

## **Crazy Polite Asians: Politeness Strategy And Cultural Relativism In Asian-Western Environment**

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### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa penggunaan dan efektivitas strategi kesopanan di komunitas Asia yang digambarkan dalam *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018). Mengingat film ini membaurkan budaya Asia dan Barat, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah aspek cultural mempengaruhi dan memberikan hasil berbeda dalam penggunaan strategi kesopanan. Penelitian ini mengimplikasi metode kualitatif deskriptif untuk menganalisa strategi kesopanan yang digunakan dalam film ini. Sebanyak 15 dialog telah dianalisa menggunakan teori strategi kesopanan dari Brown dan Levinson. Penemuan pertama menunjukkan bahwa teori Brown dan Levinson bisa diaplikasikan untuk menganalisa strategi-strategi yang digunakan dalam film ini yang didominasi dengan *positive politeness*. Penemuan kedua menunjukkan bahwa tidak semua strategi yang digunakan memberikan hasil yang sama seperti yang diteorikan oleh Brown dan Levinson yang terlalu digeneralisir dengan budaya barat. Hal ini timbul karena adanya perbedaan persepsi yang disebabkan oleh paradoks relativitas kebudayaan.

**Kata Kunci:** kesopanan, persepsi, intrakultural, relativitas.

### **Abstract**

This study aims to discover the use of politeness strategy and its effectiveness in Asian environment represented through *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018). Given that this film is told in the combination existences of both Western and Asian cultures, this study intends to personify how politeness is performed in intracultural-situated interaction and to unravel whether or not that cultural matters give different response outcome towards the strategy. This study used qualitative method to analyse the data collected from the film. Using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as a main guide, this study analysed 15 selected conversations done by the characters from the film. The first finding shows that the interaction in Asian-Western society in the film can be identified and analysed using B/L's politeness strategy and dominated with positive politeness strategy. The second finding shows that not all strategy done by the characters in the film received the expected response as theorised in so-called politeness strategy that tends to be over-generalized into western culture. This problem arises due to a perception inadequacy caused by the paradox known as cultural relativism.

**Keywords:** politeness, perception, intracultural, relativism.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Coming from the same ethnicity does not guarantee that two individuals could have the same perception and interpretation about certain social situation and concept of something. In general, to make it successful, an interaction requires both parties to share the same concept of perceiving an event or an object. Inevitably, not all individuals embodied by the exact same concept of perceiving something. This could be caused by several factors such as the different cultural perception backgrounds, environment or society exposures, manifestation of personal experiences, etc. Thus, in cross-cultural interaction, there has to be an agreement (common knowledge backgrounds) on

how social situation such as implementing the sense of being polite or appropriate in order to be perceived and rated equivalently by both parties (Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010).

Often due to the lack of this agreement in intracultural interactions, two individuals do not cross on the same point where they perceive or interpret state of being polite or appropriate incoherently and even misunderstandings might occur. For instance, in western culture, addressing parents or someone who is older in family by their names rarely considered as impolite, rude, or inappropriate, meanwhile in eastern culture addressing someone who is older by first name basis

is considered as inappropriate and impolite. Hence, the different conceptions of politeness or appropriacy create a relativism in interactions. Looking closer to this issue, society needs to have the capacity to understand and stretch their horizon concerning other cultures' point of views to be able to communicate eloquently in an intracultural setting. The least that the society could do if they are not yet able to have that capacity to grasp an understanding of different cultural or moral values is maintaining enough tolerance to not trigger misunderstanding or conflict in the interactions.

*Crazy Rich Asians (CRA)* (2018) depicts the phenomenon where cultural background plays important role in concrete interactions. This film is representation of interactions from different cultural backgrounds. It narrates the plotline of characters that come from western countries to Asia and have to face and understand new culture. *CRA* is adapted from a best-selling book by Kevin Kwan telling about the main character who happens to be Asian that grew up in New York for her whole life and come to Singapore to meet her boyfriend's family. This film illustrates how an individual facing difficulty in making good social interactions due to the different cultural understandings.

Several studies about the use and the effectiveness of politeness strategy in films had been done before by Septian (2016) and Jaeger (2019) to discover the types of strategy and its effectiveness in interactions from films or tv series. These two previous studies concerning politeness strategy were done only to discover the type of strategy that is used and its effectiveness from the data. The major aspect that differs this study to the previous ones is positioned on the further analysis on how the interference of cultural background affects the effectiveness on the use of politeness strategy. Little number of previous studies had been discussing the intervene of cultural background in the practice of politeness strategy. Some of them are from Song (2017) who made a statistical review about the theory practiced in several non-western cultural groups and Bengsch (2010) who analysed the perception of politeness done by front-liner which is influenced by cultural differences. Nurilaila et al. (2020) had done the latest study about politeness strategy in *The Last Samurai* which focused on intercultural interaction which mainly only to distinguish what are the most and least used strategies in the film between the one done by the western character and the one by the eastern character. Their findings contributed new insight into how culture intervenes the practice of politeness strategy.

