The solidarity politeness system is mostly perceived among close friends or colleagues. Interlocutors who are close to each other (- D) and equal in status (- P) use involvement strategies (i.e. positive politeness) to communicate with each other. Different from the first two systems, the hierarchical politeness system is an asymmetrical one, because in this kind of politeness system, interlocutors recognize the difference in status (+ P) between each other and thus use different politeness strategies to talk with each other in interaction. That is, people in the higher position use involvement strategies toward their subordinates, while people in the lower position adopt independence strategies toward their superiors.

Pan (2000: 148) adopts the term “hierarchical solidarity” to illustrate Chinese politeness. The literal meaning of the term suggests a mixture of the solidarity and hierarchical politeness systems proposed by Scollon and Scollon. As discussed in the previous section, the Chinese self is a more circumscribed concept which includes not only an individual but also one’s family and intimates. For Chinese, group boundary is more important than the individual face need and the positive politeness of being the same as other group members is more frequently used in interactions. As sameness and cohesion are emphasized in Chinese culture, solidarity is an important element in Chinese politeness. Unlike the solidarity politeness system of Scollon and Scollon, however, the Chinese solidarity “is not based on equality among group members but on the power structure established in the society” (Pan 2000: 148). According to Pan’s exploitation, the characteristic of Chinese politeness can be rephrased as (- D, + P) using Scollon and Scollon’s categorization. (-D) explains the phenomenon that face of participants is attended only in an inside relationship. In other words, no politeness strategies can be observed in an outside relationship. As a result, Pan (2000: 149) claims that the first step of applying linguistic politeness in Chinese culture is “to measure the social distance between the two participants.” Once an inside relationship is confirmed, interlocutors will place each other in a hierarchical order according to the power each interlocutor possesses in different situations. In an outside relationship, the attributes of participants are unknown to each other, so it is difficult to decide the power relations and furthermore the politeness strategies. Pan illustrates this phenomenon with data collected in a state-run stamp store in Mainland China. In the interactions between the store clerk and the customers, 75% of the requests were made in the form of direct imperative without any politeness markers such as *please*. This proves to be a huge difference between English and Chinese. Wierzbicka (1996) points out that interrogative forms

are widely adopted as a redressive device in making requests in English even between intimates, while Pan (2000) argues that face work is applied only in an inside relationship in Chinese.

When necessary, however, participants can turn an outside relationship into an inside one “by claiming connections with each other” (Pan 2000: 149). Building connections is a common way in Asian cultures to reduce the distance between each other and thus establish an in-group relationship. Unlike the clerk in the state-run store who receives a fixed income regardless of the sales amount, the salesperson in the kind of privately owned store which arose after Economic Reform in China in 1980’s has to ensure that the business brings in as much profit as possible. Therefore, in a privately run store, the salespersons usually try to claim common ground with the customers in order to make the transaction successful. In Pan’s data (2000: 69), the salesperson not only uses the phrase ‘大家咁老友’ (*dai⁶ ga¹ gam³ lou⁵ yeo⁵*; semantic translation by Pan: “you are all my friends”) but also pay compliments to the customer’s daughters. These two strategies attend to the customer’s positive face and achieve the purpose of establishing an in-group relationship with the customer. In between the lack of face work in a state-run business and the adoption of involvement strategies in a privately owned store, Pan (ibid: 74) introduces a new trend called “distant politeness” in modern China. This kind of politeness which “[attends] to face need without being too involved” (ibid.) can usually be observed in chain stores established by foreign capital. Salespersons in these chain stores are asked to greet and help the customers actively but refrain from small talk with the customers, as the salesperson in a privately owned store does to pay face work.

Once an inside relationship is confirmed, face work can be applied according to the position each participant occupies in a power hierarchy. Scollon and Scollon’s model of hierarchical politeness system (1995: 44) offers a guideline for applying

politeness strategies in an inside relationship in Chinese: people in the upper position, when speaking to their inferiors, can use involvement strategies to show solidarity or independence strategies to maintain distance, while their inferiors usually speak with independence strategies to show deference. The following conversation between employees and their boss's wife from *It's Difficult to Be Women* well illustrates these two strategies in one exchange. When the boss's wife shows up in the office, the employees greet her immediately.

