

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

*The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* is a 2008 movie adapted from the novel of the same name by John Boyne. Set in the 1940s during the Second World War, the film tells the story of the Holocaust from a child's perspective through the main character, Bruno, an eight-year-old German boy. Bruno is forced to move from Berlin and leave behind his friends simply because his father is a Nazi commander assigned to oversee the operations of the Auschwitz concentration camp for Jews. As a result, Bruno must adapt to a new and strict environment located near the camp, where he experiences loneliness and spends much of his time exploring his surroundings out of curiosity. In this new environment, Bruno meets many new people from a wide variety of different social backgrounds, such as soldiers, servants, prisoners, and Shmuel, a Jewish boy who is imprisoned and starving. The movie becomes interesting to analyse because the writer aims to see how Bruno applies strategies of politeness when faced with people from different social backgrounds in the new environment

Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness strategies as an objective, rational behaviour to mitigate face-threatening acts strategically. Therefore, the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) aims to enhance politeness in everyday speech to prevent misunderstandings in communication. Thus, the movie *The Boy in*

*the Striped Pyjamas* was chosen as the object of this study because the writer sought to explain the types and factors of politeness strategies used by Bruno through his conversations with people of different social backgrounds in his surroundings. In addition, the writer also wanted to examine how Bruno's politeness strategy could reflect his social background.

This study aims to analyse the types of politeness strategies used by Bruno in the conversation, the factors that influence Bruno's use of certain politeness strategies, and how these politeness strategies reflect Bruno's social background. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987), there are four politeness strategies, namely bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. In addition, several factors influence these politeness strategies, including certain payoffs or advantages, and the circumstances. Thus, from the usage of politeness strategies by Bruno, conclusions can be drawn to determine his social background.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

The writer formulates the following research problems based on the background data previously mentioned:

1. What types of politeness strategies does Bruno use in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* movie?
2. What factors influence Bruno in using certain politeness strategies, and how does his use of these strategies reflect Bruno's social background?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the research problems outlined above, the study's aims are:

1. To analyse the types of politeness strategies used by Bruno in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* movie.
2. To identify the factors that influence Bruno to use certain politeness strategies and to examine how these strategies reflect his social background. .

### 1.4 Previous Studies

In writing this research, the writer found several previous studies that can be used as references for this research. The previous studies are divided into three different focuses, which are studies that focus on analysing the movie *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* in various fields as the object, studies that focus on analysing the politeness strategies, and studies that focus on analysing the social background.

These studies below are analysing the movie *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* in various fields as the object:

The first study is from Prajaningtyas et al. (2020), who investigated a film titled "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" in their research, determining whether it could be classified as children's literature or not. To support the analysis, library research was undertaken alongside the novel and supplementary articles from reputable sources. However, the authors state that the film "The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas" is not classified as children's literature because of the characterisation criteria according to

Nodelman. However, it is classified as high literature because it possesses high literature characteristics, particularly those found in novels.

Secondly, Utami et al. (2022) investigated how social issues are portrayed in the novel “The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas”. They applied an interactive qualitative data analysis method developed by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014). Their study identified five main social issues presented in the novel: the Nazis’ ethnocentric belief in German superiority, slavery, child labour, class inequality, and the marginalisation of women. These findings suggest that themes highlighting the atrocities of the Holocaust, which can foster awareness, are also present in children’s literature

Lastly, Safrudi (2014) investigates the characterisations of the major characters and the state of children’s personalities through the lens of psychology. This research aims to identify the main characters in the film, assess their characterizations, and examine the state of the children’s characters through the lens of psychology condition via the lens of psychology. Based on the investigation, the writer found that Bruno and Shmuel are the film’s main characters. According to children’s psychology, children aged 6 to 12 still need friends and school, but the three kids, Bruno (eight years old) and Shmuel (eight years old), have an unpleasant experience that forces them to modify their behaviour.

The section below is a study analysing politeness strategies in several movies. Aathifah et al. (2022) used a qualitative approach in their study. This study aims to identify various types and factors influencing politeness strategies. The researchers discovered four politeness techniques in the movie: Bald On-Record, Positive

Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record. The Bald On-Record is the most employed strategy in the movie “Flipped”. Thus, the movie includes three Politeness Strategies factors, namely Power, Social Distance, and Rank of Imposition.

Rosari (2016) examines the politeness strategies employed by the characters in the film “The Great Debaters”. This study focuses on the language-based social behaviour of the characters and identifies four types of politeness strategies: off-record, bald-on record, positive politeness, and negative politeness. The study also highlights several factors that influence the characters’ politeness in communication, including language and style, register and domain, as well as slang and solidarity.