No study had been done to analyse the use of politeness strategy and how cultural matter affects its effectiveness in *CRA* although cultural difference tremendously plays big roles in the story plot of this

film. By using *CRA*, this study tried to distinguish the occurrences of politeness strategy in the film, and analyse how cultural background affects the effectiveness of the strategy being used in the interaction. Unlike several previous studies that had been done, this study does not only analyse the use of politeness strategy affected by the influence of cultural matter but also finds out how each individual's perception characteristic is involved in the interaction.

### **Politeness Theory**

Politeness theories that firstly pioneered by Stephen C. Levinson display how communal amity can be well sustained using some communicative strategies (Culpeper, 1996). Although people are expected to be polite in certain occasions, environments, and situations, they also have the right to be or not to be polite to one and another that depends on the goal that they want to achieve. Watts adds that politeness is something that has to be acquired; Politeness is not something is given to us when we were born to this world, it is something that we have to earn and get socialised into (Watts, 2003). Brown and Levinson's theory consists of four types of strategy that are done in relation to one's goal or self-efficacy, situation, and social eminence (Sorlin, 2017); those are bald on record (BoR), positive politeness (PP), negative politeness (NP), and off-record (OfR). Each of those strategies has its specific aim when casted-off which deals with face-threatening act (FTA) that has the possibility to risk the H's or the S's positive face or negative face.

BoR is used when someone directly utters an intention towards the addressee. This speech act has clear information mentioned in the utterance and expressed by the speaker when it has no implicit purpose that the interlocutor has to figure out which would allow direct and same interpretation between both sides. Positive face (saving face act) which is leaving or giving a good impression to the interlocutor that is done for PP strategy occurs when one has a desire or need that their self-image to be appreciated and sanctioned by others. Often, the speaker uses this strategy by asking or seeking an agreement from the hearer, giving compliments to the hearers is one of the ways to please them, asserting common ground, etc. Meanwhile, NP is the strategy directed toward the hearer as so to avoid misunderstanding. It is more of a "self-protection" strategy. Negative face in this strategy which uses the FTA also occurs when it is concerned with other's need not to be interfered or imposed upon. Lastly, on OfR strategy, speakers are being indirect and implicitly tell what they want by giving hints to the hearer. The speakers conceal their intentions in utterances using metaphors or rhetorical statements, under or overstatements, ironical statements, ambiguous or vague statements, over-

generalisation, etc. OfR strategy has very low possibility of success to bring the speaker's intention to work in a conversation.

Regardless the theories that contain some theoretical and methodological restrictions, the three factors (power, distance, and task imposition) in the theories may be important for politeness weightiness in some cultures, while those may not also apply on other cultures. In-depth research discovers that there are five factors that affect the applicability of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory in a non-western culture; Those five factors comprehend intrinsic factor, contextual factor, power factor, distance factor, and gender factor (Kiyama, Tamaoka, & Takiura, 2012). Lee et al. highlight the difference of how Americans and Japanese stating a way of favour asking and they also show that Japanese prefer to utilise apology statements meanwhile Americans prefer to proceed with thanking gestures and do not consider them as an act to reduce face threats (2012).

Culture and language use pay a big impact and affect the success of any kind of interactions done in society. Cultural differences also seem to be crucial in politeness behaviour as the politeness weightiness perception of a certain culture can be different from the perception of being polite in another culture (Song, 2017). As stated by Yeo and Pang (2017), differences in cultural values on certain communities may disrupt and hamper the communication attempts that lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Another evidence in earlier scholar also shows that eastern community tends to be more polite in honorific matters and the status relations compared to western community (Moon, Uskul, & Weick, 2019).

### **Politeness: Perception and Interpretation Relativism**

Kramsch (as cited in Wierzbicka, 2006) supports the idea that once individuals recognise that language use is indissociable from the creation and intertwined to the transmission of culture, they have to face the varieties of culture. McConachy (2019) mentions that within language learning, the conceptualisation of any form of pragmatic awareness is necessarily influenced by the assumptions which are interpretive and reflective process; Pragmatic awareness itself is a complex, multi-layered phenomenon that inherently intercultural in nature. He also adds that awareness of the more tightly constrained pragmatics conventions to evaluate and judge whether a language is appropriate or inappropriate is important and beyond simple.

