

ABSTRACT

NURFITRI SRI MUSLIMAWATI, 2019. *Formal and Informal Language Expression Used by English Students in Classroom Interaction*

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An appropriateness to use language in particular situation is needed. Specifically in classroom interaction, when the students should use formal language instead of informal language. In fact, sometimes students use informal language in a formal situation. Hence, the researcher interested to analyze the factors influencing the use of formal and informal language expression used by English students in classroom interaction. The research is qualitative research. The participant of the research is the student of Postgraduate program of UNM. The data was taken in classroom interaction use interview guide as the instrument of the research. The result of this research shows that the students use both formal and informal language in classroom interaction. There are some reasons why they use formal and informal language in the classroom interaction. The data shows that there are six factors that influence students to use formal language. Those are; (1) adjusting language to the situation, (2) avoiding short utterance, (3) respect to the lecturer, (4) politeness, (5) academic reasons and (6) scientific reasons. There are seven factors influencing the use of informal language use by the student in classroom interaction. Those are (1) intimacy, (2) imitating previous speaker, (3) focusing on audience's understanding, (4) habit, (5) simplicity, (6) spontaneity and (7) unconsciousness. Keywords : formal language, informal language, classroom interaction.

Keywords : formal language expression, informal language expression, classroom interaction

INTRODUCTION

In the classroom context during the teaching-learning process, the language that is used should be adjusted to the situation which is a formal situation. Hence, students necessarily speak formally during interaction in the classroom because the language selection must be considered to adapt to the situation. In a formal situation, it is supposed to use formal language. As Irvin stated that formal language has particular elements of code and it has the deep explanation of the particular rules (Irvin, 1979). While in the informal situation, it is supposed to use informal language. Different from formal language, informal language tends to be characterized by no limitation and less carefulness in choosing vocabulary in communication.

The use of formal language by students during interaction in the classroom process is suitable to use. In fact, sometimes, informal language is used unconsciously. The researcher assumes that there is an incongruity of the use of informal language in formal situation of the classroom context. As Straker (1980) said that to speak informal languages when the context of appropriateness order formal languages, it can cause someone to be marked as ignorant.

Based on the elaborated issues, the researcher is interested in conducting research about factor influencing the use of formal and informal language expression used by English students in classroom interaction.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL LANGUAGE EXPRESSION

Definition

Formal language should be used in formal situation. Richards et al, (1997) mentioned formal speech or formal language refers to the language that we commonly used in situations when the speakers is very careful about choice of words, sentence structure and pronunciation. The formal language can be found in school, forum, or in seminar. When talking in the educational environment such as forum, the language will be more polite, structured, normative and polite. It means that formal language briefly depends on the situation. Context when someone speaks significantly influence the use of language. It related with the statement of Labov, formal language is categorized by some special consideration to rules (Labov 1972). The certain rules mean there are limitations to produce language. The limitation appears in a certain situation. It is used to make a communication event appropriate to the social situation. In consequence, the formal situation causes someone to communicate in the formal language.

The use of formal language surely decreases the flexibility and spontaneity in produce language. Some norms are resisted the language used. There such a things that should be do and demand to do. The norms come by the peoples' behaviors that are acceptable by the society (Irvine, 1979). It means that when using formal language, there are particular rules or forms of the language that acceptable. There is also rules of language that we cannot use in formal language.

It is very necessity to speak appropriately in an appropriate time. Formal language is the kind of language that used in the formal situation. In use formal language, there are some things that should be considered. For example, choosing right vocabulary, avoiding abbreviation and slang. These considerations can be known as a rule or code that define and characterize formal language.

Informal language is the language that should be used in an informal situation. Kraut et al (1990) in their research explained that informal language is when there is no limitation of rules and hierarchies. All those forms that limit people in produce the language, are eliminated. It means that informal language refers to the language that has no certain rules. It is spontaneously speaking.

