

Polite Request Strategies: A Study of Interlanguage Pragmatics of EFL Javanese Learners of Indonesia

(Strategi Permintaan Sopan: Sebuah Pembelajaran Pragmatik Antar Bahasa oleh Siswa Jawa Sebagai Pembelajar EFL di Indonesia)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas tentang strategi permintaan yang dilakukan oleh sepuluh Siswa Jawa sebagai pembelajar EFL di Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Universitas Jember. Sebagai seorang yang sedang belajar Bahasa Inggris, Siswa Jawa bisa jadi akan terpengaruh oleh budaya Jawa ketika membuat permintaan dalam Bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengklasifikasikan strategi permintaan dan mencari tahu apakah konsep kesopanan Jawa tercermin dalam strategi permintaan tersebut. Tujuan yang lain adalah untuk mengetahui perbedaan strategi permintaan dalam Bahasa Jawa dan Inggris serta menjelaskan faktor yang menjadi penyebab perbedaan tersebut. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif. Peneliti menggunakan dua metode dalam mengumpulkan data melalui *discourse completion tests* (DCT) dan wawancara. DCT diberikan dalam dua bahasa, Inggris dan Jawa yang terdiri dari enam skenario yang diklasifikasikan menurut tiga prinsip kesopanan menurut Scollon dan Scollon (2001:54); *deference*, *solidarity*, dan *hierarchy*. Teori-teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pragmatik antar bahasa dan konsep kesopanan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa *query preparatory* adalah strategi permintaan yang paling banyak digunakan oleh partisipan dan konsep kesopanan Jawa tercermin di dalamnya. Dalam hal lain, partisipan juga membuat strategi permintaan yang berbeda dalam Bahasa Inggris dan Jawa.

Kata Kunci: pragmatik antar bahasa, kesopanan, strategi permintaan

Abstract

This study investigates request strategies produced by ten Javanese Learners of EFL in the English Department, Jember University. As the Javanese learner of English, student maybe influenced by the Javanese culture to make request in English. Therefore, the goals of this research are to classify the request strategies and to figure out how the Javanese politeness concepts are reflected in it. This is also to find the different request strategies in Javanese and English and elaborate the cause of the differences. This study is a qualitative study. The researcher has two ways to collect the data by using discourse completion tests (DCT) and interview. The DCT is presented in two languages; English and Javanese that contains of six scenarios that will be classified into three types of situations based on the politeness principles proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001:54); deference, solidarity and hierarchy. The theories employed in this study are interlanguage pragmatics and politeness concepts. The results of this study show that query preparatory strategy is the most used strategy by participants and the reflection of Javanese cultural concepts are showed on requests. In other case, the participants also produce different request strategy in English and Javanese.

Keywords: interlanguage pragmatics, politeness, request strategies

Introduction

This study deals with the production of request strategy by ten Javanese Learners of EFL in the English Department, Jember University. In this research, the participants are in the process of interlanguage with Javanese as the NL and English as the TL. The interlanguage study focuses on the speech act. Therefore, this research is about interlanguage pragmatics. The researcher assumes that

request will be the strategies that mostly used by students. As the Javanese learner of English, student maybe influenced by the Javanese culture to make request in English. This condition could trigger misunderstanding if the student has a conversation with the native speaker of English. Therefore, this study tries to reveal how the Javanese learner of English produces request in English and how far the Javanese culture can be reflected in it.

In accordance with those problems, this study tries to answer the following questions: 1. How do the participants perform requests in English? 2. How are the Javanese politeness concepts reflected in participants' request of English? 3. How are request strategies in Javanese and English different?

According to those questions, the study is designed to achieve some goals, they are: 1. To classify the request strategies in English as the target language produced by participants who are studying English and they are using Javanese as their native language. 2. To figure out how the Javanese politeness concepts are reflected in students' strategies when they are making request in English. 3. To find the different request strategies produced by participants in Javanese and English and elaborate the cause of the differences based on the result of interview with participants.

This study applies the theory of interlanguage pragmatics, request strategy, politeness, and Javanese politeness concepts. Request strategy has its own classification systems in interlanguage pragmatics. In this study, the researcher uses the nine classification scheme of request strategy used in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) proposed by Kulka, et al. (1982). In addition, the three politeness systems proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001:54); deference, solidarity and hierarchy are used to make the scenarios in DCT. Further, the Javanese politeness concept adapted from Sukarno (2010) is used to investigate whether or not it reflected on requests.