Cultural relativism in this context is a condition where something that appears odd or wrong in certain culture may seems finely natural and right in other point of view of other cultures. It demands awareness and understanding of the problems that

may emerge among different cultures or intercultural interactions. Bennett (in Brown, 2008) stated that relativism is an exclamation that we do not have the basis to judge other peoples and their cultures as well, and also that we do not have the right to declare that some are better than others. In short, happens when certain thing or event valued differently and cannot be judged as right or wrong easily due to the different understandings or beliefs.

Judgements are always made based on experience which interpreted differently by every individual in terms of enculturation. Every culture is claimed to establish a whole social world that generates itself through enculturation, the process by which values, emotional dispositions, and embodied behaviours are passed from one generation to the next generation. Interaction among intercultural systems has complex, comprehensive effects, particularly when relations are denoted by contrast power inequalities.

The state of being polite thus also varies and depends on the interpretation of the speech situation by the communicators, which is affected by cultural norms (Song, 2017). Individual's interpretation of a speech has to depend upon the contextual knowledge where the interactions occur in, so is the state of being polite depends on the concept of politeness in the environment that holds certain culture where the interaction occurs. On Kiyama et al.'s scholar (2012), number of researchers mentioned that they claimed Brown and Levinson's theories are western-biased and just the three factors to measure the face-threatening act (FTA) weightiness themselves are not always valid and applicable in non-western society. When some individuals are forced to meddle or engage in intercultural societies which inevitably involve various cultural backgrounds, mutual understanding and tolerance are increasingly needed in diversified world (Wierzbicka, 2006).

Some expressions and discourses of politeness (e.g., greetings, honorifics, requests, critics, compliments, apologies, statement directness, etc.) may be perceived differently by each individual. Individual's perception towards something or an object is influenced by their experiences which provide patterns of information of that object. Thus, two or more individuals may have different perceptions about something that caused by how they interpret something based on their knowledge — experiences. Interpretation is made based on someone's conceptualization of objects and events. Some scholars from various fields of study agree that interpretation varies differently from one to another (Davis & Henze, 2003; Fish, Rothermich, & Pell, 2017; Godeman, 2011; O'Hagan, 2016). The words we select to depict what we see and hear in life can never truly be "objective"; they can only be our interpretation of what we experience (Boldyrev & Vinogradova, 2015; Miles, 2014).

There are several criteria of perception introduced by Alder and Gunderson to give better understanding in Larry A. Samovar's book called *Communication Between Culture* (2012). These perception characteristics are known as:

- **Selective** — When people are faced with so many exposures of logic and opinion, they tend to be selective and filter the information and focus only on certain thing that they have decided to be the suitable choice for them based on their beliefs or personal decision.
- **Inaccurate** — These different perceptions are very subjective for every individual. It is not shocking that even some people have the same nationality or ethnicity, they may have different perceptions of something which shows that their perceptions may be inaccurate to the others. There are factors that trigger this phenomenon such as cultural values, religious exposures, personal experiences, and also influences by society.
- **Culturally determined** — The different perceptions that several people own are strongly influenced by the cultures where they are raised in. Culture also helps determine the proper communicative behaviour in several different contexts by knowing the rules that are applied in certain community.
- **Learned** — People's manifestation of experiences in life taught and shaped them into individuals who are capable in judging which one is "right" and which one is "wrong".
- **Consistent** — Perception also can be consistent for some individuals once they are completely sure of what they believe and usually cannot be easily changed by the influences or exposures from their surroundings. It should be highlighted that an individual might persist to this characteristic of perception on the condition that he or she remains on the same cultural exposures from the community, environment, and social interactions.
- **Changing** — In order to be able to interact and blend with a new working and life environment, people are required to learn several new perceptions that differ from their origin culture. At this state, there is a tendency for them to adapt and recognise some patterns of cultural difference in their own cultures and in the other culture of their new environment.

Hence, to build an effective interaction between two or more people, common ground, mutual understanding of social norms in an interaction which affect the way how they make evaluative judgement are needed (Kecskes on Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2019). Frequently, there is a more significant dependence on the prior context (knowledge and experience towards the subject of the conversation) than on the actual situational

context (intended meaning that might be different from the literal meaning of the subject of the conversation) in intercultural interaction compared to intracultural interaction. As an interaction occurs, an approach of politeness (that starts with an assumption of what certain utterance has) requires a focus on the process of utterance interpretation as much as on the utterance itself when the meaning of it is not given or recognised by the interlocutor (Christie, 2007). Incorrect assumptions are often caused by some differences in experiences, physiology, culture, social group engagements, social roles, and cognitive abilities that highly affect what people perceive and how they interpret something (Wood, 2018).

