CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Communication is one of the ways people be able to know each other, but on the other side it is also a poison which could bring distance between two people who have known each other. The success of communication depends on how the speech participants communicate well without harming the others. In real daily activity conversation, people tend to say something indirectly. Sometimes, the indirectness of the speech is expressed in long and complicated ways. Therefore, people need certain strategies to have a polite conversation. It is important for the speech participants to know and to understand well about the phase of politeness in conversation. As a result, mutual misunderstanding and miscommunication break down can be avoided.

Politeness is an important aspect in human behavior. It concerns the entire attitude that influences people in their life. It is also a strategy to build a harmony in term of communication. Lakoff in Eelen (2001: 2) defines politeness as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential of conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange." In other words, politeness helps us to avoid conflict which possibly happens in our daily life. People sometimes disregard it, while it is the key to make a good communication with others. They are disposed to act directly, but it makes an assessment that they

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do not know about moral value which is described in their behavior.Therefore, it is very important to understand the norm of politeness and apply it well when we are conversing with others.

Brown and Levinson's (1987: 61) politeness theory contains three basic notions: face, FTAs (face threatening acts), and politeness strategies. Face refers to a speaker's sense of linguistics and social identity, which is defined as "The puclic self-image that every member (of the society) wants to claim for himself" (Yule, 1996: 60). If a speaker says something that represents a threat to another individual's expectations regarding self-image, it is described as a FTA. Brown and Levinson proposed five strategies for politeness: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, and don't do the FTAs.

People use politeness in various verbal exchange such as in requesting, offering, refusing, criticizing, complaining, etc. Refusal is a verbal language that need to be noticed. Refusal is considered as a FTA. In a refusal, the speaker to a greater or lesser extent threats the hearer's face. Refusal is sensitive to social factors such as gender, age, level of education, power and social distance. Therefore, there is a need to put politeness strategies into action in order to mitigate the threats, in other words, to soften what the hearer might regard as a threat on him/her. According to Longman Contemporary English (2008: 1379), refusal is an expressing something when we say firmly that we will not do, give, or accept something. It is important to investigate how people say "no" for declining or refusing something,

whether it is directly or indirectly, and how they express such words without hurting others feeling.

The politeness in refusals should be considered well, because it influences an uncomfortable feeling to someone, even it used by children. When children make a conversation with others, they tended not to recognize the hearer's face, whether it would threat the hearer's self-image or no. Children mostly refuse or decline others' request directly, because they merely want everything they wants, for example:

| Mr. Welch | : "Now I want you to do that spelling bee today. 1 can't order you to, but 1 really want you to. Will you do that for the school?" |
| Akeelah | : "Why should I? So everybody can call me 'freak' and 'brainiac' and attack me in the hall or on the way home?" "No, Mr. Welch. I ain't down for no spelling bee." (Ellison, 2007: 19) |

Mr. Welch as the head master of Crenshaw Junior High School, asked Akeelah to do Spelling Bee. Then Akeelah refused his request directly with questioning before she said "no". She made her refusal by asking a question "Should I?" and stated the effect that would be have in her joining that Spelling Bee. Then she applied mixture strategies of politeness, Off Record and Bald On Record that the two strategies were extremely different. The first strategy was dealing with indirectness then on the contrary the second one was directly. After being indirectly that it minimized the FTA, children stressed her refusal to direct way. Then, it threaten the hearer's face and obviously do the FTA. Children refused the request without recognizing the hearer's face and they tend to say whatever they want. Thus, the way children

refuse something need to be analyzed that however, they can do refusal in polite or impoliteness way. Also the factors influence them to choose the way of refusing were something need to be investigated.

William A. Corsaro (2006: 191) stated from 10 to 13 years of age, children start to move from "childhood" to a view of a more adult world that they will clearly want, or be forced to join, in the near future. Hence, it is necessary to analyze how children language in social communication, particularly in their refusal strategies. This research provides how children saying 'no' in declining invitation or rejecting request, since child in this stage will start her puberty period and certainly there will be many new things influencing her language.

The significances of politeness strategies in children refusal do not only occur in the real society. Those can also be found in the forms of literary works such as novels and dramas. They are as an imitation and potrayal of social life. different from dramas, novels provide more descriptions of the story in form of narration. Therefore, readers can understand the situation happened in the story easily. These contexts of situations are important to determine the politeness strategies used in children refusals. Thus, it is possible to know how the way people say such words to others in the terms of refusals by analizing such literary works based on the consideration of the context.

