

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This chapter focused on the theoretical framework and research methods. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness as the primary source, the writer discussed the types and factors of politeness strategies used by Bruno throughout the movie. In the research methods section, the author uses a distributional approach to present the data.

2.1.1 Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategy, as discussed by Brown and Levinson in their book (1987), refers to linguistic or social features that individuals use in social interactions to regulate or mitigate potential threats to face. These are tools for people to communicate appropriately to avoid misunderstandings in conversation (Kuwastiningrum, 2020). In general, they can be described as communication techniques or methods that aim to respect the listener and maintain the speaker's self-image, so that communication can take place cooperatively (Maharani et al., 2023). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), 'face' refers to the image that each person desires for themselves. In this case, 'face' is categorised into two aspects, namely positive face and negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987, 61).

1. Negative face relates to boundaries, freedom, and the right not to be disturbed. Where individuals want to maintain freedom of action and freedom from coercion without feeling coercion and burdens.
2. Positive face refers to a consistent positive self-image that is expected by others. Positive feedback is expected to make a person feel valued and accepted for their personality. Therefore, they want their desires, opinions, and actions to be valued and accepted by others.

For the purpose of demonstrating people's awareness of other people's faces, Brown and Levinson (1987) identified four types of politeness strategies: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record.

2.1.1.1 Bald On-Record

According to Brown and Levinson (1987; 94-96), the use of the bald on-record strategy occurs when someone wants to make a threat to face (FTA) directly and efficiently, without paying attention to or prioritising the feelings of others or the hearer, which means the speaker is more focused on the action than on maintaining face or good manners. Based on Brown and Levinson (1987; 96-100), there are two main situations where the speaker uses this strategy:

First, non-minimised or ignored threats to face, this case happens when both the speaker and the hearer are mutually known, where maximum efficiency is essential, and no effort of save face is required, for instance:

1. 'Help!'

2. 'Watch your step!'
3. 'Give me just 5 more days!' (in situations to pay something) (p. 96)

Second, situations where the speaker uses the FTA directly but still minimises the impact on the hearer's face through implications. For example:

1. 'Come here! Don't hesitate!'

This example may happen in farewells, welcoming, and offering context. In situations like these, the speaker is usually bald-on record to minimise the impact on the hearer's face.

2.1.1.2 Positive Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1987; 101) stated that positive politeness is a way of showing respect by addressing someone's desire to be liked or appreciated. It involves showing that you share similar wants or values with the other person. Unlike negative politeness, which focuses on minimising an imposition, positive politeness goes beyond that by expressing appreciation or connection. It's often seen in friendly conversations where people show interest in each other's personalities, shared values, or common knowledge. One of the strategies in positive politeness is the element of exaggeration. This exaggeration shows the speaker's intent to make the other person feel good (e.g. "*What an amazing house you have!*") (1987; 104). Positive politeness is also a way to build a sense of closeness, even with people who aren't close yet, by creating common ground. This makes it useful not just to minimise the impact of a

face-threatening act (FTAs), but also to foster a more friendly, intimate interaction overall.

2.1.1.3 Negative Politeness

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987; 129), negative politeness is a way of showing respect by addressing someone's desire for freedom and privacy. It focuses on not interfering with the other person's actions or decisions. Negative politeness is about being respectful and careful; it's like following rituals of avoidance, ensuring that no imposition is placed on the hearer. This strategy is specifically focused on reducing the impact of a face-threatening act (FTA), which includes things like being indirect, using hedges (e.g., "*maybe*" or "*perhaps*") (1987; 145), expressing doubt about the success of a request, or emphasising the other person's power. These strategies create distance and reduce pressure in the conversation. They are often used when a speaker wants to slow down or control the interaction more respectfully and formally.

2.1.1.4 Off-Record

According to Brown and Levinson (1987; 211), off record is an act where it's communicated in a way that doesn't have a clear, single intention. This gives the speaker a way to avoid responsibility for the act by allowing multiple interpretations. Thus, if someone wants to perform a face-threatening act (FTAs) without fully take the responsibility, they can do it off-record, leaving the listener to decide how to understand it. This strategy is indirect, which means the speaker says something unclear or different

from what they intend. The hearer must make an inference to figure out the real intention. It's not quite clear how to understand this procedure, although it usually consists of two parts. The speaker first provides a hint that the hearer must deduce (e.g. "*It's cold in here*"), which may be interpreted as the speaker wants the hearer to close the window (1987; 215), and then the hearer uses the hint to conclude what the speaker truly wants.

2.1.2 Factors Influencing the Use of Politeness Strategies

According to Brown and Levinson (1987; 71), there are several factors, such as payoff and social variables affect the use of politeness strategies. The payoffs are known as the credit someone receives from employing a particular politeness strategy. Furthermore, sociological variables are categorised into three categories, which are social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition.

