

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Language – as an absolute needs – is used for communication to convey one's intention to each other in their social interactions. In conveying the intention, people use strategies in their communication as it is a part of the language user's communicative competence. The speakers communicative competence deals with Pragmatics (Traugott and Pratt, 1980: 226). Pragmatics determines our choice of wording and our interpretation of language in different situations. Just as rules exist for creating grammatical sentences, linguistic conventions guide the appropriate use of language in various contexts. For instance, the awareness of how we modify conversation when addressing different types of listeners. A greeting such as, "Hi, sweetie! What's up?" is more likely to be uttered to your little sister, while a greeting such as, "Hey Rud! How are you?" is used to greet your friend. Such greetings called as knowledge of pragmatics.

Pragmatics concerns with some fields and politeness is one of them. Politeness strategies are very important to investigate as it is used by people in their social interactions and in specific contexts, knowing what to say, how to say, when to say, and how to be with other people. Politeness involves talking account of the feelings to others (Brown, 1987: 296). 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 threat of addressee's face.

Politeness strategies are ways to convey the utterances as polite as possible. To achieve that, there are some strategies that can be applied in specific contexts used by an individual in certain society. It also relates to the speakers and hearers age, status, and power. Brown and Levinson in Goody (1978: 74) divided politeness strategies into two, namely: 1) '*bald on-record strategy*' and 2) '*off-record strategy*'. '*Bald on-record strategy*' could be divided also into two: (3) '*positive politeness strategy*' and (4) '*negative politeness strategy*'. '*Bald on-record strategy*' is a strategy used to say or act something in a direct way, for example: "Give me your pen", means that the speaker say the intention directly that one's need a pen. However, '*off-record strategy*' is the opposite one, a strategy used to say or act something in an indirect way, for example: "I forgot my pen", means that the speaker did not say directly what he wants but he actually has the same intention as the '*Bald on-record strategy*' that he needs a pen. '*Positive politeness strategy*' means being complimentary and gracious to the addressee, for example: "Why don't we go out for the seminar?" Meanwhile, '*Negative politeness strategy*' is to minimize requests without using the indirect forms by mitigating the imposition, for example: "Would you mind if I asked you to close the window?" In short, all people use politeness strategies in their communication that is why the researcher chooses politeness strategies to be analyzed.

The process of politeness strategies cannot be divided with speech acts. Speech acts are bits of speech produced as part of bits of social interaction. Gleason and Ratner (1998: 285) said that politeness strategies can be performed by two ways: 'direct speech acts' and 'indirect speech acts'. Direct speech acts are defined as those that use common syntactic forms to encode the common linguistic functions for which they are specifically designed to inform listeners. The form which frequently used is declarative. For instance, a witness might declare that, "The body was cold when I arrived." Typically, speakers use interrogative forms to request information. For example, the lawyer in the opening excerpt asks, "Who put them on the floor?" Imperative forms are the most direct way of commanding someone to do something such as, "Put your hand on the Bible and swear to tell the truth." Indirect speech acts are speech acts in which the literal meaning of a sentence is not what speakers intend to communicate. For example, the lawyer says, "I'm sorry?" not to genuinely apologize to the witness, but to command the witness to clarify his previous statement to make it clearer. Indirect speech acts can be performed by a question, for instance, "Could you pass the salt, please?"

The phenomena dealing with politeness strategies come from different language users such as adults, teenagers, or children and it can also relates to culture. In this research, children specifically children of seven years old will be the focus. It is in line with different subjects with different ages investigated and different focus so it produces different findings by those researchers.

At the age of seven years, the children begin to pay attention to others in communication. They need to play and to share with their friends. In this stage, intelligence is demonstrated through logical and systematic manipulation of symbols related to concrete objects. They have mastered their first language as they are categorized as school-aged-child (6-13 years old) or in other words they are called as learners. Just as what Gleason and Ratner (1998: 472) said that a child requires 10-12 years to achieve full control over oral and literate uses of a first language; starting somewhat later means somewhat faster acquisition, but nonetheless it is quite normal for school-aged children to take as long as 6 or 7 years to function like first language speakers, though some manage the first language in only 2 or 3 years. Piaget in Owens (1988: 127), gave additional statement to support Gleason and Ratner ideas about language mastery, he said that the concrete operational stage occurs in the age of 7-11 years old, and the characteristics which are found in this stage are the children thought characterized by conservation (the protection of the natural environment or the act of preventing something from being lost, wasted, damaged, or destroyed), decentration (honest and fair or treating people with respect), and reversibility (a process, an action, or a disease that can be changed so that something returns to its original situation).

