GENDER-BASED REQUEST STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS, JEMBER UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC YEAR 2012/2013

(STRATEGI MEMINTA BERDASARKAN GENDER YANG DIPRODUKSI OLEH MAHASISWA JURUSAN SASTRA INGGRIS, UNIVERSITAS JEMBER TAHUN AJARAN 2012/2013)

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Abstract

This research deals with request strategies that is produced by female and male students of English Department of Jember University academic year 2012/2013. The aims of this research are to find out how female and male students of English Department apply request strategies based on Blum-Kulka's theory of request strategies, to know how the request is related with the relative power and social distance, and the prove how the request determines politeness of gender. The research uses qualitative method. The data are taken from 16 female students and 16 male students of English Department academic year 2012/2013. The result shows that most of the participants employ Query Prepatory request. Furthermore, male students produce Query Prepatory more often than female students. The relative power and social distance do not give significant influence to the students in producing request. The result also shows that the male students are more polite than female students.

Keywords: request, request strategies, gender, relative power, social distance, politeness

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berhubungan dengan strategi meminta yang dibuat oleh mahasiswa perempuan dan laki-laki jurusan Sastra Inggris di Universitas Jember angkatan 2012/2013. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana mahasiswa perempuan dan laki-laki jurusan Sastra Inggris mengaplikasikan strategi meminta berdasarkan teori Blum-Kulka, bagaimana meminta dihubungkan dengan kedudukan dan kedekatan, dan bagaimana meminta menentukan kesopanan dalam gender. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data diambil dari 16 mahasiswa perempuan dan 16 mahasiswa laki-laki jurusan Sastra Inggris angkatan 2012/2013. Hasil analisis menunjukkan sebagian besar partisipan menggunakan Query Prepatory. Selain itu, mahasiswa laki-laki lebih sering menggunakan Query Prepatory daripada mahasiswa perempuan. Kedudukan dan kedekatan tidak memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan bagi para mahasiswa dalam memproduksi permintaan. Hasil analisis juga menyatakan mahasiswa laki-laki lebih sopan dari mahasiswa perempuan.

Kata kunci: permintaan, strategi meminta, gender, kedudukan, kedekatan, kesopanan.

Introduction

People live in a society and communicate using language to share feelings, thoughts, and anything in mind. Communication also happens in the environment of English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The knowledge of foreign language is not only the grammatical rules, but also the pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is about sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence that should be understood in order to produce meaningful language

(Kasper and Roever; 2005:318). Sociopragmatic concerns more on a language use that is applied in social context, rather than pragmalinguistic that only concerns in linguistic resources and conveys meaning (Leech, 1983:10-11). Request as one specific label of speech acts has to be learned by EFL learners in order to know how to communicate politely and properly, as stated by Koike in Jalilifar and Hashemian (2011:790) that "...the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way speaker will understand and formulate speech acts".

This research tries to analyze the request strategies

produced by 16 female and 16 male students of English Department, Jember University academic year 2012/2013. The requests produced are classified based on Blum-Kulka's theory of request strategies. Blum-Kulka (1989) as cited in Jalilifar and Hashemian (2011:791) and Purwanti (2014:10) classify the request strategies based on level of directness into 9 points. *a.Direct Level,* i) Mood Derivable (MD) (utterances which signal illocutionary force because the presence of grammatical mood of verb). Example: Leave me alone; Clean up that mess, please. ii) Performatives (P) (utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named). Example: I tell you to leave me alone; I'm asking you to clean up the kitchen. iii) Hedged performatives (HP) (utterances in which hedging expressions modify the naming of the illocutionary force). Example: I would like to ask you to leave me alone; I would like to ask you to clean up the kitchen. iv) Obligation statements (OS) (utterances which are stated for the hearer to carry obligation act). Example: You'll have to move your car; You'll have to clean up the kitchen. v) Wants statements (WS) (utterances which state the speaker's need to the hearer to carry out the act). Example: I want you to move your car; I really wish you'd clean up the kitchen. *b. Conventionally Indirect Level,* vi) Suggestory formulae (SF) (utterances which have a suggestion to do something). Example: How about cleaning up?; Why don't you come and clean up the mess you made last night? vii) Query prepatory (QP) (utterances containing reference to prepatory conditions such as ability/willingness as conventionalized any specific language). Example: Would you mind moving your car?; Could you clean up the kitchen? *c. Non-conventionally Indirect Level,* viii) Strong hints (SH) (utterances containing partial reference to object or element model for implementation of the act). Example: The game is boring; You have left the kitchen in a right mess. ix) Mild hints (MD) (utterances that make no reference to the request proper but are interpretable as request by context). Example: I'm a nun; We have been playing this game for over an hour now.

