

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the overview of the research. It begins with the background, which outlines the main issues and the study's benefits. The chapter also presents the research questions that guide the research process. In addition, it explains the object of the research, the aims, and the scope. The methodology is also described, including the approaches, techniques, and procedures used to collect and analyze data, and present the data. Furthermore, this chapter gives definitions of important terms to avoid misunderstanding. Finally, this section becomes the basis for the next chapters.

1.1 Background of The Research

Politeness is a common aspect of human communication, concerned with how speakers use language in social interaction. Holmes (1995) explains that politeness is an attitude or behavior that does not disturb others by showing respect and preventing potential discomfort. From this perspective, politeness can be understood as a way for speakers to manage their utterances in socially acceptable ways within a particular cultural context. Yule (1996) explains that politeness in interaction operates more specifically as a means by which speakers show awareness of another person's public self-image, or 'face', in both socially distant and socially close relationships.

Politeness is closely related to how people try to protect and maintain their 'face', which is key in keeping friendly and comfortable in communication. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), 'face' refers to a person's public self-image that is emotionally and socially invested and that individuals expect others to recognize in interaction. Because the *face* is vulnerable, it can be maintained, enhanced, or threatened during

communication. As a result, speakers tend to avoid actions or utterances that may damage their own or others' faces.

However, interactions do not always support this self-image. In many situations, speakers may perform Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs), which are actions or utterances that potentially damage the hearer's or speaker's face. FTAs can occur through direct criticism, blunt commands, disagreement, or impolite requests that impose on others or question their value. These acts may threaten a person's sense of approval, autonomy, or social identity, making communication uncomfortable or tense. Because FTAs are often unavoidable in everyday interaction, speakers typically seek ways to soften or minimize their impact in order to maintain harmonious social relationships. To mitigate these threats, speakers employ politeness strategies, one of which is positive politeness (P. Brown & Levinson (1987).

Positive politeness strategies are closely related to the concept of positive face, which refers to an individual's desire to be appreciated, approved of, and accepted by others. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive politeness is employed to attend to the hearer's positive face by creating a sense of familiarity, closeness, and shared understanding between speakers and hearers. By using these strategies, speakers can reduce potential threats to face, both their own and those of their interlocutors, allowing interaction to proceed more effectively and social relationships to remain harmonious. As a result, positive politeness is commonly found in various everyday communication contexts, including casual conversations, professional interactions, academic discussions, and business communication.

Beyond everyday communication, positive politeness is also highly relevant in the entertainment domain, particularly in stand-up comedy. As a form of performance that

involves speaking directly with the audience, stand-up comedy not only aims to entertain but also to build closeness with the audience. According to Ahmad et al. (2022), stand-up comedy is a style of comedy where comedians speak directly to the audience while delivering a script of short jokes and funny puns. More than just entertainment, stand-up comedy is also an effective medium for delivering social and cultural issues. Through humor, comedians can address various social, political, and cultural issues, even discussing things that were originally considered taboo to talk about openly (Mintz, 1985; Sari et al., 2023). This shows that stand-up comedy functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for maintaining positive social relations through humor.

Stand-up comedy has changed and grown over time, making it one of the most popular forms of entertainment, where comedians not only use humor to entertain but also to share opinions about society and daily life. Among the many successful comedians in this field, Gabriel Iglesias is one of the most popular American comedians in the world. Iglesias, who started his career in the late 1990s, often goes by the nickname “Fluffy,” which comes from his unique way of portraying his body shape with light and positive humor. Compared to many other comedians who use sarcastic humor or sharp criticism, Iglesias stands out with an approach that is lighter, full of stories, and close to people’s daily lives. In his performances, positive politeness strategies used to create a friendly communication with his audience. His friendly communication style not only reflects his personality but also shows how language can be used to create positive social engagement (Suprayitno et al., 2019). Furthermore, these characteristics have made Iglesias one of the most successful comedians in the stand-up comedy industry.

Iglesias’s success began when he released several highly popular stand-up comedy performances, such as “Hot & Fluffy” (2007) and “I’m Not Fat... I’m Fluffy” (2009). He

also managed to expand his fan base through his roles in the movie “Magic Mike” (2012), he also released the stand-up comedy movie “The Fluffy Movie” (2014). Iglesias’s popularity skyrocketed after he signed a contract with Netflix, with performances such as “One Show Fits All” (2019) and “Mr. Iglesias” for 3 seasons (2019-2020), This culminated in 2022, when he became the first comedian to perform at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles in a performance “Gabriel Iglesias: Stadium Fluffy”. With a capacity of more than 50,000 spectators. This achievement attests to the universal appeal of his humor and his ability to connect with audiences on a large scale.

