

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### A. Review Literature

##### 1. Politeness Strategies in Spoken and Media Discourse

Politeness strategies are essential in human communication because they help manage interpersonal relationships, maintain social harmony, and prevent conflicts. Politeness, in this sense, functions as a system of speech etiquette that regulates how individuals interact in daily life and maintain social harmony (Ryabova, 2015). Speakers in spoken discourse adjust their language based on context, social roles, and audience expectations, making politeness a dynamic and context-dependent phenomenon rather than a set of linguistic forms. Therefore, understanding politeness in everyday communication provides a foundation for analyzing how such strategies are represented in films and television series.

In media discourse, the use of politeness strategies in films and series reflects embedded social norms, power relations, and cultural values. Characters' dialogue often conveys authority, intimacy, conflict, or solidarity, and the choice of strategy can shape both character identity and narrative development. For instance, a discourse analysis of *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* reveals that characters frequently use off-record strategies to manage tension and navigate social interactions, reflecting the social and cultural context of the narrative (Ramlee et al., 2025). Animated films also reveal similar patterns; in *Frozen 2*, positive politeness is the most

dominant strategy, helping characters maintain solidarity and emotional closeness (Kustianingsih & Firharmawan, 2025). These findings suggest that politeness strategies in media are not just linguistic choices but also tools to communicate social and relational meanings effectively

Politeness strategies vary according to film genre and context, highlighting their flexibility in media discourse. In contrast, films that portray hierarchical or formal settings, such as *Green Book*, show characters using bald-on-record, deference, and negative politeness to emphasize authority and status differences (Mustofa et al., 2025). These patterns confirm that media dialogues intentionally employ politeness strategies to reflect social relationships, power dynamics, and cultural norms.

Based on these findings, politeness strategies in media discourse can be understood as a reflection of social interaction shaped by power, roles, and cultural norms. This understanding provides the theoretical basis for analyzing politeness strategies in *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* (2023), where royal hierarchy and authority strongly influence communication among characters (Julianti & Rahmani, 2024). Studying how characters in this series employ various strategies will illuminate the interaction between language, power, and social behavior in media representations, highlighting both communicative and social functions of politeness.

## **2. Politeness Power, and Gender in Communication**

Politeness strategies are closely linked with power relations and gender dynamics in communication. Social power can determine which strategies

speakers choose to mitigate face-threatening acts or assert authority, while gender can influence both the choice and perception of politeness. Studies show that women often rely more heavily on positive politeness to build closeness and maintain relational harmony, as their language tends to show more explicit concern for the feelings of others (Holmes, 1995). Men, on the other hand, tend to be more oriented toward autonomy and detachment, focusing on hierarchical relationships, which links more closely to linguistic strategies that assert control rather than involve others (Holmes, 1995). Understanding these patterns helps explain how politeness functions not just linguistically but socially and culturally.

Power hierarchies in institutional or formal contexts influence how politeness is enacted. Speakers in higher-status positions may use indirect politeness to soften directives or avoid appearing authoritarian, while those in lower-status positions emphasize deference and solidarity to preserve relationships. Research analyzing media dialogues demonstrates that gendered language interacts with hierarchical roles, affecting how politeness strategies shape character relationships and narrative tension (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015; Ramlee et al., 2025). Similarly, Tannen (1991) distinguishes between "rapport-talk," which women typically use to establish connections and negotiate relationships, and "report-talk," which men use to preserve independence and negotiate status within a hierarchical order. These findings underscore that politeness strategies are contextually shaped by both power and gender, providing insights into social dynamics.

Understanding the interaction of politeness, power, and gender provides a foundation for analyzing media texts like *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* (2023), where royal hierarchy and gender roles play crucial roles in dialogue and social negotiation. Politeness, therefore, is not simply a matter of language choice but a reflection of authority, social positioning, and cultural expectations, which will guide the analysis of character interactions in this series.

## **B. Review of Relevant Research**

A number of prior studies have investigated politeness strategies in films and media, demonstrating how linguistic choices mirror social dynamics, power relations, and cultural norms. These works provide valuable comparative insights for the present study of *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*, particularly regarding how hierarchical structures, gender, and cultural expectations shape character interactions. Reviewing such literature helps frame the current analysis both theoretically and methodologically.

Among culturally focused studies, Ramlee et al. (2025) analyzed *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery*, identifying how characters employ off-record strategies to navigate tension and maintain social relationships. The study highlights how politeness functions as a tool for managing both power and relational closeness, reflecting broader social and cultural contexts. Similarly, research on animated films, such as *Frozen 2*, demonstrates the dominance of positive politeness strategies to maintain solidarity and emotional intimacy between characters (Kustianingsih & Firharmawan, 2025). While differing in

genre and narrative setting, these studies show that media characters use politeness to negotiate both social roles and interpersonal relationships, which is relevant for analyzing the interactions in *Queen Charlotte*.

