CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Communication was the most efficient instrument for transmitting messages, views, thoughts, emotions, and objectives to an interlocutor. Communication was a reciprocal process wherein both the receiver and transmitter could engage simultaneously (Genç, 2017). Communication through languages cannot be separated by many rules (Rosa, 2017). Language came in a variety of forms and varieties, such as speech or dialogue (Annisaa & Mahmud, 2023). Discourses or statements articulated by speakers had varying significance. In communication, people could express the meaning of their speech directly, overtly, indirectly, or implicitly. Their utterances were influenced, either directly or indirectly, by specific features or aspects.

Politeness is the most important in daily life. Especially to build good communication with each other. People supported each other's faces and fostered a positive communication environment by being polite. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined face in terms of "public self-image," whereas Goffman (1967) defined it in terms of the "image of self" (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Using Goffman's face notion as a starting point, Brown and Levinson argued that everyone's perception of themselves was linked to their own emotional and social experiences, where they anticipated approval from others (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

According to Culpeper et al. (2003), impoliteness was a communication strategy meant to diminish one's dignity, which resulted in social unrest and conflict (Culpeper, 2005). Face attacks were assumed to "cause social conflict and disharmony." According to Culpeper (2005), impoliteness occurred when (1) the speaker communicated a face attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceived and/or constructed behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2). Somehow, Mills (2003) argued that as impoliteness had extremely distinct and context-specific roles, politeness and impoliteness could not be seen as diametrically opposed (Kuntsi, 2012).

We communicate with good ethics by using politeness that is appreciated by everyone. It is rare for people to use politeness towards their own friends or close acquaintances. Instead, people use impoliteness as their communication. Politeness is only used by older people, respectable people, or formal events/formal conversations. Effective communication, both polite and impolite, fosters deep relationships between individuals. This is crucial because of the diversity of genres, social backgrounds, and cultures represented in the creative community.

Cutting (2008) stated that the term may be considered disrespectful in some cultures but courteous in others. When speaking, it is important to understand the audience's culture, especially if they are unfamiliar with the speaker. Therefore, cross-cultural communication heavily influences the use of polite and impolite terms. Misunderstanding can occur in cross-cultural communication due to wording. British instructors may not be used to receiving praise from their pupils, but in China, it is considered courteous (Kamila, 2015).

Miscommunication often occurred in cross-cultural conflicts due to differences in expressing politeness and impoliteness. In 'Mind Your Language 1977' series, several characters showed how cultural backgrounds led to misunderstandings and tensions. For example, Ali Nadiem (from Pakistan) and Ranjeet Singh (from Punjab) frequently insulted each other based on religion and race, despite being from the same country. When asked to sit together, Ranjeet refused because Ali was a Muslim, leading to an exchange of offensive remarks and even threats of violence. The analysis showed that they used bald on record impoliteness—a strategy of directly attacking the other's face (face-threatening act). Their conflict reflected the historical tensions between Muslims and Sikhs in the region, particularly stemming from the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan (Pandey, 2003).

Similarly, a misunderstanding occurred between Taro Nagazumi (Japan) and Chung Su-Lee (China). When Chung Su-Lee expressed her opinion about England as part of a class assignment, Taro responded with comparisons that she perceived as belittling China. In return, Su-Lee called him a *"typical fascist Nipponese,"* which triggered an emotional reaction. This conflict stemmed from ideological differences between Japan and China, as well as cultural stereotypes. Taro followed Japanese customs such as bowing (Ojigi), while Su-Lee strongly adhered to Maoist ideology, always carrying her Little Red Book. Both cases highlighted how differences in communication styles and perceptions of politeness led to misunderstandings in cross-cultural interactions. Without awareness of cultural norms and values, expressions that were normal in one

culture might have been perceived as rude or offensive in another, ultimately resulting in conflict and miscommunication.

Previous research has explored politeness and impoliteness strategies in various forms of media, including films, television shows, and literature. Several studies have focused on identifying politeness strategies using Brown and Levinson's (1987) model and impoliteness strategies based on Culpeper's (2005) framework. For example, Juliani et al. (2022) analyzed the use of these strategies in animated films like Sleeping Beauty, revealing that impoliteness often occurred in comedic contexts. Similarly, research by Kamila (2015) examined the film Jack the Giant Slayer and found a significant use of both politeness and impoliteness strategies, particularly in interactions between characters with conflicting motives. These studies demonstrate the importance of analyzing communication strategies in media, but they often lack a focused approach on cross-cultural differences and misunderstandings that arise in multilingual and multicultural settings. Furthermore, studies like those by Nawaz et al. (2018) and Oktavia et al. (2020) examined politeness in religious or historical contexts, leaving a gap in research on contemporary sitcoms that highlight cross-cultural communication in educational settings, as is the case in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series.

