



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The negative politeness hedging strategy developed by Brown and Levinson would be utilized in this study. Brown and Levinson (1987) define “hedging” in their work “Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage.” A language device—a word, phrase, or particle—that modifies or softens the level of commitment or certainty attached to a statement is referred to in this sense as a “hedge.” thereby, because it concentrates on employing language, such as especially polite phrases in movie talks, Brown and Levinson's negative politeness theory is suited for examining the hedging strategy. For example, there are several ways in which hedging appears in speech from motion pictures, such as tag questions, subjunctive sentences, clues about faraway possibilities, and hedges like “hope,” “supposed,” “though,” and “perhaps” (Yolanda, Udayana, & Mulyana, 2022). By employing this strategy, movie characters refrain from forcing their opinions on the audience, express hesitation or doubt, and disassociate themselves from specific claims (Fadilah, 2018; Makasiahe & Suryani, 2020).

Language and politeness are deeply influenced by social and cultural norms. Negative politeness strategies, which are used to mitigate potential offense or maintain social harmony, can vary significantly between genders due to different expectations and roles in communication. By examining how males and females use these strategies in “*You Hurt My Feelings*”, a movie that reflects everyday interactions and conflicts, I aim to uncover how these differences manifest in real-life conversations. Understanding these variations can provide valuable insights into gender dynamics in communication, contribute to more effective interpersonal interactions, and enhance our grasp of how politeness strategies are employed across different contexts. Additionally, this research can help in developing more nuanced approaches to communication training and gender studies. As a result, as mentioned at the first paragraph, I use the movie “*You Hurt My Feelings*” (imdb, 2023) as the object of my study.

As mentioned at the beginning, this study uses the movie “*You Hurt My Feeling*” as its study object. In the movie, “a novelist discovers her husband's candid response to her most recent work, which suddenly turns their long-standing marriage upside down. The movie's intricate story revolves around a bunch of affluent Manhattan narcissists who form a positive group to always support each other, but eventually disintegrate when faced with the truth. This is what occurs to the main pair when Beth, a somewhat successful novelist, learns that her



husband, Don, a failed therapist, despises the manuscript of his most recent book but is afraid to face it” (imdb, 2023). Of course, this movie can be the right object for researching hedging because it tells a story where a husband and wife try to maintain their relationship.

In this movie, “*You Hurt My Feelings*”, “a novelist learns of her husband’s honest response to his latest work, which suddenly changes their long-standing marriage. So, many incidents made their relationship strained. On the other hand, her husband tried to calm his wife with negative polite speech because of their close relationship as husband and wife. In addition, the people closest to them also influence the course of this couple’s love story. They also play a role in maintaining the relationship between the two with negative politeness speech such as hedging strategies. Therefore, those can be the strong reason to select this movie to analyse the negative politeness hedging strategy.

Based on the explanation above, the negative politeness-hedging strategy is demonstrated in the movie “*You Hurt My Feelings*”, which depicts the complex dynamics of human relationships. Beth learns of Don's open contempt for her most recent manuscript, and this leads the characters, Don and Beth, into “a maze of marital strife”. Furthermore, the narrative emphasizes the need to use hedging, as described by Brown and Levinson, in communication. It's a sort of negative politeness that Don uses language strategy to mitigate the possible face-threatening-act effect of his rejection of Beth's work, as seen by his unwillingness to address or voice his genuine thoughts about it. In addition, the hedging strategy is also affected to other people surrounding them, because they, other characters, influence the development of the story and the relationship of the main characters, namely Beth and Don (pre-observation).

Example:

Minutes: 06:22, --> 06:29

Context: Don and Beth are having dinner at a restaurant and talking about Beth's book. In their conversation, Don gave the impression that he didn't like his wife's work. however, he tried not to hurt her feelings with his words.

Don : **I think** you're done.

Beth : You must be so sick of reading it.



In the given conversation between Don and Beth during dinner, Don employs negative politeness and a hedging strategy as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). Despite his apparent lack of enthusiasm for Beth's book, Don tactfully chooses his words to avoid directly expressing his negative opinions. By saying, "I think you're done," Don uses a hedge ("I think") to soften the potential impact of his statement, creating a sense of uncertainty. Overall, Don's communication aligns with the principles of negative politeness and hedging to navigate the delicate situation without causing undue offense.

There are several relevant previous studies. The first previous study is conducted by Syifa, Qaniah, & Suciati (2021). The title of this study is "*An Analysis of Negative Politeness Strategy by Anna in Anna and the King Movie*". The difference with this study is the subject, object, and focus of research. Syifa, Qaniah, and Suciati use all types of negative politeness strategies, use one main character as the object of research, namely Anna in the movie "*Anna and the King*", and focus on the sociolinguistic approach. The second previous study is conducted by Juliani, Dara, Afiqah, & Wahyuni (2022). The title of this study is "*Politeness and Impoliteness Strategy Used in the "Sleeping Beauty" Movie*". This second previous research has the same theory, namely Brown and Levinson 1987, and uses the same type of object, namely movies. However, both have some differences in the research subjects. The third previous study is conducted by Chandra Dewi and Nur Ayomi (2023). The title of this study is "*Positive Politeness Strategies Used by the Main Characters in the Animated Film "Encanto"*". From the summary of the last three studies, it can be seen that they used the same theory, namely Brown and Levinson's 1987 theory to analyse the research.

