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An Analysis on Pre-sequences in Making Invitation Used by freshmen of English as a Foreign Language: The Pragmatics Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study reports the nature of making invitation carried out by freshmen students of the pragmatic point of view. It attempts to investigate the pre-sequences strategies used for the purpose of inviting in freshmen. The respondents themselves were chosen from the English Education Program, a certain private university located in Ciamis, West Java Province. The results asserted that based on the data gained in the findings aforementioned, 80% of the respondents express their pre-sequences in the form of saying hello, and asking condition. Meanwhile, 20% of other respondents express their pre-sequences in other expressions. Furthermore, 100% of the respondents express pre-sequences expression in beginning their conversation before inviting their partners. In conclusion, the respondents expressed pre-sequences in beginning their invitation expression. Meanwhile, they are able to express quite proper politeness for inviting, accepting or refusing the invitation such suggested by the theory.

KEYWORDS:

Pre-sequences;
invitation;
freshmen;
English as a foreign language

Introduction

A language is a product of human culture, and it cannot be separated from each other. As a communication media, language is used by people to express their ideas, problems, a medium of thoughts, a vehicle for literary expression, a social institution, a matter of political controversy, and a factor in nation building (O'Grady & Dobrovolsky, 1989, p. 1). The aforementioned statement can be inferred that a language is an alternative medium used by people to communicate each other, making the relationship, exchange information or convey their ideas or feelings such as ordering, promising, complaining, and making an invitation.

In line with making an invitation, it is very indispensable. Thus, to have a successful making invitation, each interlocutor has to perform some conversational principles such as the cooperative and the politeness principles. Among them, politeness plays an important role in making an invitation process. When delivering the invitation, most speakers' particularly English speakers may often use pre-sequence as a polite strategy as well as a safe strategy (Yule, 1996, p. 68).

Based on the aforementioned conversation, the writer argues that the first speaker uses pre-sequence to begin his invitation, before delivering his invitation utterance. After getting the answer from his partner (the woman says "Hmm, nothing so far.") he then expresses his invitation utterance. Finally, his invitation is accepted by the woman. Dealing with this phenomenon, if the first speaker receives a good sign from the hearer, he is going to continue to give the official invitation. On the contrary, if the first speaker receives a bad sign, he then can save his invitation. Therefore, both the speaker and the hearer are not going to feel unpleasant. Moreover, each language contains the specific cultural features of each country. Thus, the writer analyses whether there is a pre-sequence or not in making invitation expressed by Indonesian freshmen students, particularly from West Java.

This present study was also inspired by other previous studies, such as Al-Khatib's (2006) study and Bích Hà's (2010) study. Stavans & Webman Shafran (2018) investigated the mode of directness of requests and refusals and the background variables that explain this production in two trilingual populations in Israel. Meanwhile, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) investigated the cognitive processes and perceptions of learners of Spanish when refusing invitations from a person of equal and higher status. DeCapua & Dunham (2007) how advice giving is enacted in a series of advice letters, which were modeled on letters to popular advice columns found around the world in newspapers and magazines, and on the Internet.

Al-Khatib (2006) in his research investigated the pragmatics of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society. He took the sample as composed of 120 informants. The data has shown that the process is patterned, functional and rule-governed. Furthermore, it shows that social distance in relation to sex and age of the individual speaker is important to factor in determining the type of strategies used for inviting, accepting an invitation or refusing it. It has also been argued that Jordanian Arabic has a special patterning of inviting that can be understood and appreciated only by people sharing the same socio-cultural background.

Meanwhile, the second study was conducted by Bích Hà (2010). In his research, he investigated the study of pre-sequences in the invitation in English and Vietnamese. The data used in the study were picked out from about 528 conversations from short stories, novels, books, films in both English and Vietnamese. The samples collected were described qualitatively in terms of syntactic and functional features according to modern linguistic points of view in English and Vietnamese. The frequency of structures used for pre-invitation sequences was totalized basing on the quantitative method. The syntactic and functional features of pre-invitation sequences were then summarized in some tables. The contrastive method was applied to analyze the similarities and differences in the syntactic and functional features of pre-invitation sequences in the two languages. Some generalizations and implications were drawn out after the data analysis.

Defining pre-sequences

To begin with this review of related literature, the writer would like to delineate some terms covered in this study. The first term is pre-sequences. Levinson (1983) stated that the term pre-sequences is used, with a systematic ambiguity, to refer both to a certain kind of turn and a certain kind of sequence containing that type of turn. In addition, Cutting (2002) pointed out that pre-sequences prepare the ground for a further sequence and signal the type of utterance to

follow. Further, Yule (1996) discussed that the concept of face-saving may be helpful in understanding how participants in an interaction inevitably understand more than is said and the using pre-sequences considering as the perspective of politeness.

Defining invitation

The second crucial term to be highlighted is making an invitation or invitation. The Oxford Dictionary of English (2011) defines “invite” (verb) as “to make a polite, formal, or friendly request to someone to go somewhere or to do something.” In addition, an invitation can be seen as one means through which people attempt to win the social approval of each other. Therefore, they address the participant's positive face wants, i.e. they intend to tell the invitee that his/her acceptance of the invitation is desirable and appreciated. By contrast, declining an invitation may put the inviter's positive face at risk and preserve the invitee's own (Al Khatib, 2006).

