CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language has a fundamental role in the enlargement of learners’ intellectual, social, and emotional and supports the learners’ success in learning and studying all fields of study. Language learning is expected to help learners to know themselves, their culture, and the culture of others.

The study of language is investigating grammar of language as well as utterances. The study of utterance is a level beyond how a sentence is formed and pronounced. One can have a wide scope of vocabulary and a sound knowledge of grammar, but misinterpretations can still occur if he cannot apply pragmatic competence appropriately.

According to Celce Murcia, language is communication. The objective of foreign language teaching is to develop communicative competence. There should be balance between form (accuracy) and meaning (fluency) so that students can use language naturally. Michael Canale (1983:43) proposes communicative competence based on Hymes’s concepts. It contains four domains of knowledge and skills, namely 1) Grammatical or linguistic competence which refers to the ability to use the language correctly or accuracy in language use. It is the knowledge of language code such as grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, and spelling; (2) Sociolinguistic competence which refers to the learner’s ability to use the new language correctly in
specific social situations or appropriacy in using language. It is the mastery of sociocultural code of language use such as appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness and style in a given situation; (3) Discourse competence which refers the learner’s ability to use the new language in spoken and written discourse or fluency. It is the ability to combine language structures into different types of cohesive texts; (4) Strategic competence which refers to strategies for effective communication when the learner’s vocabulary proves inadequate for the job or communicative efficacy. It facilitates the learner to overcome difficulties when communication breakdown occur.

The goal of teaching and learning English at SMP/MTs is that students can achieve the functional level to communicate orally and in writing to resolve everyday problems, whereas for SMA/MA is expected to reach the level of informational as they are prepared to continue their education into university/college. (Permendiknas RI No 22, 2006: 277-278).

If second language learners do not have sufficient knowledge and acquaintance of the target language, they would be influenced by their first language and would transfer their pragmatic knowledge of their native language to the target language. Thomas (1983) argues that `misunderstanding arises not only from language limitations (pragmalinguistic failure) but also from inadequate utilisation of social conventions and values in the target culture (socio-pragmatic failure)'.

Thus, it should be became aware of that it is very crucial for English teachers to master cross-culture and politeness and then teach them to the students so that the students can overcome all difficulties or culture shock in real-life communication. However, as non native speakers, the English teachers in Madiun Regency may still lack of Sociolinguistic competence. Their ability to use English correctly in specific social situations in using language may still weak. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study in pragmatic competence of English teachers in Madiun Regency, especially the politeness strategy used in refusal.

One part of pragmatics is politeness. In real life communication, to be polite or show respect is more crucial than the meaning of words together. Politeness strategies are significant concepts because to be successful in interaction, one has to conduct some important strategies to be polite. It can be used to generalize what kinds of politeness strategies would be used under what situations and see if individual and/or cultural differences would be found. An utterance which is considered polite in certain area, maybe considered as being impolite in another area as the standard of polite or impolite utterance is difference in every places, depends on the existence and standard norms or values in the area where the language comes from.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987:60), politeness relates to the psychological state, something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction.
Yule (1996:119) defined politeness as showing awareness of and consideration for another person’s face.

Consequently, the English teachers are suggested to have pragmatic competence and instruct students about what to say and how to say politely in English in a certain situation. Ideally, teachers should expertly introduce polite or appropriate utterances in a way that language functions are focuses as well as the forms. However, the English teachers in Madiun Regency as non native speakers, who are judged “fluent” in a second language due to their mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of that language may still lack pragmatic competence; in other words, they may still have problem to produce language that is socially and culturally appropriate. For that reason, in this research, the researcher is interested in observing pragmatic competence of the English teachers in Madiun Regency.

One of the hot topics in the discourse pragmatic research over the past few decades is refusal. Refusal is a speech act by which a speaker denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor (Chen, Yen, and Zhang, 1995). The action of refusal is performed in our daily lives and in a variety of situations. By making a refusal, the speaker is posing a threat to the hearer’s positive face by not caring about ‘the addressee’s feelings, wants, etc.,’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). According to Sadler & Eröz (2001), refusals are a pragmatic breakdown which may easily lead to unintended offence and/or breakdown in communication. In social interactions, behaviour or actions of refusals can damage the face of an interlocutor because they run contrary to the
wishes of the hearer. There are some varieties in refusal, however, most the English teacher in Madiun regency, as non native speakers have limited variety in refusal. Therefore, in this study, the researcher tries to investigate how politeness strategy in refusal used by English teachers in Madiun Regency, especially the junior high teachers.

This research investigated 38 English teachers of Junior High School in Madiun Regency, fourteen males and twenty four females who came to English teachers meeting, (MGMP) Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran. Madiun Regency is a small town in East Java which is located among Madiun, Nganjuk, and Ngawi. It has thirty eight Junior high schools which hold an English teachers meeting, (MGMP) Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran once a month every Tuesday. Every school sends one of its English teachers to the meeting every month.

