

INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS DEVELOPMENT IN COMPLAINT RESPONSES USED BY INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS

Fitri Fajar Nur Indahsari¹⁾

¹Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
email: fitri.fanuri@gmail.com

Abstract

Pragmatics development becomes a major process to control learners EFL competences. Their length of time learning the target languages strongly contributes their developmental pragmatics competence and performance. Giving response to complainers, sometimes become important in case of showing respect to the complainers. It also can be face saving strategies used by complaine, to save their face from unfavorable responsibility toward unpleasant action for the complainers. This research aims to investigate the interlanguage pragmatics development in complaint responses used by Indonesian EFL learners. Oral Discourse Completion Tasks (ODCT) was used as the instrument in collecting the data. By the used of Cross sectional approach, the writer recruited 30 EFL learners in different length of time study to be respondents. The finding discovered that the learners interlanguage pragmatics development significantly improves, their pragmalinguistics forms also develop to be more complex over the length of time study. Learners with different time EFL study tended to induce their uses of politeness much more frequently than impoliteness.

Keywords: *interlanguage pragmatics development, complaint responses, politeness, impoliteness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) sometimes becomes problem for EFL learners'. The different grammatical structure, culture, and the learner first language (L1) often drive on when the learner learn the target language (L2). In Indonesia the study of English as foreign language formally, started from elementary school. Although it was take for long time in studying English, learners' competence still not as well as the native speaker (NS).

The present research focuses on interlanguage pragmatics development which examines how language learners develop their ability to understand and do action in target language including both pragmatics production and comprehension. There are severals factors affected learners' pragmatics developments, such as: pragmatics competence, environment, pragmatics teaching (exposure), and individual differences (Kasper and Rose, 2002). The previous researchers have conducted research on pragmatics development in speech act of suggestions, request and apology, and complaint (e.g. Rajabi, 2015; Khorshidi, 2013; Gu, 2014; Khorshidi and Nimchahi, 2013). The others have investigated speech act of complaint responses but specify in interlanguage pragmatics production (e.g. Fang, 2015; Sulastri, 2014). Rajabi (2015) proved that explicit instruction was an effective tool to help students used proper several speech act strategies in different context, L2 competences or proficiency also had significant influence on learners' speech act appropriateness. Learner's environment, where the learners living and studying in L2 contexts contributes on learners L2 development in addition to develop learners' pragmatics mindset, Khorshidi (2013). Gu (2014), he investigated Chinese Learners' pragmatics development through SECCL (Spoken English Corpus of Chinese Learners) from 1997 to 2003, the result showed that learners' pragmatics ability in English improved to some extent over the year of study. While, individual different such as: age, gender, motivation, social and

psychological distance also take contributions on interlanguage pragmatics development. Khorshidi and Nimchahi (2013) through their studied prove that motivation is perform significantly rather than instrumentally motivated learners in both ILP development and pragmatics production. Nevertheless, Wijayanto and Laila (2013) proposed that each individual had complicated patterns of development. The developmental process may not similarly occur in each L2 learner, in addition L2 pragmatics can develop in a foreign country setting without any pedagogical intervention.

Learners pragmatics development also can be seen in the use of socio-pragmatics used, politeness and impoliteness become essential point to be analyzed. Wijayanto, et all. , (2013) stated that complaint act produced very direct mostly to the complainees with lower-unfamiliar. In case of gender different, there was did not have significant relationship male-female with how speaker produces the politeness degree of complaint (Abdolrezapour, Dabaghi, and Kassaian, 2012). While, in perception of polite-impoliteness used in complaints, Ratnawinata (2014) showed that female have more confidence to judge whether a complaint polite or not polite, rather than male. Recently, Perdana (2017) states politeness strategies of complaint discovered that the EFL learners' understanding on politeness/ impoliteness were not separated from their social aspects, pragma linguistics forms, context situation, and the relationship of the complainees-complainers determine politeness/ impoliteness used.

