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Realization of Speech Acts of Suggestion by EFL Learners of Universitas Negeri Semarang

Muh Imam Shofwan[1✉], **Januarius Mujiyanto**[2]

[1.] Madrasah Tsanawiyyah NU Banat, Kudus, Indonesia
[2.] Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Article Info	Abstract
	This research is a pragmatic study about realization of speech acts of suggestion by EFL learners of Universitas Negeri Semarang. The primary objectives are to explain how EFL learners of Universitas Negeri Semarang realize the speech acts of suggestion, their realization of direct strategy, conventionalized form, indirect and the use of mitigation devices to produce suggestions. To this end, the data were gathered through Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and roleplay. The data were analyzed using Martinez-Flor's (2005) taxonomy. 20 undergraduate students of EFL learners of Universitas Negeri Semarang were the respondents. The result showed that students realized their suggestion using conventionalized form more frequently than other strategies. The direct strategy was performed using performative verb more often. Conventionalized was form frequently realized by using modal should and need. Indirect strategy was performed by using hints more than impersonal. Moreover, the use of mitigating devices to redress the threatening toward the hearers' face performed frequently by opener. It is expected that the findings of this study could encourage English language teachers particularly in teaching speech act of suggestion by using the most suitable approach.

Correspondence Address :

Jl. KHR Asnawi No.30, Damaran, Kota Kudus, Kabupaten Kudus, Jawa Tengah 59316
E-Mail:imam3sgofwan@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In communication, people actually do not only say something, but they also do something with words (Austin, 1962). They usually do acts to deliver their thoughts, wants and wills to the listeners. Speakers perform these acts when they are making utterances with their partners. These acts are typically called speech acts. The acts can be an act of apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, refusal or suggestion (Yule, 1996, p.47).

Suggestion particularly as one of crucial act in interaction is speech act which is regularly performed by people in daily communication. They perform and accept suggestions from other people. They sometime gain informal or individual suggestion from intimate relationship like family, close friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, relatives etc. For instance, a father suggests their children on how to walk safely along the street, a friend suggests us to use a specific trademark of computer, or a girlfriend suggests her boyfriend not to call them at night, etc. In addition, some time they also accept formal suggestions in any kinds of situations, such as from their boss, managers, teachers, doctors or professors.

When giving suggestions, the speakers recommend the hearers about what should and must be done in the future or in other word they are intending an idea to be done by someone (Farnia, 2014, p.48). Those suggestions are intended to guide or direct what is better for the hearers or even for either hearers or speakers, so the hearers or speakers themselves will get the benefit of the suggestions given. It means that speakers understand the situations that could benefit to the hearers from knowing something and give this information to the hearers about that information (Banerjee and Carrel1, 1987, p.318). For instance, when a speaker sees the hearer is suffering from his or her toothache and says, "It's better for you to see a doctor before it is getting worse ", from this sentence, the speaker seems giving an information to the hearer about visiting a doctor is better but the truly intention is to recommend the hearer to go

to check up her/him toothache to a doctor. However, such utterance as in that situations is regarded as suggestion rather than declaration.

Although suggestion is regarded to have benefit to the hearer, Brown and Levison (1987) claimed that this speech act is considered as a face threatening act since the speaker is in some way imposing into the hearer's world by performing an act that concerns what the hearer should do. It potentially threatens the negative face of the hearer (the claim to respect autonomy and rights to non-imposition) for the possibility of future action (Liu and Zao, 2007). Therefore, when performing suggestions speakers must be cautious and utilize appropriate forms or strategies of communication to participate in a smooth conversation and to redress the threatening of the hearer's authority (Farnia, 2014).

In delivering suggestions, speakers from any places in the world are varied in performances. They must consider several factors such as urgency of suggestion, degree of embarrassment in the situation, social distance and social power between speaker and hearer (Barenjee and Carrell, 1988, p. 319). They also think through either sociocultural or sociolinguistic. Sociocultural is about when to perform a speech act and which one is appropriate in a given circumstance, while sociolinguistic denotes the actual linguistic realization of each speech act appropriate to the particular situation (Jiang, 2004). Therefore, to ovoid the intricacies of suggestion speech act, speaker should thoughtful while giving suggestions (Pishghadam and Sharafadini, 2011).

