

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of Study

Nowadays, TV programs have become one of the most chosen options to entertain people in their homes with family members and friends. Particularly since our life has been affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic, people have to stay at home to protect themselves from being exposed to the virus, known as social distancing, which makes digital entertainment, like TV programs, a promising way to escape the stress that people get from endless studying or working in their homes (Mahendher et al., 2021).

Morrison (2009) stated that TV programs are divided into information and entertainment. Therefore, the information divides into two types: hard news, straight news, features, and infotainment, and soft news, such as current affairs, magazines, talk shows, and documentaries. Then the entertainment type could be seen in music shows, dramas, movies, cartoons, soaps, and many more.

Furthermore, aside from the variety of TV programs, the convenience, and the easy access to watch those programs, people could easily watch them directly from their TV online service or YouTube, making reality shows or talent shows mushrooming on television, from singing, modeling, dancing, and cooking shows have their audience (Mahendher et al., 2021). MasterChef is one of the infamous reality show cooking competitions in the world. The show has a pattern where each contestant will show their abilities in front of the judges and other contestants

through a challenge or test, and the judges will give them comments or evaluate their performance. After that, the judges will decide their position in the competition, whether they can stay or have to leave (Giorgio Di Pietro., 2016).

According to the official website of MasterChef, stated that there are 65 territories have launched their version of the program. The program started broadcasting on the screen in 1990 and is known as MasterChef UK. Since then, MasterChef has become a worldwide phenomenon, a fever for over 300 million viewers worldwide (The4, 2022). From the humble beginning and years of growing into people's hearts, the American version of the competitive cooking show is one of the most well-known series in MasterChef's fandom.

The list of judges in MasterChef US itself adds exciting points to the show, especially Gordon Ramsay, one of the most influential chefs and restaurateurs, and famous for his highly acclaimed Michelin-star restaurants and cookbooks. Gordon Ramsay is also famous for his fiery temper, proven by his frequent delivering brutally honest comments or criticisms towards the contestants on every aired television cooking show he starred in (Higgins et al., 2012).

Besides Gordon Ramsay, there is Joe Bastianich, a famous restaurateur who previously was a judge in MasterChef Italy. Then Graham Elliot, a professional chef, is also one of a judge in MasterChef US. Not only are the judges in MasterChef US open to young adults to adult amateur home cooks, but three of them were also judges of MasterChef US Junior, where they have to face young home cooks from the youngest to 8 years old to 13 years old (Top, S.-V., 2023).

Through watching both shows, people can see the opposite sides of Gordon Ramsay, Joe Bastianich, and Graham Elliot through their interactions with the contestants. In MasterChef US Junior, they had to perform specific strategies depends whom they were evaluated, which could be seen by the use of politeness strategies while delivering their comments, which is aimed at not threatening or damaging contestants' faces, and making sure that the communication between contestant and him smoothly cooperate. Hence, there is no violation towards the contestants' faces in the conversation between them and the contestants, which is entirely the opposite of MasterChef US. Relevant factors also influence the choice of a certain politeness strategy; Brown & Levinson (1987) has identified three relevant conditions that influence the speakers' decisions to use politeness strategies due to the seriousness of a face-threatening behavior, social distance, relative power, and the imposing of status or rank. From here, we can understand how important language is to connect with other people in the society in which we live.

Language itself has been deeply rooted in society for a long time since humans need language as a tool to communicate with one another (Pardede et al., 2021). The relationship between society and language cannot be separated because language is societal. Language could be in the form of sounds and words, delivered in written or oral form, and then used by people of a particular country. It builds the relationship between people communicating and expressing their feelings, ideas, thoughts, and meaning with each other in utterances. Herman (2016) stated that language plays a vital role in expressing ideas, such as requesting, ordering,

asserting, refusing, promising, treating, and thanking, which is delivered via utterances.

Besides knowing the intention behind the utterance, language must be appropriate to the context used to maintain smooth communication and harmony between people in social interactions (Watts, R., 2003). Furthermore, the politeness strategy in any social interaction is applied not to make other people feel threatened and to avoid misunderstanding or miscommunication, or even when interacting on social media and possibly threatening a person's face. The actions like disagreement, criticisms, complaints, and insults are known as face-threatening acts (FTA).

Furthermore, the concept of the face could be understood as a picture of self-image in the social attributes, as well as the face could mean honor, self-esteem and public self-image (Goffman, E., 1967). The face is an "image" that a person wants others to accept as part of their identity. The face must constantly be protected from the risk or the threat of face loss while maintaining the interaction.

