

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Impoliteness is a field of pragmatics that has become relatively popular in recent years but has not gained nearly as much attention as linguistic politeness (Pennanen, 2013). Current scholars, most widely known Jonathan Culpeper and Derek Bousfield, have begun to alleviate this imbalance. Watts (2003) includes impoliteness in his attempts to theorize politeness. He states that greater attention on politeness instead of impoliteness can be considered as astonishing because it is specifically impolite behaviour that is more likely to be commented and judged in verbal interaction (Watts, 2003). In line with this, Eelen (2001:41) has noted that impoliteness has been ignored and called it as the conceptual bias in approaches to politeness. Thus, impoliteness is worth for study with social interaction for pragmaticians and sociolinguists, since it is part of it just as politeness but from different perspectives .

The idea of culture as system of shared norms leads to a vague distinction of which 'polite' and 'impolite'. Impoliteness evaluation is situational embedded and argumentative. Basically, impoliteness has several synonyms in the English language and somehow they all refer to the evaluation of negative behaviour (Culpeper, 2010:3233), because they attack somebody's identity or rights, and they cause specific emotional reactions (e.g. hurt, anger). It has been directly associated with the intentions of the speaker and perceptions of the hearer. As

impoliteness is assumed as attack someone's face, Culpeper (2005: 40) classifies impolite utterances into : (1) attacks on quality face (2) attacks on social identity face, (3) attacks on equity rights, and (4) attacks on association right.

In fact, there are certain rules that govern social interaction and any break of those rules creates impoliteness. For this reason, impoliteness is a break from the hypothesized norms of a community of practice (Mills, 2005: 262). According to Thomas' view (1995:149), impoliteness is the opposite of politeness in orientation to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). Thus, Culpeper explicitly abandons Brown and Levinson's distinction between positive and negative face and assesses interaction within context. Respectively, the context plays an essential role in the interpretation of impoliteness. Moreover, impoliteness can be interpreted differently by different persons depending on the context and other elements. Additionally, the hearer may interpret the speaker's utterances as impolite even though these utterances are not meant by the speaker and this will cause an attack between the speaker and the hearer.

Most of previous studies of impoliteness were made on face-to-face interactions or conversations, however. But these days, more and more people interact in the virtual world where they can see each other through computer screens or only through written text communication. As stated by Herring (2007) that communication, most basically stands for the exchange of information (be it ideational or relational), 'mediation' describes the fact that there is a technological means that is employed to communicate, and finally, 'computer' specifies that the means of mediation is related to technology, such as computers/internet, mobile

phones, video conferencing, etc. This has made computer mediated communication (CMC) become an interesting field to be studied.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) enables people to interact in far distant of space and time. Meanwhile, traditional tools for evaluating impoliteness in face-to-face interaction cannot be consistently applied to computer mediated communication (CMC). One characteristic feature, especially of many text-based CMC modes of communication (e.g., blogs, emails), is that they are 'anonymous' (faceless, bodiless) forms of interaction (Herring 2001: 621).

Furthermore, Suler (2004) claims that the disinhibition effect found online can be explained as follows: users perceive the anonymity and invisibility of the web in a sense of "you don't know me" and "you can't see me", thus giving users the feeling that they can act in a more unrestrained way. Also, according to Suler, the factor of asynchrony creates a sensation in users that they do not have to deal with immediate consequences in connection with their behaviour online. A sense of "see you later" creates a certain distance between the person and their actions online. One other factor, discussed by Suler, is the thought that users experience a sense of minimized authority in a CMC setting. The idea "we're equals" seems to influence the behaviour of users online. The explanation above gives the non-face-to-face communication such CMC more chance of doing impoliteness. In most cases, participants in CMC are more likely to use comparatively impolite ways in communication in comparison with face-to-face communication.

Online newspaper comments as one of CMC are an internet-based form of interactive audience participation (a successor to traditional forms such as letters

to the editor and speakers' corners [Baron 2008: 100]). Out of touch with the audience, Neurater-Kessels (2011:190) defines online newspaper comments as "interpersonal, written contributions by members of the newspaper readership and allow anonymous users to publicly share their personal opinion, discuss and debate newspaper content with a potentially vast readership. In her article 'Impolite reader responses on British online news site' Neurater-Kessels (2011) found that users of online newspaper comments use impoliteness to attack the journalist's authority, credibility and trustworthiness. She emphasizes that impoliteness towards the author of the articles were focussing on 9 main topics, which are: lack of balance wholeness, fairness and objectivity; lack of the judgement; lack of originality, lack of persuasiveness, lack of accuracy and truthfulness; lack of topic expertise; lack of consistency; and out of touch with reality.

