Modifications to Request

by Agis Andriani

MODIFICATIONS TO REQUEST OF ENGLISH TEACHERS' UTTERANCES

Agis Andriani
Student of Post Graduate Study of UPI
agisandriani@unsil.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Teachers' requesting is important in the teaching process. It is to realize instructions that encourage students' motivation in learning English. The aim of this study is to investigate the use of request modifications by English language teacher. To these points, the observation is done to 10 English teachers in the peer teaching process. The transcription of the recording taken from observation, gives the data of how they utter to interact and manage the classroom. Finally, this reveals that they modify the requests into strategies, external modifications, and internal modifications. The strategies categorize into direct, conventionally indirects, and nonconventionally indirects. In external modifications, supportive moves play an important role to downgrade or upgrade the request, and the internal modifications function to aggravate and mitigate the request (Blum-Kulka, et.al, 1989). These designs are the realization of their pragmatic competence and effort to fulfill the goal of teaching and their role in the classroom. Pragmatic competence is one of the aspects of language that provides many challenges for EFL learners who need to develop their pragmatic competence in order to use language appropriately according to the socio-cultural norms of the L2 community. And, this may be achieved through treatment they receive from their teachers (Rajabia, et.al., 2015). These modifications are used while they interact with the students to give description of the material, ask questions, offer chances to ask, give warn to build the students' discipline and also help students consciously control how they learn so that they can be efficient, motivated, and independent language learners (Bajrami, 2015).

Keywords: English teacher, request, modifications, pragmatic competence

INTRODUCTION

Teacher's utterances encourage the students to interact. Austin's (1962) observation shows that utterances can be used to accomplish an action set up the basis of Austin's Speech Act theory. It discusses that to perform an action can expect a verbal or nonverbal reaction from the addressee. The appropriate reaction to any speech act performed, depends on the speakers' appropriate realization of the speech act (Shahrokhi, 2012, p.678). Therefore, requesting is the act of the speaker of something that should be done by his hearer.

It is deemed as one of the speech acts frequently utilized in human interactions for information or cooperation from others (Tan & Farashaiya, 2012). Trosborg said that Requests are more frequent than other speech acts such as apologizing or promising. Request as one of the speech acts may exist in all languages, but its realization may differ according to different cultural norms (Tabatabaei & Samiee, 2013, p. 239) Nassaji and Wells (2000) state that "teachers' request for justification in the follow-up move has significant influence on the discourse being generated". This supports the view that a request is one of "the most complicated speech acts compared with other types of language function, such as expressing an apology, greeting, making a promise or agreeing" (Khalib & Tayeh, 2014, p.46). Chen and Tseng (2015) provide a comprehensive understanding of requesting in the EFL teacher context related to the "strategies and the functions of requesting" in the classroom used by teacher. This study focuses on the modifications of the teachers' requests in the classroom.

THEORY & METHODOLOGY

An interlocutor can use various elements to request. This request usually forms according to a special (culturally conditioned) structure (Munkova, et.al. 2013, p.362). Summarizing all of the views, Ermakova (1990) proposes that the illocutions of request are (a) I assume that you can do it or not do it (b) I want to cause you to do it (c) I believe that you are able to do it (d) I know that X cannot happen if someone does not do anything to make it happen (e) I say: I want to see X happen (f) I believe (see) that you will do it (you do it). (in Kotorova, 2015, p.37)

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) mention that the elements consist of head acts, supportive moves, and internal modifications. They also classify the category of the strategies into direct, conventionally indirect, and unconventionally indirect strategies. Direct[20] strategies are 'to the point' in delivering intention of the requesting. These strategies are extended into mood derivable, performatives, hedge performatives, obligation statements, and want statements. Conventionally indirect strategies are suggestory formulae and query preparatory. Meanwhile, non-connventionally indirect strategies are realized into strong and mild hints. As Weizman asserts, "Hints are the most efficient way for requester to make a request while at the same time securing the possibility of legitimately denying some of its illocutionary and propositional components " (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, p.125). Head-act strategies are supported by moves. These moves can be before head acts or follow it. The moves are also for aggravating or mitigating the requesting. Aggravating is to make the requesting has the aggravated force, including insult, threat, and moralizing, than mitigating which can soften the force of the request. Internal modifications have the downgraders and upgraders. The downgraders modify the requesting in order to have the decrease effect, while[5] the upgraders are for increasing the effect of the request. These are related to what Roberts (1992) says, "When taking another person's feelings into consideration, people speak or put things in such a way as to minimize the potential threat in the interaction" (p.288). In short, a request will make the speaker in the position of the boundaries of 'face', whether she is secured or not from the rejection.