Informal language refers to the language that is interactively and rich. We used informal language spontaneously. There are no certain rules that limit the choice of words to communicate. The communication is interactive because the situation makes people interact more released so that people can communicate in comfortable way. Another characteristic of determining the informal language of a formal language is the frequency of communication. There is a possibility for formal language turn to be informal language. It could be happened when the partner of communication have the opportunity to speak often, multiple times in a day. They used to communicate. They turn from stranger to no longer stranger and communication moves from a formal way into informal way. (Brown & Fraser, 1979).

Factors Influencing

Formal and informal language expression used in particular context where the interactants communicate. Both formal and informal language expression has their own domains. In order to determine the domains of formal and informal language expression, Straker (1980) in his study divided languages into a standard language (SE) and black language (BE). Standard language refers to formal languages which are associated with the value of status differentiation and formality, centering around unfamiliar interlocutor. This kind of formal situation should be used as formal language expression. On the other hand, the Black language which refers to an informal language is associated with the value of intimacy, solidarity, spontaneity and informality.

There are some factors that influence people to use either formal and informal language in particular situation. Generally, the factors could be situation, status, setting and pattern. Status means the speaker and hearer position in society either superior or inferior. Setting means the place or environment of the speaker such as, school, home, or classroom. Pattern refers to medium of communication either spoken or written language. Situation means the situation when the speaker communicates whether it is formal situation or informal situation.

The appropriateness of using formal and informal language is tightly related to the situation. Hence, the feature of a situation during communication must be considered as well. There are three features of a situation as external aspects effect the language chooses of the speaker provided by Feyora et all (2016:11).

a. The nature of the audience

The nature of the audience refers to the level of education of the audience. Their level of education can determine the choice of word that the someone as a speaker selects in communication. There is a certain vocabulary that does not suitable to use in school. The vocabulary that only suitable to use in the constitution.

b. The medium of communication

The medium of communication means either spoken or written language. The use of spoken language and written language is very different. There must be a variation that should be avoided in written language such as slang. We cannot use slang in writing.

c. The purpose of communication

The purpose could be for education, entertainment or information. The purpose of communication also important thing to be considered in the choose of word. The selection of vocabulary often vary according to the purpose of communication. The way we communicate in educational field are likely to be more stricter and formal than when we communicate for the entertainment purposes.

Furthermore, one of the factors that influence the communication pattern is interpersonal relation among speaker and hearer in communication. Brown & Gilman (1960), Cate Payton (1985) in Eggins, and Eggins break down three features of interpersonal relationship. Those are;

- a. Power is an equal and unequal power among interactants. The example of equal power is friend relation. The example of unequal power are interaction in the classroom between lecturer and student.
- b. Contact refers to the frequency of communication. Either the interactants have frequent contact or rarely contact. For example contact between family is more frequent than a stranger.
- c. Affective involvement refers to the emotional relationship between the interactants. How close the relationship that each of interactants have. For example husband and wife are more intimate than work associates.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This research is under area of discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is the analysis that focused on the relationship between language and its context. Discourse analysis covers language in use either written text or spoken data, from conversation to a highly established form of conversation. (McCarthy, 1991).

This research is qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic method. Qualitative researchers concern on analyzing natural setting, interpreted them in terms to seek the meaning people bring to them. The participants of this research are the students of postgraduate program specifically English education department of Universitas Negeri Makassar. To get the data the researcher use three instruments; observation, voice recording and interview in the classroom interaction context.

In analyzing the data, the researcher use Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive models. Those are; transcribing, analyzing, categorizing or classifying and interpreting data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher found that the students use both formal and informal languages in a formal setting. The setting of the interaction among students in this research refers to classroom interaction which is a formal situation (Straker, 1980). The formal language is appropriate to use in classroom interaction while informal language is not appropriate to use in classroom interaction. Murcia & Olsen (2000: 235) define appropriacy as suitableness of language used for the certain context. This

inappropriateness occurred because of the students' interpersonal relationship (Brown & Gilman:1960, Payton: 1985 in Eggins & Eggins: 1994).

