

THE TYPES OF DIRECTNESS AND INTERNAL MODIFICATION ON REQUEST STRATEGIES: A PRAGMATIC STUDY

Km Tri Sutrisna Agustia, Ni Luh Gede Mega Putri
trisutrisna@undhirabali.ac.id

Universitas Dhyana Pura

ABSTRACT

In making interaction with the guests in the restaurant, the way the restaurant's staffs uttered their intentions were matter because it would give the impression of their services to the guests. Therefore, this article aimed to find out the types of directness in request strategies which were used by Chandi restaurant's staffs and also to classify the types of internal modification in those strategies. In analyzing the data, this study applied the descriptive qualitative approach. The theory used were Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) and Sifianou (1999). It is found that the types of directness in request strategy that were used by Chandi restaurant's staffs are direct strategy and conventionally indirect strategy and also the types of internal modification that occurred in the conversation were the openers, softeners, and fillers modification types.

Keywords: types of directness, internal modification, request strategy.

ABSTRAK

Ketika berinteraksi dengan para tamu di restoran, cara dari staff restoran menyampaikan niat mereka itu penting karena hal tersebut akan memberikan kesan bagaimana pelayanan mereka kepada para tamu. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis dari keterusterangan dalam strategi permintaan yang digunakan oleh staff restoran Chandi dan juga untuk mengklasifikasikan jenis modifikasi internal dalam strategi tersebut. Dalam menganalisis data, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) dan Sifianou (1999). Dapat diketahui bahwa jenis-jenis keterusterangan dalam strategi permintaan yang digunakan oleh staff restoran Chandi adalah strategi langsung dan strategi tidak langsung konvensional dan juga jenis-jenis modifikasi internal yang digunakan dalam percakapan adalah jenis pembuka, pelembut, dan jenis modifikasi pengisi.

Kata Kunci: *jenis keterusterangan, modifikasi internal, strategi permintaan.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic is one of the linguistic branch that studies about the language use where according to Yule (1996) there are speech acts in pragmatic that the speaker does not

only produce utterances, but also performs action through the utterances. In line with that, in making interaction with the guest in the restaurant, there are speech act of requests used by the staffs and occurred in almost every situation in restaurant. The way

the restaurant's staffs uttered their intentions in making interaction with the guests in the restaurant were matter because it would give the impression of their services to the guests. Therefore, to give the best impression to the guests with the intention of getting the guests' satisfactions, it is important for the restaurant's staffs to choose the appropriate linguistic forms to express their requests when formulating request sentences by using request strategy.

According to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), request strategy is used to increase the possibility of the request being accepted or fulfilled by the hearer. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) divided request strategy into three main strategies such direct strategies, conventionally indirect strategies and non-conventionally indirect strategies. Safont Jorda (2003, in Soler 2005) then suggested that in analyzing request strategies' sentences, it is not supposed to be focused only on the head act of request but also on the peripheral elements or request modification such the internal modification. Therefore, following Blum-Kulka, et. al (1989) theory, Sifianou (1999) then proposed a taxonomy of modification devices where the internal modification consists of openers, softeners, intensifiers, and fillers.

Other studies which have examined about request strategy such, Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989; Trosborg, 1995; Hassall, 2001, were examined the production and comprehension of speech acts by second language learners compared to that of native speakers. However, this research did not make such comparisons between native and non-native speaker, instead, the aims of this research was to find out the types of directness in request strategies and the types of internal modification that were used by the restaurant staff in handling their guest.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The data of this research is taken from Chandi restaurant's floor staffs and guests' conversations and its scripts. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach proposed by Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009:310) who defined a qualitative research as a type of study which creates a descriptive text of the phenomena. The method in collecting and analyzing the data was done by following steps: 1) the data were collected by recording the video of the conversations at Chandi Restaurant which located at Kayu Aya st. no. 72, Seminyak; 2) the videos were watched to do the note taking by writing-down the transcript of the conversations' videos; 3) the transcripts then were read to select the data that suit the theories by using purposive sampling technique in order to find the types of directness in request strategies and also to classify the types of internal modification which were used by Chandi restaurant's staffs; 4) the data were classified to find out the types of directness that is used by Chandi restaurant's floor staffs in the conversations by using Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989; 5) the data then were also classified into the internal modification types which listed by Sifianou's theory in 1999.

III. DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into two parts such the types of directness in request strategies which were used by Chandi restaurant's staffs and types of internal modification which were used by Chandi restaurant's staffs.

