POLITENESS STRATEGY OF REQUEST IN WRITTEN TEXT

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For S-1 Degree In Linguistics

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities

Diponegoro University

Submitted by:

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PRONOUNCEMENT

I state truthfully that this project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2 and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, I ascertain that I do not take any material from publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, December 3rd 2018

Widiyanti

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

"It is not the mountain we conquer but ourselves."

—— **Edmund Hillary**

This project is dedicated to my beloved parents.

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LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

DCT   : Discourse Completion Test

H   : Hearer

S   : Speaker

GLOSSARY

Face   : a public self-image that everyone wants to protect.

Politeness strategy   : a way to save the hearer's negative face in conversation.

Redress   : an act of correcting something that is unfair or wrong.

Request   : an act of politely asking for something.

ABSTRACT

Request adalah salah satu ungkapan yang dapat mengancam muka lawan tutur. Menurut Brown dan Levinson untuk meminimalisir kemungkinan tindakan pengancaman muka dapat dilakukan dengan menggunakan strategi kesopanan. Penelitian ini berfokus pada strategi kesopanan dalam meminta sesuatu kepada lawan tutur melalui pesan singkat. Tujuan dari peneitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis-jenis strategi kesopanan yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa Sastra Inggris kepada dosennya serta faktor apa saja yang melatarbelakangi partisipan dalam menggunakan stategi kesopanan tersebut. Partisipan merupakan mahasiswa Sastra Inggris Universitas Diponegoro yang terdiri dari sepuluh laki-laki dan sepuluh perempuan. Penelitian ini memadukan instrumen DCT dan Role Play dalam memperoleh data kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teori strategi kesopanan oleh Brown dan Levinson. Hasil akhir menunjukkan bahwa strategi kesopanan negatif lebih banyak digunakan oleh mahasiswa ketika membuat *request* melalui pesan singkat.

Kata Kunci : strategi kesopanan, *request*, strategi positif, strategi negatif.

1. Introduction

Since the appearance of the smartphone, people have many options to communicate with another at a distance. According to Statista.com, the most popular global mobile messager apps of April 2018, based on monthly active users is WhatsApp with total 1,500 million and the second place is Facebook Messager with total active user 1,300 million. The researcher is then interested in lifting up the message in Whatsapp to be an object of the research.

When people send a message, there must be a goal to achieve. To reach the goal of the communication there are some strategies that can be applied. In this research, the researcher intends to analyze the politeness strategies used by English students in making a request to their lecturer through text message. According to Fuchs & Tuÿman (2008), a written language in a text message is rather different from traditional written language. The maximum character limit of a message is one of the factors why the language in the text message is different from traditional written language. This fact will lead the language to have different vocabulary, abbreviations, and grammatical structures.

In this project, the researcher only focuses on politeness strategies used by the English Department Students in making requests to their lecturer. The researcher tries to analyze the type of politeness strategies and the factors that influence the participants using the type of politeness strategy.

The purposes of this final project are to identify the type of politeness strategies used by English Department Student in making requests to their lecturer

and to analyze the factors that influenced the participant in using the type of strategy. There are some researches of politeness strategy which have been conducted in relation to this topic. The first research is done by Salvesen (2015). Her research entitled Politeness Strategies in Requests by Norwegian Learners of English in Comparison with Native English Speakers. She analyzed the requests made by Norwegian Learners of English and Native Speakers of English through Role-Play Request based on different situations such as social distance, power relation and cost of imposition. The data were taken from six participants consisting of three native Norway and three Native Speaker of English. The participants were asked to play a role in informal situation and formal situation. In informal situation, the researcher asked the participants to make requests to their friends and in formal situation the participants were asked to make requests toward their professor. She compared the requests made by Norwegian and Native Speakers of English. The first situation is they have to lend some money to their friends. While The Native Speakers of English tend to use more indirect strategy and hints, the Norwegian use explicit form of politeness strategy. The second situation is the participants were asked to make requests to their professor. She found that there is a big difference between requests made by Norwegian and Native Speakers of English to their professor. Native Speakers of English tend to use more implicit form of politeness strategy. It can be seen from the adjunct that Native Speakers of English added in their requests. While Norwegian seems transfered politeness startegy of their first language. It can be seen from the components used which almost similar to their Norwegian requests and English

requests. In the conclusion, she stated that the native language can influence their politeness strategies in making request. There are some differences between her research and my current research. This current research is focused on politeness strategy that English Department Students used when texting their lecturer in formal settings through written text while the research from Salvesen was comparing the request made by Norwegian and Native English speaker in formal and informal scenarios.