Table 1.1 Request strategy types - definition of coding categories and examples

Types	Examples
<p>1. <i>Mood derivable</i></p> <p>Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb indicates illocutionary force.</p>	<p>Clean up the mess.</p> <p>Move your car.</p>
<p>2. <i>Explicit performatives</i></p> <p>Utterances in which the illocutionary force is clearly mentioned.</p>	<p>I'm asking you to clean up the mess.</p> <p>I'm asking you to move your car.</p>
<p>3. <i>Hedged performatives</i></p> <p>Utterances in which the statement of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions.</p>	<p>I would like to ask you to clean up the mess.</p> <p>I would like to ask you to move your car.</p>
<p>4. <i>Obligation statements</i></p> <p>Utterances which state the hearer's obligation to perform the act.</p>	<p>You'll have to clean up the mess.</p> <p>You'll have to move your car.</p>

<p>5. <i>Want statements</i></p> <p>Utterances which indicate the speakers desire that the hearer performs the tasks.</p>	<p>I really wish you'd clean up the mess.</p> <p>I really wish you'd move your car</p>
<p>6. <i>Suggestory formulas</i></p> <p>Utterances which include a suggestion to do something.</p>	<p>How about cleaning up?</p> <p>Why don't you move your car?</p>
<p>7. <i>Query preparatories</i></p> <p>Utterances contain certain modal, such as can/could/would/may that shows the preparatory conditions (e.g ability, willingness) of the hearer to do act or the possibility of the act to be performed.</p>	<p>Could you clean up the mess, please?</p> <p>Would you mind moving your car?</p>
<p>8. <i>Strong hints</i></p> <p>Utterances containing partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act).</p>	<p>You have left the kitchen in a terrible mess.</p>
<p>9. <i>Mild hints</i></p> <p>Utterances that make no reference to the request proper, but can be interpreted as requests by context (indirectly pragmatically implying the act).</p>	<p>We don't want any crowding (as a request to move the car).</p>

Research Methodology

This study belongs to qualitative research. Mackey and Gass (2005:162) state that "a qualitative research is a research that uses non experimental design in which the data cannot be easily quantified and the analysis is interpretative". However, they (2005:182) also state that "although some qualitative researchers eschew the practice of quantification, others are interested in patterns of occurrence and do not exclude the use of the sorts of numbers and statistics that are usually found in quantitative research." This means that quantification is allowed in a qualitative research. The researcher has two ways to collect the data by using discourse completion tests (DCT) and interview. The DCT would be available in two languages, Javanese and English. The content of the DCT are six scenarios adapted from a journal written by Sukanto (2012:4). Those six scenarios will classify into three types of situations based on the politeness principles proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001:54); deference, solidarity and

hierarchy. In addition, interview is used for two purposes. The first, it is used to get 10 Javanese students who will be the participants of this research according to their cultural background based on certain criteria decided by researcher. The second, interview is held to investigate the cause of the different request in English and Javanese produced by participants.

Result

Based on the research problem, there are three questions to be answered in this study. The first is about the type of request strategies produced by participants. By using the classification scheme of request strategy by Kulka, et al. (1982), the data is classified in order to find request strategies applied by participants. The result shows that query preparatory is the most used strategy in all scenarios with the total used of 55 out of 60 requests. The second question is about the reflection of Javanese politeness concepts on requests. The result shows that the Javanese politeness concept is reflected on requests in each politeness principle; deference, solidarity, and hierarchy. There are two concepts used; *andhap asor* in deference and hierarchy and *tata krama* in solidarity. The third question is whether or not the participant produced different request in Javanese and English. After comparing the request strategy and modification produced by participants in the two languages, the researcher found 30 pairs of the same request strategies or it is about 50%. The other 50% or 30 pairs are different request strategies. Referring to the data, there are 13 more complex request strategy and modification in English and 17 more complex request strategy and modification in Javanese. In order to find out the cause of the different request and modification, the researcher held an interview with three selected participants as the representative of others who are producing different request strategies and modifications. The result of interview shows that the different requests and modification are caused by the level of mastering the L2 and also cultural consideration.

Discussion

1. Types of Request Strategies in English

By using the classification scheme of request strategy by Kulka, et al. (1982), the data is classified in order to find request strategies applied by participants. The data is also classified based on politeness principle by Scollon and Scollon (2001:54); deference, solidarity and hierarchy. Scenario 1 and 2 belong to deference (-Power, +Distance), scenario 3 and 4 belong to solidarity (-Power, -Distance), scenario 5 and 6 belong to hierarchy (+Power, +/-Distance).

a. Scenario 1 and 2: Deference (-Power, +Distance)

In deference, participant uses query preparatory as the most used strategy. In using query preparatory, most of them use modal in past tense. In addition, they also use three different ways to deliver their request by using direct question, statement of hint, and statement of reason.