Finally, the use of negative politeness-hedging strategies in movie analysis points to several previous studies that examined related ideas in movies *Anna and the King*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *You Hurt My Feelings*, and *Encanto*. These studies, however, have several gaps, such as a lack of research into the efficacy and significance of the strategies that have been identified, a concentration on particular characters or movies without taking into account larger contextual factors, and shortcomings in the application of pragmatic approach to analyse the use of negative politeness hedging strategies. To this gap, this study examines the contextual elements that influence how hedging strategies are used by male and female characters in the movie "*You Hurt My Feelings*".

1.2 Statements of the Problem

- 1) Who used the most negative politeness-hedging strategy between male and female characters in "*You Hurt My Feelings*" movie?



- 2) How do male and female characters use negative politeness-hedging strategy in their communication with their hearer?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To identify who used the most negative politeness-hedging strategy between male and female characters in *"You Hurt My Feelings"* movie.
- 2) To explain how male and female characters use negative politeness-hedging strategy in their communication with their hearer.

1.4 Significances of the Study

1. Theoretical Significances

This study would give insight into the negative politeness-hedging strategy used by the male and female characters in *"You Hurt My Feelings"* adds to the pragmatics theory. Therefore, the reader's understanding of language use in interpersonal contact within the particular setting of cinema narratives is enhanced by this study. Thus, it adds to our understanding of language use in movies by illuminating the subtle ways in which characters engage in negative politeness-hedging.

2. Practical Significances

Practically speaking, this study provides useful applications for anyone interested in good communication (Communication methods that respect the other person's freedom and autonomy, with the aim of minimizing potential threats or pressure on their "negative face"). In other words, readers acquire an understanding of how gendered communication in the movie industry is impacted by negative politeness-hedging strategy, particularly for those studying media studies or communication. The results highlight that hedging is employed to soften statements, thereby maintaining the listener's negative face—avoiding imposition and respecting their desire for autonomy. By using hedging, speakers can convey their messages without imposing too strongly on their listeners, thus preserving interpersonal relationships. In addition, female also more often use a combination of various types of hedging to show greater caution in communication. Male characters also use hedging strategies, but at a slightly lower frequency.

1.5 Scope and Limitations



The scope of pragmatics, focused on the use of negative politeness-hedging strategies as defined by Brown and Levinson's theory and analysed the dialogue of all major male and female characters in the movie *"You Hurt My Feelings"*. The study examined gender differences in the use of hedging strategies within the context of the film. The research was limited to the theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson's negative politeness-hedging strategy and did not explore other politeness theories. The research is limited to the analysis of one movie, *"You Hurt My Feelings"*, and uses all male and female characters.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Pragmatics:

The study on how language forms and their users interact. The benefit of learning pragmatic language is that one may discuss the objectives of purposes, assumptions, and kinds of actions that people take. (Yule, 1996)

2. Politeness Strategy:

The strategies of social interaction that reduce face-threatening acts (FTAs), or the perceived threat to hearers' faces. (Page 91, Brown and Levinson, 1987)

3. Negative Politeness Strategies:

The several strategies help minimize face-threatening acts (FTAs) and preserve social standing. (1987, Brown and Levinson, pp. 129–211)

4. Negative Politeness Hedging Strategy:

"A hedge' is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set," Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 145).

5. "You Hurt My Feelings" Movie

The main characters in Nicole Holofcener's *You Hurt My Feelings* in 2023 are played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Tobias Menzies. The film was first released on 22 January 2023 (Sundance) and 26 May 2023 (United States) from the production company "Film nation Entertainment, Distributor: A24, Film Nation Entertainment, UTA Independent Film Group". The 93-minute film looks at the complexities of relationships and how being honest or dishonest can affect them.



1.7 Thesis Organization

In order to provide a comprehensive explanation, this work is divided into multiple chapters. An introduction is given in the first chapter. This chapter arranges the thesis and defines important concepts. The context, problem statements, objective, significance, scope and limitations, definition of key terms. The second chapter discusses the review or related literature, this chapter includes pragmatics, politeness strategy, types of politeness strategy, types of negative politeness strategy, *“You Hurt My Feelings”* movie, and previous study. The third chapter discusses the research method, such as research design, data and source data, steps of collecting data, and steps of analysing data. The fourth chapter discusses the findings and discussion. The last chapter discusses conclusion and suggestion, of the study are also presented.