In fact, impoliteness has also used in online news comment in Indonesian news sites, such as [viva.co.id](http://viva.co.id). [viva.co.id](http://viva.co.id) is a portal that serves the information and news with emphasis on speed and depth, which is established in 2008. It is a news and community portal which creatively combines texts, images, audio, and videos, in covering national and international issues. It is the most news demanding news portal that can be seen at <http://viva.co.id/>. This news site offers the opportunity to the readers to give their comment directly to the current news.

One of the examples of impolite reader response which has been found is in the article about "Ahok Minta Maaf kepada KH Ma'ruf Amin." Since Basuki Cahaya Purnama or Ahok became the one of the candidates in Jakarta's Governor

Election, he became one of the famous person in the news. Every information about him now has been the top news which attract many responses from the news readers. This article also has triggered some comments from the readers which contain impoliteness language. Those comments can be seen as the following:

1. *AK : coba tebak, Ahok minta maaf karena salah atau apa?*
2. *MLD : Lho koq minta maaf....? kan nggak salah....!!! (kl gitu salah dong).*
3. *JY : he he,, org ini mmg sangat menggemaskan.*

All the sentences above can be judged as impolite utterances because they attack the quality face of Basuki Cahaya Purnama. The first comment from AK, “*coba tebak, Ahok minta maaf karena salah atau apa?*” shows that AK is rising unpalatable question to other readers. It can be seen that AK seek disagreement. AK believes that Basuki Cahaya Purnama does not really realize his mistake and asking for apologize seriously but there is something beside it.

The impoliteness similarly occur to the second comment from MLD. He mock Basuki Cahaya Purnana by uttering “*Lho koq minta maaf....? kan nggak salah....!!! (kl gitu salah dong)*”. In this utterance, MLD makes a joke by mocking Basuki’s arrogance. He assumes that Basuki had never felt guilty about what he had done to KH. Ma'ruf Amin. But after many citizen had been angry to him because of his arrogance, Basuki sent a letter of asking for forgiveness to KH. Ma'ruf Amin. Sending apologize letter shows that Basuki actually made a mistake.

Another form of impoliteness occur in the third comment from JY. In his comment, JY mocks Basuki Cahaya Purnama by saying “*he he,, org ini mmg*

*sangat menggemaskan.*” From his utterances, JY show his feeling to other commentators. He feels that what has been done by Basuki Cahaya Purnama is something ridicules.

Contrary to Neurater – Kessels’ (2011) findings, all those comments from the example show the impoliness language are not addressed to the journalist, but the one mention in the article, Basuki Cahaya Purnama. Since the target of impoliteness in the reader response can be different, the impolite utterances found by Neuratel-Kessel also will be different with the reader response of viva.co.id news site.

Realize that viva.co.id as one of a famous news portal which include in the same group of ANTV and tvOne in managerial let their readers to give the comments in impolite ways is an unusual phenomenon actually. To overcome this phenomenon, Indonesian government has made the rules of Information and Electronic Transaction (ITE). But unfortunately, even the rules of ITE seem does not make any sense to our society. Thus, impolite utterances can be easily found in the comment section of viva.co.id.

All of this reasons make this phenomenon is fascinating to be further examined. Therefore, the researcher is intended to find out the types of impolite utterances are used by readers on their comment in viva.co.id news site, how and why they occur.

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

In relation to the background of the study presented above, the problems of the study are formulated as in the following:

1. What types of impolite utterances are used in readers responses on online news comments in viva.co.id news site?
2. How are the impolite utterances realized in readers responses on online news comments in viva.co.id news site?
3. Why are the impolite utterances used by the readers in their responses on online news comments in viva.co.id news site?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In line with the problems of the study, the objectives are to:

1. describe the types of impolite utterances used in reader responses on online news comments in viva.co.id news site;
2. describe the impolite utterances realized in reader responses on online news comments in viva.co.id news site;
3. explain the reasons of using language impoliteness which are used by the readers in their responses on online news comments in viva.co.id news site.

## **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

In this study, the researcher only deals with impolite utterances used in online news comment in Indonesian news sites, viva.co.id. This study is also

limited to the impolite utterances are proposed by Culpaper namely: (1) attacks on quality face (2) attacks on socialidentity face, (3) attacks on equity rights, and (4) attacks on association right, and the reasons of impoliteness occurs in comments of viva.co.id news site. This study is done in a Indonesian context, thus it might be different from studies done in other countries as culture and norms could also play a key role in the study.

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study are expected to be useful theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the reseach findings are useful for linguists to enrich their knowledge of impoliteness theory specifically to give a better understanding what impolite utterances found on reader responses in online newspaper. These findings are also useful for other researcher to get information how the realization impoliteness and why the readers' responses use impolite utterances.

Practically, the study are expected to have benefits to the readers news site so that they will be aware of politeness aspect in vonveying their responses especially in online news comments. Furthermore it is also expected that the finding of this study to be useful as a reference for other researcher who would conduct a further study about linguistics impoliteness especially in a discourse of computer mediated communiation (CMC).