Table 4.1 Request Strategies of Scenario 1 and 2

Relation ship	Scenario	Strategy	Times	Total	
Deference (-Power, +Distance)	1	Query Preparatory	Direct	6	10
			Hint	2	
			Reason	2	
	2	Query Preparatory	Direct	5	10
			Reason	5	

b. Scenario 3 and 4: Solidarity (-Power, -Distance)

In solidarity, participant uses mood derivable, want statement, and query preparatory strategy. Query preparatory became the strategy that is mostly used by them. In using query preparatory, some participants are using modal in present tense and others in past tense.

Table 4.2 Request Strategies of Scenario 3 and 4

Relation ship	Scenario	Strategy	Times	Total	
Solidarity (-Power, -Distance)	3	Query Preparatory	Direct	3	10
			Reason	7	
	4	Mood Derivable	Want Statement	1	10
			Query Preparatory	1	
			Query Preparatory	8	

c. Scenario 4 and 5: Hierarchy (+Power, +/-Distance)

In hierarchy, participant uses want statement, and query preparatory strategy as the most used strategy. In using query preparatory, most of the participant uses modal in past tense.

Table 4.3 Request Strategies of Scenario 5 and 6

Relationship	Scenario	Strategy	Times	Total
Hierarchy (+Power, +/-Distance)	5	Want Statement	1	10
			Query Preparatory	
	6	Want Statement	2	10
			Query Preparatory	

2. The Reflection of Javanese Politeness Concepts on Requests in English

In this section, the request strategy produced by participants is analyzed according to Javanese politeness concepts in order to find its influence on the requests. Firstly, the researcher will explain the request pattern of each politeness principles; secondly by using the classification of request modification by Kulka (1989 cited in Najafabadi and Paramasivam 2012), the researcher will

explain how the participant uses internal modification in order to decide whether the modifier is used to decrease or increase the illocutionary force of the request; thirdly the researcher presents the finding data and explains the reflection of Javanese politeness concepts in it.

a. Deference

Deference has request pattern made by participants in which they are using query preparatory as the request strategy and they use modal in the form of past tense. This aims to minimize the imposition to the stranger interlocutor so that the speaker could be regarded as more polite. In addition, the participant uses politeness marker 'please' and consultative device 'would you like...' as the request modification. In this situation, as the Javanese learner, the participant should react to lower themselves and exalt the addressee. Therefore, the concept of *andhap asor* applies. By using the concept of *andhap asor*, the request will sound less forceful and it also shows the warmth to the stranger interlocutor.

b. Solidarity

Solidarity has request pattern in which query preparatory is used by participant as the request strategy and the modals are in the form of present and past tense. The different tenses are caused by the different illocutionary force of request. The bigger illocutionary force makes the participant uses modal in past tense to be more polite. In the scenario 3, the participants tend to use modal in the present tense because the request is easier to do by the interlocutor, so the illocutionary force is small. Therefore, this leads participant less consider to produce request in formal or polite way. On the other case, in the scenario 4, the more serious situation happens when the speaker asks the interlocutor to bring a doctor note and send it to the lecturer. This situation makes the illocutionary force of request bigger. Therefore, the participant uses modal in the past tense as considered to be more polite. Additionally, the participants use politeness marker 'please' and consultative device 'could you help me...' as downgrade to decrease the illocutionary force even though the addressees are their peers. This condition fits to the concept of *tata krama*. Speaker should have a good etiquette or *tata krama* even though to the interlocutor who has the equal social status as well as an intimate relationship.

c. Hierarchy

Request pattern in hierarchy is formed by the modal which is used by participant in the past tense. However, the participants are using different way of making requests. The differences are caused by the different capacity of power and distance between the speaker and interlocutor. In scenario 5, the scenario shows that the interlocutor is a stranger and has different social status with the speaker seen from the different age between them. It can be said that in this scenario, the power of interlocutor is small. Therefore, the participants use modal in past tense to be polite but the request is delivered in simple way. Conversely, in scenario 6, the interlocutor has different social status with the speaker seen from not only the different age, but also their relation between the student and lecturer. However, this condition

makes them do not have a distance because they know each other. Therefore, in this scenario, the power of interlocutor is big. Consequently, the participants use modal in past tense. Moreover, the bigger power drives the participants to produce more verbose request in order to be far more polite. In order to make their request verbose, the participants are using a reason, apology, or agreement. Furthermore, in order to minimizing the imposition to the interlocutor, downgrade as the internal modification is also used. The downgrades are politeness marker 'please' and consultative device 'would you like'. Based on that situation, therefore, *andhap asor* applies. By having different social status, the speaker should lower himself and exalt the interlocutor. Further, by using this concept it will make the harmonious communication either with the stranger or someone known.

