

**PRAGMATIC TRANSFER IN REQUEST AND REFUSAL USED BY
THE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH GRADUATE PROGRAM OF
THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG**

THESIS



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ABSTRAK

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Budaya yang berbeda memiliki aturan kepatutan berbahasa yang berbeda. Hal ini memungkinkan terjadinya transfer pragmatis yaitu transfer strategi komunikasi dari satu bahasa kepada bahasa lain. Transfer pragmatis ini dapat terjadi ketika mengungkapkan permintaan dan penolakan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menjelaskan strategi-strategi permintaan dan penolakan yang digunakan mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Pascasarjana UNP di dalam Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris dan untuk mengetahui ada tidaknya transfer pragmatis ketika mengungkapkan permintaan dan penolakan serta alasan terjadinya transfer pragmatis tersebut.

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan bentuk penelitian fenomenologis. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Pascasarjana UNP angkatan 2011/2012. Adapun cara pengumpulan data melalui tes melengkapi wacana, bermain peran, dan wawancara. Data yang telah terkumpul dianalisis dengan menggunakan prosedur analisis yang diadaptasi dari teori Blum-Kulka (1989).

Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa di dalam Bahasa Indonesia dan Bahasa Inggris, ketika mengungkapkan permintaan, partisipan cenderung mengungkapkannya secara tidak langsung dengan menggunakan strategi *hints* dan ketika mengungkapkan penolakan, mereka juga tidak menolak secara langsung tetapi menggunakan *apology* yang diikuti oleh *reason*. Ini berarti adanya transfer pragmatis yang terjadi ketika mengungkapkan permintaan dan penolakan tersebut. Hal ini didukung oleh komentar penutur Bahasa Inggris asli yang menyatakan bahwa lebih dari seperdua ungkapan permintaan dan penolakan di dalam Bahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh partisipan dalam penelitian ini tidak umum digunakan oleh penutur Bahasa Inggris asli. Ini mungkin disebabkan oleh beberapa alasan seperti masih lemahnya penguasaan Bahasa Inggris yang dimiliki mahasiswa, kurangnya interaksi dengan penutur asli Bahasa Inggris, perbedaan budaya, serta faktor kesopanan. Implikasinya ialah penggunaan tindak tutur yang tepat dalam mengungkapkan permintaan dan penolakan di dalam Bahasa Inggris perlu dikuasai mahasiswa secara optimal sehingga transfer pragmatis bisa jauh lebih kecil, khususnya di dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing.

ABSTRACT

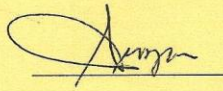

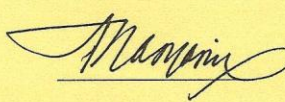
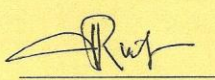

Okti Wilymafidini. 2013. Pragmatic Transfer in Request and Refusal Used by the Students of English Graduate Program of the State University of Padang. *Thesis*. Graduate Program of the State University of Padang.

Different cultures have different interpretations of appropriateness that may cause pragmatic transfer that is the transfer of the communicative strategies from one language to another language. Pragmatic transfer can possibly occur in request and refusal. This research aims at finding out the strategies of request and refusal in Indonesian and English, examining the occurrence of pragmatic transfer in request and refusal, and explaining the reasons for the occurrence of pragmatic transfer in request and refusal.

This was a kind of qualitative research in design on phenomenological research. The participants of this research were the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang enrolled in 2011/2012. The data were collected through Discourse Completion Test (DCT), role play, and interview. The data collected were analyzed by using the theory adapted from Blum-Kulka (1989).