Seven-years-old typically display an unending thirst for knowledge and will have an innate curiosity and excitement about things in the world. They often ask questions about everything from why the sky is blue to where babies come from. Seven-years-old children also take great pride in sharing their knowledge about things, and often enjoy showing younger children skills that they

themselves have mastered. For a 7-years-old, there will be a sense of confidence at school that comes from being familiar with the ins and outs of being a student in a classroom. The seven-years-old children will often feel a sense of pride about having achieved basic math and reading skills, and may want to discuss what they learned in school with parents, friends, and caregivers. Furthermore, the children of seven years old sometimes are able to use politeness strategy such the following:

Ibu: "Adek makan sayur ya!"

Mother: "Please, eat the vegetable, honey!"

Anak: "Bu, sayurinya ngga enak."

Child: "The vegetable is not tasty, mom."

The example of politeness strategy above comes from a seven years old girl to refuse what her mom wants her to do. The mother or people around the girl never teach the girl in saying such an utterance directly but the girl knows that such a kind of utterance is polite that is why she uses it. She chooses to say "Bu, sayurinya ngga enak." ("*The vegetable is not tasty, mom.*") rather than saying directly "Aku ngga mau makan sayur." ("I don't want the vegetable.") or shaking her head to refuse what her mom offered. The politeness strategy can also found in the following conversation which produced by one of the subject of this research.

A: "*Bu, semalam kok ngak datang?*"

A: "Why didn't you come yesterday, maam?"

Peneliti: "*Semalam kan hari Minggu, de?*"

Researcher: "Yesterday is Sunday, right?"

The utterance, “*Bu, semalam kok ngak datang?*” (“Why didn’t you come yesterday, maam?”) is polite. Nevertheless, an adult never teach the girl about that but she knows that it is a good way in asking such a question to the researcher. The utterance as a whole showed that the girl wants to comraderie herself to the researcher in which the researcher is a new comer in her school. And the used of ‘*bu*’ here shows respect used at school in common in Indonesia. So, she conveys it that way. A child’s ability in saying such both examples above is contributed by her on going cognitive development.

However, the children of seven years old sometimes are not able to use politeness strategy in their communication naturally so they should be taught how to use it properly as their psychosocial still also develops, for example:

Child : “Mommy, I want an ice cream.”

Mother : “Is that the way to ask?”

Child : “Please!”

Mother : “Please what?”

Child : “Please buy me an ice cream.”

Mother : “No.”

Child : “Please . . .”

Mother : “Please, may I buy an ice cream?”

Child : “Please, may I buy an ice cream?”

The example above showed that the adult particularly parents took a part in teaching politeness strategies to the children.

It seemed obvious that children mastered polite forms as a part of politeness strategies partly as a result of their increasing cognitive capacities and partly because they were motivated or even forced to be polite, and hence socially accepted by people around them (Gleason and Ratner, 1998: 376).

For that reason, the researcher chose three children of seven years old as her subject as the children at the ages never investigated yet by other researchers. Another reasons in choosing three children were because the thing to investigate was not the number of the children but the strategies used by the children in their communication. Beside that, although there were some children of seven years old in the school, not all parents permitted their children to be observed. That was why she chose three of them to be analyzed.

The children of seven years used politeness strategies in their daily activities, such as: at school, at home, in playing game, or wherever they were and whatever they did. The children of seven years were categorized as learners that was why the researcher decided to investigate the three children at school, SD RK. Makmur, Budi Murni 7 which located in Jl. Durung No. 178 Medan, whether inside the classroom when they follow the teaching learning process and outside the classroom for instance when they play games with their friends in resting time, when the three subjects talk with their teachers, their parents, or their caregivers but it is still in the area of the school.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background above, the researcher formulated the problems as in the following:

1. What types of politeness strategy used by seven-years-old children at school?
2. How children of seven-years-old used politeness strategies at school?
3. Why do children of seven-years-old used the politeness strategies at school as they are?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the types of politeness strategy used by seven-years-old children at school.
2. To find out the process of using politeness strategies by seven-years-old children at school.
3. To find out the reasons of using politeness strategies by seven-years-old children at school.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

There are a lot of ways in analyzing the children's speech by looking at their ways in communication. In this thesis, the researcher focuses on politeness strategies used by children, especially in three children at the age of 7 years old.

The researcher will use politeness strategies theory proposed by Brown and Levinson.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This research was expected to benefit theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically, this study was expected to contribute as useful references for those who want to make a further research on the same area with different focus and object.
2. Practically, this study could be made as the model for parents, teachers, and readers who directly touch this area in order to be able to guide the children in using politeness strategies.