Gabriel Iglesias in Stadium Fluffy found positive politeness strategies. Here is one example:

“I know what it’s like to be single for a long time, and I know what it’s like to be in a relationship for a long time. And there’s pros and cons to both. I can only speak for the guys on this one. Some guys”.

The statement uses the positive politeness strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers. This can be seen from the utterance “**I can only speak for the guys on this one**” which in this Iglesias is identifying the group with the word “**the guys,**” meaning men who share experiences about relationships. In doing so, he invites the audience (especially men) to feel that “we are one group,” creating a sense of familiarity and solidarity.

Based on Stadium Fluffy (2022), this show was chosen because it represents an important milestone in Iglesias’ stand-up comedy career, as he became the first comedian to perform and sell out tickets at Dodger Stadium, Los Angeles. More than just breaking records, Stadium Fluffy also marked the celebration of Gabriel Iglesias’ 25-year journey in comedy, making it not only a historic achievement but also a deeply personal milestone

for the comedian. In addition, the show holds special significance because it was held after the COVID-19 lockdown, symbolizing the return of large-scale live entertainment.

The popularity of this special makes it highly relevant to study in terms of language and communication strategies. Iglesias' material covers a wide range of personal experiences, cultures, and social issues, all presented in a light and entertaining way. Compared to other comedians who often use sharp or sarcastic humor, Iglesias relies on everyday stories delivered in a warm, friendly, and unpretentious style, which helps the audience feel connected. This style makes him particularly suitable to be analyzed using politeness theory by Brown and Levinson, especially the positive politeness strategies he employs to build closeness with his audience.

Through this research, it is expected that insights will be gained into the role of positive politeness in stand-up comedy, particularly in fostering audience engagement and maintaining a comfortable atmosphere. The findings will contribute to the fields of pragmatics and entertainment communication, offering valuable perspectives for comedians, scriptwriters, and communication scholars in understanding the interplay between politeness and humor in public performances.

1.2 Research Questions

The linguistic phenomena in Gabriel Iglesias' performance, particularly in the use of positive politeness strategies employed by him as a speaker, are of interest to the research.

To investigate this, the research will be guided by two research questions:

1. What types of positive politeness strategies are used by Gabriel Iglesias in his humor in Stadium Fluffy?
2. What is the most dominant type of positive politeness strategies found in humor

delivered by Gabriel Iglesias?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To analyze the types of positive politeness strategies used by Gabriel Iglesias in humour in Stadium Fluffy.
2. To interpret the most dominant strategy found in humour delivered by Gabriel Iglesias.

1.4 Focus of the Research

This study focuses on the use of positive politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987), without discussing negative politeness strategies, bald on record, or off record. The analysis focuses on how Gabriel Iglesias uses positive politeness strategies in delivering the incongruity-resolution humour utterances during his stand-up comedy show entitled Gabriel Iglesias: Stadium Fluffy. This study aims to reveal how positive politeness strategies are used to build closeness with the audience.

The research data includes all forms of utterances that came out of Gabriel Iglesias' mouth during the show, including stories, narratives, and dialogues quoted from other people, as long as they were delivered verbally by Iglesias himself. The data was taken from the official broadcast of Gabriel Iglesias: Stadium Fluffy on the Netflix platform and collected through observation and transcription methods. With this focus, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the function of positive politeness strategies in oral humour discourse, as well as how these linguistic strategies are used by comedians to maintain positive face and strengthen solidarity with the audience.

1.5 Methods of the Research

This research used a qualitative approach with the descriptive method. The qualitative

method was chosen because it allows the researcher to describe, explain, and understand a phenomenon in depth without manipulating variables or testing quantitative hypotheses. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research involves the researcher's active role in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data through non-numerical means.

1.5.1 Data Collection

According to Creswell (2009), data are a collection of information from narratives, images, or numbers that were analyzed in research. Meanwhile, data sources are the origin or location from which the data is obtained. In this study, the data source is a stand-up comedy performance titled Gabriel Iglesias: Stadium Fluffy. The video has a total duration of 1 hour and 55 minutes, and the stand-up comedy performance by Gabriel Iglesias runs for approximately 1 hour and 47 minutes. Meanwhile the data for this research were taken from humorous utterances by Gabriel Iglesias that contain positive politeness strategies. The steps for collecting data in this research are as follows:

1. The first step was to determine the stand-up comedians and performances to be analyzed. Among the many comedians to choose from, Gabriel Iglesias was selected as the subject of this study because many of his performances deal with everyday issues and often address socio-cultural issues. Gabriel Iglesias' show: Stadium Fluffy (2022), released on Netflix, was chosen as the data source because it represents one of the most significant achievements in his career.
2. After selecting the performance, an observation was conducted by watching the entire *Stadium Fluffy* show several times in order to gain a general understanding of its context.

