

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Communication is the bedrock of human interaction, facilitating the exchange of ideas, emotions, and intentions through language. Effective communication not only conveys information but also establishes social bonds and regulates interactions. Clark (1996) explores how language is used in everyday interactions and how communication is a collaborative process, reflecting the ideas of establishing social bonds and regulating interactions. Language, as a communication tool, includes not just words but also non-verbal signals, context, and cultural norms, all of which affect how messages are understood and reacted to. The study of language in use, or pragmatics, delves into how context shapes meaning and how speakers strategically employ language to achieve their communicative goals (Levinson, 1983).

Gulo and Afriana (2024) emphasize that people communicate daily to establish relationships for various reasons, with the level of intimacy or familiarity influencing how communication occurs. They highlight that much of what we communicate is shaped by our social relationships, which determines the language we use, the words we choose, and the attitudes we convey. In particular, the concept of politeness, as discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987), underscores how language is employed to maintain civility and avoid confrontation, with apology serving as a key example of polite communication.

Pragmatics investigates how language users navigate meaning in context, emphasizing the importance of implicature, presupposition, and speech acts in everyday communication. Politeness, a significant aspect of pragmatic analysis, addresses how speakers manage social distance and maintain rapport while expressing their intentions. Sandjaja and Afriana (2024) highlight that politeness is crucial for positive interpersonal interactions, as it helps mitigate the potentially unpleasant or threatening content that might be communicated. Politeness is not only essential in oral communication but also in written forms, playing a key role in behavior and holding significant importance in societal interactions. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory suggest that politeness strategies are used to lessen face-threatening acts (FTAs) and maintain social harmony by addressing the positive and negative face needs of those involved in the conversation.

In today's interconnected world, the study of politeness strategies remains pertinent as individuals negotiate diverse social and cultural contexts through various communication channels. From everyday conversations to media representations, politeness strategies shape interactions, influence perceptions, and contribute to effective communication practices. As Ricky and Afriana (2024) point out, politeness also entails a heightened awareness of others' wishes, emphasizing the importance of being considerate in social exchanges. This can manifest in daily activities, where, according to Afriana and Mandala (2018), it is considered polite to use respectful phrases, avoid direct mocking, and show respect for others. Thus, utterances and phenomena such as these illustrate how politeness can influence the dynamics of communication and social relationships.

A notable example of politeness strategies in action can be observed in a talent show, America's Got Talent. During one episode, a blind contestant named Putri Ariani from Indonesia entered the stage led by her parents. At around 1:51 to 2:01 of the segment, judge Sofia Vergara engaged with Putri Ariani using positive politeness strategies. Sofia's response, "**Ok, we're happy that you are here and excited, we want to see you,**" is a clear instance of the positive politeness strategy known as **Notice, Attend to Hearer** (wants, interests, needs, and goals). This strategy involves showing attention to and interest in the listener's needs and desires. In this example, Sofia shows interest in Putri's dreams and expresses genuine excitement about her presence. The payoff influencing the use of this strategy lies in minimizing potential face-threatening acts (FTAs) by aligning with Putri's positive face needs, such as her desire to be appreciated and supported. Additionally, the circumstances, including the social context of the interaction and Sofia's role as a judge, further shape this response. By stating they are happy and excited, Sofia reduces social distance, fosters rapport, and creates a welcoming environment. Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that most speech acts, such as offers, requests, disapprovals, and praises, can mitigate the speaker's face-threatening actions (FTAs). In this scenario, Sofia's supportive words not only address Putri's emotional needs but also reflect an effort to build trust and maintain harmony in a professional setting.

