

## INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS OF SUGGESTION BY INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study is pragmatic study on Indonesian EFL learners in interlocutors to express giving suggestion strategies. This study was conducted to analyze the suggestion strategies and politeness strategies used by Indonesian EFL learners by using qualitative approach. Subjects of this study are twenty of first semester and twenty of third semester by Indonesian EFL learners in Java. Data for this study is taken from respondents through the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which consisted of nine situations with different familiarities and social status. Respondents in each semester are asked to write the expression of giving suggestion to complete the DCT. Their responses are collected to be analyzed based on the suggestion strategies by Guerra and Martinetz and also to be analyzed based on the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson. The findings of the study show that most of the respondents from Indonesian EFL learners utilized Direct Suggestion in the form of performative verb and imperative, followed by Conventionalized Forms Suggestion in the form of possibility, should, conditional, recommend, interrogative forms. The other finding that Indonesian EFL learners utilized Bald On-Record strategies of politeness in their giving suggestion.

**Keywords:** *interlanguage pragmatic, suggestion strategies, politeness strategies*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Interlanguage pragmatic is branch of linguistics. It is the study about the language produced by foreign language or second language learners. If we know a lot about the interlanguage pragmatic, we are able to detect the country of person. According to Huang (2010:682) "Interlanguage Pragmatics theory, the two pillars of the theory of pragmatics and second language acquisition theory are cross-cultural language learning of the study". So, when we learn about interlanguage pragmatic, we can know the characteristic of each regions and countries.

The suggestion can be from family, friends, and other persons. It can happen anywhere and any times. Many previous studies investigated about how to use suggestion strategies by EFL/ESL learners in some countries such as Iran, Chinese, Persia, and Indonesia. Many previous studies had investigated how to increase pragmatic competence in suggestion speech act by EFL/ESL learners with kinds of instructions (e.g., Pishghadam & Sharafadini, 2011; Bu, 2011; Salemi, Rabiee & Ketabi, 2012; Rajabi & Farahian, 2013; Jayantri, 2014; Gu, 2014; Farnia, Sohrabie & Sattar, 2014; Aminifard, Safaei & Askari, 2014; and Abolfathiasl & Abdullah, 2015). Those particularly addressed whether culture, social distance in relation with gender influences in producing the type of suggestion strategies through oral and written. Most studies were conducted for the both of native and non-native speaker, the random learners and the same semester.

This study aims at understanding how Indonesian EFL learners in Java region apply suggestion strategy and politeness strategy. Knowing whether environment becomes the

influenced produce the suggestion strategies in communication. So, the writer is very interested in conducting research on suggestion strategy used by Indonesian EFL learners in Java district. This study will take the first semester and the third semester students of English Department of which university as the subjects and the title of this research is *Interlanguage Pragmatics of Suggestion by Indonesian EFL Learners*.

## B. LITERARY REVIEW

Learners learn foreign language which is not first language. They face the difference with the first language. Researching foreign language is part of several specializations in interlanguage studies. According to Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993:3) "ILP is one of several specializations in interlanguage studies, contrasting with interlanguage phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. As a subset of pragmatics, ILP figures as a sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, or simply linguistic enterprise, depending on how one defines the scope of pragmatics". Interlanguage pragmatic is close with sociolinguistic or psycholinguistic because of the correlation by pragmatic. Some of few researchers had researched about interlanguage pragmatic of speech act.

