

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

With advanced technology, communication does not have to be carried out physically face to face because there are many options to do it virtually. It has brought a significant change in the way people interact with in every aspect of society including in the academic setting. Various online communication tools are used to make the academic activities become much more efficient, effective, and accommodating for both the facilitators and students. One of the tools that is commonly used is email.

Email plays a role in transmitting information as a text-based online communication tool. A salutation or greeting is used first before a body or main content and a closing in email. It is placed at the beginning to open the message before moving forward to the main idea just like how verbal communication works. People usually use greeting when they meet and welcome somebody with polite and friendly remarks. As it is done at the beginning of social interaction, the use of greeting expressions is frequent and common in daily conversation and naturally becomes routine.

It is necessary to always include a greeting in an email to recognize the sender's social position to the reader and for the sender to affirm the reader's identity in a communication. Considering each other's identity and speaking accordingly in social

interaction is polite behavior whether it is in face-to-face or online communication. Being linguistically polite involves speaking appropriately according to the relationship between a speaker and hearer. It is practically impossible to communicate without showing the social relationship between the participants in a conversation. For example:

- a. Student to their lecturer

“Good morning, sir.”

- b. Student to fellow student or friends

“Hey! What’s good?”

From the two examples of utterances above, the student uses different tones in the greeting to a lecturer and a fellow student. In the context of the examples, the student shows respect to the lecturer by using appropriate words that indicate politeness when they greet the lecturer. It is done because the student is aware of the difference in social status in the academic setting. According to an article by The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) of the University of Minnesota (n.d.), the expression “Good morning” tends to be used by and to individuals of higher status in a formal situation. Meanwhile, “Hi” and “Hey” are frequently used between friends or close relatives in a non-formal situation that indicates solidarity and familiarity. Therefore, students can greet each other casually to their friends since they have a close relationship and belong to a similar social

hierarchy. It is different because the bigger the gap of power and the social distance between people, the more formal they speak.

Some formal greetings are found in emails that are sent to lecturers taken from four selected students of class 2018 and 2019 of English Department of Andalas University as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| a.1 <i>Assalamu'alaikum Wr Wb</i>
Good afternoon, sir, | a.2 <i>Assalamu'alaikum</i>
Dear sir, |
| b.1 <i>Assalamu'alaikum, ma'am.</i> | b.2 <i>Assalamu'alaikum</i>
Good morning, <i>bu</i> + name |

As seen from the samples, all four students use “*assalamu'alaikum*” in their greetings. It is the common greeting expression used among Indonesian Muslims as a salutation when they see each other also known as *salam*. Two students (a.1 and b.2) use another greeting expression following the *salam* which are “good afternoon” and “good morning”. One student (a.2) uses the salutation “dear” in the greeting after the *salam*. All four students also add the appropriate address terms such as “sir” and “ma’am” and “*bu* (ma’am) + first name” in addressing the lecturers. It shows that the students have different choices of greetings despite their social dynamics with the lecturers.

Due to the phenomenon above, the writer is interested in investigating the greetings in the students’ emails to find out the different forms of greeting used to email lecturers and how they are used in relation to the politeness of students of the English Department of Andalas University.