CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Effective communication is the cornerstone of solid relationships. We rely on strategies to get our messages across clearly and ensure they are understood as we intend. In addition, Wang (2010:121) stated that speakers need to be proficient in a variety of speaking techniques to maintain effective relations between the speaker and the hearer. To maintain effective relations, the speaker must respect and satisfy the hearer's feelings and avoid imposing their personal space. These strategies are referred to as politeness strategies. Using those strategies can avoid offending and create a more positive atmosphere for conversation. This aligns with Holmes' (1995:5) theory that politeness involves respecting the person being spoken to and avoiding offense. Therefore, effective communication requires not only understanding the strategy but also how we apply the strategy and being considerate of others' feelings.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory offers a valuable framework for understanding politeness strategies. They propose that everyone has a social self-image, which they call "face." Politeness strategies may help the speaker protect the listener's face and mitigate the possibility of threatening it. The theory distinguishes between the positive face, the desire to be liked and appreciated, and the negative face, the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition. The specific strategy used depends on the relationship between the speaker and listener. More direct communication might be appropriate in close relationships, where a

positive face might be the primary concern. In unfamiliar settings or where the negative face is more important, more indirect language or softening phrases might be employed.

The Disney movie *Encanto* is particularly interesting for studying politeness strategies because, based on the observations, many utterances of the character used politeness strategies. This animated film, released in 2021, tells the story of the extraordinary Madrigal family, with each family member blessed with a unique magical gift except Mirabel.

Mirabel's character is chosen for analysis because her lack of magic puts her in a unique position within the family. She often feels overlooked and struggles to find her role, yet she strives to maintain harmonious relationships and save her family from impending destruction. Moreover, the family hierarchy is still strongly maintained in this movie, and she is in the position of the second youngest member without a magical gift. Based on those issues, we can identify how her relationship with each family member, her lack of magic, and how she strived to save the family influenced her to use politeness strategies. Furthermore, using politeness strategies becomes a tool for her to manage face-threatening acts, navigate sociological dynamics to maintain harmony and reveal her characterization within a family dynamic. Therefore, this study aims to examine how sociological factors within a family environment in the movie Encanto influence the main character's politeness strategies choice using the politeness strategy theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) and how those strategies can reveal the character's characterization using the method of character portrayal by Kenney (1966).

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the problems of the study, the author proposes three research questions as follows:

1. What are the types of politeness strategies applied by Mirabel in the *Encanto* movie?

2. What sociological factors influence Mirabel to use politeness strategies in the *Encanto* movie?

3. How do Mirabel's politeness strategies contribute to her characterization?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This section will demonstrate the study's research objectives according to the research questions. Three primary objectives will be discussed in this study.

1. To identify and classify the type of politeness strategies applied by Mirabel in the Encanto movie.

2. To investigate the sociological factors that influence Mirabel in using the politeness strategies in the *Encanto* movie.

3. To analyze Mirabel's characterization based on the influence of using politeness strategies.

1.4 Previous Studies

Many studies have discussed politeness strategies, particularly in movies, as a literary work. Several previous types of research have been conducted based on similar issues. The chapter is structured chronologically, with three distinct topic discussions: studies with a similar object but different approach, studies with both a similar object and approach, and studies aligned with the study's focus, which is politeness strategies.

Three previous studies were discovered with a similar object, *Encanto*, as a literary work, but with a different approach. To begin with, two studies have similar object and focus as the present study: those conducted by Rusminiati and Suastini (2023) and Insani et al. (2022). Both focus on investigating the main character's personality and identity, with conflicts as the supporting topic in Encanto movie. However, Rusminiati and Suastini's (2023) focus on Mirabel's struggles with control, selfishness, and avoidance due to psychological influences, while Insani et al. (2022) emphasize her strength, resilience, confidence, and kindness. Despite both analyses dealing with Mirabel's personality, they provide different perspectives: one highlighting her flaws and internal conflicts, and the other underscoring her strengths and positive attributes.

The last study from the first group analyzed color elements to present the expectation and family hierarchy in Encanto movies using a semiotic approach. Puti, Syarifah, and Prasetyoningsih (2023) conducted something entirely distinct and contrasted my study about politeness strategies. They applied Barthes' semiotic theory of connotation and denotation to their analysis, which contributed to a more nuanced understanding of family hierarchies and the pressures associated with them, while also highlighting the value and potential limitations of applying semiotic theories (like interpreting symbols and signs) to such analyses.

Furthermore, two articles with similar objects and topics were observed, but the discussion's focus differed. They both shared the same theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). However, Dewi and Ayomi (2023) investigated positive politeness strategies applied by the main character, while Cantika and Thamrin

(2022) analyzed negative politeness strategies employed by all the characters in Encanto and the factors influencing the use of strategies. While both studies analyze politeness strategies in the same movie, they focus on different types of politeness—negative and positive—and their respective roles in communication. This leads to different insights and practical applications regarding conflict management and relationship building.

Moreover, the remainder of the previous studies have explored politeness strategies, identifying the factors influencing characters' decision-making regarding employing these strategies. For instance, the theses written by Aryani (2017) and Septiyani (2016), as well as an article by Fitria, Ningrum, and Suhandoko (2020), all discussed how main characters in movies adopt politeness methods. The findings of these three studies revealed that the primary characters in the film used four different kinds of politeness methods, and factors such as payoffs and sociological variables influenced these strategies as uttered by Brown and Levinson (1987). However, none of the three studies connect it to other aspects besides linguistics. They solely focus on politeness strategies and their influencing factors without attempting to analyze different elements outside linguistics, such as literary devices, characters, conflicts, plot, etc. Still, those three studies provided adequate references and information to provide sufficient details on politeness strategies that can be used as a reference for my present study.

Several previous studies have examined and analyzed Encanto, addressing similar or different discussion approaches. In this study, the analysis focused on examining all types of politeness strategies used by Mirabel in the animated film

Encanto. This study has the same object and approach as Dewi and Ayomi (2023), which investigated politeness strategies used by the main character, Mirabel, in Encanto movie. They investigated only positive politeness with the findings of 20 instances in Mirabel's utterances. However, there are some utterances that can be categorized as positive politeness strategies that were not identified. Therefore, conducting research with a similar topic and more detail is needed. Moreover, this study focused on not only positive politeness but also all the types of politeness strategies, such as bald on record, negative politeness, and off record, to understand the character of Mirabel more deeply when faced with situations requiring her to speak using certain politeness strategies. This analysis contributed to the broader discourse on interpersonal communication dynamics in animated narratives by linking Mirabel's use of politeness strategies to her characterization, which no studies have yet combined the two approaches of politeness strategies and characterization.

Thus, the primary objective of this study is to analyze the specific types of politeness strategies employed by Mirabel, examine the sociological factors that influence her choices in using these strategies, and establish a correlation between the intensity of politeness strategies used by Mirabel and her characterization in the movie *Encanto.*

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study primarily centers on the politeness strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987) and the character portrayal theory stated by Kenney (1966). This study has constraints related to examining the specific politeness strategies

employed by Mirabel, the sociological factors that shape Mirabel's use of these strategies, and how these politeness strategies contribute to Mirabel's characterization in the *Encanto* movie.

1.6 Writing Organization

This research is written in the following steps:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This section contains the study's background, research questions, objectives, previous studies, the scope of the study, and writing organization.

CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and research method.

CHAPTER III: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study in the form of a data presentation and the discussion

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter delivers a summary of the results of the analysis conducted.