Brown and Levinson (1987:65) state that request is included in kinds of face threatened that will influence the hearer's negative-face want because the speaker "put on some pressures on the hearer to do the speaker's want." The seriousness of request is determined by: i) Degree of imposition. It detemines the hearer's self-determination and approval toward the speaker's want. The impositions given create negative face, ii) The relative power. Power between the speaker and hearer affects the hearer's face toward the way the speaker conveys his want, iii) a. The social distance between the speaker and hearer. It shows how close the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. It determines the speaker and hearer's face. (Brown and Levinson, 1987:77-78). Holmes (2013:279-281) also states that people who is closed with their friends use imperative more often as superiors also use imperative to subordinates. However, declarative and interrogative are usually used by people who are not familiar to each other.

In relation with gender, Lakoff (2004:49-51) states that women have more polite attitude rather than men, especially in request. Women tend to utilize compound request in which accompanying with tag question or tag

orders, such as please, will you, could you, etc. This kind of women behaviour is employed because they give the hearer open-decision. It may sound like a command; however they want to demonstrate the suggestion to do some help for them. Moreover, it is more interesting for women for discussing interpersonal subject rather than external issue that is usually discussed by men. Lakoff (2004:78-79) also states that women tend to hedge because they do not know the certainty of their speech. "I think..", "I guess..", "well", "kinda" are the examples of hedging that are usually used by women. Those terms are showing inaccuracy and uncertainty of their speech and they are produced to avoid the hearer from the lack of self-confidence. Furthermore, McConnell-Ginnet (2003:158) also states women tend to speak indirectly, for instance when they do a request, they will say it indirectly and implicitly. Holmes (2013:281) also states that men are likely to utilize direct form and it sounds less polite rather women who tend to occupy direct form lesser in order to get some favour.

The theories above are applied to answer the research questions: a) What kind of request strategies produced by female and male students of English Department academic year 2012/2013? b) Why cannot they use direct and indirect request strategies properly? c) How do relative power and social distance influence the students in producing request? d) Are female students' utterances of English Department academic year 2012/2013 more polite than male students?

Research Methodology

This research belongs to qualitative research. The data are taken from 16 female students and 16 male students of English Department of Jember University academic year 2012/2013. The data are collected using role-play and interview. The role-play that is recorded is set by scenario that consists of 6 combinations of power and distance and 3 situations of each combination. There is a blank space in the situation and the participants are asked to make request based on the situation.

Result and Discussion

Table 1. Types of request produced by female and male students.

Types of Request		Female		Male	
		Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage
D	MD	6	2%	4	1.3%
	P	-	-	-	-
	HP	-	-	-	-
	OS	2	0.7%	1	0.3%
	WS	-	-	-	-
CI	SF	-	-	-	-
	QP	233	80.9%	244	85%
NCI	SH	17	6%	13	4.5%
	MH	15	5.2%	1	0.3%
Exception		15	5.2%	25	8.6%
Total		288	100%	288	100%

Based on the table above, 80.9% of female requests and 85% of male requests belong to QP. For example: *May I know her address?; Excuse me. Can I borrow your pen?; I want to take a German class. Can I join your class?; My mother got accident. Would you mind if you stay here for an hour?* Female students are more able to employ SH (6%) and MH (5.2%) than male students (4.5% SH and 0.3% MH). For example: i) SH: *I have got a scholarship in German and I need to join Germany class as soon as possible. But it seems the class already is closed. What should I do?; I'm sorry because I come here to rearrange the examination because I got call from my mother that my cousin passed away.* ii) MH: *I'm sorry I disturb you. But I have some questions for you to fulfill my assignment; I'm sorry I have to go away because my mother is in a hospital. She was in an accident.* SH and MH belong to Non-conventionally level. They are considered as the most polite type of request.

After interviewing the participants to find the reasons why they produce kinds of request, most female students who employ QP consider that they want to show politeness by producing QP. As they know, "can, could, will, may, and would" become the standard of making polite request. There are several students who produce MD which belongs to Direct level. For example: *Please give me a paper; Close the window, Anny.* The kind of request is made for their little sister who has lower power but they are closed enough. Most students answer that the reason is because they talk to their little sister who is younger than them and both of them have close relationship. The male students also have the similar answers with the female students. They consider that QP is the proper type for making request. They also say that they notice the power between them as the speaker and the hearer, and the relationship with the hearer. However, they consistently use QP in producing request. They only differ the request by changing the present form which is for those who have equal or lower power into the past form which is used to those who have higher power. The kind of knowledge is gotten from their teacher and lecturer or even movies and books.

