

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language is the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, and a language is any specific example of such a system. Language is important because it helps in communication. It also builds our socio-economic interest and enhances our cultural value system. Another importance of language is that it makes friendships and cultural ties grow stronger while also shaping our thoughts and emotions. A regional language is a language spoken in an area of a nation state, whether it be a small area, a federal state or province, or some wider area.

Indonesia is a country of many languages, culture and religion so we call it as unity in diversity. Indonesia has around 300 different languages but as a national language Indonesian people use Indonesia language. So before you go abroad to some place in Indonesia, better you learn the language before because language is the most important things for communication with other people. When walking around in West Java you will probably notice the melodic, wailing way in which people speak, that sounds are very different from Indonesia language, like Javanese, Sundanese, or Maduranese, etc.

Although there are many social, economic, and political similarities between the Javanese and Sundanese, differences abound. The Sundanese live principally in West Java, but their language is not intelligible to the Javanese. Although the Sundanese language, like Javanese, possesses elaborate speech levels, these forms of respect are infused with Islamic values, such as the

traditional notion of *hormat* (respect--knowing and fulfilling one's proper position in society). Through copious memorization and practice in correct pronunciation, children learn that reasonable behavior means verbal conformity with authority and subjective interpretation is a sign of inappropriate individualism.

Sundanese people are famous with the “polite” in their lives, so if you learn sundanese try starting from now using low tones in communication. The words are using for asking something in sundanese are using “*punten*” in the first sentence before you asking something.

This is a polite greeting to excuse yourself when you ask something or walk passed and followed by “*mangga*” to reply by way of saying ‘go ahead’.

Speculation as to how speech levels came to play a part of Sundanese has yielded various explanations. The following appears to be the most credible, given geographical factors."Aside from an emotional, literary evaluation, the existence of the distinction between refined and less refined, and pure and less pure Sundanese may perhaps be explained from the point of view of Sundanese history. In addition, it is possible that the psychological climate and environment exerted an influence upon certain aspects of language." (Harsojo 1983: 301). The higher speech level was employed among members of the regents' families. In fact, only upper classpeople, descendantsof the royal families,knew the speech level system. Speech levels were formally taught in Dutch schools onlyin the early 20th century. Speech levels thus became a part of the life of educated Sundanese people (Rosidi 1980).' (Soedradjat 1986: 108).

Indonesian independence in 1949 exerted new influences on language development. According to Soedradjat (1986) the use of speech levels has changed over time in such a way that some levels are now used differently from the way they were used very much earlier. Some of these levels, i.e., Medium and Very high levels are rarely used nowadays. Only in the wayang, i.e., puppet drama performance is the high level now used in the way that it was used socially in the past. In the past, the high level was used to show respect to the menak 'aristocrats'. Nowadays, however, the distinction in class based on blood is not significant, and therefore the high level i.e., *basa lemes* is used to any addressee whom a speaker thinks should be given respect.

Variant terminological systems and models of speech level use exist. Of these, Satjadibrata's (1956) seems to be the standard formulation, because Noorduyn, Wessing and Soedradjat rely heavily on it. In it, two levels constitute the frame: Kasar (K) 'low level' or 'general conversational speech' and Lemes (L) 'high level' or 'speech in which polite (i.e., Lemes) vocabulary is used'.

People are said to be 'speaking Lemes', 'speaking Penengah' or 'speaking Kasar' according to the overall impression the listener derives from the utterances s/he hears. Socially, use of speech levels is one aspect of politeness which ranges from Lemes refined, 'in accordance with customary law' to Kasar 'lacking refinement'. The Kasar-Lemes scale is a theme underlying many aspects of Sundanese culture: deportment, dress, body movement, etc. Finer distinctions are possible though their use is very infrequent: *Lemes Pisan (LP)* 'very polite', *Panengah (P)* 'rather polite', and *Kasar Pisan (KP)* 'crude, earthy'.

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

Pragmatics deals with the speakers “communicative competence” (Trougott & 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 the 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 pragmatics 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 the types of speech act, such as representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, 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 variat in expressing the ideas or meaning in a given context. They also understand the natue 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.

In this paper, the researcher will try to argue that politeness is one of the most important symbolic values to be socialized in our daily encounters as all cultures value politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Although what constitutes polite behaviour, for instance in the interest of saving face, varies from culture to culture (Eastman, 1990), politeness is also universal cross-culturally (Clyne, 1994, Morand, 1996, Scollon and Scollon, 1995). It is universal because humans in every culture appear to share a very broad set of linguistic politeness conventions. Thus, it is a crucial element of interpersonal communication in all cultures.

Politeness has been approached differently according to the researchers' interests, as what is polite in one culture may not be considered polite in another. Hence, politeness is culturally relative: sensitive to particular situation-specific social norms. Politeness in this section will not be discussed in-depth and only theories relevant to this study will be referred to. Their relevance will be seen from the perspectives of both sociolinguistics and pragmatics, it also involves the performance and interpretation of a range of speech acts in Sundanese and the researcher wants to know that social status can influence in communication. The basic premise adopted here is that politeness has to do with language use which warrants its classification within pragmatics. Politeness is also a phenomenon

which relates language and the social world which warrants its classification within sociolinguistics (Eelen, 2001). The notion of politeness in this paper, once again, will be discussed from a socio-cultural perspective. However, general theories about politeness will be considered first.

There are some reasons for choosing the Sundanese speech acts as the object of the study. First, this speech community is renowned for indirection in their linguistics behaviour especially when it comes to communicating about unfavorable things. Second, Sundanese are ethnic groups in Indonesia, to have a penchant for avoiding excessiveness as evident. And the third, the Sundanese 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 speech acts in daily conversation. It is unavoidable, that politeness strategies are dominantly used by Sundanese people.

Studies focused on the politeness strategies in Sundanese by native speakers are rarely found, specifically by Sundanese native speakers. These studies have been based on reported usage or intuition, not analysis of actual texts. This has yielded a standard model based on "features of the social environment in which the speech event is taking place", most notably, "a) social status of the addressee or referent, b) social status of the speaker, c) the difference (if any) between a and b, and, "d) the degree of friendship (intimacy) between the speaker and the addressee" (Wessing 1974: 12). This fact has motivated the writer to conduct a study dealing with politeness strategies particularly out what types of politeness strategies which are used by Sundanese.



## 1.2 The Problems of The Study

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

1. What are politeness strategies used by the Sundanese people?
2. How does the social status influence politeness strategies in Sundanese?
3. Why is the social status affecting politeness strategies used in Sundanese people?

## 1.3 The Objectives of The Study

In relation to the problem, the objectives of the study are;

- a. to describe politeness strategies used by Sundanese
- b. to explain that social status can influence politeness strategies in using Sunda language.

## 1.4 The Scope of The Study

This study attempts to investigate the politeness strategies used by Sundanese speakers when they express their speech acts in every day context of situation specifically in spoken language. The pattern of speech acts is based on the Sundanese speakers. The expressions consists of requesting, command, advising, asking, forbidding, inviting, permitting, and recommending which are used by twenty Sundanese native speakers in conversation at Kecamatan Medan Tembung.

## 1.5 The Significance of The Study

This study is considered to enrich the theories of politeness strategies in Sundanese and the politeness strategies can influence in using Sunda language.



And the results of the study to contribute information about politeness strategies in Sundanese for students, lecturers, researchers, and government.



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