In the TV show "Ted Lasso," Ted frequently uses this strategy. For instance, when he first meets his team, he might say things like, "**I heard you were absolutely phenomenal in the last match!**" or "**You've got incredible talent!**"

These **exaggerated** compliments go beyond mere politeness and show an enthusiastic and heightened interest in the players' abilities and achievements. The payoff influencing the use of this strategy is the establishment of strong social bonds and the fostering of a positive, supportive atmosphere. By making team members feel exceptionally valued and appreciated, Ted reduces the likelihood of face-threatening acts (FTAs) and boosts their morale and motivation. Additionally, the circumstances, such as Ted's role as a leader and the need to build trust within a new team, shape his approach. This strategy reduces social distance, fosters camaraderie, and builds mutual respect. Exaggerated compliments not only uplift individuals but also set a tone of optimism and encouragement, leading to improved team cohesion, increased trust, and a collaborative environment. Ted Lasso's strategy is centered on fostering strong, positive relationships and creating an inclusive team culture, which is crucial for collective success.

The movie provides a rich source of linguistic data where characters navigate relationships, conflicts, and personal growth, offering insights into how politeness strategies contribute to character development and narrative progression. Flick (2014) notes that movies serve as valuable objects of research because they reflect societal norms, cultural values, and communication patterns, allowing for an in-depth analysis of social interactions and language use in a controlled yet diverse context. In analyzing the "Kung Fu Panda" movie series, this research focuses on the utterances and expressions employed by characters to explore how positive politeness strategies are utilized.

“Kung Fu Panda” series are animated feature movies produced by DreamWorks. The movies are animations, adventures and comedies that tell the story of the adventures of a panda named Po. In this research, the researcher took “Kung Fu Panda 3” as data source. Choosing “Kung Fu Panda 3” as the data source for this research is motivated by its rich character interactions, diverse cultural contexts, and the film’s emphasis on relationships and personal growth. The movie features a wide range of characters with distinct personalities, providing ample examples of positive politeness strategies in action. The interactions between Po, his biological father Li Shan, and his adoptive father Mr. Ping, among others, offer a nuanced look at how politeness is used to navigate social dynamics and build relationships. Additionally, the film’s blend of traditional Chinese cultural elements with universal themes makes it an ideal subject for exploring how politeness strategies function across different cultural and interpersonal contexts.

One of the expressions in the movie occurs at 00:14:53. Po is taking a bath while talking to his foster father, Mr. Ping. Po tells him that Master Shifu has asked him to teach his friends kung fu. When his father hears this, he immediately encourages Po to take the job, viewing it as a form of promotion. Mr. Ping says, **“Take the job, son”** to persuade Po to accept Master Shifu’s offer to become a kung fu teacher. This directive utterance, characterized by the verb “take” at the beginning, contains the intention to command. In this utterance, the positive politeness strategy is used by employing an **use in-group identity marker** through the word “son.” By using “son,” Mr. Ping tries to soften the command, making it more subtle and polite. Using in-group identity markers, such as the term “son,”

implies a relationship of familiarity and solidarity between the speaker and the interlocutor, reinforcing their close bond.

The use of this strategy is influenced by the payoff of fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity between Mr. Ping and Po. By addressing Po as “son,” Mr. Ping not only emphasizes their close relationship but also reduces the social distance between them. This makes the command feel less authoritative and more like a supportive suggestion, thereby increasing the likelihood that Po will accept the advice without feeling pressured. Additionally, the circumstances of their relationship as foster father and son play a crucial role in shaping this interaction. The term “son” reinforces their familial bond, creating an environment where such directives are perceived as caring rather than imposing. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that using markers of shared identity or group affiliation, such as “mate,” “honey,” or “son,” can soften speech acts and create a more polite and inclusive tone. In this scene, the directive speech is effectively mitigated through the in-group identity marker, demonstrating how language can be strategically employed to navigate social dynamics and maintain harmony.

Another utterance occurs at 00:17:47. Li Shan’s utterance, “**Hey son, let me teach you how to belly gong,**” employs the positive politeness strategy of **offer or promise**, specifically offering sympathy, understanding, and cooperation. By saying, “let me teach you how to belly gong,” Li Shan is offering to share a skill and spend time together, which can be seen as a “gift” of knowledge and bonding experience. This conveys a willingness to engage and invest in the relationship.