3. Transcripts were created by writing down everything Gabriel Iglesias said during the performance. The transcripts were then verified with the audiovisual recording to ensure accuracy and consistency between the spoken and written forms.
4. Data selection was conducted by identifying sections containing humorous utterances based the incongruity–resolution theory, which served as the theoretical framework for identifying humor.
5. Data sorting was carried out by identifying utterances that contained positive politeness strategies.

1.5.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study used the theory of positive politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987). Each humorous utterance in Stadium Fluffy was analyzed to identifying the types of positive politeness strategies used by Gabriel Iglesias. The analysis focused on how comedians build closeness, solidarity, and positive social identity with audience through humorous interactions.

The analysis process to answer the first research question began by identifying the utterances that had been identified as humorous that contained incongruity humor, indicated by the presence of F1 (the introduction), F2 (the setup) and F3 (the punchline) as proposed by Attardo (2020). Each selected utterances was analyzed to identify and classify the fifteen types of positive politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987). Once these strategies were identified, it was possible to describe the types of positive politeness strategies used by Gabriel Iglesias to establish closeness with his audience.

Next, to answer the second research question, the frequency of occurrence of each type of positive politeness strategy was determined to identify the most dominant used

strategy. The frequency of each strategy was then assessed and converted into a percentage using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{\text{Frequency of a Strategy}}{\text{Total Frequency of All Strategies}} \times 100$$

This step aims to identify the tendency to use positive politeness strategies in the overall data. Providing a basis for interpreting which strategies Gabriel Iglesias relies on most to establish closeness with his audiences.

The results of the study are presented in the form of percentage tables. These tables group the utterances analyzed based on the type of positive politeness strategy and show the frequency and percentage of each strategy. Furthermore, in the presentation of the data analysis, only some of the data are described to show the existence of positive politeness strategies in Gabriel Iglesias' stand-up comedy.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

a. Face

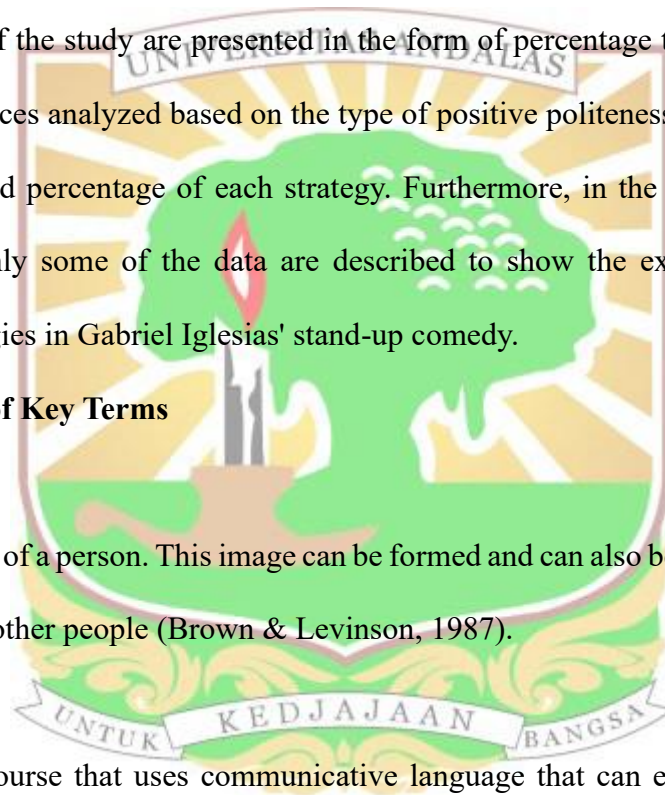
Face is the image of a person. This image can be formed and can also be destroyed through interaction with other people (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

b. Humor

Humor is a discourse that uses communicative language that can entertain the reader. Reading humor discourse usually makes you feel relaxed. Humor is often used as a way to relieve fatigue; it makes someone laugh, sometimes causing stomach pain from excessive laughter. However, after the laughter ends, the fatigue felt by someone begins to decrease a little (Arfianti, 2020, p. 70).

c. Politeness

Politeness is showing awareness and consideration of another person's face (Yule, 2010).



d. Sarcastic

Sarcastic refers to being sharp and hurtful, whether in the form of words or actions. The term is often associated with cruel behavior, where sarcasm is used to ridicule, bitterly insinuate, and mock others (Tuah et al., 2023).

e. Stand-up comedy

Stand-up comedy is a performance by someone who tells something funny to the audience without costumes, properties, and stage settings (Gustyawan, 2022).

