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REQUEST STRATEGIES USED BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA CONTEXT

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Abstract
This study explored the permeating strategies used by the international student in request acts and the common features appearing during the language use as international students in Indonesia, where English is used as a Lingua Franca. The study employed a set of Oral Discourse Completion Test (ODCT) to collect the data from eight international students. Ten ODCTs were composed based on the relative power, social distance, and imposition and were analysed based on the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP). The result was presented in descriptive qualitative where the most frequently used strategies were conventionally indirect – suggestory formulae. Meanwhile, the content analysis indicated that address terms and lengthy reasonings were the most common features appearing in the request acts made. The results offer that interlanguage pragmatic in lingua franca context occurs smoothly as the international students can combine the local culture in their language use.

Keywords: acts of requesting, interlanguage pragmatic, lingua franca context

Introduction
The English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) Context is marked by the use of English between the users whose first language is not English. There are more and more usages of English in countries where international programs like education exchange take place. As no native speakers are included, the main aim of ELF is to promote the understanding by utilising the communicative competence instead of a native's rigid structure (Cohen, 2010). In an international context, knowing structures and large vocabularies might not guarantee fluent communication but a need for competence. A student must be able to grasp the context in the cross-cultural situation, articulate the rules and vocabularies when communicating to the other person. This ability is called pragmatic competence.

If the learners solely use the native's speakers' rules when communicating with different people, they will fail the conversation. The real conversation in different cultures must pay attention to at least three main things, including the relative status, the level of the acquittance, and the imposition's degree (Scollon

et al., 1996). Therefore, the learners need to be able to use appropriate speech acts and appropriate levels of politeness. With this said, in ELF, pragmatic competence is constructed by competent speakers of the language and not by native speakers (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014).

Cultural context is a vital component in communication with other people. In relation to context, pragmatic knowledge during a conversation in ELF intends to communicate meanings and maintain the conversations going. Learners at ELF need to have heightened awareness in pragmatic awareness and equipped strategies to support them in sustaining successful communication (Ayşegül, 2016). This fact calls for teaching communication strategies in ELF informed pedagogy (Sato et al., 2019). Previous research in communicative strategies from the ELF's perspectives indicates that non-native speakers achieve successful communication by constructing meaningful interaction rather than focusing on rigid norms (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Kaur, 2019; Sato et al., 2019). Other findings indicate that speakers of ELF emphasise the collaborative and supportive nature as they use various strategies to accommodate their speech and avoid misunderstanding resulting in meaningful and smooth conversation (Björkman, 2014; Cogo & House, 2018).

Interlanguage pragmatics is a growing body of research that focuses on examining the extent of second language use that may contain first language pragmatic features or the failure to comprehend the second language's pragmatic features. These research areas are growing rapidly as it looks into how speakers from different cultures use English which is not their first language, to engage in a natural conversation (Trosborg, 1994). When students in the ELF context communicate, they create interlanguage pragmatics through the productions of speech acts. Therefore, investigating the speech acts have long been the centre of any pragmatics research. The act of request is considered the most challenging part of the interlanguage pragmatics as requesting involves a face-threatening act because requests involve imposing the hearer for the speaker's benefit (Pinto, D., & Raschio, 2007). With that said, a successful request will need some tact of linguistic degree that varies across language. As politeness and linguistics components are varied, the use of strategies may result in inappropriate speech.

Request strategies have been classified by Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1984) to make easier the understanding of the request strategies.

