

## REQUEST EXPRESSION USED BY THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** *In this research, the researcher wants to know what are the forms and what is the request strategy that frequently used by the English department students. The objectives of this research were to know and describe the form of request expressions used by the English department students, and also to find out what is the request strategy they used. The design of this research was descriptive method. The data were collected by using the cards, and the samples expressed the instruction based on the cards. The data were analyzed based on the category framework of request strategies proposed by Blum-Kulka et al (1989). From the three categories of request strategies written by Blum-Kulka et.al (1989), Direct level, Conventionally Indirect Level, and Non-Conventionally Indirect level. The students only used the conventionally indirect level when they expressed the request to the hearer, there were 'can', 'could', and 'would' that involves in query preparatory. From the result of this research, the researcher can conclude that there are some forms of request expression that used by the English Department students, such as can you, could you, and would you. From the categories of request strategies written by Blum-Kulka et.al 1989, the students only used the conventionally indirect level when they expressed the request to the hearer, there are can, could, and would.*

**Keywords:** *Speech Act, Request, Expression.*

**Abstrak:** *Dalam penelitian ini, peneliti ingin mengetahui apa saja bentuk- bentuk permintaan dan apa strategi yang sering digunakan oleh mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dan menggambarkan bentuk-bentuk ekspresi permintaan yang digunakan. Rancangan penelitian ini menggunakan metode descriptive. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kartu-kartu yang berisi contoh-contoh yang mengungkapkan berdasarkan kartu tersebut. Data lalu dianalisa berdasarkan kategori strategi yang ditulis oleh Blum Kulka (1989), Direct level, Conventionally Indirect Level, and Non-Conventionally Indirect level. Siswa hanya menggunakan Conventionally Inidirect Level ketika mereka mengungkap permintaan kepada lawan bicara, yaitu 'can, 'could', and 'would' yang termasuk dalam Query Preparatory. Dari hasil penelitian ini, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa can you, could you, and would you. Dari kategori-kategori strategi permintaan yang ditulis oleh Blum Kulka (1989), siswa hanya menggunakan Conventionally Indirect Level ketika mereka mengungkapkan permintaan kepada lawan bicara, yaitu can, could, and would.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Aksi Bicara, Permintaan, Ekspresi.*

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important thing that always used in daily activity. People need communication to interact to the other, and of course, conversation is a tool that frequently used by many people. Conversation is a social skill that is not difficult for most individuals (Wikipedia: 2010). Conversation is the ideal form of communication in some respects, since they allow people with different views, on a topic to learn from each other. A speech, on the other hand, is an oral presentation by one person directed at a group.

A successful conversation includes mutually interesting connection between the speakers or thing that the speakers know. Those engaging in conversation naturally tend to relate the others speaker's statement to themselves. They may insert of their lives into their replies, to relate to the other person's opinions or points of conversations.

Everyday, everyone always does communication by using speech act. Speech act is a technical term in linguistics and the philosophy of language. A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication.

According to Tomic (1978) speech act is a very helpful foundation for examining the actual language used by real people people in real events of life. Speech acts include real life interactions and require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

According to Jannedy (1994), speech act use to convey information, request information, give orders, make request, make threats, give warnings, make bets, give advice, and others. Almost same with Jannedy, Yule (1985) state that the use of the term speech act covers action such as requesting, commanding, questioning and informing.

Request is one kind of speech act that frequently used in daily communication. Request is an expression where the speakers expect the hearers to do something to benefit the speaker.

According to Celce (1991), the speech act of requesting is realized when the speaker verbalizes a wish which can be carried out by the hearer. Thus, a request, if it is complete with requires, the hearer to carry out an act or to provide some information or goods for the speaker wants.

Request is the clearest example of face threatening speech acts. In fact, it is explicitly expressed by the speaker's intention that the hearer performs an action, and this fact triggers the default rule, moreover the request actions have usually to be perform for the sake of the speaker.

Keovilay in Ariyanti (2001) defines request as pre-event acts where these acts express the speaker expectation of the hearers performing in action, verbal or non-verbal. According to Ellis (1994) request are attempts on the parts of speaker to get the hearer to perform or to stop performing some kind of action. A number of general were interactional, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic features of request. A

request is also expressed to give an order to the listener.

However, using request is more polite than using commands, even though the listener is also expected to follow the order. Based on the definition of request, it is clear that request is a speech act where the speakers expect the hearers to do something to benefit the speakers.

