

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Particular groups of people have different ways of speaking. In social settings, most people usually use various expressions to show politeness and deference to those they know well or even to colleagues they are familiar with. In having conversation with others, people should involve the term Politeness. Politeness may be defined as civility, courteousness, refinement, respect, and consideration for others. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the term politeness should be involved to respect both the hearers and the speakers. Therefore, both of the speakers and the hearers can keep their relationship. Yule (1997) states politeness in an interaction can be defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face. In this case, politeness is done to show awareness and respect to the speakers' face and the hearers' face. Face is something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to an interaction. There are many interactions that should involve the term politeness such as requesting, apology, offering, and many more. One of the interactions that should be paid attention to is apology. In apologizing, people should be polite in order to maintain the hearer's negative face. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Model (1987)

regards apologies as “negative politeness strategies” in that they convey respect, deference, and distance rather than friendliness and involvement.

In everyday life, apology is an important aspect in life to create a good communication between people and others. Apology is done when a speaker does offense to a hearer. The speaker who has done the offense to the hearer should apologize to the hearer in order to restore the hearer’s face and maintain the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. According to Kasper (1989) apology is the acknowledgement by the speaker that a violation has been committed and an admission that he or she is at least partially involved in its cause. Apology is an action or an utterance in which an apologizer can rehabilitate his or her own existence in society. When someone asks for an apology, they can use many ways to express an apology. Apology strategies according to Trosborg (1995) are the methods used by individuals to perform the speech act of apology such as statement of remorse and reparation. In this research, related to Trosborg’s theory (1995) who also particularly made a research on politeness strategy, there are eight apology strategies: rejection, minimizing, explanation, acknowledge of responsibilities, expression of apology, and expression concern of hearer, promise of forbearance and offer of repair.

Apology is also necessary in the public service. Commonly, in the public service, there are customer service officers that have a duty to serve questions by customers and provide the desired information as complete as possible with friendly and easy-to-understand language. A customer service officer has a duty to give

satisfaction to customers through a well service. A customer service officer is responsible in serving any necessity of customers especially in terms of accepting the problems from customers. They accepting the problem and find out how to solve the problems faced by customers in order to provide an optimal service by the customer service officers. Customer service officers have an important task, namely to foster a good relation with the whole customers so that the customers can feel happy, satisfied, and even build more trust; eventually, the guest then will be a regular customer at the company. However, sometimes there is mistakes made by customer service officers and misunderstanding between customers and customer service officers that make customer service officers should apologize. Customer service officers must receive and be ready to take whatever that will happen. For example, they must be ready to accept complaint from customers. Complaint and apology constitute an adjacency pair. Adjacency pairs is composed of two turns produced by different speakers which are placed adjacency pairs include such exchanges as question or answer. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) an adjacency pair a complaint is a first part act, with an apology as a 'preferred' second part, that is, a complaint can be immediately followed by an apology without further comments.

In the public service, complaint is an important for customer service and they must understand with the impact of the customer's perception. Tax et.al (1998) stated that dissatisfied customers can be encouraged to complaint because if a customer feel do not satisfy with the services they will complaint. When the customers start to

complaint then the company will guarantee the risk of losing the customers. The customer service officers in responding the complaint may be performed directly with explicit apology. According to Trosborg (1995) explicit apology it means that the complaine used one of the words that directly shows an apology such as; apologize, sorry, excuse. Moreover, a complaine can respond a complaint indirectly by taking on responsibility or giving explanation. Also, a complaine may find a reason to minimize the degree of the offence. Therefore if the offence is a grave one, a verbal apology may be does not enough to restore the damaged relationship among the customers and customer service officers. According to Goffman (1971) the apologizer's response has a twofold aim; she or he must placate the complainer to restore social harmony and she or he must restore her or his own social status. If the offence is the grave one, a verbal apology may be does not enough to restore the damaged relationship among the customers and customer service officers. Thus apologies are offered to express regret for having offended someone.