As mentioned by Fish et al. (2017) that the meaning of an utterance may be assigned differently by the listener(s) as the one intended by the speaker. Escandell-Vidal (in Christie, 2007) also add that an individual's knowledge of the world is shaped by their culture which shows how different cultures would create an issue since both parties have different sets of organised knowledge regarding social relationships, events, and situations. Christie highlights the point:

"If so, a natural explanation for the failures in intercultural communication is found, which can be seen as the consequences of two people trying to act out the same 'scene' with different internalized 'scripts' metaphorically speaking" (Christie, 2007:287).

Her statement is supported with what Savic (2018) summarised in his paper that several "culturally conditioned communicative orientations" may lead to sociopragmatic failure; for instance, these include cultural perceptions of which speech act can threaten the addressee's face, orientation to the content of the message or the interactant, the value assigned to self-assertion and self-effacement, preferred levels of directness and explicitness, etc.

## **METHODS**

*Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) was chosen to collect the data of this study. Data gathering procedures begun with streaming the film on a subscribed streaming site. Along the streaming process, the screening process was done to collect the data of this study from the extracted encrypted dialogues. The data that were taken only the dialogues that involve any characteristic of politeness strategy. This study used Brown and Levinson's theory to analyse the use of politeness strategy. Meanwhile, to analyse the perception of each character, Alder and Gunderson's types of perception were used as a main guide. Both analyses implicated qualitative method in order to identify the politeness strategies in the film and get comprehensive examination of each character in the dialogue.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Types of Strategy

The data below were analysed by identifying which strategy used by every character in the conversations. The data first will not be divided into some categories of politeness strategy and every dialogue will be analysed individually in order to allow depth analysis of the interaction that occurred between the speaker and the hearer in every dialogue. It will be shown what characteristics of perception that every character inherits (see Table 2) based on the broken-down data that show how every character in the film practices the politeness strategy.

#### Dialogue 1.

Eleanor	: Do get a mop. The floor is wet.
Concierge	: [nodding]
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [00:03:04 – 00:03:07]</i>	

In the beginning of the film, Eleanor states “Do get a mop. The floor is wet.” to a hotel concierge in this dialogue. This sentence is very clear and shows directness towards the hotel concierge. Directness in politeness theory displays how FTA is done by the speaker who has dominant or higher position compared to the hearer. Thus, the hearer who is weaker in the sense of power distance has no choice but to ‘fulfilling’ what the speaker wants or do from the hearer. Eleanor states a BoR strategy which can be distinguished by how she uses the word “Do” in her statement in the beginning of her sentence and shows that she has absolute power position over the concierge at the hotel that she owns. As a result, the concierge does as what she said.

#### Dialogue 2.

Nick	: It's my mum. Do you mind?
Rachel	: No, it's fine
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [00:09:03 – 00:09:05]</i>	

After hearing the rumor of Nick dating a girl, Eleanor calls Nick who happens to be enjoying his lunch with Rachel in a restaurant at that time. Nick starts this dialogue with PP strategy by saying “It's my mum. Do you mind?” which shows that he cares for Rachel's concern. Rachel replies with PP by showing cooperation to Nick as the hearer in her “No, it's fine”.

#### Dialogue 3.

Nick	: Hey, Mum. Everything okay?
Eleanor	: Does something have to be wrong for me to call?
Nick	: Yeah, usually.
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [00:09:09 – 00:09:16]</i>	

Nick opens the phone call by saying “Everything okay?” to implicitly ask for a reason why Eleanor is giving him a call which indicated as a PP strategy. Eleanor replies with OfR by stating a rhetorical question in this dialogue. Rhetorical question does not need to be answered as it is usually expressed, but this is exceptional in the interaction that occurs between Eleanor and Nick. Nick serves an NP strategy by stating “Yeah, usually” which shows an irony that there is always something wrong when Eleanor calls Nick.