Thomson and Martinet (1980) state there are several forms of request. First, the use could you in question, for instance, could you clean the board? Second, will/would you + please form, where as “would” is more polite than “will”, example: would you please listen to me. Third, the use of perhaps you would ...form which implies confident that the other person will perform this service, such as perhaps you would let me know when your new stock arrives. The fourth is if you would form, for instance, if you'd signed the register follow the porter. The fifth is the used of I should/ I would...and also would you be good/ kind enough form. The sixth is would you mind + gerunds form, such as in would you mind signing this form? While the last form is the use of you might as, e.g. you might post these letters for me.

Hughes (1986) introduces several forms of request, one of the commonest forms of request in English involves the use of modals auxiliaries (can, could, will, and would), for instance: could you share with Anna today, can you say that again.

An extremely common variation involving the modal auxiliaries use a tag,

like ending such as clean the board, would you? Modal auxiliaries (can, could, will, and would), are very frequently accompanied by please, such as could you please try questioning no 5, would you come out to the front please?

According to Krohn (1990) the word please makes the request sentence more polite. Please may be also inserted at the end, instead of beginning of the sentence.

When people make a request, they concentrate on what is going to do or react for that request. Request is included in speech act which is part of pragmatics subjects. Request strategies are studied in order to provide sociolinguistics information about the language use.

It is needed by English as second language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners in improving their English speaking abilities. By looking at one example adopted from English, in requesting, in which there are ways to go about getting the things what people want.

When someone with a group of friends, he/she can say to his/her friends, (“get me that book!”, if you don't mind?), and (“I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but I am not able to hear the speaker in the front of the room”).

In different social situations, it is obligated to adjust or use of words to fit the occasions. Furthermore, when the people need to take a thing from someone else, they should use politeness strategies, such as what would you do when you see some pens on your teacher desk and you one to

use one, would you say “oh, I want to use one of these!”

From the description above, it is very important to use the appropriate sentence in every situation, because it can make the speakers or the hearer to avoid misunderstanding.

From the reason above, the researcher was interested in investigating the request expression used by the English Department students of UMB especially the request expression that used by the students outside of the class.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The design of this research was descriptive method. The population of this research was the first semester of English department students of UMB. The total number of the population is 169 students.

The instrument that used by the researcher was tape recorder and the situation cards that have the instructions of the request. In collecting the data, the researcher gave the cards that had an instruction of the request to the students.

There were five cards which have five kind of different instructions. Then the researcher recorded the students' voice when they were expressing the instruction of expressing the instruction of request from the card in English. The steps of data analysis among others transcribed the students' voice in written form, identified the data by using strategies in expressing request, then analyzed what the request expression used by English department, after that the researcher interpreted the

result of the research , and the last made the conclusion.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

The researcher took the data from class A, B, C, D, and E, at the first semester of English department students of UMB in Academic Years 2010/2011. The researcher collected the data from the third of January 2011 up to the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

The researcher distributed the cards that had the instructions of request to the students. There were 5 cards that had 5 kind of different instructions. Then the researcher recorded the students' voice when they were expressing the instruction of request from card in English. Based on the recorded of the students' voices, the researcher found the result.

### *Situation of the problem in point 1*

In this situation, students generally expressed the request by using the modal auxiliaries (can and could). While other students express the request by utter the reason first, and then he expressed the request by saying word please.

### *Situation of the problem in point 2*

In this situation, all students in each class using the same expression by used the modal auxiliaries (can), when they need a help from their friend in preparing his birthday party.

### *Situation of the problem in point 3*

In this situation, students generally expressed the request by using the modal auxiliaries (can, could, and would). While other students express the request by utter the reason first, and then he expressed the request by saying word please.

*Situation of the problem in point 4*

For this situation, almost all students also used can, could, and would when they express their request, but some students introduce themselves first before they express the request.

*Situation of the problem in point 5*

Still used the modals can, could, and would, students express their request. But for some students, for this situation, they express apologize first, then the request expression.

Based on the result, there were five points that can be discussed by the researcher. Generally, the students at first semester expressed the request based on the instruction by using simple expression, but, they still used the grammatical error. It might be some factors, such as:

1. They did not master English grammatical, because there were still at the first semester,
2. They did not master about pragmatics, especially in speech act, because they have not learned this subject yet. The data that has been collected from the subject will discussed based on Blum-Kulka et al (1989).

**Request expression used by the students for the situation in point one**

The situation happening in point one is a context where there is a woman who takes a student queue in a bank. For this situation, the students give request by using the modal auxiliary (could and can), and they add the word please at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.