3.1 Direct Request Strategy

According to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) direct request strategy is the

most direct way for the speaker to utter the request where it is uttered in an explicit way.

a. Mood Derivable

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) stated mood derivable or imperative form of requesting directly shows that the utterance is an order or a command.

Data 1

Hostess: *"Well, sir. We hold your table only for 15 minutes. If you are late or cancel the reservation, please, inform us as soon as possible."*

Guest: *"We won't be late. We stay down the corner"*

The request delivered by hostess staff to the guest which specifically in the sentence *please, inform us as soon as possible* was belonged to "mood derivable" type because according to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) it was a request which form as an imperative sentence.

The way the hostess delivered her request by saying *please, inform us as soon as possible* was very direct so the request could be understood easily by the guest as the requestee. This request was made by the hostess to the guest to inform her if the guest late or maybe if he wanted to cancel his reservation so the hostess could re-arrange the table for the other guests. It also noticed when delivered her request, the hostess also used the word *please* as the politeness marker to make her request seemed more polite. It is supported by Trosborg (1995) who stated imperatives can be mitigated by inserting question tags or the politeness marker such *please* word.

b. Explicit Performative

Explicit performative refers to the statements that are authoritative by nature and may sound impolite if one is outside a formal context (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989). The illocutionary force of the

explicit performative utterances is clearly named by the word *ask*

Data 2

Waitress: *"Excuse me, madam. If you don't mind, I am asking you to give your umbrella to the hostess. She will give it a mark and keep it outside."*

Guest: *"Oh okay. Just don't let me forget the umbrella."*

Based on the Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) categorization, the sentence *If you don't mind, I am asking you to give your umbrella to the hostess* which conveyed by waitress staff to the guest was belonged to "explicit performative" type because the main request is said but the illocutionary forced explicitly named by the word *asking*. It is known from the way waitress staff delivered her request by saying *if you don't mind, I am asking you to give your umbrella to the hostess* that was direct so the requestee or the guest can understand it easily. It belonged to be explicit performative type of request because it showed that the main request is said but the illocutionary forced explicitly named by the word *asking*. Besides, this request is made by the waitress to ask the guest to give the umbrella to the hostess so she can keep it outside and the waitress can move around easily in order to serve the guest.

c. Hedge Performative

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989 stated the hedged performative verb indicating the request intention is modified by modal verbs or verbs that express intention to show some politeness in the act of requesting.

Data 3

Waitress: *"Excuse me, madam. There are other guests who want to sit on the next table, so I would like to ask you to move your bag, madam"*

Guest: *"Oh, I'm sorry"*

The waitress conveyed her request to guest by saying *so I would like to ask you to move*

your bag, madam was belonged to “hedge performative” type in the types of directness request categorization by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) because the utterance said is modified by a hedging expression such *I would like*.

The sentence was belonged to hedge performative type of request because it showed that the intended request is mitigated even the main request is said and used the hedging expression such saying *I would like*. Besides, this request is made by the waitress to ask the guest to move her bag from the other chair because the other guests wanted to sit there.

d. Obligations Statement

As defined by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), obligations statement is the utterance states the obligation of the addressee or the hearer to carry out the act.

Data 4

Hostess: “*Sir, if you really want the private room only for your group, and you don’t want other guests be in that room, you have to pay Rp. 8.5 million as the minimum spending for the private room*”

Guest: “8.5 million? oh, that’s okay. No problem. Should I give the deposit right now?”

The request delivered by hostess staff to the guest in the second turn which specifically in the sentence *you have to pay Rp. 8.5 million as the minimum spending for the private room* considered to be “obligation statement” type because based on the Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) categorization, it contained the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act.

The way the hostess conveyed her request by saying *you have to pay Rp. 8.5 million as the minimum spending for the private room* was very direct so that the request could be understood easily by the guest as the requestee. It also noticed that when delivered her request, the hostess also used the phrase

you have to that obligate the guest which made the request belong to obligation type of direct request. This request is made by the hostess to ask the guest to pay the minimum spending for the private room.

e. Wants Statement

Wants statement refers to the utterances that state the speaker’s needs and wishes which the requestee may perform the intended act or comply (Blum-Kulka et. al., 1989).

