CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Language is the most typical, the most representative and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are simple not separable, one cannot fully understand the nature of either language or culture unless they are seen as inseparable. The language itself is used by people to communicate to each other around the world. Moreover, when people use language in doing communication, there are connections and meaningful patterns in language use and speaking practice in societies around the world, and that they have their own patterns significantly different to each other culture (Sherzer, 1992, p. 420). Because of those significant differences to each culture, the people in that social community should have the same grade in understanding the utterances. Hence, the communication will run well because they have already had the same competence of understanding to each other.

A communication is successful to the extent that the speaker and the hearer pair signals and messages in the same way, therefore that the message broadcast in the form of a given signal is identical to the one received when the signal is decoded. According to Grice (1975, p. 45), there are some kinds of rules in people's assumption that give direction in order to interpret what people say, unless those people receive some indication to the contrary. That is the main

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purpose in communication, how a message can be successfully delivered by the speaker and accepted well by the hearer.

The situation will be different if the communication cannot run well because of language and culture differences between the speaker and the hearer. It happens to people who learn another language as their second language learned, but they are so hard to deliver the message in second language form. People need communication strategy which is an effort from the speaker to express meaning when faced with difficulty in the second language (L2) (Gass and Selinker, 2008, p. 285). The second language use can be influenced by the characteristics of the native language (L1). People, who can speak more than one language, often find difficulties in changing their mindset for the second language learned. For instant, Indonesian people who can speak English, usually unconsciously speak in English but in Indonesian style. It means that even the words are spoken in English, some the structures are still in Indonesian patterns. This kind of transfer is called pragmatic transfer which forms interlanguage pragmatics.

According to Takahashi (1996, p. 145), in interlanguage pragmatics it is assumed that intercultural miscommunication is often caused by learners' falling back on their L1 sociocultural norms and conventions in realizing speech acts in a target language. As L1 sociocultural communicative competence is learned in the learner's own country as well as his/her native language, and different ethnic groups have differing communication strategies, it is assumed that L1 speakers use their own communicative strategies even though they speak the L2 language. The different use of strategies employed by speakers causes miscommunication which it becomes complicated in cross-cultural communication where all the

participants may speak the same language, but do not share the same norms of communication (Yamagashira, 2001, p. 260).

Based on Gass and Selinker (2008), miscommunication resulting from native speaker perceptions of relatively proficient nonnative speakers is often serious in terms of international relations because the source of the difficulty is more likely to be attributed to a defect in a person (or a culture). As Gumperz and Tannen (1979, p. 315) point out, because the interlocutors assume that they understand each other, they are less likely to question interpretations. This is labeled the most dangerous because of without a shared background, linguistic system, and specific beliefs. When one interlocutor confidently (but inaccurately) interprets another's utterance, it is likely that participants will run into immediate problems because they do not share a common discourse space (Varonis and Gass, 1985, p. 341).

Therefore refusals are given as a way of illustrating the speech act which occurs in all language but not all languages/cultures refuse in the same way, or do they feel comfortable refusing the same invitation or suggestion. Refusals are a highly complex speech act primarily because they often involve lengthy negotiations as well as face-saving maneuvers to accommodate the noncompliant nature of the speech act. Because oral refusals are the results of an initial request *(Would you like to come to my house for dinner tonight?)*, they preclude extensive planning on the part of refuser (Gass and Selinker, 2008, p. 289).

There are some previous studies that are in the same project, in speech act-refusals. In 1990, a study conducted by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz investigated the refusal statements by Japanese and American people in English

language. Then in 1991, a study was conducted by Bardovi Harlig about the refusal statements by native and non-native English language in a university in America. Moreover, in 2001, Yamagashira conducted a study about refusal strategies used by Japanese. It investigated pragmatic transfer in the use of refusal studies by Japanese ESL learners. The study of refusal strategies was also conducted by Nguyen (2006). It was about the cross-cultural pragmatics in refusal strategies applied by Australians as English native speakers, Vietnamese ESL learners, and Vietnamese native speakers. On the other hand, Wannaruk (2008) also conducted a study about pragmatic transfer in refusal strategies used by Thai ESL learners.

Indeed, this study is more concerned with investigating the refusal strategies used by the American English native speakers, Indonesian ESL learners and Indonesian native speakers, and also investigating whether any pragmatic transfer happens or not in the used of refusal strategies.

1.2 Statements of the problem

From the background above, two statements of the problem are found which are related to refusal strategies and pragmatic transfer in speech acts.

1. What types of refusal strategies are used by American English native speakers, Indonesian ESL learners and Indonesian native speakers?

2. How does pragmatic transfer occur in refusal strategies chosen by Indonesian ESL learners?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to investigate the types of refusal strategies used by American English native speakers, Indonesian ESL learners and Indonesian native speakers, and also to find out the occurrence of pragmatic transfer in refusal strategies used by Indonesian ESL learners.

1.4 Significance of the study

Theoretically, the writer hopes that this research will give improvements in the pragmatic studies which are already done before this. This study is also meant to give contribution towards the study of linguistics, especially for the English Department of Airlangga University. Practically, for the readers, it will be helpful to understand more about the idea of refusal strategies and to apply it. Therefore, it would avoid miscommunications, which can occur in daily conversations or even in communications with people from different cultures.

1.5 Definitions of key terms

- Language transfer : The forms and the meanings of the native language and culture in a second language learning situation (Lado, 1975, cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008, p. 89).

- Pragmatic transfer : Transfer of L1 sociocultural communicative competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other function of

language, where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular function of language (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Welts, 1990, p. 56).

- Speech acts : The action performed in expressing something (Austin, 1962, p. 53).

- Refusal : The negative counterparts to acceptances and consentings are rejections and refusals, just as one can accept offers, applications, and invitations, so each of these can be refused or rejected (Searle and Vandervken, 1985, cited in Sattar, Lah, & Suleiman, 2010, p. 81).