- (16) Employees: 老闆 娘
 lou⁵ban² nêng⁴
 Boss Wife
- The boss's wife: 都 話 唔好 客氣 啦
 dou¹ wa⁶ m⁴hou² hag⁸hei³ la¹
 already say Not-good polite FP
- 叫 我 Venus 得 架 啦
 giu³ ngo⁵ Venus deg⁷ ga³ la¹
 call me Venus(ENG) all-right FP FP
- Employees: Wife of boss
- The boss's wife: I've told you there is no need to be so polite. Just call me Venus.
- (From *It's Difficult to Be Women*)

The employees show deference to the boss's wife by addressing her '老闆娘' (*lou⁵ban² nêng⁴* boss's wife) which along with the term '老闆' (*lou⁵ban²* boss) is used to address superiors (Matthews and Yip 1994: 373). The boss's wife, on the contrary, speaks down with involvement strategy and asks the employees to call her by her English first name. Moreover, although the boss's wife adopts a direct imperative to request being called by her first name, the sentence final particle '啦' (*la¹*) "softens

the force of the request” (Matthews and Yip 1995: 359) and prevents the request from being perceived as rude and impolite.

Although power hierarchy in an inside relationship decides the politeness strategies applied, the source of power differs in different situations. Pan (2000) examines two kinds of in-group relationships (office and family settings) and discusses the sources of power in each situation. Although Pan not only examines the lexical terms but also conducts discourse analysis in her study of Chinese politeness, she believes that “the choice of address forms in interpersonal communication is often the first indication of how participants view their relationship” (Pan 2000: 98). As a result, I will give two Cantonese instances (one for each situation) in the following discussions of power relations proposed by Pan. In an office setting, official rank gives power to the interlocutors and gender proves not to be an important factor. In the TV drama from which I took the Cantonese examples, the female manager Hilda is always addressed as Hilda-姐 (*Hilda-ze²* Hilda-Sister) by her subordinates. The suffix ‘姐’ (*ze²*), as discussed in previous section, is added to the name of one’s superior to show deference. In a family setting, age is the decisive factor. The main character ‘Ling’ in the same TV drama uses the kinship terms such as ‘阿爸’ (*a³-ba⁴* father) or ‘阿哥’ (*a³-go¹* elder brother) to address family members who are older than her. However, she addresses her younger brother sometimes using the kinship term ‘細佬’ (*xei³-lou²* younger brother) and sometimes his first name ‘阿力’ (*a-lig⁹*; *a*-intimate prefix; *lig⁹*-first name), while her younger brother always addresses her as ‘家姊’ (*ga¹-je¹* elder sister) as the elder members in a family have more power than the younger ones.

5.2 Japanese Politeness

5.2.1 Ide

Ide (1989: 224) believes that Brown and Levinson's model of politeness is not comprehensive enough to explain politeness phenomena in Japanese because the use of formal forms and honorifics which are "the major linguistic devices for politeness in Japanese" is wrongly categorized by Brown and Levinson as a negative politeness strategy. She argues that formal forms and honorifics are not strategies which interlocutors adopt to redress face threatening actions according to their own volition. Instead, the use of formal forms and honorifics is grammatically and socio-pragmatically compulsory in Japanese. Levinson (1983: 90-91) mentions that the distinction between formal and informal forms is so "firmly grammaticalized" in Japanese that "it is almost impossible to say anything at all which is not sociolinguistically marked as appropriate to certain kinds of addressees only." In other words, Japanese speakers have to choose between plain forms and formal forms in every utterance "(s)ince the choices cover such parts of speech as copulas, verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs" (Ide 1989: 231). Table 1 below demonstrates the plain and formal forms of some basic parts of speech.

