Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Background

It is well-known nowadays that having grammatical competence is not enough to enable someone to have communicative conversation. For example, in a dining room, a woman says "Could you pass me the salt?" to her child. The child here then replies "Yes, I could" and continues eating his dinner. The child in this case shows that he has a good grammatical competence but does not know how to communicate appropriately. By uttering the question "Could you pass me the salt?", the woman intends to request the child to pass the salt to her instead of asking the child's ability to pass the salt. Giving the answer "Yes, I could" and doing nothing as what the woman expects to make the child fail in having successful communication.

In responding to the situations as being described above, Hymes (1972) argued that there was more than the grammatical competence needed. According to Hymes, someone must have a communicative competence to enable him not only to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to recognize when and where to use the sentences. Later, Canale (1983) developed the model of the communicative competence and set up the components that constitute the communicative competence. According to Canale, the communicative competence was made up from four competencies which were the grammatical competence – the features and rules of language that enable someone to produce grammatically correct sentences; the sociolinguistic competence – the ability to produce appropriate utterances both in meaning and form depending on the social, pragmatic, and cultural situation; the discourse competence – the skill of combining sentences to form unified spoken or written texts through cohesion and coherence; and the strategic

competence – the ability to use communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication and to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

In the situation where communicative competence is also needed to have successful communication, the appearance of speech acts becomes very important. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) described speech acts as the use of language to do things instead of just being statements. It means that the utterances do not only describe some situations that the speaker has, but also represent the speaker's doing such as warnings, acts of apologizing, and requests. Grundy (2008) described speech acts as actions in words. In speech acts, an utterance consists of three meanings: the locution (its literal meaning), the illocution (the intention carries in the utterance), and the perlocutionary force (the effect or the consequence of the utterance). The same utterance may have different illocution meanings and perlocutionary forces depending on the context the utterance being stated.

Due to various speech acts available, Searle (in Mey, 2001) classified speech acts into five categories, as follows:

a. Representatives

They refer to speech acts that state what the speaker believes to be the case or not. They commit to the truth of an utterance. For example, "J.K. Rowling wrote the phenomenal fiction: Harry Potter". The statements of fact, assertions, and conclusions belong to this category.

b. Directives

This category deals with the kinds of speech acts through which the speaker gets someone to do something. For example, "Stop talking." Commands, suggestions, orders, and requests belong to this category.

c. Declaratives

They are kinds of speech acts that change the world through the utterance. For example, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen."

d. Commissives

They deal with the kinds of speech acts in which the speaker commits himself to some future actions such as promises, threats, and refusals. For example, "I'll bring it tomorrow".

e. Expressives

They refer to the speech acts which state what the speaker feels. For example, "I'm really sorry to hear that". They express the speaker's emotions, such as: like, dislike, joy, and sorrow.

From Searle's classification, it can be seen that speech acts play important roles in communication. Speech acts allow the speaker to perform a wide range of language function, such as apologizing, complimenting, complaining, offering, ordering, promising, requesting, and threatening.

Based on Blum-Kulka in 1991, from various types of speech acts available, there are two speech acts that are mostly used in daily communication: apologizing and requesting. Apologizing is defined as a speech act which is intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation (Olshtain, 1989) while request is defined as a speech act which conveys the speaker's illocution that he/she wants the hearer to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker (Trosborg, 1995).

Seeing the importance of having the knowledge of speech acts, some researchers such as Ellis (1992) and Olshtain and Cohen (1990), conducted research to find out the significance of teaching speech acts for a second or foreign language learners. Their research showed that teaching speech acts to the second or foreign language learners enabled them to produce utterances that were more in line with the native behaviors. Moreover, Baleghizadeh's research (2007) emphasized the role of speech acts in English language teaching. She found out that having the knowledge of speech acts while learning a second language was important

since speech acts facilitated the process of communication and made the communication more effective.

Nowadays, the needs for teaching speech acts in schools for the second or foreign language learners are emphasized. Some researchers found that learners still had lack abilities in using speech acts to communicate appropriately and effectively. Gobel's research conducted in 2009, for example, investigated the problems that the learners had with speech acts. Through his research, he found out that the learners had difficulties in expressing politeness appropriately. They tended to be too harsh or too formal.

The difficulties that the learners have dealing with their ability in using speech acts for communication can be affected of several factors. One of them is the lack of various speech act strategies they get. Up to now, course books have become the main input where the learners get the knowledge of using speech acts. However, it is often found out that the course books used in schools suffer from having enough various speech act strategies that enrich the learners' ability in having appropriate and effective communication. From the findings of the research conducted by Baleghizadeh (2007), Gobel (2009), Delen (2010), and Ekaning (2011), it can be concluded that the English course books used in schools had problems in presenting enough various speech act strategies that influenced the students' competence in using speech acts in the target language – English. In addition, the limited interactions with native speakers of English had also influenced the foreign language learners to communicate naturally in English. The learners' L1 often influenced their ability in having naturally English conversation.