The use of this positive politeness strategy is influenced by the payoff of fostering a sense of unity and connection between Li Shan and Po. By offering to teach Po a skill, Li Shan reinforces their bond and demonstrates his willingness to invest in the relationship. This approach not only enhances their rapport but also increases the likelihood that Po will respond positively to his request. Additionally, the circumstances of their interaction, including Li Shan's role as Po's biological father and his desire to establish a meaningful relationship, shape the use of this strategy. The offer to share knowledge and spend time together serves as a symbolic "gift" that strengthens their connection. By emphasizing shared activities and cooperation, Li Shan creates a supportive and engaging dynamic, demonstrating his genuine intentions to both Po and Mr. Ping. This effectively highlights the strategic use of language to navigate complex family relationships and build trust.

Some research has been conducted by previous researchers related to this study. Kusmanto and Widodo (2022) aimed to describe the forms of language politeness during online learning in higher education. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, the study identified six forms of positive politeness strategies, emphasizing the importance of these strategies in strengthening character education. In another study, Son and Afriana (2023) examined the occurrence of positive politeness strategies in a YouTube video titled "Ariana Grande I Full Video." they used Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of positive politeness strategies, employing a descriptive qualitative method and observational techniques. Their findings revealed 68 instances of positive politeness across 10 different strategies.

Previous and present research have analyzed positive politeness strategies using Brown and Levinson's theory. The similarities between these studies lie in their use of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory to examine the types of positive politeness strategies and the factors influencing their use in various contexts, such as YouTube videos and online learning environments. However, what distinguishes the present study from these previous works is the focus on a different data source and context. While previous studies analyzed data from a YouTube video and an online learning environment, this proposed research used the animated movie "Kung Fu Panda" as its data source. The aims of this research are to identify the kinds of positive politeness strategies employed in the movie and to explore the factors influencing the use of these strategies. Therefore, the researcher proposes the title, **"A Politeness Strategy Analysis of the "Kung Fu Panda" Movie: Pragmatics Approach."**

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the research above, the five identifications of the research are as follows:

1. The role of positive politeness strategies in character development and narrative progression in the "Kung Fu Panda" movie.
2. The comparison of positive politeness strategies used in the "Kung Fu Panda" movie with employed in different contexts, such as YouTube videos and talk shows.
3. The effectiveness of positive politeness strategies in the "Kung Fu Panda" movie.

4. The types of positive politeness strategies employed in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie.
5. The factors influencing the use of positive politeness strategies in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identified problems above, this study focuses on two primary limitations:

1. The types of positive politeness strategies employed in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie.
2. The factors influencing the use of positive politeness strategies in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background and limitations, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of positive politeness strategies employed in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie?
2. What are the factors influencing the use of positive politeness strategies in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie?

1.5 Objective of the research

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the types of positive politeness strategies employed in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie.

2. To analyze the factors influencing the use of positive politeness strategies in the “Kung Fu Panda” movie.

1.6 Significance of the research

1. Theoretical significance

This research aims to contribute to the field of pragmatics by providing a detailed analysis of positive politeness strategies in a popular animated film. It will enhance the understanding of how these strategies are employed in media representations and how they function within different cultural and social contexts.

2. Practical significance

For educators and students, this research can serve as a valuable resource for understanding the application of pragmatic theories in real-world contexts. For filmmakers and scriptwriters, insights from this study could inform the development of more nuanced and authentic character interactions in animated films and other media.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Pragmatics : Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how context influences the interpretation of meaning in language. It examines how speakers use language strategically to achieve their communicative goals (Mey, 2001).

Positive Politeness Strategies: : Techniques used by speakers to make their communication more amicable and to show concern for the listener's feelings and interests. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these strategies aim to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) and promote social harmony.

Kung Fu Panda Movie : An animated film series produced by DreamWorks Animation, focusing on the adventures of a panda named Po and his journey as a kung fu warrior. The movies are known for their rich character interactions and blend of cultural elements.