CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. 1   Background

Communicating in languages requires both linguistic competence and communicative competence. The notion "communicative competence" is proposed to cover the knowledge that a fluent speaker of a language must possess in order to understand and produce contextually comprehensible and appropriate utterances in the language (Hymes, 1972). This theory is in contrast with Chomsky's on linguistic competence which do not account for sociocultural factors or differential competence in heterogeneous speech community (Sahin, 2009). Hymes believes that language competence does not rely exclusively on linguistic competence. Stern (1983, as cited by Sahin, 2009) also says that language competence is not solely concerned with the rules of a language. Communicative competence is wider than linguistic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1984), in Bagarić and Djigunović (2007), propose four areas of knowledge and skill: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. This study is mainly concerned with sociolinguistic competence as it addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts depending on contextual factors such as participants,

purposes of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interactions (Collie and Slaler, 1988, in Sahin, 2009).

In sociolinguistic contexts, it is likely that most of the problems that L2 learners face in communicating are mainly pragmatic. L2 learners tend to be exposed to linguistic knowledge, yet to a certain extent they have limited exposure to pragmatic knowledge (Grossi, 2009). Furthermore, there are also sociocultural norms and constraints that can influence the L2 learners in speaking another language, thus these factors are considered natural for L2 learners (Franch, 1998). From this problem, it is possible that L2 learners produce negative transfer or, furthermore, it may lead to pragmatic failure when they are actually communicating with native speakers or lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding (Gass and Selinker, 2008; Zhao and Throssell, 2011). When it leads to communication breakdown, then the purpose of communication cannot be achieved.

In general communication, most societies are well-aware of various utterances and purposes of a certain speech act, such as request, offer, and apology. Apology as a verbal language is one type of speech acts that are varied across cultures (Demeter, 2006), particularly it differs in certain way from Indonesian to English (Kadarisman, 2011). Despite the similarity of the forms and strategies across cultures (Olshtain and Cohen, 1990; Demeter, 2006), apologies come in various form, particularly when they are conveyed by learners from two different cultural backgrounds and holding two different powers. The way of conveying apology is certainly different for every nation, including situations that

preceded it. For instance, when Japanese learners are given a gift, instead of expressing gratitude, they express apology because *thank you* does not sound sincere enough in Japanese (Richards & Sukwiwat, 1983 cited by Franch, 1998). Another example is Indonesian culture and context, in which apology goes into wider social domain. In ending a speech, Indonesian people tend to convey an apology, such as *Should there be any mistakes, I apologize….* Certainly, when applied in English, this kind of apology is not appropriate as the convention in English never allows an apology to end public speech, hence it is culturally rejected (Kadarisman, 2011). Those are some of the examples of what may influence the L2 learners in conveying apologies. Other than that, power and severity of the offense, in particular, may also highly affect the conveyance of apology and the applied strategies of apology (Hou, 2006; Reiter, 2000, as cited by Wagner, 2004). Based on that particular background, this study attempts to identify the strategies of apologizing used by the Indonesian teachers of English related to the power of the speakers (P) and based on the rank of imposition (R)/severity of the offense. Distance (D) as another factor is held constant, as it is not a main topic for this study.

To date, there have been a number of researches investigating the apologizing strategies in various contexts and settings (Hou, 2006; Aloia, 2009; Rasekh & Mardani, 2010, Özyildirim, 2010). Nonetheless, the number of research on apologizing with Indonesian setting is still limited. Therefore, this study focuses on the strategies of apologizing in Indonesian setting, particularly in an English course. In addition to the primary subject of this study, the apologizing

strategies are observed related to the power of the interlocutors and the severity of offense. The present study is expected to enlighten the language teaching professionals in building more awareness of pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic factors that their students possess, particularly regarding apology strategy.

1. 2   The Purpose of the Study

This study aims to identify on how Indonesian teachers convey their apologies in English based on given situations and severity of the offense, and find out whether power relation affects the strategies of conveying apologies.

1. 3   Research Questions

This study attempts to find out the way Indonesian EFL teachers convey their apologies in L2 and the strategies they apply based on given situations. This study also attempts to inquire whether power relation affects the utterance in the apologizing strategies.

The inquiry would be guided by the following questions:

1. What strategy do the Indonesian EFL teachers apply to express an apology in their L2?

2. How do the Indonesian EFL teachers convey their apology in their L2 to the hearer with different levels of power and in different severity of offense?

1. 4   Limitation of the Study

This study focuses mainly on describing the strategies of apologizing to hearers with different powers applied by Indonesian EFL teachers based on given situations that illustrate the severity of offense and how power (P) of the interlocutors may relate to the strategies that the speakers use. Distance (D) as another primary factor in the utterance is not included in the topic of the research, therefore, distance in this study is held constant.

1. 5   Significance of the Study

This study very likely enriches the literature on viewing pragmatics as one of the major parts in second language learning. Furthermore, this study is expected to throw lights on pragmatic competence and its effect in L2 learning. Identifying the pragmatic factors of L2 learners may assist the L2 instructors in comprehending the variety and difficulty that L2 learners may face.

This study would also possibly contribute to the language teaching professionals in general, particularly in introducing other apology strategies and discovering the most appropriate way in teaching apology to the students, thus the students would apply the apology accordingly. Furthermore, language teaching professionals may view power relations as one of the possible features and

influence in communication strategy, therefore, they may see it as one of many reasons in different strategies of apologizing.

The research site in this study is an English course and the participants are Indonesian EFL teachers. Therefore, this study may juxtapose the real-life case faced by EFL teachers in general, particularly in the case of pragmatics. The method in this study applied a Discourse Role-Play Task (DRPT) that has been modified in order to obtain more real-life data. Thus, the study may contribute some pragmatics perspectives to the language teaching professional that closely related to their teaching methods.

1.6   Organization of the Paper

This research is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the paper. It discusses mainly about the background of the study and the purposes of the study. The second chapter provides clear theories and literatures that highly support the study and become the framework of it. The third chapter discusses the methodology applied for this study and the data that further analysed and interpreted into required result. The fourth chapter is an elaboration of findings and discussions of the result. Lastly, the fifth chapter concludes the overall writing of the paper and provides some contributing remarks as suggestions.