



**INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS:  
DIFFERENCES OF ENGLISH REQUEST STRATEGIES BETWEEN  
HIGH PROFICIENCY AND LOW PROFICIENCY STUDENTS OF  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2012 OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY OF  
HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY OF JEMBER**

**THESIS**

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UNIVERSITY OF JEMBER**

**2016**



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**THESIS**

Presented to the English Department,  
Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember,  
as One of the Requirements to Obtain  
the Award of Sarjana Humaniora Degree  
in English Studies

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

1. My beloved parents Harmansyah Anshar and Linda Khumaiyah for their sincere love, prayers, and supports; I do thank you for everything you do,
2. My beloved sister Herlin Noer Yunia who always support me and give me advices,
3. My bestfriend Meyta Mayangsari who supports me to finish my thesis,
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6. My Alma Mater.

**MOTTO**

“The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said.”  
(Peter Drucker)\*



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\* ) [www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/p/peterdruck142500.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/p/peterdruck142500.html)

## DECLARATION

I hereby reveal that the thesis *Interlanguage Pragmatics: Differences of English Request Strategies Between High Proficiency and Low Proficiency Students of Academic Year 2012 of English Department Faculty of Humanities University of Jember* is an original piece of writing. I certify that the analysis and the research described in this thesis have not already been submitted for any other degree or any publications.

I certainly certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, June 9<sup>th</sup> 2016

The Candidate,

Harliansyah Noer Yunanda

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

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Jember, June 2016

Harliansyah Noer Yunanda

## SUMMARY

**Interlanguage Pragmatics: Differences of English Request Strategies Between High Proficiency and Low Proficiency Students of Academic Year 2012 of English Department Faculty of Humanities University of Jember;** Harliansyah Noer Yunanda, 090110101063; 2016; 60 pages; English Department Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember.

This study is focused on the differences of request strategies performed in English between two different groups of students of academic year 2012 in English Department Faculty of Humanities University of Jember. The groups consist of students with high proficiency and students with low proficiency. The purpose of this study is to find out how both groups of students differ in their strategies and what causes such differences. Furthermore, this study is also meant to figure out the role of proficiency in the students' way of performing requests speech acts in English.

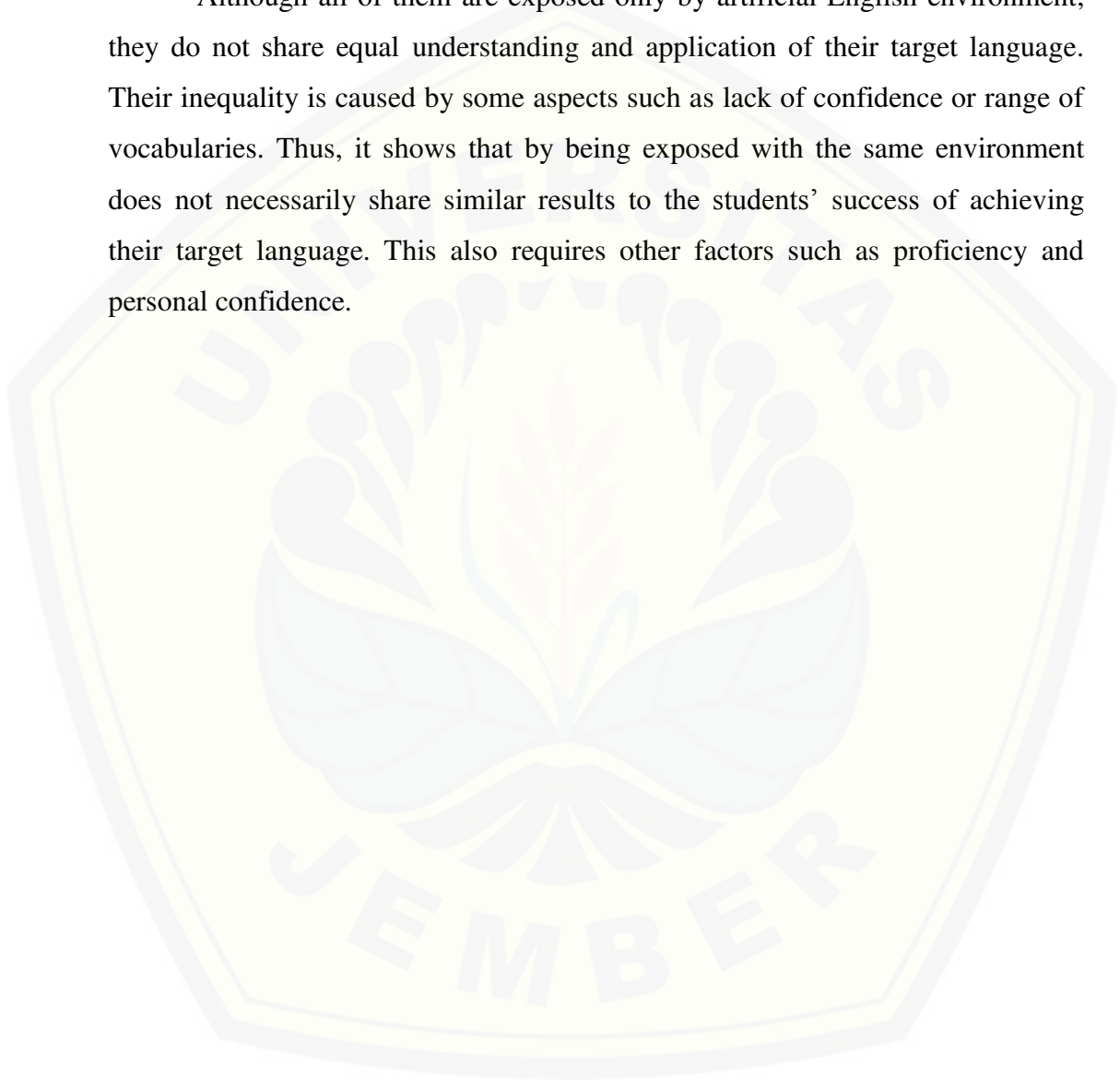
The type of research used in the making of this study is mostly qualitative research though some aspects may look quantitative. To gather the data, this study uses survey research as the research strategy. The methods used to analyze the data are through purposive sampling to filter the data and describe focused group interviews transcription. The data transcription is collected from two different time and place for each group interview. Moreover, purposive sampling works well in finding wide variation or the focus of the data.

The results of this study reveal that both high and low proficiency students are still under the influence of their first language. In fact, this influence does not disappear even when they are exposed with artificial English environment for a long time. However, they also have differences in the complexity of their strategies. High proficiency students tend to perform lengthy strategies while low



proficiency students tend to perform simple strategies. Students also perform various responses on each situation by using direct requests, conventionally indirect requests and nonconventionally indirect requests. Based on the findings, they tend to use Reference to Preparatory Conditions as their request strategies.

Although all of them are exposed only by artificial English environment, they do not share equal understanding and application of their target language. Their inequality is caused by some aspects such as lack of confidence or range of vocabularies. Thus, it shows that by being exposed with the same environment does not necessarily share similar results to the students' success of achieving their target language. This also requires other factors such as proficiency and personal confidence.