Based on the phenomenon, in this study, the writer tries to analyze apology strategies that are used by Telkomsel customer service officers. The writer chooses Telkomsel customer service officers because Telkomsel is a big provider with many customers and it has been granted five awards in the 10th annual prestigious mobile awards. Telkomsel succeeds obtaining the best predicates in each year as operator of the year, best GSM operator, best Blackberry services, best postpaid (Halo card), and best prepaid (Simpati). Customer service officers of Telkomsel in applying apology

need more than simply saying “I’m sorry”. According to Edmondson and House (1981) an affective, sincere apology depends as much on the words they say as it does on the context of: timing, meaning, setting, and actions. Therefore, the writer wants to know about the service of Telkomsel particularly about how the customer service officers serve the customer needs, provide a solution, and take messages or problems that must be resolved. In addition, the writer chooses to analyze apology strategies because the writer wants to know what the most common types of apology strategies that occur in the conversation among the customer and customer service officers in Telkomsel. The writer realizes that apology is an important aspect in conversation in maintaining the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Moreover, as a human being the writer realizes that in having communication with the others sometimes occur misunderstanding. Therefore, the writer analyzes how the customer service officer solves the offense that he or she has done to customer.

In this modern era, people cannot be separated from provider. Provider is very important for people’s life these days. If we are going to somewhere, we definitely will pass the advertisement about provider. We definitely will find a billboard on the streets of Surabaya that advertise about a provider. For people in Indonesia are certainly familiar with Telkomsel. As a well known provider in Indonesia, Telkomsel should be able to provide the best service for customers. It is important for a big company of provider to provide explanation to the customers so that the customer has understanding of provider products or activities. In addition, through publication in

the mass media, other forms to foster effective communication can be obtained by the customer service. Persuasive elements occur when a customer service officer is getting closer and convincing people who are potential to be Telkomsel customers.

There are some related studies that have been conducted concerning with apology strategies. One of them is the study conducted by Ermawati (2010) entitled *Apology Strategies Used by the English Department Student of Airlangga University*. The study analyzes about the types of apology strategies that occur in the conversation among the English Department Students of Airlangga University. Then, there is a study entitled *Study of Apology Strategies Used on Telephone Conversation by Male and Female Call Center Agents in Telkom 147*. The study is conducted by Julia (2007) who analyzes about a study of apology strategies used on telephone conversation by male and female call center agents in Telkom 147. Different from them, this study concerns on the apology strategies used by the Customer Service Officers in Telkomsel by using the apology strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995).

1.2 Statement of the problems

Based on the background that the writer formulated, the statement of the problems are as follows:

1. What types of apology strategies used by the customer service officers of Telkomsel?

2. Which apology strategy that is mostly used by the customer service officers of Telkomsel?

1.3 Objective the study

In this study, the writer tries to identify what apology strategies are used by the customer service officers of Telkomsel. Moreover, the writer also tries to find out which apology strategy that is mostly used by the customer service officers of Telkomse. In this study, another purpose is to contribute knowledge to the readers about types of apology strategies that are used by Telkomsel customer service officers. By knowing the types of apology strategies the readers can broaden their knowledge about apology strategies that occur in the conversation.

1.4 Significance of the study

The writer is studying the Apology Strategies Used by Customer Service Officers in Telkomsel Surabaya. For the theoretical the writer hopes that the research will be useful for advance study in pragmatic or another research on apology strategies. In addition, for the practical, the writer hopes this research can contribute further knowledge about apology strategy in service managements of business companies. In this case the customer service can use the apology strategy provided for handling the customer complaints. The writer also wants to show the form of

apology strategies used by customer service at Telkomsel Surabaya as one of the best providers in Indonesia.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Apology strategies : The methods used by individuals to perform the speech act of apology such as statement of remorse and reparation (Trosborg, 1995)

Customer service officers : Employee that has a duty to serve a question by customers and provided the desired information as complete as possible with friendly and use language that is easy to understand (Rust, 1993)

Politeness strategies : Face refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself; it is also maintaining that “self-esteem” in public or private situations (Brown and Levinson, 1987).