

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a brief explanation of some theories that support the study. The theories are related to Pragmatic, Face Threatening Act (FTA), and Politeness Strategies

2.1. Pragmatic

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. It encompasses the analysis of how speakers use context to convey implicit meanings, manage conversation, perform speech acts, and understand politeness. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics involves understanding the language in use and considering how people comprehend and produce a communicative act in a concrete speech situation, far beyond words and sentences' literal meaning.

Pragmatics first emerged as part of the study of semiotics, the science of meaning and signs. In 1870 Pierce C. S. developed the concept of pragmatism, which emphasizes that the meaning of a sign depends on its practical consequences and use. Later, Morris W (1938) expanded this concept by dividing semiotics into three parts, namely, syntax (sign structure), semantics (sign meaning), and pragmatics (use of signs in context). This was followed by Austin J. L (1962) who introduced the speech act which became the basis for the modern study of pragmatics, where the focus is on how utterances are used in specific contexts to achieve communication goals. In the 1970s, pragmatics began to be recognized as an independent branch of linguistics. Yule (1996) separated the pragmatic into several kinds including the study of speech acts, deixis (words that require context to be understood, such as "here," and "there"), presuppositions (assumptions underlying utterances), and politeness in communication. Brown & Levinson (1987) developed a theory of politeness that examines how an individual maintains face (self-esteem or social image) in social interaction. This theory explains the strategies

used by speakers to avoid or reduce threats to others' faces (Face-Threatening Acts, FTAs). This work became one of the main foundations in the study of modern pragmatics. The history of pragmatics explains how the basic concepts of meaning and context in language have developed into a discipline that studies language use in complex social and cultural contexts.

Yule discusses applying pragmatic concepts, such as politeness, to written and oral communication in his book "Pragmatics". Yule (1996) claims that the study of pragmatics in writing, particularly about politeness, requires research into how readers interpret and convey the meanings implied in written communication. Yule discusses that the politeness principles proposed by Brown and Levinson also apply in written communication. The writer may use positive politeness strategies to establish a closer relationship with the reader, for example by using expressions that show familiarity or appreciation. In contrast, negative politeness is used to respect the autonomy of the reader, such as using more formal or cautious language.

English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks should include pragmatics to become proficient communicators. According to Bachman (1990), pragmatic competence is part of communicative competence which includes understanding pragmatic conventions and having the flexibility to use language in various situations. Textbooks with a pragmatics component assist students in understanding the language and the cultural customs and social norms surrounding its use. In the context of writing, pragmatics is the study of how writers use language to control social relations while maintaining an appropriate level of politeness. To maintain efficient and polite communication between writers and readers, pragmatic concepts such as deixis, implicature, and politeness techniques remain relevant and important, although written communication differs from oral communication in terms of immediacy and direct relationship.

2.2. Face Threatening Act (FTA)

Face-threatening act (FTA) A face-threatening act (FTA) refers to any behavior that has the potential to damage a person's positive social value or "face" in a given interaction. Yule (1996) states that if the speaker says something that is a threat to other individuals regarding self-image, it is described as a face-threatening act. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks, handling FTAs appropriately is crucial for teaching pragmatic competence and effective communication skills. ELT textbooks aim to provide students with the necessary tools to communicate effectively in English. This involves not just grammatical competence but also pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts. FTAs are a key aspect of this pragmatic competence, as learners must understand how to navigate interactions that may threaten the face of others.

Goffman (1967) first presented the idea of the face, and Brown and Levinson (1987) expanded on it by suggesting that while interactions with others (FTAs) are inevitable in communication, their effects may be mitigated by using a variety of politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish two types of facial threats. They are the Negative Face and the Positive Face. A negative threatening face occurs when a speaker does not avoid or intends to avoid the freedom of action of the interlocutor. Using polite requests, providing options, or acknowledging the other person's right to refuse are strategies that respect negative faces. On the other hand, a positive threatening face refers to an individual's desire to be appreciated and liked, and the avoidance of imposition. Complimenting someone's achievements, expressing admiration, or offering support are actions that enhance a positive face.