#### Dialogue 4.

Astrid	: Nick and his new girlfriend will be there. You'll like her.
Michael	: Oh, yeah? Why? Because she's a commoner like me?
Astrid	: You know that's not what I meant.
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [00:24:40 – 00:24:49]</i>	

Astrid opens the conversation using PP by stating “You'll like her” which shows optimism that Michael will like Nick's new girlfriend. Instead of approving what Astrid said, Michael responds it with “Because she's a commoner like me?” which identified as rhetorical question in OfR. Astrid pays it back with PP strategy shown on how she is presupposing common ground by saying “You know that's not what I meant”. In this dialogue Astrid and Michael have different concept about the reason why Michael would like Nick's new boyfriend and misunderstanding happens.

#### Dialogue 5.

Rachel	: Wow! Oh, my gosh! Your house is amazing, Mrs. Goh.
Mrs. Goh	: You're such a sweet talker. Call me Auntie. Auntie Neenah.
Rachel	: Sorry. Auntie Neenah.
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [00:27:57 – 00:28:22]</i>	

Rachel uses PP strategy by saying “Oh, my gosh!” as slang and “Your house is amazing” as compliment. Mrs. Goh serves OfR by overstating in “You're such a sweet talker”. Overstating often used before the speakers reveal what they want from the hearer. This also happens in this dialogue where Mrs. Goh says “Call me Auntie” that is identified as BoR strategy. To respond Mrs. Goh, Rachel uses NP by saying “Sorry” as an apology. Both in this dialogue, Rachel and Mrs. Goh have different

perception on how Mrs. Goh supposed to be appropriately addressed by Rachel.

Dialogue 6.

Nick	: Thank you very much for bringing Rachel.
Peik Lin	: Oh, no worries.
Nick	: Do you want to stop by for some dinner?
Peik Lin	: Oh, no, I couldn't impose.
Nick	: No, it's not a problem.
Peik Lin	: I had some dinner plans.
Nick	: Seriously.
Peik Lin	: Yeah, I'd fuckin' love to.

*Crazy Rich Asian [00:36:21 – 00:36:30]*

After giving Rachel a hitch to the mansion, Nick uses PP which can be seen on how he exaggerates his gratitude in “Thank you very much” and invite her to join the party. Peik Lin uses NP in her “Oh, no, I couldn’t impose” which shows that she does not want to impinge Nick. Nick continues with being optimistic twice in his next PP by saying “No, it’s not a problem” and “Seriously”. To reply to Nick’s offer, Peik Lin states white lies in her “I had some dinner plans” and also uses slang in the end by saying “I’d fuckin’ love to” which identified as PP strategy.

Dialogue 7.

Rachel	: Well, she knows that I'm passionate about what I do, and she's always wanted that for me.
Eleanor	: Pursuing one's passions. How American. Well, you mother's very open-minded. Not like here, where parents are obsessed with shaping the lives of their children.

*Crazy Rich Asian [00:40:29 – 00:40:46]*

In this dialogue, Rachel is implying OfR by stating the word “always” in her sentence. Eleanor replies with OfR by saying “How American” where she is being ambiguous whether it is a compliment or an insult addressed to Rachel as the hearer. Eleanor continues with another OfR strategy where she states an irony which is also followed by understatement in her “Well, your mother’s very open-minded. Not like here, where parents are obsessed with shaping the lives of their children”. Though it is implicitly delivered, it can be seen that Eleanor is trying to insult Rachel for being American.

Dialogue 8.

Eleanor	: Your father and I were really looking forward to having you home. He's not getting any younger. With you on board, maybe he'll take a day off once in a while.
Nick	: I know, Mum. I'm just not ready yet.

*Crazy Rich Asian [00:47:08 – 00:47:27]*

Eleanor in this dialogue uses OfR by overstating and giving hints about what she wants from Nick as the hearer. The most distinct hint that she uses is on her line which says “With you on board, maybe he’ll take a day off once in a while”. Nick obviously gets what his mom is trying to say to him, but he replies with PP strategy by giving reason to not giving what Eleanor’s want as the hearer by uttering “I’m just not ready yet”.

Dialogue 9.

Amanda	: I'm a lawyer. General counsel at the Young family corporation, actually.
Rachel	: That's very impressive.
Amanda	: Nah, just good, old-fashioned nepotism.

*Crazy Rich Asian [00:53:13 – 00:53:21]*

In order not to sound arrogant, Amanda uses an NP by hedging her statement and also be conventionally indirect to Rachel by saying “actually” in the last of her sentence. Rachel realises that it is something outstanding and gives Amanda a compliment as a form of PP strategy in her “That’s very impressive” which in Brown and Levinson’s theory, this strategy is done to satisfy the hearer’s positive face that wanted to get liked and admired. Rather than saying thank you for the compliment that Rachel had said, Amanda kept on putting her profile low by giving an NP by hedging and denying the claim that Rachel made for her in “Nah, just good, old-fashioned nepotism”.

