

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Language is an important means of communication through which speakers convey not only information but also social meanings (Yule, 1996). In everyday interaction, speakers must consider how their utterances may affect others, especially in maintaining harmonious relationships. Through language, individuals establish social relationships, negotiate meanings, express intentions, and accomplish various communicative purposes within different social contexts. As communication occurs in diverse situations involving different participants and relationships, speakers are often required to adjust the way they express their intentions according to the context in which the interaction takes place.

The interpretation of language is not determined solely by the literal meanings of words but is also influenced by contextual factors surrounding the interaction. This perspective is examined in pragmatics, which focuses on how meaning is constructed and interpreted based on the relationship between speakers, hearers, and the communicative situation. Pragmatics enables researchers to investigate how speakers select particular linguistic expressions to achieve specific communicative goals while considering contextual elements that influence interaction. Consequently, pragmatic analysis provides an appropriate framework for examining language use beyond its grammatical structure.

One important aspect of pragmatic studies is politeness. In communication, speakers frequently perform utterances that may potentially threaten the hearer's feelings, social identity, or public self-image. Consequently, communication involves not only the transfer of information but also the management of interpersonal relationships. Speakers are therefore required to select linguistic strategies that allow them to convey their intentions while minimizing potential threats to the hearer's face. The choice of politeness strategies becomes particularly significant in interactions involving differences in authority, responsibility, familiarity, or institutional roles, where speakers must balance

communicative effectiveness with social considerations (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Several studies have analyzed politeness strategies in film dialogues using Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework. Julianti and Rahmani (2024) examined politeness strategies in *Wonder* and found that positive politeness was the most dominant strategy, particularly through expressions of empathy, joking, and asking for reasons. Ernovilinda (2020) analyzed politeness strategies in *Shanghai Knights* and reported that bald-on-record strategy appeared most frequently, reflecting differences in communication styles between the main characters from different cultural backgrounds. Ramlee et al. (2025) also examined politeness strategies in *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* and found that off-record strategy was commonly used, particularly through indirect expressions that support the film's mystery narrative. Similarly, Abdul Aziz and Hashim (2025) found that all four politeness strategies appear in *The Social Network*, with bald-on-record and negative politeness strategies occurring frequently in interactions between characters within a competitive professional environment. Beyond film discourse, Fitriyah and Virgianti (2026) in a study published in the Indonesian *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (IJELTAL), examined politeness strategies in comments on the NIKIZEFANYA Twitter (X) account. They found that positive politeness was the most dominant strategy, particularly through the use of in-group identity markers that foster solidarity among users. Their findings suggest that the choice of politeness strategies is closely related to the communicative context and the social relationships established between participants.

These previous studies demonstrate that the use of politeness strategies varies according to the communicative contexts represented in different films. Factors such as interpersonal relationships, institutional roles, and situational demands influence the strategies employed by the characters. However, previous studies generally emphasize identifying and classifying the types of politeness strategies used in film dialogues. Comparatively less attention has been devoted to explaining how these strategies are realized through interactions shaped by contextual variables such as power relations, social distance, and rank of

imposition. Therefore, further investigation is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between politeness strategies and the interactional contexts in which they occur.

Accordingly, the present study extends previous research by examining not only the types of politeness strategies employed by the selected characters but also the ways in which these strategies are realized in interaction. Rather than focusing solely on the distribution of strategy types, this study interprets the characters' linguistic choices by considering the contextual variables of power, social distance, and rank of imposition proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). By adopting this analytical perspective, the study seeks to provide a more contextual understanding of how politeness strategies function within interactions involving authority, cooperation, and conflict.

Film dialogues have frequently been used as data in pragmatic research because they present interactions situated within identifiable social contexts. Although film dialogues are scripted, they are constructed to represent communicative situations involving different speakers, interpersonal relationships, institutional roles, and communicative purposes. These characteristics enable researchers to examine how language is used across various interactional settings while considering the contextual factors that influence speakers' linguistic choices. As a result, film provides a suitable source of data for analyzing the realization of politeness strategies in context.

Among various film genres, action-thriller films provide particularly rich interactional contexts for pragmatic analysis because the dialogues frequently involve authority, urgency, persuasion, negotiation, and confrontation. These communicative situations require speakers to adjust their linguistic choices according to changing social relationships and situational demands. Consequently, action-thriller films offer valuable opportunities for examining how politeness strategies are employed and realized in diverse interactional contexts.

