

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description of the study. It comprises the background, formulation of the problem, operational definition, aims of the study, and significance of the study.

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

In this digital era, teaching and learning language is not only emphasizing grammatical knowledge and fluency, but it is important to raise student's awareness of pragmatic knowledge. According to Chorain et., (2016) Language proficiency must be correlated not only with grammatical knowledge but also with pragmatic aspects of the target language, if there are no pragmatic aspects then this can result in communication disorders. Pragmatics is an important part of learning language because it helps learners avoid miscommunication and communicate as they wish across cultures and languages (American English Website, 2019). Furthermore, according to Bhishe (2015), politeness is a conversational element that comes from pragmatics. This means that politeness is one of the important pragmatic aspects of communication that must be taught to students. Teaching politeness strategies in the classroom can be said to raise students' pragmatic knowledge.

The textbook is assumed as one of the tools to introduce pragmatic knowledge to the students. The textbook has a central role in language teaching as the main reference which provides various materials, activities, and language input that are appropriate to students' needs (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2016). To support the teaching of pragmatics, textbooks contain a lot of dialogue which can be one of the materials for pragmatic teaching.

In the last 6 years, research on politeness strategy has been carried out. Shooshtari (2017) investigated the frequency and extent of the 'politeness principle' and 'principle of irony' subcategories of interpersonal rhetoric as a general term in two textbooks. Textbooks should be researched books in the

category of psychology. This research found a total of 299 politeness structures in authentic textbooks and 103 structures were found in unauthentic textbooks. Arif et al. (2018) investigated politeness strategies practiced during the learning process differentiated by their gender. The research revealed that male lecture usually used positive and negative politeness strategies, and female lecturers preferred to use bald on-record strategies to interact with the students Then, Mahmud et al. (2019) also examined students' politeness strategies in the classroom, but it was in a university context. The result showed that the learners applied positive and negative politeness strategies during the classroom interactions.

Regarding the importance of reflecting politeness strategies in Indonesian English textbooks, the researcher intends to explore politeness strategies in Indonesian English textbooks. Similar research has been conducted by Meiratnasari et al. (2019). They used all dialogues in “Talk Active 1” and “Talk Active 2” as their sample and Politeness Strategies by Brown and Levinson (1987) as their theory. The research showed that Indonesian English textbooks reflected positive and negative politeness strategies as the main strategies. Therefore, the researcher intends to use a content analysis study with the same theory but in different English textbooks. The textbook the researcher uses is “When English Rings a Bell” published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture for grade VIII Junior High School which previously had little research. This research helps assess the extent to which textbooks can adapt politeness strategies to their target readers. These adjustments can relate to the student's age, education, and learning needs.

## **1.2. Formulation of the Problem**

The question of the research is:

What are the politeness strategies reflected in the dialogues in the Indonesian ELT Textbook ‘*When English Rings a Bell*’ grade VIII?

### **1.3. Operational Definitions**

The researcher provides three definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows;

#### **1.3.1 The Construction of Politeness Strategies**

It refers to the way politeness strategies constructed, structured, and integrated in dialogues found in English textbooks. This involves analyzing the politeness strategies applied in the dialogues to achieve specific communication goals.

#### **1.3.2 Indonesian ELT Textbook**

It refers to a textbook designed for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in Indonesia, which is used in grade VIII. This textbook became the main data source for the study, focusing on the identification and analysis of politeness strategies in the dialogues presented.

### **1.4. Aim of the Study**

This study aimed to explore politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory as represented in the dialogues of Indonesian English textbooks grade VIII published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.

### **1.5. Significances of the Study**

This study explores politeness strategies in "When English Rings A Bell" an English textbook grade VIII published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. Publishers or book authors can use this research as evaluation material to make the next textbooks more effective.

The result of the research is expected to contribute to the practical uses of language.

#### **1.5.1. Practical Uses**

Practically, this study will be used as a reference and consideration for implementing the Politeness Strategies in classroom activity. In addition, this research is expected to contribute to improving the understanding of pragmatics.