CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Javanese language is one of 746 languages in Indonesia. It is the mother tongue for 70,000,000 people mostly living in Central Java, the Special Territory of Yogyakarta and East Java. There are also Javanese communities in the Northwestern part of West Java, North Sumatera and Lampung as well as in other Indonesia provinces where Javanese have been resettled from the densely populated island of Java.

Javanese belongs to the Western Austronesian language family, whose members include Indonesian, Malay, Batak, Minangkabau, Balinese, Sundanese and Madurese, to cite just a few, and many languages in the Philiphines, including Tagalog. Javanese differs from many other languages in the world, in that it has well-standardized speech levels, the use of which are dictated by an aggregate of factors such as status of the hearer or addressee (including that of persons talked about), the social distance between the speaker and the hearer and, to a certain extent, the degree of formality of the speech event.

Javanese is the most politically dominant ethnic group which has strong culture. According to Geertz (1961), quoted by Magnis-Suseno (1984:38), there are two basic cultural rules that are most determined in shaping the patterns of social intercourse in the Javanese community, they are Magnis-Suseno terms principle of kerukunan (harmony) and that of hormat (respect).
The former refers to the duty of each and every member of the community to endeavor to maintain social harmony, and the latter refers to responsibility of all community members to show respect to others on every occasion in accordance with their status and standing in community. The use of speech levels of the language is very much influenced by various degrees of social distance between speaker and hearer. The degrees of social distance are influenced by the three factors of are, age, social status and formality.

A Speaker may say words clearly and use long complex sentences with correct grammar, but still have a communication problem if she/ he have not mastered the rules for social language known as pragmatics. In this line, the speakers should understand appropriately the concept of the language which is included in the area of pragmatics.

Pragmatics deals with the speakers “communicative competence” (Traugott & Pratt, 1980:226). Speakers use their knowledge of a language to convey and interpret meanings. In the area of pragmatics the speakers interpret their utterance in social contexts, knowing what to say, how to say it, and when to say it, and how to be with other people. This knowledge enables them to produce and understand utterances in relation to specific communicative purposes and specific speech context.

When speakers perform utterances in contexts, basically they accomplish two things, interaction acts and speech act. In one side, the international acts impose structure on the discourse by ensuring that one utterance leads smoothly to another. On the other, speech acts constitute attempts by language users to perform specific action, in particular interpersonal function. In this case, speech act is one of the study of pragmatics.
Speech acts in one form of utterances can be used by the speakers of interlocutors to convey the meaning of their purposes in communication. Thomas (1983:96) states that the pragmatic competence has an important role in communication. In this way, the pragmatic competence as the ability to perform speech acts should be mastered in different types of speech act, such as representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives.

Furthermore, the way people communicate is different. It depends on its own culture. Each culture influences the way its people talking. Brown (1999:165) describes the two follows: ‘A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. In a word, culture and language are inseparable. That is why; the degree of politeness in speaking is not the same in every people. It is based on their culture and habit. Culture has the significant actor in politeness.

Politeness strategies are very important. Politeness involves talking account of the feelings to others (Brown, 1987:296). Specifically, it means that one should be pay attention to the politeness strategies otherwise there will be miscommunication. If miscommunication happens, it can disturb the relationship. However, being polite is a complicated business in any language. It is difficult to learn because it involves understanding, not only the language, but also the social and cultural values of the community (Brown, 1987). Besides, politeness strategies are important in avoiding or minimizing the treat of addressee’s face.
Politeness refers to socio-cultural matter and is crucially reflected in language. There are many alternative ways possibly used by people to have politeness strategies and politeness value in using language over the entire world (Chen, 1989). Politeness is one of the characteristics of our culture. Thus, it is important to study about politeness. By studying the politeness strategies in speech acts, people can be polite to determine the choice of words and phrases or linguistic variant in expressing the ideas or meaning in a given context. They also understand the nature of language in relation to politeness value.

Politeness strategies are ways to convey the utterances as polite as possible. To achieve that, there are a number of strategies that can be applied and at the same condition to reflect the culture of an individual in certain society. Brown & Levinson's (1987) divide four types of politeness strategies; bald on record strategy, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record indirect strategy. It is agreed that the politeness is attributed with those strategies.

There are some reasons for choosing the Javanese speech acts as the object of the study. First, this speech community is renowned for indirection in their linguistics behavior, especially when it comes to communicating about unfavorable things. Second, Javanese are ethnic groups in Indonesia, to have a penchant for avoiding excessiveness as evident. And the third, the Javanese politeness can be regarded from their habit while interacting with others. They appreciate really the people who have given valuable services to them. They use politeness speech acts in daily conversation. It is unavoidable, that politeness strategies are dominantly used by Javanese peoples.
Studies focused on the politeness strategies in Javanese by native speakers are rarely found, specifically by Javanese native speakers. As stated by Chen (2001) that an aspect of politeness that has not been explored is the use of politeness strategies. This fact has motivated the writer to conduct a study dealing with politeness strategies particularly the speech acts which are conveyed by Javanese native speakers in order to find out what types of politeness strategies which are used by Javanese

1.2 The Problems of the Study

In relation to the background, the problems are formulated as the following.

1) What types of politeness strategies are used by Javanese?
2) What types of politeness strategies is dominantly used by Javanese?
3) Why is the type dominantly used?

1.3 The Objective of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of the study are

1) to describe politeness strategies used by Javanese,
2) to explain the dominant type of politeness strategies used by Javanese, and
3) to elaborate the reason for the dominant use.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study attempts to investigate the politeness strategies used by Javanese speakers when they express their speech acts in every day context of situation specifically in spoken language. The main aspect to be observed is the speech acts in
illocutionary act, what politeness strategies they use in conversation. Whether they tend to use the (1) bald on record strategy where the speakers do the acts of saying directly, it is regarded such as impolite way (2) positive politeness; the speakers give any reasons or explanation in speech and attempt to do something (3) negative politeness refers to the acts done by the speakers without giving reasons to his/ her speech, and (4) off-record indirect strategy where the speakers do not say directly what they want to say but with doing the obscure acts.

A speech acts is an utterance which serves as a functional unit in communication. Austin (1962) distinguishes the performance of speech act involves three types of speech acts “locutionary act”, illocutionary act” and perlocutionary act”. Illocutionary acts become the major investigation related to the intention of utterances or performance of particular language function. Furthermore, Searle (1976) categorized the illocutionary acts into five, representatives, directives, commisives, expressives, and declaratives.

The pattern of speech acts is based on the Javanese speakers. The expressions consist of question, offer, and suggest, etc which are used by 8 Javanese native speakers in daily conversation.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to be significantly relevant theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, the research findings are expected to enrich the theories of linguistic politeness strategies, specifically the spoken language in spoken medium by certain community, mainly the Javanese society. This study considers being useful initially to provide the information of what politeness strategies used by Javanese native
speakers when they express the speech acts in everyday context of situation. Consequently, it will give better understanding and new insight on how politeness strategies is related to the aspect of pragmatic study. This contribution will in turn give tentative framework for a comprehensive analysis of politeness.

Practically, since this research focuses on Javanese native speakers in expressing statement, question, offer, apologize, etc; hopefully it is useful for teachers and lectures of sociolinguistics to apply the politeness strategies specifically in speech acts to the sociolinguistics students either in University or high school which occur in daily conversation. And also practice the patterns of speech acts which are used by Javanese native speakers. This will accelerate them to speak Javanese, thus they will not be clumsy to speak directly to the Javanese native speakers.