FTAs are a fundamental aspect of pragmatic competence and are crucial for effective communication. ELT textbooks play a significant role in teaching students how to navigate FTAs through various politeness strategies. By

incorporating realistic dialogues, role-playing exercises, and cultural notes, textbooks can help learners develop the skills needed to manage face-threatening situations effectively. Understanding and applying these strategies enables students to communicate more effectively and appropriately in English, enhancing their overall language proficiency.

2.3. Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies is a manner of maintaining the feelings of others during communication to avoid conflict (Brown, 2015; Leech, 1983). The use of politeness strategies is to create a good communication relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Textbooks reflect politeness strategies as part of pragmatic knowledge. In ELT textbooks, dialogues often serve as practical models for language use in social interactions. To educate students on how to negotiate social relationships and maintain face in various communication situations, politeness strategies should be included in these conversations. Research from Vellenga (2004) has shown that students' pragmatic awareness and performance can be significantly improved by explicit training on pragmatic aspects, such as politeness strategies.

To carry out good communication using politeness strategies, various strategies can be utilized in a particular context by an individual in a specific society. Based on the politeness theory offered by Brown and Levinson (1987), there are 4 types of politeness strategies:

a. Bald on Record

Clearness and effectiveness are concerns of this type. This type of strategy is commonly found with people who know each other very well such as close and family.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), bald-on record has two kinds of strategy:

(1) Cases of non-minimization of the face threat. Here, maximum efficiency is important, and because S and H both recognize this, there's no need for face-saving. Redress could decrease the conveyed urgency in situations of extreme desperation or urgency. It is when the speaker wants to command, ask, give a cue, give permission, or give a message with an urgent context. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), there are examples of this strategy, such as:

- “Help!” (compare the non-urgent ‘Please help me, if you would be so kind’)
- “Watch out!”
- “Give me just one more week!” (to pay the rent)
- “Listen, I have got an idea.....”
- “Hear me out: . . .”
- “Look, the point is this: . . .”

(2) Cases of FTA (Face Threatening Act) oriented bald on-record usage refers to instances in which a speaker communicates a message that directly threatens the "face" (self-image) of the hearer without any mitigation or softening of the message (Brown & Levinson (1987). This strategy is characterized by the speaker being very direct and clear, prioritizing the efficiency of communication over the potential social risks involved. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), there are examples of this strategy, such as:

- “Come to my room!”
- “Come in, don’t hesitate, I’m not busy.”
- “Don’t mind the mess”
- “Don’t let me keep you”

In certain situations where the social is closer or the context allows for it, individuals may choose to be straightforward and explicit in their communication. Give a command, give permission, welcome, farewell, demand, and offer are examples of Bald-on record.

b. Positive Politeness

This type refers to direct actions where the speaker wants to appreciate the hearer clearly, without guessing (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example “Your hat looks so beautiful!” or “What a nice scarf!”.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), positive politeness has 15 kinds of strategy: (1) Notice, attending to the hearer; i.e “What a beautiful vase this is! Where did it come from?” (2) Exaggerating; i.e “What a fantastic garden you have” (3) Intensifying interest in the hearer; i.e “You always do the dishes ! I will do them this time.” (4) Using in-group identity markers; This is categorized by use *Mate, brother, sister, guys* (5) Seeking agreement; The agreement may also be stressed by repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said in a conversation. (6) Avoid disagreement; (7) Raising common ground; i.e “*I had a really hard time learning to drive, didn’t I*” (8) Joking; (9) Asserting speaker’s knowledge of and concern for the hearer’s wants; i.e “*I know you can’t bear parties, but this one will really be good — do come!*” (10) Offering and promising; (11) Being optimistic; (12) Including both speaker and hearer in the activity; (13) Giving or asking for a reason, (14) Assuming reciprocity; (15) Giving gifts to the hearer.

Positive politeness focuses on showing friendliness and using the expression of solidarity to enhance the positive value of the interaction. Compliments, expressions of appreciation, and shared interest are examples of positive politeness.

c. Negative Politeness

This type concerns the hearer's negative face when the speaker says something indirectly (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example when the speaker asks in curiosity "Why are you painting your house purple?" or "Can you play the piano?".