Dialogue 10.

Collin	: You're a genius, Nicky.
Nick	: What's a best man for?

*Crazy Rich Asian [00:57:57 – 00:58:01]*

Collin and Nick run away from the hectic party the hectic bachelorette party which Barnette made. They move to a calmer place in an island using a helicopter. Collin did not think that Nick has the ability to operate a helicopter and giving an exaggerated compliment by saying “You’re a genius”. Collin’s PP strategy is replied by Nick using PP combined with OfR where he says “What’s best man for?” that implicitly means that Nick gets Collin’s back. Even though Nick uses OfR, the

message is delivered successfully since both of them have the common ground that is needed.

#### Dialogue 11.

<i>Collin</i>	: <i>Nick, I'm really happy for you, man.</i>
<i>Nick</i>	: <i>Thanks, dude.</i>
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [00:58:46 – 00:58:50]</i>	

Nick told Collin that he is going to propose Rachel after more than a year they have been dating. Collin states a PP strategy by stating “I’m really happy for you” which intensifies his interest to Nick as the hearer. Nick continues with PP strategy by thanking Collin and uses the word “dude” which indicates the close relationship between both of them.

#### Dialogue 12.

<i>Rachel</i>	: <i>You okay?</i>
<i>Astrid</i>	: <i>Yeah. Actually... No.</i>
<i>Rachel</i>	: <i>You could talk to me.</i>
<i>Astrid</i>	: <i>Michael is having an affair.</i>
<i>Rachel</i>	: <i>I'm really sorry, Astrid.</i>
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [01:03:50 – 01:04:42]</i>	

Astrid at first is not sure and only respond Rachel’s question with OfR strategy where she says “Yeah. Actually... No”. Rachel then serves PP strategy to Astrid by giving an offer and reassurance in her “You could talk to me”. Astrid opens up about what happens to her marriage using BoR as how she is being direct and clear by saying “Michael is having an affair”. Realising what occurs to Astrid, Rachel gives PP strategy and states her sympathy by uttering an apology to Astrid in her “I’m really sorry, Astrid”.

#### Dialogue 13.

<i>Eleanor</i>	: <i>Ah Ma says if we don't pass traditions down like this, they'll disappear.</i>
<i>Astrid</i>	: <i>God forbid we lose the ancient Chinese tradition of guilting your children.</i>
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [01:09:00 – 01:09:09]</i>	

In the conversation where the whole members of Nick’s family are gathering in the morning to make dumplings that associated with their family tradition, Eleanor passes an NP strategy. It can be seen from how Eleanor states an FTA as a general rule in her line by stating “Ah Ma says”. Astrid who is never afraid of confronting Eleanor replies her with the identical NP strategy by stating “God forbid”. The whole family knows that Eleanor is a very religious woman. Astrid’s and Eleanor’s are referencing general rules from figures who are seen as principals who they have to follow and use this as an FTA. Astrid’s NP strategy is also an OfR that implicitly tries to attack Eleanor’s positive face back

which shows it is such an irony for Eleanor to be religious and put the blame of losing tradition to children at the same time. The OfR in here is delivered successfully to the hearer as both parties have the same common ground.

#### Dialogue 14.

<i>Rachel</i>	: <i>How did you guys meet?</i>
<i>Nick</i>	: <i>She met him at Cambridge. Both studying law together.</i>
<i>Rachel</i>	: <i>Oh, I didn't know you were a lawyer.</i>
<i>Eleanor</i>	: <i>I wasn't. I withdrew from university when we got married. I chose to help my husband run a business, and to raise a family. For me, it was a privilege. But for you, you may think it's old-fashioned.</i>
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [01:10:12 – 01:10:32]</i>	

Rachel opens this conversation by asking for a chronological of how Eleanor and her husband met. She uses PP strategy by showing interest to Eleanor in her statement “Oh, I didn’t know you were a lawyer”. Rachel intensifies her interest to Eleanor as she finds out that she went to a law major in Cambridge and thinks that it was a good thing and meant to give a compliment to Eleanor. But instead of being pleased, Eleanor gives direct clarification what Rachel’s implicit message is wrong about her with an NP strategy by saying “I wasn’t”. Eleanor continues using an NP as she gives overwhelming reasons by saying “I withdrew from university when we got married. I chose to help my husband to run a business, and to raise a family”. In the end, Eleanor finishes her line using BoR where she is being clear and distinctive difference of what Rachel assumes and what really happened by saying “For me it was a privilege. But for you, you might think it’s old-fashioned”.

