

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.The Background of the Study

Speakers and hearers must have intention not to be offended or need to be honored when doing communication. They do want to keep harmony. This kind of naturally intention relates to what term as politeness. Politeness is a way to polish the behavior, minimize conflict, keep cooperative interaction and smoothen the communication. Because of politeness has a great role and impact in communication, the language users or learners do need to be aware and understand about it. Politeness also exist in all kinds of speech act. Here the researcher is interesting in refusal which is a kind of initial respond of an act which has a great risk in threatening both the speaker and hearer face in communication. Since the goal of politeness is avoiding conflict, keeping cooperative principle and maintaining the mutual face so the researcher wonder how the English Foreign Learner will refuse something considering that goal of polite communication.

Politeness is inter-related to culture, what is regarded polite in one culture may not be the same among other cultures, the way to show politeness is also different among cultures. Every language community has a system of politeness, but the details associated with that system will vary since face is associated with the most essential cultural ideas concerning the nature of the social persona, honour, shame and thus to religious

concepts (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Watts (2003) also states that culture manifests in one's identity, and consequently one's linguistic interpersonal behaviour is regarded driven by one's cultural identity. Since values and perceptions vary across cultures, politeness also seems to be a culture-specific phenomenon. From those theories that state the relation of politeness and culture, it is concluded that culture have the effects on politeness. Cultural effects on politeness are proved by the different strategies used by some Indonesian cultures which have different way in refusal. Bataknese tends to use direct refusal strategy while Malay tends to use indirect strategy.

In addition, discussing about English Foreign Language learner, it must also interrelated to interlanguage which is a linguistic stage or new language created by EFL learners. As interlanguage must be faced by the EFL learners when learn English as a target language, here the researcher assume that interlanguage stages may have the effect to EFL learners' way in producing politeness in English refusals because each EFL learner must have different interlanguage, so their ways to refuse are also varied. This assumption is supported by Tarone (2001) which states during the process of L2 learning, the learner create the interlanguage system derived from the learner's internal processing so that the learner's performance is variable and learners interlanguage keep changing until the target language system is fully shaped. From that explanation, it is clear that each EFL learner has different interlanguage.

Based on those two theories about cultural effect on politeness and interlanguage on EFL learning context, the researcher find out the gap between those theories that trigger the researcher to conduct this research in EFL context. Does it culture which make the differences of EFL politeness in refusal? or does it interlanguage stage? The background why the researcher interest in conducting this research is illustrated in this diagram below.

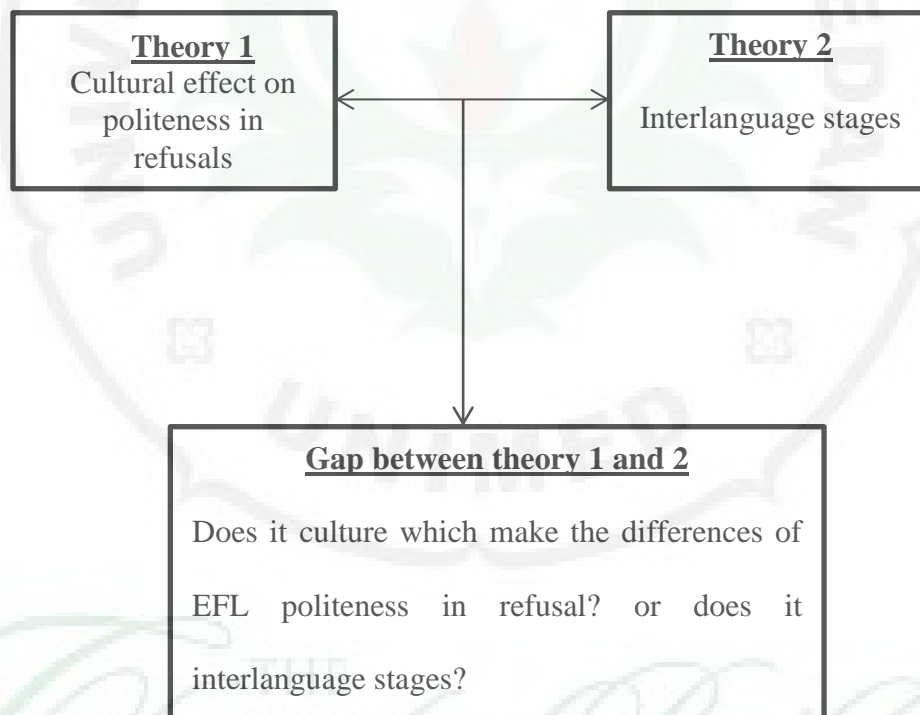


Figure 1. Gap between theory 1 and 2

Some preliminary data to support the gap theory is also collected. The data are from four EFL students who have different culture (2 Batakese and 2 Malay students). The four students were asked how to refuse in two situations given. The first situation was “You have a friend, He asks you to

lend him your phone to do his school project. What do you say to refuse him?. The second situation was “You have a friend, He invites you to come to his birthday party on this Saturday. What do you say to refuse him?”. Their answers were explained in Table below.

