

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is involved in nearly all fields of human activity. People do many more things with language. For example, when a manager utters “*you are fired!*”, he terminates the service of an employee. This example shows how the use of language brings certain effect and change in the environment.

According to an American language philosopher, Searle (2000) speaking a language is performing speech acts, acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions or making promises. Searle states that all linguistic communication involves linguistic (speech) acts. In other words, speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication. They are not mere artificial linguistic constructs as it may seem, their understanding together with the acquaintance of context in which they are performed are often essential for decoding the whole utterance and its proper meaning. The speech acts are used in standard quotidian exchanges as well as in jokes or drama for instance. In line with Searle, Umar (2006: 13) states that many utterances, termed performatives, do not only communicate information, but are equivalent to actions. So, through utterances, people do things or have others do things for them.

Austin (2009) distinguished the performance of speech acts into three types; namely locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act. Illocutionary acts become the major investigation in this study related to the intention of utterances or performances of particular language function. Finch (2000) categorized the

illocutionary acts into five, namely representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. Speech acts in one form of utterances can be used by the speakers or interlocutors to convey the meaning of their purposes in communication. In communication itself, pragmatic competence has an important role. In this way, the pragmatic competence as the ability to perform speech acts should be mastered in different types of speech acts.

The use of language is different in certain settings, such as in social, science or religion. In social purpose, particularly happened in the reality TV shows that they are monologue which used as truth-signs of direct access to the authentic (Aslama and Pantti, 2006). The power of monologue in the reality genre promotes the transformation of television from a mass medium to first-person medium addressing masses of individuals. The power of the monologue in reality TV can be seen as a parallel to the fascination of the entire genre for its audiences. The monologue, as with reality programming in general, contains an ambiguous interplay of the pre-scripted and non-scripted, individual and collective, performed and non-performed and fake and real. Consequently, the thrill for viewers is to hunt for the few rare authentic moments when the participant seems to reveal their 'real self' (Hill, 2002). The monologue situations hardly resemble any everyday talk events, but the literary way of talk does not diminish the claim for authenticity. Rather, the form serves the purpose of giving the viewers the ultimate opportunity to assess the key characteristic of authenticity: the participant's integrity and credibility when it comes to feelings. The paradox of an individualized society is that while one is talking alone about one's deepest emotions, at the same time one is selling one's authenticity to viewers.

The Apprentice Asia is an Asian reality game show which is adapted from *The Apprentice US* in which a group of aspiring young businessmen and women across Asia compete for the chance to work with the Malaysian entrepreneur Tony Fernandes, who also serves as the host of the show. People are placed in two teams, and each week (i.e. in each episode of the show) they are assigned a task to be performed and asked to select a project manager for the task. The decision of what team wins/loses is made based on the teams' performance with respect to the task assigned. The winning team receives a reward, while the losing team faces a "boardroom showdown" in order to determine which team member should be fired (eliminated from the show). Elimination proceeds in two stages; in the first one, all of the losing team's members are confronted. The project manager of the losing team is asked to select some of the team members who are believed to be most responsible for the loss. In the second stage, which takes place in the boardroom meeting, the rest of the team is dismissed, and the project manager and the selected members face a final confrontation in which at least one of the members is fired by Fernandes at the end of the meeting. In this meeting, on one side is the 'candidates board' and on the other side is the 'executive board'. The 'executive board' is formed by Fernandes together with two advisors who will help him making the decision of what member of the team gets fired.

Based on the various projects assigned to the contestants such as selling fish at a wet market for the highest profit, creating a 30-second viral video to promote *Expedia*, making a sales pitch for 3 Taiwanese products (from a choice of 6) to large retailers (*Giant Hypermarket* and *Sogo*) and small retailers, promoting the *Nescafé Dolce Gusto* with a *pop-up café*, managing part of the *Hilton Kuala*

Lumpur for the day, designing a new set of uniforms for *Air Asia* staff (guest services, weekend flight attendant and ramp attendant) and present them at a fashion show, producing a live commercial for the *Volkswagen Beetle (A5)*, facing one-on-one interviews with three of Fernandes' trusted associates, etc, the viewers will be inspired by how the contestants present themselves professionally and the way they sell themselves to impress Fernandes in order to be his apprentice. The host, Fernandes also educates the candidates and viewers as well through informing a lot of useful information in business world. For instance, pricing is very important because it is the main factor of convincing buyers to buy the products. In business world, playing safe may not be the best choice because it is projected that we may not have the drive to push ourselves during tough times. In addition, getting in business world can be really competitive, so be ready to get step on, used for get criticized by others. In communication aspect, related to the assigned tasks, the viewers are taught to communicate with others well in conducting presentation, job interview and doing transactions in sale.

