

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Research Background

Nowadays, information and technology develop so fast that the need to master English as an international language is inevitable. As educational institutions, schools have launched various strategies to speed up the mastery of English to their students such as through providing an additional allocation time to study English, establishing English extracurricular, and even schools invite a tutor or informal institution to give additional teaching for their students.

Unfortunately, most of what they do is commonly focusing on getting good mark to pass the minimum standard issued by the government. Ideally, the need of English for Indonesian students should be their ability to use English in daily context, not to pass the final exam. The need to master English is not only to get a better life but also to increase the competitiveness of human resources for young generation.

This condition has something to do with the status of English in Indonesia as a foreign language. By this status, English is not used widely as a means of communication among the members of society. It is treated as the object of study rather than a means of communication. Due to this condition, the parameter of their success in learning English is when they get good mark

in their examination, no matter they have capability of using this language or not.

Obviously, the methods the teachers conduct in their teaching and learning program and the ways the students study are influenced by the condition. Teachers are busy explaining materials, and the students are busy doing their tasks. They could lack of activities to practice the language in real face-to-face interaction. The students are trapped in the habit of memorizing words and language patterns without knowing how they are used in the social context. Here, as a language English has lost its spirit as a means of communication.

Some identified mistakes in reality which are frequently found are the lack of ability in using appropriate dictions to express an intended meaning, and the use of adjective, adverb, preposition, and passive voice. For example, when a student is asked to criticize his younger brother who always leaves his bed in mess, he says, "*You should be autonomous because you have a large*". Here, the student wanted to say to his younger brother who has grown up but he uses the word *large* instead of *grown up*. Another example, when the student is supposed to criticize unfamiliar older person, he says, "*Hi, is this area your own? If not, please get rid of your car from us.*" The utterance could obviously bear the hearer with bad feeling of harassment to the addressee. They may be included into bad criticism proposed by Tracy, Van Dusen, & Robinson in Young (2004) for they tended to involve particularly negative

language or a harsh manner. On another case when the criticism was directed to unfamiliar person with the same status level, a student said, "*What are you doing? This is female toilet. Go away from here. You are not decent*". This utterance may make the addressee feel driven away and insulted. In fact, the addressee may enter the wrong toilet inadvertently or due to the condition that he could not bear with.

According to Leech's (1993) definition, criticism is an utterance functioning to express a psychological act toward negative condition of the hearer. Pragmatically, their above utterances are definitely illocutionary act of criticism. Both of the utterances indicate the speaker's reaction toward the negative condition (parking car in improper place and entering improper toilet) of the addressee. However, expressing criticism shouldn't be realized through a language which could offend others. Otherwise, the goal of giving criticism that is to change the addressee's negative condition to the good one may not be achieved as inappropriate choice of words or utterances may damage good interpersonal relationship.

The examples above indicate impoliteness in a communication. Brown and Levinson (1987) pointed out, face needs to be continually attended to in the process of communication, and face threatening speech acts, therefore, need to be softened so that politeness can be achieved. (Example: *Excuse me sir, would you park your car in the park area? Your car blocks other vehicle.*) In Javanese perspective, people should speak politely and respectfully to older

person especially that of unfamiliar one. This phenomenon may reflect the failure of the pragmatic competence of the participants in their verbal interaction.

Based on the fact that, the present study explores how the participants express their criticism using English as their foreign language based on a particular context. Criticism is one of speech acts which is very good to conduct a study about interlanguage pragmatic for it is very sensitive for the interlocutor's relationship. Expressing criticism require carefulness, otherwise it could damage a good relationship between the interlocutors. By analyzing the strategies of criticism employed by the participants, the writer expected the description of the learner's pragmatic competence. Understanding the pragmatic competence of the students as a foreign language learner is very importance especially for the teacher and the learners themselves. It may take a role as a reference to improve the foreign language learning process. Since this research is about second language used by the learners, this research is under interlanguage study.

Interlanguage is the study of language which is produced by a learner of a second language. It usually has grammatical features which are not found in either the learner's native language or the target language. The language of a second language learner range between his mother tongue and the target language. Even though the learner has been very much exposed to the target

language, his language never reaches the target language. It would be a new version of language.

Conducting research of interlanguage among the secondary students is such a challenging and beneficial thing. On one hand there must be many challenges as the students still has low English proficiencies in their pragmatic competence. On the other hand, it makes important contributions to the understanding of second language acquisition among the secondary students.