The results of the research show that, in request, the participants tend to express it indirectly through hints, and in refusal, they also use indirect strategy through apology followed by reason. This is true for both in Indonesian and English. It means that the participants tend not to directly express request and refusal. It is thus assumed that pragmatic transfer occurs in asking request and refusal. This is supported by the judgment from the English native speakers who confirmed that more than half of the expressions of request and refusal in English expressed by the participants of this research are not commonly used by the English native speakers. It may be caused by some reasons, such as low competence of the target language mastered by the students, lack of interactions with the English native speakers and cultural differences, such as politeness factor. The implication is the appropriate speech acts of request and refusal in English should be mastered optimally by the students so that the pragmatic transfer can be reduced especially in the context of leaning English as a foreign language.

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Finally, this thesis is expected to give a significant and useful contribution for the development of English education in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

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The Researcher

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In daily life, people need to have relationships with others by doing activities and having interactions. In every day interaction, they constantly create utterances to achieve certain communicative intentions. The goals of the interaction are represented by particular speech acts, such as request and refusal.

Request is an expression which is arranged in order to make the listener does what the speaker asks. The purpose of request is, therefore, to get the listener do something. On the other hand, refusal means the act of saying “no”, expressing non-acceptance, declining or disagreeing. The utterance of refusal might contain just one word, such as “no” or several words or sentences, such as “I am sorry”, “I can not”, “I have another appointment”, etc. Thus, it can be stated that request is related to the expressions used by the speaker in asking the listener, while refusal is related to the expressions of declining from the listener toward the speaker.

In expressing request and refusal, there are several strategies, which can be used. Related to request, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (eds.) (1989) divide the strategies into three broad categories based on the levels of directness. They are direct strategies, conventionally indirect strategies and non-conventionally indirect strategies. Direct strategies consist of five parts, such as mood derivable, performatives, hedge performatives, obligation statements, and want statements. Moreover, conventionally indirect strategies include suggestory formulae and query preparatory. The last is non-conventionally indirect strategies, which are

divided into two, such as strong hints and mild hints. Then, related to refusal strategies, Felix-Brasdefer (2007) divides the strategies into three broad categories. They are direct, indirect and adjuncts to refusal strategies. There are twelve strategies under the category of indirect refusal, such as mitigated refusal, reason/explanation, indefinite reply, regret/apology, alternative, postponement, repetition of a portion of previous utterance, request for information, set condition for future or past acceptance, wish, promise to comply, and preparator. Furthermore, the strategies employed as adjuncts to refusal comprise five strategies. They are positive opinion, willingness, an expression of gratitude, agreement, and empathy. It is clear that request and refusal have various strategies, which can be used in communication.

Due to various strategies of request and refusal, people are free to choose the strategies that they want to use. However, the level of directness from each of the strategies may influence the politeness in communication especially when people communicate in a second or foreign language. This is due to the fact that different cultures have different perceptions and interpretations of appropriateness. Therefore, cross cultural communication posits inherent risks of communication difficulties.

Besides, communication difficulties are also resulted when conversationalists do not share the same knowledge of the subtle rules governing conversation. Scarcella (in Abed, 2011) ascribes high frequency of such difficulties to the fact that “non-native speakers often transfer the conversational rules of one language into another language”. This is commonly called as

“pragmatic transfer”. Pragmatic transfer is one potential cause of inappropriate performance in a second or foreign language. It occurs when the speakers use their own communicative strategies though they speak the second language (L2) or foreign language (FL). This is caused due to different native languages and cultures. When Indonesian people speak English for instance, it is assumed that Indonesian people tend to transfer the way they speak in Indonesian. This is due to the fact that Indonesian people tend to state the topic at the end, while native English speakers commonly begin the conversation with a topic. In other words, it can be stated that there is a kind of pragmatic transfer occurs and it may cause misunderstanding of the addressee to the intention of the addresser.