For native language, performing suggestion could be very easy, appropriate and acceptable in any situations. However, for foreign language speakers, it can be very difficult to adjust the social and the culture of other countries. For example, many English foreign language (EFL) learners ignore of socially and culturally about using appropriate forms which may cause the communication break-down or conflict (Pishghadam & Sharafadini, 2011). As a consequence, they perform different suggestions

performance which may cause misunderstanding in communication.

For EFL learners and English native speakers, the different performance in giving suggestions is highly influenced by sociocultural. As a case in a point that people from high culture countries do not always perform English suggestions appropriately in any situations. Their performances even are not acceptable for the hearer because English native speakers do not always accept any suggestions. Further, NSs prefer to present any solutions or choices in giving suggestion than being direct suggest the hearers. On the contrary, many scholars have proved that non-native speakers produced more direct strategies in realizing speech acts of suggestion (e.g. Liu & Zhao (2007); Farnia (2014); Pishghadam & Sharafadini, (2011).

Moreover, what EFL learns in the classroom and language text books learn about suggestion may have different implication in their real life. Hence, there is no consistency between what students learn and the realization in their speech act performance (Jiang, 2004). This, therefore, in this current study is intended mainly to investigate how Indonesian EFL learners especially Universitas Negeri Semarang students realize speech acts of suggestions in their interactions, the realization of strategies as Martinez' Flor (2005) had coded and the use of mitigation devices to redress threatening toward the hearers.

METHODS

In this section, the subjects selected, the instruments used, and the framework adopted is explained.

The participants of this study were selected from under graduate students of Universitas Negeri Semarang who were in their sixth and eighth semester. The data were collected by means of written discourse completion task and roleplay. The data were collected through a voluntary action outside classrooms.

Two instruments were used to collect the data: an open-ended questionnaire in the form of written discourse completion task and role-play as triangulation. The DCT was comprised of twelve situations. A brief description of the data collection was presented to each participant. The twelve situations were given to each participant through google doc and asked them to respond the situations given. Whereas, in role-play, they are asked to listen to the situation carefully, imagine themselves in that situation, and then say what they would say in the real situation. The oral DCT was audio-taped and after the task was completed, their responses were recorded and transcribed.

Since the data were in the form of qualitative data, this study utilized the following methods in analyzing the data, i.e. transcribing, identifying, classifying, and interpreting.

1) Transcribing deals with the process of transcribing the sound data from the role play activity. In this process, the researcher transcribed himself the recording data (audio data) into written text by listening to the audio data, and writing it down.
2) Identifying deals to identify the suggestion expressions made by the participants in DCT and ODCT.
3) Classifying the data based on the suggestion taxonomy proposed by Martinez-Flor (2005).
4) Classifying the data based on direct, conventionalized form and indirect strategy.
5) Suggestion strategies were elicited from the respondents and mitigation devices used in the producing suggestions were also considered in this study.
6) Interpreting phase, this is the lasts phase in which the researcher interprets the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The realization of speech acts of suggestions that had been gathered from both DCT and role-play as triangulation was presented below.
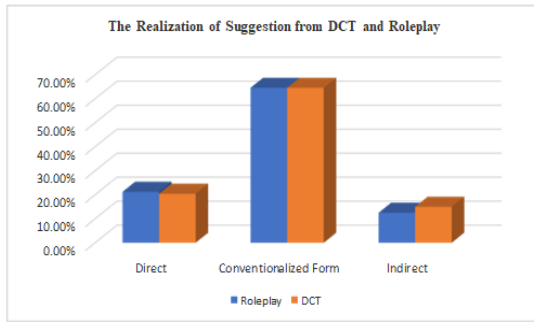
Picture 1.

All data were then transcribed and analyzed against Martinez-Flor (2005) taxonomy. The DCT questionnaire result can be seen from the following table.

Tabel 1. the respondents used *conventionalized forms* more frequently than direct types or indirect types.