While politeness and impoliteness strategies have been extensively studied in various media forms, there is a clear gap when it comes to examining these strategies in the context of a multicultural, multilingual classroom environment in television series. Many existing studies, including those by Juliani et al. (2022) and Kamila (2015), focus on films or isolated characters without considering the broader impact of cross-cultural communication. In addition, there has been

limited exploration of how humor, especially in comedic television series like Mind Your Language 1977, plays a role in the execution and reception of politeness and impoliteness strategies. The show's specific setting a diverse classroom with characters from different cultural backgrounds provides a unique context that has not been thoroughly explored in prior studies. This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing how the show portrays politeness and impoliteness strategies through a cross-cultural lens, contributing to the broader discourse on intercultural communication.

Therefore, to fulfill this curiosity, the researcher analyzed a series that can cover all aspects of daily activity. The researcher chose the series "Mind Your Language 1977" as a source of research data. This series focuses on a teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language among students from different countries and languages, creating a rich environment for analyzing politeness and impoliteness strategies.

In the research, the researcher focused on analyzing politeness and impoliteness in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series, which lies in its cultural and linguistic diversity representation. The show's use of different languages and cultural backgrounds creates a unique context for analyzing politeness and impoliteness strategies. The study's findings can contribute to a better understanding of how politeness and impoliteness strategies are used in different cultural and linguistic contexts.

The researcher was interested in the series 'Mind Your Language 1977' for several reasons. First, it involved learning English as a foreign language,

which aligns with the researcher's major in English Literature. Second, the adult students in the series come from diverse religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, reflecting current real-world situations. Third, the series is a comedy, featuring hilarious actions and conversations in every scene.

The novelty of this research lies in its application of politeness and Impoliteness strategies in a cross-cultural, multilingual sitcom from the 1970s— Mind Your Language. This study is one of the first to apply both Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (2005) impoliteness theory to a comedic television series. Additionally, the series' setting—a diverse classroom of international students learning English as a foreign language—presents a rich environment for exploring how cultural backgrounds influence the use of politeness and impoliteness strategies. The humor in the show, often derived from misunderstandings and cultural stereotypes, adds another layer of complexity to these strategies. This research contributes new insights into how humor and cross-cultural misunderstandings shape communication and relationships, offering practical implications for intercultural interactions in educational or professional contexts. By examining the show's portrayal of cultural diversity and communication strategies, this study provides a fresh perspective on how media can reflect and influence societal norms surrounding politeness.

The researcher recognized the importance of strategies for politeness and impoliteness in this study. These strategies are crucial for building positive relationships in daily interactions. The researcher aimed to learn more about these strategies and how they can be applied in everyday life. Additionally, the researcher would like to know when politeness and impoliteness were used in

communication with someone as well as everyone. This research discovered when to be polite and when to be rude. The researcher gave the research the title **"An Analysis of Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies Used in 'Mind Your Language 1977' Series.**

1.2. Problems of the Study

The problems of the study were formulated in the following questions:

1. What were the kinds of politeness and impoliteness strategies used in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series?

2. What were the kinds of polite and impolite strategies that most frequently used in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series?

3. What were the cross-cultural diversity connected to politeness and impoliteness strategies among the characters in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, The research objectives of this study were:

1. To find out the kinds of politeness and impoliteness strategies used in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series.

2. To find out the kinds of polite and impolite strategies that most frequently used in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series.

3. To explore how cross-cultural diversity influences the use of politeness and impoliteness strategies among the characters in 'Mind Your Language 1977' series.

1.4.   Significance of the Study

This research was believed to be useful both conceptually and practically. This research aimed to improve the researcher's comprehension of politeness and impoliteness strategies used in English. This research was a useful reference for future academics and researchers who study polite and impolite behavior. The study incorporated literary sources from the English Literature program and the libraries of Universitas Bina Darma.

1.5.   Limitation of the Study

According to the background above, this study focused on analyzing the kinds of politeness and impoliteness strategies used in "Mind Your Language" series season 1, episodes 1 to 13. The data were taken from thirteen episodes of the first season because the researcher emphasizes the politeness and impoliteness strategies used by the characters in the series. The problem of politeness and impoliteness appearing in the interactions between the teacher and the headmistress, the teacher and the employees, the teacher and the students, or among the students is limited to the students having many different backgrounds, religions, cultures, and languages. Politeness strategies analyzed in this research were based on Brown and Levinson's theory (1987), and impoliteness strategies were based on Culpeper's theory (2005).