# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introductory Remarks

This research investigated variations of speech act realized by the contributors to *The Jakarta Post readers'* forum commenting to the topic about a lack of religious tolerance by using speech act theories. The investigation focused on: 1) categorizing the speech acts found in the readers' forum and 2) distinguishing the variations made when a speech act was realized. This chapter will present respectively: background of the research (1.1), statements of problems (1.2), purposes of the research (1.3), research methods (1.4), clarifications of key terms (1.5) and organization of the research (1.6).

## 1.1 Background of The Research

Language is human's basic needs of communication. Using the language, a speaker conveys meaning that is inferred or concluded by a hearer. One of subfield in linguistics – study of language – which concerns on investigating meaning based on context is pragmatics. According to Cipollone et al (1998: 234), context can be divided into four, which are 'physical context' (related to place, objects and actions); 'epistemic context' (related to background knowledge); 'linguistic context' (related to accompanied utterances); and 'social context' (related to social relationship). The use of the contexts is further illustrated by Cipollone et al (1998: 234) in a situation when a stranger interrupted library visitors who were talking loudly. When the stranger utters, *"Talk a little louder, won't you? I missed what you just said."*, the utterance

means a request for silence. It considers a physical context (library), an epistemic context (the library is a silent place), a linguistic context (the utterance is said sarcastically) and a social context (there is distant relationship between the stranger and the visitors). Thomas (1995: 22) defined pragmatics as 'meaning in interaction' due to the negotiation among context, speaker and hearer in assigning meaning of utterances. Assigning meaning based on context has a close relationship with performance of 'speech acts'. Considering physical and social contexts are needed to analyze speech act since meaning is assigned from interaction (among context, speaker and hearer) (Paltridge 2005:60).

In the previous illustration, the stranger was not merely uttering a sort of words but he also performs an act of requesting, in this case requesting the visitor to be silent. Acts that are performed when uttering words are called speech acts. The theory of speech acts was firstly introduced by J.L. Austin (1962). The stranger's utterance is an indirect speech act (Searle 1969). It is because the utterance does not contain 'performative verb' and it meets 'felicity conditions' of requesting. Moreover, the utterance which is conveyed in interrogative and declarative manner has forces like imperative manner. Nonetheless, it can be interpreted as a request by looking at the contexts operated behind the utterances. Austin (1962) and Searle (1962) suggested classification of speech acts which is derived from their theory emphasizing rules for defining speech act. Austin classified illocutionary verbs lexically so that speech acts consist of five kinds (Expositives, Verdictives, Commisives, Exercitives, Behabitives). On the other hand, Searle classified five kinds of speech acts based on the nature of act performed (Assertives, Directives,

Commisives, Expressives, Declaration). Unfortunately, defining speech act based on rules brings some weaknesses.

Using rules to define speech act seems inappropriate because it tends to be grammatical instead of pragmatic descriptions (Thomas 1995). Aziz (2000) argued that a speech act will not be effective if any reactions do not come from interlocutors. Thus, a corresponding attitude on the part of the hearer is more important than rules to determine successfulness of a speech act performance. Bach and Harnish (1979) paid attention to this important aspect. They theorized speech acts based on the speaker's expressed attitudes which form the hearer's corresponding attitudes. The corresponding attitudes are derived from hearer's inferential process toward the speaker's attitudes. The inferential process is comprehensively described in a speech act schema (SAS). The SAS, as their influential contribution, has made a clear pattern of inference done by the hearer. A product of the SAS used by this research is the taxonomy of communicative illocutionary acts. It is a classification of speech acts which categorizes speech acts into four kinds (Constatives, Directives, Commisives, Acknowledgments). The classification is used to categorize speech acts realized in the readers' forum due to its detail and comprehensiveness. Besides, it seems reasonable to prefer the expressed attitudes-based speech acts theory since the rules-based theory brings lots of weaknesses.

There are previous research which mainly focused on categorizing speech acts using this classification including the research conducted by Lazuka (2006), Babatunde (2007) and Andor (2008). Both Lazuka (2006) and Babatunde (2007)

categorized speech acts on speeches; the former on precedential speeches while the latter on evangelical Christian religious speeches. Unlike the others, Andor (2008) paid attention to investigate the usage factors, structural types of occurrence and functionality of expression "No problem" by way of dictionary-based identifications, corpus-based investigations and native speaker testing. Nonetheless, all of them took advantages of Bach and Harnish's (1979) speech acts classification. Noticeably, categorizations of speech acts on a readers' forum has not found yet. So, this research fills the gap by categorizing speech acts in *The Jakarta Post reader's* forum.

*The Jakarta Post* has claimed itself as 'the largest English newspaper in Indonesia' (available at www.thejakartapost.com). The data of this research was obtained from *The Jakarta Post* online edition which serves both local and international audiences. Consequently, contributors to the readers' forum were Indonesians (who are not native speakers of English) since the local readers are Indonesians. Besides, the contributors were possibly foreigners who (stay or do not stay in Indonesia) are native speakers of English and interested in events held in Indonesia. Samples of the readers' forum were taken narrowly to a topic regarding a lack of religious tolerance. The topic seems a 'hot button' issue in Indonesia because touching ethnic, race and religious issues (*isu SARA*) is often highly sensitive. In fact, more than 50 % of the latest 60 titles within the readers' forum carried the topic out. Thus, the research revealed how Indonesians, who are Muslims as majority, view the topic. They were confronted with foreigners who are (commonly) non-Muslims or even Indonesians believing religions other than Islam. Both of them were placed on different sides in 'face-threatening situations' (Brown and Levinson 1987).

