

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is an important tool of communication in human life to interact with other. The existence of language makes us easy to communicate in society. No society without language and no language without society. The usage of language as a tool of communication has several rules that should be obeyed by the speaker and listener. Every speaker and listener is responsible to the rules deviation of linguistics in communication. Thus, speaker and listener should cooperative in order to make good communication.

Everyone has certain intention in communication. The communication is expected to be understood by people who are involved in the process of communication. Communication process cannot always run smoothly because some participants in communication do not understand the message received. Therefore, the important of rules in language communication is needed to make the good communication process so that the purpose of communication can be reached.

In a banking environment, the front-line staff interacts the most with customers which means that they have to ensure not only that information is transmitted, but also that this is done in a way that complies with courtesy expectations of different cultures (Kyriakidou & Gore, 2005).

Due to these different expectations, misunderstandings are very likely to occur. Robertson (2003) points out that the front-line environment in any business is unique and in most cases distinctively different to the management and administrative divisions. Robertson proposes that there are a number of key characteristics that can help in understanding the front-line work place. Thus, he notes that front-line staff has very defined job roles and are in extensive interaction with the customers or the public.

Furthermore, there is a very hierarchical management structure and any communication follows this chain. Generally, the front-line environment has rather junior positions and mostly non-professional staff, even though the personnel often receive structured training when they are first employed. All these aspects put front-line employees into an interesting position in the banking environment and make them a group worthwhile to be researched. Even though the setting of the proposed research is in the banking industry, the findings could be relevant for any kind of front-line staff that deals with international customers. The study focuses on communication techniques that front-line staff uses as well as the effect of national and corporate culture on communication contexts in relation to the employment of polite behavior, or as it is more commonly referred to in the hospitality industry, courtesy.

In communication theory, there are two principles of language usage that are cooperative principle and politeness principle. The cooperative principle suggested that verbal communication is done straightforwardly, clearly, correctly and relevantly to the context. Politeness principle suggested that verbal

communication is done tactly, easily to accepted, generously, humbly, suitably and sympathetically.

Being polite is crucial to successful communication with other people and impoliteness negatively influences the way a person is perceived, bringing judgments of being “rude”, “uncooperative” or “offhand” (Watts, 2002, p. 2). The importance of being polite is caused by the content of conversation, since often what needs to be communicated is unpleasant and threatening to the hearer. Moreover, linguistic politeness is not only employed to mitigate face threatening acts, but the term is also often used for conventionalized forms of linguistic behavior, words like “please”, that occur even if no FTA is present.

Although antagonistic positions are one of the characteristics of the customers, the customer service still has to employ politeness to some extent, whether to mitigate a face threat that his question introduces or to soften the argumentativeness of his language in order not to be perceived as “rude” by the customers. To investigate the politeness strategies of Banking service communication, Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory is applied in this thesis, as it is the most influential and comprehensive model of politeness. Special attention is given to the choice between positive and negative strategies. Although they are used to attend to positive or negative face respectively, one speech act can threaten both faces at the same time (Huang, 2007) and thus the speaker must choose to which face he should primarily attend.

Based on the preliminary study, the researcher found that some customer services did not apply the politeness strategies while communicating to the

customers. This act made the service rank of the branch being decreased because the customers did not feel comfortable with the customer service, like the conversation below:

Customer Service (CS): Ada yang bisa dibantu Pak?

(What can I do for you Sir?)

Customer (C) : Gak bisa dipakai ATM ku

(My ATM card is broken)

CS : Saya cek Pak

(May I check Sir?)

C : Ini

(Here you are)

CS : Bapak salah masukkan PIN

(You entered wrong PIN)

C : Masak sih? PIN saya 4578, gak mungkin salah!

(Really? My PIN IS 4578, It could not be wrong!)

CS : Bener Pak, Bapak salah

(No, you are wrong)

C : Ah gak mungkin! Aku ingat kok PINku! Jadi kekmana ni?

(Impossible! I remember my PIN! So how about my ATM card?)

CS : Kita ganti PIN saja Pak, kena biaya Rp. 5.000

(We change the PIN Sir, it charged Rp. 5.000)

C : Aku gak salah, kena biaya pulak!

(I was not wrong! Why I must be charged!)

CS : Jadi gimana Pak? Kartu Bapak gak bisa dipakai kalau gak diganti

(So, how about your ATM card Sir? It cannot be used if the PIN is not changed)

C : Terserahlah! Kekmana lagi! Aku ingat PIN ku kok salah!