#### Dialogue 15.

<i>Astrid</i>	: <i>Thank you, Grandma.</i>
<i>Ah Ma</i>	: <i>Family never says thank you.</i>
<i>Crazy Rich Asian [01:24:38 – 01:22:43]</i>	

Astrid shows up walking through the church corridor with Ah Ma on Araminta and Collin’s wedding after having an argument with Michael. On their way of walking next to each other, Astrid expresses her gratitude and she is implying PP strategy in her line in this dialogue. To reply Astrid, Ah Ma uses PP strategy where she uses the word “Family” to show solidarity.

Based on the analysed conversations that provide how every character is employing politeness strategy in some conversations in the film, the occurrences of the strategy are identified as in Table 1.

Table 1. Occurrences  
of Strategies in the film.

Title	Occurrences of Strategies				
	BoR	PP	NP	OfR	Total
<i>Crazy Rich Asians</i>	3	18	10	12	43

Hence the most used type of strategy is PP and followed by OfR strategy. The second least strategy that used in *CRA* is NP which makes BoR as the least used strategy. It can be concluded that PP is the most used and BoR is the least used strategies in *CRA*.

The results of this study show that the minimisation of FTA is often done in this film which shown how PP strategy and OfR are the most used strategies. This is contrasting the result in in Nurilaila et al., (2020)'s *Last Samurai*, that presented a finding where the most used strategies are BoR and OfR. Nurilaila et al. also did not elaborate the reason why those two strategies are the most used ones in the film that they analysed. Meyer (in Bengsch, 2010) states that NP is the most applied strategy to conduct FTA in Western cultures. Western culture also respects freedom which let straightforwardness let alone to be done without being really concerned (Yin, Hsu, Kuo, Huang, & Yin, 2011). Schneider (in Yin et al., 2011) claims that in Asian culture, people tend to be less straightforward and direct which is parallel to the finding of this study that NP and BoR are the least preferred strategy done by the characters in *CRA* since these two strategies use FTA to risk hearer's positive face.

### Types of Perception

Some dialogues that had been analysed on the previous section were further identified to figure out each character's perception criteria. One character may possess more than one perception criterion (see Table 2). The dialogues where different perceptions occur can be easily distinguished when either the S's or the H's perception is inaccurate in the setting where the interaction occurs. In *CRA*, Rachel as the heroine or the main character that all the way from New York came to Singapore and faced many different perceptions with other characters. Even though Rachel physically has the Chinese traits, she grew up in New York for her entire life and works as a professor in a famous university there which makes her perception highly affected and shaped with the western culture.

Before meeting Nick's family, Rachel visited her best friend back in the university, Peik Lin who happens to live in Singapore. Rachel encounters dialogue 5 where she tries to give a compliment to Peik Lin's mother about their house. Rachel

addresses her 'Mrs. Goh' as a proper honorific addressing system to show respect and be polite to Peik Lin's mother. What she did in this interaction shows that her perception is culturally determined. After Mrs. Goh corrected Rachel just in order to call her auntie and she employed that directly in her response, Rachel's perception then identified as learned and makes Mrs. Goh's perception identified as consistent.

In dialogue 9 and 14, Rachel's perception is contrast to the other characters' perceptions. Based on these two dialogues, Rachel's perception about the pride of being a career woman is opposed by Amanda in dialogue 9 and by Eleanor in dialogue 14 and makes Rachel perception in those two dialogues identified as inaccurate. In both dialogues, Rachel tries to give compliment to the hearers. In Brown and Levinson's theory, an individual would state something pleasing to satisfy the hearer's face. Alas, in these two dialogues, Rachel's attempts to satisfy Amanda's and Eleanor's positive face do not work.

How Amanda says that her profession has to deal with old-fashioned nepotism in dialogue 7 and the way Eleanor emphasised how it is ethically a wife's job to maintain and keep the family well as how it is in Asian culture which written in dialogue 14, show that Amanda and Eleanor's perceptions are both characterised as culturally determined. How Eleanor and Amanda stood up for their opinions and opposed what Rachel presumed beforehand, show that their perceptions were consistent which proves that Brown and Levinson's politeness theory of satisfying the hearer's positive face cannot operate eloquently if both parties do not have the same concept about perceiving something.