Requests can be examined thoroughly, generally with naturalistic data collected in naturalistic settings such as free plays or any activity in educational settings (Zerey, 2014, p.1211). To this side, observation is done to the teaching process of teaching reading. The observation of teacher talk was performed through a recording of the teaching process in classroom. As Behrens and Parker (2010) state, "…the types of language behavior teachers tend to use in he classroom: teacher –talk. For example, teachers mainly ask questions" (p.13). In addition, Swann suggest that "if your interest is in aspects of classroom talk, you may wish to focus on talk between the teacher (yourself or colleague) and pupils, or between different pupils, or both. You may be interested in whole-class discussion or small-group talk" (in Candlin & Mercer, 2001, p. 323). This observation can mainly reach the exploration of what the teacher is saying in the classroom to the students who are their peers.

From the recording result, the audio of those things are reflected teaching learning process. The process includes pre-activities, core activities and post activities. The other, field note supports this kind of recording. As Swann says, "they provide useful contextual support for audio and video recording" (in Candlin & Mercer, 2001, p. 32). Therefore, this note is a complement of recording taken from the audio recording.

The data were analyzed based on the requesting theory from Blum-Kulka, et al (1989)[22] who mention the three elements of requesting. These elements are categorized into head acts, supportive moves, and internal modifications. Each category has its own classifications and indicators. Head acts are delivered into direct[20], conventionally indirects, and nonconventionally indirects. Direct strategies are extended into mood derivable, performatives, hedge performatives, obligation statements, and want statements. Conventionally indirect strategies are suggestory formulae and query preparatory. Nonconnventionally indirect strategies are realized into strong and mild hints. Supportive moves are the other elements of requesting. These moves are for aggravating or mitigating the requesting. Aggravating include insult, threat, and moralizing, and mitigating. Internal modifications have the downgraders which modify the requesting in order to have the decrease effect, and upgraders which are for increasing the effect of the request.

FINDING & DISCUSSION

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) have provided the guideline of data analysis in order to get the elements of requesting.To deliver the core of the utterance intention, the teachers use various kinds of strategies. These strategies are her effort to get attention. The strategies are specified into some subtypes completed by the utterances taken from the data.The attention taken from the students are from the efforts of the teachers to do strategies in the utterances. In the direct strategies, she uses mood derivable, performatives, hedges performatives, and want statement to convey a very clear instruction.

Strategies	Subtype	Utterance

Direct	Mood derivable	Listen to me first!
		Now, observe the picture below! Things in the classroom. It is a cupboard. It is a window. Ada gambar window-nya?
	Performatives	Kalau kalian sudah mengerti, sekarang bekerja dengan teman sebangku kemudian kalian perform, tampil, menampilkan simple dialog!
	Hedge performatives	Sampai sini ada pertanyaan? Bisa dipahami? Bisa ya…
	Want statement	Today, we learn about month and day. I want you to watch video and answer the question!
Conventionally Indirect	Suggestory formulae	Nah ini merupakan keutamaan hari yang telah kita pelajari. Jadi jangan pernah kalian menganggap ada hari yang membosankan, ada hari yang kalian benci.
		I think that's all and remember next time we will learn about telling time and you should prepare about it!
	Query preparatory	Ok. Good. The last meeting we have learnt about time and now, ok class, what do you think about January?
		Nah, itu merupakan contoh-contoh penggunaan after dan before. Ok, what we have learn after study this subject?
		I have the picture to compare with our classroom. This is the classroom in Malaysia. Lebih bagus ya?
		Then, what have you learn today? Apa yang sudah kamu pelajari hari ini?
Nonconventionally Indirect	Mild hints	Kenapa Asep? Are you sleeping, are you sleeping?
		Just five!
	Strong hints	Twenty past…twenty past nine!
		Ini hadiahnya…

The conventionally indirects are indicated by implicit requesting. This can be done by suggestory formulae and query preparatory. The suggestory formulae is to give the way in cooperating with the speaker in order to volunteering the hearer in doing the request, and there is also negotiating support in 'if you want to add your score', the hearer should do assignment. The query preparatory is to give the space for a while to the hearer to receive the request.

The non-conventionally indirects seem to hide the real intention of the request. These are categorized into strong and mild hints. Strong hints refer to the requests which still have elements related to the previous information of the utterance topic. Compared to with the strong hints, mild hints have no reference for the topic talked. In this case, the hearer's consideration and knowledge are needed. These conditions happen when the teachers want to facilitate the students into the interactive discussion. Therefore, language setting is changed to motivate the students to get involved in the question-answer session.

