CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) is a branch of second language acquisition research. One of its aims is to study how non-native speakers perform a particular speech act in a target language. Research in interlanguage pragmatics has shown that English language learners" performance of speech acts is often different from that of native English speakers because the learners have limited knowledge of L2"s pragmatic rules and transfer their native pragmatic rules into their L2 communication. Zegarac and Pennington"s definition on pragmatic transfer is the influence of newly learned second language knowledge by the existing native language knowledge in mind. Such pragmatic transfer is shaped by culture-specific knowledge (Zegarac and Pennington, 2000). When people from different cultures communicate with each other without perceiving their different culture, miscommunication may probably happen and pragmatic transfer may probably occur.

Since Indonesian language and English language belong totwo different language systems, evidence of pragmatic transfer of Indonesia into English by Indonesian learners of English is most likely to be identified in their intercultural communication.One pragmatic transfer which can possibly occur inthe intercultural communication of Indonesian learners ofEnglish is expressing expressive speech act. Expressives are speech acts whose illocutionary content is the expression of a psychological state about oneself or the world (Searle and Vanderveken, 1985).

Put it more simply, expressives speech act which consist of complaint, refusal, apology. Complaint is seen as an illocutionary actin which the speaker expresses negative feelings toward the hearer. The speaker does so because s/he thinks that the hearer should be responsible for a socially unacceptable past event.

A refusal is a speech act by which a speaker refuses "to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor" (Chen, Ye, & Zhang, 1995: 121). Apology has been defined as regretful acknowledgement of fault or failure.

Since Indonesian and English speakershave different perceptions of how expressive speech act should be conducted, it is more likely that pragmatic transfer of Indonesian will occur in the their intercultural communication of Indonesian learners of English. According to Brown and Levinson"s politeness theory (1987), this speech act is regarded as a face threatening act since the speaker is insome way intruding into the hearer"s world by performing an act that concerns what the latter should do.

Since pragmatic transfer in expressive speech act by Indonesian learners of English can cause the breakdowns in their intercultural communication, it is needed to investigate Indonesian learners" pragmatic transfer in expressive speech act strategies in order to know how learners" culture-specific backgrounds affect their pragmatic competence in English. In so doing, the pedagogical implications can be brought forth and inspire both language teachers and language learners.

Speech act and politeness are two unseparated things, they have close relationship in term of communication. Due to the terms of communication, when people want to interact with others of course s/he uses a language and s/he has to consider the way they interact, they have to consider the term of politeness in expressing speech act. Since speech act and politeness become an interesting topic to be learned, it is considered that social distance, formality of issue and power difference would play important roles in determining the strategies in doing politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987: 74) consider a number of variables which might affect the politeness strategies, such as power, distance, and rank of imposition. Whereas according to Holmes (1995), there are three dimensions which have proved useful in analysing linguistic politeness, namely " solidarity-social dimension, the power dimension, and the formality dimension. Therefore, power, distance, and rank of imposition are important in determining politeness strategies.

One person may be said to have power over another to the degree that he or she is able to control the behaviour of the other. Power is a relationship between at least two persons, and it is nonreciprocal in the sense that both cannot have the same power in the same area of behaviour. One of the factors influencing power differences is the age differences. Conversations between people of different ages frequently show different strategy of politeness. Mizutani and Mizutani (1987:4) affirm that differences in age will influence the formality of speakers and hence the degree of politeness. It has become a rule in Japan that older people talk in a familiar way toward younger people, and younger people talk politely to older people. In contrast, people of the same age commonly use familiar speech styles in conversation.

Another aspect of power is the notion of status, which is derived from the Latin term for „standing‟ and relates simply to one‟s position in society, conferring „rights and obligations upon a person as a citizen within a political community‟ (Turner, 1988:2). According to Bonvillain (1993:145-146), status differences may be based on „combinations of income, occupation, education, and resulting differences in access to social, economic, and/or political power and this reflect inequalities among sectors of a population‟. Such aspects of power relations determine the low or high level of conversations. Brown and Levinson‟s idea in this case is that „the more powerful a person, the more influential he is in the conversations‟. His level of politeness may even decrease to less polite speech. Another factor relating to differences in communicative styles is gender, based on the idea that men and women are different in their language.One of the differences is that women are said to be more polite than men. According to Speer (2002:347), women have a higher tendency than men to apply politeness strategies in their speech such as the use of more compliments and more apologies. Hobbs (2003:243) notes that when talking with same sex peers, women will use many positive politeness strategies. On the other hand, men in similar circumstances do not show this tendency.

