

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the nature of the present study. It begins with background of the study, the formulations of problems, aims of the study, scope of the study, clarification of key terms, and significance of the study. This chapter is also completed with organization of the study as the general description of the paper.

1.1 Background

Language is a tool to deliver idea and feeling at communication in many situations whether formal or informal. Language is also a tool for doing things. People use language to ask question, request favors, make comments, report news, give directions, offer greetings and perform hundreds of other ordinary verbal actions in daily life. Holmes (2001:223) states that “language varies according to its uses as well as its users, according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it”.

Communication may involve people from different background such as age, gender, etc. Also, settings of the interaction are socially relevant to the variation of using language (Holmes, 2001). Thus, they are not culturally independent. It involves pragmatic knowledge in which Searle defines as “knowledge of acceptable speech acts within a society, and the rules that govern them” (cited by Oktoprimasakti, 2006:103). A cross-cultural understanding

requires pragmatic understanding to ensure its effectiveness and to avoid pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1995).

According to Aziz (2000), refusal can be defined as the act that shows one's inability or willingness to perform the request for some reasons whether it is expected honestly or not. In other words, a refusal is uttered when one disapproves something from a speaker. It can be a response to request, offer, invitation, argument, suggestion, etc. There are some ways that are usually applied in performing refusal action in order to encourage the speaker that he/she has an appropriate reason, i.e. refusal strategy. As stated by Bardiove-Harlig and Hartford (1990) and cited in Anonymous #1 (2003) that someone, who refuses something, needs to take their own status and the face-threatening nature of refusal into consideration and employ strategies to maintain the status balance.

Refusals, being inter-related with requests, are speech acts aimed at escaping from performing a requested action (Kline and Floyd, cited by Oktoprimasakti, 2006). Since requests are made with the expectation that the hearer will perform them, refusals to requests threaten to produce the requester's 'negative face' (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In order to reduce the threat of seeing the requester's negative face, people often use strategies in refusing, which vary within and across cultures.

Therefore, refusing is a complex issue, as a speaker directly or indirectly says no to his/her interlocutor's request, invitation or suggestion. This speech act has attracted the writer attention due to the face-threatening. For example, when your neighbor, who is an old woman, asks you to do something and you are not

able to do it. However, you will not try to insult her by refusing her request. In this case, you need to make an appropriate refusal to reject her request in order to save the hearer's face. It will be different when you have to refuse your friend's request, you can say directly the truth or give her/him a simple excuse that you can not fulfill her/his request.

Many factors influence the realization of refusal strategies. Some of these factors are socio-cultural and contextual factors. The socio-cultural factors include parameters such as social power (status), social distance, gender, and age while the contextual factors are related to the social setting (e.g. home, work, school) and function of the interaction. Those factors have been relevant in accounting for the particular language variety used. Thus, in realizing speech act particularly refusing, speakers will be influenced by both socio-cultural and contextual factors.

Speech act of refusals has attracted many researchers attention. Some examples are included in the researches conducted by Beebe et al. (1990), Nelson et al. (2002), Honglin (2007), Campillo (2010), Oktoprimasakti (2006), Miller (2008), Oktoprimasakti (2006), and Aziz (2000). Beebe et al. (1990) compared strategies used by Americans and Japanese in refusing; Nelson et al. (2002) conducted a comparative study of Egyptians and Americans; Honglin (2007) investigated the speech act of refusing between Chinese and American English; Campillo (2010) investigated the refusal strategy from socio-pragmatic approach; Miller (2008) has conducted a research on patterns of refusal for requests and invitation in Costa Rican Native Spanish speakers; Oktoprimasakti (2006) and Aziz (2000) conducted research about refusing in Indonesia.

