

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SEMANTIC

In general semantics is the science that studies the meaning of a word, both spoken and written. The term comes from the greek word “semantikos” that mean important significant. Semantic examines how words, phrases, sentence, and texts convey the meanings as well as how the meaning is understood by both of reader and writer for example the word "eat" which means putting something into the mouth, according to experts, semantics is the study of meaning and language, both the meaning of words and the meaning of sentences (Lyon 1977).

2.1.1 Range of the semantic studies

1) Lexical meaning

Lexical meaning is the basic meaning of a word as it is defined in the dictionary, independent of its use in a specific context (Lyons, 1995). In this study, lexical meaning is fundamental because it serves as the baseline for understanding the literal message of a warning before it is processed through politeness strategies. By identifying the literal meaning of words such as 'Dilarang' (Prohibited) or 'Sampah' (Trash) the researcher can determine whether the politeness strategy used is intended to soften or sharpen the original, dictionary-defined intent of the warning."

2) Grammatical meaning

Grammatical meaning refers to the meaning that arises from the arrangement of words in a sentence or the process of affixation (Palmer, 1981). This concept is important because grammatical structures directly dictate the level of directness in a warning. In this study, the researcher analyzes imperative structures in warning signs by examining how syntax transforms neutral words into commands

For instance, "Parkir" (Noun) becomes a prohibition with the addition of "Dilarang" (Dilarang Parkir). This grammatical change indicates a Bald On-record strategy, delivering the message clearly and directly. showing that a change in word class or sentence structure can fundamentally alter the politeness level from a mere information to a firm command.

3) Contextual meaning

Contextual meaning refers to the significance of a word or sentence shaped by the specific situation, time, and place of its usage (Ullmann, 1972). Contextual meaning is crucial to this study because the degree of politeness cannot be accurately measured without observing the social situation. It allows the researcher to see beyond literal definitions;

the word "dog" semantically refers to an animal. However, when placed in a warning with the phrase "The garbage dog that dumped the garbage here," its contextual meaning shifts to insult or sarcasm. This study uses contextual meaning to identify Off-record strategies, where the location and the relationship between the speaker and the reader are the primary factors in determining how a message is perceived by the public

4) Ambiguity

Ambiguity arises when a word, phrase, or sentence can be interpreted in multiple ways (Cruse, 2000). Ambiguity is important in this research because it is a key characteristic of indirect communication in Bengkulu society. The researcher uses this semantic concept to identify Off-record or indirect strategies where a sign like 'Hati-hati, ada CCTV' (Watch out, there is a CCTV) is semantically ambiguous. It could be neutral information or a polite warning not to commit a crime. By analyzing ambiguity, the study reveals how the community delivers a 'threat' or a warning without being overtly rude, thus maintaining social harmony while still achieving the goal of public order.

2. 1.2 Definition of Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in real contexts to construct meaning, both in spoken and written forms. According to Brown and Yule (1983), discourse analysis focuses on the study of language in use, not merely on linguistic structure, but on how language functions in actual communication. Stubbs (1983) also emphasizes that discourse analysis involves examining language beyond the sentence level and considers the social context in which language occurs. Therefore, discourse analysis serves as an essential tool for understanding the relationship between linguistic form and social function in everyday communication, including in public warning texts.

In this study, discourse analysis is used to understand what politeness strategies warnings are used in public places in Bengkulu City. Specifically, the research applies

discourse analysis to examine how language in public warning texts functions not only to inform but also to persuade and maintain social harmony.

Discourse analysis is how language is used in real life, both spoken and written. The analyst does not only look at the arrangement of words but also their function in communication and also social context. In this study, discourse analysis is used to understand positive strategies of politeness in warnings in public places in Bengkulu City. The aim is not only to provide information, but also to maintain harmony.

2.2.1 Politeness Theory

Politeness theory is a prominent approach in discourse that discusses how writer use language to maintain social harmony and avoid conflict in communication. Written warnings such as, "Please dispose of trash or receipts in the proper bin." It will more easier to accept and maintain the social harmony. There are several warning that could cause conflict. For the example of the conflict in communication "DILARANG MEMBUANG SAMPAH DISINI KECUALI ANJING!/ DON'T THROW TRASH HERE, EXCEPT DOGS!". This sentence in directly attacks the freedom of the public places. The consequence of this warning will affect the public places user, split they into 2 public places . The first one will obey the warnings even they feel ashamed because the warning. Even so, there are also those who will hostile the warnings, in the way that make it increasingly throwing the rubbish in front of the warning, as a form of resistance. Or they will vandalize the warning.