(It's up to you! What can I say! I remember my PIN, it Should not be wrong!)

CS : Ok Pak

(Ok, Sir)

The choice of politeness strategy in a Banking service communication depends also on the type of customer. One of the social variables that determine the weightiness of an FTA is social distance. This relationship works also in the opposite direction and by choosing certain politeness strategy, the customer service can manipulate the perceived social distance. From the conversation above, the customer service did not use the politeness strategies in delivering the cause of customer's problem, so it made the customer keep curious and confuse about his ATM card problem. If the customer service can apply the suitable strategies, the customer will be comfort and decrease his emotion. That's why the customer service should be informed the importance of politeness in communicating to the customers in avoiding unsatisfying service. The other case describes the politeness between Customer Service and Customer below:

CS : Pagi Bu, ada yang bisa dibantu?
(Morning Mam, what can I do for you?)

C : Saya mau cetak rekening koran
(I want to print my account statement)

CS : Periode kapan bu?
(What period Mam?)

C : Bulan September tahun 2012 mbak, ada yang mau saya lihat
(September 2012 miss, I want to see the transactions)

CS : Oh, kalau transaksi yang lama kali gak bisa disini bu, dicabang
sebelah, kesana aja ibu
(Oh, we cannot provide elder account statement here, it can be
gotten at next branch, you can go there)

C : Aduh! Cape kali kesana lagi! Disini ajalah, kelen mintakanlah,
malas aku ngantri lagi!
(Ouch! I'm tired to go there! I want it can be done here, you ask to
them, I'm lazy to queue again!)

CS : Cabang sebelah ini loh bu, kalau disini nanti jadi lama bu
(The next branch Mam, if you ask here it takes a long time Mam)

C : Tolonglah gak apa-apa lama
(Help me please, nevermind if it takes a long time)

CS : Ok Mam, ini akan kami teruskan, nanti kalau sudah ada balasan,
kami kabari ibu
(Ok Mam, we will follow up the files and if there is the reply,

We will inform you)

C : Ok, makasih ya

(Ok, thanks ya)

CS : Sama-sama bu

(You're welcome)

As the current economic growth, the banking sector plays an important role in advancing the economy of a country because almost all financial sectors always need Banking service. Mandiri bank as one of BUMN engaged in the national banking system always trying to prioritize customer satisfaction. Customer service is an employee who on duty and deal directly with customers to provide optimal services. They are responsible for serving all customers' needs satisfactorily, especially in terms of receiving complaints or concerns from customers, as well as trying to find a way out to solve customers, problems. Whereas the customer is a person or company that has a deposit account or loan and the financial transactions at a bank. This is the main reason that a customer service must be ethic in speaking especially to the customers.

As of September 2012, Bank Mandiri is the first largest bank in Indonesia by total assets. Based on mystery shopper method done by surveyor, in 2011 Bank Mandiri got average value 91.23 percent, a first time for a bank got more than 90 percent over 15 years survey. Bank Mandiri got Service Excellence Award for 7 times consecutives and got The Most Consistent Bank for 2 times. This is one of the reasons for the researcher to find the politeness strategies that are used by the

customer service in giving best solutions to their customers which affect this Bank service excellent.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background presented before, the problems of study are formulated as follows:

- 1.) What politeness strategies are used by Customer Service Staffs?
- 2.) How are the politeness strategies used by Customer Service Staffs to communicate with their customers?
- 3.) Why do the Customer Service Staffs use Politeness Strategies the way they do?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In accordance with the problem of study, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1.) To find out the politeness strategies used by Customer Service Staffs to communicate with their customers.
- 2.) To find out how the politeness strategies used by Customer Service Staffs to communicate with their customers.
- 3.) To find out why the politeness strategies used by Customer Service Staffs to communicate with their customers.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In order to be focus, the writer makes the scope of the study. The writer focuses on politeness strategy used by Customer Service in communications between Customer Service and customer. The writer uses the combination of politeness strategy of Brown and Levinson, and Leech's politeness maxims to analyze the politeness strategy.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The writer hopes this study will be significant theoretically and practically.

The theoretical significances are:

- 1.) To show the readers the types of politeness strategies used in conversation
- 2.) To show that people usually use the politeness strategy in their daily conversation whether they realize it or not, especially in Banking Service.

The practical significance of the study is to encourage another study of politeness strategy in other created discourses like novels, short stories or even field research about politeness strategy. The writer hopes this thesis can be one of the references.