

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the thesis. The introduction chapter consists of background of the study that explains the underlying phenomenon, statement of the problem which is stating the research questions of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, and the last one is definition of key terms.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In daily life, we always involve in everyday interaction with other people, whether it is face to face, or by communicating tools, such as cellphone and the internet for instance. Most of the society systems demand certain rules to be obeyed by their civilians, and politeness is one of them. Politeness behavior and its relation with age and social classes has been an important role in maintaining the balance of social norms and social values. By being polite, the society can establish a good and healthy relationship with each other, despite their difference as persons, like Brown and Levinson (1987) has previously stated that politeness is rational behavior to all humans and also everyone has a positive and a negative face. Thus, to be considered as impolite, is to gain bad impressions toward ourselves.

On the other hand, there is impoliteness which is the main focus of this paper. The impoliteness itself is the opposite phenomenon of the politeness. In communicating with each other, every individual has his/her choice to perform polite or impolite utterances as a form of claiming their identity. Impoliteness has not received much attention in the context of scholarly works, while it actually is happening more frequently and often unavoidable in today's social interactions. It is now considered as important to perform the impolite behavior for the necessity of showing a sign of close and tight bound in a relationship. It can also be used for the purpose in showing one's personality, the symbol of being fitted in any kind of particular social group in the life of this modern era. Watts (2003, p. 5) stated that impoliteness is a notable form of social behavior because it objects the acceptable and appropriate behavior. Whether we realize it or not, impolite behavior is being evolved in the habitual performances. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of politeness, there are five strategies in performing the Face Threatening Acts (FTA); (1) bald on record, (2) positive politeness, (3) negative politeness, and (4) off record. But then later, Culpeper (1996, p. 356) constructs and develops a model in performing impoliteness, based on the theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies; (1) bald on record impoliteness, (2) positive impoliteness, (3) negative impoliteness, (4) sarcasm/mock politeness, (5) withhold impoliteness. The writer will discuss this framework further on the next chapter.

This impoliteness phenomenon in form of utterances can also be found in the other layer of society, the celebrities and the television shows. However, the

behavior of the celebrities which we cannot avoid in noticing or even just watching it, are inevitably connect with the people who are happened to be the audience. One of the study shows that there are relations between watching programs that contains verbal and behavioral aggression and the youngsters' behavior (Linder & Gentile, 2009). The celebrities and how they are portrayed, is anyhow very highly related with the behavior they or the media choose to show to the public. Concerning the image they want to create, or the image that media wants to construct, they sometimes tend to use a certain verbal impoliteness in order to show their personality to their fans and even to cause an offense, which it turns out to bring the popularity and entertaining element to the show.

In the rapid development of television programs, reality shows have become very popular nowadays, as it records and displays ordinary people on the television. The reason why the writer chooses *The X-Factor USA* show because it is one of the entertainment shows that not only has been well known globally, but it also represents the kind of today's favorite kind of show, the reality show. Reality show is a part of entertainment, since it is designed to entertain the audience. The study conducted by Ebersole and Woods (2007) proves that audience watch reality shows because this kind of television program has the entertainment factor. *The X-Factor USA* is one of the most globally well-known singing contests from America, which is started in September 2011 and originally aired on FOX channel every Wednesday and Thursday (Inc., 2011). The franchise of the show is held in many countries as well, including Indonesia.

The writer chooses the third season because it is the latest one. Simon Cowell is not only the creator of the show, but he is also one of the judges in the panel, which makes his statements are considered important and give a lot of influence toward the contestants also the audience. Simon Cowell is a celebrity who has been working since 1979 (Biography, 1996). He is known for his, as what the people call, “rude attitude” since he sat in the judges’ panel seat in the world globally known show *American Idol*, and still has the attitude ever since. His attitude, however, is the perfect tool to stay popular in this business. Because, despite that the impoliteness is causing offense, it turns out that it is the one essential thing that brings the entertaining element out of the show. The fact that *The X-Factor USA* is an entertainment show, and is still maintaining its popularity from the first time it is aired until now, interests the writer to examine about the impoliteness used by Simon Cowell as a celebrity and the main attention in one of the world class reality show.

There are two previous studies which are conducted in the impoliteness area of study: “*Impoliteness and Entertainment in the Television Quiz Show: The Weakest Link.*” by Jonathan Culpeper (2005) and “*Impoliteness in Reality Show—A Pragmatic Account*” by Hu Junhua(2010). Both of the impoliteness studies have also addressed to the area of entertainment world, more specifically, the television shows. However, none of their works used the object of talent searching contest or performance show, as this research does. Culpeper’s (2005) work uses the quiz show called *The Weakest Link* as his object, and Junhua’s (2010) uses the professional reality show called *The Apprentice*. The other

difference is, the research conducted by Junhua (2010) used the model of Grand Strategy of Impoliteness (GSI) which was corresponding to the Grand Strategy of Politeness (GSP) by Leech (2005), as in this research, the writer uses the sub-strategies of impoliteness constructed by Culpeper (1996) which he designed from the theoretical framework of the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987).

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

In the background of the study, it has already been described about the reality show called *The X-Factor USA* also the creator and one of the panels of the judges in the show, Simon Cowell. The writer has also explained about the impoliteness and its strategies which can be used in performing impoliteness utterances. The writer finds it interesting to analyze the impoliteness performed by Simon Cowell as the personage of the show.

Thus, based on the background of the study, this research mainly intends to seek the appropriate answers to these following questions:

- 1) What types of impolite utterances do Simon Cowell use in *The X-Factor USA* show?
- 2) What are the factors that affect Simon Cowell's impolite utterances?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Simon Cowell has obviously showed us that being impolite in front of the camera can be fascinating and might also bring the popularity toward the show. Through the pragmatic approach toward the words from Simon Cowell, the creator of *The X-Factor USA*, the writer hopes to find out how the impoliteness types are being produced and presented by Simon Cowell in *The X-Factor USA* season three, in the audition round (episodes: 1-5), and what are the factors that causing them.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to help the audience of media understands more about the occurrences of impoliteness in TV show. Through the analysis of reality show, this paper aims to reveal not only about the impolite utterances occurrence but also to find the correlation between impoliteness and entertainment.

The fact that impoliteness issue, especially in the media context, has not gaining the scholarly attention as much as the politeness issue has, interests the writer to conduct this research. Thus, this study is expected to give the proper contribution to the development of the Pragmatics linguistics sub-field research, especially in the impoliteness and politeness strategies area.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Face Threatening Acts (FTA) : An act that infringe on the hearers' need to maintain their self esteem and be respected. (Brown and Levinson, 1978)
2. Bald On Record Impoliteness : As in Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy, the FTA is performed clearly and boldly but the difference is, in Brown and Levinson's, the face threat is small. (Culpeper, 1996)
3. Positive Impoliteness : The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants. (Culpeper, 1996)
4. Negative Impoliteness : The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants. (Culpeper, 1996)
5. Sarcasm or Mock Politeness : The FTA is performed with the use of obviously insincere strategies. (Culpeper, 1996)
6. Withhold Impoliteness : The absence of politeness in situations where it is expected. (Culpeper, 1996)