The public's understanding of theoretical politeness is not merely about following rules, but about how they perceive the Face Threatening Acts (FTA) within a warning. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when people encounter a warning, they unconsciously evaluate the 'weight' of the message based on the power and social distance of the sender.

1) Bald on-record

Bald on-record is a politeness strategy that involves speaking or writing in a direct, clear, and concise manner without any attempt to minimize the threat to the reader's face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this strategy is most commonly used when the speaker or writer believes that the urgency of the message outweighs the need for politeness, or when there is a great difference in power between the parties. In the context of warnings, this strategy is often used to ensure safety and immediate compliance.

Characteristics of the sentences appearing in warnings:

1. Using direct imperative sentences The manifestation of the Bald on-record strategy is characterized by the use of direct imperative sentences, such as the words "Stop" or "Don't," which function to deliver commands or prohibitions clearly without any ambiguity for the readers.

2. The Bald on-record strategy is expressed through messages that are short and clear, specifically designed to be delivered without any "hedges" or polite markers that might soften the force of the instruction..
3. The Bald on-record strategy is often used in emergency or high-risk situations to provide efficiency, as the need for immediate action and clear communication outweighs the necessity of minimizing face-threatening acts..

Example in Warnings context:

"DILARANG MEROKOK"

This sentence is a direct command. The writer does not use words like "Please" or "Sorry" because the primary goal is to prevent fire hazards in public areas like Gas Stations or Banks. The clarity of the message is prioritized over the reader's feeling of being commanded.

2) Negative politeness:

Negative politeness is strategic politeness used to respect the rights, freedoms, and autonomy of the interlocutor, especially when the warnings has the potential to interfere with or restrict their freedom. This strategy seeks to minimize threats to the negative face that is, a person's desire to be free from coercion, interference, and freedom of action.

Characteristics of the sentences appearing in warnings:

1. The manifestation of the Negative Politeness strategy involves using words of apology or phrases like "Excuse me, be careful," which function as hedging to minimize the imposition on the reader and show respect for their personal space.
2. The Negative Politeness strategy is also demonstrated by giving reasons why the prohibition exists, which serves to explain the necessity of the rule and helps the reader understand that the imposition is not arbitrary but based on a specific justification.
3. The Negative Politeness strategy is further implemented by using passive voice forms to distance the impression of a direct command, which shifts the focus from the individual being addressed to the action itself, thereby reducing the sense of personal intrusion.

Example in Warnings context :

" Be carefull, The floor is wet "

This sentence shows how the writer care to the readers, is still an intervention in someone's freedom of action, it can be seen as a threat to negative face. The readers is implicity suggesting that the readers to should not walk in a certain way, or the readers must take the precautionary action.

3) Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a politeness strategy that aims to satisfy the positive face of public place users who are the readers of the warnings delivered. Positive face is a person's desire to feel appreciated, liked, and accepted by others. It also means wanting to be

seen as someone who is capable, attractive, and valued in society. The purpose of implementing this strategy is to minimize social distance and maintain solidarity in the context of warnings. With this strategy, readers of warnings do not feel commanded by a stranger or an authority figure, but instead, they are asked to cooperate as a peer.

Characteristics of the sentences appearing in warnings:

1. The Positive Politeness strategy is manifested by using group identity markers such as "we," "friend," or "my brother/sister," which aims to bridge the social distance and create a sense of belonging between the sign maker and the reader.
2. The Positive Politeness strategy is also demonstrated by showing optimism that the reader will cooperate, expressing a high level of trust that the reader will follow the warning because they share the same goals or values.
3. The Positive Politeness strategy is further implemented by using complimentary sentences or words, or paying attention to the reader's needs, which functions to satisfy the reader's "positive face" by making them feel appreciated and respected.

Example in Warnings context :

" Son, say no to drugs."

This sentence functions as an imperative but uses a warm, personal tone. The vocative "Son" not only expresses care but also appeals to shared values and familial responsibility. The warning can be sound frontal if the writers doesn't care about the

readers positive face for the example the warning can be “*using drugs=Stupid*”. This warning statement sound attack the positive face of the readers.

4) Off-record

Off-record is a politeness strategy where the writer performs an act in an indirect way, leaving the true intention to be interpreted by the reader. This strategy allows the writer to avoid the responsibility of directly "ordering" the reader. By using hints, metaphors, or irony, the writer hopes the reader will understand the intended warning through their own social awareness.

Characteristics of the sentences appearing in warnings:

1. The Off-record strategy is manifested by using irony, metaphors, or rhetorical questions, which allows the sign maker to convey a message without stating it in a literal or direct manner.
2. The Off-record strategy is also characterized by the fact that the message is implicit (hidden) rather than explicit, requiring the reader to interpret the underlying meaning based on the context provided.
3. The Off-record strategy often functions as a social "shaming" or a subtle hint, aiming to influence public behavior by triggering a sense of social awareness or embarrassment rather than through a formal command.