Language forms Parts of speech	Plain	Formal
Copula	だ <i>da</i>	です <i>desu</i> でございます <i>de gozai masu</i>
Verb 1	来る <i>kuru</i> (to come)	来ます <i>kimasu</i> (neutral)
		いらっしゃいます <i>irasshaimasu</i> (exalting)
		まいります <i>mairimasu</i> (humbling)
Verb 2	聞く <i>kiku</i> (to inquire)	聞きます <i>kikimasu</i> (neutral)
		お聞きになります <i>o-kiki-ni-narimasu</i> (exalting)
		お聞きにします <i>o-kiki-ni-simasu</i> (humbling)
Noun	意見 <i>iken</i> (opinion)	ご意見 <i>go-iken</i>
	写真 <i>shashin</i> (photograph)	お写真 <i>o-shashin</i>
Adjective	元気 <i>genki</i> (healthy)	お元気 <i>o-genki</i>
Adverb	ゆっくり <i>yukkuri</i> (slowly)	ごゆっくり <i>go-yukkuri</i>

Table 1 Different forms of basic parts of speech (examples taken from Niyekawa 1995: 53- 70).

Matsumoto (1988: 415) gives three sentences to explain the usage of the three Japanese copulas listed in Table 1.

- (17a) 今日は 土曜日 だ。
 kyou-wa *doyoubi* *da*
 Today-TOPIC Saturday COPULA

Today is Saturday.

(17b)	今日は	土曜日	<u>です。</u>
	<i>kyou-wa</i>	<i>doyoubi</i>	<u><i>desu</i></u>
	Today-TOPIC	Saturday	COPULA

Today is Saturday.

(17c)	今日は	土曜日	<u>でございます。</u>
	<i>kyou-wa</i>	<i>doyoubi</i>	<u><i>degozai masu</i></u>
	Today-TOPIC	Saturday	COPULA

Today is Saturday.

The three sentences above share the same semantic meaning, but are different in the degree of formality. People use Sentence (17a) when talking with family or intimate friends and Sentence (17b) with strangers, acquaintances and superiors. (17c) is adopted in an extremely formal situation.

As shown in Table 1, there are two ways to convert a plain verb into a formal one. Verb 1 (来る *kuru*, to come), on the one hand, is shifted to a formal form by means of “lexical substitution” and Verb 2 (聞く *kiku*, to inquire), on the other, is switched with the help of some “grammatical devices” such as prefix and suffix (Niyekawa 1995: 53-54). Basically, the formal form of each verb can be further divided into three categories: neutral, exalting, and humbling forms. If we take Verb 1 (来る *kuru*, to come) in Table 2 for example, the neutral form (来ます *imasu*) which can refer to both speaker’s and addressee’s action is generally adopted in formal situations. The exalting form (いらっしゃる *irasshaimasu*) refers to the addressee’s action only and the adoption of it shows the speaker’s respect toward the addressee by exalting the status of the addressee. Respect can also be paid to the addressee by the adoption of the humbling form (まいります *mairimasu*) by which the speaker humbles his/her own act in order to elevate the addressee’s status.

The prefixes ご (*go*) or お (*o*) are attached to Japanese nouns when people refer to the items related to the addressees whom they want to show deference to. So the two examples in Table 1 (ご意見 *go-iken* and お写真 *o-shasin*) do not simply mean ‘opinion’ and ‘photograph’, but should be interpreted as ‘your precious opinion’ and ‘your beautiful photograph’ (my translation) owing to the honorific prefixation of ご (*go*) and お (*o*). The morphemes ご (*go*) or お (*o*) can also be prefixed to some Japanese adjectives and adverbs which usually appear in formulate expressions as the two examples in Table 1 show. The adjective 元気 (*genki* healthy) together with the honorific prefix お (*o*) forms a frequently used greeting as in Example (18).

- | | | | |
|------|----------------|-------------|-----------|
| (18) | お元気 | です | か。 |
| | <i>o-genki</i> | <i>desu</i> | <i>ka</i> |
| | HON-healthy | COPULA | QUES |

Are you in good health?

