

**AN ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES  
USED IN ASKING REQUEST BY THE SIXTH-SEMESTER  
STUDENTS' OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY  
PROGRAM, SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

**A Thesis by**

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**Student Number 06011181722009**

**English Education Study Program  
Language and Arts Education Department**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

**SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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Certify that the thesis entitled "An analysis of Politeness Strategies Used in Asking Request by the Sixth Semester Students of English Education Study Program, Sriwijaya University" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by Ministry of Education of Republic of Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Indralaya, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

The Undersigned,



Miftahul Lia Indriani

## THESIS DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- My parents, Siti Badi'ah and Mugiyono, my biggest motivation to finish this thesis, who always support me and stay by side in any circumstances.
- My dearest brothers, Doni Ramadhan and Muhammad Mustofa, my strength and source of happiness.
- Me, thanks for choosing to be strong every day, thanks for being able to fight through hardship for these 4 years, and thanks for trusting God in all your worries.

**Motto:**

“Verily with hardship there is ease. Verily with difficulty comes ease”

(Q.S: Al-Insyirah: 5:6)

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Indralaya, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021

The Writer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miftahul Lia Indriani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Miftahul Lia Indriani

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**An Analysis of Politeness Strategies Used in Asking Request by the Sixth-Semester Students' of English Education Study Program, Sriwijaya University**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to identify the types of politeness strategies used in asking request by 6<sup>th</sup> Semester Students of English Education Study Program Sriwijaya University. The participants of this study were 10 sixth-semester students of English Education Study Program. The data were collected by Discourse Completion Test (DCT) Questionnaire and Interview. To identify the types of politeness strategy, the data were analyzed based on the Politeness Theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The findings from this study showed that the 6<sup>th</sup> semester students used all four politeness strategies namely bald on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, and off-record strategy. In performing politeness strategies in request, 6<sup>th</sup> semester students tended to use negative politeness strategies more frequent than other strategies. Considering of this, the students want to be polite and to interlace good relationships among the interlocutor.

**Keywords: Politeness Strategies, Request**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces (1) background of the study, (2) problem of the study, (3) objective of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Communication is the most important basic needs of people in social life. In communication, people use language as a tool that enables them to have interaction such as sharing their feelings, opinion, or ideas with each other. Nowadays, foreign language has become the primary aim of teaching and learning. One of which is English. To be able to communicate in English, learners must understand the target of language. However, for some learners, mastering English is not as easy as it is expected. It is still a great challenge for learners. Learners need to be exposed a lot with the aspects of the target language. They are also expected to master these aspects as much as they can. Yet, no matter how indispensable these aspects are, learners also need to be equipped with another important aspect in achieving the successful of communication between the native speakers and users of the target language, namely, communicative competence (Kurdghelashvili, 2015).

Communicative competence was a term proposed by Hymes. Hymes (1972) as cited in Daskalovska et al. (2016) pointed out that “being able to speak a language involves not only the ability to possess linguistics knowledge, but also the ability to use that knowledge in communication (p.55)”. To achieve a successful communication, Canale and Swains (1980, as cited in Tulgar (2016) introduced the Communicative Competence Model which divided into four main areas of knowledge and skill that must be possessed for effective communication. First is related to linguistics knowledge such as phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language. Second is sociolinguistics competence that enables interlocutors to use contextually appropriate language based on

their grammatical knowledge by combining linguistics knowledge with contextual rules. Third, discourse competence is about the ability of the language user to follow cohesion and coherence to maintain flow and unity. The last, strategic competence that is related to both verbal and non-verbal hints that can make the interaction more effective and hinder possible communication breakdowns. Hence, based on these brief definitions, four competencies need to be mastered by learners to avoid misunderstandings in communication.

Since communication is not only about emphasizing grammatical and fluency in utterances, learners must also have pragmatic knowledge. Hua and Farashaiyan (2012) stated that when communicating with the speakers of different language and cultures, the speakers must be proficient in both linguistics and pragmatic competences. In other words, it is not enough for learners to know merely the grammar and a large vocabulary of a target language, yet they also need to know how to use their knowledge appropriately depending on the context including when, where, and to whom they use an utterance. Therefore, learners must be extended their pragmatic competence.

Pragmatic competence means the ability of language user's to comprehend, compile, and convey the meanings appropriately for the social and cultural context in which communications happen (Deda, 2013). In communication, the pragmatic competence of speakers is very essential since the lack of competence of pragmatics on speakers could lead them to experience pragmatic failure. Ortaçtepe (2012) averred that foreign language have trouble in communicating correctly in different social interaction due to their limited pragmatic knowledge of the cultural values and norms of the target language. As a result, they could be perceived as rude, insulting, or uncooperative by their interlocutors whom are having communication with them. For instance, Rahayuningsih et al. (2020) stated that the lack of pragmatic competence could lead to communication failures. Furthermore, Wannaruk (2008) emphasized that "communication breakdowns can occur during cross-cultural communication due to different perception and interpretation of appropriateness and politeness (p. 318)".