The Study of EFL Students' Requests Based on Politeness Theory is paper done by Elmianvari and Kheirabadi in 2013. They elicited the data from English Foreign Learners (EFL) students in a language institute in Iran. The data were taken during students' regular class in Farzaneh English Institute. The researcher who is also their teacher gave an assignment to mail unspecified request in a polite form focused on e-mail based as a form of computer-mediated communication. They focused on a polite case that is between students and their lecturer. Elmianvari and Kheirabadi collected the data during English classes in Farzaneh English Institute, where the researcher works as a lecturer. During the class, the subjects were asked to send an e-mail to their lecturer in a polite and appropriate way. The result showed that most of the students that sent e-mail to their lecturer expressing their requests in a polite, formal and indirect way to save the negative face.

The third studies came from Eshghinejad and Raouf Moini in 2016. They are discussing the differencess of politeness strategy employed by male and female students as an English Foreign Learners in sending a text or SMS to their lecturer.

They emphasized the identifying gender based on the use of the type of politeness strategies. Chi-squares procedures was employed to collect the data. After collecting the data, they printed the message to be analyzed and tabulated. For the further analysis, they used SPSS software. The result showed that there was no significant difference between male and female student in using politeness strategy.

The fourth studies came from Deveci and Hmida (2017) in *The Speech act in email by Arab University students in the UAE*. The purpose of the study is to investigate how the speech act set is realized by both native English speaker and Arab native speaker in English-Medium University in UAE. The data were collected using discourse completion task. The participants were asked to send an email to their professor for requesting the feedback of their assignment. The analysis showed that there were differences between two data setting at a subject line, closing remark, a thank you note at the end and a name at the end. The researcher state that the result indicate that Arabic non Native speaker of English failed to fully conform to requestive email writing in term of discourse structure in the target language.

Another study was conducted by Aribi (2014). He investigated the request strategy used in EFL (English for Foreign Learners) materials to a group of Tunisian EFL students. The result showed that there was an over use of direct strategies, variations, and sentences in EFL manuals. The analysis of the data shows that the most direct level of the strategies is mood derivables, and the most

direct level of variations that is imperatives were presented by far the most frequently, and their amount and proportion were outstanding.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

Politeness strategy is a strategy used to minimize the violence that will affect hearer's face. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined face as a public-self image that every person wants to protect. Then, they divided the face into two, face negative and face positive.

Face negative is a desire to be free or not imposed by others while face positive is a desire to be approved. Thus, Brown and Levinson said that face is something related to emotion. It can be improved, maintained or lost. Almost in every interaction, there will be a possibility of face-threatening that may lead to the conflict. So that, in order to avoid the possible threat, Brown and Levinson introduced various strategies that speakers may use.

1. On record without redressive action or baldly

This is the most direct and clear strategy.

Example : for making a request we could say "Open the door!"

2. On record with redressive action

a. Positive

Positive politeness strategy is approach-based, with this strategy the hearer's positive face is strengthened as the speaker like or agree with the hearer.

Example : "Help me to absent on your class, will you sir?"

b. Negative

Negative politeness strategy is orientated toward hearer's negative face. This politeness based on prevention of losing personal freedom of action.

For example, we could found " I was wondering if I could get an extension on the time, is it all possible that I can get an extraday or to finish up this paper?"

3. Off record

This strategy is about giving hints to the hearer.

For example: "oh, I forget my pen (while searching on the bag) " to say I want you to lend me your pen.

Brown and Levinson also divided three social contexts that will determine the languange choice between speaker and hearer.

1. Distance

   The social distance between speaker and hearer. In this research we can take an example from distance between student and lecturer. The student is younger than the lecturer so he/she will speak politely and appropriatly.

2. Power

   The hearer and speaker position in society. The social status and age will differenciate the language choice in conversation.

For example a conversation between lecturer and student, the lecturer has authority in a class rather than the student.

3. Range of imposition : weight of the threat.

3. Research Methods

This study deals with politeness strategy of the English students toward their lecturer in requesting through text message. The Population is Indonesian learner of English and the participants are English Department students in The Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University. The respondents are twenthy active students. The students were asked to complete the questionnaires in three different settings. The researcher assumes that the capability of the subjects in English is good and their fluencies in English is better than the other students from different departments. They already took many classes from the past semester so they can produce the utterance well. The data were collected by using written DCT (Discourse Completion Test) requiring the respondents to write some messages to their lecturer based on three settings. Leech (2014:252) said that DCT could be called as "stimulus-driven production task." He also stated that the stimulus is typically given in the description of a dialogue setting, often with an utterance to which the respondents are asked to give responses. Their responses will be analized qualitatively based on Brown and Levinson Politeness strategy.