Dialogue 4 is where two individuals that come from the same culture encounter a misunderstanding due to their different concepts on perceiving something. Astrid means to deliver to Michael that he will like Nick's new girlfriend because Rachel works as an economics professor in NYU and Michael has a business that runs in economics sector in Singapore. Michael perceives Astrid's statement differently. He uses defensive listening — perceiving a personal threat or attack which actually does not even intended by Astrid. Henceforth, in this dialogue, Michael's perception is identified as inaccurate and Astrid's perception counts as consistent. This similar event occurs in dialogue 15 where Astrid is expressing her gratitude towards Ah Ma to accompany her to attend Araminta's and Collin's wedding. Ah Ma opposes Astrid's statement in this dialogue which makes Ah Ma's perception identified as culturally determined and Astrid's perception identified as inaccurate.

In dialogue 4, Michael should have given a response that shows his interest to what Astrid have said as it is theorised in B/L's politeness theory. Instead, Michael serves an NP strategy to attack



Astrid's positive face since he perceives Astrid's claim differently. Michael assumes that Nick's new girlfriend (Rachel) is a commoner just like him is the reason why Astrid claimed he will like Rachel. The Young family in *CRA* is told that it is filled with royal and upper-class Singaporeans which makes Michael misinterpret Astrid's statement. While in dialogue 15, an expression of gratitude towards the hearer that supposed to be accepted or taken as how it works in politeness strategy by B/L and count as appropriate, works differently in here. Instead of saying "You're welcome", Ah Ma replies with a statement that indicates that it is wrong to express a gratitude for giving a hand towards members of family. Dialogue 4 and 15 are proofs that even though both parties in the interaction come from the same culture, they could still face misunderstanding that caused by how they interpret or value something differently.

CD : Culturally determined  
L : Learned  
CO : Consistent  
CH : Changing

## CONCLUSION

Different perceptions due to the different cultural value in perceiving politeness strategy could happen in intercultural interaction. This proves that even though the so western-centred Brown and Levinson's politeness theory can be used to identify the type of the strategy that is entailed in an interaction, it can be perceived, understood, and reacted differently in other culture such as Asian culture. The strategy uses in *CRA* are dominated with the PP strategy with the biggest number of the occurrences in the film (see Table 1). Based on the analysed data on the research that had been done majority of the main characters in the film show that they can also carry some combinations of several criteria of perception on how they perceive the strategy used on the interaction. This can be caused by the exposure of internal and external factors. An individual's character development along the film plot counts as an internal factor that affects the identification of their perspective criteria. Someone's perspective criterion may also appears differently based on who they interact with and also the environments or the societies where the interactions occurred which these are known as the external factors.

Several criteria of perception identified from an individual can be caused by the process of someone trying to adjust or merge to a different culture and environment where they come in. Honorific system is one of the aspects that trigger relativism in perceiving politeness when it is occurred in an interaction among some people in western and eastern (i.e., Asian) cultures. Dialogue 5 is the example where the speaker tries to be respective toward the hearer but then get opposed due to different seniority and respect (informality) weightiness concepts, hence causing different perspectives in perceiving the politeness strategies that had been done. This verifies that there is a relativism in perceiving what is proper or polite due to different perspectives in two (or more) individuals.

Different cultural or moral value weightiness would be the next aspect that causes perspective relativism in politeness perceivance. Perspective that identified to be inaccurate in an individual can be used to highlight the occurrence of relativism of interpreting something or an event. In dialogue 9 and 14, Rachel as the one who is entailed with western mindset whose perspective is identified as inaccurate got opposed by Amanda and Eleanor about the image of being a devoted career woman. Their images about being a career woman are totally

Table 2.  
Perception Type Identifications

Character	Perception Identifications				
	Type	Dialogue			
Rachel	CD	5			
	I	5 9 14			
		L	5		
		Nick	L	2 3 6 10 11	
S	8				
Eleanor	L			1 13 14 15	
				CO	7 8 13 15
		Astrid	CO		4
			S		12
L	13				
I	15				
Michael	L	4			
	I	4			
Amanda	CO	9			
	CD	9			
Mrs. Goh	CO	5			
	CD	5			
Ah Ma	CO	15			
	CD	15			
Peik Lin	S	6			
	L	6			
Collin	L	10 11			

S : Selective  
I : Inaccurate

different and show that they have different cultural and moral value weightiness about it.

Both aspects that were found to be the reasons why relativism in perceiving the act of politeness happens are the appliances of Gricean's basic theory which vocalises that in order an interaction becomes

successful, a common ground between two parties is needed; In interaction where one's perspective is identified to be inaccurate is also where a relativism occurs. Hence, the inaccuracy of someone's perspective in interpreting or perceiving something or an event can be used to spot a relativism in an interaction.

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