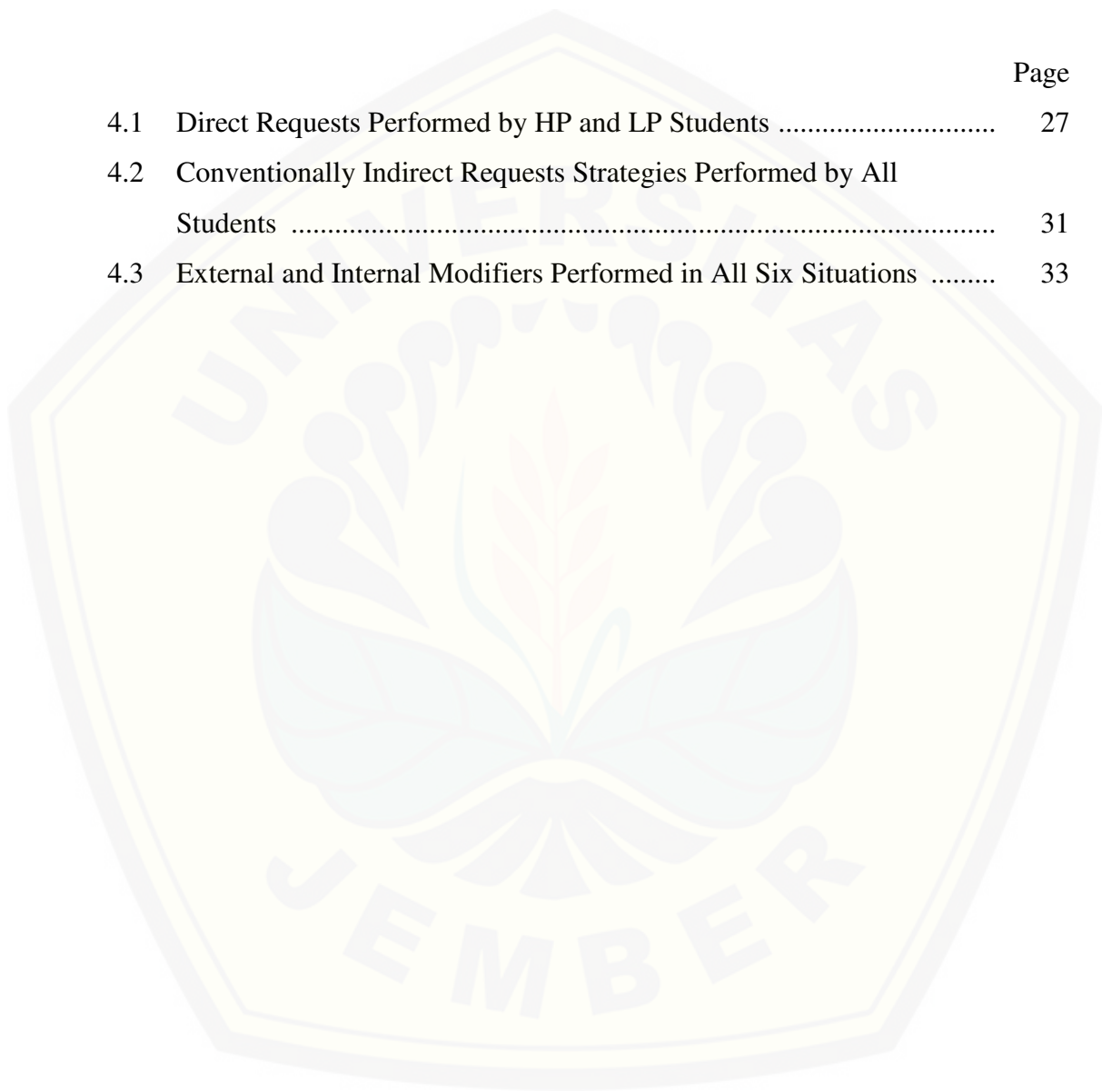
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>FRONTISPIECE</b> .....	i
<b>DEDICATION PAGE</b> .....	ii
<b>MOTTO</b> .....	iii
<b>DECLARATION PAGE</b> .....	iv
<b>APPROVAL SHEET</b> .....	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	vi
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	vii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	ix
<b>LIST OF CHARTS</b> .....	xi
<b>LIST OF APPENDIXES</b> .....	xii
<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>1.1 The Background of the Study</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 The Problems to Discuss</b> .....	4
<b>1.3 The Scope of the Study</b> .....	5
<b>1.4 The Goals of the Study</b> .....	5
<b>1.5 The Significances of the Study</b> .....	5
<b>1.6 The Organization of the Study</b> .....	6
<b>CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW</b>	
<b>2.1 The Previous Researches</b> .....	7
<b>2.2 Theoretical Framework</b> .....	11
2.2.1 Requests in Speech Acts .....	12
2.2.2 Requests as Language Learning Strategy .....	13
2.2.3 Types of Request Strategies .....	14
2.2.4 Proficiency and Interlanguage Pragmatics .....	17

<b>CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD</b>	
<b>3.1 The Type of Research</b> .....	19
<b>3.2 Research Strategy</b> .....	19
<b>3.3 Data Collection</b> .....	20
<b>3.4 Data Processing</b> .....	24
<b>3.5 Data Analysis</b> .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</b>	
<b>4.1 Request Strategies Performance</b> .....	26
4.1.1 Direct Requests .....	12
4.1.2 Conventionally Indirect Requests .....	31
4.1.3 Nonconventionally Indirect Requests .....	40
<b>4.2 The Causes of Request Performance Differences</b> .....	43
4.2.1 Situation 1 .....	43
4.2.2 Situation 2 .....	45
4.2.3 Situation 3 .....	46
4.2.4 Situation 4 .....	48
4.2.5 Situation 5 .....	49
4.2.6 Situation 6 .....	51
<b>CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION</b> .....	55
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	57

**LIST OF CHARTS**

	Page
4.1 Direct Requests Performed by HP and LP Students .....	27
4.2 Conventionally Indirect Requests Strategies Performed by All Students .....	31
4.3 External and Internal Modifiers Performed in All Six Situations .....	33



**LIST OF APPENDIXES**

	Page
A. Discourse Completion Task Questionnaires .....	61
B. Tables of Calculation and Request Strategies Performed .....	64
C. List of Responses of the Discourse Completion Task Questionnaires ..	70
D. The Transcriptions of the Focused Group Interviews with High Proficiency Students .....	85
E. The Transcriptions of the Focused Group Interviews with Low Proficiency Students .....	92

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains basic information about this thesis. This chapter consists of the background of the study, the problems to discuss, the scope of the study, the goals of study, the significances of the study and the organization of the study.

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Nowadays, as English becomes international language, many people begin to learn English and so are the students. However, they do not simply learn about English. They also try to practice it in their daily lives. They use their English by performing conversation with others such as asking for time, calling for help, and so on. Though they use English less often in their conversation compared to their use of their first language, they gradually develop their English language. The development itself is commonly known as interlanguage.

Interlanguage differs from the first language and the second language. Corder (1967) and Selinker (1972) define it as a “halfway house” between the first language and the second language. This is because interlanguage is a temporary transition and constantly changing, depending on the learner’s mastery toward the second language. Interlanguage integrates with other branch of linguistics. One of this integration is with pragmatics. Bachman (1990:89) states that “Pragmatics is thus concerned with the relationships between utterances and the acts or functions that speakers (or writers) intend to perform through these utterances”. In other words, pragmatics is an important component in the SLA because pragmatic understanding facilitates the delivery and understanding of messages in conversations so that there is no misunderstanding between the speaker and the interlocutor.

This integration is known as Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP). It is a study about second language (L2) learners' process of obtaining and using their second language. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993:3) explain ILP as "the study of nonnative speaker's use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language". However, Kasper then stresses even more that ILP refers as "the study of nonnative speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in L2, or put briefly, ILP investigates how to do things with words in a second language" (Kasper, 1998:184). This proves that ILP focuses not only on how L2 learners obtain and use their L2, but also how the process of the L2 learners understands their L2.