Table 2. The percentages of request produced by female students based on the 6 combinations.

Combination	Types of Request (%)									Exce ption
	D					CI		NCI		
	MD	P	HP	OS	WS	SF	QP	SH	MH	
A (P = ; D +)							95.8			4.2
B (P = ; D -)							73	18.7		8.3
C (P + ; D +)				4.2			77	4.2	6.25	8.3
D (P + ; D -)	12.5						79.1	4.2	2.1	2.1
E (P - ; D +)							70.8	20.8	4.2	4.2
F (P - ; D -)							89.5	6.3		4.2

Note: P= relative power, D= social distance
  *P: + (higher than the hearer), - (lower than the hearer),
    = (equal with the hearer)
  *D: + (do not know each other), - (know each other)
  * A, B, C, D, E, F : Types of Combinations

Based on the table 2, the most dominant type of request strategies that is applied is Query Prepatory. Related with social distance, Holmes (2013:279) states that those who are closed each other usually apply imperatives more often. For the relative power, Holmes (2013) also states that superiors tend to use imperatives to subordinates. However, the female students are not aware about the social distance that is provided in the situation. In the combination A and B, they tend to use QP and MH in requests they produced to the hearer that has equal power with them. In the combination C which social distance is + and the power of the speaker is higher, only 4.2% female students apply direct request which belongs to imperatives. It also happens to 2.1% female students who apply imperatives in Combination D in which the power of the speaker is higher than the hearer and the relation between the speaker and the hearer is closed (D -). For the combination A and B, the female students as the speaker has equal power with the hearer. However, most of them produce interrogatives (QP) and declarative (SH and MH) in form of requests. It means, different relative power and social distance does not have significant influences for female students in producing request.

Table 3. The percentages of request produced by male students based on the 6 combinations.

Combination	Types of Request (%)									Exce ptio n
	D					CI		NCI		
	MD	P	HP	OS	WS	SF	QP	SH	MH	
A (P = ; D +)							97.9			2.1
B (P = ; D -)							83.3	10.4		6.3
C (P + ; D +)	2.1			2.1			79.1	2.1		14.6
D (P + ; D -)	6.3						89.5			4.2
E (P - ; D +)							72.9	6.3		20.8
F (P - ; D -)							85.4	8.3	2.1	4,2

Based on the table 3, the most dominant type of request produced by male students is QP. This is similar with female students. Most of male students are not aware of relative power and social distance variation provided in every combination. In the combination A, most male students apply interrogatives (QP) to the speaker who has equal power but they do not know each other. It means that Holmes' statement (2013:279) which says that imperatives are mostly applied by superiors to subordinates. This result also appears in combination C in which male students tend to use interrogatives (QP) and declaratives (SH) for requesting to the hearer who has lower power. There are only 4.2% male students who produce imperatives utterances (MD and OS). In the combination B, most male students also produce interrogatives (QP) and declaratives (SH) to their friend that they really know. The same case also happens in the combination D. Although the male students have higher power than the hearer and the relation between the speaker (male students) and the hearer are closed, they still apply QP. There are only 6.3% of male students who employ imperatives (MD). The type of request (MD) that is produced by 6.3% of male students is suitable with Holmes'

theory that superiors apply imperatives more often to subordinates and also to those who have closed relation with them (2013:279). Therefore, for male students, relative power and social distance have no influence for them in producing request.

Based on table 1, female students of English Department academic year 2012/2013 are not more polite than male students. This result is not relevant with Lakoff's theory (2004:49-51) that say women have more polite attitude rather than man, especially in request. Moreover, women tend to utilize compound request which is accompanied with tag question or tag orders, such as please, will you, could you, etc. Based on the result that has revealed, male students use tag question or tag orders, such as will you, could you, etc., more often than female students. Moreover, female students are able to use direct request better than male students.

Conclusion

The result shows that most female and male students tend to produce Query Prepatory request. Most female and male students produce QP because they consider that the polite way to produce request is using "can, could, will, would, and may". However, they only change the present modals (can, will) into the past form (could, would) to distinguish the level of politeness. They have gotten the kind of knowledge from teachers, lecturers, movies, and books. Based on the result in the first research question, the relative power and social distance do not have significance influence for the female and male students in producing request. It is because the dominant appearance of request is Query Prepatory. Finally, male students are considered more polite than female students because male students produce Query Prepatory more often than female students.

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