

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The importance of communicative competence has been paid more attention in the field of second language teaching and learning. Hymes (1972) holds that second language learners must learn to speak not only grammatically but also appropriately correctly to achieve communicative goals. According to Novick (2000), this concept of appropriateness is achieved by mastering not only linguistic rules such as morphology, syntax, phonology and vocabulary, but also socio-cultural rules of language manifestation. Ahn (2007) confirmed that the acquisition of socio-cultural rules, which is widely known as pragmatic competence, is a basic requirement to second language learners. Pragmatic competence is crucial to successful cross-cultural and interpersonal communication as it will facilitate interlocutors to convey their communicative intention and to comprehend the message as it is intended by other interlocutors (Bachman, 1990; Fraser, 2010).

The concept of speech acts is one of the main areas of pragmatics that was first coined by Austin (1962). Speech acts can be performed directly and indirectly. Direct speech acts refer to the performance of certain acts in which the speaker means what he literally says, and indirect speech acts refer to

performing acts in which the speaker means more or something other than what is uttered (Searle, 1969).

One of the speech acts is complaining as proposed by Trosborg (1994) as a category of representative. Complaint is one of speech acts which could engender communication breakdown. It threatens an addressee's positive face as a complainer expresses negative evaluations of a situation which is the result of the addressee's past actions. It could also threaten the addressee's negative face as it may contain an implicit or explicit demand to rectify the aforementioned situation (Kraft & Geluykens, 2002).

Complaining is the speakers' communicative act to verbally express their annoyance, disagreement, disappointment, negative and unsatisfied feeling to a certain state of affairs, wrongdoing, speech, service, action, etc. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). When making complaints, people often use indirect strategies in order not to offend the other party and to avoid being impolite, rude or disrespectful (Wannurk, 2005). Because of the lack of sufficient socio-pragmatic knowledge of the second language, complaining becomes even more difficult for the non-native speakers of a second language. Yamagashira (2001) states that if non-native speakers do not know how to make complaints in a second language, it is assumed that they will use their own language strategies and, consequently, misunderstandings occur. According to Trosborg (1994), there are eight strategies of complaint such as hints, annoyance, ill Consequences, indirect accusation, direct accusation, modified blame, explicit blame (behavior), and explicit blame (Person).

Study of complaint has been a quite interesting issue for many pragmatics researchers. Several previous studies found that the complaint strategy showed that students applied an indirect complaint strategy rather than a direct complaint strategy to the other person. Many previous studies such as Murphy and Neu (1996), Tanck (2002), Kraft & Geluykens (2002), Tanck (2004), and Shahrokhi (2016) have focused on investigating the use of complaints between native and non-native English speakers where the researchers used observations and involved multinational participants.

According to the description above, the writer chooses giving complain strategies for the topic of this study because giving complaint cannot be separated from the interaction of human daily life. It means that almost in our life, we use complaints when someone disagrees and is dissatisfied with a service, product, action, etc. Unlike previous studies, this study involved Indonesian learners of English as non-native English speakers, small-scale participants and using complaint strategies in certain situations. Therefore, the writer will do a study under the title **“A Study on the Strategies of Giving Complaints in English in Certain Situations Used By EFL Learners in Kupang”**.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

Based on the background above, the writer identifies two problems, formulated in questions below:

1. What are giving complaint strategies used by the eleventh grade students of St. Rafael Seminary High School Kupang?
2. Which complaint strategy is the most commonly used by participants?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Related to some problems above, the objective of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the complaint strategies used by the eleventh grade students of St. Rafael Seminary High School Kupang.
2. To find out the most used complaint strategy by participants.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This research will have some contributions the details are explained in the following:

#### **1. Theoretical Contributions**

This study will enrich the studies on giving complaint strategies. Besides, this study will also be another reference for other researchers who would like to conduct similar studies.

#### **2. Practical Contributions**

This study helps the writer to understand more about giving complaint strategies so that she will help students to use the strategies well when speaking English.

#### **3. Pedagogical Contributions**

This study will enrich the reading resources in learning for English Education Study Program and Senior High School students especially in learning the strategies of giving complaints.

## **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

The following are the several limitations of this study.

1. This study only uses qualitative research methods to explain the strategies of complaint used by students. Therefore, future studies may be able to use a mixed method, namely using qualitative and quantitative research methods to be able to explain and analyze the percentage of each complaint strategy used by participants.
2. The instrument used in this study is a set of questionnaires to obtain data. But it might not be able to catch the naturalness of the data. Therefore, future studies might be able to conduct interviews for data validity.