

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

People sometimes make requests towards other people. A request is an act of asking an addressee to do something for the addresser (Maloni 1982:23). According to Holmes, the choice of requests or directives depends on some social factors. One of them is social distance between the interlocutors. People, who are close friends or intimates usually direct in making request by using imperatives. Ervin-Tripp also agrees that the form of requests or directives will be less direct when there is less familiarity between the interlocutors (Wolfson, 1989).

However, the high level of intimacy between the interlocutors, does not guarantee that they use imperatives in expressing their request. Tannen (1990) gives an example of husband and wife conversation. In the conversation that takes place in a car, the wife requests her husband as follows

Wife : “Would you like to stop for a drink?”

Husband : “No.”

In the example above, the wife does not use imperatives. Based on Ervin-Tripp's classification of requests, the wife uses imbedded imperatives. It indicates that husband and wife do not always use imperatives in making requests towards each other. In addition, men and women are different in using language. Holmes states that as subordinate group, they have to speak politely. As a result, they tend to use more polite and less direct forms of directives while men tend to use more direct form (Holmes, 1990).

In using language in the daily life, making requests is one of the speech acts that people always make. Thus, the writer wants to know the request type that wives use in making requests towards their husbands because in every daily life, husbands and wives always make requests towards each other. Furthermore, the writer also wants to find out the request type that husbands use in making request towards their wives.

Furthermore, from a research on request in Israeli Hebrew by Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983a), it shows that the important factors in making requests are the social distance and power between the interlocutors. Compared to the American speakers investigated by Ervin-Tripp, Blum-Kulka et.al (1985) finds that indirect requests are made relating to the power of the addressee, on the other hand less direct requests are made to those that have dominant position socially. Even though the result from Israeli Hebrew and American English are similar, Wolfson (1989) keeps saying that cultural differences must be taken into consideration.

From the explanation above, the writer wants to compare couples of husbands and wives from two ethnic groups, which are Javanese and Chinese Indonesians. Javanese and Chinese Indonesians have their own cultures and values. According to Hariyanto (1993), in Chinese Indonesians culture, a marriage involves the whole family because it concerns with the clan. On the other hand, for Javanese, marriage is an individual matter. Thus, the writer concerns with request expressions between husbands and wives of Javanese and Chinese Indonesian couples in order to find whether there are differences between Javanese and Chinese Indonesian couples in making requests.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This thesis attempts to compare and contrast Javanese couples and Chinese Indonesians couples in making request towards their spouses. Consequently, the questions that the writer wants to answer are:

1. What kind of request expressions used by Javanese namely
 - a). husbands make towards their wives?
 - b). wives make towards their husbands?
2. What kinds of request expressions used by Chinese Indonesian couples namely
 - a). husbands make to their wives?
 - b). wives make to their husbands?
3. What are the similarities and the differences (if any) between Javanese couples and Chinese Indonesian couples in making requests towards their spouses?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to identify the request types used between Javanese couples and Chinese Indonesian couples in making requests towards each other. By comparing and contrasting the request types used by those ethnic groups, the writer will be able to find out the request expression that used by the husbands and wives from Javanese and Chinese Indonesian couples. Moreover, the writer can see the differences and similarities between Javanese and Chinese Indonesian couples.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The writer hopes that after reading this thesis, the readers can understand how husbands and wives make requests towards their spouses. As a result, later, the readers understand the type of requests that their spouses make.

The writer also hopes that this study will give another contribution in the area of sociolinguistics, especially in the knowledge of making requests. In addition, the research can be done on other regions. The writer expects that there will be many sociolinguistic studies based on ethnicity and also intimacy such as parents and children.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of this study is sociolinguistics. The writer chooses social factors, which are high intimacy and ethnicity, and language factor, which is making requests. Thus, the writer takes husbands and wives from two different ethnic groups that are Javanese and Chinese Indonesians. Other social factors such as age, economy and

length of marriage will not be considered in this thesis. Remembering the high level of intimacy of husbands and wives, the writer decided to limit the subject of this study on Javanese and Chinese Indonesian couples from Bojonegoro. Bojonegoro is the writer's hometown where the writer has an access to this research because she has known many Javanese and Chinese Indonesians couples. The relationship between the writer and the respondents can support this study because Donald Ary says that the close relationship that has already established with the subjects provides for a cooperative atmosphere so that truthful information can be obtained (1994:134). Hence, the writer limits this study on 15 Javanese couples and 15 Chinese Indonesian couples from Bojonegoro (see also 3.2.3.1).

1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

A request is an expression or an act of asking an addressee to do something for the addresser (Maloni 1982:23).

Directives are linguistic utterances intended to someone to do something (Holmes, 1990:289).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The writer arranges this thesis into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the significant and purpose of the study, the scope and limitation and definition of key terms. The second chapter deals with the review of related literature. Next, the third chapter is about the methodology that the writer uses in getting the data. Then, the

fourth chapter is where the writer discusses and analyzes findings. The last chapter is about conclusion that the writer gets from her research.