Based on this theoretical framework, the present study analyzes the film *The Order* (2024). The film presents interactions among characters occupying different institutional and ideological positions, including Terry Husk and Joanne Carney as FBI agents, Jamie Bowen as a local law enforcement officer, and Bob

Mathews as the leader of an extremist organization. Their interactions involve cooperation, investigation, authority, persuasion, conflict, and confrontation, creating various communicative situations in which speakers continuously negotiate interpersonal relationships while pursuing different objectives. These variations provide an appropriate context for examining how politeness strategies are realized across interactions involving different social roles and power relations. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying the types of politeness strategies used by the selected characters in *The Order* (2024) and explaining how these strategies are realized in their interactions based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background elaborated above, this research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What types of politeness strategies are used by the selected characters in *The Order* (2024)?
2. How are politeness strategies realized in the interactions of the selected characters?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to identify and analyze the politeness strategies used by the selected characters in *The Order* (2024) based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Specifically, the study focuses on examining how the characters employ different types of politeness strategies in their interactions throughout the film. In addition to identifying the strategies used, this study also seeks to explain how contextual variables, such as power relations, social distance, and rank of imposition, influence the characters' choice of politeness strategies in particular situations.

1.4. Scope of Study

This study focuses on the analysis of politeness strategies used in the verbal interactions of selected characters in *The Order* (2024). The selected characters

are Terry Husk, an FBI agent; Bob Mathews, the leader of the Order; Jamie Bowen, a local sheriff's deputy; and Joanne Carney, an FBI agent and Terry Husk's partner. These characters are selected because they occupy different institutional and ideological positions, allowing the study to examine how politeness strategies are employed in interactions characterized by varying power relations, social distances, and communicative purposes.

The data are taken from the film script and are limited to spoken dialogues produced by the selected characters. Only utterances that contain politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework are identified and analyzed. Since the study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, the analysis emphasizes the interpretation of linguistic expressions rather than the statistical frequency of language use. The analysis focuses exclusively on verbal language. Therefore, non-verbal elements such as gestures, facial expressions, body language, intonation, and other visual aspects of the film are excluded from the analysis. Nevertheless, the situational context surrounding each utterance is considered when it is necessary to support the interpretation of the selected data.

This study applies Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as the primary analytical framework, including the concepts of face, Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), and the four politeness strategies. In addition, the contextual variables of power (P), social distance (D), and rank of imposition (R) are employed to explain the realization of politeness strategies in each interaction. These variables function as analytical considerations rather than measurable variables and are used solely to support the interpretation of the selected utterances. Accordingly, the primary focus of this study remains the identification of politeness strategies and the explanation of how those strategies are realized in the interactions of the selected characters.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to the field of pragmatics, particularly to the study of politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. By examining the realization of politeness strategies in film dialogues, this research provides further discussion on how contextual variables, namely power

relations, social distance, and rank of imposition, influence speakers' linguistic choices during interaction. Therefore, the findings are expected to enrich existing studies on politeness by providing a contextual analysis of language use within cinematic discourse.

Furthermore, this study is expected to serve as a reference for students and future researchers who are interested in pragmatics, discourse analysis, and film-based linguistic research. The findings may provide an example of how Brown and Levinson's politeness theory can be systematically applied to analyze verbal interactions in audiovisual media. In addition, this study may contribute to a broader understanding of how language reflects interpersonal relationships, institutional roles, and communicative purposes represented through fictional characters in film dialogues.

1.6. State of the Art

Although previous studies have demonstrated that Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory can be effectively applied to analyze film dialogues, most of them primarily focus on identifying the types and frequency of politeness strategies employed by characters. The findings generally emphasize which strategies are dominant in particular films and relate those patterns to the interpersonal relationships between the characters. While these studies provide valuable insights into the distribution of politeness strategies, fewer studies examine how the strategies are realized within specific interactional contexts by considering the social relationships between speakers and hearers.

The present study extends previous research by analyzing not only the types of politeness strategies employed by selected characters in *The Order* (2024) but also the ways in which those strategies are realized in interaction. In addition to identifying the strategies, this study interprets their use by considering the contextual variables proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), namely power, social distance, and rank of imposition. By focusing on characters who occupy different institutional and ideological roles, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how politeness strategies function in an action-thriller film characterized by authority, cooperation, and conflict.