The investigations related to ILP have been getting more various over time. At one time, the investigations about ILP mainly focus on speech acts like requests (Rinnert, 1999), gratitude (Hinkel, 1994; Cheng, 2005), refusals (García, 1992), etc. There are also some investigations which focus on more than one speech acts. One of the examples is Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's work (1984) which focused on requests and apologies performed by learners of Hebrew. However, the investigations of strategies of speech acts in second language begin to get deeper investigations. Among them is the investigation about proficiency in speech acts. One of the examples is a comparison study of Cook and Liddicoat (2002) between high and low proficiency English learners.

There is a debated assumption that more proficient learners have more understanding over the second language to express opinions and arguments of their first language at the pragmatic level. Thus, their understanding leads to more likeliness of transferring socio cultural norms of their first language than those with less proficiency over second language (Takahashi and Beebe, 1987). On the other hand, there is another assumption that more proficient learners do not necessarily have more understanding over their target language. Although learners with higher proficiency level show different performance, the difference is very insignificant compared to the performance of lower proficiency learners (Jianda, 2006).

In Interlanguage Pragmatics, there is a basic premise that knowing the words and phrases which are grammatically appropriate in the SLA is not enough. Learners should decide the properly spoken utterances by considering several things such as what can be said, where it can be said, when the utterances can be said and how to use it effectively. One of the realizations of Interlanguage Pragmatics is clearly reflected through request.

Performing requests may look easy to do. However, the basic concept of making requests in English itself has variations depending on the situations. This leads to the suggestion of how to make effective requests, so that it can increase the likelihood that our requests can be accepted by the people we are talking to. If we make requests carelessly, our requests may not be accepted clearly because one utterance may contain countless functions and meanings.

There are several reasons that underlie the choice of making requests as the focus of investigation of this thesis. The first reason is that making requests are often done everywhere and it is quite useful among second language learners because “learners cannot avoid making requests” (Schauer, 2009:25). Learners will certainly make a lot of requests like asking for time, asking for help and use it in their daily conversation. The second reason is that making requests has been mostly studied. Schauer (2009:26) states that “this speech act has not only received much attention in ILP research in the past three decades, but was also one of the speech acts that researchers in Interlanguage Pragmatics focused on”. Therefore, its framework is obviously strong and can provide further study. The third reason is that requests can act as the result or the parameter which determine how the pragmatic competence of a language learner develops, in term of learners’ proficiency level. This is due to the ability of requests that can be applied by using wide variety of linguistic forms like interrogatives, imperatives, direct or indirect forms. The fourth reason is that the nature of making requests has a great potential to threaten the speaker’s face, as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Therefore, it requires some certain strategies to suppress the possibility of losing face by doing modification and learning the strategies of using it.



This thesis investigates students of academic year 2012 when making requests in English. The investigation focuses on the English Department Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember, where a large number of students use second language by still applying their knowledge of their first language. The objects of the research are the students of academic year 2012. The reason of the choice of students of academic year 2012 is based on their experience on English environment of English Department Faculty of Humanities. It can be assumed that they are more accustomed to English environment, especially because they have attended English basic classes (speaking, listening, writing and reading class) and English specific classes like syntax, pragmatics, discourse, psycholinguistics, and so on. This, of course, provides them with more insight to English. As they attend more classes, they are expected to create possibilities that they will show different level of English, especially in term of their requests strategies.

This thesis is worth studying further as little has been known on investigations of request strategies regarding to proficiency. The position of this thesis is among the description of influence of difference proficiency of language learners. Thus, this thesis tries to describe the different strategy performed by students with different proficiency. Through the data obtained, this thesis tries to describe how students of academic year 2012 with different proficiency perform requests. The data obtained can also provide the factors driving the differences.

## **1.2 The Problems to Discuss**

According to the previous explanation, the problems to discuss in this research are as follows.

1. How do the students of academic year 2012 with different proficiency level differ in performing requests?
2. What factors cause these differences?

### **1.3 The Scope of the Study**

As the basic title implies, Interlanguage Pragmatics, this thesis is a hybrid of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Pragmatics. However, the limitation of this study is mostly on the SLA as the focus is on proficiency rather than Pragmatics which focuses more on socio cultural transfer, though some components of pragmatics will also give additional explanation regarding to this thesis. Furthermore, the limitation of this study is on the comparison between high and low proficiency level students of academic year 2012 of English Department Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember, especially in term of their Interlanguage Pragmatics development and their requests strategies in English.

### **1.4 The Goal of Study**

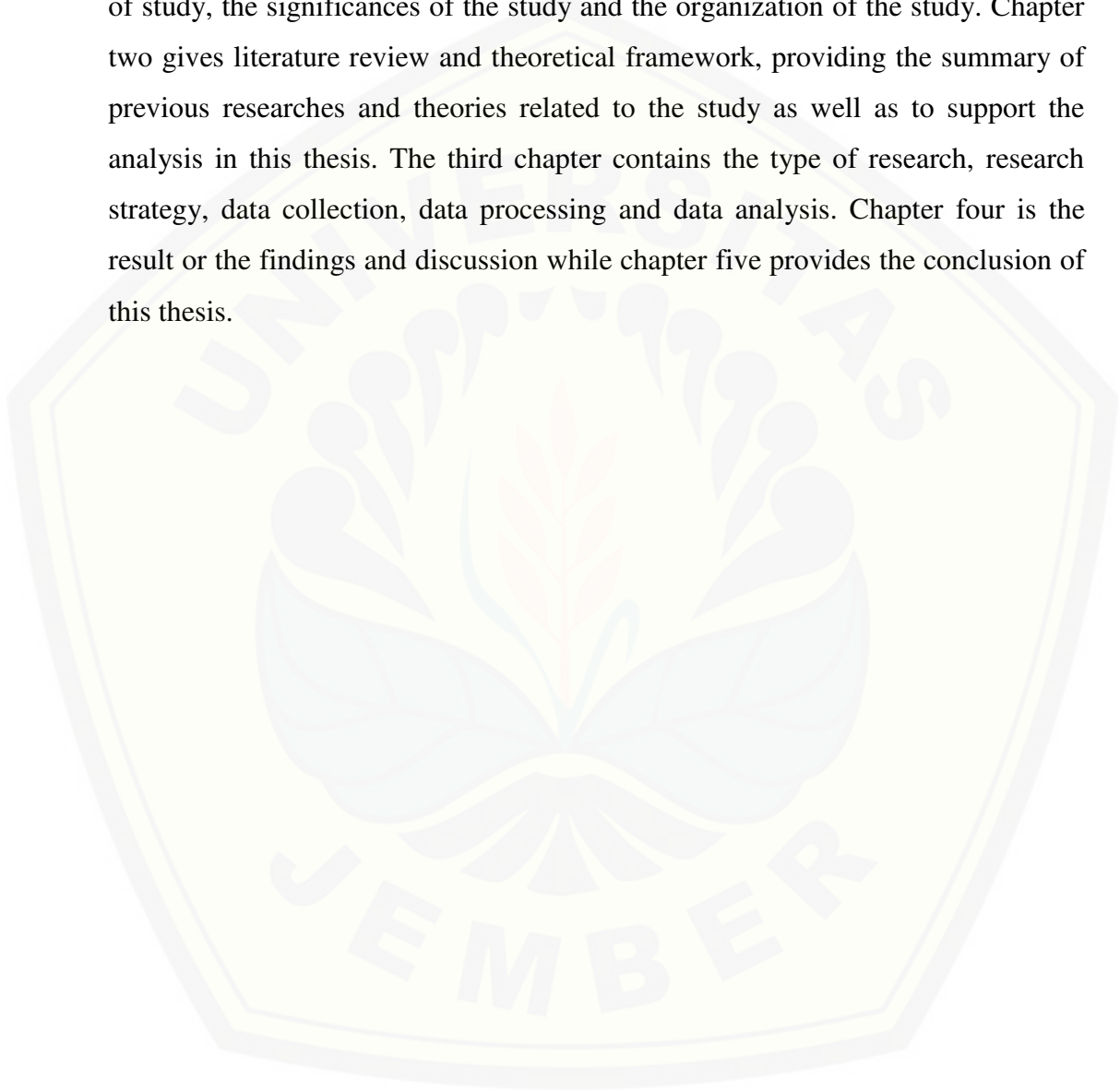
The aim of writing this thesis is to know how two different proficiency levels of English language learners in the English Department Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember perform requests in English and its strategies as their part of daily interaction. Another purpose of it is to examine what encourages the students to deliver different strategies used to make requests for daily interaction.