The language spoken by the host, advisors and contestants in this reality TV show can be very different. For instance, in the elimination time taken place in the board room, there will be a bitter disputation among the contestants which is proved from their speech in order not to be eliminated by the host and deserve to go to the next round. For example:

Fernandez (the host) : Dian, why I shouldn't fire you? (*Directive-Questioning*)

Dian (the contestant) : I have too much fire in me that have just been succumbed because of another life and I want to get back to it.
(*Representative – Informing*)

Fernandez (the host) : All right! Naz? (*Directive - Questioning*)

Nazril (the contestant): Sir, there is no accident in the universe. There's a reason why we are supposed to be here with each other. Meaning, I have always admired you, Sir. I'm your

biggest fan and I always wanted to be an apprentice. Your apprentice, sir. And I have personal values that is very, very high, Sir. And that includes integrity and love and passion. (*Representative – Informing*)

Fernandez (the host): Based on everything I've heard. Nazril, you're fired! (*Declarative-firing*)

The host asks questions to get a lot of information from the advisors and contestants in order to make the right decision to determine who the weak contestants are and then fire them. He asks about every contestant's opinions about members of the team who do not do the project assigned well and should be fired. He also asks the advisors in order to hear their opinions about the contestants' performances. To avoid misinterpretation between the host, advisors and contestants, he performs his speech acts directly and literally without uttering ambiguous words or sentences. In helping the host to make the right decision and give advice to what the contestants did and what should every project be successfully run, the advisors inform a lot of information through their utterances. They inform the host about the plus minus of teams' projects and give advice or suggestions to the contestants' performances. On the other hand, the contestants are the participants who are required to answer the host's questions. That is why they need to inform the host about their performances in running the project assigned and whose members of the team are unable to do the project as the weak ones and pointed them to be the fired candidates.

Based on the phenomena above, the researcher is interested in investigating the use of speech acts in *The Apprentice Asia* TV program. It is focused on the host, advisors, contestants' utterances in board room in order to know how they perform speech acts during the disputation. As Josiah and Johnson (2012: 262) states that speech act is a process in which a person uses an utterance

to perform an act such as stating a fact, stating an opinion, confirming or denying something, making a prediction or a request, asking a question, issuing an order, giving a permission, giving a piece of advice, making an offer, making a promise, thanking or condoling somebody. In this case, the choice of speech acts theory as the linguistic framework for the analysis of speech acts in *The Apprentice Asia* TV Program is based on the fact that the participants perform various actions through various utterances.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as the following.

- a) What types of speech acts are used by the host, advisors and contestants of *The Apprentice Asia*?
- b) How are those types of speech acts used by participants of *The Apprentice Asia*?
- c) Why are those types of speech acts used in the ways they are?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

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

- a) discover the types of speech acts used by the host, advisors and contestants of *The Apprentice Asia*,
- b) explain how those types of speech acts are used by participants of *The Apprentice Asia* and
- c) explain the reasons why those types of speech acts used in the ways they are.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study investigated speech acts used by the participants of *The Apprentice Asia* in five episodes (episodes 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9) which took place in board room in elimination time. The focus is on types of speech acts, namely representative, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. Further, investigation was on the realizations of speech acts and reasons for their occurrences.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to give some relevant contribution both

- a) theoretically, to enrich the theories of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, specifically give a better understanding and new insight on how speech acts are related to the aspects of pragmatic study and it is usefully considered to provide the information of what type of speech acts used by the participants in the reality TV program when they express the language in the board room and
- b) practically, to be a guidance for those who are interested in reality TV program discourse analysis and for those who will be involved in that setting as well.