The appropriate novel to be analyzed by theory of politeness strategies was James W. Ellison's *Akeelah and The Bee*. It is a novel written by James W.

Allison in 2007 based on the screenplay of a 2006 American drama *Akeelah and The Bee* by Doug Atchison. It tells the story of Akeelah Anderson (Keke Palmer), an 11-year-old girl from South Los Angeles who tries to make it to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. A little girl who shows herself and make her dream happen with hard effort and struggle to be a winner in the prestigious competition. The researcher chosen this novel because the children characters were prominent and also this literary work was very educated.

In James W. Ellison's *Akeelah and The Bee*, there are many refusals that come from the sensitive social factors as mentioned before. Thus, the way 11-13 years old children say 'no' to their addressee and the reason why they used those strategies in refusing or declining something from others need to be considered and learned, since those phenomena are considered crucial in daily conversation.

This research emphasized the politeness strategies used by four children characters on refusal in *Akeelah and The Bee*. It focused on how the children characters said no to decline five function of refusal, there are Suggestion, Request, Offer, Invitation and Command. The study deals with every utterances and everything related to refusal. There was two fields elaborated in this research. First, the analysis focused on the kinds of politeness strategies on refusals proposed by Brown and Levinson used by the children characters and also the explanation of chosen strategies. Second, the research

focused on the possible factors influenced the choice of politeness strategies in the children character's refusal that also proposed by Brown and Levinson.

Finally this research was done to get better understanding about politeness in Islam that we must treat others well. It can be seen in 15th Hadith of Hadith Arbain :

عَنْأَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ : مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْأَخِرِفَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْأَخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ جَارَهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْأَخِرِ فَلْيُكْرِمْ ضَيْفَهُ.

(رواه بخاري و مسلم)

Abihurairah narrated that Rasullah SAW said "whoever among you believe in Allah and the day of hereafter say good things or keep quiet, whoever among you believe in Allah and the day of hereafter be generous to their neighbor, whoever among you believe in Allah and the day of hereafter be generous to their guest." (Narrated by Bukhori and Muslim)

(http://haditsarbain.wordpress.com/hadist-15-berkata-yang-baik-atau-diam/)

1.2. Research Problems

1. What kinds of politeness strategies of refusals used by children characters in James W. Ellison's *Akeelah and The Bee*?

2. What factors influence the choice of politeness strategies in children characters' refusals?

1.3. Research Purposes

This research proposal is intended to meet the following purposes:

1. To describe what kinds of politeness strategies of refusals used by children characters in James W. Ellison's *Akeelah and The Bee.*

2. To find out the factors influence the choice of politeness strategies in children characters' refusals.

1.4. Significance of The Study

The result of this research is expected to be able to give the following benefits:

1. Theoretically, the research is expected to give such a contribution in linguistics fields, particularly in politeness strategies of refusal, as a reference or comparative study.

2. Practically, it is expected to help the learners of English Department to understand more about the idea of politeness strategies from the various sample in this research and to apply each strategy in appropriate context or situation. Since our knowledge about politeness can influence our linguistic behaviors, it enables us to have effective communication and to manage our relationships with people.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation of the use of terms, it is important to the researcher to give the suitable meaning of the key terms. Some terms are defined as follows:

1.5.1. Politeness Strategies

Politeness is dealing with "social polite behavior" or etiquette in communication to reach a harmony of verbal interaction (Yule, 1996: 60). Then Politeness strategies are the strategies of communication proposed by Brown and Levinson that emphasizes on the polite words in action.

1.5.2. Children Refusal

According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, "refusal" means expressing oneself as unwilling to accept, to do or comply with, or deny. It is lack of agreement to perform a particular course of action, It can be indicated by word "no". Then children refusal is the expresion of unwilling to accept or deny with particular course of action expressed by children.

Children in this research are 11-13 years old, who are in period of pre-teen that children in this stage show their existence and reach their own personality, hence, their refusal utterances in social communication is interested to be analyzed. The following is the table of children development periods:

Picture 1. Children development periods

1.5.3. James W. Ellison's *Akeelah and The Bee*

It is a novel written by James W. Allison in 2007 based on the screenplay of a 2006 American drama *Akeelah and The Bee* by Doug Atchison. It tells the story of Akeelah Anderson (Keke Palmer), an 11-year-old girl who participates in the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Since this research focused on the children's refusals, then all children's utterance of refusals identified in this research.