Example in Warnings context:

"Anjing buang sampah disini"

In this warning, the writer does not directly say "Don't throw trash here." Instead, the writer uses irony by suggesting that only animals (dogs) would litter in that area. This forces the reader to use their logic and social sense to conclude that if they litter, they are being equated with the animal mentioned in the sign.

In addition to the face management strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson, this research incorporates Lakoff's (1973) politeness rules to provide a deeper perspective on the language of warnings. There are 3 of rules of politeness.

1. Don't impose

This rule emphasized the writer should not to press the readers with overly harsh or commanding language. The language should be soft and gentle, so that the readers doesn't feel pressured by the writers. For the example "*for staff only!*" it would be more polite if uses "*sorry this room is just for staff only*" with this way using "sorry" will decreased the commanding expression without change the meaning of warnings

2. Give options

This rule emphasized the importance of giving the freedom to the readers so that make they feel comfortable. The language should used is offering , suggestion, or providing not forcing the readers. For the example instead said "*used your helmet when riding!*" the warning will be polite if uses "*you should using helmet when you riding, to prevent unwanted fatal risk*" this warning will more acceptable because not threatening the freedom of warnings readers

3. Make the other person feel good

This rule emphasized the language should be comfortable and uses to make the readers feel respected and appreciated. This way can be used to praising, showing the sympathy, or choosing the polite word. For the example compared of the writers says “ *DON'T THROW TRASH HERE, EXCEPT DOGS!*” will be better if the writer says “ *Thank you of your awareness of not throwing the rubbish in this area*”. Although the warning is sarcastic, the warning is better.

This study analyzes various politeness strategies found in public warning texts, ranging from direct commands to more indirect and persuasive approaches. These strategies do not only convey rules but also function to regulate behavior, encourage cooperation, and maintain social harmony in Bengkulu City. The main theoretical framework of this study is the theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). This framework is chosen because it provides an extensive lens to categorize how warnings are constructed, from the most direct commands to the subtlest hints. By using this theory, the researcher can effectively analyze the diverse linguistic phenomena found in Bengkulu City, ensuring that every variation of politeness in the 43 collected data is accurately classified and interpreted.

2.2.2 Analytical Framework For Politeness Strategies In Warning Discourse

The analysis of politeness strategies in discourse involves examining not only the linguistic structure of utterances but also their social meaning and communicative purpose. The analytical steps are as follows:

1. Identifying Units of Speech

The first step is to identify relevant discourse units from warning texts in public places. These units can be full sentences, phrases, or clauses that have a communicative function. For example, the sentence "Let's maintain" or "DILARANG MEROKOK" will be treated as a single unit of analysis because they contain specific communicative functions and politeness strategies. Identification is carried out by sorting each warning text documented through photographs and then grouping them according to their linguistic forms and politeness categories bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record to focus the analysis.

2. Classifying Politeness Strategies

In this step, the researcher classifies the collected warnings based on the four types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). These strategies represent the various ways writers in Bengkulu City manage the 'face' of the public, ranging from direct commands to subtle hints. Each strategy has specific characteristics as follows:

1. Bald on-Record strategies

Bald on-record is a strategy used when the warning is delivered directly and clearly. In public signs, this strategy is prioritized when the urgency of safety is more important than being polite. The sub-points include:

1. Using Direct Imperatives This way is used to give a clear and firm command to the readers so that they comply immediately without any doubt. It focuses on efficiency and urgency. For the example: *“DILARANG MEROKOK/NO SMOKING”*
2. Focusing on Task-Oriented Instructions This way focuses purely on the action that must be taken by the reader for the sake of safety or procedure, without any social small talk. For the example: *“Matikan mesin saat mengisi BBM/Turn off the engine while refueling.”*

2. positive politeness strategies

1. Giving compliments

This way used to giving respect either proud to the readers, it can make the readers feel respected by the writer. And so make the message in warnings easy to accept. For the example *“ good job friends to not littering, let us keep this positive habit”*

2. Showing similarities

This way showing both the writer and reader have a similar goal. Therefore make the warnings become the shared responsibility. For the example *“Let’s fight against drugs.”*

3. Using friendly greetings

This way using the friendly and warm greetings at the beginning of the sentence, thus the atmosphere feels friendly, though the warnings seen as warm warnings. For the example “ *hello friends!, let us using helmet when driving*”

4. Showing interest in other people's needs

This way showing the writer care about the reader’s interests or needs, therefore the warnings is relevant and not selfish. For the example “*For your safety, please do not step on the yellow line and avoid wearing sandals or rubber-soled shoes on the escalator*”