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), negative politeness has 10 kinds of strategy: (1) Being conventionally indirect; i.e. "*I'd like to borrow your car. If you wouldn't mind*" (2) Questioning and hedging; i.e. "*John is a true friend.*" (3) Being pessimistic; i.e. "*Perhaps you'd care to help me.*" (4) Minimizing the imposition; i.e. "*Could I have a taste of that cake.*" (5) Give deference; (6) Apologizing; i.e. "*I hope you don't mind me saying this, but....*" (7) Impersonalizing speaker and hearer; (8) Stating the FTA as a general rule; (9) Nominalizing; (10) Going on record as incurring a debt or as not indenting hearer.

Negative politeness is focused on minimizing imposition or intrusion. It involves being indirect using hedges, and showing deference to the interlocuter's autonomy. Apologies, requests with hedges, and use of euphemisms are examples of negative politeness.

d. Off Record

Off-record is a type of politeness strategy where the speaker wants the hearer to interpret the meaning (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, when the speaker wants the hearer to close a window, the speaker says "It's cold here" instead of asking directly.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987), off-record has 15 kinds of strategy: (1) Giving hints; i.e. "*It's cold in here.*" (c.i. Shut the window) (2) Giving association clues; (3) Presupposing; i.e. "*I washed the car again today.*" (4) Understating; i.e. "*That dress is a quite nice.*" (5) Overstating; i.e. "*I tried to call a hundred times, but there was never any answer.*" (6) Using tautologies; i.e. "*you're man, why don't you do something about it ?*"

(7) Using contradictions; i.e. *“John is here, and he isn’t here.”* (8) Being ironic; i.e. *“John is real genius.”* (9) Using metaphors; i.e. *“Harry is a real fish.”* (c.i He swim like a fish) (10) Using rhetorical questions; i.e. *“What can I say ?”* (11) Being ambiguous; i.e. *“John’s a pretty smooth cookie.”* (12) Being vague; i.e. *“Perhaps someone did something naughty.”* (13) Over generalizing; i.e. *“If that door is shut completely, it sticks.”* (14) Displacing hearer; i.e. (15) Being incomplete, using ellipsis; i.e. *“Well, I didn’t see you.”*

This strategy involves avoiding a direct request or statement thus allowing the interlocuter to respond voluntarily without feeling imposed upon. It includes hints, suggestions, or jokes that indirectly convey the intended message.

2.4. Study of the Relevant Research

Several studies have been conducted to investigate student’s politeness strategies. Erlinda & Rahmi, (2015) analyzed positive politeness used by Indonesian teachers in the English classroom context based on Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory. The investigation revealed six types of positive politeness strategies used by the teacher in classroom interactions. The strategies are Strategy 2: exaggerating interest, approval, and sympathy to the hearer; Strategy 4: using in-group identity markers; Strategy 5: seeking agreement; Strategy 10: offering, and promising; Strategy 12: including both speaker and hearer in activity, and strategy 13: giving or asking for a reason.

For instance, Agustina & Cahyono, (2016) examined the authority of relations and politeness strategies in the English foreign language classroom communications. The result revealed that the Indonesian students expected polite expressions from their lectures.

Nurmawati et al. (2018) also revealed six types of teachers’ positive politeness strategies that promoted effective classroom interactions. The strategies are strategy 1: noticing, and attending to the hearer; strategy 3: intensifying interest in hearer; strategy 4: using uniqueness marker; strategy 6:

avoiding disagreements, strategy 7: raising common grounds; and strategy 12: including both speaker and hearer in activity.

In addition, Meiratnasari et al. (2019) explored politeness strategies in “Talk Active 1” and “Talk Active 2” based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory. They chose dialogues in the textbook as the limitation of the study. The research revealed that Indonesian English textbooks reflect bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record.

Then, Mahmud (2019) also examined students' politeness strategies in the classroom, but it was in a university context. The result showed that the learners applied positive and negative politeness strategies during classroom interactions. Moreover, Astusti (2022) explored politeness strategies in an English textbook for senior high school, actually at X grade. The research showed that the Indonesian English textbook reflected bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record as described in the theoretical framework by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Furthermore, Hidayanti (2023) explored politeness strategies in the dialogue materials of an English textbook for senior high school grade XII based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory. The research revealed that the dialogue materials of an English textbook reflected bald on-record, positive politeness, and negative politeness.