

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to understand and produce speech acts appropriately in different situations (Cheng, 2005). The understanding and production of speech acts by non-native speakers and the acquisition of speech act knowledge related to the L2 (second language) learning are the main concerns of interlanguage pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Pragmatics, as defined by Mey (2001), examines language from the user's point of view, focusing on the choices made by users, the constraints they face, and the impact of their language use on others.

Yule (2006) defines language as a symbol-based communication system that has important social functions. Yule emphasizes that people use language to exchange information, express emotions, and build social relationships. Felicia (2001) further emphasizes that spoken and written language are the most important tools in daily communication. Language as the main communication tool not only serves to exchange information, but also includes certain actions performed through language, as described in the study of pragmatics and discourse analysis. A fundamental aspect of pragmatics, speech acts include actions performed by saying something (Bach and Harnish, 2003). Speech acts, as an important aspect of pragmatics, not only include the act of speaking,

but are also influenced by cultural contexts, such as the different uses of gratitude expressions in different cultures. Common English expressions of gratitude such as “thank you” and “thank you” are used differently in different cultures (Dalilan, 2012).

Cultural differences in expressing gratitude, as seen between Indonesia and America, can be explained through the classification of explicit and implicit strategies in expressing gratitude as outlined by Eisenstein and Bodman (1986). Explicit strategies are fully and clearly expressed, while implicit strategies are implied and not directly stated. The choice between explicit and implicit strategies for expressing gratitude not only reflects individual preferences, but can also influence social dynamics, making it difficult to express gratitude appropriately. Failure to do so can result in negative social consequences such as anger and resentment (Einstein and Bodman, 1986). Expressions of gratitude arise in a variety of social situations and play an important role in promoting positive relationships. According to Algoe and Haidt (2008), expressions of gratitude will motivate benefactors to continue to do good, thus creating reciprocal and positive relationships. Beebe & Cummings (2005) highlight that expressions of gratitude are not only closely related to norms of politeness, but also vary depending on the speaker and the situation. Analyzing expressions of gratitude in films that reflect everyday life can reveal how these aspects of politeness manifest in different social contexts.

This perspective is in line with the research conducted by Fanida and Koesoemo (2023) on “Thanking Expression Used by the Characters in the Luca Movie (A

Pragmatic Analysis)” which focuses on the pragmatic analysis of expressions of gratitude in the Luca movie, by identifying the types and forms of expressions of gratitude as part of expressive speech acts. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the dialogue, by highlighting the casual context and culture of social interaction that reflects the Italian background of the film.

Furthermore Agustina (2021) Expressions of Gratitude in the Movie “The Pursuit of Happiness”: A Pragmatic Analysis” This research focuses on analyzing the expression of gratitude in the movie ‘The Pursuit of Happiness’ by using speech act theory by Hymes (1972) and Aijmer (1996). This study identifies the types of gratitude and the strategies used by the characters to express gratitude.

In contrast to previous research, this study examines how these expressions and reactions reflect the emotional and socio-economic struggles of the characters in the movie. “The Pursuit of Happiness”, an American biographical drama film, presents various examples of gratitude expressions and responses. Directed by Gabriele Muccino, the movie tells the story of Chris Gardner, a determined and hardworking individual who struggles to achieve success and happiness. The researcher chose this movie to explore how the characters express gratitude in different ways. Thus, this study is entitled “An Analysis on the Expression of Gratitude and Response Uttered by the Characters in the “Pursuit of Happiness Movie”

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background of the study above, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the gratitude expressions strategies used by the characters in “The Pursuit of Happiness” movie?
2. What are the strategies of responses of gratitude’s frequently used by characters in “The Pursuit of Happiness” movie?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. In line with the research questions, this study aims to find out the expressions of gratitude and their responses used by the characters in the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness."
2. Additionally, this study seeks to explain the frequency and context of how these gratitude expressions and responses are employed by the characters in the film.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are anticipated to be valuable both theoretically and practically:

- a. Theoretically

The study aims to demonstrate the use of gratitude expressions and responses in the movie "The Pursuit of Happiness." Therefore, it is expected that the

findings will contribute to applied linguistics, particularly in understanding gratitude strategies.

b. Practically

Students from both English and non-English departments can gain insights into the gratitude expressions and responses used by the characters in the movie. This can enhance their understanding of these expressions and serve as a reference for future studies related to gratitude expressions and responses in films.