There are eleven studies which discuss similar topics, six studies about politeness and five studies about refusal. Phuơng (2011), Maginnis (2011); Sholaikah (2012); Hastari (2013); Pratiwi (2013); and Wijayanto et al.’s (2013) all study about politeness strategy. Maginnis (2011); Hastari (2013); Pratiwi (2013); and Wijayanto et al. (2013) conducted the research about politeness strategy using Brown and Levinson’s theory as the researcher will conduct, but Pratiwi (2013) and Wijayanto, et al. (2013) conducted a study about politeness strategies used in complaint. Whereas Hastari (2013) did a research on Politeness Strategies of Request and Maginnis (2011) used politeness theory to explore the impact of simultaneously engaging in a face to
face conversation and a text message conversation. Phượng (2011) conducted a study about politeness strategies in Conversations. Sholaikah (2012) reported politeness strategies used by the main character in Persuasion movie.

The five previous studies about refusal are Wijayanto (2011) investigated similarities and differences between refusal strategies conducted by British native speakers of English (NSE) and Javanese learners of English (JLE); Sattar et al. (2011) did a study about the speech act of refusal; Suryaputra (2011) concerned the similar topic as the writer will observe, the refusal strategies but he observed Javanese and Chinese students in Faculty of Letters Soegijapranata Catholic University; and Ghazanfari et al. (2013) conducted a research about cross-linguistic differences in refusal speech act among native Persian and English speakers. Wijayanto (2013) investigated refusal strategies conducted by British native speakers of English (NSE) and Javanese learners of English (JLE) on The Internet Journal Language, Culture and Society URL.

The researcher investigated refusal which conducted by the English teacher to continue Wijayanto’s researches, but this study focuses on the politeness strategy in refusal.

Even though the researcher has found eleven studies which discuss similar topics in this last five years, there has been no research about politeness strategy in refusal in Indonesia which investigates the English teachers yet. It is the first research in Indonesia which investigates the English teachers’ politeness strategy in refusal, as non native speakers.
B. Problem Statement

Good language teachers not only master the role of grammar but also should understand pragmatic competence. They should know how to apply the pragmatic competence for teaching the language. It should be noted that it is necessary for English teachers to teach cross-culture and politeness for the students so that the students can overcome all difficulties or culture shock in real-life communication. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study in pragmatic competence of English teachers in Madiun regency, especially the politeness strategy used in refusal.

C. Research Questions

The writer formulates a problem in this study, as follows:

1. What refusal strategies are used by English teachers in Madiun Regency to decline an invitation, an offer and a suggestion?
2. What politeness strategies are used to decline an invitation, an offer and a suggestion?
3. How does social distance (Social Status level) influence on politeness strategy in refusal used by English teachers in Madiun Regency?
4. How does gender differences influence on politeness strategy used in refusal?

D. Objectives of the Study

Based on the formulation above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To explain the refusal strategies.
2. To explain the politeness strategy used in refusal.
3. To explain the influence of social distance on politeness strategy used in refusal.

4. To explain the influence of gender differences on politeness strategy used in refusal.

**E. Benefits of Research**

This study could bring benefits in practically and theoretically:

1. Practical Benefits

   Practically, this study could contribute to the formal educational institutions, teachers, and learners in the form of teaching and learning English, especially speaking.

   a. The readers can get a large knowledge about Pragmatics, Speech Act, and Politeness, especially politeness strategy used in refusal.

   b. For teachers, it is expected to equip the teachers with knowledge about Pragmatics, Speech Act, and Politeness, especially politeness strategy used in refusal; and hopefully apply it in teaching learning activity.

   c. For the students, this study can enhance students’ pragmatics competence.

2. Theoretical Benefits

   This study is expected to support and to add the referential knowledge on Pragmatics, Speech Act, Politeness strategy, and Refusal. Theoretically, this study can be source of information to other researchers in the future.
F. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on seeking the information of the politeness strategy used in refusal by English teachers in Madiun Regency.

G. Thesis Organization

Chapter I is introduction. It explains the historical background why the research is being conducted. In this chapter, the questions, objectives, benefit, as well as the scope of the study are also be formulated.

Chapter II is underlying theory. It presents four theories as references to support this study. It is divided into 2 subsections; they are (a) previous studies and (b) Theoretical Review. Previous studies is used to know where the position of this research is and would be taken from all over the world in the form of journals and thesis. It charts the theoretical framework discussing the notion of Pragmatics, Speech Act, Politeness, and Refusal. Next, the researcher explains about the discussion of the major theories of Pragmatics, Speech Act, and Politeness. It also discusses about politeness strategy and refusal strategy.

Chapter III expands the politeness strategy used in refusal by English teachers in Madiun Regency as well as what kind of research methodologies which the researcher employs in conducting the research.

Chapter IV elaborates further the finding and discussion of politeness strategy used in refusal by English teachers in Madiun Regency as well as the finding of factors which contribute it.
Chapter V unites previous chapters into set of conclusion and suggestion.