The role of moves is as the support of the requesting. This part can be placed before, after, or the combinations of the requesting. This functions to aggravate and mitigate the requesting. To aggravate makes the imposition of the want to realize shown by how the speaker emphasizes the requesting and how she gives advice as the reason to soften the force. For example:

Now, observe the picture below! <u>Things in the classroom. It is a cupboard. It is a window. Ada gambar window-nya?</u>

<u>Kalau kalian sudah mengerti</u>, sekarang bekerja dengan teman sebangku <u>kemudian kalian perform, tampil, menampilkan simple dialog!</u>

To mitigate the requesting can be realized into preparator, grounders, imposition minimizer, disarmers, and getting a precommitment. The preparatory is focused on the readiness of the hearer to receive the speaker's want in the utterance. For example:

<u>Ok. Good. The last meeting we have learnt about time and now, ok class,</u> what do you think about January?

Grounders deliver the intention to the requesting by giving the reason, explanation or justification before telling the point. For example:

<u>Nah, itu merupakan contoh-contoh penggunaan after dan before.</u> Ok, what we have learn after study this subject?

Imposition minimizer can reduce the effect of the imperative implied in requesting. The utterance "I think that's all and remember next time we will learn about telling time and you should prepare about it!" "we will learn" added before to "you should prepare" can minimize the impact of requesting series. Disarmers happen when the speaker realizes that there will be an objection from the hearer. For example, "Sampai sini ada pertanyaan? Bisa dipahami? Bisa ya…" Further, it is getting a precommitment. This mitigating move is to get the early agreement to avoid the hearer's rejection. For example, "I have the picture to compare with our classroom. This is the classroom in Malaysia. Lebih bagus ya?" The utterances taken from the data show the teacher's negotiation to the students. This relevant to Farahiana and Rezaee (2012) who state that "types of teachers' questions play an important role in teaching since they affect students' participation in the process of negotiation of meaning" (p. 161). They also emphasize that these questions may serve various functions such as "focusing attention, exerting disciplinary control, getting feedback and most important of all, encouraging students to participate" (p. 162).

Following the explanation of the core strategy and the supportive moves added and followed in many categories, the head acts themselves have their own inside modifications. These modification can downgrade or upgrade the requesting imposition. The downgraders are interrogatives, subjunctives, conditional clause, politeness marker, subjectivizer and appealer. Updraders are time intensifier and repetition of request. For example:

Downgraders

<u>Kalau kalian sudah mengerti</u>, sekarang bekerja dengan teman sebangku kemudian kalian perform, tampil, menampilkan simple dialog!

Ok. Good. The last meeting we have learnt about time and now, ok class, <u>what do you think about January?</u>

Upgraders

<u>Today</u>, we learn about month and day. I want you to watch video and answer the question!

Then, <u>what have you learn today? Apa yang sudah kamu pelajari hari ini</u>?

According to Farrell (2009), teachers use communication in the classrooms in order "to accomplish three things: to elicit relevant knowledge from students, to respond to things that students say and to describe the classroom experiences that they share with students"(in Yusof &Halim, 2014, p. 472). In this case, teachers oral language, which takes place in a pedagogical context, is "the heart of teaching learning" (Azian, Raof, Ismail, &Hamzah, 2013, p. 283). Related to a request, Farahiana and Rezaee (2012) propose that there are types of teachers' questions that play an important role in teaching since they affect students' participation in the process of negotiation of meaning. They also argue that teacher talk plays a crucial role in language learning since teachers typically have a superior status in the classrooms and they control topics of discourse and also provide the only live target input that the students are likely to receive (Cullen, 1998). One manifestation of teacher talk is teacher question. Teacher question may serve various functions such as focusing attention, exerting disciplinary control, getting feedback and most important of all, encouraging students to participate. (p. 161-162). With regard to this condition, Chaudron (1988) mentions that teacher questions are considered to be important because of "their potential power to facilitate TL production or correct meaningful content-related responses by students and give some other important benefits of teacher questions such as engaging learners' attention, promoting verbal responses, and evaluating learners' progress" (Inan & Fidan, 2013, p. 1071). Chen and Tseng (2015) propose that as requesting is a sociolinguistic behavior, it is suggested that teachers consider classrooms as a social context similar to the contexts outside the classroom and encourage students to make requests as well as perform the pragmatic functions in requests appropriately and consciously. To make teaching and learning effective, it is suggested that college EFL teachers make requests for communicative purposes in the classrooms. (p.255)

This strategy is a counter part of cultural gap of the learner in the classroom. Taha (2014) argues that "if the learner of a language does not have enough information about the target culture, he will fall into the cultural gap, and face cultural conflicts. That is why, linguists and teachers try to help learners of a foreign language cross the cultural gap, avoid cultural conflicts and achieve intercultural communication (p.209)