In this case, pragmatic transfer can possibly occur in request and refusal. In expressing request and refusal in English, non-native English speakers use indirect communicative strategies in order to try to avoid the task offending their interlocutor. They might use a variety of forms and contents in request and refusal situations. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (in Scarcella, Andersen, and Krashen, 1990) mention that request and refusal are major cross cultural sticking point for many non-native speakers. Therefore, to avoid being impolite or rude in making request and refusal, non-native English speakers use indirect strategies. However, these indirect strategies might be misunderstood by the target community. If non-native English speakers do not know how to express request and refusal in the target community, it is assumed that they would depend on their native culture’s strategies and transfer would occur in request and refusal made by

non-native English speakers. Thus, request and refusal are highly problematic and susceptible to misunderstanding.

In educational setting, especially in EFL context, pragmatic transfer also commonly occurs when EFL learners express requests and refusals. This is due to the fact that many EFL learners are non-native speakers of English. Besides, this is also because of EFL learners' socio-cultural communicative competence is learned in the learners' own country as well as their native language and different communication strategies in different ethnic groups. Therefore, it is assumed that EFL learners use their own communicative strategies even though they speak the L2/FL. In expressing request in the classroom for instance, when EFL learners ask question in discussion, they do not come directly to the question they want to ask. It is different from English native speakers who come directly to the point without a lot of introductory statements at the beginning. In other words, it can be stated that EFL learners tend to use their own communicative strategies though they speak the L2/FL. It means that pragmatic transfer does occur.

In relation to that, there have been some researches conducted by the previous researchers. One of them was researched by Vintoni (2009). He has conducted a research to identify the strategies of request and refusal used by native speakers of Tanjung Pauh Mudik (regional) dialect of Kerinci language in various social situations or settings at the morning traditional marketplace in the village. From this research, it was found that the native speakers of Tanjung Pauh Mudik (regional) dialect of Kerinci language use various strategies in request and refusal. In request, they used the strategies of mood derivable, explicit

performative, want statement, suggestory formulae, query preparatory and strong hints. In refusal, they used the strategies of non performative, excuse/reason/explanation, statement of alternative, attempt to dissuade the interlocutor, and verbal avoidance. Then, in relation to pragmatic transfer, Syahri and Kadarisman (2007) conducted a research about pragmatic transfer in English request realizations made by EFL learners. The results showed that the subjects realize request in the form of external modifications more frequently. This is due to pragmatic transfer. Yamagashira (2001) conducted a research on pragmatic transfer in Japanese ESL refusals. The results showed that pragmatic transfer does occur.

Although many researches have been investigated by previous researchers about request and refusal, more studies were needed to be conducted especially about pragmatic transfer in request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background and previous studies, the problem identified was related to pragmatic transfer in request and refusal. Pragmatic transfer is one potential cause of inappropriate performance in a second or foreign language. This is due to different cultures have different perceptions and interpretations of appropriateness. This includes the use of the strategies of request and refusal. If non-native speakers do not know how to make request and refusal in the target community, it is assumed that pragmatic transfer does occur.

C. Focus of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem, the focus of this research was on the pragmatic transfer in request and refusal from Indonesian into English made by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang as non native speakers of English or as the English Foreign Learners. Then, since there are several kinds of refusal, this research focused on refusal toward request only. Besides, this research focused on request and refusal used in the classroom.

D. Formulation of the Problem

The problem of this research was formulated in the following question: “Why do the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang as non-native speakers of English may have pragmatic transfer in the choice of the strategies of request and refusal toward request?”

E. Research Questions

The formulation of the problem was elaborated into the following research questions:

1. What are the strategies of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang in Indonesian and English?

2. Does pragmatic transfer occur in the choice of the strategies of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang from Indonesian into English?
3. Why does pragmatic transfer occur in the choice of the strategies of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang?

F. Purposes of the Research

Related to the research questions and background of the problem, the purposes of this research were:

1. To find out the strategies of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang in Indonesian and English
2. To examine the occurrence of pragmatic transfer in the choice of the strategies of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang from Indonesian into English
3. To explain the reasons for the occurrence of pragmatic transfer in the choice of the strategies of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang

G. Significances of the Research

This research is expected to have significant contribution to several aspects. First, theoretically, it is expected that this research provides a significant

contribution to the enrichment of linguistic studies, especially pragmatics. It is also expected that this research may strengthen the theory about pragmatic transfer in request and refusal.

