CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Communication is a process of exchanging information between one person and another by using various technical and natural ways (Steinberg, 2007). Conversation is one of the ways people use to communicate with each other. Nolasco and Arthur (1897) define conversation as an interpersonal communication between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information are exchanged. A conversation is said to be successful when the speaker and the listener are able to understand the utterances. Supporting this idea, Tupan and Helen (2008) also states that the purpose of communication can be achieved if the speakers can interpret each other's utterances.

In order to understand someone's utterance and respond to it appropriately, it is important to know the knowledge of linguistic forms and functions and how to use these forms appropriately in target language interaction. Knowing the forms and words of the language is not enough, people also need to use the language in socioculturally appropriate ways, considering the participants and context in which the interaction takes place. This ability is generally referred as *pragmatic competence* (Celce Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). Pragmatic competence requires the ability to use and interpret language in contexts (Bialystok, 1993).

Pragmatic competence is the knowledge of pragmatic system and the ability to use the system appropriately (Viljamaa, 2012). Pragmatic competence is

traditionally divided into *sociopragmatic* (the knowledge of the system) competence and *pragmalinguistic* (the ability to use the system) competence. However, because pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are closely related, it is difficult to design a test that investigate exclusively pragmalinguistics or sociopragmatics (Kusevska, 2015). Therefore, the present study include both aspect under the area of pragmatic competence.

Due to the difficulty of investigating a comprehensive construct like 'pragmatic competence', certain aspects of it have received particular attention among the researchers (Roever, 2006). The most frequently conducted research in this area is speech act. While the aspect that is put less attention is conversational implicature. Farahian et al. (2012) argues that pragmatic competence is necessary for communicative competence. Accordingly, the use of conversational implicatures is inevitable for effective communication. Conversational implicatures could be used to provide a variety of communicative purposes. Levinson (1983) support this idea by declaring that conversational implicature is one of most important ideas in pragmatics. The importance of conversational implicatures in expressing a message indirectly is well-established (Bouton, 1994). Conversational implicatures deal with Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle, which is considered as theoretical underpinning for pragmatics research. This principle describes how the speaker and the hearer make a successful communication by following the maxims (quantity, quality, relevance and manner) as rule in conversation. It is important to depend on these maxims to make a cooperative and efficient conversation (Finegan, 2004).

In the real conversation, however, there has been found a prevalance of people neglecting the maxim. The speaker blatantly fails to observe the maxim. This situation is called flouting maxim (Thomas, 1995). The speaker doesn't intend to mislead or deceive the interlocutor, but they aim at giving the message, apart from the expressed meaning, to the hearer. The speaker expects the hearers to be able to infer the implied meaning of what is delivered. Grice (1975) defines the implied meaning as 'conversational implicature' and flouting maxim is the way the speaker generates the implicature.

The issue of pragmatic competence has drawn some researchers' attention in the field of interlanguage pragmatics. The studies conducted mainly focus on ESL/EFL students as it is the branch of theory of second and foreign language acquisition. A research was conducted by Abdelhafez (2016) that aims at investigating the effect of explicit instruction of conversational implicature on developing TEFL students' pragmatic competence. He found that there is significant effect of instruction in the improvement of students' pragmatic competence.

Apart from that study, some prior studies related with pragmatic competence were conducted in second and foreign language education concerning on the development of pragmatic competence and the investigation of it. The writer found that studies related with assessing or reflecting pragmatic competence, both globally and nationally, are relatively scarce. Considering the circumstance, the researcher attempts to fill this gap by conducting a study about reflecting the pragmatic competence. Since pragmatics is a wide area, it is hard to design a study

that assess pragmatic competence as a whole. Kusevska (2015) argues testing a language competence is complex, time-consuming, and impractical. Depending on the purpose of the test, different aspects of pragmatic competence can be tested (McNamara, 2006, p. 65). In present study, the writer attempts at finding out the mastery level of students' pragmatic competence through the flouting of Grice's maxim. While some studies gain the data from test result (mostly DCT), the present study will use the data from *WhatsApp* chat among students. The writer is interested in examining the chat of students of English Language Education Study Programme (ELESP), UNJ. Nowadays, *WhatsApp* becomes one of the most important applications among the students especially in the university level. The chat feature allows students to be easily in touch, discuss something and share any kind of media.

Students use *WhatsApp* chat to discuss anything related with their friends, parents, lecturer, and lover. They ask each other to obtain the detailed and the certain information. However, because of some reasons, the participants of the group chat are unable to give appropriate response, so the conversation doesn't run smoothly. This arises the researcher's curiosity about how the participants would vary the discussion with flouting maxim. Since it is a cross-platform messaging, it is likely that they parry the questions from the other participants or deliberately avoid giving straightforward answer. The lack of knowledge, jokes, and various ongoing topics seemed to be the reasons of flouting the maxim. Grice's Maxim (1975) theory will be used to identify the types of flouting maxims encountered and

the conversational implicature in the chat. The result of flouting maxim will then be used to find out the mastery level of ELESP students' pragmatic competence.

1.2. Problems of the Study

Based on background of the study, the research questions are:

1. What flouting maxims are encountered in ELESP students' *WhatsApp* chats?

2. What conversational implicatures are used by ELESP students in *WhatsApp* chats which contain the flouting maxim?

3. What mastery level of ELESP students' pragmatic competence is reflected by the flouting maxim in *WhatsApp* chats?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

Based on the research question, the purposes of this study are:

1. To find out the flouting maxims encountered in ELESP students' *WhatsApp* chats

2. To analyze the conversational implicatures used by ELESP students in *WhatsApp* chats which contain the flouting maxim

3. To find out the mastery level of ELESP students' pragmatic competence through the flouting maxim in *WhatsApp* chats

1.4. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on investigating the mastery level of ELESP students' pragmatic competence through flouting maxim in *WhatsApp* chat. The flouting maxim is analyzed in terms of maxim quantity, quality, relevance, and manner referring to the theory of Grice's Maxim. This study also focuses on

analyzing the conversational implicature that indicates why the participant flout the maxim, comprising generalized and particularized conversational implicature. The utterance of the participants which indicate the flouting maxim will be the object of the investigation to reflect the pragmatic competence.

This study is limited to face-to-face interaction since the data is in the form text messages in online communication. Basically, Cooperative Principle requires a face-to-face interaction in order to observe people's non-verbal communication and paralinguistic features. In online communication, these features cannot be observed and it could lead people to misinterpretation. This study is also limited to a specific context of conversation since the researcher analyzes all students' text messages using English without any particular interlocutor and context of conversation.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be beneficial for the readers to help them comprehend the importance of pragmatic competence in order to build a successful communication. This study is expected to encourage the readers to enrich their pragmatic competence by following the Grice's maxim. For the ELESP students, this study will guide them to make an analysis about pragmatic competence especially which has relation with flouting maxim. As a prospective english teacher, this study is also beneficial for ELESP students as they will teach their students how to communicate effectively using English through the improvement of pragmatic competence.

For ELESP lecturers, this study will help them to know how far the pragmatic competence is acquired by ELESP students as pragmatic is included in the syllabus. In addition, this study is also expected to become the references for other researchers to conduct more comprehensive study in the area of pragmatic competence, conversational implicature and Cooperative Principle.