### **1.5 The Significances of the Study**

It is expected that this thesis can discover the differences of students' way of performing requests. This study is expected to provide better understanding to students who learn English so that they can know variations and strategies of performing requests which can be applied in their daily interaction. It is also hoped that this thesis will also be beneficial to the lectures as additional data to get more insight about request strategies.

### **1.6 The Organization of the Study**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background of the study, the problems to discuss, the scope of the study, the goals of study, the significances of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter two gives literature review and theoretical framework, providing the summary of previous researches and theories related to the study as well as to support the analysis in this thesis. The third chapter contains the type of research, research strategy, data collection, data processing and data analysis. Chapter four is the result or the findings and discussion while chapter five provides the conclusion of this thesis.



## CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This chapter provides some theoretical reviews for the study. The previous researches are used to preview existing researches in order to find the gap of the study. The theories are also needed to support the analysis of existing data of the thesis in order to obtain maximum results.

### 2.1 The Previous Researches

For decades, first language is considered to be able to interrupt the process of second language acquisition (Villanueva, 1989). It is believed that this interference is caused by a tendency of word-for-word translations in complex word order, weak boundaries of first language and its usage in acquisition-poor environments. Thus, the interference performs what is known as interlanguage. Interlanguage has been researched many times and it is often mixed with other field study such as pragmatics into Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP).

As a study of language learning, ILP has focused on the teaching of pragmatic competence to L2 and foreign language learners, specifically addressing three main questions: whether pragmatics is teachable; whether explicit instruction produces better results than exposure; and whether different instructional techniques or approaches give different results (Kasper and Rose, 2002).

Taguchi (2006) investigates the appropriateness of L2 speech act production. The research examines whether more and less proficient learners differ in their speech act production and what features of production differentiate the performance between the two groups of learners. It involves a number of university students of lower and upper intermediate levels consisting of 20 native speakers of English and 59 Japanese learners of English. The native speakers (10

males and 10 females) were college students in the U.S.A. The Japanese students were college students in Japan and formed two proficiency groups consisting of 29 higher proficiency students (15 males and 14 females) and 30 lower proficiency students (15 males and 15 females). Their proficiency levels are based on the institutional TOEFL scores and teacher ratings of oral proficiency adopted from ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the Ontario Test of ESL Oral Interaction Assessment Bands.

The task consists of requests in two types of situations which differ into three factors namely interlocutors' power difference (P), social distance (D) and the size of imposition (R). In one situation, the power was in equal level, the distance among interlocutors and the degree of imposition was small ("PDR-low"). In the other situation, the listener had greater power, the interlocutor distance was large, and the degree of imposition was also large ("PDR-high"). Situation descriptions were given in the participants' L1 to ensure understanding in the written form on a card. The participants practice two PDR-highs and two PDR-lows.

The findings suggest that a person should avoid face-threatening and needs to be clear in their intention to avoid hearer's misunderstanding. For PDR-high requests, L2 learners used ineffectively inexplicit ambiguous expressions. The lack of clarity in intention seemed to have resulted in the lower appropriateness scores of PDR-high speech acts, compared with those of PDR-low speech acts.

Another research regarding to the relationship between speech acts and proficiency is provided by Takahashi and Beebe (1987) which examines the developmental pragmatic competence of Japanese learners of English as compared with natives of Americans, mainly on speech act of refusals. Qualitative assessments of transfer strategies were given. The data collected are based on the written refusals of 80 subjects. They were divided into 20 native speakers using Japanese and 20 native speakers using English, as compared with 40 Japanese students speaking English (20 EFL and 20 ESL). Within the ESL and EFL categories, 10 students are at the graduate level and 10 at the undergraduate level. They are meant to reflect approximate level of proficiency.

The subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire of Discourse Completion Test (DCT) consisting of 12 written role play situations. Each situation contained a blank so that only a refusal would fit. The word “refusal” was not used to avoid biasing the respondent’s choice of response. The situations were categorized into four stimulus types for refusals like requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions. One of each group required a refusal to a higher status person, one to a lower status person, and one to a person of equal status.

In conclusion, Takahashi and Beebe’s study showed that there is transfer in both the EFL and ESL contexts and native language has stronger influence in the EFL context. Moreover, there is also transfer at both lower and higher proficiency levels. The transfer increases as the learner’s proficiency increases and that transfer is greater among our higher proficiency learners than among lower proficiency learners. Analysis of the content or tone of the refusals showed that higher proficiency ESL learners were more subject to native language transfer than lower proficiency learners.

There is a research presented by Matsumura (2003) which is meant to examine different levels of pragmatic development among 137 university-level Japanese learners of English who came to Canada for 8 months. They are compared to 111 native speakers of English living under the same dormitory. The data were collected three times at three months intervals from the Japanese students. The first data collection was held in Japan. The second and the third data collection were held in Canada at the first month and the fourth month of their arrival.

The data from the participants were gathered in classrooms by using multiple choice questionnaires (MCQ) and self-report questionnaires (SRQ) on English. The MCQ consists of 12 scenarios of daily university life with four response choices on each scenario. The choices consist of direct advice, hedged advice, indirect comments with no advice, and opting out. To avoid misunderstanding, they are all written in English and Japanese while the response choices remain English to avoid decisions based on Japanese translations. Before taking the questionnaires, the participants were previously asked to take

institutional TOEFL once in Japan and three times in Canada. The SRQ was meant to get data on the participants' amount of English exposure in daily life.

In sum, Matsumura found that amount of exposure has greater potential to account for development of pragmatic competence than levels of proficiency. Moreover, amount of exposure is determined in part by levels of proficiency and direct and indirect effects of proficiency do not strongly influence development of pragmatic competence.

These previous researches give some certain contributions to this research. First, Taguchi's work (2006) gives overview about speech act of requests in the scope of proficiency differences as well as how to separate participants with different proficiency. Second, Takahashi and Beebe's work (1987) gives overview on how to collect data regarding to pragmatic competence of requests by using Discourse Completion Task. Moreover, Matsumura's work (2003) gives overview about building participant-friendly questionnaire and results on proficiency regarding to language exposition.