Practically, the results of this research are expected to give significant contribution to language teaching, especially for educators and EFL learners. For educators, it is expected that they would pay more attention on pragmatic transfer that occurs in expressing request and refusal. For EFL learners, it is expected that they would avoid pragmatic transfer especially in expressing request and refusal when they communicate in L2/FL.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Pragmatic transfer : the influence of the speakers' pragmatic knowledge of one language on their comprehension and production of the pragmatics of another language. In this study, the pragmatic transfer includes both request and refusal.

Request : the expression which is arranged in order to make the listener does what the speaker asks. In this study, request is given by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang

Refusal : the expression of declining toward request. In this study, refusal is given by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusions

Pragmatic transfer is one potential cause of inappropriate performance in a second or foreign language. It occurs when there is the influence of the speakers' pragmatic knowledge of one language on their comprehension and production of the second or foreign language. This is caused due to native languages differences and the speaker's low competencies in the target language.

An overall view of the request and refusal data make by the students of English graduate program of the State University of Padang reveals that indirect way of request (hints) is widely chosen in expressing request and the use of indirect strategy in the form of apology followed by reason is the strategy frequently occurred in expressing refusal. It happens in almost all situations. These results disclose that the students prefer to express request and refusal indirectly since the strategy applied is indicated as indirect strategy. A further test of the data reveals some significant differences compared with the way English native speakers expressing request and refusal. It is indicated that the English native speakers use more direct strategy in requesting and refusing. Because of that, it is demonstrated that the students may fall back on their cultural background when formulating their request and refusal strategies. It means that pragmatic transfer might be occurred from Indonesian into English.

In this case, the students of English graduate program still use their own communicative strategies when they speak English. This is supported by the

judgment from English native speakers about the expressions of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program. It proves that more than a half of the expressions of request and refusal used by the students of English graduate program are not commonly used by the English native speakers. Those expressions are not common in the form of the strategies used. In other words, it can be stated that pragmatic transfer exists in request and refusal.

The occurrence of pragmatic transfer is caused by some reasons. The knowledge of the target language mastered by the participants is one of the reasons of the occurrence of pragmatic transfer in request and refusal. It means that low competences of the target language influence the way they speak in English. Moreover, lack of interaction with the English native speakers also motivates the occurrence of pragmatic transfer. In other words, it can be stated that the more they interact with the English native speakers, the less the occurrence of pragmatic transfer. Then, the reasons include cultural differences and politeness factor. Due to the difference culture between Indonesian and English, the students tend to use their own culture when they speak English. This is influenced by the politeness in speaking since Indonesian culture tends to be indirect. Thus, politeness is one of the important considerations in expressing request and refusal.

B. Implications

There are some implications related to the occurrence of the pragmatic transfer in request and refusal.

1. Different cultures view politeness from different perspectives of cultural and linguistic background and express it in different ways. Thus, when using English as a mean of interaction, the English norms should be considered to avoid misunderstanding in communication.
2. A successful study of ESL/EFL includes the way to perform a different speech act in different situations including the speech act of request and refusal in different cultural context. In other words, it involves the performance and competence of the target language.
3. The success of learning EFL involves not only correct grammatical forms but also sociolinguistics aspect of the L2/FL culture. This also includes a sufficient practices giving clear and reasonable explanation in response to different eliciting acts according to the norms of FL cultures.

C. Suggestions

Based on the research finding described in the previous chapter, the researcher suggests several points. The suggestions are:

1. EFL educators are recommended to create the learning environment that includes the use of speech act in different cultural context by introducing the way native speakers of English communicate.
2. The result of this research could also be one of the references to do any other researches that discuss about pragmatic transfer.
3. Other researchers may further investigate the social variables such as age, gender, and level of formality.

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