The researcher revealed that each student used formal and informal language in the classroom interaction influenced by different factors. There are six factors influencing formal language in EFL classroom interaction. Those are; (1) To Adjust Language with the Situation, (2) To Avoid Short Utterance, (3) To Respect the Lecturer, (4) To Show Politeness, (5) To Speak Academically and (6) To Speak Scientifically. Therefore, the researcher found that the most dominant factor that influences students to use informal language is adjusting language to the situation. It can be shown as the following extract;

Extract 4.38 To Adjust Language with the Situation

I: Kalau bertanyaki dikelas presentasi biasanya pake can atau could, misalnya can you explain bla bla bla or could you (when you asking in a classroom presentation, do you use can or could? For example can you explain blab la bla or could you?)

P: kalau saya sih pake could dianya, kalau diri saya sendiri tapi biasa rata-rata teman pake can, can you mind to blab la bla. Kalau saya pakenya could you mind to blab la bla (I choose to use could but commonly my friends use can, can you mind blab la bla. Whereas I use could you mind to blab la bla)

I: kenapa pake could ki daripada can (why you use could rather than can?)

*P: untuk lebih sopannya karena ndak sebaya, **sebaya sih tapi kan kita dalam keadaan formal jadi kita harus pake could.** Beda kalau sudah diluar kelas (to be more polite because **though we are in the same age but in the formal situation we should use could.** It is different when we are outside the class)*

Based on extract 4.38 above, it shows that the reason why students use formal language in classroom interaction is because of the situation. Through the interview, the student responded "**sebaya sih, tapi kan kita dalam keadaan formal jadi kita harus pake could**". It means that although the student is in the same age as the peers or classmates, he/she still need to use formal language because of the situation. The situation is a formal situation so that the student considered to use formal language as well. The use of formal language in a formal situation is the way students adjust the language with the context of the situation where they speak.

Mulyana (2005) argues that dialogic spoken discourse involves verbatim meaning, which cannot be just determined by simple linguistic aspect, but also by situational context. Malinowski (in Eggin, 1994) also claims that the language only becomes comprehensible when it is placed within its context of a situation.

Other factors influencing the use of formal language are politeness and the respect of lecturer. This is in line with the idea of Hymes (1972), Saviele & Troike (2003), and Haryono (2011) stating that social status and age of the speaker are two very important things in shaping strategies and pattern of communication. The level of formality in relationship, a social status between the speaker and the hearer is

resolute speech level as a politeness strategy (Sukarno, 2015). The next factor influencing the use of formal language is an academic and scientific reason. The student considers to use formal language instead of informal because of the education environment and status of the student in a college. Feyora et al (2016) mention one of the social features that influence communication event is nature of the audience. Their educational level among others will reflected in determining the selection or choose of the vocabulary that the writer or the speaker choose in every process of communication.

Besides all the factor influencing of formal language that have been elaborated above, the researcher also found another factor influencing the use of formal languages. It is avoiding short utterance. Students claims that communicate in classroom interaction should be avoid short utterance in order to use language appropriately.

The students use formal language in the classroom interaction is mostly influenced by the situation. The use of formal language is appropriate in the formal situation. As stated by Richards et al (1997), formal language is the language that we used in situations when someone is very careful about choice of words, pronunciation and sentence structure. The similar opinion comes from other experts, Lightbown & Spada (1999) who said that formal setting in is most showed according to the structure-based method of teaching. Hence, classroom context is the situation when the students should use formal language in interaction.

Formal language should not be used in an informal situation whereas informal language should not be used in a formal situation. Straker (1980) claimed that when the formal language used in informal situation it makes someone marked as distant, unfriendly, unduly proper, and phony. Otherwise, when the informal language is used in the formal situation, the speaker tend to be marked as ignorant. Nevertheless, in classroom interaction, the students still speak using informal language.