Other studies focus on hierarchical or royal contexts, which closely parallel the current study's historical setting. Mustofa et al. (2025) examined *Green Book*, showing how characters use bald-on-record, deference, and negative politeness to signal authority and maintain social hierarchy. These findings illustrate that politeness serves not only as a social lubricant but also as a marker of authority and cultural norms.

Additionally, research on gendered politeness and cross-cultural interactions emphasizes how social power and cultural background influence language choices. Holmes & Stubbe (2015) argue that politeness is one important reason for modifying the blatant imposition of one's wishes on others, and that most workplace interactions provide evidence of mutual respect and concern for the feelings or face needs of others. These insights suggest that gender and social hierarchy intersect with politeness strategies, providing a nuanced lens for understanding interactions in fictionalized royal settings such as *Queen Charlotte*.

Together, these studies confirm that politeness strategies are central to understanding how characters construct social meaning through language. Most prior research focuses on modern, intercultural, or family-based settings, leaving a gap in historical or royal contexts. The present study addresses this by examining dramatized royal discourse, applying a politeness framework to

analyze how *Queen Charlotte*'s language reflects power, intimacy, and social identity within an 18th-century aristocratic court.

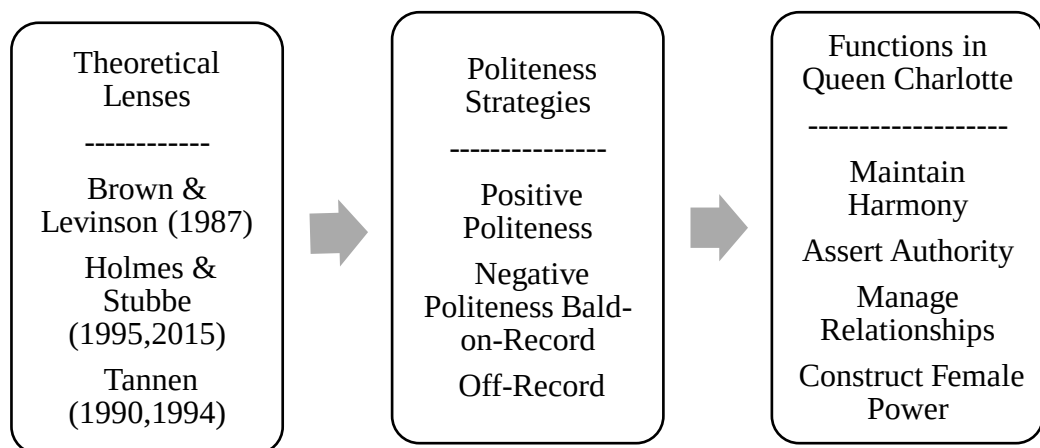
### **C. Theoretical Framework**

Politeness theory provides a systematic framework to examine how individuals manage relationships, negotiate hierarchy, and maintain face in communication. Brown and Levinson (1987) categorize strategies into positive, negative, bald-on-record, and off-record, allowing researchers to analyze how speakers mitigate face-threatening acts and assert social roles. This framework interprets language as both a communicative act and a reflection of social, cultural, and relational dynamics.

Sociolinguistic perspectives on gender and power complement this approach. Holmes (1995) argues that linguistic politeness is closely related to power relations in social interaction, as the distribution of power influences how speakers express deference and politeness. She further explains that women are often regarded as a less powerful social group than men in many communities, and this unequal distribution of power is reflected in the different politeness strategies used by and directed toward women. Therefore, the power dimension provides an important framework for understanding gender differences in politeness and interactional behavior (Holmes, 1995). Tannen (1991) distinguishes between rapport-talk, through which women establish connections and negotiate relationships, and report-talk, through which men negotiate status within a hierarchical order— suggesting that women's relational

style may function as a subtle strategy for shaping interaction, rather than simply indicating weakness.

Applying these frameworks to historical royal media contexts allows for the analysis of female power in structured hierarchical settings. In *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* (2023), politeness strategies are used to maintain harmony, assert authority, and manage relationships. Integrating Brown and Levinson's strategies with Holmes and Tannen's perspectives provides a robust theoretical lens to examine how Queen Charlotte and other female characters deploy politeness to construct social meaning, exercise leadership, and negotiate hierarchy within a royal court.



*Figure 2. 1: Theoretical Framework of Queen Charlotte's Politeness Strategies*

As shown in Figure 2.1, the analysis is guided by three theoretical lenses: Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which identifies types of politeness strategies; Holmes and Stubbe's (1995, 2015) sociolinguistic perspective, which considers power and gender; and Tannen's (1991) view on gendered conversational style, which shows how politeness can be a form of influence.

These theories help identify the politeness strategies used in the series, such as positive and negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record. The diagram also shows their functions: maintaining harmony, asserting authority, managing relationships, and expressing female power. This flow from theory to strategy to function illustrates how Queen Charlotte's language reflects both her social position and gendered authority in the royal court.