Type	Strategy	Frequency	Percentage	
Direct	Performative verb	26	10.83%	21.25%
	Noun of suggestion	3	1.25%	
	Imperative	14	5.83%	
	Negative imperative	8	3.33%	
Conventionalised Forms	Specific formulae	12	5.00%	64.58%
	Possibility/probability	14	5.83%	
	Should	70	29.17%	
	Need	45	18.75%	
	Conditional	14	5.83%	
Indirect	Impersonal	6	2.50%	12.50%
	Hint	24	10.00%	
Silent		1	0.42%	0.42%
No suggestion		3	1%	1.25%
Total		240	100.00%	100.00%

The findings revealed that the respondents used *conventionalized forms* more frequently than direct types or indirect types. More in detail, in performing conventionalized forms, they used *should* strategy (29.17%), *need* strategy (18.75%), possibility/probability (5.83%) specific formulae (5.00%), and conditional (5.83%). Whereas, in committing *direct* strategy, the findings indicated that the use of performative verb is (12.08%), noun of suggestion (1.25%), negative imperative (2.08%) and imperative type (5.00%). In addition, the indirect strategy was employed using hint strategy (14.17%) and impersonal (0.83%).

Besides, some students reminded silent and gave no suggestion toward situations given. However, all types of strategies were employed by speakers in producing their suggestion performances. On the other side, as data triangulation, the role-play revealed that the speakers also employed conventionalized forms more frequently than direct types or indirect types. In short, the data findings which was gathered either in DCT or roleplay revealed the same outcome.

In realizing direct strategy, the speakers committed *performative verb* more frequently than *imperative*, *negative imperative* or *noun of suggestion*. They performed performative verb using verb *recommend* more common than using verb *suggest* or *advice*. The performance can be observed as following:
(1) Sir I recommend you to check another bookstore. I saw discount for the same book on another bookstore.
(2) Sir, I suggest you to check in another book store, perhaps you can get a good book with a lower price, and so many options there.
(3) I advise you to stop doing the activity. It has been very late

In addition, considering imperative strategy, speakers performed directly using the word don't, for example:
(4) Don't eat too much potato chips. It is not good for you.

The speakers also employed noun of suggestion using my suggestion in performing direct strategy. e.g.
(5) Excuse me, Sir. I'm sorry, I happen to hear your problem. My suggestion is that you prepare it as early as possible, so your presentation would be optimal.

Dealing to the realization of conventionalized form, the speakers was very dominantly employed *should* than *need*. The other strategies such as *probability/possibility*, *conditional* and *specific formulae* were less used by the speakers. The speakers' performances can be seen from the following example:

(6) You should start it earlier so you can focus on your work later, Sir.
(7) Sorry, I think you need to see your blouse.
(8) I think you may put your suitcases in the luggage carts.
(9) It's a good idea if you clean it up from your desk before you start your work.
(10) Dad, how about going there tomorrow? The weather is very bad right now.

The last speakers' realization was indirect strategy. This strategy was commonly committed by using *hints* by presenting some clues which should be inferred by the hearer as a suggestion not to take the course for his/her own benefit. They performed (10.00%) more often than impersonal (2.50%) from the whole suggestion performances. The speakers' indirect strategies performance can be seen from utterances below:

(11) Excuse me, sir. I've found this book at xxx store. It's cheaper than this one.

The speaker expression showed that indirectly the speaker suggested the hearer to get the same book in another bookstore with lower prices. However, the speaker presented a hint in his utterance about his experience founding the same book in another bookstore. Whereas, the speakers' *impersonal* strategy performance can be seen rom the following expression:

(12) Excuse me, Ma'am. Yesterday I saw the same book in another bookstore, and it has lower price. I think it would be better to check and compare the price before buying it.

Through this expression, the speaker provide affirmation when the speaker said what he or she thought the hearer wanted to hear and bought the same book in another bookstore.
Dealing to the use of mitigation devices, the findings could be seen from the following table.

Tabel 1. The findings showed that the frequency pattern

Verbal	Opener	Title	40	16.7%	29.58%
		Attention getter	25	10.42%	
		interrogative form	6	2.50%	
	Justification/Reasons	imperative	3	1.25%	20.83%
		impersonal	4	0.00%	
		Negative imperative	7	2.92%	
		Conditional	6	2.50%	
		Should	23	9.58%	
		Need	11	4.58%	
	Hedges		2	0.83%	0.83%
	Mocking		2	0.42%	0.42%
	Awareness		6	2.50%	2.50%
	Negative evaluation		0	0.00%	0.00%
	Compliment		4	5.00%	5.00%
Non-Verbal	Take measure		0	0.00%	0.00%
	Opt out		0	0.00%	0.00%
Do not use mitigation device			98	40.83%	40.83%
Total			240	100.00%	100.00%

