CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

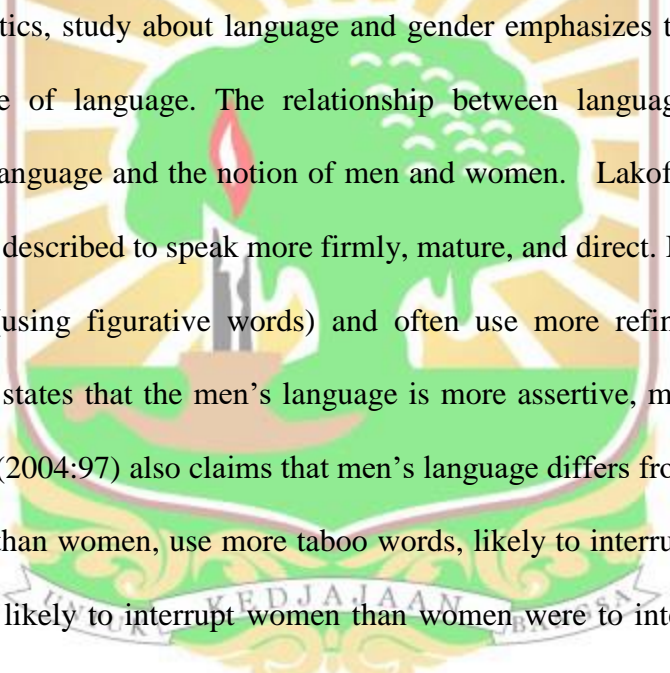## 1.1.Background of the research

Language is used as a means to communicate among them by human being. It enables human beings to express their ideas, emotion and experiences. One can express their idea directly in speech or by conversing with others or indirectly through written form of language. One can talk on the phone or send letter or emails to someone they want to communicate.

However, sometimes, the speakers are often find difficulties in explaining their ideas to the receiver with good words which will easier to be understood by the receiver and make a good impact to the receiver (Syrova, 2013). Seken (2007) stated that speaker usually finds problem on how to deliver their ideas in a good way. In other words, speakers or writers should have ability to choose appropriate words and appropriate style in communicating with their counterparts or readers.

One aspect that has to be considered in this context is politeness. Politeness as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) is strategy that used to save hearer's face and the way to convey our utterance as polite as possible. For example, the choice of address terms in writing formal email. As mentioned by Braun, (1988, p. 30), the use of address terms in an inappropriate situation can lead to misunderstanding in communication. For example, the offer "you may go outside now" can be considered as polite when it is used to a child, but inappropriate when used for someone

whose social position or authority is over the speaker. Then, the appropriate address term used in writing formal email can show our respect to the addressee by the speaker.

In relation to politeness, it is claimed that male and female are different in using language. Lakoff (1975), for example, argues that women are expected to be polite than men. Lakoff argues that this is because women in society is believed as subordinate. women need to speak with standard forms in case to protect their face and also their addressee's face (Holmes, 2011).

In sociolinguistics, study about language and gender emphasizes the focus on the effect of gender on the use of language. The relationship between language and gender is the relationship between language and the notion of men and women. Lakoff (1975), for example, mentions that men are described to speak more firmly, mature, and direct. In contrast, women are not strict and overt (using figurative words) and often use more refined and polite words. Lakoff (2004) further states that the men's language is more assertive, mature, and on point or direct forms. Coates (2004:97) also claims that men's language differs from women's. He states that men swear more than women, use more taboo words, likely to interrupt others disruptively. Men also much more likely to interrupt women than women were to interrupt men. Similarly, Crawford (1997, in Heroes 2015) states that men's language in communication can be identified as direct, brief sentences, judgment activities, swear words, self-references, and politeness.

Women's and men's language can be observed among other in emails. Electronic-mail (E-mail) is one of computer-mediated communication and becoming an accepted means of communication between student in the university and their lecturer. In this *Covid 19* pandemic era, many lectures ask their students to submit their assignments by emails. It is interesting to

know how male and female students of English Department communicate by email to their lecturer. It is probably that not all students are able to write an email in the right format and in an appropriate manner. They probably lack knowledge of comprehending social distance and power relation between them and their lecturer. Besides, politeness in computer-mediated communication becomes an in interesting topic to study especially in an academic communication setting because there is significant differences in distance and power in their social relations between student and teacher (M.A.Locher, pp. 1-5, 2010).

Based on this fact, the writer was interested to investigate the use of language by male and female students of English Department, Andalas University, in communicating by email with their lecturers. The study observed the students' choice of words and type of sentences used in every components of email in order to find linguistic characteristics of male's and female's language in writing email. It also examined appropriateness of the language in relation to politeness in communicating with person with power and higher social position. In other words, appropriateness reflects state of students' politeness in that written communication.

1.2.Identification of the problem

This research focuses on investigating male and female language in writing emails to their lecturer and focused on three research questions. They are:

1. What are the structures of emails written by selected male and female students of English Department 2018 to their female lecturer?

2. What are the characteristics of the language in emails written by selected male and female students to female lecturer?