Students 1 in class A and students 1 in class E using the modal auxiliary (can) when they give the request, while the other students such as the students 2, in class A, and the students 1 in class B expressed the request by using the word please and they give apologize before or after they give request, and there are two students in class A and class C using the modal auxiliary (could) when they expressed the request. Actually, in this situation they should used the appropriate request sentence, because they speak to a woman who is older than them.

Based on Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness theory, request are Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), since a speaker is imposing her/his will on the hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed that when confronted with the need to perform a FTA, the individual must choose between performing the FTA in the most direct and efficient manner or attempting to mitigate the effect of the FTA on the hearer's face. In this case, the strategy that used by the students in this situation is conventionally indirect level, because they use "can you and could you".

**Request expression used by the students for the situation in point two**

The situation in this point is a situation where the speaker request to hearer who need help from the hearer to help them to celebrate birthday party. In this part, most of students use the modal auxiliary (can) in expressed the request.

When the students give request to their friend, they popularly used the basic forms

of politeness strategy with 'can you'. It seems that students were correctly able to assess the level of politeness.

Not different with the native speakers, in fact, the English department students at UMB especially at first semester, also used the request form 'can you', when they expressed the request, so, it can conclude that they were also use the conventionally indirect level, as the request strategy.

While, not different from the situation in point one, in this situation the students also use the request form 'can you' when they expressed the request. It is appropriate with the opinion from Hughes (1986), where one of the commonest forms of request in English involves the modal auxiliary (can).

#### **Request expression used by the students for the situation in point three**

In this situation, the students expressed the request by using modal auxiliary can, could, and would, and only the student 2 in class D and both of students in class E expressed the request by using the word please.

The situation that happens here was the situation where the speaker (manager) gives the request to the hearer (secretary) to prepare a meeting with his partner. In this context, not different from the two situations before, the request strategy that use from the students is the conventionally indirect level, because the speaker (student) used can, could, and would to express the request based on the context.

It also can be concluded that the request forms that used by the students were the modal auxiliary can you, could you, and

would you, Hughes (1986). While there were three students expressed the request by using the word please, without using the form of request.

According to Krohn (1990), the word please makes the request sentence more polite, but in this case the students did not use the form of request, because they only used the word please when they expressed the request to the hearer.

#### **Request expression used by the students for the situation in point four**

In this situation, the student 1 in class A expressed the request by using modal auxiliary (could), but first she introduced herself and then she told what was her purposed. The other students, such as the students 2 in class A, and the students in class B, C, and E used the modal auxiliaries (can) when they gave the request. But, the students in class D just used the word please when he gave the request.

Actually, they should use the appropriate request sentence when they give a request, because the hearer is a lecturer who is teaching in the classroom. So, it is very important if the speaker (students) use polite sentence to the hearer (lecturer), the polite form such as, 'would you mind', 'would I', 'could I', 'could you'.

It is important to use more polite forms of request due to the formality between the lecturer and the students. But, in this situation only one student used the appropriate request sentence, 'could'. While the other students used can, whereas in this situation they speaks with the lecturer. Certainly, they should be used more polite

forms of request sentence such as could and would. According to Thomson and Martinet (1980), could and would are more polite than 'can and will'. Same with the 3 situation before, the request strategy that the student used is the conventionally indirect level, because they used can and could.

### **Request Expression used by the students for the situation in point five**

The situation that happened here is the situation where the students as the speaker give request to the presenter (hearer), to repeat his explanation, because the student (speaker) did not understand about his explanation. For this situation, the students (speaker should be use the modals could or would the express the request in formal situation, because they speaks to the speaker (presenter).

The students in class A and B, add the word please at the end of sentence, while the students 1 and 2 in class E, used the modal auxiliaries can and could to express the request to the hearer.

According to Krohn (1990) the word please makes the request sentence more polite. Please may also be inserted at the end, instead of beginning of the sentence.

Similarly with the other situation before, the students used the conventionally indirect level, where they used can and could. As the form of request, they also used the modal auxiliaries 'can you and could you'.

### **CONCLUSSION**

From the result of the research, the researcher can conclude as follows:

1. From several form of request expression that used by the English department students of Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu such: can (can you help me to prepare my birthday party?), could (could you wait for a moment please?), would (I would like to make an experiment research, and I need a help from one of the students, could you mind to help me in to do the research?)

2. From the three categories of request strategies written by Blum-Kulka et.al (1989), the students only used the conventionally indirect level when they expressed the request to the hearer, there are can, could, and would, that involves in query preparatory.

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