The findings showed that the frequency pattern in the use of mitigating devices are as follows: opener (29.58%), justification (20.83%), compliment (5.00%), awareness (0.00%), Hedges (0.83%) and Mocking (0.42%). Speakers did not perform any non-verbal strategies in making suggestion to soften the suggestion performance. Overall, the speakers prefer to choose verbal strategies than non-verbal strategies. The finding also indicates that speakers used tittle (16.70%) more frequently than other opener strategies, i.e. attention getter (10.42%) and interrogative (2.50%). Moreover, the frequency of justification for should (9.58%) is higher than other justification or reasons given for need (4.58%), negative imperative (2.50%), imperative (1.67%), impersonal (1.67%) and conditional (1.25%) strategies. Regarding to non-mitigation devices usage about (40.83%), the speakers show more directly in making suggestion and also perform indirect suggestion using other strategies such as maybe, I think and others softener expressing to redress the

threatening to hearers' face. In addition, there were also found respondent which ignored the situation by giving no suggestion.

Regarding the first goal of the study, the finding showed that conventionalized form was performed more frequently than other strategies types (i.e. direct and indirect strategies). This result supports to the previous study conducted by Dzakiah (2016) who found that most often strategies in giving suggestions by Indonesian students were conventionally indirect strategies. However, this opposes to Farnia's (2014) and Pishghadam and Sharafadhini's (2011b) findings in which in Iranian Farsi with high-context culture like Indonesia use more implicit strategies than explicit one, speakers produced suggestion strategy using direct strategy, i.e. imperative form more than other strategies. However, like previous studies, most of the speakers of this present study attempted to redress the threatening to the hearers' face by employing mitigation devices (Farnia, 2014).

In addition, the finding revealed that the social parameters i.e. social distance, status dominance and rank of imposition influenced toward the speakers' performance in employing strategies to commit suggestion over the hearers. Regarding to those parameters, the speakers made an effort to redress the threatening by using conventionalized form more frequent than being direct. They used modals such as should, need, can, may more frequent as strategy to perform the speech acts of suggestion to be politer because modal can be used to perform variety of social functions, for example, expressing politeness or indirectness when making requests, giving advice (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999 as cited in Jiang, 2004). Also, this study support Liu and Zhao (2007) who considered modals as one of the most frequent strategies by EFL learners.

This, therefore, this study is also in line with Hinkel (1994:8) who claimed that in Indonesian culture, advice is given largely as expression of friendliness and/or concern. The use of conventionalized form indicated that students made some efforts to be polite by avoiding direct which was considered rude and impolite. This also reinforced to the notion stated by Hinkle (1994) that Indonesian society is highly stratified where the use of advice-giving speech acts depends directly on the social status of the speaker's. in addition, the significant percentage of the speakers' production in making suggestion using indirect strategies displayed that many speakers attempted to produced suggestions politely.

Moreover, the frequency of mitigation devices used in making a suggestion displays that the speakers tend to redress the face threat of the hearers and keep the speaker's own face by avoiding stating a direct strategy. The results show that although the speakers tend to use conventionalized form more which is a face-threatening act, they tried to redress the face-threatening act of suggestion by using other strategies such as justifying the reason of using conventionalized form (i.e. should, need or conditional). The use of openers as a strategy to avoid jumping into offering a suggestion and as a result to threat the speakers' face can also display the importance of face among interlocutors.

Considering to the second goal of the study, the finding shows how EFL learners of Universitas Negeri Semarang performed direct strategy by using performative verbs more frequent than other direct strategies i.e. imperative and noun of suggestion. The use of these performative verbs such as suggest, recommend and advise is considered very direct in making suggestions and may be too formal for most occasions, particularly among equal status speakers (Jiang, 2006). However, the speakers in this study did not consider whether they performed performative verb in formal or in informal situation. This indicate that few speakers preferred to use more direct and explicit strategies in their communication. In addition, the directness choices were due to a perceived urgency about the situations potentially embarrassing and face-threatening situations (Banerjee & Carrel1, 1987). For the appropriateness, this formula is not widely employed in everyday life of native speaker since it is regarded as very direct and usually it is

sometimes employed for formal situations. (Wardhaugh 1985; Koike 1994; Tsui 1994; Koester 2002 in marinez-Flor 2005). Therefore, the use of imperative is also regarded as the most direct and impolite forms of making a suggestion (Edmonson and House 1981; Koike 1994; Hinkel 1997 in Martinez-Flor, 2005).

