

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Humans, at their core, are social beings. They need to interact and connect with each other, and communication is their primary tool. Communication is the process of understanding, expressing, and sharing meanings and ideas or passing information from one person to another (Hornby et al., 2010; Davis, 1967; Pearson & Nelson, 1999). Without communication, humans cannot fulfil their needs as individuals or groups because there is no interaction between them. There are four types of communication: verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual. Verbal communication is communicating with words, such as spoken language. Non-verbal is the process of conveying meaning in the form of non-word messages, such as smell, touch, and taste. Written communication means communicating with other people through written words. Visual communication displays information such as topography, photography, signs, traffic codes, symbols, and designs.

Language is the prime medium of communication. It helps express and carry the thoughts and feelings of two individuals involved in communication. Through language, humans can understand each other. There are two forms of language used in communication: written and spoken. The spoken form is the most widely used of the two in daily communication. That also means that verbal communication is also a common type of communication since it uses spoken language as its medium.

Many meanings in communication and language usage, in general, are determined by context. Pragmatics allows us to look beyond the literal meaning of utterances and focus on suggested meanings. Pragmatics studies the correlations between linguistics forms and their users (Yule, 1996, p.4). It is also concerned with how language is used in real life. We can determine a communicator's assumptions, intentions, goals, and actions they perform while talking (Yule, 1996).

Politeness is a topic that has a solid connection to human communication. Politeness itself means showing good manners towards others. By conducting it, one can be said to know how to behave in society. In pragmatics, politeness is used to demonstrate awareness of the “face” of the other person (Yule, 1996, p. 60). Face here refers to the emotional and social self-awareness that every individual possesses and expects others to recognise. By understanding the interlocutor’s feelings and what face they desire, a speaker can decide whether to save or threaten the face.

Brown & Levinson (1987) offer politeness strategies in their book *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. According to them, people involved in communication tend to maintain one another’s face continuously. They will avoid face-threatening acts or use strategies to minimise the threat. The strategies are bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald off-record. The four are utilised after evaluating numerous factors so that the speaker can employ the most appropriate method for each individual so that both the speaker and the interlocutor can maintain their respective faces and create a comfortable environment.

If there is politeness, the opposite is also there. Impoliteness is a communicative strategy designed to attack face and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony (Culpeper et al., 2003). Many aspects of our lives are considered impolite, such as ignoring someone, excluding another person from an activity, and using obscure language. Like politeness, these things can happen in our daily conversation, books, movies, and television. Culpeper (1996, and slightly revised in 2005) offers five impoliteness strategies: bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold impoliteness. The interlocutor can also respond to the impoliteness that they receive. Culpeper also offers four response strategies: accepting the impoliteness, defensive or offensive counter the impoliteness, and not responding to the impoliteness.

Film, also called a motion picture or movie, is a series of still photographs on film, projected rapidly onto a screen through light (Andrew et al., 2023). Because of the optical phenomenon known as persistence of vision, this gives the illusion of actual, smooth, and continuous movement. Typically, moving pictures are accompanied by sounds. Politeness is also employed in speech and interaction between characters in a film. We can tell when a character converses with another character in the film. We may determine a character's characteristics based on the dialogue of the characters in the film because the manners of a person can be gleaned from their speech and demeanour.

Many studies take politeness as their main topic. One of them is Yani Kurnia Sari (2016). She wrote a thesis entitled *An Analysis of Politeness Strategy in Barack Obama's Victory Speech*. In this thesis, Yani attempts to determine what strategy Barack Obama employed in his inauguration/victory speech. She also studied the form of politeness used in the speech. The research findings show that Barack Obama applied positive politeness strategies by joking, intensifying interest, exaggerating, complimenting, including S and H in the activity, being optimistic, promising, offering, and assuming or asserting reciprocity.

In *The Investigation of Politeness Principles and Strategies Used in Akeelah and the Bee Movie*, published by Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra BSI, Hikmahwati et al. (2021) investigate what kind of politeness principle and most dominant type applied in the utterances of the main characters' Akeelah and the Bee movie and strategies used in their utterances. There were two sources in this research. The primary source was the script of the movie. The secondary sources were books. They discovered that the main characters applied the agreement maxim, approbation maxim, tact maxim, modesty maxim, and sympathy maxim in their utterances, and the most dominant type used is the agreement maxim. In their remarks, the key characters also utilised bald-on-record civility, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record politeness.