3. How Request Strategies in Javanese and English are Different

In this sub chapter, the DCT of Javanese version is used and compared to the DCT of English version. The comparison of the differences focuses on the tendency of complexity on request strategies and modifications. Afterwards, the factors that influence the differences are discussed according to the result of interview. After comparing the request strategies and modifications in DCT of Javanese and English version, the researcher found 30 pairs of the same request strategies or it is about 50%. The other 50% or 30 pairs are different request strategies. The request is differentiated into two classifications based on the complexity of its strategy and modification.

3.1 The Classification of Different Request Strategies and Modifications

a. More Complex Request Strategies and Modifications in English

The example is taken from scenario 1 which is produced by participant 6.

English : ***I think your seat is for two persons, I wanna sit here. So, can you give me a space?***
Javanese : ***Saged geser sekedik? Aku badhe linggah teng mriki.***

Although the participant makes query preparatory as the request strategy in both languages, but he makes more internal modification in English by saying "I think your seat is for two persons" as hint before the head request.

b. More Complex Request Strategies and Modifications in Javanese

The example is taken from scenario 6 which is produced by participant 5.

English : ***Sir, I'm sorry would you give me a few more days for me to finish this assignment?***
Javanese : ***Nyuwun ngapunten Pak, menawi angsal kulo nyuwun waktu setunggal dinten mawon damel nggarap jebibahan niki amargi kulo dereng rampung pak.***

The participant produces request by using the same strategy and he also apologized in the beginning of request. However, he makes more verbose request in Javanese than

English by adding a reason “*amargi kulo dereng rampung pak*” after the head request.

3.2 The Cause of Different Request Strategies and Modifications

a. More Complex Request Strategies and Modifications in English

1. Mastering many English vocabularies

More complex request in English is produced because English is the dominant language that he practiced every day. As an English Department student, he uses English more often than other language. This condition leads him to produce more complex request in English because he is mastering a lot of English vocabularies.

“At this time, Javanese is the most rarely used. I communicate with my friend by using Indonesian. If I do not use Indonesian, I often use English. This is influenced by environment in campus, so English becomes language that is mostly processed in brain.”

2. Mastering different language structure of L1 and L2

In this case, the participant already put himself in deeper understanding about the proper language structure in each language. He switches the structure that he believed in Javanese to the structure that he believed in English. Therefore, he changes the structure in Javanese as the L1 to the proper structure in English as the L2.

“I think that is more proper to used. The language structure I mean. I think this is more proper if I use direct object in English. But this kind of structure is rarely used in Javanese. Whether or not I use the direct object, in Javanese, the interlocutor will understand to what I mean. So, I can use indirect object in Javanese.”

b. More Complex Request Strategies and Modifications in Javanese

1. Not mastering many English vocabularies

The simpler request in English is totally caused by the lack of English vocabularies that the participants had. Therefore, he just made the request as far as what he can, because he cannot express his idea in more complex request.

“I mean I freely to produced the request according to what I thought at that time. Moreover, I think this is because the lack of English vocabulary I had than the Javanese.”

2. Applying L2 pragmatics’ competence

In this case, the participant produced more complex request in Javanese than in English because he considers about the culture of Javanese related to politeness. Therefore, he applies his pragmatics competence of L2 by making request in English without influenced by his L1 culture.

“In my understanding, people in the country which uses English as the L1, they

will probably be disturbed by many apologies. I also often find in the internet that they hate person who always apologized. Otherwise, Javanese people are identical with politeness. Moreover, we will be scorned by others if we act impolitely.”

Conclusion

This research focuses on the types of request strategies and the reflection of Javanese politeness concept to the request. The question was answered briefly that query preparatory strategy is the most used strategy by participants and they are using different ways to deliver the requests. Further, Javanese politeness concept is reflected on the requests produced by participants. In the last, it is found that participants produce different request in Javanese and English and some causes are elaborated.

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