Giving response to complainers, sometimes being important in case of showing respect to the complainers. It also can be face saving strategies used by complainees, to save their face from unfavorable responsibility toward unpleasant action for the complainers. From the previous studies it can be implied that, the strategies of complaint and complaint responses used by the complainees might be diverse, such as: Social distance, culture, and gender proved affect how someone produced their complaint responses. Learners' speech act production reflected their pragmatics competences. It implied, both L2 and EFL learners, exposure were strongly contribute on their developmental pragmatics competence and performance. The exposure leads how they produced their target languages; there will be no language acquisition without exposure.

However, the study which examines interlanguage pragmatics development in complaint responses used by EFL learners is still not yet discussed. Based on the gap, the researcher is interested in examining the interlanguage pragmatics development in complaint responses used by Indonesian EFL learners. The researcher also claimed this present research as the first research on interlanguage pragmatics development in complaint responses. The researcher chooses complaint response expression because responding complaints sometimes become important in case of showing respect to the complainers. It also can be face saving strategies used by complainees, to save their face from unfavorable responsibility toward unpleasant action for the complainers. Besides, the studies of complaint responses are still rare.

The objective of this research are to investigate the interlanguage pragmatics development in complaint responses used by Indonesian EFL learners based on their length of time study, and the politeness or impoliteness involved in complaint responses used by Indonesian EFL learners based on their length of time study.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research Participants

This research applied a cross-sectional approach conducted at the English Department of a university in the Central Java 2017. The research participants were thirty Indonesian EFL learners, and divided into three different groups based on the length of time study: group A consists of ten learners with eight to ten years study, group B consists of ten learners with eleven to twelve years study, and group C consists of ten learners with thirteen to fifteen years study.

2.2 Data Collection Technique

The researcher used DCT approach as this present research required in obtaining the data. There were two ways of collecting data: first, the researcher provided nine DCT scenarios and the complaint, the learners are requested to the DCT scenario through their complaint responses. The learners complete the DCT orally under the researcher control and recorded by the researcher. The second, after all participants completed the DTC and recorded the researcher transcribed the complaint responses produced by the learners.

2.3 Data Analysis Technique

In conducting the research, the researcher were classified the learners' different length of time study into three levels: first level consists of eight to ten years study; second level consist of eleven to twelve years study; and third consist of thirteen to fifteen years study; analyzed the strategies of complaint responses used by Indonesian EFL used Trosbrong and Shaw (1998) strategies of Apology; analyzed the Learners' politeness or impoliteness involved in complaint responses based on pragma linguistic forms using Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies and impoliteness strategies using Culpeper (1996); and analyzed the learners pragmatics development from complaint responses strategies and politeness or impoliteness used.

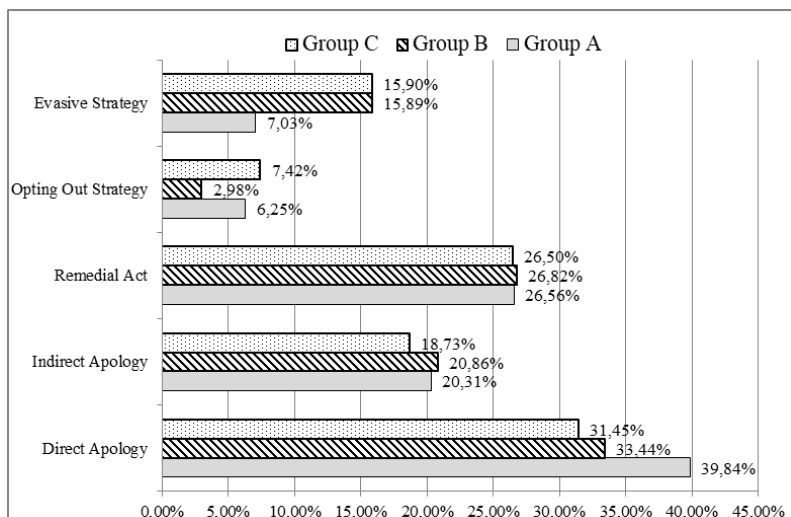
3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Interlanguage Pragmatics Development in Complaint Responses

