

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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#### 1.1. Background of the Study

In order to learn English more effectively, learner should know what differences and similarities exist in the ways English and Indonesian speakers / writers express themselves in their own language. The differences between English and Indonesian may be seen clearly in culture, religion, attitudes towards youth, the general way of life, etc.

Indonesians and Americans who have cultural contacts should know each others' life experiences ; therefore, it is necessary for the two nations to study the comparison and contrast of both cultures. To this point, Dra. Pauline Tomasouw (1986 : 1.2) explains that culture is the every day life style of ordinary citizens and the values to belief and prejudices they share with their fellow within their linguistic and social groups with due attention the intragroup differences (of social class, for example). Besides that, Wuri Soedjatmiko (1987:3) defines culture as a 'way of life,' or 'patterns of living,' and consists of elements such as verbal and nonverbal behaviors, attitudes

traits of people, standards (of success, beauty, intelligence) and values which are considered good or proper by the culture bearers.

Realizing the fact that culture of people refer to all aspects of shared life in a community, Lado (1957:66) said that it is not sufficient to compare English and Indonesian utterances / sentences 'structure by structure' in order to find the most appropriate way to translate sentences cross-culturally. As cited in Schriffin (1984:270), Hymes also adds (1972) that the speaker's 'communicative competence' should be the subject of linguistic inquiry rather than 'grammatical competence'. To reach this goal, it is advisable to investigate the actual ways how language is used to communicate and how the communicative functions are realized in a language.

One of the way how language is used to communicate is by learning the way people in this society address one another. The use of appropriate forms of address is important and it is not difficult for language learners to grasp, since all languages make use of some kind of address forms. That is why Fergusson 1976, Brown and Levinson 1978 (as cited in Wolfson 1989:85) said that politeness may itself be a universal feature of language and then they suggest the likelihood that all language make use of precoded routines or what they call

'politeness formulas,' which speakers are required to utter in a certain situations.

According to Fergusson 1976 (as cited in Wolfson 1989 : 86), there are many kinds of 'politeness formulas' namely how to apologize to show that someone feels sorry about what he has done, how to request to other people politely, how to communicate with someone on the telephone politely, how to show disapproval politely, how to refuse politely, etc. The writer here, wants to stress one of the 'politeness formulas', how to refuse other people politely.

Refusal is an act of showing that someone wants to decline to accept the requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions from someone else. This refusals can occurs when someone perceives that he cannot accept all that categories above. However, the way people refuse and their acceptance of particular refusal expressions as a means to restore harmony differs from one another. The differences may be caused by a difference in cultural background.

Failure to restore harmony as expected by the complainer of a different cultural background may result in cultural miscommunication. For example, an American may only use Direct refusals, such as 'I refuse' or 'no' mainly in response to intimates and status unequal or strangers. But if the interlocutor is an Indonesian, he will not use indirect refusals like that. Maybe he will say something to minimize

the degree of offense, such as, ' I'd like to, but...' This phenomenon happens because most of Indonesian people feel reluctant to refusing someone's offering directly. Marit Kana states that most of the Indonesian notion of politeness requires maintaining at all times a smooth, untroubled appearance between individuals (cited in RELC Journal,1982:31). So, when someone use direct refusals, the Indonesians might feel that he is being impolite and say something unpleasant about this. As a result, problems in communication may occur.

Realizing that people refuse in many different ways and the fact that inappropriate refusing strategies may create communication failure, the writer become curious and interested in making study of refusing strategies. Besides that reason, the writer also learned from the sociolinguistics class that society or culture influences language. As stated by Wardhaugh (1986:10). Social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior. Based on this theory, the writer conducts a study on refusing strategies used by people of different cultures, particularly English native Speaker and Indonesian Speaker.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

With reference to the background of the study, the problems in this study were formulated as follows:

1. What refusing strategies are used by Native Speaker in the case of :
  - a. Higher to lower status ?
  - b. Equal status ?
  - c. Lower to higher status ?
2. What refusing strategies are used by Indonesians in the case of :
  - a. Higher to lower status ?
  - b. Equal status ?
  - c. Lower to higher status ?

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

In line with the background and the research questions started above, this study intended to identify the refusing strategies used by Indonesian and Native English Speakers based on different status.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study should give a contribution to the field of sociolinguistics since it involved refusals speech act by providing data on English Native Speakers and Indonesian Speakers refusing strategies. Furthermore, hopefully the findings of this study may be used as a reference by other sociolinguistic students who want to conduct similar research.

#### **1.5. Theoretical Framework**

There are three theories as the basis of the study. They are theory of politeness, theory of refusal, and theory of Sociolinguistics.

Theories of politeness and refusal are needed to analyze and classify what strategies are used by English Native Speakers and Indonesian Speakers in their refusal as the instruments to get the necessary data.

Theory of Sociolinguistics is stated in this thesis to clarify the understanding about status in English Native Speakers and Indonesian Speakers society.

### **1.6. Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study is refusal strategies used by English Native Speakers and Indonesian Speakers. The writer will take the nationality as one of her variables. The other variables that will be used is status (equal and unequal status), but the other variables, such as age, sex, social distance, level of formality, will not be considered. The writer also limits the subjects of this study to 16 English Native Speakers and 20 Indonesian Speakers.

### **1.7. Definition of Key Terms**

To make the interpretation of the terms clear, it is necessary to define the following key terms :

1. Politeness Strategies in this particular study are the art of managing politeness in speakers exploit several behaviors. It may consist of several language function, such as thanking, apologizing, showing interest, etc.
2. Politeness in this particular study, according to Dufon and Wahab (1994:123) refers to good manners (Fraser, 1990) or proper social conduct (Kasper, in press).
3. Strategy is a plan at any of some levels (there are four highest level strategies, they are : bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off

record), relying on the context to make clear which hierarchical level we are talking about (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987:92).

4. Refuse is to decline to grant the request or the invitation of a person; or to decline to accept an offer or suggestion of a person (Webster 1991:1129).
5. Status, according to Giles and Powersland (1975:142), is one's special position or rank in relation to others which has something to do with power.
6. English Native Speakers are the subjects taken by the writer. What the writer means by English Native Speakers are foreigner or people who was not brought up in Indonesia and whose mother tongue is English. The English Native Speakers in this study are categorized as foreigners, who stay in Indonesia for a long or short period and their ages are about ranging 20-40 years old.
7. Indonesian Speakers are the subjects taken by the writer. What the writer means by Indonesian Speakers here are people who live in Indonesia and whose mother tongue is Indonesian. Their ages are about ranging 20-40 years old.

### **1.7. The organization of the Thesis.**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one contains the idea why the writer is interested in studying this matter, the questions to be answered, the objective and significance of the study, definition of the key terms, supporting theories, and the organization of the paper. Chapter two presents the basic theories of the study elaborated from the theoretical framework. Chapter three talks about the research methodology, how the study is carried out until the data collection is done.

Chapter four is about the data analysis, and the interpretation of the findings. Finally in chapter five, the writer concludes the whole thesis.