CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Indirectness occupies a central role in studies of politeness. University students in eight cultures or languages have investigated cross-cultural and intralingual variation in two speech acts: request and apologies (Blum-Kulka, 1987). The study reveals that speakers are not limited to make their requests straightforwardly. They deliver the request in indirect way. Therefore, it is important to consider not only ‘the said’, but also ‘the unsaid.’

Indirectness is a form of politeness. The speaker avoids expressing himself explicitly either in conversation or writing. It is known as a style of formulating speech acts (Sew, 1997). Pragmatics studies the context of situation which affects the ways of using language to perform different functions. The functions of indirectness are to express request, to express command, to give information, to give advice, etc. People can do an action based on the speaker’s intention if they know the function of indirectness. The action refers to speech act. The speech act is a unit of language used to express meaning. The utterance expresses an intention (Searle, 1969).

People use indirectness because of power, social distance, or size of imposition. Power involves legitimate, reference and expertise. Power means the relative power of the speaker over the hearer. Meanwhile social distance means the social distance between the speaker and the hearer. Lastly, size of imposition means the degree of imposition in culture. People might obtain some advantages
by indirectness, for example they may wish to avoid hurting someone or avoid some negative consequence. They avoid appearing too pushy or creating an uncomfortable feeling (Thomas, 1995).

Most of political figures tend to use indirectness in their speeches. It is used to influence people. The indirectness is a strategy used by the political figures to persuade, declare, command, request, etc. The speech reflects the main character of the speaker. It plays an important role in shaping the image of the speaker. Therefore, indirectness is used to keep the politeness. The speaker has an intention that must be done by the hearer, but the intention is not expressed directly. It is implicit in the text of the speech. Most of political figures use indirectness to express request. The speech act of request has been one of the most widely examined features in both the inter language and cross-cultural pragmatics fields. A request consists of an illocutionary act in which the speaker asks the hearer to perform an action. It is for the benefit of the speaker (Trosborg, 1995; Sifianou, 1999).

Request belongs to directive speech act based on Searle’s speech act theory. This category of speech act directs someone to do something for the speaker. Most of the political figures use indirectness to express request. They use this strategy to influence people. By using indirectness, the force will be minimized. As a result, people will give positive response. Since most of the political figures use indirectness, it is important to analyze the speech act which is hidden in the text of the speech. Therefore, indirectness of request is an interesting aspect to be investigated.
The typology of request patterns has been listed by Soshana Blum-Kulka (Blum-Kulka, 1987). The typology is based on the degrees of illocutionary. The more ‘indirect’ the utterances are the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be.

There have been studies about indirectness examined by some researchers. Lee and Pinker (2010) only focus on the rationales of indirectness. Moreover, Cornish (2005) only focuses on the degrees of indirectness, while Geluykens and Limberg (2012) only focus on gender variation in using indirectness. In addition, Terkourafi (2011) only focuses on off-record indirectness. They have not determined particular topics.

Other researchers have determined particular topics such as the use of indirect speech act in three communication channels and indirectness across cultures in English, German, Polish and Russian request (Hassell & Christensen, 1996; Ogiermann, 2009). Meanwhile Zhang and You (2009) have investigated the motives of indirectness in daily communication such as politeness, self-protection and humor. Further, Uysal (2011) has investigated a cross-cultural study of indirectness and hedging in the conference proposals of English NS and NNS scholars boundary crossing.

However, they have not investigated about the specific speech act, the context background, and the types of indirectness. Therefore, the researcher has an idea to analyze a particular topic with specific speech act. The chosen topic is indirectness of request in Barrack Obama’s speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative
Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”. These speeches are chosen because the utterances contain indirectness of request.

This study will find out and determine the indirectness of request used by the speaker, the types of request on scales of indirectness, and the context background. In addition, this study will reveal that indirectness exists to deliver or inform some particular hidden intentions to the hearers in particular conditions.

This research is a descriptive qualitative research with single case study. The researcher will use purposive sampling technique with content analysis technique to collect the data. Then the data will be analyzed by using pragmatics approach to find the meaning in the context with Blum Kulka Theory.