Based on data collected, the students use informal language in classroom interaction influenced by seven factors. Those are (1) Intimacy, (2) The Imitation of Previous Speaker, (3) The Focus of Audience's Understanding, (4) Habit, (5) Simplicity, (6) Spontaneity and (7) Unconsciousness. Therefore, the researcher found that the most dominant factor that influences a student to use informal language is intimacy. It can be shown as the following extract;

Extract 4.48 Intimacy

I: *jadi menurut ta kak misalnya begini haruskah kita menghindari kata-kata begitu kak misalnya I dunno and guys. Pentingkah menghindari kata- kata itu dalam kelas diskusi atau kelas presentasi (so, do you think we should avoid the word I dunno and guys? Is it important to avoid these words in classroom discussion and presentation?)*

P: *kalau formal iya penting karena kan paling tidak kan situasinya itu kan formal jadi kita menghargai dosen yang ada disitu. Kalau disebut guys otomatis dosennya kan ada disitu, masa kita selevel sama dosen. Dia kan lebih tinggi daripada kita (yes it is important when the situation is formal because we respect*

to the lecturer. When we say guys means that we are in the same level with lecturer while he/she is in a higher level)

I: kalau nda ada dosenya misalnya kak? (if there is no lecturer?)

P: ndak masalah. Itu kita lebih intimate sama. Kalau ndak ada dosen sih ndak masalah tapi selama itu masih teman sekelas (it is okay because we are more intimate each other. If there is no lecturer, it is okay as long as with classmate)

Extract 4.48 above shows that the student agreed to use the word “guys” which indicates informal language. The student thought it is normal to use informal language in classroom context when there is no lecturer inside. The response to the interview, "**ndak masalah. Itu kita lebih intimate sama**". The student agreed to use “guys” in the classroom interaction because it is more intimate with the audience. The audience, in this case, addressed to the student's classmate. Hence, the student decided to use informal language because the audience is only peers and the student felt intimate with them. Finally, the student considered that it is normal to use informal language to them although it is during the classroom interaction.

Intimacy is one of the characteristics of informal language (Ferguson cited in Straker, 1980). Intimacy is the close bond or relationship among people. In this case, the intimacy refers to the closeness among students in classroom. The students feel close to their peers as other speakers so that it is normal to use informal language even though in a formal situation. This phenomenon is in line with the statement of Eggins (1994) that effective involvement is one of the features of interpersonal relationship that concerns on intimacy in communication. So that, the use of informal language could possibly influence by the bond or the closeness relationship. Brown & Gilman (1960) also introduced the term of power and solidarity. The close bond and relationship refers to the intimacy which is included into the term of solidarity.

The intimacy among students in classroom interaction significantly can influence the way they use language. As claimed by Brown & Fraser (1979) about the changing way of communication. They said that there is a possibility for formal speech turn to be informal speech. It could be happen when the interactants have the opportunity to communicate often in a day. They used to speak each other. So they turn into use formal language become use informal language because the intimacy is built after communicate multiple times. Similar to this view, Brown & Gilman (1960), Eggins (1994) and Payton (1985) in Eggins, define the term of contact which deals with a communicational frequency of the speakers either they contact frequently or infrequently. Hence, the way the students interact from formal language to informal language can be influenced by the intimacy among them in classroom interaction.

Besides intimacy, other factors that influence the use of informal language in classroom discussion are the focus on audience understanding and the imitation of previous speaker. Students may find the condition that they will not realize to keep use formal language during a discussion in the classroom. The condition is when the student as a presenter focuses on the purpose of communication. Feyora et al (2016)

found that one of the situational factors that influence the communication is the purpose of communication. The purpose could be for education, entertainment or information. The purpose of communication also important thing to be considered in the choose of word. When the student focuses on the audience's understanding, the student tends to be inattentive or careless about the choice of words or the appropriacy of language use. It can be seen on the extract 4.54 and 4.56.