However, the range of languages regarding to speech act of requests researches is relatively small as the most frequently described is English requests (Hassall, 1999). Furthermore, little have been known of how Indonesian performs requests, especially in English. Nadar (1998) investigates Indonesian way of requesting in English though Nadar's research focuses on characteristics of the requests from the viewpoints of forms and politeness strategy. However, proficiency still becomes a debated factor of language development, especially in term of interlanguage pragmatics. Though researches about proficiency factor often discusses how Asian first language like Japanese (Jing, 2006), Chinese (Jing, 2006), and Iranian (Najafabadi and Paramasivam, 2012) affects English language learning, little have been known of how Indonesian language affects English learners, especially how learners develop their request strategies in different exposition. Therefore, this thesis tries to investigate speech act of requests by focusing on proficiency factor between students with two different proficiency levels and finding factors causing the way they perform such requests.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Interlanguage pragmatics is “a relatively young area in linguistics that originated [*sic*] from pragmatics theory and developments in L2 pedagogy and research in the 1970s.” (Schauer, 2009:15) It can be described as the study of how speakers of L2 obtain, understand, and utilize linguistic patterns in L2. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (2005:7) define it as a study which “investigates the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge in second languages, deriving its research methods from comparative cross-cultural studies and second language acquisition research”. Interlanguage pragmatics also has relation with pragmatics resulting on the “hybrid” nature (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993:3). Therefore, the position of interlanguage pragmatics belongs to both pragmatics and SLA.

“As its name betrays, ILP belongs to two different disciplines, both of which are interdisciplinary. As a branch of Second Language Acquisition Research, ILP is one of several specializations in interlanguage studies... As a subset of pragmatics, ILP figures as a ... linguistic enterprise...” (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993:3)

Through the definition, it can be stated that interlanguage pragmatics is a part of SLA that has function as the context and vocabulary understanding process of second language, specifically English. Therefore, there are two important aspects in interlanguage pragmatics. The first aspect, in producing and comprehending L2, the learners are having a must to not only producing contextually appropriate utterances of L2, but also appropriate in social situations of L2. Therefore, it shows the connection between pragmatics competence and culture in the second language. The second aspect stresses that interlanguage pragmatics is also concerned with the development of pragmatic competence.

Schauer (2009:16) discussed that L2 learners often make assumption that “certain norms, strategies and phrases that are used in their native language to achieve a certain purpose can also be employed in a translated form in their L2 to achieve the same purpose”. This assumption is then called as transfer. Kasper (1992; 1998) distinguishes this behavior into two types of transfer, positive transfer and negative transfer. The positive transfer is a condition when L2



learners' meanings are in line with native speakers' acceptability while the negative transfer is a condition when the L1 interrupts L2 learners in transferring structures and items of target language.

### 2.2.1 Requests in Speech Acts

When it comes to a discussion about Speech Act Theory, it is usually attributed to John L. Austin, a philosopher from Oxford which formed the basic concept of Speech Acts through his famous work entitled "How to do Things with Words". Based on Austin's work (1962), Speech Acts can be described as utterances with performative function in language and communication or verbal actions. Speech Acts is "action performed via utterances" (Yule, 1996:47) or it can be simply conceptualized as "acts done in the process of speaking" (Jerrold, in Horn and Ward, Eds., 2004:53). Though Yule divided Speech Acts into "direct and indirect Speech Acts" (1996:54), Speech Acts itself was originally divided into three parts. They are locutionary (the act of saying something), illocutionary (act in saying something) and perlocutionary (what we bring about or achieve by saying something) (Austin, 1962). Thus, requests are within illocutionary acts.

House and Kasper (in Schauer, 2009:24) define requests as "directives, with the following interactional characteristic: 'S (speaker) wants H (hearer) to do p/p is at cost to H' in the present investigation". Therefore, requests are acts in which the speaker wants the interlocutor or the hearer to perform an act(s) for the speaker in the form of verbal or non-verbal. Schauer (2009:123) distinguished requests into three main categories, namely "direct requests, conventionally indirect requests and non-conventionally indirect requests." In requesting, the requester asks someone to carry out something and this may bring unpleasant result or become a face-threatening act if he or she does not ask for requests appropriately. This is because the nature of requests is basically "imposing his or her will on the hearer" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:65) by asking him or her to perform an act which benefits the speaker.

Making requests is also quite chancy because whenever a person makes request, the person's negative face who is asked for request is threatened. This may be caused by the requester who shows power by requesting. On the other hand, if the outcome is refusal, the speaker may lose face. What makes requests gets so chancy is because requests are done as an attempt to make or change an event or to put it simply, requests are pre-event acts (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). Thus, before performing requests, it is wise to know in advance of the people who are going to be given requests.

### 2.2.2 Requests as Language Learning Strategy

Language learning strategy was defined broadly by Rubin (1975:43) as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge". Oxford (1990:8) also conceptualized language learning strategies as particular techniques or strategies used by learners to "aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information." In this regard, making requests is something which requires a separate strategy because it is not a fairly easy activity. The impact of requests' nature as a face-threatening act varies, depending on the strategy used by the requester.

The strategy used in making requests will determine the outcome of the requests. To get the expected result, it is wise to realize that basically English has certain patterns where asking for interlocutor's ability such as "Can you...?" or likelihood of doing something like "Will you...?" are considered as making requests (Yule, 1996:56). Therefore, making requests directly is not recommended because in order to make the requests can be accepted by the interlocutor, the requester is advised to know or ask the precondition of interlocutor, whether he or she is able to perform action as requested before or not. This way, the requester can "avoid a direct imposition via a direct request" (Yule, 1996:57).

In Indonesia there is a general assumption that Indonesian people are used to perform requests indirectly or performing prefacing moves frequently (Hassall, 1999) because they are worried about their requests not getting the desired results.

However, when they are dealing with English, the story will be much different due to the factor of cross-cultural communication. As the English non-native speakers, Indonesian tends to perform supportive moves to minimize the risk of losing face (Syahri, 2013), just like other EFL learners from different languages like Japanese, Chinese (Jing, 2006) and Iranian (Najafabadi and Paramasivam, 2012).

### 2.2.3 Types of Request Strategies

Traced back to Austin's work (1962), he is the first researcher who categorizes request strategies into a number of taxonomies. Furthermore, his categorization is perfected by Searle (1969). Although Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) are the pioneers of Speech Acts Theory, especially the categorization of request strategy, the categorization is still considered to be a bit too general. Thus, House and Kasper (1981) then develop their original taxonomy consisting of eight parts of request strategies classifications which are based on Searle (1969).

House and Kasper's work was then modified and merged with Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's work (1984), resulting into three basic categories of requests. The categories are then composed into nine subcategories. The three basic categories, its nine subcategories and its respected examples are taken from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's CCSARP (Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns) project (1984).

On the other hand, there is also another request strategy framework developed by Trosborg (1995). Though Trosborg develops her own request strategy categorization, the taxonomy is similar to CCSARP in some aspects. For instance, both taxonomies have scale of directness. The categorization in CCSARP is listed from the most to the least direct request strategy while Trosborg's is listed in reverse. However, Trosborg's taxonomy also has differences. For instance, the CCSARP has Nonconventionally and Conventionally Indirect Requests while Trosborg's only has Nonconventionally Indirect which is divided into hearer-oriented conditions and speaker-based

conditions. These differences indicate that “there is no general agreement on a definite categorization system for request strategies” (Schauer, 2009:28).

However, this thesis uses CCSARP’s categorization because CCSARP has been frequently used in many ILP researches before. Therefore, examples of how to analyze data of request strategies according to CCSARP can be easily found. This, of course, helps the way of constructing the result of the research. To provide further understanding of CCSARP, the taxonomies are listed as follows.

a. Direct Requests

1) Mood Derivable

Mood Derivable works well with imperatives as this subcategory stresses its illocutionary force on the verb (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) as the initial performance of requesting. It increases the level of face-threatening as the requester does not know or even care any circumstances of the interlocutor. Compared with other form of requests strategies, this subcategory imposes the interlocutor the most. This, however, will give no problem if the requester has higher power level than the interlocutor.

Example: “Clean up this mess, please.”

2) Explicit Performative

The second subcategory of Explicit Performative has lower face-threatening level compared to Mood Derivable even though that it is still quite face-threatening. This is because Explicit Performative explicitly uses illocutionary force by pointing to the person who is asked for to strengthen the request.