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Requesting reflects the responsibility of teacher to guide students to have good English language competence. This specific element of speech acts directives function to act, ask information, confirm, ask attention, ask permission, and clarify. It requires the teachers' competence in using language, even though it is in asking or giving a question to students. These activities are not simple, because the teacher's techniques realized the motivation for the students to be successful in learning, and professionalism for the teachers. This conclusion can be strengthened by conducting the other discussions on how the politeness strategies are used, the types of codes delivered, and the responses of the students in these activities. It is expected that the area can enrich the findings and summarize other information in teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. Besides that, the suggestion could become the basis of an investigation in which those factors of requesting can test the concept of an ideal language teacher who can motivate students to improve their English ability

REFERENCES

Azian, A. A, Raof, A. H. A, Ismail, F., &Hamzah, M. (2013). Communication strategies of non-native speaker novice science teachers in second language science classrooms. *System*, 41, 283-297. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.02.003

Candlin, C.N. & Mercer, N. (2001). *English Language Teaching in its Social Context*. London, UK: Routledge

Chen, C-C. & Tseng, D. S. D. (2015). A Pragmatic Study on College EFL Teachers' and Students' Requesting Behaviors in the Classrooms. *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, 1, 4. doi: 10.18178/ijlll.2015.1.4.48

Cordón, A. I. F. (2015). The teacher's competence 'Promoting use and reflection on language' in an oral interaction task. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* , 178, 94 – 99. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.03.152

Farahiana, M. & Rezaee, M. (2012). A case study of an EFL teacher's type of questions: an investigation into classroom interaction. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 47, 161 – 167. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.63

Inan, B. &Dilek F. (2013). Teacher questions and their functions in Turkish as a foreign language (TFL) classes. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 1070 – 1077. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.160

Khalib, F. M. & Tayeh, A. (2014). Indirectness in English requests among Malay university students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 134, 44 – 52. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.223

Kasper, G. &Blum-Kulka, S. 1993). *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press

Kotorova, E. (2015). Expressing REQUEST in German and Russian: a Communicative-pragmatic Field Analysis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 206, 36 – 45. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.10.020

Matras, Y. (2009). *Language Contact*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Munková, Daša, Eva Stranovská, Zuzana Fráterová, &Beáta Ďuračková. (2013). Identity vs. Foreign Language and Culture in Production of Speech Acts. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84, 361 – 366. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.567

Roberts, J. (1992). Face-Threatening Acts and Politeness Theory: Contrasting Speeches From Supervisory Conferences. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 7, 3, 287-301

Shahrokhi, M. (2012). Perception of dominance, distance and imposition in persian males' request speech ACT strategies. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 46 (2012) 678 – 685. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.181

Taha A. A. (2014). Teaching A Foreign Language From A Cultural Perspective. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 136, 208 – 212. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.315

Tan, K.H. & Farashaiya, A. (2012). Utilizing formulaic request strategies in an ESL classroom. Utilizing formulaic request strategies in an ESL classroom. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.243

Tabatabaei, O. &Samiee, Z. (2013). Transfer of requestive speech act from L1 to L2 in Iranian. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 70 (2013) 239 – 244. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.060

Yusof, F., Yusof, M. & Halim, H. (2014). Understanding Teacher Communication Skills. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 155, 471 – 476. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.324

Zerey, Ö. G. (2014). Request in Turkish-SpeakingPre-School Children: A Classroom Discourse Perspectives. *Turkish Studies - International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic*, 9/6, Spring, 1207-1223

RIWAYAT HIDUP/CURRICULUM VITAE

Complete Name	: Agis Andriani
Institution	: Student of Post Graduate Study of UPI/ Lecturer of Unsil
Education	: S2
Research Interest	: Pragmatics

Modifications to Request

1 %

9   Submitted to University of Sydney
Student Paper
1 %

10   essay.utwente.nl
Internet Source
1 %

11   humanities.utm.my
Internet Source
1 %

12   Li Li, Wen Ma. "Request sequence in Chinese public service calls", Discourse Studies, 2016
Publication
1 %

13   academypublication.com
Internet Source
1 %

14   bbktheses.da.ulcc.ac.uk
Internet Source
1 %

15   ijeltal.org
Internet Source
1 %

16   lib.dr.iastate.edu
Internet Source
1 %

17   Lumturie Bajrami. "Teacher's New Role in Language Learning and in Promoting Learner Autonomy", Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2015
Publication
1 %

repository.usd.ac.id

| 18 | Internet Source | 1 % |

| 19 | Submitted to University of South Florida
Student Paper | 1 % |

| 20 | eejpl.vnu.edu.ua
Internet Source | 1 % |

| 21 | Submitted to IAIN Batusangkar
Student Paper | 1 % |

| 22 | Rosina Márquez Reiter, María Elena Placencia. "Spanish Pragmatics", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2005
Publication | 1 % |

Exclude quotes   Off   Exclude matches   < 1%
Exclude bibliography   Off