Table 1.1. CCSARP Request Strategies Adapted from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989)

Request Strategies	Types	Examples
Direct	1. *Mood derivable* (The grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks as its illocutionary force as a request)	*Leave me alone.*
	2. *Explicit performatives* (The illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers)	*I'm asking you to clean up the kitchen.*

Request Strategies	Types	Examples
	3. *Hedged performatives* (Utterances embedding the naming of the illocutionary force.)	*I'd like to ask you to clean the kitchen.*
	4. *Obligation statements* (The illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.)	*You'll have to clean up the kitchen*
	5. *Want statements* (The utterance expresses the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling vis á vis the fact that the hearer does X.)	*I really wish you'd clean up the kitchen*
Conventionally indirect strategies	6. *Suggestory formulae* (The sentence contains a suggestion to X.)	*How about cleaning up?*
	7. *Query preparatory* (The utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions, such as ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed, as conventionalised in any specific language.)	*Could you clean up the kitchen, please?*
Non-conventionally indirect strategies (hints)	8. *Strong hints (*The utterances contain partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act, directly pragmatically implying the act)	*You have left the kitchen in a right mess.*
	9. *Mild hints (*Utterances that make no reference to the request proper or any of its elements but are interpretable through the context as requests, indirectly pragmatically implying the act)	*I'm a nun (in response to a persistent hassler).*

A number of studies have been done in the area of acts of request. Interestingly most of the findings done in the areas of interlanguage pragmatics, whether involving the native speakers or done among the non-native speakers, result always indicate the use of non-conventionally indirect strategies outnumbering other request strategies (Khalib & Tayeh, 2014; Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2019; Megaiab et al., 2019; Nugroho et al., 2021). The explanation for this finding has been the intention of the speakers to save the face of the hearer as the request is for the speaker's benefit. However, other results which are done in the context of ELF suggest that it is the students that now have the extended

awareness of the local cultures where they study, thus flexing their language use to promote collaboration and enhance mutual understanding (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; Yates, 2018). The very recent finding also indicates instead of focusing on native speakers' rule, the ELF speakers focus on the meaning transfers (Situmorang et al., 2021)

This study aimed to look at the most used request strategies used by international students in a private university in Indonesia. As Indonesia is neither the native nor the second language user of English, it is apparent that any use of English between Indonesia and other non-native speakers utilises ELF. Therefore, it is safe to say that the cross-cultural context richly influences communication. Besides, this study also focused on the most common features used when producing the acts of request. Previous studies have underlined the use of address terms (Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2019; Sztencel, 2020) and lengthened requests (Brubæk, 2012; Krulatz, 2016; Rose, 2000) in the production of the act of requests. Therefore, it was crucial to see whether the students in the ELF context encountered a similar situation. This study contributed a novelty to pragmatics in the ELF context as it promoted the nuances of different cultures from different countries in Asia speaking English as a communication tool.

Method

The participants of the study were eight international students who came from different countries in Asia whose first language was not English. Henceforth, their languages were not governed by the native's forms but were dynamically changing according to the circumstances (Beltrán, 2013; Chacón-Beltrán, 2021). Ten ODCTs were employed as a means of data collection. ODCTs provided the natural data because it informed the situation to reflect on, the communicative strategies used, the real expression used in the daily communication, and the intercultural situations (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). ODCT elicited the utterances interpreted and created by the students when a situation happened. It was the result of their judgement of the appropriate response to the situation. The OCDT situations were designed based on the politeness distance and degree of imposition as listed below:

Table: 2.1. ODCT situations and aspects included within the scenarios

	ODCT	Relative Power	Aspects Social Distance	Imposition
	Scenarios			
Scenario 1	Asking for price when buying bread to baker man	+√	+√	+√
Scenario 2	Asking for help in organising party to a co-worker	-√	-√	-√
Scenario 3	Asking for a remedial exam from the professor	-√	-√	-√
Scenario 4	Asking to lower down the temperature to friend	√	√	√

Scenario 5	Asking for money to boss	-√	-√	-√
Scenario 6	Asking for help from a classmate	√	√	√
Scenario 7	Asking for shoes to sibling	-√	√	-√
Scenario 8	Asking for an apartment to uncle	-√	√	-√
Scenario 9	Asking for keeping the dog away to a neighbour	+√	+√	+√
Scenario 10	Asking for a phone call to a stranger	-√	-√	-√

The data was analysed using Blum-Kulka and Olhstain's Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP). The result then was presented in percentage in forms tabulated categories of which strategies mainly were used. Secondly, the data was then content analysed to determine the most features appearing in the acts of request made. The result was presented in themes and supported by interpretation.