With respect to the third research question, the findings indicate that students revealed conventionalized form using should and need more frequent than others form such as Specific formulae, Possibility/probability or conditional. This is in line with (Pishghadam and sharafadini, 2011)'s study in which "modal" was the most common forms used by the students. The use of modalization signalized to argue about the probability or frequency of suggestion (Mujiyanto, 2010, p.2). Furthermore, culture and two main systemic factors, i.e. distance and status apparently influence toward leaners' performance in giving suggestion. All situations given influenced and become judgment to the speakers' performance in giving suggestion. This support toward previous research that social distance and status impacted toward speakers' suggestion performance (Smith-Hefner 1988 as cited in Hinkel, 1994). In addition, the use of speech acts of suggestion depends directly on the social status of the speaker's and the hearse's, because Indonesian society is highly stratified. Therefore, the students' performance may be caused from transferring L1 to L2 which is commonly seldom successful (Blum-Kulka1989; Olshtain 1983, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe 1987; Wolfson 1988 in Hinkle, 1994).

Turning to the fourth question, indirect suggestions were very low in frequency: there were only 30 utterances or 12.50% suggestions of the whole students' 240 utterances. This is in line with Liu and Zhao, 2007 and Banerjee & Carrel1, 1987 who confirmed that non-natives use of more direct strategies in comparison with those of natives. The finding clearly illustrates that few students utilized "hints" more often than "impersonal" strategy to perform indirect strategy. This shows that few students preferred to perform utterances which hearer should infer

than giving alternative choices as a suggestion to do an act for his/her own benefit (Martinez-Flor, 2005, p.176).

Moving to the fifth research question, the results of this study seem to strengthen the notion stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) that people cooperate in maintaining face in interactions. Suggestions might be considered as face threatening. Thus, EFL learners of Universitas Negeri Semarag employed different types mitigating patterns when making a suggestion. For example, tittle and attention getter were the most frequently used mitigating device. This strategy, according to Pishghadam and Sharafadini (2011), is an indirect suggestion strategy used by EFL learners compared to more direct strategies used by native speakers of English.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion concerning to the research problems can be drawn as follows: the speakers chose more conventionalized form than other strategy types (i.e. direct and indirect strategies).

Direct study is highly done by using performatives verb to explicitly force speakers' ideas toward the hearers. The students performed performative verb without considering the formality of situation. Whereas, making suggestions using direct strategy and may be too formal for most occasions, particularly among equal status speakers. Those direct realizations indicate that few speakers preferred to use more direct and explicit strategies in their communication.

The students' performance of conventionalized form is dominated by performing modals *should* and *need* than other types of strategy. These modals function differently in terms of formality and also demonstrate different degrees of authority of the speaker and urgency of the message. Therefore, Culture and two main systemic factors, i.e. distance and status effected toward students' performance in giving suggestion.

The indirect strategy performance in this presents study is frequently low. Only few

students performed utterances which hearer should infer than giving alternative choices as a suggestion to do an act for his/her own benefit. Therefore, students tried to redress the face-threatening act of suggestion by using mitigation devices such as justifying the reason of using direct strategies. They employed different types mitigating patterns such as tittle and attention getter more frequently than another mitigating device which shows that Indonesian society is highly stratified.

SUGGESTION

Learning language does not only know about the meaning of target language but also able to identify and employ the pragmatic or the use of language in any situation and context. This pragmatic competence is very important to be successful in communication. EFL learners also need to learn native cultures so that there will be no misinterpretation toward any utterances performed. Therefore, based on the result of the study, it is hoped that to teach English language to the foreign language learners, the language instructors need to explain the use of language form and the use of the most appropriate strategies to perform any utterances particularly in giving suggestions.

For the next researchers of suggestion speech acts, it is expected that there will be other researches that will study about suggestion more detail and naturally design to native speaker as the subject. Hence, it will contribute to decrease the miscommunication and conversation conflict between the speakers. In addition, the researcher also expects that there will be other researches in accordance to suggestion speech acts by regarding to culture and other factors which may impact toward Indonesian students' performance in giving advices.

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