Henceforth, the realizations of the contributors' speech acts showed the functions of the readers' forum itself. Specifically, this research examined following problems: 1) categorizing the speech acts found in *The Jakarta Post readers'* forum 2) distinguishing the variations made when a speech act was realized.

**1.2 Statements of Problems**

The researcher formulated problems in this research into two following questions:

1) What speech acts are found in *The Jakarta Post* readers' forum?

2) What variations are made when a speech act was realized?

**1.3 Purposes of The Research**

This research aims at investigating:

1) speech acts found in *The Jakarta Post* readers' forum; and

2) variations made when a speech act was realized.

**1.4 Research Methods**

1.4.1   Research Design

This research mainly used descriptive-qualitative methods. According to Vanderstoep and Johnston  (2009: 7), a qualitative research relies on text rather than number to describe phenomenon which is studied. The purpose of a qualitative research is descriptive because it aims at describing the research participants' point of view thoroughly (Vanderstoep and Johnston  (2009: 167). Besides, this research was a case

study. The result of a case study is descriptions and interpretations of the case (Vanderstoep and Johnston 2009:210 and Yin 2003 cited in Creswell 2007:245). The case carried by this research was the realizations of speech act in *The Jakarta Post readers'* forum.

### 1.4.2 Data Source

Data of this research were a readers' forum available at official website of *The Jakarta Post* (thejakartapost.com). The readers' forum contains pages which are contributed by the readers. Each page is labeled by several headings (such as Letter, Comment, Issue and Text Your Say) followed by certain topic to be responded by the readers. Commonly, they respond to articles published by the newspaper beforehand. Otherwise, they are invited to respond a topic announced below the page. The topic chosen by this research is about a lack of religious tolerance.

### 1.4.3 Data Collection

Six pages of the readers' forum were picked out to analyze. The length of the pages' publication was between the period of May, 2012 and August 2012. Samples of the readers' forum were limited to a topic regarding a lack of religious tolerance. It was because more than 50 % of the latest 60 titles within the readers' forum carried the topic. The picked pages contained comments responding to the following issues: *1) 'Adzan with lowered voices'; 2) No Sunday service for churchgoer; 3) Gramedia burns books 'defaming' Prophet; 4) Saudi warns non Muslims: Respect Ramadhan,*

*or else; 5) Raid on Café; and 6) Pig heads hung outside mosque in France.* Those issues were appropriately picked out since issues number 1, 3, 6, showed, at a glance, that non-Muslims who have a lack of religious tolerance. On the other hand, issues number 2, 4, 5 showed that Muslims who have a lack of religious tolerance.

1.4.4   Data Analyses

Stages of analyses were divided into two. The first step of analyses was the speech acts analysis. Speech acts realized by the readers' forum contributors were categorized in the light of the taxonomy of communicative illocutionary acts proposed by Bach and Harnish (1979). The categorization of speech acts referred to four major categories of communicative illocutionary acts (Constatives, Directives, Commisives and Acknowledgments).

The second step was distinguishing the variations made when a speech act category was realized. As Bach and Harnish (1979) subdivided the four major categories into many subcategories, the researcher determined the subcategories as the variations of a speech act. The variations were identified by using head acts and the supportive moves analyses. Furthermore, specific acts performed within the variations were detected. Therefore, the acts were used as clues for interpretation (Lazuka 2006). Every distribution of the speech acts categories and the variations of each category were displayed in form of tables. The tabulation was needed in order to present occurrences precisely with percentage.

**1.5 Clarifications of Key Terms**

There are some key terms which are needed to be clarified including:

1) Speech Acts: The notion which explains that language can do a lot instead of giving only meaning from its words or phrases. Furthermore, saying things through language means simultaneously performing actions. It is simply defined to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* or *in* saying something we are doing something (Austin 1962).

2) Speech Acts Schema (SAS): Bach and Harnish's proposal of the schematization of how the hearer making inference of illocutionary force potential within the speaker utterances (Bach and Harnish 1979: xv).

3) A Taxonomy of Communicative Illocutionary Acts: A detailed grouping of illocutionary acts which is categorized in terms of the kind of attitude expressed (Bach and Harnish 1979: xv). It classifies speech acts into four kinds namely Constatives, Directives, Commisives and Acknowledgments.

**1.6 Organization of The Research**

The research is reported within five chapters. Chapter 1 gives introduction to the research. It consists of six sub chapters which are background of the research (1.1), statements of problems (1.2), purposes of the research (1.3), general review of research methods (1.4), clarifications of key terms (1.5) and organization of the research (1.6). Chapter II comprehensively discusses theories used in this research. The chapter consists of speech act theories (2.1) including the genesis of speech act theories (2.1.1), speech act schema (SAS) (2.1.2) and a taxonomy of illocutionary

acts (2.1.3) and review of previous research (2.2). Chapter III explains research methods. It consists of five sub chapters which are research questions (3.1), research design (3.2), data source (3.3), data collection (3.4) and data analyses (3.5). Chapter IV presents findings (4.1) and discussions (4.2). Lastly, Chapter V gives conclusions (5.1) of the research and suggestions (5.2) for the next researcher.

## 1.7 Concluding Remarks

Background of this research, statements of the problems, purposes of this research, general review of research methods, clarification of key terms has filled this introductory chapter. Next, the second chapter will discuss theories used in this research comprehensively.