

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Communication takes place at anytime, everywhere and with who ever we want to be our addressee. In academic settings, communication happens mostly between students and their lecturers, between students and students, and between students and other staff members. In academic conversations especially those taking place inside the classrooms, the topics of conversation often center on academic matters such as explaining theories and arguments relevant to the topics. It is often the case that during such discussion students have different points of view, which often will lead to long conversation. Yet, it is not always the case that all people (i.e. students) can put forward their opinions straightforwardly, as there are some who will do it indirectly, although they feel quite certain about the ideas they wish to convey. This is believed to be related to some individual as well as social variables such as how the students regard the status of their lecturers (of being lecturer), and how he can establish or maintain the degree of formality and familiarity.

When distance is taken into account, communication between students and lecturers is characterized by a higher degree of formality than that of between students and students. In communicating with his students, sometimes a lecturer does not use direct strategy in expressing disagreement. "He is not engage in direct confrontation with his students because he is expected to encourage rather than deter students to participate and voice their opinions. However, students when they possessed more knowledge about the subject matter, they become more confident to express their thought to their lectures without being hesitated" (Kakava, 1993).

In communicating with others, people sometimes need strategies in order to avoid misunderstanding among them. The term politeness then comes up in our mind. Let's say that in certain occasion you heard someone telling you these kinds of utterances as we can see below:

(1) Could I just borrow a little bit of money

which seems more polite than

(2) Give me some money

Now, which one do you think is more polite between the two utterances? For me, those utterances are polite, but they differ in the strategies they employ. Maybe you have different

point of view about this and we might have a long discussion to talk about it. As we all consider; people share a common principle that they always want to be polite but differ in the ways they express they want. In the Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) situations such as speech act of disagreement, people may choose a number of strategies to express his want without making his interlocutor loose his/her “face”. In the classroom setting, students and lecturer sometimes employ different ways and strategies when they disagree with each other. It is due to the need that they do not want to attack “the face” of their interlocutor. But why do they use different types of strategy in expressing disagreement? It is the situations like these that attract me to investigate further about the phenomena.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Based on the background, there are a number of problems which can be formulated as an attempt to investigate the phenomenon mentioned above. They are:

1. What strategies do the students use to express disagreements?
2. If there are variations in the realizations of the strategies, what factors influence such variations? Is it due to contextual variables for example social relationship, gender, age, etc?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the research problem above, I state the purposes of this research as follows:

1. To investigate the way students express their disagreement.
2. To investigate kinds of factors that influence variations in the realizations of strategies.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The findings of the research are expected to be able to:

1. Uncover types of strategies used by both students and lecturers in expressing disagreement in the classroom activities.
2. Find and uncover some information and data about communication patterns mostly in Face threatening Acts (FTA) situations. When the data gained, it is hoped that both students and lectures conduct a good communication transaction by using such information.
3. Give some informative input to those who want to carry on research on the same field.

1.5. RESEARCH LIMITATION

This research was intended to describe kinds of strategies used by both EFL learners enrolled as postgraduate students and lecturers in the Department of English Education of UPI in expressing disagreement, and to describe the linguistic theories of politeness with regard to the strategies.

1.6. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in three different classes at the Department of English Education of UPI during semester three and four in the year 2003. The classes were English Literature, Cross Cultural Understanding and Applied Linguistics (Critical Thinking).

The qualitative data were collected by doing classroom observation; conducting interviews with sample students who express certain strategies in making disagreement and videotaping the classroom activities. I analyzed the data as soon as I could after I had finished conducting the observation. The data were analyzed qualitatively through the following phases: (1) identifying the data, (2) categorizing the data, and (3) interpreting the data.

1.7. THESIS ORGANIZATION

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one explains the overall picture of the study, outlining the background, significance of the study, and the research methods.

Chapter two describes related theories in detail that include the perspective on linguistic politeness, some politeness strategies, and relevant study to the issue under investigation can also be found in this chapter.

Chapter three discusses detailed information about research methodology. This chapter also presents the research design, data collection method, and data analysis.

Chapter four provides the description and the analysis of the data. The analysis is guided by the research questions: the strategies do the students use in expressing disagreements, factors influence the variations in the realizations of the strategies, and how do theories of politeness explain to the strategies of expressing disagreements in the classes under study.

The last chapter highlights the research findings and their significance and implication to English teaching and learning. This chapter also concludes with recommendation for further study.