Regarding the statement above, the writer can infer that invitation is a formal or friendly request to someone to go somewhere or to do something. Through accepting someone's request, it means that the participant addresses his or her positive face. In contrast, by declining someone's request, it means that the participant addresses his or her negative face.

Pre-sequences in invitation

The last term is pre-sequences in the invitation. Yule (1996) defines, “A Pre-invitation is an utterance before an invitation to check if an invitation can be made.” Furthermore, Levinson (1983) stated that pre-invitations are treated as transparent by the recipients – so that their responses are clearly attuned to the fact that an invitation is potentially forthcoming in the next turn.”

Dealing with the statements above, then, the writer infers that pre-invitation is an utterance delivered by someone to his or her partner before an invitation expression delivered. It means to check if an invitation expression can be made or not.

Method

The writer uses a qualitative method which means that the writer collects qualitative data and interprets them qualitatively. The data are analyzed by using politeness theory under pre-sequences in delivering invitation undertaken by freshmen. The data were taken from some short dialogues delivered by freshmen in the context of making an invitation.

Data collection technique

The data needed for this present study is pre-sequences in making invitation used by freshmen in their communication or social interaction. The data themselves were gained by recording the freshmen's short conversation dealing with making an invitation. The writer tried to transcribe each dialogue and analyze it in percentage.

Participants and Research Site

Dealing with the participants and research site, in this present study, the writer took 22 freshmen which were chosen purposively from a particular class at the English Education Program from a certain university located in Ciamis, West Java as the participants. The reason for choosing freshmen level is because, at the second semester, they were taught speaking for a specific purpose such as how to make an order, promising, complaining, making an invitation, and so forth.

Result

In interpreting the data, the writer analyzed all conversations in making an invitation which has been transcribed. In analyzing the data, the writer used the analysis of pre-sequences in making the invitation as suggested by Yule (1996). Based on the Table 1, the writer can infer that the dialogue has a complete structure of pre-sequences strategy used in delivering the invitation, although the responsibility for the invitation is refusing.

Table 1. The Rec#1 analysis

Rec.#1	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	L: Hi, what are you doing?	= pre-invitation
2.	Y: I am listening to music. What's going on?	= go a head
3.	L: Well, would you like to come to my house for dinner on Saturday?	= invitation
4.	Y: Oh, Er, actually, I would love to. But, I am sorry, I am already going out to the cinema with my boyfriend on Saturday.	= refuse
5.	L: Alright. I can understand. Have a nice day.	= stop

Table 2. The Rec#2 analysis

Rec.#2	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	R: By the way, what are you doing next Friday?"	= pre-invitation
2.	D: Nothing special."	= go a head
3.	R: Would you like to come to my house to have dinner?"	= invitation
4.	D: That's very kind of you, thanks.	= accept

Regarding the data in table 2, it assume that the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy used in making invitation, even though the response for the invitation is accepting.

Table 3. The Rec#3 analysis

Rec.#3	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	Ro: Do you have spare time at Saturday night?	= pre-invitation
2.	Re: Yes, I do. I have spare time at Saturday night.	= go a head
3.	Ro: If you have spare time, would you like to join me and my family to have dinner?	= invitation
4.	Re: That's a good idea.	= accept

Regarding to the table 3, the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy used in making invitation, and the response for the invitation is accepting.

Table 4. The Rec#4 analysis

Rec.#4	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	H: By the way, do you have spare time on Saturday night?	= pre-invitation
2.	A: Yes, I do. What's going on?	= go a head
3.	H: I'm going to invite you to my family's planning. Would you join with me and my family for having dinner at my home on Saturday night?	= invitation
4.	A: With pleasure.	= accept

Regarding the table 4 the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy used in expressing invitation, and the response for the invitation is accepting. Regarding the table 5 the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy delivered in making invitation. And the response for the invitation is refusing.

Table 5. The Rec#5 analysis

Rec.#5	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	N: What are you doing?	= pre-invitation
2.	L; I am playing chess with my friend.	= go a head
3.	N: Can you to come to my house to have dinner tonight?	= invitation
4.	L: Hmm...I'm sorry, because tonight I will go to America with family.	= refuse
5.	N: Oh yeah.. no problem.	= stop

Table 6. The Rec#6 analysis

Rec.#6	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	N: Hi, what are you doing?	= pre-invitation
2.	E: I'm doing my assignment of writing.	= go a head
3.	N: O... I have a small party in my house, would you like to come?	= invitation
4.	E: That sounds good, but I have to do my assignment. What times will the party be started?	= refuse = go a head
5.	N: It will be started around 07.00 o'clock p.m.	= go a head
6.	E: Ok. After finishing my assignment I'm going to come to your house.	= accept

Dealing with data in table 6 it concludes that the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy delivered in expressing invitation. Although, in the first response the hearer refuses her invitation request, but at the end, the hearer accepts the invitation after the hearer finishes her activity.