In interlanguage pragmatics development in complaint responses, the researcher found three indicators used to measure the learners development: 1) the frequencies of strategies used by the learners, 2) the head act sequences, and 3) the pragmalinguistics used by the learners. Taken by 9 DCT scenarios and carried from 30 EFL learners in 3 different level of EFL exposure, researcher found 270 number data of complaint responses. There were five complaint response strategies use by the learners namely: direct apology (DA), indirect apology (IA), remedial act (RA), opting out strategy (OO), and evasive strategy (ES).

3.1.1 The Frequencies of Strategies Used by The Learners

Related to overall strategies used, the three groups had similarities and differences. Furthermore, direct apology often used by group A, it less used by group B, and the least used by group C. Besides, in used of indirect apology; group A and group B had more or less similar frequencies, and group C was the least. However, the three groups had more or less similar frequency in the used of remedial act strategy. Opting out strategy often used by group C, it less used by group A, and the least used by group B. The least strategy use was evasive strategy, group B and group C had more or less similar frequency, and group A was the least use of evasive strategy. The overall strategies used describe on chart below:



3.1.2 The Head Act Sequences

Considered on the use of the head act sequences, the three groups had more or less similar dominant head act sequences. In group levels, the three groups tend to used similar dominant head act DA+IA (e.g. DCT2, DCT3, DCT5, and DCT8) and OO (e.g., DCT6). The dominant head act sequences used, describe on the table below:

Group	A	B	C
DCT1	DA+RA	DA+IA	DA+IA
DCT2	DA+IA	DA+IA	DA+IA
DCT3	DA+IA	DA+IA	DA+IA
DCT4	DA+IA	DA+RA	DA+IA
DCT5	DA+IA	DA+IA	DA+IA DA+RA
DCT6	OO	OO	OO
DCT7	OO DA+IA	DA+IA	DA+ES
DCT8	DA+IA	DA+IA	DA+IA DA+RA
DCT9	DA+RA	ES+RA	DA+IA

3.1.3 The Pragmalinguistics Used by The Learners

Moreover, related to the pragmalinguistics used by the three groups, there were some different wordings to express similar strategy. Group A tends to used simple sentences, group B used more complex sentences, and group C used the most complex sentences. The following examples are the pragmalinguistics used by the three groups:

e.g.

Group A :

I will repair your motorcycle, I will bring your motorcycle to motorcycle shop.(*DCT7/A/1*)

Group B :

I want change your motorcycle. I want give you money for service your motorcycle.
(DCT7/B/4)

Group C :

I will repair all of your cost to repair your motorcycle. So calm down, I will give the money for you, so keep calm and just repair your motor cycle. I will pay the cost for you
(DCT7/C/7)

3.2 Politeness and Impoliteness used in Complaint Responses

3.2.1 Politeness Used in Complaint Responses

Related to the number of the learners taken from three groups with different time study, the researcher found that: learners in group B and group C with longer time study produce politeness strategies more than group A in complaint responses.

Interestingly, politeness strategies often used by group B and group C; positive politeness often produce by group A. Group B often produced negative politeness, and group C often produced combination strategy. There were the examples of politeness use by the learners:

Group A : *Ok Mister, I will repair your motorcycle, I will bring your motorcycle to motorcycle shop* (DCT7/A/1).

