CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Language is the most valuable thing that helps people in many aspects of life. For instance, language is used by people to interact with each other, to get the information, to share their thought or feeling, and to build relationships. It means that language is a tool of communication. However, communication is not an easy thing. It is not only exchanging information but also understanding the emotion and intention behind it. People may need to learn communicating skills like giving commands, making requests, expressing apologies, and refusing in an appropriate way. It is because language can determine whether someone polite or impolite, wise or unwise, educated or uneducated and others.

Refusal is part of the speech act proposed by J.L. Austin in 1962 in his well-known book of '*How to Do Things with Words*'. Speech acts is an act that the speaker performs when making an utterance. Then, speech act of refusal is when people make the action of refusing to someone's invitation, offer, suggestion, and request through utterance. However, when people express a certain refusal, the one who gets refused might feel disappointed and somehow feel disrespect because the one who refuses uses inappropriate refusal. That is why the refusal strategies are usually applied in performing refusal action in order to make a polite refusal.

Refusal may be one of the challenging tasks for a human to master, especially when refusing someone in a foreign language. The speaker should have a wide range of vocabulary, knowledge of grammar, and pragmatic competence to avoid misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer. Social factors such as gender, age, level of education, occupation, power, and social distance, make refusing even complicated (Frase, 1990, p.383). For example, when an employee has to refuse his/her boss's invitation.

(1)   A: I am sorry, but I can't. I have responsibilities before that.

(Felix-Brasdefer, 2004, p. 613)

In this case, the employee may need a polite refusal since she/he has to refuse someone who has higher power than them. It can be seen that the employee uses the word '*sorry*' before saying '*I can't*' in order to be polite. Moreover, the employee also gives an explanation to save the boss's face for being rejected.

Refusal may be one of the essential skills that should be mastered by college students, such as The International Accounting Department students. They have to be able to refuse someone older than them, such as the seniors and lecturers in a polite way. The International Accounting Department students are usually familiar with English language. It is because they have a policy of using English Language as the language of instruction in their class. English language may become the second or the third language that they learn. As a second language learner, the International Accounting Department students may have a pragmatic competence which shows

their ability in producing an appropriate refusal. That is why the researcher is interested to choose the fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019 as the participants of this research.

1.2 Research Questions

Within the domain of pragmatics, this study is designed to provide an understanding of second language learners about refusal strategies in English in relation to social factors. To explain that, the research focuses on two questions:

1. What are the forms of refusal in English as acquired by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019?

2. What are the types of refusal strategies in English as acquired by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019 in relation to social factors?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objective of this research is to examine the production of refusal in English in relation to power, social distance, and rank of imposition by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019. The purpose of the research is to answer the research questions above.

1. To find out the forms of refusal in English as acquired by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019

2. To explain the types of refusal strategies in English as acquired by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019 in relation to social factors

1.4 Scope of the Research

This research is conducted in the framework of pragmatics, which focuses on the speech act of refusal in English. Furthermore, the data used in the study are taken from the expressions of refusal in English that are used by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019. The study focuses on the form and the sequence of refusal strategies in English as acquired by fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019. Moreover, the study also focuses on the factors that make the fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University in 2019 decided to use those refusal strategies in relation to the social factors such as power, distance, and rank of imposition.

1.5 Methods of the research

1.5.1 Participants

The participants of this research are the fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University who started their study in 2015. There are several considerations why the fourth-years students of International Accounting Department were chosen. Firstly, the International Accounting Department students are usually familiar with English language. It is because they have a policy of using English Language as the language of instruction in their class. English language may become the second or the third language that they learn. As a second language learner, they should have an ability to perform speech acts of refusal in an appropriate way which can show their pragmalinguistic competence (Leech,1983). Secondly, as a

class of 2015, they already spoke English language as the language of instruction in their classes for almost five years. They are expected to have the competence to produce an appropriate refusal with different social factors. Thirdly, there is only a few research about speech act of refusal in English language that has been conducted with them as a participant.

1.5.2 Data Elicitation Instrument

The instrument employed in this research is Discourse Completion Task (DCT) (Blum-Kulka, 1982). In this research, a written DCT was used to find the pattern of the speech act of refusal and to investigate types of speech acts in a short period. The 12 situations were given and the participants have to read a written description of a situation. In this questionnaire, the participants were asked to refuse the invitation, offers, suggestions, and requests from someone and write their answers based on the situations in the questionnaire. Each situation was created based on a familiar situation for college students. The situations and the settings were described as detail as possible to make the participants can simply imagine as if they were involved in those situations. Moreover, the situations were made in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid misunderstanding, but the participants were required to answer the situations in English.

1.5.3 Data Collection Procedure

After all the questionnaires were ready, the researcher asked for assistance from one of the friends who happened to be one of the fourth-year students of International Accounting Department of Andalas University. She was asked to

confirm whether the International Accounting Department students of Andalas University agreed to be the participants of this research. After she confirmed it, the participants were contacted in order to make an appointment. There were 23 students that consist of 20 females and 3 males who agreed to participate in this research. The participants could be found in some places, such as in the Economic Faculty, in the library, and in the cafe. When the researcher met the participants, the researcher gave them some instructions and reminded them to write their answers in English. Then, the questionnaires were handed to the participants.

1.5.4 Data Analysis

After the data collection procedure ends, all the questionnaires were moved into the computer. Then, the data were grouped into the table based on its situations. In analyzing the data, all the types of refusal were analyzed by using a theory of types of refusal by Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R (1990). Furthermore, the forms of refusal for each utterance were categorized according to its sequence, which are pre, head, and post-sequence of refusal by Felix-Brasdefer (2004). After the forms of refusal were categorized, the researcher classified the forms of refusal based on its strategies. Next, each strategy was analyzed in order to see the relationship between the refusal and the social factors such as power, distance, and rank of imposition based on Brown & Levinson's theory (1987). Lastly, the explanation and assumption were given as the analysis of the data.

1.5.5 Presenting the Result of Analysis

After analyzing the data, the results of the analysis were presented into several tables

and figures. In explaining the data, the writer will descriptively explain and interpret

the data into sentences. The tables were used to show the percentage of refusal forms

and strategies acquired by the participants. Then, the figures were used to show the

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