The next factors influencing the use of informal language are habit and unconsciousness. As a mention before by Brown & Gilman (1960), Eggins (1994) and Payton (1985) in Eggins about the term called contact which deals with a communicational frequency. The term of contact related to how frequently the interactants interact each other. Either they contact frequently or infrequently. The frequent contact tends to communicate informally. Hence, in a formal situation, the use of informal language can be used habitually and unconsciously.

Another factor influencing the use of informal language is spontaneity. As explained by Straker (1980) that there are four field of informal language. Those are; spontaneity, solidarity, intimacy and home and friendship domains. It means that one of the reasons why students used informal language because of the spontaneity.

Besides all the factors that have been elaborated above, the researcher also found another factors influencing the use of formal and informal language. It is simplicity. Sometimes, some student communicate in classroom interaction prefer to say something in easy way. They prefer to simplify the language that they use. In consequence, the probability of the informal language occurring in the classroom interaction influencing by the simplicity reason.

There are some researchers that conducted similar issues of formal and informal language expression. The first is Pradianti (2013) who analyzed some reasons influencing the use of slang. Slang is the new formation of a word which is included into an informal language. As said by Yule (1985) that word formation processes are the process of forming new words or terms from the use of the old word to the new words uses to some processes. Pradianti (2013) also analyzed the factors influencing the use of informal language expression specifically in the use of slang. Pradianti (2013) analyzed the use of slang in everyday conversation. She focused on the informal situation which is different with the present research that focused on the formal situation context.

Pradianti (2013) found five reasons influencing the use of slang in everyday conversation. Those are; say something in an easy way, show their anger, make other people confused and want to have fun and laugh. In the present research, the researcher found seven factors influencing the use of informal language expression used in classroom interaction. Those are; intimacy, imitating the previous speaker, focusing on the audience's understanding, habit, simplicity, spontaneity, and unconsciousness. In this case, there is a similarity reason in both researches. Pardianti (2013) found one of the factors that influence the use of slang that is to say something in an easy way. The present research found one of the factors that influence the use of informal language expression is that simplicity which has a similar meaning to say

something in an easy way. Gerber (1968) said that teens use slang words in sentence shorter, faster and easier to say.

The second researcher is Susanto (2014) who aim to find out the factors influencing the use of address term *Sampeyan* and *Anda*. He found that there are two factors influencing the use of *Sampeyan*. Those are to express politeness and indicate informality. There are four factors influencing the use of *Anda*. Those are more formal and appropriate manners in environmental education, to respect person of higher social status and older person, more polite and more appropriate than *Sampeyan*, and the influence of environmental education and the use of Indonesian as a formal language. In short, the factors influencing the use of *Sampeyan* and *Anda* can be briefly concluded by *Sampeyan* which indicate informality while *Anda* indicated formal term. Similar to the present research, the present research aimed to find out factors influencing the use of formal and informal language expression.

The similarities between Susanto (2014) and the present research shows in factors influencing the use of the formal and informal term. There are two similarities factors that influenced the use of formal language expression in both Susasnto (2014) research and the present research. Firstly, both of the research found that environmental education influenced the use of a formal term. As Straker (1980) said that formality is related to religion, education and government field, while the language should be a systematic resource expressing meaning in context (Chapelle: 1998). It means that the educational environment can be a factor that influenced someone to use the formal term.

Secondly, both of the studies found that politeness influenced the use of a formal term. As stated by Butt et al (1996), when people are talking, we are actually interacting with language and using it to express interpersonal meanings. In the interaction, we are establishing a relationship. It is reflected through the talk that social identities are revealed such as friends, buyers, and sellers, student and lecturer etc. It enables the speaker to express roles and attitude (Meristiani: 2011). For example, when students talk with the lecturer, students play the inferior roles to the lecturer. Students show the attitude of politeness in order respect lecturer. Wolff & Poedjosoedarmo (1982) stated that a careful talking is a feeling of respect or embarrassment from fear or awe of a person of higher status. In the same vein, Hymes (1986), Saviele & Troike (2003), and Haryono (2011) state that the age and social status are two very important things in shaping patterns of communication and strategies. It means that expressing politeness can be a factor that influences students to use formal term.