Group B : *Oh I'm sorry. I don't have much time here in University. I'm very busy lately. I'm sorry I didn't correct your thesis. I'm so sorry.*
(DCT3/B/7)

Group C : *I am so sorry for the report Mister, because yesterday my father is sick, so I waiting my father in the hospital. I am so sorry, there is no signal to call you about the report. I am so sorry will do the report today and about two hour I will finish the report, if you want to waiting for me, you can wait the report finish in two hours.*
(DCT5/C/3)

3.2.2 Impoliteness Used in Complaint Responses

Instead of politeness strategies, which are used by the learners in all DCT scenarios, impoliteness strategy only used in certain DCT scenarios. Group C with the longest time study, found as the most frequently used impoliteness strategies when produced their complaint responses. However, each group had tendencies in use of impoliteness strategies: group B for example, tend to used Bald on Record impoliteness more frequently than group A, and group C; group C tend to used Negative impoliteness strategy more frequently than group A and group B; while group A tend to used Negative impoliteness, rather than Bald on Record impoliteness and positive impoliteness.

In producing impoliteness wording, group B and group C found were complicate rather than group A. For example, Group A used a single swear word 'fuck' and repeated; group B used more words to attack the complainer red face by used swear word, unpalatable question and threatening word; group C produced derogatory nomination and ask the complainer to throw out. e.g.:

Group A : *What the fuck?*
Yes, fuck you to bro, it easy came on. I have a job, I have a job
: *for seeing the sinetron you know. Fucking you.* (DCT9/A/5)

- Group B : *Yeah I see, this is a rubbish place. So what the hell? It's good for me, I helping my parents looking for some money. So, what the hell with you ha? You are shit a big baby boy. You don't know about life, the hard life. I will responsible, I will clean up your rubbish place. So, you must shut up your mouth now! And go away from me, you better go away from me or in ten minute I will poor all this rubbish to your mouth! (DCT8/B/5)*
- Group C : *Hey you stupid student, how can you say such a thing like that to me? Go on from this room right now! (DCT9/C/6)*

Discussion

In this sub point, the researcher discusses the research finding obtained from the data analysis. There are two points discusses in this sub chapter: 1) pragmatics development in complaint responses and, 2) politeness and impoliteness used in complaint responses.

Pragmatics Development in Complaint Response Strategies

The result of the study showed that different time study prompted different complaint responses behaviors produced by EFL learners (complainee). Related to complaint responses, Trosborg and Shaw (1998) complaint responses strategies became basic tools to classify the learners' complaint responses strategies use. There are five kinds of complaint response strategies, namely: 1) strategy apology, consist of direct apology (DA) and indirect apology (IA); 2) remedial act (RA); 3) opting out strategy (OO); and 4) evasive strategy (ES). The findings show that all strategies proposed by Trosborg and Shaw (1998) completed use by the learners to responds their complaint, the learners dominantly used strategy apology to handling the complaint and takes some responsibility (e.g. *I'm sorry Sir, I don't know if my behind is motorcycle. I'm sorry I will repair your motorcycle. DCT7/A/10*). However, complaint responses produced by the learners are varieties, some of the use strategy apology as an opening statements, but some of them prefers to produced tread statement (e.g. *Hey you stupid! Just be calm down, you wanna fight to me? Is it the stupid statement of you? I will take a responsible, I will repair you motorcycle and I will pay all your repairmen. So, just be calm down and don't be like that! I will punch your mouth, Oke I will pay all your motorcycle repairmen. I promise to you. – DCT7/B/5*). In line with, Fang (2015) the learners used strategy apology and non-apology. It can be classified, strategy apology involved direct apology and indirect apology; and strategy non-apology involved remedial act, opting out strategy, and evasive strategy.

Related to pragmatics development in complaint responses, there were three indicators use to measure: 1) the frequencies of strategies use, 2) the sequence order of the strategy, and 3) the pragmalinguistics of complaint responses. The finding showed that there were significant different frequencies and strategies used by learners in three groups. Learners in group B and group C were produced strategies more frequently than group A. It implied that learners with longer time study had more pragmatics knowledge and affected their output. The previous study conducted by Gu (2014) also proposes that the frequencies of strategies use are reflect some evidence of progress in both the use of linguistics structure and employment of some speech act. Gu (2014) found that learners pragmatics ability in English improve to some extent over the year of study. In their process of the study extent they automatically get explicit and or implicit pragmatics exposure, previous study (e.g. Rajabi, Azizifar, Gowhary, 2015; Devici, 2015) reported that explicit instruction was significantly help learners produce some speech act with appropriate strategies in different context situation, and it would improve interpersonal communication in multicultural societies.

