CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents introduces the present study. It consists of the background of the study, the research questions, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the research method, the clarification of key terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the study

Debate is a tool for governmental campaign. Hornby (2005 in Sari, 2010: 2) defines debate as a "formal discussion to show skill and ability and arguing". To convince the opponent and all the audience towards the candidate's argument is the essence of debate. The debate can be considered not only as a session of arguing and stating the argument but also an expression of beliefs, opinions, feelings, and ideas.

In November 2011 Banten people had to choose their governor for 2012-2017 period and all the gubernatorial candidates had to do the campaign in order to gain people support. Debate is one part of the campaign. The Banten Provincial General Election Comission required that the debate be held and attended by all candidates. This must be done to explore the candidates' intellectual capacity and their vision and mission.

A debate may be examined in a variety of points of disciplines, including pragmatics. Within pragmatics a debate may also be examined from different points of view, including the theory of speech acts, which was originally developed by Austin (1962). The theory explains how speakers use utterances to perform intended actions and how hearers interpret intended meaning from what is said. As Searle (1969: 42) puts it, "all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts". This is to say that there is an act in every communication that people perform.

The theory has developed fast and there are hundreds of studies that explore the speech act issue. There is research which analyzes speech acts on trial (Ljungberg and Holm,1996). There have also been several studies examining commissive speech acts, including Bilbow (2006), who discussed commissive speech acts in intercultural business meeting and Puspasari (2006), who analyzed commissive speech acts employed by the characters in the movie "a bug's life".

It appears that there has not been research on commissive speech acts that focuses on gubernatorial election. Thus, the present study investigates the realisation of commissive speech acts the Banten gubernatorial election. Moreover, the study will see the implication of politeness (see Brown and Levinson 1987) in the use of commissive speech acts. It is expected that this research will contribute to the field of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and linguistic studies in general.

1.2 Research questions

The problems of the present study are formulated in the following research questions:

1. What commissive speech acts are performed by the candidates in the debate?

2. How is politeness implied in the use of commisive speech acts?

1.3 Aims of the study

In relation to the research problems above, the present study aims to

1. find the commissive speech acts performed by the candidates in the debate.

2. examine politeness that is implied in the use of commissive speech acts.

1.4 Scope of the study

The study discusses the commissive speech acts used by the candidates in Banten gubernatorial candidate debate and the politeness implication. This study focuses on the use of commissive speech acts. The data include the use of commissive speech acts in the gubernatorial candidate debates broadcasted by a television station, i.e. Metro TV.

1.5 Research method

This research is largely qualitative, especially in identifying and classifying the commissive speech acts that appear in the debates. Descriptive quantification, however, is also used to identify the trend in the use of commissive speech acts, and the results are used to make further interpretation of the use of the speech acts, especially with regard to the politeness implication.

Data were collected by accessing websites containing the recorded videos of the debates. The recorded debates were later transcribed for analysis. The data were analysed through identification, classification, and quantification of commissive speech acts. The commissive speech acts were identified and classified based on the speech acts theory developed by Searle

(1979) and Yule (2000). Later the occurrences of the speech acts were calculated to find their percentage. This quantification was made in order to examine the implication of politeness in the use of commissive speech acts.

1.6 Clarification of key terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, the following key terms are defined in the context of the present study.

- **Politeness** is a system of interpersonal relations which is designed to facilitate an interaction by minimizing the potential conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange (Lakoff, 1990)

- **Speech acts** refer to a theory that explains how speakers use utterances to perform intended actions and how hearers catch intended meaning from what it is said. In other words, speech act is best described as "in saying something, we do something" (Austin, 1962: 18).

- **Commissive speech acts** refer to a type of speech acts that speakers use to commit themselves to do some future actions. Commissive speech acts are acts of promising, pledging oneself, guaranteeing, swearing to do. It defines the notion in terms of commitment (see Searle, 1979)

- **Banten Gubernatorial election** is an event held to vote for Banten governor. This is done by Banten residents to choose their leader for the next period.

1.7 Organization of the paper

This paper is organised in five chapters. The first chapter provides general information about the present research, the research questions, aims of the study, scope of the research, the research method, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper. Chapter two contains theoretical foundation of the research, especially the theory of speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979) and politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Chapter three outlines the research method, especially the general framework, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four presents the results of analysis and discussion of the findings. Finally, chapter five concludes the present study and offers some relevant suggestions.