INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, it is almost inevitable for individuals to avoid communication or interacting with other people. As social creatures, people must interact with each other to achieve various goals in life. According to Levinson (1983), successful communication requires mutual knowledge between those involved. In addition, it is also important to ensure that our participation is relevant and support the course of interaction (Grice, 1989, p. 26).

On top of that, as a complex phenomenon, communication also requires manners or strategy. As stated by Kingwell (1993), communicating is not only how we convey interests, arguments, or information to others; more than that, it is also necessary to pay attention not to coming across as offensive towards others' feelings. Being polite is of significant importance in communication. Therefore, it is beneficial to understand one concept in pragmatics that concerns this: Politeness strategies.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are acts in the realm of communication that have the potential to threaten a person's 'face', which are referred to as FTAs or face-threatening acts. 'Face' means the public self-image of an individual that must be maintained or defended. The idea of 'face' originated from Goffman's (1967) and the English term, which refers to feelings of being embarrassed or humiliated (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It is 'something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction' (Brown and Levinson, 1987 p.61). In essence, they argued that politeness is about minimizing the threat to one's face, and to also make them feel respected, liked, and so on.

Understanding politeness strategies can be beneficial in analyzing social interactions, both in real life context or in fictional works. The advancement of media and technology has resulted in the introduction of many streaming services such as Netflix, which provides a diverse variety of movies and TV series that can be utilized as object studies of various kinds. As Sorlin (2023) argued, TV series provide a rich source of examples that can be utilized to illustrate theories in pragmatics.

In relation to this research, one TV series that stands out is 'Bojack Horseman' due to its complex nature and its huge success. According to the show's creator Raphael Bob-Waksberg,

Muhammad Rizqi Rahmatulloh, 2024
Politeness Strategies of Mr. Peanutbutter in the Adult Animated TV Series *Bojack Horseman*
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

1

in an interview with Rotten Tomatoes TV (2020), *BoJack Horseman* is more than just a comedy; it offers a deep character journey and emotional complexity that connects deeply with viewers. It has won 35 awards, including Annie Awards and Critic Choice Awards.

Bojack Horseman is an adult animated drama-comedy set around alternate Hollywood, where humans and anthropomorphic animals coexist. It is known for portraying reality such as mental illness, capitalism, and existentialism (Pabst, 2017; Le Pioufle, 2021; Parashar, 2020). That is the reason why the series, according to Le Pioufle (2021), can connect deeply with viewers, that is by offering more than merely entertainment, but also deeper issues such as capitalism that are packaged within a chronologically consistent story. In *BoJack Horseman*, celebrities and their star images are portrayed as commodities, which can attract audiences and make profits (Le Pioufle, 2021). One example of it can be seen in season 5, episode 4, when a character, Mr. Peanutbutter, must change his public image to be a tough guy just to star in an upcoming movie.

Focusing on politeness strategy, this research analyzed one of the main characters from the series: Mr. Peanutbutter. The reason for analyzing this character is his distinctive personality among others; he is constantly friendly, cheerful, and positive, making it suitable to analyze politeness strategies. Most importantly, his character can give a sufficient amount of data.

Politeness strategies, especially in popular media, has become a popular topic. Rosari (2016) analyzed politeness strategies applied by the characters of The Great Debaters movie using a combination of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies and Spolsky's factors influencing politeness in speech. The findings revealed that the characters in the movie utilized all four types of politeness strategies, with language style, register and domain, and slang and solidarity as factors influencing the characters' politeness. Norra (2015) analyzed politeness strategies used in Her movie. This qualitative research used Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategy and Ronald Wardaugh's Politeness and Solidarity theory. The researcher analyzed 12 scenes containing politeness strategies in the movie and concluded that all the characters in the movie are generally polite, although occasional Face-Threatening Acts (FTA) occur. Putri & Fitrawati (2022) examined politeness strategies of request used in 'Yes Day' movie and found four types of politeness strategies used by all characters in the movie. In another context, Safa & Kurniawan (2015) examined Gordon Ramsay's politeness strategies in

Muhammad Rizqi Rahmatulloh, 2024
Politeness Strategies of Mr. Peanutbutter in the Adult Animated TV Series *Bojack Horseman*
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

2

Masterchef and Masterchef Junior US. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, the study found that Gordon Ramsay tended to be more polite in Masterchef Junior, while in Masterchef, he used all types of politeness strategies except negative politeness.

As previously mentioned, research on politeness strategies in different media have been conducted many times, specifically in movies. However, studies that have taken animated TV series, especially serialized ones as the object of the study are still lacking. To be exact, there has been no research on politeness strategies that took *Bojack Horseman* TV series as the object of the study. For example, a thesis by Kubickova (2021) did take animated TV series as the object of the study, but the researcher used impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2005), which makes it different from this research. Thus, this present study examined how Mr. Peanutbutter from *Bojack Horseman* employs politeness strategies in communicating with other characters. This present study also took a slightly distinctive approach by narrowing its focus to a single character. While many studies tend to examine the politeness strategies of multiple or all characters (Rosari, 2016; Fitrawati & Putri, 2021; Fridolini et al., 2021; Aditiawarman & Elba, 2023), this research specifically analyzes a single character to achieve a more focused and in-depth analysis. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, this study aims to uncover how Mr. Peanutbutter employs politeness strategies in his interaction. In-depth analysis of how he uses politeness strategies will be achieved by answering these sub-questions:

1) What types of politeness strategies are used by Mr. Peanutbutter and how does he realize them in his interaction with other characters?

2) What type of politeness strategy is dominantly used by Mr. Peanutbutter?

3) How does the context influence his choice of politeness strategy?

4) What impact do his strategies have on the dynamics of his relationship with other characters?

Muhammad Rizqi Rahmatulloh, 2024
Politeness Strategies of Mr. Peanutbutter in the Adult Animated TV Series *Bojack Horseman*
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

3