Interestingly, the learners' different frequencies used did not reflect their head act sequences used. The three groups had more or less similar head act sequences. However, the learners tend to used apology strategy as opening statement. It can be assumes that the learners' apology strategy can minimize the degree of offend, and able to maintain interlocutors

relationship, and it is confirm Trosborg (1995) that apology is an effective strategy to maintain social harmony especially the relationship of complaine and complainer.

The pragmalinguistics used by the learners also found that group B and group C had more complicated wording than group A. It can be implied that more strategies produced, it also more words produced by the learners. Learners in group A as the starting point in ILP development showed that there were predominantly produced simple sentences (e.g. *I am so sorry, I don't know that the laptop is broke. I'm so sorry.* – DCT1/A/2) and became complex use by group B and group C (e.g. *I'm sorry I don't know intentionally to do it. I will help you to tell to your teacher, so you can follow the examination.* – DCT1/B/2; *I am sorry my friend, I broke your laptop, and I have done my job about the task, and I will help you about the task. I a sorry about this trouble to your laptop, I will promise to you to, and I will service your laptop, and I will do your task with my task.* – DCT1/C/3). As pragmalinguistics refers to words produce by EFL, Achiba (2002) in study of interlanguage pragmatics development in request states pragmatics development refers to pragmatics expansion, that is, the addition of new form to learners' pragmalinguistics repertoire in some speech act. The learners also had already acquired most of the pragmalinguistics features of some speech act in the final stage of development.

Nevertheless, learners' pragmatics development could not be considered from pragmalinguistics only, there socio-pragmatics related to their use of politeness also become essential point to be considered.

Politeness and impoliteness

The finding showed that the three groups had different strategies of politeness and impoliteness involved in their complaint responses. Related to their politeness used, the finding showed that the learners involved politeness in every condition in their complaint responses, there were positive politeness, negative politeness, and combination strategy used. Group B and group C with longer EFL time study produced politeness more than group A with the shortest EFL time study. Nevertheless, positive politeness predominantly used by group A, group B often used negative politeness and group C tend to used combination strategy both positive and negative politeness.

Against with the politeness used, impoliteness did not involve in every condition in their complaint responses, there were certain condition involves impoliteness. Group C with the longest EFL time study showed the most frequently used impoliteness, group B was less, and group A was the least. Wijayanto, et all, (2013) explore the politeness strategy in interlanguages pragmatics of complaints by Indonesian EFL learners, the finding indicated that very direct complaint produced to lower-unfamiliar hearer (complaine). While, in the present study related to the responses, impoliteness precisely used to respond unfamiliar-equal hearer (complainer).

Their different choices in using politeness and impoliteness strategy may not separate from learners' cultural dimensions, Perdana (2017) formerly found that EFL learners' cultural dimensions determine their used of politeness / impoliteness. Besides, their politeness or impoliteness understanding may also affect their politeness used. Ratnawinata (2014) proposed that the highest level had better understanding about politeness and impoliteness used better than middle or basic level. But, than it could not be totally used due to each learner had their own potential, and could not be absolutely same. In line with, Wijayanto and Laila (2013) have been found that each learner had their own developmental pattern.

4. CONCLUSION

After analyzed the data and discussing the findings, the present study concludes some essential points: the three groups of EFL learners with different length of study indicate developmental process of EFL pragmatics to some extent over the years of the study. This can be indicated by their different use of complaint response strategies especially on the frequencies, the head act sequences, and pragmalinguistics used. The frequencies of appropriate use of the complaint responses significantly improve and their pragmalinguistics forms also develop to be more complex over the length of the study.