Table 1.1. Refusal by Bataknese and Malay EFL Students

	Batak 1	Batak 2	Malay 1	Malay 2
	I no want, I afraid broken.	I’m sorry. I’m very busy Saturday.	Nothing pulse, sorry.	I’m so sorry. I’m very busy in this weekend.
Strategy	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect

Based on those preliminary data, the refusal strategies used by the Bataknese, and Malay EFL students are different. Some of them used direct strategies while some others used indirect strategies. Bataknese are usually straight to the point and say something directly while Malay are indirectly. But here, two Bataknese students used indirect and direct strategy and two Malay students used direct and indirect strategies too. Looking at that fact, the researcher assume that the indirect strategies used by Bataknese and direct strategies used by Malay students are caused by interlanguage stage not the culture. Because if it is culture that affect the refusal, both Bataknese and Malay students should refuse in the same way that is Bataknese refuse directly while Malay refused indirectly.

Based on the preliminary data, the refusal strategies produced by the Bataknese and Malay EFL students are different. Batak culture tends to

straight to the point, but here the data showed that the Batakese students refuse directly and indirectly. It is contradictory with the tendency of Batakese who usually speak in direct way, so do the Malay. Looking at those preliminary data, make the researcher's assumption stronger that interlanguage stages can also affect the politeness in EFL especially in refusals. Although culture can affect the politeness in refusal but different interlanguage stages can affect them too.

Many previous study have conducted the study about politeness in refusal such as Satıca and Ciftci (2018) who examined refusal strategies of Turkish learners of English and explore their perceptions of social factors that are influential in their strategy use. The findings showed that Turkish learners of English employed a lot more strategies when the initiating act was invitation. Additionally, Turkish learners of English were found to use indirect strategies more than direct strategies and adjuncts.

Iliadi and Larina (2017) studied similarities and differences between the ways of refusing requests, offers and invitations in different social contexts in two languages and cultures. The study has found that the Russians use more direct strategies than the British and the British do more face-work to mitigate their refusal, they use both negative and positive strategies. The difference strategy used by the Russian and British is because cultural differences and values. British is closer to Anglo culture while Russian is closer to Hebrew so it affects the strategy used by both Russian and British.

Rahayu (2019) investigates the speech act recognition of refusing as made by Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language, native Indonesian, and native English. The results show that Indonesian EFL learners (IELs) tend to use their native culture in refusing. The most different strategy used are “directly say no” and “put the blame on the third party”. Most native speakers (NSs) easily say “no” directly when they want to refuse compared to Indonesian native Speakers (INSs) and IELs

From those some previous studies, the research is interested in conducting the research related to the culture and interlanguage stages effects in politeness of refusal. In fact, there is still no researcher which conducts this research on Indonesian EFL learners who have different cultures and interlanguage stages.

1.2. The Problems of the Study

Based on the observation above, the research problems are formulated as follow:

1. How are politeness in refusals realized by the subjects of different culture and interlanguage stages?
2. Why are politeness in refusals realized as the way they do?

1.3. The Objectives of the Study

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

1. to analyze the way how the the subjects of different culture and interlanguage stages form politeness in refusals
2. to investigate the underlying reasons why politeness in refusals realized as the way they do

1.4. The Scope and Limitation of the Study

EFL students can range from Elementary students to University students in both state and private education institution. This is too broad and therefore it is narrowed to Junior High School students grade IX in two schools. One school in the strong Batak atmosphere (North Tapanuli) and one other in Malay atmosphere (Asahan). Politeness is also a broad concept and too broad to study too, therefore it is also limited to *refusal*. Many aspects of *refusal* can be studied, but this study focuses only to their ways of forming politeness in refusal as well the underlying reasons of this production. The limitation of the study is the data collected by using Discourse Completion Task (DCT) not the natural data because of the consideration of time in research.

1.5. The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to be significant and relevant theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically

This study is expected to wider and strengthen the theory of politeness and culture, politeness in refusal and interlanguage stages on EFL students' politeness.

2. Practically

The findings are contributed to:

- a. English Foreign learners in their attempt to improve their communication in English.

- b. The teachers, lecturers or educators to enrich their attempts in providing the materials and teaching English especially the politeness in refusal with the consideration of the students' culture and interlanguage stages.
- c. The writer as her motivation to improve her skill and knowledge in teaching English especially politeness in refusal with the consideration of the students' culture and interlanguage stages.



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