CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener (Yule, 1996). Every day, people engage in conversations either directly or indirectly. Whatever it is, good communication adheres to pragmatic rules. Pragmatic is essential to learn because it shows that grammatical accuracy alone is insufficient to guarantee successful communication (Choraih et al., 2017). Successful communication also depends on how interlocutors produce and understand the meaning of the utterances in various contexts (Choraih et al., 2017). One of the most common communication problems is the misunderstanding between the speaker and the hearer because of decoding. It usually happens when the hearer misinterprets what the speaker means and wants. The misunderstanding problem can be found in requesting, apologizing, and praising. However, the writer only focuses on the request strategies in this research.

In pragmatics, requesting is one of the speech acts. Speech acts are actions performed via utterances. For example, the statement is changing the word via utterance (Yule,1996). Other kinds of speech acts are declaration, representative, expressive, directive, commissive (Yule, 1996). A representative is a speech act that states what the speaker believes to be the case or not. Expressive Speech is a speech act that expresses what the speakers feel. A directive is a speech act that

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speakers use to get someone else to do something. Finally, commissive is a speech act that speakers use to commit themselves to future actions (Yule, 1996).

Requesting is one of the most common speech acts. It happens almost in any situation, including social media. Social media is a place where people can communicate using their gadgets (Zaru, 2016). They can talk with other people as if they meet and talk directly through social media such as Line. In-Line, people can communicate by chatting or calling or even video calling as if they meet directly even though they are away. In chats, we can find a lot of speech act realization. Requesting is an act that every person does, whether consciously or unconsciously. It cannot be helped since humans are social beings that cannot live without any other people. When people cannot do something, or need something, or ask for something, they will ask for help. In requests, the speakers give the listeners the freedom to respond. Listeners may accept or refuse the offers by using different kinds of strategies. One of them is downgraders and upgraders. Downgraders is a strategy that speakers use to give codes to the listener. Therefore, as speakers, they hope the listener can understand and perform what they ask while upgraders are commanding sentence which are straight to the point without any courtesy. Upgraders strategy can be found when people communicate with their friends or when they get mad.

The previous studies about downgrading and upgrading show that downgrading and upgrading are used equally. Samar & Ahmadi (2014) conducted

a study on teaching request downgraders in L2. He takes 147 Iranian EFL learners studying at Islamic Azad University. The participants were 26 males and 121 females whose ages ranged from 21 to 26. They have never been exposed to a second language environment. He found that both tasks were performed significantly better in the immediate and delayed post tests than in the pre tests. The participants were asked to play specific roles with the unexpected situation related to the request, and then they were asked to comment on the play. They also did the questionnaire to test their point of view about asking requests. The result from the task showed that both downgraders and upgraders performed equally.

Similarly, both groups maintained the positive effects of the treatment in the delayed posttest on the production and perception measures. Glaser (2019) conducted a study on the patterns of downgrading and upgrading in disagreements. In this study, he collected data from forty-nine EFL learners. He found that the learners used downgrading strategies. The third study by Longhi & Marinica (2019) was a study on downgrading and upgrading strategies used in the act of self-praise in French and US LinkedIN -summaries. He collected the data from 90 communication professionals located in France and the United States. He found that although French and US communication professionals did not present completely opposed behaviors about the use of downgrading and upgrading strategies, it is equal among downgrading and upgrading strategies used. Furthermore, they mixed downgrading and upgrading simultaneously, so they combined downgrading and upgrading together.

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In this study, the writer is interested in analyzing what kind of downgrader and upgrader are used in Line chats. The writer focused on the analysis of syntactic downgraders and upgraders among college student group chats. The writer wanted to explore how college students communicate their need/want and desire more in-depth because the writer found that sometimes people do not know their position as a speaker. In this case, the role is their way of making a request; for example, the writer's friend asks for help to find a job, but he/she forces the writer to help as soon as possible. This is the wrong way to request because he forcefully asks for help without considering the writer's condition (having trouble) and position. From this study, the writer hopes that people will know their roles as speakers in making a request. Therefore, they will be able to communicate what they want/ need and desire appropriately.

1.2 Field of the Study

This study is related to the field of pragmatics.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on pragmatics, particularly on the analysis of the text through social media, Line. Therefore, the writer will only analyze the chats in Line among college students in a private university in Semarang.

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1.4 Research Questions

In her study, the writer would like to address the following research questions:

1. What kinds of syntactic and lexical downgrades are used in Line chat among university students in Semarang?

2. What kinds of syntactic and lexical upgraders are used in Line chat among university students in Semarang?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

From the research question mentioned above, the writer has two objectives:

1. To find out the kinds of syntactic and lexical downgraders used in Line chat among university students in Semarang.

2. To find out the kinds of syntactic and lexical upgraders used in Line chat among university students in Semarang.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to be valuable input for pragmatics. Furthermore, this research will contribute to pragmatics class to improve students' knowledge and understanding of downgraders and upgraders in requests.

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1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Pragmatics

   Pragmatics concerned study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener (Yule, 1996).

2. Requesting

   Requesting is an act by the speaker to give the listener the freedom to decide their attitude and response to the request (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

3. Downgraders

   Downgraders can also be used to reduce the face-threatening nature of requests. Because of the outcome of the request (negative use) or of the demand (interrogative and modal use 'might') (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

4. Upgraders

   Upgraders are commanding sentences which are straight to the point without any courtesy .Upgrader strategies can be found when people communicate with their friends or when people are getting mad (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).