Learners with different time of EFL study (i.e., length of study) have different uses of politeness and impoliteness. This is also one of other fundamental factors in the development of their pragmatic competence. Their developing knowledge of politeness and impoliteness in EFL tend to induce their used of politeness much more frequently than impoliteness. Learners with longer time of learning produced politeness more often than impoliteness and vice versa. Besides, awareness of different social status and social distance also motivates the different use of politeness and impoliteness by the learners with different time of learning.

5. REFERENCES

- Brown, Penelope & Levinson, Stephen C. (1987). *Politeness some some universals in language usage*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Culpeper, Jonathan. (1996). Toward an Anatomy of Impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25, 349-367.
- Deveci, Tanju.(2009).The Use of Complaints In the Inter-language of Turkish EFL learners. *Colombia Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 25-42.
- Deveci, Tanju.(2015).The Complaint Speech Act Set Produced by University Students Speaking English as a Foreign Language. *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal*, 4(1), 2161- 2171.
- Fang, Ting.(2015).Taiwanese EFL Learners' Strategies in L2 Responses to Complaints. *English Teaching of Learning*, 32(2), 65- 85.
doi: 10.6330/ETL.2015.39.2.03
- Gu, Tongqing. (2014). Pragmatic Development of Chinese EFL Learners—A Study on FL Suggestions. *English Language Teaching*, 7(4): 147-157.
- Kasper, Gabriele and Kulka, Shosana Blum. (1993). *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Kasper, Gabriele and Rose, Kenneth R. (2002). *Pragmatic Development in a Second Language*. USA: Blackwell Publisher
- Khorshidi, Hasan Rasouli. (2013). Study Abroad and Interlanguage Pragmatic Development in Request and Apology Speech Acts among Iranian Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 6 (5): 62- 70.
- Khorshidi, Hassan Rasouli & Nimchahi, Abdolreza Bagherzadeh. (2013). Motivation and Interlanguage Pragmatics in Iranian English Language Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 6(6): 86- 96.
- Levinson, Stephen C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. (2000). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perdana, Hestuningtyas Maharani. (2017). The Students' Comprehension on Politeness/ Impoliteness in Interlanguage Pragmatics of Complaints by EFL Learners In UMS. Unpublished *Thesis*. Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia.
- Rajabi, Shima; Azizifar, Akbar; & Gowhary, Habib. (2015). Investigating the of Explicit Instruction of Apology Speech Act on Pragmatic Development of Iranian EFL Learners. *Australian International Academic Centre*. 6(4): 53.

- Ratnawinata, Eni. (2014). A Cross Sectional Study on The Perception of (Im) Politeness Used in Complaint by Indonesian EFL Students. Unpublished *Undergraduate Thesis*. Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia.
- Sulastrri, Endang. (2014). Complaint Responses Used By Indonesian EFL Learners. Unpublished *Undergraduate Thesis*, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia.
- Tabatabaei, Soudabeh. (2015). Realization of Complaint Strategies by English and Persian Native Speakers. *MJAL*, 7(1): 123-145.
- Trosborg, Anna. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics: requests, complaints, and apologies*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wijayanto, Agus., & Laila, Malikatul. (November, 2013). Pragmatic Development in a Foreign Setting by Indonesian Learners of English: Evidence from Non Pedagogical Intervention. *presented at 1st COLALITE: Conference on Language, Linguistics and Literature*, Jendral Soedirman University, Purwokerto- Indonesia.
- Wijayanto, Agus., Laila, Malikatul., Prastyarini, Aryati., & Susiati, Susiati. (2013). Politeness in Interlanguage Pragmatics of Complaints by Indonesian Learners of English. *English Language Teaching*, 6(10): 188-201.
doi:10.5539/elt.v6n10p188