Since all of the speech acts can endanger neither the speaker's nor the hearer's face, causing disharmony or disagreement between the individuals, meaning that face-threatening acts are possible to occur in daily interactions, and endangering positive and negative faces and causing the loss of the speaker or hearer's loss. Thus, Brown & Levinson (1987) have developed politeness strategies to reduce the impact of a face-threatening act. Therefore, politeness strategies are divided into five types: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. The speaker chooses and performs those four politeness strategies.

Therefore, while performing politeness strategies, the intention is to make both speaker and hearer feel comfortable and relaxed in their conversation, avoiding confrontation. Using different politeness strategies is crucial to perform by Gordon Ramsay while interacting with the contestants in MasterChef US and MasterChef Junior US to maintain smooth communication between him and the contestants.

Therefore, the topic of politeness strategies has been studied by several scholars. Safa & Kurniawan (2015) analyzed politeness strategies that being performed by Gordon Ramsay in MasterChef season 4 (episodes 9 and 12) and MasterChef Junior US season 1 (episodes 2 and 6) by applying Brown and Levinson's framework of politeness strategies in their analysis. Their research revealed that Gordon Ramsay mostly used bald-on-record, positive politeness, and off-record. Meanwhile, focusing on the MasterChef Junior US, Gordon Ramsay only performed a positive politeness strategy. The study's findings show that he prefers to save MasterChef Junior contestants' positive faces because a direct critique could influence their motivation in cooking, and also due to the age factors of the contestants.

Then, a study by Torres, J. (2020) investigates the politeness strategies used by The Voice of the Philippines coaches, focusing on their genders and exposure to Western culture, which also uses Brown and Levinson's framework of politeness strategies. This study shows that the coaches demonstrated the highest percentage of positive politeness (66.23%) and the least is off-record (3.43%). Comparisons of the coaches' politeness strategies, when grouped by gender and exposure to Western culture, were also studied. The results based on the gender difference in the

employment of sub-strategies are based on male and female preferences. Female coaches usually used off-the-record and negative politeness methods, whereas men coaches used bald on-the-record strategies. Moreover, regarding the exposure to Western culture and politeness strategies used, it was discovered that coaches with average to very high exposure to Western culture use more bald-on-record, positive politeness, and off-record politeness strategies than coaches with low exposure to Western culture, who use more negative politeness strategies in their utterances. The disparities in politeness strategies concerning exposure to Western culture support the belief that politeness reflects a specific set of cultural norms.

Furthermore, a study by Siburian, A. (2016) identified the politeness strategy used in an Indonesian talk-show, Soimah Talkshow Program (STS), due to the show's entertainment and effective language. Using the same framework of politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1987) and combined with the descriptive qualitative methodology, he found that the show mostly uses positive politeness (26%), and the least strategy that he found is Bald-on-Record (15,2%). The findings of his study show that positive politeness is a vital aspect of one's socialization and is utilized to maintain the community's social values, including dialogue.

Moreover, Probosini, N. (2020) conducted a study to analyze politeness strategies using the same theoretical framework, Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy employed by the Devil Wears Prada's main characters. The study is qualitative research and uses the Devil Wears Prada movie script as the data. The result found that the most dominant politeness strategies that were found in the film

were positive politeness (49 times), the second place is Bald-on-Record (47 times), followed by Off-Record (20 times), and the least negative politeness (19 times). The findings show that positive politeness is mostly used by the main characters in the film in order to maintain a harmonious relationship in the workplace and show respect for each other faces.

A study of politeness strategy by Hamuddin, B., & Noor, F. N. M. (2015) with articles spanning 6 years from the Malaysian Journal of Economic Studies (MJES). The study analyzes the politeness strategies used by the journal writers by using Brown and Levinson's framework of politeness strategy and Myers (1978) about persuasive strategies and scientific articles proposed by Mulholland (1994). Furthermore, by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study found that the journal writers most widely use positive politeness with a total of 8 tactics, with bald-on-record and off-record being the least strategies that being used, showed that the journal writers use positive politeness to build a friendly atmosphere between the researcher themselves and to lessen the impact of imposition in their acts, as well as to meet the demands of the academic community, which expects scientific terminology to be impartial and formal.

On the other side, a study about the gendered implications of the sportification of cooking in MasterChef US was done by Grindstaff, L., & Rafi Grosplik. (2022). They analyzed 9 seasons and 240 episodes and used a qualitative approach. MasterChef US combines cooking and sports to create a gender-hybrid performance. The hybridization has boundaries, and the masculine and feminine poles are unequal. The study shows women compete on "equal" footing with men

in MasterChef US. However, they must be reassuringly feminine/maternal along the way, and the metaphorization of sport as conflict and war reminds them of their tenuous hold on male territory. The lingua franca of success in MasterChef US is heroic masculinity. The entire aim of heroic masculinity is to triumph over the competition by being "the best."