Beside the above factors, being familiar between the interlocutors will influence the ways to be polite. Brown and Levinson (1987:74) called this „social

distance" and referred it as "the degree based on stable social attributes the reflex of social closeness". This suggests that how familiar speakers are with each other will determine how politely they behave. The closer they are, the less polite they need to be. Situation or speech situation, either formal or informal, is also an influential factor in communication. Normally, people talking in formal situations will use more polite speech whereas in informal situations, speakers tend to use a more familiar style of speech. In addition, people also change levels of speech depending on the situation, even when talking with the same person. Holmes (1995:17) refers to this as the "formality dimension", which concerns the situational factors that influence people to be polite or not.

Thus, from the elaboration above it can be concluded that the politeness is affected of three essential variables, namely power/ power dimension, distance/ solidarity- social distance dimension, and rank of imposition/ the formality dimension.

This study is necessary to be conducted because through this study, it can give information to the reader generally and to the students especially in order to make them know how to communicate with the lecturers well. Therefore, Students- lecturers interaction are necessary to be noticed, because in teaching and learning program, they will have interaction in expressing something, it can be requesting, refusing, complaining and so on. Researcherwas really interested to make a research in this study because in their daily language, they have different politeness strategies to different lecturers. It is proved in the preliminary data which resesarcher did, it was by administering wDCT. This example is one of their utterances which researcher found in wDCT.

Case : refusal

"You are a student who arrives half an hour late to class because you had to go to the doctor for an important health issue. The course policy states that late arrivals are not permitted, except for serious documented excuses. The lecturer tells you that your *behaviour is* disruptive and asks you to leave the class.

You refuse your lecturer by saying:

<u>For female lecturer</u>

Student: " Sorry mam, I have to go to the hospital first because I have tocheck my health. This is not my want to come late. (positive politeness)

<u>For male lecturer</u>

Student: "Sorry sir, I didn't intend for coming late at your class. I also didn't want this is happened.."(bald on record)

<u>For female lecturer</u>

Student: " Sorry mam, I come late. But, I didn't want this is happened. Please allow me to join the class mam. For the next I will not do it anymore." (positive politeness)

From the examplesabove, it can be seen that students o STKIP Tapanuli Selatan Padangsidimpuan have different politeness strategies to different lecturers. They prefer to use bald on record strategy to oldermale lecturer and prefer to use positive politeness strategy to younger female lecturers. It means there is possibility that not all of four types of politeness strategies stated by Brown and Levinson occur in an interaction and not all male lecturerswill get more polite language than others.

The facts above motivated the researcher to conduct a study dealing with politeness strategies used in expressive speech acts in classroom interaction to know whether students of university especially of STKIP Tapanuli Selatan Padangsidimpuan use the four typesof politeness strategies stated by Brown and Levinson in their expressive speech acts.

1.2 Problems of the Study

The problems of the study are formulated as in the following.

1. What types of politeness strategies are used by the students of STKIP Tapanuli SelatanPadangsidimpuan in class interaction with different power of lecturers in expressing complaint, refusal, and apology?

2. How are those types of politeness strategies realized by the students of STKIP Tapanuli Selatan Padangsidimpuan in expressing complaint, refusal and apology?

3. Why are the types of politeness strategies realized the way they are?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems, the objectives of the study are :

1) to describe the types of politeness strategies used by the students of STKIP Tapanuli Selatan Padangsidimpuan in expressing complaint, refusal and apology.

2) to explain how those types of politeness strategies are realized by students in expressing complaint, refusal and apology by the students of STKIP Tapanuli Selatan Padangsidimpuan.

3) to find out the reason why the types of politeness strategies are realized as the way they are.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

In this study, the discussion focus on power differences in determining politeness strategies . The power tends to be reflected to age and gender. Ages influence the formality of speakers and speech styles in conversation. Further, gender plays important roles in some speech acts of human communication. Therefore, this study is limited on different power of lecturers in determining politeness in English which case consists of complain, refusal and apology. The researcher limit these three cases because it potential for Face Threathening Acts.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This study is expected to have both theoretical and practical significance for the readers. Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to enrich the theories of politeness strategies especially in the classroom interaction. They are also expected to give the contribution as guiding information for sociolinguistics students who are interested in the study of politeness.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be useful for students and readers. Firstly for students, they can use the politeness strategies either in the university and in the society. Secondly for the readers, the findings of this study can be made as the model in order to guide the readers in expressing and using politeness in their daily communication.