Data 5

Waiter: “*Thank you for having dinner in Chandi, madam. I’m glad to serve you and I really wish to serve you again next time. Have a good night*”

Guest: “Oh thank you. you’re amazing. See you next time”

In accordance with Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) categorization, the request delivered by waiter staff to the guest in the first turn which specifically in the sentence *I really wish to serve you again next time* was belonged to “want statement” type because it expressed the speaker’s wish to the hearer who is maybe will perform the intended act. The waiter delivered his request by saying *really wish to serve you again* was very direct so the request could be understood easily by the guest as the requestee. This request is made by the waiter to the guest to express his gladness through his wish to serve the guest in another time. It also noticed that when delivered her request, the waiter also used the phrase *really wish* which express his want or desire.

3.2 Conventionally Indirect Request Strategy

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) defined that conventionally indirect strategy can be realized by employing procedures which realize the act and the necessary contextual condition.

a. Suggestory Formulae

Suggestory formulae according to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) is the utterance which contains a suggestion to do something.

Data 6

Hostess: *"Allright, sir. Because you'll be more than 8 people, so I think you better make a reservation"*

Guest: "Oh okay"

The request conveyed by hostess staff to the guest which specifically in the second turn in the sentence *so I think you better make a reservation* was belonged to "suggestory formulae" type because according to Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), it consisted the suggestion to the hearer to do something which can be seen from the phrase *you better make*.

I think you better make a reservation sentence which delivered by the hostess contained a suggestion to the guest to do something. It is showed from the use of the phrase *you better make* which belonged to suggestion. This request is made by the hostess to suggest the guest to make a table reservation considering the amount of the person in the group.

b. Query Preparatory

Based on Blum-Kulka et. al. (1989) statement that query preparatory is the utterance contains a reference to preparatory conditions for the feasibility of the request such ability, willingness which can be shown by using the modal verbs "*could/can/would*" or the possibilities for the act being performed.

Data 7

Hostess: *"I'm sorry, but sir could you please wait here for a moment? Because I have to check the availability on the reservation book first."*

Guest: "Sure"

The request conveyed by hostess staff to the guest especially in the second turn in the sentence *could you please wait here for a*

moment? considered to be "query preparatory" type because based on the Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) types of directness categorization, it had preparatory conditions for the feasibility of the request like willingness.

It is noticed from the way the hostess delivered her request by saying *could you please wait here for a moment?* contained a preparatory conditions for the feasibility of the request like the willingness of the guest to wait for the hostess who checked the availability on the reservation book. It is showed from the use of the word *could* in the beginning that the hostess used in delivering her request.

3.3. Openers Modification

Sifianou (1999) defined openers as the opening words and expressions which look for the hearer's or addressee's cooperation and modify the request.

Data 8

Hostess: *"I'm sorry, but sir , could you please wait here for a moment? because I have to check the availability on the reservation book first"*

Guest: "Sure"

The guest wanted to have the wine (private) room. Therefore, the hostess said *could you please wait here for a moment?* sentence while she checked the availability before blocked and confirmed the table to the guest. *Could you please* was used to look for the guest's cooperation which according to Sifianou (1999) openers refers to opening words and expressions which search the addressee's co-operation such *could you please.../do you think.../would you mind...*, etc. The used of the phrase *could you please* uttered by hostess staff before her actual request made it belonged to "openers modification" type.

a. Softeners Modification

Softeners modifications are the devices that serve to soften and mitigate the force of the

request, which means that this modification is used when the request is quite forcing (Sifianou, 1999).

b. Understatement

As it is defined by Sifianou (1999), understatement is an adverbial phrase by means of which the speaker underrepresents the state of affairs expressed in the utterance such *for a moment, for a second, a little bit*, etc.

Data 8

Hostess: *"I'm sorry, but sir, could you please wait here for a moment? because I have to check the availability on the reservation book first"*

Guest: "Sure"

The hostess said *could you please wait here for a moment?* when the guest wanted to have the wine (private) room because it is said to ask the guest to wait while the hostess checked the availability before blocked and confirmed the table to the guest. According to Sifianou (1999) the utterance such *for a moment, for a second, a little bit, etc* belong to softeners. The used of the phrase *for a moment* uttered by hostess staff is used as the softeners as her request and made it belonged to "understatement" type.

c. Downtoners

Downtoner as stated by Sifianou (1999) is a lexical or phrasal element that is used in order to decrease the impact of speaker's request which involve a series of adverbs such *probably, possibly, perhaps, maybe, rather*, etc.