The adverb ゆっくり (*yukkuri* slowly) prefixed with ご (*go*) functions as a very polite suggestion for the addressee to take his/her time as in Example (19).

- | | | |
|------|--------------|-------------------|
| (19) | どうぞ | ごゆっくり。 |
| | <i>doozo</i> | <i>go-yukkuri</i> |
| | please | HON-slowly |

Please take your time.

The above examples demonstrate the system of formal language in Japanese. Owing to the complexity of honorific language, face-threatening action is not a big concern in Japanese politeness since every utterance can be threatening if the speaker fails to use the correct form required for that situation (Ide 1989).

In order to come up with a more comprehensive account of politeness phenomena, Ide (1989) argues that the neglected aspects in Brown and Levinson's model should be taken into consideration. She claims that linguistic politeness consists of two aspects. One is termed the "volition aspect" of politeness (Hill et al. 1986: 348) which includes some of the linguistic strategies in Brown and Levinson which the speakers, according to their free will, can exploit to redress the addressee's face in the utterance. For example, the speaker can choose to use an interrogative form to mitigate the potential threat of a request as in Example (20).

- (20) これを 読まない か。
kore-o yoma-nai ka
 this-ACC read-NEG QUES

Won't you read this?
 (From Ide 1989: 226)

In addition to interrogative forms, claiming common ground and minimizing the imposition are also categorized as the volitional use of politeness. The following Japanese sentence demonstrates the negative politeness of minimizing the imposition.

- (21) ちょっと 聞きたいん だ けど。
chotto kiki-tai-n da kedo
 little ask-want to-P COPULA though

Could I ask you something?
 (From Fukuda 1995: 10)

According to Fukuda (ibid: 11), the adverb 'ちょっと' (*chotto* little) is "often used to suggest that what is being discussed is so unimportant and minor it's hardly worth mentioning," so 'ちょっと' (*chotto* little) is used to minimize the imposition of a

request as shown in Example (21).

The other aspect is called the “discernment aspect” (Hill et al. 1986: 348) of politeness which, according to Ide (1989), is the part overlooked by Brown and Levinson. Discernment is the translation of the Japanese term *wakimae* which means “the ... automatic observation of socially-agreed-upon rules” (Hill et al. 1986: 348). Interlocutors are bound to use the proper language according to the norms of a specific society. Selection of proper address terms for a specific addressee in a specific situation is a significant element in being polite in many languages. The formal forms in Japanese expounded above and the choice of pronouns in some western languages are also representative examples of discernment. For instance, there are two kinds of normative pronouns, ‘you’ and ‘thou’ in Shakespearean language. The contemporary pronoun ‘you’ is used to mark the distance between addresser and addressee, while the old-fashioned ‘thou’ is adopted to show intimacy between interlocutors (Shih 2004).

Unlike the volitional use of politeness which allows the interlocutors choices, the discernment aspect of politeness emphasizes the compulsory nature of social norms which regulate the interlocutors’ behavior. However, both aspects aim to facilitate communication and can be found, with different weightings assigned to each aspect though, in most languages. The volitional aspect is emphasized in languages like English, while the discernment aspect can best explain the politeness phenomena in languages such as Japanese and Chinese.

For a Japanese speaker to observe the social norms in order to be polite, he/she must know “his/her expected place in terms of group membership (in-group or out-group), role structures ...and situational constraints” (Ide 1989: 241). Similar to Chinese culture, Japanese are also sensitive to group distinction. According to Niyekawa (1995), children in Japan are educated at a very early age to behave according to their

group identity which can be easily observed in Japanese language. The formal forms introduced at the beginning of this section are mainly adopted toward seniors, superiors and out-group members such as post office clerks, while the plain forms are oriented toward the family, intimates and in-group members such as one's colleagues. Fukuda (1995: 6) illustrates with several dialogues the difference between formal and plain forms which she terms as “Necktie” and “T-Shirt” Japanese respectively. The Examples (22a) and (22b) below are articulated by the same speaker but oriented toward different addressees. The addressee of (22a) is the speaker's colleague while that of (22b) is the boss.

