

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Gratitude is one of the most frequently used speech acts in everyday interactions. Expressing gratitude is an important component of social interaction, fostering healthy relationships between individuals. Cui (2012) stated that the wrong expression of gratitude could damage the relationship between the speaker and the listener. McCullough et al. (2002) define gratitude as a personality trait as 'a general tendency to recognise the role of others in one's positive outcomes and experiences and to respond to them with gratitude.

Emmons (2004) stated that gratitude is "thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether that gift is a tangible benefit from another person or a happy moment evoked by the beauty of nature. Gratitude can be expressed by thanking, praising, and appreciating (Pishgadam et al 2011),

Like other types of speech acts, gratitude also has several strategies for expressing gratitude. According to Cheng (2005), there are eight types of gratitude strategies: thanking, appreciation, repayment, recognition of imposition, apology, positive feelings, other, and alerter. These types of gratitude strategies can be found in everyday interactions, especially among students who always interact with each other on campus, so it is not surprising that these strategies are easy to find. However, Each student's application of gratitude strategies may differ. Aside from cultural differences, gender differences have shown a contribution to

gratitude expression. Mills (2003) points out that gender could be playing a significant role in the appropriateness in different situations and that gender and politeness relationship is even more complex compared to cultural factors. Here are the examples of a gratitude expression:

Female : “Excuse me sis, thank you so much for finding my wallet”

Male : “Hey sis, thanks a lot”

The first expression of gratitude was given by a female student and the second by a male student in response to the same situation, the gratitude strategies used were alerter and thanking. However, there are differences between the two students in expressing gratitude. The female participant used 'excuse me sis' which belongs to the attention-getter category and 'thank you very much for finding my wallet' which belongs to the category of thanking by stating the favor, while the male student used 'hey sis' which also belongs to the attention getter category and 'thank you very much' which belongs to the category of simple thanking. From both analyses, it can be concluded that female student is chattier than the male who only say what he needs to say.

Many researchers have conducted gratitude strategy research, one of them is research conducted by Bakircia et al. (2020), which investigated English speakers' gratitude strategies in interlanguage pragmatics by comparing EFL learners in Turkey and non-native European English speakers at tertiary level. The researchers used the data classification theory of gratitude strategy from Cheng (2005) and the data collection technique Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The writer used the Exploratory Mixed Methods Paradigm in this research to process

the data. Primary findings indicated strong divergences and weak similarities between both speaker groups, who resorted to the speech act of thanking compared to non-native European speakers who also differed in gratitude strategies.

Related to the research on gratitude strategies mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is clear that previous research differs from this research regarding the object of analysis and research methods used. In this study, the writer analyzed gratitude strategies used by male and female students of the Faculty of Language and Arts. This can help determine if there are differences in the way both genders express gratitude in various situations. Students from this faculty have gained in-depth knowledge and experience in understanding language structure, proper word usage, and the ability to express themselves clearly and effectively. Students from this faculty are also native Indonesians, who are certainly more flexible in expressing their gratitude in their own language. In this study, the object to be studied has never been researched by others, which means that this object is the first in the study of gratitude strategies.

In this study, the data used are expressions of gratitude from students of the Faculty of Language and Arts using Indonesian, this is done because this faculty consists of various majors and study programmes so that not all students can use English, this is also done so that these students can be more flexible and varied in expressing gratitude. To process the data this study used a qualitative design with an interview study via questionnaires as the research method, which will be collected using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). This study used Cheng's

(2005) theory, which has previously been widely used by other authors, proving that this theory is highly appropriate.

B. The Problem of the Study

Related to the background of the study, the problems of the study are:

1. What common gratitude strategies are used by students of the Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan?
2. How do female and male Language and Arts students of Universitas Negeri Medan differ in expressing gratitude?

C. The Objectives of the Study

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

1. To find out the common gratitude strategies used by students of the Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan.
2. To reveal the differences in the use of gratitude strategies by female and male students of the Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Medan.

D. The Scope of the Study

This study will provide a clear understanding of gratitude strategies as outlined in Cheng's (2005) theoretical framework. This research will explain the different aspects of gratitude strategies, such as expression, acceptance, and personal attribution. To identify the gratitude strategies used by male and female Faculty of Language and Arts students in responding to various situations. The study will explore the similarities and differences in using these strategies. To conduct this

study, the author used 30 participants consisting female and male from Faculty of Language and Art Universitas Negeri Medan. In describing the use of the gratitude strategy, the authors used a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisting of 10 situation description scenarios. The design of each situation provides various forms of situational scenarios that can stimulate participants to give their gratitude response.

E. The Significance of the Study

The writer hopes this study on gratitude strategy used by English literature students has theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretically

This research is expected to add insight into speech act theories, especially gratitude strategies for students or people who want to conduct research on gratitude strategies.

2. Practically

This research is expected to be useful for readers in applying gratitude expression, especially in interacting with others.

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