Example: “I am asking you not to park the car here.”

3) Hedged Performative

The third subcategory is Hedged Performative which is under the Explicit Performative. Though Hedged Performative is also included in direct requests, it is the softer version of Explicit Performative because its illocutionary force is embedded (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) by using “I would like you to...” to begin the request performance.

Example: "I would like you to give your lecture a week earlier."

b. Conventionally Indirect Requests

1) Locution Derivable

The illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution to reveal speaker's intention for the interlocutor to do something for him/her.

Example: "Madam, you'll have to move your car."

2) Scope Stating

The Scope Stating gives much lower illocutionary force by expressing the requester's intention, desire or feeling (Blum-Kulka and Olshain, 1984) knowing the fact that the interlocutor already does something.

Example: "I really wish you'd stop bothering me."

3) Language Specific Suggestory Formula

The subcategory of Language Specific Suggestory Formula describes what the requester wants through suggestions given to the interlocutor (Blum-Kulka and Olshain, 1984) and the suggestion is not necessarily done by the interlocutor.

Example: "How about cleaning up?"

4) Reference to Preparatory Conditions

This subcategory is far less face-threatening as the request performed has references to know the interlocutor pre-conditions such as interlocutor's capability, willingness or action possibility of being performed (Blum-Kulka and Olshain, 1984).

Example: "Would you mind moving your car, please?"

c. Nonconventionally Indirect Requests

1) Strong Hint

It is similar to the subcategory of Language Specific Suggestory Formula for it contains references fragments of objects required in implying the act asked

(Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) but it requires more pragmatic understanding as the utterance will not describe what the requester wants from the interlocutor.

Example: “You’ve left this kitchen in a right mess.”

## 2) Mild Hint

It is indirectly pragmatically implying the act (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) and requires further pragmatics understanding as it mentions neither the problem nor the solution.

Example: “I’m a nun.” (In response to a persistent boy)

In addition to the taxonomies above, CCSARP also provides other categorizations which are called Internal and External Request Modification. Both have their own respective modifiers which enable L2 learners to “modify the illocutionary force of the utterance” (Schauer, 2009:28). According to Schauer (2009:28), Internal Modifiers can be described as “linguistic devices that modify the illocutionary force of the request”. The examples are word “please” as politeness marker and “maybe” as downtoner. Furthermore, Internal Modifiers can be divided into Upgraders, devices that enable addition of the request’s illocutionary force, and Downgraders, the reverse of Upgraders. On the other hand, External Modifiers can be described as supporting statements for the request so that it can become a proper request. This categorization is also known as Supportive Moves.

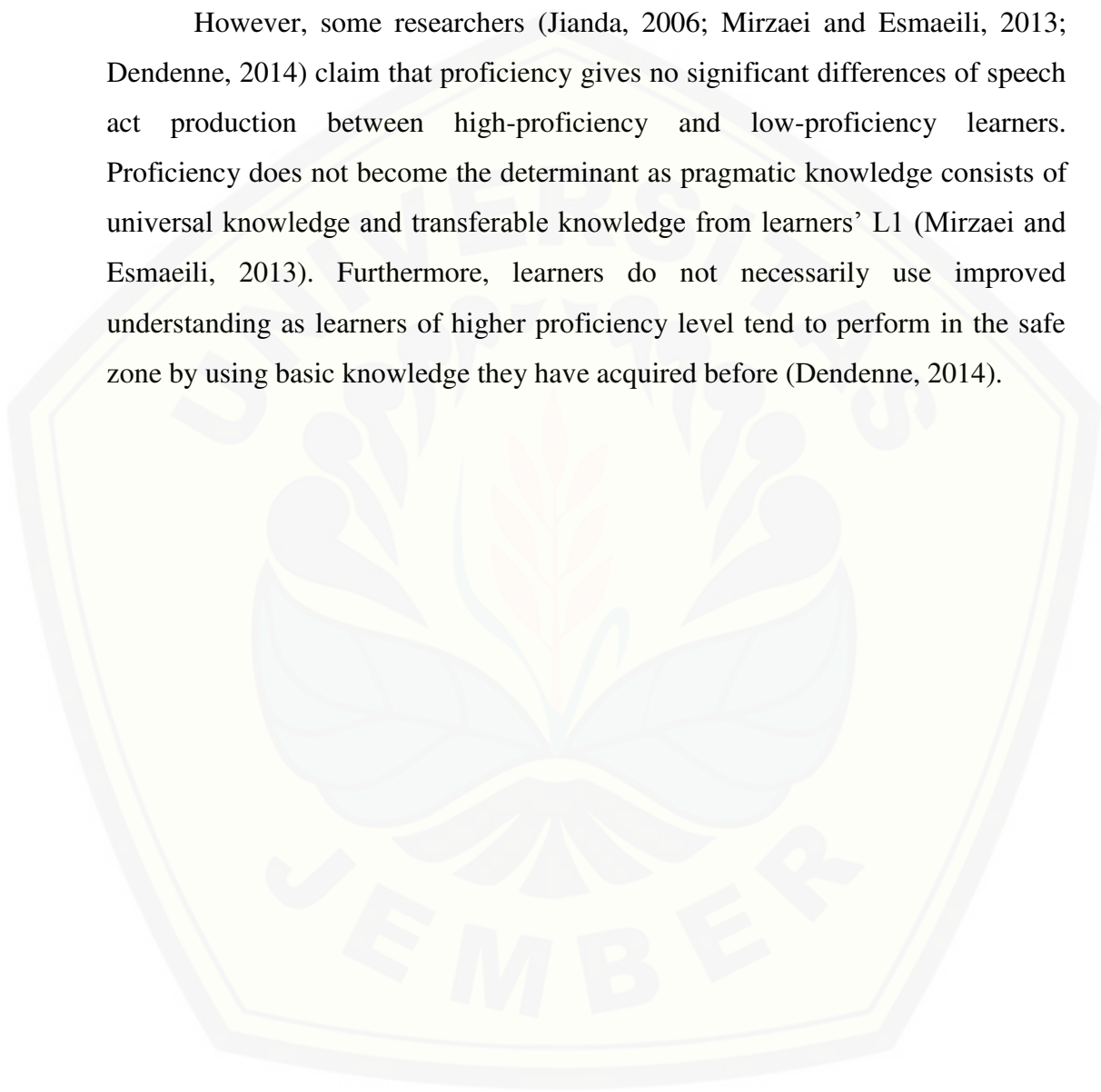
### 2.2.4 Proficiency and Interlanguage Pragmatics

Generally, proficiency can be described as an individual ability to do or perform something. It refers to how one makes use or functions what he or she has. Thus, language proficiency can be referred to individual ability to use language as a means of completing various linguistic tasks.

Within ILP, proficiency is still questionable whether it positively or negatively has relation with transfer (Dendenne, 2014). Although proficiency is a debated subject related to L1 influence on L2 production of speech acts (Farnia

and Suleiman, 2009), some researches (Takahashi and Beebe, 1987; Olshtain and Cohen, 1989) begins to provide further evidences that L2 proficiency has correlation with pragmatic transfer. Thus, learners' performance becomes more native-like as their proficiency increases.

However, some researchers (Jianda, 2006; Mirzaei and Esmaeili, 2013; Dendenne, 2014) claim that proficiency gives no significant differences of speech act production between high-proficiency and low-proficiency learners. Proficiency does not become the determinant as pragmatic knowledge consists of universal knowledge and transferable knowledge from learners' L1 (Mirzaei and Esmaeili, 2013). Furthermore, learners do not necessarily use improved understanding as learners of higher proficiency level tend to perform in the safe zone by using basic knowledge they have acquired before (Dendenne, 2014).



## CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the way of conducting the study by describing various tools used in the thesis. This chapter consists of the type of research, research strategy, data collection, data processing and data analysis.

### 3.1 The Type of Research

In general, the type of research used in the thesis is qualitative research, though some aspects may look quantitative. This is because qualitative research is a “research that is based on descriptive data that does not make (regular) use of statistical procedures” (Mackey and Gass, 2005:162) while quantitative research is a research where the “data are usually in the form of numbers that researchers analyze using various statistical procedures” (Tavakoli, 2012:145).

This thesis is considered to be qualitative because the data gathered in this thesis is presented in the form of descriptive data through questionnaires and focused group interviews to know how the participants respond naturally to the questions given in the discussion. The quantitative aspect can be referred to the data analysis performed later on after collecting all the data.

### 3.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy used in this thesis is the survey research because the strategy consists of range of methods performed in this thesis like questionnaires and interviews. This strategy is used because surveys have become “one of the most popular and commonplace approaches to social research.” (Denscombe, 2003:6) Moreover, there are some advantages of surveys that can make this thesis gets a more brief results. First, survey research is more likely to “focus on data



more than theory” (Denscombe, 2003:27) because surveys are associated with collecting data directly from data resources and this is in line with how this thesis collects the data.

Second, surveys can be used either on large-scale researches or small-scale researches. It is more likely to get data according to the samples than any other strategy. Denscombe explains (2003:27) that when “the coverage is suitably wide and inclusive it gives credibility to generalized statements made on the basis of the research.” In other words, the wider the coverage of the surveys is, the more credible the data will be.

Third, surveys can provide excellent amount of data for fairly low cost in a short time. Denscombe explains that the costs are “more predictable” (2003:27) and the time period is not quite long, though the process is not an instant one.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Basically, the population of this thesis is students of academic year 2012 from English Department in Faculty of Humanities, the University of Jember. The students of academic year 2012 are chosen because they have taken most of basic and complex subjects of English. Moreover, students of academic year 2012 begin to learn deeper English from some classes like pragmatics, psycholinguistics, and syntax which are only accessible from their second and a half year and their third year study.

The participants are recruited through a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a technique where the samples are “hand picked” (Denscombe, 2003:15). It fits best to a situation where some certain people or events have been known to occur. Then, some particular portions of these people or events are taken as examples which are likely to “produce the most valuable data.” (Denscombe, 2003:15) In other words, the samples are selected with some certain purposes in mind. Denscombe claims (2003:16) that purposive sampling can provide “instances which will display a wide variety” or even “a focus on extreme cases”.

Of all those students, the participants are comprised of thirty students of academic year 2012. This is because Denscombe (2003:24) explains that sampling often involves “between 30 and 250 cases” for small-scale research. Therefore, the students taken as the samples are thirty students because taking number of 250 for the samples is impossible, knowing the fact that students of academic year 2012 are less than that. In addition, taking too many samples is also ineffective as it is irrelevant with the term of sampling.

After that, those thirty students are divided into two groups of students to ensure the representativeness of the samples. One group consists of high proficiency students while the others are low proficiency students. The grouping is based on their scores on TOEFL, especially paper based ones. However, unlike other tests, TOEFL has no pass or fail scores as there are no really good or bad scores in TOEFL. It all depends on the statement of the office of admissions. The measurement on University of Jember’s Academic Handbook includes 475 of minimum TOEFL scores as one of the requirements before taking final exam on Faculty of Humanities, University of Jember. Therefore, students who get TOEFL scores above that are included into the high proficiency students which are then shortened as HP students. Meanwhile, students with TOEFL scores below that range are included into students with low proficiency level. Thus, they are nicknamed as LP students.

The data of this thesis are comprised from expression of requests performed by selected students of academic year 2012 as a result of purposive sampling who are previously asked to fill in DCT questionnaires given. There will be some basic questions in the questionnaires as follows.

1. How old are you?
2. What are your TOEFL scores?
3. Do you learn English as your first language?
4. Do you learn English as your foreign language?
5. Do you use English as your daily interaction?
6. Do you ever communicate with English natives in your daily life?
7. Do you ever live abroad?

The questions above are meant to filter irrelevant data so that the questionnaires can elicit valid data of the samples. The participants are asked to fill in some written DCT scenarios. They are asked to write requests based on available written DCT scenarios which consist of certain situations followed by blank spaces with appropriate forms of requests. Written DCT is used as it becomes “the favored and most widespread instrument to obtain targeted speech acts” (Rue and Zhang, 2008:33), either in one single language group or across language group. The DCT or Discourse Completion Task itself is a questionnaire describing some daily life situations and the respondents are expected to react by making requests. The DCT included in this thesis is more to open DCT rather than dialogue DCT. This is because open DCT is a DCT in which “no turns are provided” (Kasper, in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 2005:10) so that the respondents may perform requests freely without worrying the next line of the dialogue as in dialogue DCT which has “an initiating turn or a rejoinder” (Kasper, in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 2005:10).

The DCT questionnaire used is adapted from Najafabadi and Paramasivam’s work (2012) as the scenarios provided in their DCT have much more detailed description of situations. This is because their DCT are based on the two social aspects; social power and social distance. The social power refers to three power levels of the requester over the requestee. They are higher requester power level, lower requester power level and equal requester and requestee power level. The social distance refers to two familiarity levels. They consist of requester and requestee who are familiar each other and those who do not know each other.

Therefore, the participants can perform various requests freely according to their assumption of the situations provided. However, the written DCT of Najafabadi and Paramasivam's work (2012) are slightly changed with fewer scenarios to adapt the students' familiarity and to avoid misinterpretation, either among students of academic year 2012 with high proficiency or low proficiency. The written DCT are as follows.

1. You are taking a course in sociolinguistics. In today's class, the lecturer mentions a new article "Language & Culture". You are interested in the topic so you go to the library to read the article. Unfortunately, the library does not have the article, and you decide to borrow it from the lecturer. This is your third course with him and you have a good relationship with him. You go to his office and say...
2. Tomorrow is the deadline for one of your final papers. You have many other assignments and cannot finish the paper on time. This is your first course with this lecturer and you have never spoken with him before. However, you decide to talk to him about an extension on the paper. You go to his office and say...
3. You have been helping your neighbor, a high school student, with his/her studies for two months now. Your next meeting with him/her is Monday evening. You have an exam on Tuesday and you want to postpone your appointment with your neighbor until Wednesday evening. You say...
4. You are a university professor. You have a department meeting and you have to cancel one of today's classes. One of the course students stops by your office to inquire about one of the requirements. This is the student's first course with you and you don't know him that well. You want the student to post an announcement about cancelling today's class at the classroom door. You say...
5. You have been sharing a boarding house with a friend for two years now. While you were working on your assignments, your laptop stopped working.

You want to use your friend's laptop and finish your assignments. You go to your friend's room and say...

6. Last week, you had a bad cold and missed very important classes. You see one of your classmates in the library. You have never spoken with this classmate before but you know that he/she is an excellent student, and you want to copy his/her notebook. You go to your classmate and say...

After completing the DCT questionnaires, they are then asked to join immediate post-task focus group interviews to investigate the possible factors causing their requests differences. The focus group interviews are performed twice. The first one is conducted to interview the LP students while the second one is for HP students. This is meant to make the interview becomes more conducive as taking too many participants in one focus group interviews at a time will make it lose its sense of focused interview.