Indonesia as one of the countries that uses English as its foreign language also realizes the importance of teaching speech acts in schools. It is shown from the standard and basic competencies that the Indonesian education government has set up in the syllabus of the elementary, junior, and high school. Furthermore, the English course books used as the

learning materials in Indonesian schools consist of parts that provide students with some speech act strategies. For example, it appears under the subtitle of "Speech Act" in "English in Focus" course book and under the subtitle of "Ways to Say It" in "Look Ahead" course book. Since 2007, the government has planned to develop the schools in Indonesia to become Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (SBI). However, its process is not easy. It needs a lot of money and time. Therefore, as a start, the government has chosen some schools which belong to the Sekolah Standar Nasional (SSN) to be established as Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional (RSBI). This policy is hoped to be able to create Indonesian human resources who are capable to compete in the global world.

SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo is one of SSN in Sidoarjo which have been chosen to be established as RSBI. The one that differentiates this school from other RSBI is the students' characteristics. All students in SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo are Javanese. They all live and grow up with the Javanese culture which emphasizes on the etiquette. When talking to older people, for example, they have to use formal language. This rule has to be followed although they have a close relationship with the speaker. They still have to use formal language when talking to their father, mother, or older brother/sister. Meanwhile, being the students of a RSBI gives them chance to interact with native teacher of English and to learn the teachers' culture which will enable them to have a more natural communication in English – more native-like. English culture is quite different from Javanese culture. In English culture, the children's respect toward their parents or older brother/sister is not shown by the language they use to talk to them. Some of the children even call their parents or older brother/sister with their names.

Seeing the situation that the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo have, there was still no research being conducted to find out the influence of that situation on the speech act strategies that these students use. Moreover, since apologizing and requesting belong to two speech acts

that are mostly used in daily communication, the writer thought that a research needed to be conducted in order to find out whether the apology and request strategies used by the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo were the same as the ones used by English native speakers and the activities that influenced the apology and request strategies these students used.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

According to the background, the problems of this research were formulated as follows:

Major problem:

1. Were the apology strategies used by the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II the same as the ones used by native speakers of English?
2. Were the request strategies used by the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II the same as the ones used by native speakers of English?

Minor problem:

1. What activities influenced the apology strategies that the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo use?
2. What activities influenced the request strategies that the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo use?

1.3 Objective of the Research

Based on the statement of the problems above, this research was conducted in order to find out whether the apology and request strategies used by the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo were the same with the ones used by native speakers of English and the activities influencing the apology and request strategies these students used.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This research was based on the theory of speech acts since it was trying to investigate the strategies of two speech acts which are mostly used in the daily communication (Blum-Kulka, 1991) used by the students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo. Speech acts are the basic of linguistic communication which play important roles in communication. They have three kinds of meaning: Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary Force (Austin, 1962). These three kinds of meaning that the speech acts have allow the speaker to perform a wide range of language function, such as apologizing, complimenting, complaining, offering, ordering, promising, requesting, and threatening (Searle in Mey, 2001). Thus, having the knowledge of speech acts will enable someone to communicate effectively and appropriately.

Moreover, the procedure of data analysis in this research used the apology strategies suggested by Cohen (1996) and the request strategies suggested by Blum-Kulka (1991). According to Cohen, the apology strategies can be classified into five categories: an expression of an apology using a relevant performative verb, an explanation or account of the situation, an acknowledgement of responsibility, an offer of repair, and a promise of non-recurrence. While request strategies suggested by Blum-Kulka (1991) were classified into six classifications: direct, conventionally indirect, indirect, softened way, justification, and imposition minimizer.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The result of this research was expected to provide some insights and comprehensible inputs for English language teaching in Indonesia relating to the activities that could be used to teach speech acts in schools. Moreover, this research was also expected to encourage other researchers to conduct similar study in order to find out the strategies that the students used for other kinds of speech acts besides apologizing and requesting whether the strategies they used had been the same as the ones and to

investigate whether there were other factors influencing the strategies they used.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

Due to the numerous strategies of apologizing and requesting proposed by the experts, the writer analyzed the data based on the Cohen's apologize strategies and Blum-Kulka's request strategies.

The sample of this research was also limited to the tenth- and eleventh-grade students of SMA Muhammadiyah II, Sidoarjo since the twelfth-grade students were busy preparing for their national exam when the data of this study was taken. However, the tenth- and eleventh-grade students were considered to be able to represent the twelfth-grade students since the twelfth-grade students had once received the same materials taught in the tenth and eleventh grade.

Moreover, this research was only a survey research which objectives were to find out whether the apology and request strategies that these students used were the same as the ones used by the native speakers of English and to find out the activities these students did that were able to influence the apology and request strategies used by the students. The reasons of using the apology and request strategies and the student's English background were not investigated further in this research.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

Realizing the broad topic of this research, the writer found it was necessary to define it. For this purpose, it is useful to define the term "apology strategy", "request strategy", "native speakers of English", and "activities" found in this research.

– Apology strategy

The apology strategy in this research refers to the apology strategies typically used by native speakers of English.

– Request strategy

The request strategy in this research refers to the request strategies typically used by native speakers of English.

– Native speakers of English

Native speakers of English refer to people whose first language or mother tongue is English.

– Activities

Activities in this research refer to verbal spoken and written actions that the students do which can help them learn apology and request strategies.