

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents about the introduction on the study covering: context of the study; research questions; research objectives; research scope and limitation; significance of the study; and definition of the key term.

### 1.1 Context of the Research

In order to be able to communicate in the target language successfully, learners need to know how to use their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary appropriately depending on the context and the people they are speaking to. This type of competence is called *pragmatic competence*. Pragmatic competence is part of *communicative competence*. Communicative competence was introduced by Hymes (1972), pointing out that knowing and being able to speak a language involves not only possessing linguistics knowledge, but also an ability to use that knowledge in communication, which requires possessing social and cultural knowledge as well. In other words, mastering only grammar vocabulary is not enough. Another competence needed is pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language effectively and appropriately. The ability to use language effectively is in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand a language in context (Thomas, 1983). In addition, pragmatic competence is understood as the knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realizing particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts, and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular language's linguistic resources. Fernandez-Amaya (2008) states that lack of ability to employ the pragmatic aspects or inability to speak English

appropriately according to whom, how, when, and what they speak to leads to misunderstanding and miscommunication.

One of pragmatic competence concern is speech act. Speech act is something expressed by an individual that not only presents information, but performs an action as well (Austin, 1975). The speech act can be divided into several acts which one of them is the act of requesting. The interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics fields has widely examined the speech act of requesting. Blum-Kulka & Olhstain (1984) conducted CCSARP project covering the differences of requesting and apologizing between native and non-native speakers. More studies are carried up in requesting act field such as Daskalovska et al (2016); Flores-Salgado & Castineira-Benitez (2018); and Tarawneh (2019).

A request consists of an illocutionary act in which the speaker asks the hearer to perform an action which is for the speaker's benefit (Trosborg, 1995; Sifianou, 1999). Due to this assersion, this act has been regarded as one of the most threatening speech acts, since it intrinsically threatens the hearer's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Due to the existence of face-threathening act in making requesting speech act, the speaker may want to modify in delivering the act to minimize the impact. Native-speakers and learners' use of this particular speech act has mostly focused on examining their use of those pragmalinguistic formulae employed to express the request act itself (e.g. Can you ...?, Would you ...?, I need ..., You must ...), without paying special attention to the modification devices that accompany it (Rose, 1999; Cook & Liddicoat, 2002).

The act of requesting is often used in daily social interaction with others. The interaction can be between parents-childrens, superiors-subordinates, lecturers-students, even strangers and vice versa. In addition, the interaction can take place in everywhere such as home, schools, public places, and also university.

People have their own tendencies in using request strategies. They are likely to be direct in their utterance when their social relationship is closer (Leech, 1976), but when they have to speak to someone with a distance social relationship they tend to be more polite. This statement is in line with the preliminary study conducted by researcher to investigate the request strategies used in “Ron Clark Story” movie.

“The Ron Clark Story” was aired on 2006 on TNT (US television) directed by Randa Haines starring Matthew Perry as Ron Clark, Mellisa de Sousa as Marissa Vega, Ernie Hudson as Principle Turner, etc (Wikipedia contributors, 2019). The movie is based on the real life educator Ron Clark which tells story about idealistic teacher named Mr. Clark who leaves his previous work place and starts to work in a school in New York whose students are trouble makers. The movie is mostly teacher-student interaction.

The study reveals that the most used request strategy movie is mood derivable (62.2%). Mood derivable is one of direct strategy that the speaker directly use imperative to make a request, such as *Okay, settle down!; Take your seats!; Put your gum in here!* It is considered appropriate because the most interaction in the movie is from Mr. Clark-the teacher (higher status, higher power, close distance) to his students (lower status, lower power, close distance).

In addition, Tarigan (1990) states that an indirect illocutions tend to show more politeness. Besides that, people will also consider the context in saying something, they tend to wait the right time to say something. The preliminary study also shows that the query preparatory (considered the most polite strategy) is used to make request from the teacher to the school Principal Turner as in the movie: *Ms. Wallace, can we please not talk about Shameika like she's not in the room?* This utterance is considered appropriate because Mr. Clark has lower status, lower power, and wide distance to the Principal Turner.

On the basis of the context, this study is conducted to investigate the type of request strategies in Indonesian EFL learners in university level where the interaction is various between student with another academic users. The various interactions also brings to different situations that lead the student decide what type of request strategy they would use.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

On the basis of the background of study, this study is conducted to answer the question as follows: ‘How do Indonesian EFL learners convey their request?’ The major question is broken down into minor ones:

- 1.2.1 How are address terms used by Indonesian EFL learners to perform English request?
- 1.2.2 What strategies are performed by Indonesian EFL learners to convey English request?
- 1.2.3 How are English request perspectives performed by Indonesian EFL learners?
- 1.2.4 How are English request syntactic downgraders performed by Indonesian EFL learners?
- 1.2.5 How are English request downgraders performed by Indonesian EFL learners?
- 1.2.6 How are adjuncts to head act modifications used in performing English request by Indonesian EFL learners?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

On the basis of the research question, this study is aimed to describe how Indonesian EFL learners convey their request. Specifically, this study is intended:

- 1.3.1 To describe address terms used by Indonesian EFL learners to perform English request.
- 1.3.2 To describe strategies performed by Indonesian EFL learners to convey English request.

- 1.3.3 To describe English request perspectives performed by Indonesian EFL learners.
- 1.3.4 To describe English request syntactic downgraders performed by Indonesian EFL learners.
- 1.3.5 To describe English request downgraders performed by Indonesian EFL learners.
- 1.3.6 To describe adjuncts to head act modification used in performing English request by Indonesian EFL learners.

#### **1.4 Research Scope and Limitation**

The study belongs to pragmatic field since it focuses on how to use language to communicate successfully. This study focuses on students' request obtained by their writing form by using DCT (Discourse Completion Test). Since DCT is used, the natural setting such as classroom activity cannot be achieved. Therefore, the study limits only the students' writing form about what they will say in situations given by researcher.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Research**

This study may contribute to enrich the knowledge about the request strategy that can be used by the certain situation. In addition, it also contribute to the existing body of knowledge about pragmatic competence, and also raise EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of not only attending to their students' grammatical competence, but also their pragmatic understanding.

#### **1.6 Definition of the Key Term**

##### **1.6.1. Pragmatic competence**

Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language appropriately based on the context to achieve one's intention.

##### **1.6.1.1 Speech act**

Speech act is an utterance defined in terms of a speaker's intention and the effect it has on hearer.

#### 1.6.1.2 The act of requesting

The act of requesting is speech act realized by speakers' written responds to given situation that reflects utterance to make hearer to do something.

#### 1.6.1.3 Address term

Address term is to whom the request is being uttered.

#### 1.6.1.4 Request strategies

Request strategies refer to the way the students convey their English request. There are macro and micro strategy in requesting.

#### 1.6.1.5 Macro strategy

Macro strategy is three major strategies in requesting that covers conventional direct, conventional indirect, and non-conventional indirect.

#### 1.6.1.6 Micro strategy

Micro strategy is concerned with specific strategies in conventional direct, conventional indirect, and non-conventional indirect.

#### 1.6.1.7 Request perspective

Request perspective is point of view of request to be performed.

#### 1.6.1.8 Syntactic downgrader

Syntactic downgrader deals with the students' way to modify their requests by using sentence pattern.

#### 1.6.1.9 Other downgrader

Other downgrader refers to modifications for achieving different effect to soften the request.

#### 1.6.1.10 Adjunct(s) to head act modification

Adjunct(s) to head act refers to the students' way in modifying additional information to support the request.