Findings and Discussion
The acts of request strategies by the international students

The data elicited from eight international students ranged from direct strategies (17.5%), conventionally indirect strategies (67.5%), and non-conventionally indirect strategies (15%). However, the findings showed that a significant difference in the distribution of the request made was apparent among the three request strategies. While some request strategies were not used in the acts of request strategies produced by the students, one strategy exceeded 50% of the total strategies made. Strategies use such as hedge performatives, obligation statements, and suggestory formulae were not found through the data elicitation. The most frequently used strategy was query preparatory alone (67,5), which covered almost ¾ of the strategy used. The distribution was demonstrated as follow:

Table 4.1. Request Strategies distribution made by students in the ODCT

Request strategies	N=80	Percentage %
Direct	**14**	**17.5**
Mood derivable	5	6.25
Explicit performatives	3	3.75
Hedged performatives	0	0
Obligation Statements	0	0
Want statements	6	7.5
Conventionally indirect	**54**	**67.5**
Suggestory formulae	0	0
Query preparatory	54	67.5
Non-conventionally indirect	**12**	**15**
Strong hint	7	8.75
Mild hint	5	6.25
Total	**80**	**100**

This study intended to vary the ODCT containing the sociopragmatic aspects of relative power, social distance, and imposition in formal and informal situations. As a result, the ODCT varied from lecturers, strangers, friends, neighbours and close relatives. However, the findings suggested that the sociopragmatic aspects did not strongly correlate with the level of directness. Although they were expected to use more variations when producing the acts of request, the students maintained distance and politeness by consistently using the conventionally indirect request-query preparatory. They produced acts of request that sought their interlocutors' willingness and ability to do what they inquire.

The findings are not uncommon to the research of act of requests in the interlanguage pragmatic. A previous study by (Nugroho et al., 2021) revealed that conventionally indirect requests are the most commonly used strategies by students of the English for Specific Purposes class. The reasons were explored and depicted that culture, degree of politeness and the social distance factors influence the choice of the strategy used. The study of Malay university students indicated that students also preferred to use conventionally indirect strategies to their lecture and friends because they wanted to keep the positive and negative face-threatening acts during the conversation (Khalib & Tayeh, 2014). Lenchuk & Ahmed (2019) also found students using conventionally indirect strategies to promote tolerance and heightened awareness towards different communication styles. The most striking finding that emphasised this study's result was a study of Libyan students (Megaiab et al., 2019), which revealed that query preparatory was the most used strategy as they wanted to promote politeness and avoid imposition when making a request.

A possible reason for using the conventionally indirect request-query preparatory is the heightened awareness of the local cultures' politeness. As the international students mostly are from Asian countries, the cultures are yet similar to some point. Therefore, the level of politeness is no different. Using query-preparatory, the students maintain politeness as the level of imposition is less threatening. As a result, the number of expressions used are limited and show no differences between formal and informal contexts. Aware that Indonesians uphold politeness and the social hierarchy explain why the conventionally indirect are primarily used although they are studying as international students. Besides, other reason points to the use of English in a lingua context. Students studying in a lingua franca context are found to flex their language use to promote collaboration and enhance communication and mutual understanding (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018; Yates, 2018). The students aim to avoid conflict in the conversation but arrive at mutual understanding and solve task goals smoothly. Therefore, the native speaker's pragmatics no longer suit the interlanguage pragmatics in the lingua franca context.

Common features found in the acts of request
Using address terms
The uses of address terms are found among scenario 1 (uncle, sir/madam, Pak), scenario 3 (professors, teacher, doctor, Dr Spinegel, Ibu/Pak, Sir), scenario 8, (uncle), and scenario 9 (brother, man, neighbour). Scenario 1 was an act of

request of buying bread to the baker man, which in this aspect is a stranger. Scenario 3 was asking for rescheduling the exam to the professor who was to a superior person. While Scenario 8 was between uncle and cousin with kinship, scenario 10 was an act of request to a neighbour in an unpleasant situation where the speakers had relative power, social distance, and imposition.