The following are the steps in gathering the data:

1. Asking the English Department students to participate in the research

2. Giving explanations to the respondents about the questionnires

3. Classifying all the data

4. Analyzing the text messages using Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory.

The researcher will pay attention to the written results produced by the English students who participate in this research. The researcher use qualitative approach on exploring the use of politeness strategies of requesting produced by the respondents and then the researcher will find out and classify the types of the politeness strategy in requesting used by English Students toward their lecturer and the factor that influenced the students use that type of strategies.

4. Result and Discussion

Politeness strategy used in a conversation is to avoid the conflict between the speaker and hearer. There are three factors of politeness strategy according to Brown and Levinson, they are Distance, Power, and Range of imposition. The researcher is trying to find out the politeness strategy that is used by English Department Students in sending a request message based on distance and power

between student and their lecturer. Since the hearer of the speaker is a lecturer, almost all the students prefer to use formal and appropriate language. Then, the researcher is trying to analyze the type of politeness strategy that is employed by the participants.

The sample text messages were gathered from twenty English department students. They are between 20 – 25 years old. They are asked to pretend like sending messages to their lecturer in three different cases.

Setting 1

The first setting is about asking for permission to under 40 year lecturer. In this setting, the relation between the participant and the lecturer is closed since he is the participants' advisor. Among the twenty participants, fourteen of them chose the A message as their option to request a permission to their lecturer. The four other participants chose D answer, one participant chose B answer and one participant write the message in her own style.

Good Morning Sir, (greeting)

*I am (participant name) from English Department 2014 (getting attention). Tomorrow morning I will have an important meeting club in Student Center at 10 pm which is during your class (explanation). **Can you give me permission to skip your class this time, Sir**? (request and modification)*

The most frequently used message is A. Among the twenty participants, fourteen of them chose the first message as their request to their lecturer for asking permission to skip a class. Through a brief interview, one of the participants said their answer is the most proper one because it is short but to the point.

He said that even if the distance is quite close but they can not write a message as casual as they are sending messages to their friends. They also said that message should be initiated with greeting to show the respect for the lecturer. A greeting is one of the strategies to get attention from the hearer. Then, introducing becoming one of an important part of the message. He explained that even if they know the teacher really well, they should introduce themselves first. After introducing, they explained the situation they had. Among the fourteen participants, negative politeness strategy containing a modal verb is the most frequently strategy used. According to Brown and Levinson (1978) there are some strategies to minimize the negative face-threatening act, be conventionally indirect, question and hedge, be pessimistic, minimize the imposition, give deference, apologize, impersonalize S and H, and State the FTA as a general rule.

Setting 2

The second setting is about asking for extended the deadline for the paper. Among twenty participants, there are five answers. The twelve participants chose the first message, the other four participants chose the second message, and the

three other participants chose the fourth message, and one informant writes her

o

> *Good Morning Sir,*
>
> *How do you do? I hope you are fine. I have something to tell you Sir, last week you gave paper assignment, unfortunatelly I could not finished it in two days.* **Would you give me extra time to finish it if it is possible for you?** *Tomorrow it will be my sister wedding and I will be bussy that day. I will be appreciate if you give me extra days to finish it. Sorry for the trouble. Thank you for your attention sir, I hope this message reach you well.*

This message consisted of an attention getter, small talk, asking permission, explanation, request for modification. Before asking for extended days to finish their work, they explained what happened. They told the teacher that they had something more important than the assignment.

> *last week you gave paper assignment, unfortunately I could not finish it in two days.*

It can be indicated as excuses so the teacher will softly understand her situation.

> *I will be appreciated if you give me extra days to finish.*

This sentence can be indicate as a mitigating word. Blum-Kulka explained when people using mitigating word can be indicate he/she pessimistic with the outcome of the request.

> *Sorry for the trouble.*

The participant realized that the position of the teacher is higher than them so they say sorry for asking the extended time because of his private business.

One informant said that the first message is appropriate, she stated that giving the real reason of what you are doing will be more appreciated. This message is the longest message among the other answer, the dominant informant chose the first message we can connect it to the Javanese culture. Javanese, when it comes to the politeness they will use more word state what they mean. The more sentence you used, the more polite you are. In this message, the informant really explained what really happened to their lecturer.

The other participant said that asking directly without softened the word is rude, he said that the trouble is from him so he has to explaine the situation first rather than asking for the extended time first.

Setting 3

Among the twenty participants, they are all choosing the first option.