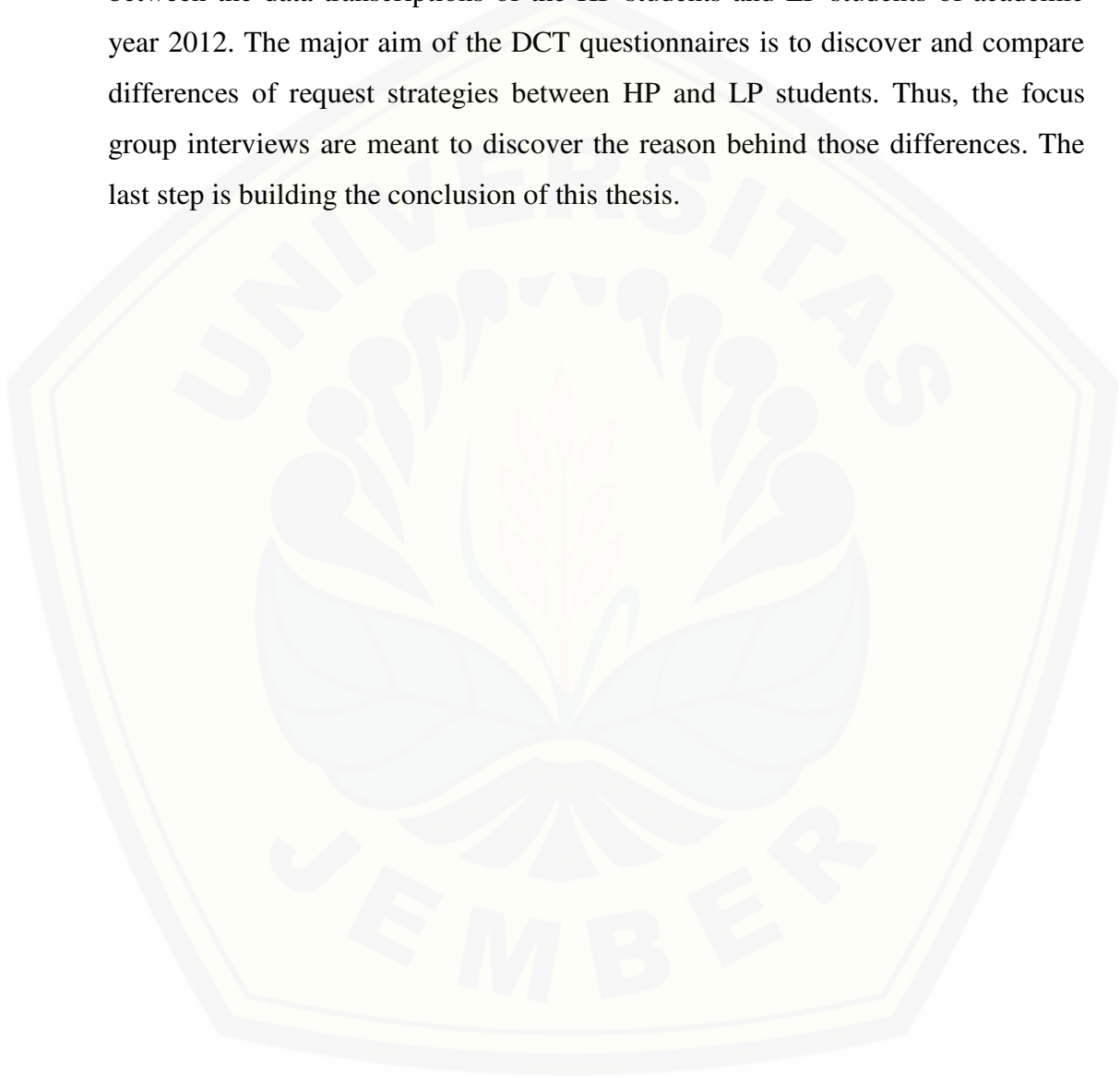
### **3.4 Data Processing**

After collecting the data, the next process is processing the raw data gained from DCT questionnaires and focus group interview. The participants are divided into two groups of HP students and LP students of academic year 2012 based on their TOEFL scores. The groups consist of fifteen students each. This is meant to ensure the representativeness of the samples. The data gained are then classified regarding to the request taxonomy and modification of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's CCSARP project (1984).

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data of this thesis are analyzed by some steps. First, the basic construction of the background of the study and the problems to discuss are established. Then, theoretical review is built to strengthen the discussion regarding to request strategy. After building the supporting basis, the population

of the data is then selected. Through this population, the data are taken by using DCT questionnaires and by performing focus group interviews. After that, the received data are transcribed and classified into some categories based on the Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's request taxonomy (1984). The data is then compared between the data transcriptions of the HP students and LP students of academic year 2012. The major aim of the DCT questionnaires is to discover and compare differences of request strategies between HP and LP students. Thus, the focus group interviews are meant to discover the reason behind those differences. The last step is building the conclusion of this thesis.



## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the performances of students of academic year 2012 on requests in English. There are two types of students that are analyzed in this study, HP and LP students. They were divided according to their TOEFL scores performed before. They are then analyzed by giving out DCT questionnaires and interviewing them in two groups. A group consists of HP students while another consists of LP students. Primary data were obtained from their responses on the DCT questionnaires and the transcription results of the interview conducted.

The DCT questionnaires show that the students perform various responses on each situation by using direct requests, conventionally indirect requests and nonconventionally indirect requests. Some perform complicated strategies while others choose to simplify their strategies. The most prominent strategy of all available strategies in request speech acts is Reference to Preparatory Conditions (63.24%), followed by Scope Stating (18.14%) in the second most used strategy. This leads to the result that students of academic year 2012 expose conventionally indirect requests more than the other two types of requests. This raises the argument that students of academic year 2012 are more accustomed in using conventionally indirect requests strategy (86.76%), especially Reference to Preparatory Conditions, as their way of performing requests. On the other hand, they are not quite accustomed with the strategies of direct requests (11.27%) and nonconventionally indirect requests (1.96%). This can also become a proof that students who learn English from artificial English environment have limitation on their English performances, especially when they perform requests. However, the study still provides insight that students who learn English in an artificial English environment even have potential to develop their English understanding further.

Although HP and LP students provide different responses or requests, they still share some similarities. The similarities found are that both HP and LP

students are aware of the risk of losing face. Therefore, they often utilize additional Modifiers, either External or Internal Modifiers, as their supporting strategies. Both HP and LP students also remain under influence of their L1 understanding. This leads to the opinion that both HP and LP students still cannot be fully influenced by their target language, even though they are already exposed with artificial English environment for a long time. Meanwhile, the difference between HP students' performances and LP students' performances is that HP students often provide Internal Modifiers and External Modifiers extensively in the form of greetings, asking for permission, and apology. Although the three mentioned External Modifiers have their own field of strategy, they remain treated as External Modifiers when they are performed in the scope of request speech acts. Although LP students also provide Internal and External Modifiers, they do not expose the Modifiers as much as HP students do. LP students mostly perform much simpler request strategies. Sometimes they even do their requests without any Modifiers before or after their request utterances. This is because they have limited vocabularies and are lack of confidence. LP students also argue that they are often afraid of making mistakes if they try to speak with lengthy or expansive strategies.

Hopefully, this study is able to provide contribution to better understanding to the different request performances of EFL learners, especially between high proficiency (HP) students and low proficiency (LP) students who are exposed to artificial English environment. This study is also expected to provide more insights on the SLA limitation of proficiency in Interlanguage Pragmatics. This is because this study focuses on one speech acts of requests while there are many other speech acts and different approaches. In fact, this study reveals that Interlanguage Pragmatics approach on Indonesian EFL learners can be expanded even further for the next studies.