One of the major issues in the study of pragmatics is politeness. According to Grundy (2008, as cited in Ifechelobi, 2014), “Politeness is the term used to describe the relationship between how something is said to an addressee and that addressee’s judgment of how it should be said (p. 61)”. It has an important role in the interaction between a speaker and interlocutors especially for those coming from different cultural backgrounds. Due to this importance, many linguists from various disciplines conducted a study on this issue. Some of them claimed that it belonged to the domain of pragmatics and some others claimed that it belonged to the sociolinguistics or even psycholinguistics domains. However, apart from this controversy, keeping politeness in every conversation with any language is very important especially for learners. It is because sometimes what is considered polite in their mother tongue context could possibly be rude in the target language context.

Politeness is a fundamental thing in pragmatics. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that politeness is a broad phenomenon in the use of language in social circumstances. In a similar vein, Syahri (2013) highlighted that politeness principles are universally utilized by the speakers of any language in order to realize various speech acts. Speech acts refer to the action performed by a speaker with utterances that include actions of complaint, compliment, promise, apology, or request (Yule, 2017). However, compared to the other type of speech acts, requests have been one of the most widely examined by many pragmatic researchers. As declared by Pinto and Raschio (2007), the types of this study is extensive because request entail the speakers imposing on the hearer by requesting that a specific action be performed for speakers’ benefit. By this coercion, a successful request requires some level of linguistic discretion that often varies between language, so the transfer of strategies from one language to another can produce in inappropriate utterance. Also, in line with Fraser (1978, as cited in Rakhmah, 2015) that emphasized “Requests are very frequent in language use (far more frequent, for example, than apologizing or promising). Requests are very important to the second language since they have been researched in more detail than any other type of speech act”. The

speech act of request is considered as action that threaten the desire of hearer's negative face want, or the desire of every person that their action be hindered by others (Brown & Levinson, 1992). To minimize the effect of such coercion, the requester must choose the proper strategy to be politer when asking a request. Hence, this study will focus more on the request acts rather than the other speech act performances as the frame whereby the politeness strategies are used.

Being polite is one of the ways people conveying speech quality. According to Meyerhoff (2006) politeness is “the action taken by competent speakers in a community in order to attend to possible social or interpersonal disturbance (p. 82)”. In other words, politeness is an interpersonal relation designed to facilitate interaction, in order to minimize the potential for conflict and confrontation by using appropriate linguistic and speech choices to enhance harmony in the relationship. Request is one of the speech acts in which politeness can be conveyed in any situation. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), requests are considered as face threatening acts as a speaker is forcing her/ his will on the hearer. Thus, politeness strategies in request are convey to soften or change the politeness level of the request appropriately based on the situation given to the speakers can successfully achieve the communicative end and avoid unpleasant communication. Many kinds of research regarding the politeness strategies used in requests have been conducted by researchers. A study conducted by Juliari and Yuniari (2019) showed that negative politeness strategies are mostly employed by EFL students in the classroom activity. Then, the study by Amer et al. (2020) indicated that participants employed bald-on record strategy in making a request by using the imperative form, but negative politeness strategies most dominant ones that are used by Jordanian customer for these strategies rather than other strategies. In addition, the study by Alakrash and Bustan (2020) revealed that Malaysian students used more indirect strategies while Arabs students tended to use an explicit form and direction of request strategies. Thus, the use of different strategies by students is related to different cultural background.

Based on the findings above, it can be summarized that the use of negative politeness strategies is the most frequently used strategy in communication among other politeness strategies, such as positive, on-record, and off-record politeness. Therefore, the politeness strategies used by students both positive and negative are very interesting to study, because it is a common phenomenon that occurs among language learners, especially for EFL learners.

An example of an EFL learners in Indonesia is the 6th student of the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. They are obligated to take semantic and pragmatic courses. It means that they learn how to communicate well with others. However, it does not ensure whether they have applied well all of those theories in communicating including in choosing politeness strategies in making requests. To date, there was no study found in examining the politeness strategies on 6th semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, but it is very important to conduct this study in order to know how they choose appropriately strategies when communicating, especially in making requests. Therefore, it became the reason why the writer was eager to conduct a study entitled "Analysis of Politeness Strategies Used in Asking Requests by the Sixth-Semester of English Education Study Program Sriwijaya University".



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