The difference between Susanto (2014) and the present research is the variable that is analyzed. Susanto (2014) specifically analyzed the use of address term in relation with the formality and politeness. Otherwise, the present research generally analyzed the term formal and informal language expression.

In this research, the condition of the classroom interaction specify to the classroom discussion or classroom presentation in order to get the data about students' utterance. Three of four meeting of the research conducted without the

presence of lecturer. As mention before that one of the factors influencing the use of formal language is respect to the lecturer. Hence, the presence of lecturer influences the students' language in the classroom. The absence of lecturer make the situation of classroom became more intimate. The students feels more relax and comfortable to communicate each other because there is no lecturer among them. In consequence, there are a lot of data about the use of informal language.

Moreover, the use of informal language in classroom interaction not always indicate student to be less polite. Based on the result of the research, the researcher found that the students use of informal language mostly because unconsciousness and spontaneity. The students unconsciously communicate in informal way or use informal language. Each of the students has a habit in using language. They tend to speak as the usual. So that the habit can influence the students in communicate. They can spontaneity use informal language in formal situation. In consequence, the students can possibly use informal language in classroom interaction unconsciously. It shows that there is no intentional to be impolite in using informal language in classroom interaction.

In conclusion, the incongruity of language use can possibly occur. In this research, the incongruity of language use occur in classroom interaction when the language should be formal language, in fact, there are student that still use informal language unconsciously. This research shows that the use of informal language occurred unconsciously in classroom context. There is no intentional to be less polite. The students did not mean to show impoliteness toward their classmates or lecturer. It is only the unconsciousness to use informal language in the classroom. Furthermore, the use of formal language in the classroom indicates the student to adjust the language and the way they communicate with the situation of the classroom. The result of this research shows that mostly student understand about the use of formal language in classroom interaction is appropriate and they use formal language in classroom interaction is because the situation. Situational factor has a big impact to influence the student in using formal language.

In the end, there still rarely researcher that conducted the study about formal and informal language, whereas, the study of formal and informal language is an interesting issue to be analyzed. This research is one of the rare research that raise the issue of formal and informal languages, especially in the field of classroom interaction analysis. The previous researches about formal and informal language concern on the different field such as mathematics, business and literature. It means that this research includes into earlier research that analyze formal and informal language in classroom interaction context.

The researcher found that there are some implication of this research. The first is this research provides knowledge about factor influencing the use of formal and informal language expression used by English students in classroom interaction. The result of this research can be an additional information and knowledge to the students and the teacher to use language in classroom context. It is useful to the student and the teacher to differentiate which is formal language and informal language. Hence,

hopefully they can use it appropriately with the situation. The second is this research found there are some factors that influence the use of formal language in classroom. Most of the students claims that they use informal language in classroom interaction because unconsciousness and spontaneity. There is no intention to be impolite in classroom interaction. Hence, it can be concluded that using informal language in the classroom interaction is not indicate someone to be impolite in classroom. Students supposed to have a reason and factor influencing them to use informal language in classroom interaction. The factors influencing the students to use informal language is elaborated in the research question number two of this research.

CONCLUSION

The use of formal language by the students in classroom interaction is more dominant than the use of informal language. It indicates that the student actually aware of using appropriate language and appropriate situation.

The result of this research shows there an appropriateness in using formal language in classroom interaction. Mostly the use of formal language by the students is because they want to adjust the language with the situation. Therefore, the result of this research also shows that there is an incongruity of the use of informal language in classroom interaction. The use of informal language occurred unconsciously or spontaneity. There is no intentional to be less polite. The students did not mean to show impoliteness toward their classmates or lecturer. It is only the unconsciousness to use informal language in the classroom.

Furthermore, the researcher hope that this research gives information and knowledge on the characteristics and factors influencing the use of formal and informal languages used by students in classroom interaction. It is expected that by reading this research, the readers will have additional information and better comprehension about formal and informal languages and they can use it appropriately in daily conversation.

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