Barrack Obama is one of influential political figures in the world. He is the President of United States. The first speech entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels” was delivered in 20 minutes at Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago on April 3, 2006. Since the speech was delivered in a research laboratory operated by University of Chicago for the United States Department of Energy (DOE), the audiences of the speech were students of University of Chicago and United States Department of Energy. It was also attended by Congress. The speech explained that the condition in America was worse. The climate of the planet had changed because of global warming’s effect. The ice began to melt away, the land began to shrink, the dangerous weather happened, the forest started to burn, and the temperature had risen.
The second speech entitled “Education” was delivered on October 25, 2005 at the Center for American Progress, a progressive public policy research and advocacy organization which was dedicated to improve the lives of Americans through progressive ideas and action. The speech explained that the quality of education system in America was still bad meanwhile knowledge was very important to meet the new challenges of a global economy. The government had tried to change the education system, but it failed because American people did not support it and they did not participate to reform it.

The third speech was delivered on January 25, 2007 at Families USA Conference, Washington DC, a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the achievement of high-quality, affordable health care for all. The speech explained that America should have universal health care. Every four years, health care plans were offered up in campaigns with great promise. However, the plans collapsed when those campaigns ended. Health care and hospital costs continued to rise. Then, more private insurers simply refused to insure the elderly because they were too great of a risk to care for.

As mentioned before, there are indirectness of request in Barrack Obama’s speeches. For example:

Will we let this happen all over the world? Will we stand by while drought and famine, storms and floods overtake our planet?

Barrack Obama, President of America delivered his speech about Oil and Alternative Fuels in Chicago on 3rd April 2006. He delivered this speech for his campaign. The condition in America was worse. The climate of the planet had
changed because of global warming’s effect. The ice began to melt away, the land began to shrink, the dangerous weather happened, the forest started to burn, and the temperature had risen.

From the data above, it can be seen that if American people do not do an action, drought, famine, storms and floods will overtake the planet. The request is in a form of interrogative. The utterance belongs to Mild Hints. The speaker’s utterance makes no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but it is interpretable as requests by context. In this case, the speaker requests to save the world.

B. Research Questions

Based on the research gap, the research problem statements are:

1. How was the context of situation when Barrack Obama delivered his speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”?

2. What are the requests of Barrack Obama in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”?

3. What types of request on scales of the indirectness are used by Barack Obama in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”?
C. Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the research objectives are:

1. To describe the context of situation when Barrack Obama delivered his speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”.

2. To find out the request of Barrack Obama in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”

3. To find out the types of request on scales of indirectness which are used by Barrack Obama in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”

D. Research Significances

Theoretically, this study is hoped to be additional materials in pragmatics, especially providing a depth investigation about indirectness and request. Therefore, the result of this study will help to investigate the occurrence of indirectness of request. In addition, the result of this study will provide the types of request on scales of indirectness. Lastly, this study will show the context background of the utterances.

Practically, this research can be used by lecturers as additional lecture. This study investigate indirectness of request in some speeches. Therefore, it is hoped that people will be more sensitive or easier to find out the intention of the speech to get the real meaning and message from the speaker.
Furthermore, this research shows a new perspective in viewing indirectness of request. If this research is not established, people will only have limited information about the application of indirectness of request that usually happen in speech. As a result, they can misunderstand and ruin something. Therefore, by reading this research people can also apply indirectness of request in the speech when they want to say something which cannot be said directly.

E. Scope of Research

This research covers the indirectness of request occurring in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”, the context background, and the types of request on scales of indirectness. The results of this research do not aim at generalizing the use of indirectness in request in all speeches. This research only limits its focus on the utterances of Barrack Obama in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”. Finally, this research only analyzes the types of request on scales of indirectness in the speeches entitled “Oil and Alternative Fuels, Education and Universal Healthcare Issues”. This research does not examine the other speech acts or the other speeches delivered by the same speaker.
F. Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is INTRODUCTION, which consists of Research Background, Research Questions, Research Objectives, Research Significance, Scope of Research, and Thesis Organization. The second chapter is LITERATURE REVIEW. It consists of the theory of Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Directive Speech Acts, Request Speech Acts, Direct and Indirect Speech, Politeness, Component of Speech, Classification of Request on Scales of Indirectness, and Related Study. The next chapter is RESEARCH METHODOLOGY which consists of Research Design, Research Location, Data and Source of Data, Sampling and Sampling Technique, Technique of Collecting Data, Technique of Analyzing Data and Technique of Coding Data. The fourth chapter is DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION which consists of Data Analysis and Data Discussion. The last chapter is CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.