2.1.2.1 The Payoffs

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987; 72) theory, the use of certain politeness strategies has the expected results for the speaker related to the strategy used. Payoff refers to the advantages or credit that someone gets when using politeness strategies in social interactions. This factor is the reason why a person chooses a particular strategy to maintain social relations or the interlocutor's 'face'. For instance, by expressing it through a positive politeness strategy, the speaker might reduce the FTA aspect by reassuring the hearer that they share similar kinds of values, interests,

or perspectives as the speaker. Another possible payoff is that the speaker minimises the debt for doing the FTAs by including the hearer and himself equally in the request or offer (e.g., with an inclusive ‘we’ as in ‘*Let’s get on with dinner*’) (1987; 72). Another example is when positive politeness strategies begin with praise, thereby encouraging a sense of appreciation for participation. This can be seen in the context of classroom interactions between teachers and students (e.g., “*I’m glad to see you all actively participating in today’s discussion. But don’t forget, every opinion should be shared respectfully*”). By applying this positive strategy, the teacher gain payoff as a maintaining positive classroom environment (Sutyrajmi, et.al, 2025; 3).

2.1.2.2 Sociological Variables

According to Brown and Levinson (1987;74), the politeness strategies used by speakers affected by FTA involve sociological variables. Sociological variables are categorised into three aspects: social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition.

2.1.2.2.1 Social Distance

In Brown and Levinson’s (1987; 74) politeness theory, social distance refers to the degree of closeness or social distance between the speaker and interlocutors. In social distance, interaction and good message delivery between speakers and interlocutors are seen based on background, age, and cultural background.

For instance, “*Are you alright, ma’am? Are you alright, sir? Perhaps you shouldn’t do this in public, Sir. I understand, but I’m talking to you. Why don’t you just*

calm down?” In this example, the speaker and the interlocutor do not know each other and the speaker is younger which can be seen why he chose the addressee terms ‘ma’am’ and ‘sir’ to call the woman and the man to maintain social distance (Suyono and Andrianti, 2021), even more the age gap between them are quietly far so the speaker tend to use the negative politeness to show respect (Jeanyfer and Tanto, 2018).

2.1.2.2.2 Relative Power

Brown and Levinson (1987; 74) stated that relative power is the level of power or hierarchy between speakers and interlocutors, so it affects the politeness strategy used. If the speaker has higher power than the interlocutor, then the speaker tends to use a low level of politeness. Conversely, speakers use a high level of politeness if he or she has lower power than the interlocutor (e.g., *could you show a little more sensitivity?*”), in this example, a customer demanded his right to be served well and instructed the writer to also serve deaf customer. As a customer, he had the right and authority to give instructions, however, he did not directly ask for it but used a certain negative strategy to respect his ‘face’ (Suyono and Andrianti, 2021).

2.1.2.2.3 Rank of Imposition

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987; 74), the rank of imposition refers to the level of demand of the request or action performed by the speaker. If the request is large and in demand, then the politeness used is also high. Otherwise, the rank of imposition becomes low if the demand is small (e.g., *why don't you get a job and get*

them by yourself, okay? So, you get a job and you can get them yourself.”) this sentence is one of the high ranks of imposition illustration because the request is large and in demand besides the hearer of this sentence is a child (Suyono and Andrianti, 2021).

2.2 Research Methods

The research method applied in this study is divided into five parts, namely the type of research, data and data sources, data collection methods, population and sampling techniques, and data analysis procedures.

2.2.1 Type of Research

This research used a descriptive qualitative method. In the descriptive qualitative method, the writer used qualitative data and analysed social phenomena descriptively, particularly the politeness strategies found in the film. The data collection process was based on the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). This study collects and analyses the data from the utterances in the movie and from the movie script to strengthen the utterances.

2.3 Data and Data Source

This study's data is based on Bruno's utterances in the movie *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* that contained the politeness strategies. Bruno's utterances were taken from his conversations with several characters surrounding him, namely Shmuel, a Jewish boy; Ralf and Elsa, Bruno's parents; Gretel, Bruno's sister; Maria, the family

maid; Lieutenant Kotler, a German soldier; and Pavel, a Jewish prisoner, who represent Bruno's main interlocutors throughout the movie. The writer collected this data by watching the film on official platforms such as Netflix. Furthermore, the writer also saw the subtitles of Bruno's utterances, so the data collected would be clearer and more accurate.

2.3.1 Data Collection Method

Data were collected through observation and note-taking methods. Through observation, the writer observed relevant data related to the politeness strategies employed by Bruno. Subsequently, the note-taking method was used to identify and classify Bruno's utterances containing politeness strategies. The function of this method was to distinguish which utterances employed politeness strategies and which did not. In the process, while watching the movie, the writer carefully observed and noted Bruno's utterances that were considered to contain politeness strategies. After the data were collected, the writer analysed and validated the utterances based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies.

2.4 Population and Sample Technique

This study used total sampling. In this sampling technique, the total sample number is proportional to the total population number, where the sample will be selected according to specific criteria. Thirty-four Bruno's utterances contain politeness strategies and become the population as well as the sample. From the sample, the writer

analyses the type of politeness strategy used by Bruno, the factors that influenced Bruno to use the politeness strategy and how Bruno's social background is portrayed throughout the movie.

2.4.1 Method of Data Analysis

The data analysed refers to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. First, the writer analysed the types of politeness strategies used by Bruno, including the bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies. Then, the writer analysed the factors that influenced Bruno in using certain politeness strategies, namely payoffs and sociological variables. Thus, from the analyses conducted, Bruno's social background can be concluded.