

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Background of the Study

Politeness is applied by someone because he wants to respect the hearer. Politeness is not something we are born with, but something we have to learn and be socialized into, and no generation has been short of teachers and handbooks on etiquette and ‘correct behavior’ to help us acquire polite skills (Watts, 2003;9). So, given the everyday nature of politeness, it might seem surprising to learn not only that it occupies a central place in the social study of language, but also that it has been the subject of intensive debate in linguistic pragmatics, sociolinguistic and, to a lesser extent, social theory for several years now.

In interaction, sometimes people speak to their friends, family or someone else. People must constantly make choice of many different kinds: what people want to say, how people want to say it, and the specific sentence type, words, sounds that best unite what and how. It is related to Wardhaugh (1992) who said that how people say something is at least as important as what people say; in fact, the content and the form are quite inseparable, being but two facts of the same object. Besides that, in interaction the conversation sometimes cannot be successful because of misunderstanding between speaker and hearer during the

conversation. Thus, politeness is really needed to build a good relationship and to have a good social interaction with other people.

In other word, politeness is the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward another. Furthermore, according to Yule (1996), politeness is a system of interpersonal

relations designed to facilitate interaction by human interaction by minimizing potential conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange. It is related to Lakoff (1973) who said that politeness is a strategy used by the speaker to avoid conflict with the hearer. It means that problem can be found in a communication process because of different assumptions, conventions or others. As stated by Grice (1975) who said that human communication should be explained as a form of social interaction whose success depends on the interactants' presumption that communicative behavior is driven by certain norms and rules.

Moreover, Politeness is one of the most important and productive areas of the research. It can be seen from the concept of politeness of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, which was first published in 1978 and then reissued, with a long introduction, in 1987. They define politeness as regressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of 'face-threatening acts' (FTAs) (Brown & Levinson: 1987).

It is clearly that the importance in cross-cultural communication is obvious and therefore, comparative studies of the conceptualization and manifestations of

politeness in different cultures must be regarded as vital in an era of growing internationalization. Even Murni (2010) assumes that the roles of linguistic politeness in Indonesia cannot be denied. She states that since reformation era, many critics have been uttered when Indonesian people talk to each other especially in their daily life.

In other aspects, the necessary of being polite is required highly but politeness itself has been scrapped. Politeness is one way of people in being polite to construct a harmony in term of communication. Lakoff in Yule (2002: 60) states politeness as “a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange.” In other words, politeness assists us to avoid conflict which probable happens in our daily life. Therefore, it is very important to understand the norm of politeness and apply it well when talking with others. Therefore, it seems impossible for people to interact with others without language in their daily life. By language, people can express their feeling, opinion, ambitions, willing, etc. It means that language is one way to explore people’s idea that relates to the real life in their daily communication. Someone’s behavior can be seen by the use of language. The use of language flaccidity, politely, gentlemanly, systematically, regularly, clearly and simply can reflect the character of who says it. All of it can appear on their face. It is based on the argument of Brown & Levinson (1987). It can be concluded that, all man kind in their lively need communication to socialize with someone elsein society which can be formulated with two ways of communicating and interacting by using oral and written speech.

The English language is full of these little formalities, which can definitely determine whether you are going to make a good first impression on someone or not. Sometime, the unspoken etiquette appear when asking for information, or even when some people are offering something and they have to take into consideration how they are offering it. Using 'please' and 'thank you' is necessary in most situations. Fabio (2012) adds that being polite, it does not only rely solely on the use of "please" and "thank you" when talking to other people. He even suggests that it is very common for travelers who visit foreign countries to regard their people as rude or impolite that they have to pay attention and be careful there, because there is no universal model of politeness, and they might find and jump at unfair conclusions if it does not take that fact into consideration. Even though, in many situations, people expect a sort of indirect way of speaking to each other, which is a little silly.

Based on the preliminary observation at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran, the researchers found that one way of educating students in the classroom can be done and conducted through the use of politeness strategies. But, in communication in the classroom, teachers and students are still not quite aware about the ability to take a part in the communication process based on the ways in which the language usage. Schwarz et al (2009:1) state that classroom interaction is the process-product perspective helps correlating between teacher's action and students' further outcome.

It means that classroom interaction is a process that is conducted by teachers in order to help the students for getting the good result at the end of teaching. In the same rhymes, it is included of their construction of sentences, their 'ways of

getting their message across' (Schwarz et al: 2009) and also how they relate to each other in playing a very important role in the nature and quality of the interaction. Another aspect of education is the teacher. Teachers as a model, a motivator, an educator, and a facilitator have important roles in the classroom. All behavior, gesture and actions of the teachers give effect directly to students.

From this point of view, the researcher is interested in analyzing teachers politeness strategies which are usually used by English teachers based on gender in English classroom interaction and to explain the reasons of teachers' politeness strategies are realized by English teachers based on gender in English classroom interaction. It is because the researcher believes that there must be some politeness strategies used by English teachers of SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran. Moreover, in order to make it in a good title of thesis, the researcher is interested in conducting a research under the title: "Teachers' Politeness Strategies Used in English Classroom Interaction Based on Gender at SMA Negeri 3 Kisaran".

#### **B. The Problems of the Study**

Through this study, the problems of the study are formulated as the following:

1. What kinds of politeness strategies are used by English teachers based on gender in English classroom interaction?
2. Why are the teachers' politeness strategies realized by English teachers based on gender in English classroom interaction?

### **C. The Objectives of the Study**

Based on the background, the problems can be identified:

1. To identify and to analyze the kinds of politeness strategies used by English teachers based on gender in English classroom interaction.
2. To explain the reasons of the teachers politeness strategies are realized by English teachers based on gender in English classroom interaction.

### **D. The Scope of the Study**

It was based on the study of pragmatics. The scope of the research will be limited to the use of politeness strategies in teaching English in the classroom which were used verbally in oral speech by teachers based on gender. There are kinds of politeness namely politeness principle, face threatening act, and politeness strategies. The researcher focused of politeness strategies in Brown and Levinson theory (1987), namely (1) bald on record, (2) positive politeness, (3) negative politeness, (4) off record strategy.



## **E. The Significances of the Study**

The findings of the research are expected to provide information which may have theoretical as well as practical value for English teacher.

### **1. Theoretically**

This research is expected to all of the teachers to know how to the use the kinds of politeness strategies in teaching English in the classroom because teachers as a model will be imitated by their students. It would teach them how to communicate well. Therefore, it is not only teaching students to be smart but also teachers teach about attitude and behavior as their guidance when they socialize in outside of the school. Furthermore, the urgency of character's education in Indonesia is needed and be important as motivation's need to students. Politeness strategies must be considered when teachers teach in the classroom.

### **2. Practically the findings will be useful:**

#### **a. For the student**

This research is expected to provide a lot of information about teachers politeness strategies used in English classroom interaction based on gender to increase their knowledge of politeness strategies that be used in teaching.

**b.** For the lecturers

This research is expected to provide additional information for lecturers as advisors for students who conduct research on teachers' politeness strategies used in English classroom interaction based on gender.

**c.** For the other researcher

This research is expected to be a reference for those who want to conduct a research about teachers' politeness strategies used in English classroom interaction based on gender.