3. Negative Politeness strategies

Negative politeness is used to respect the reader's autonomy and freedom by using formal language and avoiding being too bossy. The sub-points include:

- Using Hedges or Polite Markers This way is used to soften the command so the warning does not sound like a harsh order, making the reader feel more respected. For the example: “*Mohon antre dengan tertib/Please queue in an orderly manner.*”
- Giving Reasons (Rationality) This way showing that the warning is not just a rule, but it is for the reader’s own benefit or safety. This makes the reader more willing to follow the sign. For the example: “*Demi keselamatan anda, mohon tidak menginjak garis kuning/For your safety, please do not step on the yellow line.*”

- Apologizing for Imposition This way used to acknowledge that the warning might interfere with the reader's comfort or freedom. For the example: “Mohon maaf atas ketidaknyamanannya, sedang ada perbaikan jalan/Sorry for the inconvenience, there are road repairs underway.”

4. Off-record Strategies

Off-record is an indirect strategy where the warning is delivered through hints or irony. The writer avoids a direct command, allowing the reader to interpret the message. The sub-points include:

1. Using Irony or Sarcasm This way used to give a subtle "social punishment" or shaming to the readers who might violate the rules. It makes the reader feel embarrassed if they do not comply. For the example: “*Anjing buang sampah disini/Only dogs dump trash here.*”
2. Giving Hints or Association Clues This way used to inform the consequences of an action indirectly, so the reader can conclude the warning by themselves. For the example: “*Jangan menyemprot artinya membeli/Don't spray, or you must buy it.*”

3. Analyzing Social Context

After classifying the strategies, the next step is to analyze the social context of the warning. This analysis includes the relationship between the warning's author (e.g., a hospital, local government, or public facility manager) and the reader (the general

public or facility users) in terms of power and social distance. Furthermore, the context is also examined in terms of the socio-cultural context in which the warning is posted, such as local politeness norms, the collective values of the Bengkulu city, and the communication objective. It is crucial for readers to analyze these contextual backgrounds to understand the social context, as it provides the necessary framework to interpret the author's intentions and the urgency of the message. By doing so, the message is understood not only in terms of its linguistic structure but also in terms of the vital social role it plays in society, ensuring the warning is perceived as both appropriate and effective within its specific environment.

4. Interpreting Social Functions and Effects

The final step is to interpret the social functions and impacts of using various politeness strategies in warnings, such as bald on-record, positive, negative, and off-record. Social functions can include maintaining harmony, creating solidarity, ensuring public safety, and fostering collective awareness. In terms of effects, the impact is directly observed in how readers respond to the message; for instance, the use of polite approaches makes readers feel appreciated and respected, while direct and firm instructions compel them to comply immediately in urgent situations. With this interpretation, the research can demonstrate that the choice of politeness strategies is not simply a linguistic choice but also an effective communicative tool for regulating public behavior in a manner that suits the urgency and social context of Bengkulu City.

2.3 Related Previous Studies

Several studies have examined politeness strategies in various social and cultural settings. These previous works serve as important references and provide a comparative perspective for this research.

One relevant study is conducted by Mubarok, Hayati, and Haristiani (2024). Their research analyzed public signs in Japanese and Indonesian train cars by using a linguistic landscape approach. The data were taken from 36 photos of signs (19 from Japan and 17 from Indonesia), divided into three categories: prohibitions, warnings, and instructions. The results showed that both Japanese and Indonesian signs mostly used politeness, but in different ways. Japanese signs often used polite forms like 「ください」 (*kudasai*) or 「ご注意」 (*go-chūi*), while Indonesian signs used passive forms with the prefix *di-* and words like *mohon*. The study also found that the level of politeness depended on the situation: signs about danger were more direct and less polite, while less urgent signs were usually more polite.

Another relevant study was conducted by

In the Indonesian context, Lestari (2023), who analyzed positive politeness strategies used by eighth grade students in English teaching and learning at SMPN 2 Tanon, Sragen. The study aimed to find out what types of positive politeness strategies appeared in classroom interactions. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, Lestari found that students often used strategies such as giving compliments, showing agreement, and using inclusive forms like “we” to create a sense of solidarity. This

study shows how positive politeness is applied in an educational context. However, it is limited to classroom interactions, while the present research focuses on warning texts in public places in Bengkulu City.

However, most of the existing research focuses on educational or institutional settings, with limited studies exploring politeness strategies in public places, particularly in smaller cities such as Bengkulu. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap by analyzing how positive politeness strategies are used in informal, real-life public interactions in a specific local context.