Nawal F. Abbas (2013), in his article *Positive Politeness and Social Harmony in Literary Discourse*, published by the International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, analyses the linguistic strategies of politeness as represented in a novel titled *Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*. In the novel, the main character, Anne, tries to build common ground with others so she can be in a friendly relationship with many people. Abbas employs Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies theory and combines it with Spencer-Oatey's (2002) contribution accounting for social rights and responsibilities. Then, he employs the model to investigate the connection between language use and the social relationships of the speakers. He finds that most of Anne's discourses in this novel, which are linguistic realisations of super-strategy 1 (bald-on-record) and 2 (positive politeness), are meant to establish common grounds to achieve friendly and harmonious relationships with others.

Terada et al. (2021) published their article at the IVA '21: Proceedings of the 21st ACM International Conference on Intelligent Virtual Agents titled *Effect of politeness strategies in dialogue on negotiation outcomes*. The study investigated whether differences in the politeness strategies used by a "virtual agent" impact negotiated outcomes in a non-zero-sum situation. A virtual agent is a software application that combines programmed rules and, increasingly, artificial intelligence technologies to deliver automated assistance, guidance, and answer questions to humans/customers, typically through a chatbot-like virtual assistant (Botelho & Pratt, 2020; Genesys, n.d.). The participants engaged in an online multi-issue negotiation with one of three agents (using the positive, off-record, or no politeness strategies, while the negative strategy was excluded because of validation failure). The results showed that the agents who used the off-record strategy could extract more significant concessions from their human partners. The human participants were comfortable exploiting agents who failed to adopt politeness in their language. In contrast, positive politeness, which does not threaten the other's face, led to fairer negotiated agreements.

Not only politeness but many studies were also conducted to discuss impoliteness strategies. In Khazraie and Talebzadeh's (2020) article, "*Wikipedia does NOT accept your babbling!*": *Impoliteness-induced conflict (resolution) in a polylogal collaborative online community of practice*, they analyse the impoliteness strategies discovered on the "Wikipedia talk" pages. Talk pages (also known as discussion pages) are administration pages where editors can discuss improvements to articles or other Wikipedia pages. From the 120 pages they analysed (both macro and micro), they found the existence of impoliteness phenomena, the prevalence of on-record impoliteness strategies rather than off-record strategies, and dominance of the defensive strategy of explaining, as well as a tendency among all the participants (i.e. initiators, recipients, and witnesses) to resolve conflicts.

Alawawda and Hassan (2021) analyse Drew Hayden Taylor's drama *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*. The study examines conventionalised and implicational impoliteness in literary texts, as well as the expressions of the actors. They notice that impoliteness is prevalent in the female characters' speech throughout the play. They found that both males and females used impoliteness strategies, although women used them more frequently than men. The primary cause for this is the emotional suffering the characters have through throughout their lives.

Based on the studies discussed above, it is apparent that politeness and impoliteness strategies can be discovered in many media as long as communication is made there. The above studies employ Brown & Levinson's theory for politeness strategies research and Culpeper's extension of the politeness strategies theory into impoliteness strategies research. What slightly differentiates the studies above from this research is the data source and focus of the research. This study investigates the impoliteness strategies employed by a character and the interlocutor's response to such strategies. Nevertheless, apart from that, the theory used remains the same with the addition of several other theories, which will be explained in the next chapter.

1.2 Research Question

1. What kind of impoliteness strategies are employed by the characters in the film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*?
2. What are the responses to the impoliteness strategies used in the film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*?

1.3 Purpose of The Study

Based on the research questions, this study investigates what kind of impoliteness strategies are used by characters in the film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* and the hearer's responses to them, added with some context to tell how they do it in the scenes.

1.4 Scope of The Study

The study focuses on analysing what kind of impoliteness strategies are used by the characters in the film through impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper, which to an extent, mirror the politeness strategies of Brown & Levinson. Following the information gathered, this study also reveals the context when the strategies are applied and how the other characters respond.

1.5 Significance of The Study

It is hoped that the research will be beneficial as theoretical development for the students who concern with linguistic research, especially in studying pragmatics that has an impoliteness strategy scope, to be developed more in the future. Furthermore, it will be beneficial for societies to decide on impoliteness when they interact with each other.