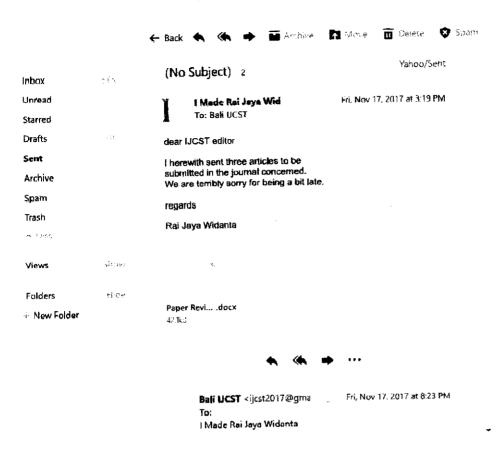
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# Interlanguage request modification: a case in vocational college

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Abstract. There has been much attention given by scholars to the investigation of inter-language pragmatics (ILP), and some of them have been concentrating on how ILP speakers modify their speech acts (SA) of request. This study was aimed at investigating request modification produced by Indonesian English speakers. A group of 23 college students majoring in tourism was involved as research participants. The participants were given two tests using two role play cards with two hotel-context request situations, i.e. low imposing request (R-Rq) and high imposing request (R+Rq). Pretest was given prior to and post-test was given upon treatment. The situation was chosen based on [1] exemplar generation model. The data of request utterances was analyzed and compared with request taxonomies proposed by some scholars. Data analysis showed that the research participants were more competent pragmatically upon the treatment, indicated with the fact where they were able to produce 13 request modification patterns being compared to 11 patterns prior to the treatment.

### 1. Introduction

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has been one of many focuses of attention of scholars in more or less the past twenty years. More specifically, much research was undertaken to investigate how ILP speakers modify their speech acts (SA) of request. Request (Rq), as discussed in this research, consists of two parts, the core or head act and peripheral modification<sup>2,3</sup>. Core or head act consists of the main utterance which has a requesting function and can stand by itself. While peripheral modification devices are optional items that serve to either mitigate or intensify the force of requesting move.

Research on ILP request had brought great achievement in the way how modification of request is classified [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]. The classifications, which were used to analyze requests modification made by participants in this research, had been referred by scholars [9], [10]. Modification is one of conditions used to judge whether or not someone is considered to be competent pragmatically.

Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language appropriately and effectively. The competence comprises three major parts; (1) grammatical competence; (2) sociolinguistic competence; and (3) strategic competence<sup>[11]</sup>. Pragmatic competence itself belongs to sociolinguistic competence. On the other hand <sup>[12]</sup> subdivides pragmatic competence into two parts; (1) pragmalinguistic, the linguistic end of pragmatics, and (2) sociopragmatic, sociological interface of pragmatics. Sociolinguistic ability is the ability to produce and recognize socially appropriate language in context, operationalized as SA of request, refusal produced in oral role play<sup>[13]</sup>.

In spite of some investigation undertaken on modification, they have not showed similar result one another. [9] Investigated how Australian learners of Indonesian language made modification when making request. Involving 20 students in an interactive oral role play using Indonesian language, this research was in attempt to draw a more complete picture of second language (SL) SA performance. It was found that most modification used in making request was internal modification. It was summarized that 67,7% of the modifier were the use of negation 'ngak' and 'ndak', kinship term of address 'pak', appealer 'ya and yes', and under starter 'sedikit or little'. In conclusion, It was found that request

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modification produced by learners lacked of internal modification and frequent supportive moves. In line with this research, [14] investigated use of modification of request SA by Greek learners of English 14. The investigation was in purpose to see to which extend the learners' use of mitigation deviates from that of British English native speakers. It was found that the amount and type of modification of mitigation used by Greek learners present some deviations from native speakers' use since there has been native influence and pragmatic and sociopragmatic influence. In addition, the fact was also judged as the result of different politeness orientation of the two groups.

In line with [9] findings, Iranian learners of English was found to overuse external modification and underused internal modification being compared to the American native speakers (NSs) 10. The ILP request modification research was intended to investigate ILP knowledge of Iranian English learners to see their ability to perform SA of request, clearly to see to what extent they approximate native speakers (NSs) in using internal and external modification. Thus, performance of Iranian learners of English was compared to American NSs of English. Using discourse completion task (DCT) with 12 situations to elicit data, there were 120 participants involved to fill in the DCT. Data was categorized using CCSARP modification<sup>6</sup>. Clearly, it was found that they used external modification a lot higher in frequency than internal modification being compared to American NSs. In addition, they showed pragmatic development toward NS norms with an increase in language proficiency level. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the learning of English as second language (L2) involves acquisition of not only lexical, phonological and syntactical knowledge of target language (TL) but also its pragmatic rules. The endeavor is of importance for the learners to be able to use TL in a native like manner 10, gain sociocultural rule appropriately apart from grammatical competence [15]. The research results found did not draw consistence one another. Thus, this research was aimed at investigating request modification done by research participants prior to and up on the learning. Specifically, it is in purpose to respond to the following research questions:

- 1. Are participants of the research considered more competent pragmatically up on their learning?
- 2. How are their request modifications prior to and up on the learning like?

### 2. Methodology

The research was initiated with developing instrument used to obtain data. The instrument was oral role play card, which was believed to be able to give more natural data of request modification related to English in hotel context. To find the most frequently used situation of request in hotel context, exemplar generation model [16], I was utilized. A questionnaire containing direction for hotel staff to list a number of situations in which request was use in order of its frequency was delivered. Two most frequently occurred situations were then chosen. They were used as the basis for making oral role play card. They were two request cards, high imposing request (Rq R+) and low imposing request (Rq R-) composed. The cards were written in Indonesian language to ease participants to comprehend them. Prior to their use, the cards were piloted by 3 students who were in the same level as the research participants to see whether or not the cards were comprehended and participants will be able to follow the instruction. Up on their execution, there were some comments or revision including narration, word choices, spelling, font given in a focused group discussion (FGD).

There were 23 semester III students majoring in tourism in a vocational higher education institution of Tourism were involved as research participants. The class in which the group of student was in was chosen with purposive sampling method. The first test (T1) was done to draw research participants' basic competence prior to the treatment. On the T1, two students were called into the test room. Using the oral role play cards, each participant was given chance to respond to the two cards. In this case, the teacher acted as a hotel guest to who the speech acts of request were delivered. The teacher at the same occasion also recorded the participants' utterances.

Treatment by giving a period of 6-meeting-learning was done after T1. Participants were taught English for tourism whose materials was inserted with pragmatics-based English materials. The learning materials were design in such a way that the use of English contextually can be explicitly introduced. The materials scope for the learning was made in line with the oral role play card materials. Students were involved in communicative language teaching (CLT) [17] to give participants chance to use the TL

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