Data 9

Hostess: *"Sorry sir, unfortunately we will be closed during lunch time tomorrow. Would you probably want to reschedule your booking?"*

Guest: "Oh that's bad! Why do you close?"

The guest wanted to book a table for lunch. Unfortunately the restaurant would be closed

during lunch time. Therefore, the hostess suggested the guest by saying *Would you probably want to reschedule your booking?* sentence, to make the guest reschedule his booking at dinner time or maybe the lunch time on the day after. According to Sifianou (1999), downtoners are phrasal elements which are used in order to decrease the impact of speaker's request which involve a series of adverbs such possibly, perhaps, maybe, rather, etc. The hostess staff used the expression of *probably* as the softeners in her request and made it belong to "downtoners" type.

3.4 Fillers Modification

Sifianou (1999) defined filler modification as lexical items used by speakers or requesters who make the request to fill in the gaps occurring in conversation.

a. Hesitators

Sifianou (1999) defined that hesitators reflect the requester's uncertainty of the impact of the request on the addressee.

Data 10

Hostess: *"Unfortunately, the private room is already booked. But we have a table right next to the air-con over there. Would erm.. would that be okay for you?"*

Guest: "Oh that's okay. As long as it has the air-con, it's okay. Haha.."

According to Sifianou (1999) who defined various means of hesitators modification can be stuttering or repetition of words. As seen in the conversation above, in delivering her request, the hostess was not sure with the impact of the following request made on the guest. It shown by the combination of stuttering *erm..* and repetition of word *would* that said by the hostess which made this sentence belonged to "hesitators" type of modification. It also showed the guest wanted to sit in the private room. Unfortunately the private room is already booked. Therefore, the hostess suggested the guest to sit in the pergola area right next to

the air-conditioning. Before that, the hosting asked the guest if she is willing to do so by saying *Would erm.. would that be okay for you?* sentence, to make sure the guest feels okay with the table.

b. Attention-getter

Attention-getter is used to attract and alert addressee before the actual request or the head act is made (Sifianou, 1999).

Data 11

Waiter: "*Madam, could you please keep turn around the steak? so your steak won't be burn.*"

Guest: "Thank you so much."

Sifianou (1999) stated that in order to attract the hearer's attention, the speaker may resort to attention-getters, which include the kinship terms of address to the attention-getter. According to Hassall (2001) the example of the kinship terms of address such, *father.., mother.., sir/madam..*, and etc. As seen in the conversation above, in delivering his request, the waiter staff wanted the guest to do something as he said because the steak was served on the hot stone so it would not get burn and the guest could enjoy his meal. However, before the waiter delivered his request to the guest, he said *madam* to make sure he attracted and alerted addressee first before the actual request is made.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation which has been presented previously, the result of this research is from 11 data of request strategies that has been analyzed by using Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) theory of the types of directness in request strategies, it was found there are 2 types of directness in request strategies occurred such direct strategies and the conventionally indirect strategies types. In direct strategy, there are 5 sub-types of direct request strategy that is used by Chandi restaurant's staff such mood derivable, explicit performative, hedged performative, obligations statement, and wants statement types. Those direct strategy were delivered with the politeness marker such the word *please* to make it sounded more polite. Meanwhile in conventionally indirect strategy, there 2 sub-types that appeared in the conversations such suggestory formulae and query preparatory. There are also types of internal modification that occurred in the conversation that has analyzed by using Sifianou (1999) theory. The internal modification types that appeared in the conversation were the openers modification, understatements and downtoners types of softeners modification also hesitators and attention-getters types of fillers modifications.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alcon-Soler, E., M.P. Safont-Jorda, & A. Martinez-Flor. 2005. *Towards A Typology of Modifiers for The Speech Act of Requesting: A Socio-Pragmatic Approach*. RAEL: Revista Electronica de Linguistica Aplicada, Volume 4.
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). 1989. *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Hassall, T. J. 2001. *Modifying requests in a second language*. International Review of Applied Linguistics (IRAL), Volume 39.
- Sifianou, M. 1999. *Politeness Phenomena in England and Greece: A Cross-Cultural Prospective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Trosborg, A. 1995. *Interlanguage Pragmatic: Request, Complaints and Apologies*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Vanderstoep, S.W. and Johnston, D.D. 2009. *Research Methods for Everyday Life Blending Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. San Francisco.
Yule, George. 1996. *Pragmatics*. Oxford:
Oxford University Press.