> *Good Morning Mam,*
>
> *My name is (your name) the coordinator of English Department batch 2014. My friends and I could not attend the class next week because we have a fieldwork of public speaking to Jakarta.* **Could we reschedule our class, mam?** *Thankyou*

The setting is about asking for rescheduling the Grammar class because the students will have a field trip. The participant should pretend like a

coordinator of the class that sending a message to the lecturer, who is a professor aged over fifty, all of the twenty participants chose the first option.

The message was opened by formal greeting followed by a small talk that is the introduction of themselves. They are choosing to make a request in indirect by explaining the reason why they asking for rescheduling the class.

5. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the researcher concludes that negative politeness strategy is the most used strategy by English Department students. As we can see from the discussion, in setting one there are fourteen participants from twenty participants that choose the message contained modal that we can classify as negative politeness strategy. In setting two, Twelve participants also choose the message contained negative politeness strategy, while in setting three all the participants choose the message with negative politeness is employed. There are some social aspects that influenced the participants to use negative politeness strategy. In this research, the difference of age and status from student and lecturer is really affecting the language choice.

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APPENDIX

Below are the three formal settings that should be completed by the participants

Situation 1:

imagine that you are an activist in your club

* *your lecturer is a man under 40 and you are close to him since he is your advisor.*

Tomorrow morning you will have an important club event at Student Center during class time. You have to ask your Lecturer through text message if you can skip from his class.

A. Good Morning Sir,

   I am (your name) from English Department 2014. Tomorrow morning I will have an important meeting club in Student Center at 10 pm which is during your class. Can you give me permission to skip your class this time, sir?

B. Hey Sir,

   Tomorrow I could not attend to your class because I have an important meeting in my club. Would that be ok sir?

C. Sir, How are you? I hope you are fine.

   Tomorrow morning at 10pm I have an important meeting at Student Center. Could you please give me permission to skip your class this time, sir? Thank you.

D. Good Morning Sir,

Excuse me, sorry if I'm disturbing your time. I have something to tell you, you know that I am a member of English Student Association. Tomorrow morning, I have an important meeting that I could not skip because I am the leader of the project. Could you possibly give me permission not to attend to your class this time? I would appreciate if you give me the permission sir. Thankyou so much for your attention

E. (You can fill it with your own words)

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Situation 2:

Imagine that you are a final year student, your family will hold a wedding of your sister as same as the deadline for your paper.

Your lecturer is a man above 40 and you did not really know him well.

In two days you have to hand in the assignment and you do not think that you can finish it on time. You ask your Lecturer through text message for extended the deadline for your paper.

A. Good Morning Sir,

How do you do? I hope you are fine. I have something to tell you sir, last week you gave paper assignment. Unfortunately, I could not finish it in two days. Would you give me extra time to finish it if it is possible for you? Tomorrow it will be my sister wedding and I will be busy that day. I will appreciate if you give me extra days to finish it. Sorry for the trouble. Thank you for your attention sir, I hope this message reachs you well.

B. Hello Sir,

I've been working really hard lately but I'm just really struggling to get this paper done. And I hope I could have a little bit of an extension because I don't think I'll finish it by the time it's due. May I please have an extension?

C. Hey Sir,

Would it be possible to get extended deadline on this paper? You know that I'm struggling in this semester and I need extra days to finish my paper. Thank you for your kindness sir.

D. Hi Sir, How are you?

I know I have a paper due, and its due in two days, but I don't think I will be able to finish in time, and I was wondering if I could get an extension on the time. I have a very busy semester; I'm taking 24 credits, and I've just fallen behind. Is it at all possible that I can get an extra day or two to finish up this paper?

E. (You can fill it with your own words)

  ....

Situation 3:

*imagine that you are a coordinator of the class, your professor aged over 50 and you never know her before since you never take her class.

In the next week, you will have a field trip for two days. As a coordinator of the class you have to text the Lecturer to reschedule the Grammar class.

A. Good Morning professor,

My name is (your name) the coordinator of English Department batch 2014.

My friends and I could not attend the class next week because we have a fieldwork of public speaking to Jakarta. Could we reschedule our class, mam? Thankyou

B. Mam, how are you?

Is everything okay? Next week, my friends and I are going to have a fieldtrip for four days. I would appreciate if you can reschedule our class. Thank you.

C. Good Morning Mam,

I know you are busy but could we reschedule our class? Next week English Department student batch 2014 are going to have a fieldtrip. So we can not attend your class, mam.

D. Hello Mam,

I am (your name). Could you possibly reschedule our class next week? My friends and I must join to fieldtrip of public speaking for four days from Friday until Monday.

Thanks for your kindness.

E. (You can fill it with your own words)

    ....