3. How is politeness reflected in emails written by selected male and female students of English Department 2018 to their female lecturer?

1.3.Objective of the Research

This research has the following objectives:

1. To identify the structure of emails written by selected male and female students of English Department 2018 to their female lecturer.

2. To examine and describe the linguistic characteristics in emails written by selected male and female students of English Department 2018 to their female lecturer.

3. To examine and describe politeness strategy used in emails written by selected male and female students of English Department 2018 to their female lecturer.

1.4.Scope of the research

This study focused on the language used by male and female students of English analyzes writing ability of male and female student in writing an email to their lecturer. The data are limited to emails written by 26 students, consisting of 13 male and 13 female students of English Department Student, Andalas University, 2018. The email is limited to those written to a female lecturer with the same topic, which is submitting an assignment. The receiver is limited to a female lecturer and the number of the receiver is limited to one lecturer.

1.5.Method of the research

1.5.1. Data and Source of Data

The data are all words and sentences found in emails written by students of English Department Student, Andalas University, 2018 to their lecturers. The sources of data are sample of students' emails sent to a female lecturer. The samples of emails are determined using purpose sampling technique and uses sex types of the sender as one criterion. There are 26 emails used as the source of data, written by 13 males and 13 females. The emails are written by the students to the lecturer for one purpose, which is the submission of a Morphology assignment.

1.5.2. Method of Collecting Data

In collecting data, the writer uses several steps. Firstly, the writer contacted some female lecturers whether they were willing to share emails sent to them by their students to be used as a sources of data. Only one of the lecturers that has a time to check their students' email and then share the emails with the researcher. Since the emails sent by the lecturer differ widely in terms of intention, the university entrance period, and the time (year) the emails sent, it was decided to take only emails written by students of 2018 university entrance which are sent in the same year. The topic is limited to one topic, which is the submission of a morphology assignment, to avoid variety in the intention or purpose of writing an email. As the result, there are 26 emails that can be used as data, consisting of 13 emails by male and 13 by female.

Second, the emails from the lectures are downloaded and kept in one folder. The emails are classified based on the sex of the senders. Then, every email is read carefully to find the completeness in the email format. Note-taking technique is used to identify both the completeness in the format of email and the language used in every part of emails.
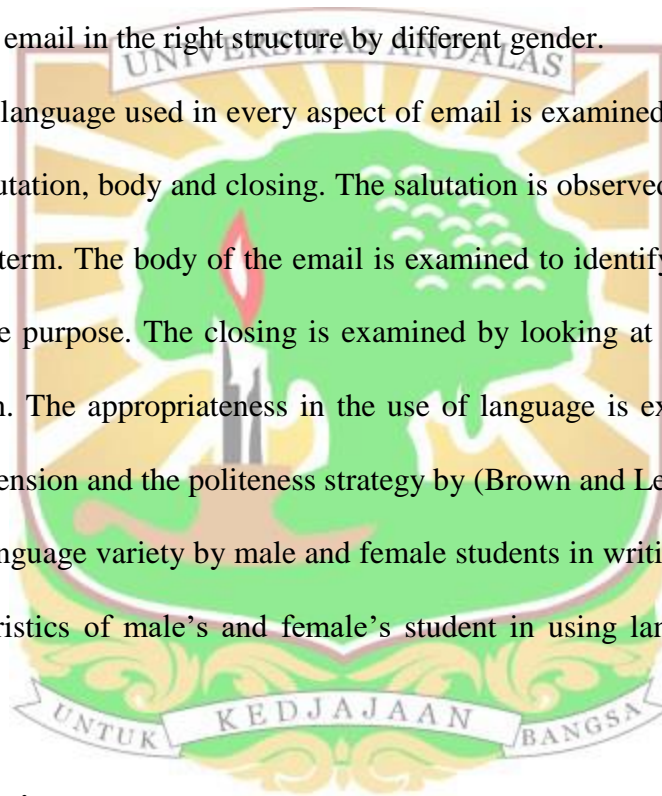
1.5.3. Data Analysis

The writer uses the following steps in the process of analyzing the data. Firstly, the collected email samples are examined to see the structure of the email. The structure of email follows the standard email format by College (2015). Every email is analyzed from the existence of every part of email: the salutation, body, and closing. The result of identification is grouped into two categories: complete and incomplete email. This category is used to check the knowledge of writing email in the right structure by different gender.

Secondly, the language used in every aspect of email is examined by looking at the ways the students write salutation, body and closing. The salutation is observed to identify the form of greeting and address term. The body of the email is examined to identify the types of sentences used in conveying the purpose. The closing is examined by looking at the closing expressions and self-identification. The appropriateness in the use of language is examined by referring to power and social dimension and the politeness strategy by (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Finally, the language variety by male and female students in writing emails is compare to see specific characteristics of male's and female's student in using language refers to Lakoff (1975; 2004).

1.5.4. Data Presentation

The data, which is the form of emails, is presented in its original form. The analysis is done in descriptive way to descriptive the format of each email and the language used in each part of the email. The result and the finding are presented in the form of table. The meaning of the data and findings are also described descriptively.