Maharani et al. (2023) discuss the film “Gifted”. This film depicts the narrative of gifted children’s education and parenting and is based on real-life challenges in the learning world. This research tries to examine the main character’s politeness technique in this film. The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method and an audio-visual collecting approach. This study’s results show that 37 positive politeness strategies and 23 negative politeness strategies were used among 512 utterances from the major characters.

Wati and Puspani (2020) investigated politeness strategies spoken by characters in the “The Patriot” movie, as well as the effect of gender on the degree of politeness in the film. The authors employed the note-taking and documenting method to acquire study data. The analytical results suggest that the characters in the film “The Patriot” use eleven of the fifteen strategies described by Brown and Levinson (1978). In terms of the characters’ gender, ladies regularly employ a neutral tone when conversing with

both men and women. Men, on the other hand, engage in talks with varied degrees of formality.

Puti and Fitrawati (2022), in their study on the movie *Yes Day* (2021), also used the theory of politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) and used a qualitative descriptive method. In their research, they found four types of politeness strategies which are bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. The results of their research found that bald-on record was the most widely used type of politeness strategy, while off-record was the least used in the movie *Yes Day*.

Safitri and Kusumaningtyas (2022) conducted research on the animated film 'Moana' using Politeness Strategies theory by Brown and Levinson's (1987). This study used a descriptive qualitative method to analyse the main characters' speech. The study identified four types of politeness strategies: bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record, with a focus on the use of bald-on record strategies.

Permadi (2018) researched the use of positive politeness strategies in Woody Allen's film 'Midnight in Paris' using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. This study employed qualitative methods to analyse the characters' utterances in the movie. This study's findings revealed 13 types of positive politeness strategies, with the most dominant strategy being exaggerating interest, agreement, or sympathy, while some strategies, such as giving gifts or emphasising knowledge about the hearer's desires, were the least frequently used.

Sigarlaki et al. (2025) conducted a pragmatic analysis of positive vs negative politeness in the 'Coco' (2017) movie by using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness

strategy theory. This research used a qualitative descriptive method to analyse the conversation between Miguel and Héctor. The results of this study indicate that positive politeness is the most dominant strategy, while negative politeness appears less frequently, especially in moments of disagreement or emotional tension. This study also found that the politeness strategies in 'Coco' (2017) not only reflect linguistic politeness but also support the film's themes of empathy, respect, and family harmony.

The last one in this section investigates sociological elements from the Enola Holmes movie as well as Brown and Levinson's (1987). Sari (2023) used the theory of politeness strategies to examine her research. The author then used descriptive qualitative research to explain the findings of the study. The study claims that the author found 82 instances of politeness strategies in the Enola Holmes movie, including 32 instances of bald on-record politeness, 25 instances of positive politeness, 10 instances of negative politeness, 14 instances of off-record politeness, and one instance of the say nothing/no FTA strategy. Additionally, three sociological factors, social distance (D), relative power (P), and absolute rating of imposition (R), have an impact on how the characters in the Enola Holmes movie employ politeness techniques.

In this last section, the writer found previous studies related to social background. Kuswartinigrum (2020), in her study, analyses the "Parasite" (2019) movie. The writer examined how characters from diverse socioeconomic classes use distinct politeness strategies to deal with face-threatening acts. She discovered that the high-class Park family mostly employed positive politeness and indirectness to maintain social distance and exert authority, whereas the lower-class Kim family

tended to use more negative politeness and deference tactics to avoid confrontation and earn favour.

Based on the previous studies mentioned above, many researchers have discussed politeness strategies in various movies, using Brown and Levinson as their primary source. Other researchers have also discussed how a person's social background is reflected in their use of politeness strategies. However, no research has examined how the social background of the main character in a film is reflected when dealing with different social classes of different age groups. To respond to this question, this study uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness to analyse how Bruno's politeness strategies reflect his social background in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* movie.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

This study is grounded in the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). It is specifically limited to examining the types of politeness strategies employed by Bruno, the factors that influence his choice of these strategies, and the ways in which his social background is reflected through his use of politeness strategies.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study has several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study yields more resources and references on the different types of politeness

strategies, the factors that influence the use of certain politeness strategies, and how these strategies relate to an individual's social background. Practically, this study is expected to provide readers with more in-depth knowledge of the use of politeness strategies, identify the reasons individuals employ them, and help them use them appropriately, while also helping readers identify a person's social background in their use of politeness strategies.

PERPUSTAKAAN  
FAKULTAS ILMU  
UNIVERSITAS  
BUDAYA  
DIPONEGORO