- (22a) 子供さん は いくつな の ?
kodomo-san wa ikutsu-na no
 son-HON TOPIC how old-AUX QUES

How old is your son?

- (22b) お子さん は おいくつなん です か ?
o-ko-san wa o-ikutsu-nan desu ka
 HON-son-HON TOPIC HON-how old-AUX COPULA QUES

How old would your son be?

(From Fukuda 1995: 94-116)

An obvious difference between (22a) and (22b) would be the prefixation of the honorific morpheme お (*o*) to the noun 子 (*ko*, child) and the interrogative phrase いくつ (*ikutsu*, how old). Japanese refer to their own children as 子供 (*kodomo*) but さん (*san*) is attached (i.e. 子供さん *kodomo-san*) when they refer to other's children and お (*o*) is prefixed (i.e. お子さん *o-ko-san*) when they refer to children of their superiors. Moreover, in Example (22b) the formal copula です (*desu*) is adopted to show respect toward the boss, but the copula is totally omitted in (22a)

when the addressee is a close acquaintance who is equal to the speaker in terms of organizational status.

5.2.2 Matsumoto

Matsumoto (1988: 408-409) approaches Japanese politeness from a different point of view. She questions Brown and Levinson's conclusion that Japanese is a negative-politeness culture in which "one would expect *symmetrical* use of high-numbered strategies" (1989: 251, my emphasis) and furthermore demonstrates her counter-opinion with a common greeting used in an initial encounter as shown in Example (23).

(23) どうぞ よろしく お 願い します。
douzo yoroshiku o-negai-shimasu
please well HON-hope-HON

I ask you to please treat me well/take care of me
(Example from Matsumoto 1989: 251)

This expression which might threaten the addressee's freedom sounds too imposing to English speakers even though it is redressed with devices like どうぞ (*douzo*, please) and the formal form of the verb 願う (*negau*, hope) is adopted. To Japanese, however, this expression actually pays deference to the addressee because "acknowledgement of interdependence is encouraged" in a hierarchical society like Japan in which juniors "show their respect by acknowledging their dependence" (Matsumoto 1988: 410). Therefore, Matsumoto (1988: 411) claims that there are many "relation-acknowledging devices" in Japanese to manifest the difference in ranks among interlocutors. In addition to the formulaic expressions like Example (23) and the formal forms of language discussed in Section 5.2.1, verbs of giving and

receiving can also be used to acknowledge the relationship between interlocutors. There is more than one Japanese verb which corresponds to the English verbs *give* or *receive*, as shown in the table below.

English Verbs	Corresponding Japanese Verbs
Give	(1) 差しあげる (<i>sashiageru</i>)
	(2) あげる (<i>ageru</i>)
	(3) やる (<i>yaru</i>)
	(4) くださる (<i>kudasaru</i>)
	(5) くれる (<i>kureru</i>)
Receive	(6) いただく (<i>itadaku</i>)
	(7) もらう (<i>morau</i>)

Table 2 Verbs of giving and receiving in English and Japanese

The verbs of giving and receiving can not only denote the actual actions of giving and receiving an item, but also can “suffix to a gerund form of a verb” (Tsujimura 1996: 341) to describe the favour exchanged between the interlocutors. For example, the gerund form of the verb 書く *kaku* (i.e. 書いて *kaite*) can be suffixed with any of the giving/receiving verbs in Table 2.