Interlanguage research could be done on various speech acts performances such as an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, criticism, or refusal. In this study the writer would like to focus on the speech act of criticism.

Criticism is the act of giving negative evaluation towards the condition of the addressee. Nguyen (2005) defines criticizing as an illocutionary act to give negative evaluation of the hearer's actions, choice, words, and products for which he or she may be held responsible.

In the present study criticism is defined as expression to give a negative evaluation towards the bad habit or conduct of the addressee. This act is performed by the speakers as negative reaction of the addressee's bad habit (John L. Austin: 1962) who come from different status levels of familiarity and social distance. By the different status levels, the writer expects various strategies of criticizing employed by the students to find out their pragmatic competence.

Studies about criticism have been conducted by some researchers, among others Dusen and Robinson (1987) who investigated the characteristics of good and bad criticisms, Tracy and Eissenberg (1990) who investigated the influence of superiority related to the preferences for message clarity and politeness in giving criticisms, Gunarwan (2001) who investigated the strategy of criticism in terms of directness and indirectness among native speakers of Javanese, Tuan (2005) who explored the relationship between speakers' gender and their reactions to criticizing, Nguyen (2005) who observed pragmatic development in the use of criticizing and responding to criticism by a group of Vietnamese EFL learners, and Jauhari (2010) investigated the influencing factors in determining the preferable strategy of criticism.

The present study investigates the strategies of criticism employed by senior high students to find out their pragmatic competence. The strategies of criticism in the present study refers to those used by Nguyen (2005). Understanding the pragmatic competence of the students as a foreign language learner is very importance especially for the teacher and the learners themselves. It may take a role as an evaluation device towards the English learning method in the institution. It may be used as a reference to improve the foreign language learning process as well.

The research was conducted in SMA 2 Mejayan grade XII. The consideration of this choice due to the rareness of interlanguage pragmatics

research conducted using such data resource. In addition, getting the detailed information about language elicited by the learners may help us in pointing out the weaknesses which in turn helps us to figure out the solution. So, the result of this research may be useful for the betterment of teaching English at SMA. The competency standard of teaching English for SMA students grade XII is another consideration of the researcher. It says that one of the target in teaching English for grade XII of Senior High Students is the ability to criticize in transactional and interpersonal conversation.

“Mengungkapkan makna dalam percakapan transaksional (to get things done) dan interpersonal (bersosialisasi) resmi dan berlanjut (sustained) secara akurat, lancar dan berterima dengan menggunakan ragam bahasa lisan dalam konteks kehidupan sehari-hari dan melibatkan tindak tutur: membujuk, mendorong semangat, mengkritik , mengungkapkan harapan, dan mencegah.”

#### B. Scope of the Research

This study is focused on the utterances used by the students of SMA 2 Mejayan in expressing criticism. The strategies of criticism in this study was analyzed based on Nguyen's strategies of criticism which cover six types of direct strategy and eight types of indirect strategy. By analyzing the strategy of criticism employed by the students, the writer hopes to get a picture about their pragmatic competence.

### C. Research Question

This study is guided by the following three questions:

- 1) What strategies are used by the students of SMA 2 Mejayan to express criticism in different social contexts?
- 2) Does social distance influence the different use of criticism strategy? and
- 3) Does familiarity influence the different use of criticism strategy?

### D. Research Objective

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1) to describe the strategies of criticizing by the students of SMA 2 Mejayan based on different social contexts,
- 2) to examine whether different social distance influences the use of the strategies, and
- 3) to observe whether different familiarity influences the use of the strategies.

### E. Research Benefit

The significance of this study can be viewed from both theoretical and practical aspects, as describe below:

- 1) Theoretically, it is hoped that it provides useful information about the pragmatic competence in the speech acts of criticism and enrich interlanguage pragmatics research.

- 2) Practically, this study is expected to provide teachers with helpful information about the pragmatic competence of the students in expressing criticisms.

#### F. Thesis Organization

This thesis provides five chapters. CHAPTER I presents introduction which consists of research background, scope of research, research question, research objective, research benefits, and thesis organization.

CHAPTER II provides review of related literature. It covers of previous studies and theories related to the present study.

CHAPTER III describes the research method which is used in this study. It contains type of the research, subject of the research, data and data source, technique of collecting data, and technique of analyzing data.

CHAPTER IV presents findings and discussion. It reviews and discusses the result of the research findings.

CHAPTER V gives conclusion, suggestion, and implication of the study. It presents the conclusion of the research, recommends possible avenues for further research, and the implication of the study for teaching English.