Although many researchers have conducted research in investigating the act of refusals, a few studies have been carried out to study the direct and indirect refusal strategies in the work place context with focus on the influence of the social power (status) and social context or setting to the strategy used. For that reason, the writer still has a great curiosity to investigate refusal strategies among trainees in one of the company in Indonesia. It was aimed to discover the most common refusal strategies realized by the trainees when refusing requests and to explore effects of social power (status) and setting on realization of refusal strategies used by the trainees. The trainees of vocational training program at PT. Krakatau Steel became the sample of this study. Two different instruments used in collecting data for this study, namely questionnaire and interview. It is expected that this study would reinforce previous studies on the subject and contribute to the material development of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and English teaching in general.

1.2 Formulations of Problems

The study will investigate the problems that are formulated in the following questions:

1. What are the most common strategies realized by the trainees when refusing requests?
2. In what ways does social power (status) influence the strategies used by the trainees when refusing requests?
3. In what ways does setting influence the strategies used by the trainees when refusing requests?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The present study aims at investigating data related to the realization of direct and indirect refusal strategies to request which are used by the trainees of vocational training program at PT. Krakatau Steel. The main aims of the study include:

1. discovering the most common refusal strategies realized by the trainees when refusing requests,
2. exploring effects of social power (status) on realization of refusal strategies used by the trainees; and
3. exploring effects of setting on realization of refusal strategies used by the trainees.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited only to the refusals that performed by the trainees of vocational training program, especially in refusing a request. The data gained from 20 vocational trainees in Human Capital Development Centre PT. Krakatau Steel. The study focuses on the most common refusal strategies realized by trainees when refusing requests and the effects of social power (status) and setting on realization of refusal strategies used by the trainees.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is expected to be useful for the English Department in someway, especially for linguistic subjects, such as; pragmatics, socio-linguistics, and many more because it presents much information intensely. All of the studies approach the strategies of refusing used by Indonesian.

Moreover, the study can serve as facts and examples for other writers who want to observe the same issues in depth. It is a helpful resource for both studying and researching the Linguistics especially about refusal more thoroughly. Hopefully, the result of the study somehow would inspire or even trigger the English students to learn more about the involved topics.

The study benefits people to employ a good manner verbally and non-verbally in daily life. By learning the refusal strategies and the influence of social power (status) and setting to the strategies used, it is hoped to offer new knowledge of diverse communication style. Additionally, it educates them with

regard to ways of displaying respect and deference, saving face, avoiding, or minimizing, imposition and exercising right manners.

Also, the study benefits Indonesians, especially those learning English and cross-cultural communication. It may serve as background knowledge in understanding another culture. It may also be useful in an effort to predict and avoid possible pragmatic failures and problems.

1.6 Clarification of the Key Terms

The following terms are used for the study. They are clarified to avoid misunderstanding of the problems in the study:

- Realization is something that is made real or concrete (Available at: www.wordference.com). In the study the realization means the refusals to requests made by the respondents.
- Refusal is a negative respond to an offer, request, invitation, etc. (Adapted from Al-Kahtani, 2005). Here, the refusals are the negative or unexpected responds to the request.
- Refusal strategies are ways of refusing an act in order to safe hearer's face.
- Request used to express a desire for; ask for. (Available at: www.thefreedictionary.com/request).
- Setting is defined primarily by the nature of activities and context in which a communication event occurs. (Aziz, 2000)
- Power is defined as the degree of power which a person can impose on a hearer. (Aziz, 2000)

1.7 The Organization of the Paper

The study is presented into a paper with five chapters. Chapter I is the introduction which mainly discusses the reasons and purposes of the study. It consists of research background, formulations of problems, the aims of the study, clarification of terms, significance of the study, and organization of paper. Chapter I is followed by theoretical review which serves some concepts adopted for this study and previous studies undertaken by others which are presented as theoretical foundation in Chapter II. Research methodology is presented in Chapter III which explains the way this study conducted. It covers method of the study, respondents of the study, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV is the most important part of the study. It contains the finding and analysis of the data collected from questionnaires and interviews. Chapter V concludes the present study and offers the suggestions. Conclusion is the summary of finding and discussion. While suggestion presents some recommendations and suggestions for further study.