Based on the previous studies, the writer had not found any study that only focused on analyzing the politeness strategies performed by Gordon Ramsay in the MasterChef US season 05, episode 08. However, information and references about politeness strategies have been provided by those studies. Hence, the non-existence of the study of the politeness strategies performed by Gordon Ramsay in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08 would be an interesting topic because Gordon Ramsay has an interesting character or media persona, which is famous with the way he uses language towards the people around him.

Thus, after founding the gap from the previous studies, the writer is motivated to widen the study of language by investigating factors that influence politeness strategies that have affected Gordon Ramsay's utterances while performing the politeness strategies in the MasterChef US season 05, episode 08. Furthermore, this study of politeness study insists on showing that the people who are involved in the field of reality show has to consider the use of politeness strategies while interacting with other.

Therefore, MasterChef US was taken as the data source and chosen as the object of analysis due to its popularity as the biggest culinary competition anywhere in the world, which is proved by the fact that each country has its version of the



show and the fact that the show has its fandom and official website, strengthen the reason why MasterChef has become a phenomenon on the internet, as well as in the world. Even though, according to MailOnline, an online newspaper website from US and Australia, MasterChef Australia was nominated as the world's most popular reality show series on November 2020 by the Global TV Demand Awards, the world's first unbiased, data-driven entertainment awards ceremony is called the Global Demand Awards, (Buaya, A., 2021).

Hence, the writer collected data from Gordon Ramsay's utterances on MasterChef US season 05, episode 08, in this study. The season and episode were chosen due to had been crowned as the most heated season of MasterChef US because of the fierce competition between the contestants and their unique personalities, especially the drama that happened between Leslie and Cutter at the pressure test that they have to face after the loss of their team in that episode, which led to many compiled videos of those seasons on YouTube, and still gaining more audiences now.

In addition, Gordon Ramsay has become a hot debate topic on the internet because of how he communicated and interacted with the contestants. Moreover, it is such fresh air to see someone originally from Scotland, a part of the country known for having a more polite and composed language and communication, the United Kingdom, become a star in an American TV show.

The word "please" is more often used in British culture than in North American culture (Biber et al., 1999). Not that American society is any less polite than other cultures. There are other methods to be polite, and North Americans may

view them the same way as British English people may view the word "please" in specific circumstances since politeness is strongly influenced by culture.

A study by Murphy, M. & Felice, R. (2019) studied the difference in the use of "please" as a marker for the level of imposition between American and British English from several emails from two similar workplaces, where the findings stated that American English is more direct with a low number of "please". Meanwhile, British English is more comfortable with the word please and indirect language. However, Gordon is commonly mentioned in the media as being associated with bad language on television, far away from the image of someone polite, which British society is known for. He takes delight in his reputation as a confrontational chef, which causes the phenomenon of politeness strategy to be very diverse in his speech.

In summary, the study is aimed to analyze how Gordon Ramsay performed politeness strategies towards the contestants in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08, then investigate the factors that contributed to the chosen strategy.

## **1.2. Research Question**

Regarding the background above, several questions were raised to get a clear comprehension of the issues that were discussed in the conducted study, following questions:

1. How was Gordon Ramsay performing politeness strategies in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08?
2. What factors contribute to the use of politeness strategies by Gordon

Ramsay in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08?

### **1.3. Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to:

- a. To analyze how Gordon Ramsay performed politeness strategies in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08.
- b. To investigate the factors contributing to the politeness strategies that Gordon Ramsay performed towards the contestants in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08.

### **1.4. Scope of Study**

This study attempts to find the types of politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's framework that Gordon Ramsay performed in MasterChef US season 05, episode 08. The conversation between Gordon Ramsay with the contestants is taken from the video uploaded to YouTube through an account called chan M. The data was taken from the subtitle transcript of their conversation and downloaded from a website called <https://www.dvdvideosoft.com/online-youtube-subtitles-download>. This study did not analyze all of the scenes in the episodes. However, it will only focus on analyzing the interactions between Gordon Ramsay with the contestants when they were doing the challenge and at the pressure test. Furthermore, the study only focuses on the verbal aspect, the utterances. The types of politeness strategies performed by Gordon Ramsay can be investigated by only analyzing from the verbal aspect.

### 1.5. Significance of Study

#### a. Practical Significances

It is expected that this study can enrich the knowledge regarding linguistic phenomena. This study is also likely to raise the readers' awareness about using politeness strategies between adults and kids.

#### b. Theoretical Significances

This study expected would be helpful to be a reference to conduct a study related to pragmatics analysis, specifically the application of politeness strategies in TV programs to specific variety shows, and also to update the research with the same topic and contribute to the language and linguistics field.