Give	(a) 書いて(<i>kaite</i>)	差しあげる (<i>sasiageru</i>)
	(b) 書いて	あげる (<i>ageru</i>)
	(c) 書いて	やる (<i>yaru</i>)
	(d) 書いて	くださる (<i>kudasaru</i>)
	(e) 書いて	くれる (<i>kureru</i>)
Receive	(f) 書いて	いただく (<i>itadaku</i>)
	(g) 書いて	もらう (<i>morau</i>)

Table 3 The combination of the verb 書いて (*kaite*) and giving/receiving verbs

Interlocutors are required to choose the correct verb form among those listed in Table 3 according to the relationship between the addresser and addressee. If the receiver (say a teacher) is higher in status than the giver (here the speaker), combination (a) will be used as in Example (24) below.

- (24) 私が 先生に 住所を 書いて差しあげた。
watashi-ga sensei-ni juusho-o kaite-sashiageta
 I-NOM teacher-DAT address-ACC write-gave

I wrote the address for my teacher.
 (From Tsujimura 1996: 341)

If the receiver is equal to the giver (the speaker) in status, a different verb (combination (b)) will be chosen.

- (25) 私が 友達に 住所を 書いてあげた。
watashi-ga tomodachi-ni juusyo-o kaite-ageta
 I-NOM friend-DAT address-ACC write-gave

I wrote the address for my friend.

Examples (24) and (25) are used according to the status of the receivers in relation to the giver. However, it is difficult to reflect this difference in the English translation and this would be an aspect to look at in Module 3 when I examine the transference of politeness phenomena from Japanese into English. Tsujimura (1996: 334) explains that the giving/receiving verbs in Japanese are deixis which “requires a great deal of contextualization” to figure out the actual referents. As a result, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss every giving/receiving verb listed in Table 2 as well as their combination with many other verbs other than those shown in Table 3.

The frequent adoption of “relation-acknowledging devices” (formulaic expressions, formal forms and giving/receiving verbs) proves that Japanese is not a negative-politeness culture. Matsumoto (1988: 423-424) categorizes, with the terms borrowed from Lakoff (1979: 64-65), Japanese politeness as the strategy of “Deference” and negative politeness as the strategy of “Distance.” Negative politeness (“Distance”) creates distance between interlocutors by neglecting the relationship, while Japanese politeness (“Deference”) pays respect to interlocutors by acknowledging the relationship.

6. Summary

In this paper, I have examined theories related to linguistic politeness in English, Chinese (Cantonese) and Japanese. Brown and Levinson's face-attending strategies prove to be more applicable to Western languages such as English. As it has been widely noted that the observance of politeness is not necessarily connected with any face-threatening action, their indirectness approach (redress to FTA = politeness) cannot fully explain every language exchange. However, the strategies they propose are useful when we examine real languages. Therefore, Brown and Levinson's politeness (1987) will still be considered in further analysis of linguistic politeness.

To compensate the insufficiency of Brown and Levinson's model, scholars, especially those who study Asian politeness, have put a lot of effort to work out a more comprehensive theory. I have examined in this paper Chinese (Cantonese) and Japanese politeness which are relevant to my later research. Although Chinese (Cantonese) and Japanese are different in terms of linguistic aspects, the discussions show some similarity in politeness phenomena between these two languages. First of all, the group boundaries are emphasized in both languages. Speakers of both languages observe politeness according to the group identity they are given in certain situation. Moreover, relationship among interlocutors influences the use of politeness. For Chinese people, connection between each other must be established first before politeness can be applied. For Japanese, interdependence on each other is highly encouraged and regarded as an important way to pay deference.

The diversity between Western and Asian politeness as well as the similarity between Chinese (Cantonese) and Japanese politeness should be carefully considered before one tries to transfer the politeness features from one language into another one. The review and discussions conducted in this paper will be the basis of my further study on transference of politeness phenomena from Japanese into Cantonese and English.

When carrying out translation, audience response is important: whether the audience response will be appropriate in the target language context. Therefore, I would like to examine in Module Two the response of audiences when they read translations of politeness features. A questionnaire will be designed to collect audiences' opinions and reactions to different translations. The audience response obtained and analyzed in Module Two will become the criteria in Module Three for judging the appropriateness of the translation of subtitles / dubbings in Miyazaki's animated films.

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