

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Politeness in an interaction can be defined as the means to show awareness of another person's face (Yule, 1996:60). Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is claimed to be universal which has been used by many linguists to study politeness in many different languages. In interlanguage pragmatic research, politeness used by foreign language learners has become new interest of study. For example in China context, Cheung (2009) analyzed politeness strategy used by Chinese EFL learners as compared with that of American native speakers. In Yemeni context, a study by Alfattah (2009) empirically investigated the ways in which Yemeni learners realized request in their English interlanguage with special reference to politeness strategies as patterned by Brown and Levinson (1987). In Indonesian EFL learning context, politeness as a source of pragmatic failure was reported by Aridah (2010) and Wijayanto (2012).

Other researchers extend the study of politeness on many aspects relating to the speakers. Based on Brown and Levinson, there are four focuses were found. First, from a number of different disciplines critical attention was focused on the language use of non-powerful or disadvantaged groups (women, ethnic, minorities, second-language learners), and here the question of cultural particulars vs. universal patterns was the foregrounded, for

example the study conducted by Bharutham (2003), Chen (2001), Fukada, et al (2003), and Leech (2007). Secondly, some other studies focused on the acquisition of politeness strategies by children such as, Ladegard (2003) and Nippold et al. (1982). Thirdly, there was a current work on the structure of conversation has turned up many properties of conversational organization which tied in directly with matters of politeness, such as, Machlachlan (1982). And fourthly, there was a recent attempt to apply politeness to the analysis of ritual (Brown and Levinson, 1987:29).

In general, politeness strategy function to attend other people faces. The seminal theory of Brown and Levinson (1987:66) proposed two kinds of face, *negative* and *positive face*. The former is personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, whilst the latter is positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants'. They claimed that some speech acts intrinsically threaten negative and positive face. For example disagreement and criticism threaten hearers' positive face, whilst requests threaten hearers' negative face.

Speech act of complaint is interesting as it is included as an act that threatens both positive and negative face want. It threatens positive face of the complainees as the complainers do not care about the complainees' feelings, wants, etc. It puts threats on addressee's positive face as it shows that speaker has a negative evaluation on the hearer. Thus a complaint is intrinsically a non-polite act (Trosborg, 1995:312). Nevertheless, it does not

mean that people have to be direct and rude, still they can complain politely. The following shows how polite and impolite complaint can be done by a speaker:

(Dani (22 years old) borrowed his uncle's handphone, but he broke it. His uncle complains)

- (1) Damn you! This is broken!
- (2) Dani, oh my God, I have bought it yesterday.

Complaint (2) sounds more polite than complaint (1). In (1) the speaker blames the hearer by involving swear words "Damn you!" in which the speaker does not care about the hearer's face. Complaint (2) implies that speaker regrets because his handphone is broken and he does not blame the hearer but rather applies hints to complaint, thus he/she sounds less direct

Research on complaint strategies by foreign or second language learners has been limited. For example Park (2001) reported politeness strategies used in complaint by Korean EFL Learners. Abdolrezapour (2012) showed how Iranian EFL learners used politeness in complaint. He reported that more indirect complaints were perceived as more polite by EFL learners. In Indonesian context, a study by Sukyadi (2011) reported that gender influenced the choice of complaint strategies. Wijayanto, et al. (2012) showed that Indonesian EFL learners had difficulties to express complaint in English. For example :

(situation a friend broke a new camera) :

- (1) Why didn't you ... save my camera well ? and you have to ... change my camera ... like this.
- (2) ... my camera is broken ... my friend: I hope you-you save my camera: but ... you: broke my camera: and now you have to change my camera.

The data above showed that complainers paused several times to express complaints. They also often repeated words, such as, *I hope you-you save my camera*. Then, the learners also lacked of vocabulary and model of complaints as they used a similar complaint for male and female complainees, e.g.:

(context a student complains to his/her lecturer about a low mark):

- (1) Can you ex-explain about my work sir?
- (2) Can you explain about my work mam?

Although some studies reported that politeness was used in complain strategies by second/foreign language learners (e.g. Abdolrezapour, 2012; Park, 2001), in Indonesian EFL learning context, it is very rare. This study is intended to fill the gap. Thus this study is to extend an interlanguage pragmatic research in Indonesian context, particularly focusing on politeness strategies used in complaints by Indonesia EFL learners.

B. Problem Statements

The research problems proposed in this study include:

1. What complaint strategies are used by Indonesian EFL learners?
2. What politeness strategies are used in complaint in relation to P (relative power) and D (social distance)?

C. Objectives of the Research

Generally, the objective of the research are :

1. To identify complaint strategies are used by Indonesian EFL learners

2. To explain politeness strategies are used in complaint in relation to P (relative power) and D (social distance).

D. Scope of the Research

This research is limited in the discussion of the politeness strategies used in complaint by Indonesian EFL learners in relation to P (relative power) and D (social distance) by male and female EFL learners. The data were analyzed using Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson's Politeness theory (1987) and Anna Trosborg's complaint strategies (1995). The complaints were those elicited through oral DCT, so it was not natural data in face to face interaction done by the learners.

E. The Benefit of the Research

The benefit of the research is divided into theoretical and practical, as follows:

- a. Theoretical Benefit

This research will give contribution in pragmatics study especially on politeness and complaint research.

- b. Practical Benefit

- a. For the learners

- 1) It helps EFL learners to know the correct use of complaint because complaint is a difficult act.

- 2) It helps EFL learners understanding the correct use of politeness strategies because there some different culture between Indonesian and English

- b. For teachers or lecturers
 - 1) The implementation of politeness by EFL learners could be an additional knowledge for teachers or lecturers in teaching pragmatics, especially in Brown and Levinson politeness theory.
 - 2) The implementation of complaint by EFL learners could improve teachers or lecturers in teaching pragmatics, especially in Trosborg's complaint strategy.
- c. For other researchers
 - 1) The result could be a reference in other researches of politeness in complaint which is rare to be studied.
 - 2) Hopefully, oral DCT could be one new interest in collecting data in interlanguage pragmatic in UMS.
- d. For UMS
 - 1) The result could be a note for Department of English Education to improve pragmatic ability to EFL learners.
 - 2) It is to extend interlanguage pragmatic research which is very limited in Indonesian EFL context.

F. Research Paper Organization

This research consists of five chapters. Chapter I is introduction which explains the background, problem statements, objectives of the research, scope of the research, the significant of the research, and research paper organization. Chapter II deals with the underlying theory consisting of politeness, face, types of politeness strategies, sociological factor (P and D), speech act, and the definition of complaint speech act. Chapter III contains research method which consists of type of the study, subject of the study, data of the research, data collection technique, data analysis technique. Chapter IV is research findings and discussion. Chapter V is closing which consists of conclusion, the implication of the research, the weakness of the research, and suggestion for further research.