Referring to the data in table 7 the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy expressed in making invitation. The response of the hearer accepts the invitation.

Table 7. The Rec#7 analysis

Rec.#7	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	W: Good Afternoon?	= pre-invitation
2.	H: Good Afternoon.	= go a head
3.	W: How are you?	= Pre-invitation
4.	H: Pretty Good. And you?	= go a head
5.	W: not bad. Listen, my family and I are going to have dinner out this evening. Why don't you go with us?	= invitation
6.	H: well. I won't say no.	= accept
7.	W: OK. I'll pick up at 7.00 pm.	= go a head
8.	H: all right. I'll be ready then.	= stop

Table 8. The Rec#8 analysis

Rec.#8	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	L: Hello, how are you?	= pre-invitation
2.	P: I'm fine, how about you?	= go a head
3.	L: I'm very well, by the way, will you have dinner with my family?	= invitation
4.	P: Really? I certainly would.	= accept

Based on the table 8, the writer argues that the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy expressed in making invitation. The response of the invitation is accepting.

Table 9. The Rec#9 analysis

Rec.#9	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	Y: By the way, today I won a competition of English	= pre-invitation
2.	W: Wow. I'm proud of you.	= go a head
3.	Y: Yeah, thanks. To celebrate it, would you like to join us for dinner tonight?	= invitation
4.	W: Thank you for asking for me, but I'm sorry I can't join for dinner because my mother is sick.	= refuse

With regard to table 9 aforementioned, the writer assumes that the dialogue has a complete structure of pre-sequences strategy expressed in making an invitation. Although, the response of the invitation refuses.

Table 10. The Rec#10 analysis

Rec.#10	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	P: Hello.	= pre-invitation
2.	I: Oh..What's up?	= go a head
3.	P: Tomorrow, I'm going to celebrate my birthday. So, I would like to invite you to come to my home for having dinner at 7.00 PM. Can you?	= invitation
4.	I: That sounds good.	= accept

Dealing with the table 10, the writer infers that the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy used in expressing invitation. The response of the invitation is accepting.

Referring to table 11, the writer infers that the dialogue has complete structure of pre-sequences strategy in making invitation. The response of the invitation is accepting.

Table 11. The Rec#11 analysis

Rec.#11	Utterances	Pre-sequences strategies
1.	M: Hi, how have you been?	= pre-invitation
2.	K: I'm very well, thanks. How about you?	= go a head
3.	M: I'm doing great.	= go a head
4.	K: Good to hear that. Anyway, would you be interested in coming to my zoo grand opening next Saturday? We're having some people over for a meal."	= invitation
5.	M: Zoo grand opening? That's great!	= accept

Discussion

With regards to the findings of the present study, it can be inferred that the use of pre-sequences is regarded as a politeness strategy specifically in making an invitation. As suggested by Yule (1996) the use of pre-sequences in delivering invitation covers: (1) pre-invitation, (2) go ahead, (3) invitation, (4) accept. In the other hand, it can cover (1) pre-invitation, (2) stop, (3) stop. Thus, if we see to the findings aforementioned, most of the conversations undertaken by 22 freshmen almost cover all items as required in expressing invitation as suggested by Yule (1996).

Furthermore, in this section, the writer answers the research questions proposed in this present study: (1) what kind of expressions do the freshmen deliver the pre-sequences in English invitation? Based on the data gained in the findings aforementioned, 80% of the respondents express their pre-sequences in the form of saying hello and asking condition. Meanwhile, 20% of other respondents express their pre-sequences in another expression such as: Do you have spare time on Saturday night?; and By the way, today I won a competition of English.

In addition, the second research question is: (2) how do they express their invitation expression? Based on the data gained in the aforementioned findings, 100% of the respondents express pre-sequences expression in beginning their conversation before inviting their partners. The expressions uttered such as: Hi, what are you doing?; By the way, what are you doing next Friday?; Do you have spare time on Saturday night?; and By the way, do you have spare time on Saturday night?

Meanwhile, in expressing an invitation they expressed the utterances such as: Well, would you like to come to my house for dinner on Saturday?; Would you like to come to my home to have dinner?; If you have spare time, would you like to join me and my family to have dinner?; I'm going to invite you to my family's planning. Would you join with me and my family for having dinner at my home on Saturday night?; Can you to come to my house to have dinner tonight?; and O... I have a small party at my house, would you like to come?

The results of the present study are in line with the results of the previous studies undertaken by Al-Khatib's (2006) study and Bích Hà (2010) study. Those two previous studies investigated the research on Pragmatics of invitation and pre-sequences in the invitation.

Conclusion

With regards to the aforementioned findings and discussion, the present study comes into the conclusion that 80% of the respondents express their pre-sequences in the form of say hello, and asking condition. Meanwhile, 20% of other respondents express their pre-sequences in other kinds of expression. In addition, 100% of the respondents express pre-sequences expression in beginning their conversation before inviting their partners. Such suggested by Levinson's (1983); and Yule's (1996) notion of politeness.

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