

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Humans are social creatures. In everyday life, they always need to socialize with one another. In conducting communication, everyone must have their way of maintaining harmonious social relations. They use language to develop and sustain relationships to keep them positive and warm, as well as to convey information. Language is the most crucial element that is required for interpersonal connection in a communication process. Generally speaking, the purpose of communication is to transmit knowledge, concepts, wants, or emotions. In all areas of human endeavor, communication has always been the most important key to achieving a desired goal. In communication, there is always an interaction between the speaker and the listener or speech partner. It is also related to pragmatics. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the meaning conveyed by the speaker or writer, and interpreted by the hearer or reader. In pragmatics, some principles are useful for understanding what people hear or read. One of the significant topics in pragmatics is speech acts.

Discussion of speech acts is always related to certain actions carried out by speakers to convey their meaning or objectives to their speech partners. Speech acts play a very important role in efforts to maintain communication between speakers and hearers. Speech acts are utterances as a substitute for actions that are usually performed by someone in interacting with others (Yule, 1996). In terms of

context, speech acts do not reduce the meaning of what is conveyed. Speakers or addressees might perform various types of speech acts such as apologies, complaints, compliments, thanks, and or requests. Speech acts are often used by speakers and/or recipients to convey particular goals. Each type of speech act has a different function. However, the main function is to make communication run smoothly without any misunderstanding. To achieve this, the speaker and recipient must be able to make the best use of communication opportunities by using certain methods such as small talk as a communication opener or keeping communication alive. This is what is called a phatic speech act.

Phatic speech acts are always linked to the concept of phatic communion which was first introduced by (Malinowski, 1923). According to Malinowski (1923), phatic communion is a type of speech in which ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words. This means that a phatic speech act is speech delivered by speakers to speech partners in the form of words or phrases that aim not to convey certain information, but only to establish better communication, bind intimacy, and improve relations between the two. Phatic speech act aims to break the silence. Breaking of silence and the communion of words is the first act to establish links of fellowship, which is consummated only by the breaking of bread and the communion of food. This means that one of the goals of the phatic speech act is to break the silence which aims to increase the unbreakable bond between the speaker and the hearer, to fulfill their social function as humans, who need other humans in their daily lives.

An identical definition was also put forward by Senft (2014) who stated that phatic communion is generally used to refer to utterances that are said to have exclusively social bonding functions like establishing and maintaining a friendly and harmonious atmosphere in interpersonal relations, especially during the opening and closing stages of social encounters. Another definition is formulated by Jumanto (2014) who defined phatic communication as verbal communication between a speaker and a hearer to maintain the social relationship between them, not to emphasize the information content of the communication. There are various ways to maintain social relations by using phatic communication. Phatic communication is just small talk without any other purpose such as getting certain information. Phatic speech acts aim to create a relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Without realizing it, phatic speech acts are often used in communication, with certain purposes. Therefore, communication carried out by the speaker does not always convey information but only maintains a harmonious relationship or breaks the silence in a situation (Kreidler, 1998). Even though phatic speech acts do not have a specific function, it does not mean that phatic speech acts are not important.

The way to maintain social relations between members of society is very dependent on and cannot be separated from the cultural diversity that lies behind society. This underlies the emergence of various utterances that have peculiar characteristics of the social relations traditions of culture that differ from one culture to another. Intercultural communication is the capacity to communicate with people from different cultures. However, intercultural communication can

also be a challenge since it might cause misunderstandings. One method used to avoid misunderstandings is small talk, which aims to liven up the atmosphere when communication takes place. Indonesians are known for their friendliness since the country places a strong emphasis on language courtesy. Indonesia has a very diverse culture, as well as Indonesians who come from various regions with different cultures. In an area that has various cultures, maintaining a harmonious social relationship among people is something that must be done. In a community, harmony can be created if each person can respect and pay attention to each other in certain ways. This is the basis for the emergence of various utterances that support the social relations of people who have different cultures. Therefore, each individual's culture greatly influences phatic communication. According to Sakinah (2017), the tendency for students to be liked by other students is greater if the students are open or friendly towards their friends, such as saying hello when they meet or smiling.

The previous research related to phatic speech acts was conducted by Harahap (2020) discussing phatic communion. This research described the forms and function of phatic communion in the movie entitled "Toba Dreams". The forms of phatic communion that the characters used were ritual words exchanged when people meet, standard topics of conversation, and meaningless words or misunderstood words. The functions of phatic communion were avoiding the silence, breaking the silence, or saying something obligatory. Another previous research was conducted by Purnamasari (2020) discussing phatic utterances in movies. This research described the phatic utterance functions expressed by the

characters in the movie. The research showed that there were four functions of phatic utterances found in the movie, those are breaking the silence, having small talk, keeping the conversation going, and expressing solidarity. Some other earlier research was assisted by Meidiani et al., (2022) discussing the phatic marker in the Javanese language. The purpose of this research is to reveal the form, function, and factors that cause and reveal the distribution of Javanese language phatic markers in adolescent social groups in Sambikerep District, Surabaya. The result of the research found phatic markers form of particles, phatic markers form of the word phatic, the marker function, and the distribution of phatic markers. Further research about phatic talks of Javanese women in internet-mediated communication (IMC) was carried out (Widiana, 2021). This research aims to explore the use of Javanese politeness maxims in a virtual context. The types of phatic talks found in this research are classified into greetings, congratulations, compliments, condolences, support, and jokes. Politeness strategies performed by Javanese women in IMC have specific characteristics based on the traditional Javanese politeness maxims of Kurmat (Respect), Tapa Seliro (Tolerance), Andhap Asor (Humility), Empan Papan (Self-Awareness), and Grapyak (Friendliness).

The previous studies did not discuss the Phatic Speech Acts of English-speaking Indonesian students in particular. This research aims to identify the types and functions of speech acts found in the daily conversation of English-speaking Indonesian students. The data of this research is taken from conversations conducted by English-speaking Indonesian students. The conversation can be in person or the WhatsApp group. The conversations are in English. Therefore, this

study also aims to find out whether the Indonesian culture influences the way they speak.

### **1.2 Statement of Problems**

1. What are the types of phatic speech acts found in the daily conversation of English-speaking Indonesian students?
2. What are the functions of phatic speech acts found in the daily conversation of English-speaking Indonesian students?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the types of phatic speech acts found in the daily conversation of English-speaking Indonesian students.
2. To describe the functions of the phatic speech acts found in the daily conversation of English-speaking Indonesian students.

### **1.4 Scope of the Problem**

Limiting the scope of the study is needed and important to make the discussion run well. This research describes the types of phatic speech acts in the daily conversation of English-speaking Indonesian students. Then, the functions of phatic speech acts used by English-speaking Indonesian students are explained as well.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that the findings of this study could shed light on the use of phatic speech acts among English-speaking Indonesian students in the Javanese context. The reader of this work may gain a thorough comprehension of the subject consideration, namely the phatic speech acts. This research is theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study supports the subject itself because it provides development on this topic and also enriches phatic speech acts with a cultural background, and also supports the reader to have a better understanding of phatic speech acts. Practically, the researcher expects that the study may make the students, lecturers, or readers think about how phatic speech acts can be so important or very useful in our daily activities.