Combining the query preparatory, the participants of this study added the address terms to their requests. The use of address terms; uncle, sir/madam, professor, and brother were defined as the impact of the politeness strategy in global communication. The appearance of the address terms is shaped by the mindset of promoting the politeness value and sense of family in the Asian countries (Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2019). The most striking finding is that these international students start to use the local address terms like "Pak" and "Ibu", indicating that they have personalised the lingua-cultural similarities across the English (Sztencel, 2020).

Would you mind, could you, can you, ... please!

The use of the query preparatory spread all over the act of request regardless of the socio-pragmatic aspects embedded in the scenario. In general, the scenarios were designed to request a person of superior status, a stranger, a friend with equal status, and a sister/brother with the speaker as superior. However, as the statistic revealed throughout these scenarios, the acts of request made followed the five most frequently used structured including, "would you mind….", could you please….", can you…." "Can I…..", "May I…." rings the same finding with the request made by EFL learners in the Republic of Macedonia (Daskalovska et al., 2016).

The expression used is listed in the Common European Reference for Languages (CEFR) as B2 level, indicating that the students are confident speakers of English. Their language level is just enough for them to study abroad. In addition, as discussed earlier, the students have heightened awareness of the local cultures' politeness, thus complying with it as a way of blending into the community.

Lengthened reasons

The data showed that almost 98% of the requests made were accompanied by lengthened reasons that provided information on why they produced the request and how the interlocutor may help them. The participants provided reasons for why they needed help and were unable to do them. Across the social aspects and regardless of who the hearer status was, the participants formulated their sentences which consisted of 2 familiar patterns—first, the reasons and requests, and second, the request and the reasons. The following excerpts were taken from situation 8, where the participants had a kinship relationship with the hearer.

> **Pattern 1**: *Uncle, respectfully uncle, I'm in a little trouble because one of my friends coming to the dorm but I don't have and got any place for him to stay, so could you please give him your room for one day for him just to stay?*

Pattern 2: *Uhm... uncle, can I borrow your apartment? Cause my friend is going to stay, and I don't have a place for her to stay. But I promise that I will clean up and keep everything fine in your apartment.*

These patterns permeate through the whole act of requests produced by the participants of the study. The participants explained the reasons to make the requests more understandable, which helped them navigate their social landscape when requesting assistance from others.

Similar results have also been shown in the study of requests by the non-native speakers where students utilised more pre-requests or reasons for requesting, making their utterances lengthened (Blum-kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Hassal, 2001). However, other studies' findings contrasted this to the inability to differentiate the suitable strategies according to the power relation, imposition, and social distance (Brubæk, 2012; Rose, 2000; Tanaka, 1988). Their inability to generate the different strategies result in rigid politeness and limited variations.

This study, however, argues that the production of the lengthened reasons is more of a sign of the heightened awareness of the local cultures and their understanding of meaningful communication is better than a rigid rule. With that said, to achieve the goal of the request and avoid the imposition, the participants use more modifications and thus produce longer requestive utterances and show less variation in their strategies choice (Krulatz, 2016). The reasons may indicate tolerance and sensitivity toward others' communication styles (Lenchuk & Ahmed, 2019). Besides, the students provide lengthened reasons because they want to provide more information about the request made, manage the relationship with the interlocutor, and analyse the actions that may be needed (Baranova & Dingemanse, 2016).

Conclusion

The findings indicate suggestory formulae as the most used strategies among the production of the act of requests. Meanwhile, the most common features that appear in the request production are the use of address terms, the use of CEFR B2 language expressions, and the lengthened reasons. This study argues that the underlying causes for these results are their heightened awareness of the lingua franca politeness and lingua-culture. However, these findings are debatable whether the students cannot use different variations of strategies to produce acts of request across the aspects of social distance, relative power, and imposition. Therefore, future research should investigate the underlying reasons behind the production of suggestory formulae and the features used in their request patterns

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