The first previous study is *Pishghadam & Sharafadini (2011)*. They investigated to conduct a contrastive analysis between English and Persian with regard to suggestion speech act. To this end, some Iranian university students were asked to complete a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) consisting of six situations in which their suggestion act was explored. The research data was analyzed using percentage and Chi-square test. The study findings were compared with the previous research carried out by Jiang (2006) exploring natives' use of suggestion act in order to detect the similarities and variations between 2 cultures. The results revealed the variations in almost most of the suggestion types. Furthermore, gender proved to be a significant factor in the production of suggestion strategies. Finally, pedagogical implications were discussed in the context of second language learning. The second previous study is *Bu (2011)*. He investigated pragmatic transfer in suggestion strategies by Chinese learners of English. The subjects of the study include ten native English speakers, ten Chinese learners of English and ten native Chinese speakers. All of them are university students. The classification of suggestion strategies is mainly based on Hinkel's study. The data is collected by means of a Discourse Completion Test questionnaire. The Chi-square test is used to compare frequencies of the use of suggestion strategies by the native English group, by the Chinese learner of English group and by the native Chinese group. Results indicate that although all three groups use opting out suggestion strategies the most frequently and direct suggestion strategies the least frequently, the Chinese learner of English group displays direct suggestion strategies and hedged suggestion strategies more frequently than the native English group. Such pragmatic transfer is transferred from Chinese culture and teaching induced errors respectively, which provides pedagogical implications for both language teachers and language learners. The third previous study is *Jayantri (2014)*. She investigated the pragmalinguistic forms used in the suggestion and to describe the differences of strategies suggestions both by fourth semester female and male students of English Department Muhammadiyah University in the speaking class 2011. This study uses descriptive qualitative method. The data are the written text of suggestion utterances used in the speaking class 2011. The data of both pragmalinguistic forms were analyzed by Martinez-Flor and the differences of strategies suggestions were analyzed by Martinez-Flor. The technique of data collection are Observation in the Speaking Class, Recording the data of using DCT, Interview of the data, Classifying Suggestion the DCT of English Department of UMS. The research finding showed that there are eight kinds of suggestion utterance: direct performative verb, direct noun of suggestion, conventionalized forms possibility/probability,

conventionalized forms should, conventionalized forms conditional, indirect impersonal, hints, and certain modals and semi-modals used in the speaking class.

The similarities between this study and the previous study are how use of suggestion strategies by EFL learners. The writer focus on the variety of suggestion strategies by EFL learners. The difference between this research and the previous studies are from the subjects are involved. The writer in this research uses the first semester and the third semester in English Department. The location of subject is in the Java region of Indonesia. The title of this study is *Interlanguage Pragmatics of Suggestion by Indonesian EFL Learners*.

Pragmatics is branch of linguistics which is concern the meaning based on the context. Pragmatics studies how people understand and produce a communicative act or speech act in a situation which is generally a conversation. It is the way in appreciate everybody because people have different words to deliver their think in the same understanding. Pragmatic data consist of utterances. According to Yule (1996:3) stated that “pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or reader”. When we communication of course involving between speaker and listener and they are able to understand each other if they know the meaning utterance or sentences in communication. Pragmalinguistics is part of pragmatics, so pragmalinguistics and pragmatics are connected each other. According to Leech in Archer (2005:4) is aware that “specific pragmatic descriptions ultimately have to be relative to specific social conditions”. According to Leech in Fauziati (2009: 210) “proposes two further pragmatic systems.” Pragmalinguistics, which accounts for the more linguistic end of pragmatics, a particular resource which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions and Sociopragmatics which studies the more specific ‘local’ condition of language use. Pragmatic system has two features, they are pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. So, pragmalinguistics and sociolinguistics have correlation in making pragmatics.

Everyday in our life, we need communication so we are called social human. According to Rickheit (2008:1) “communicative competence is fundamental for a successful life in our society as it is of great importance for all areas of life”. Communication can happen in verbal and non-verbal. The communication well can occur if we have knowledge or capability in communication. Pragmatic competence is the ability to make use of a variety of language functions. We can certainly define the appropriate use of language in different situation. So, we have to say something based on the situation itself. According Chomsky in Ifantidou (2014:2) “pragmatic competences is the characterizes as knowledge of the conditions, appropriate manner and purposes of language use, due to which communicators can relate intentions and purposes to the linguistic means at hand”.

Interlanguage is nonnative speakers when they use a foreign language in their second language. There are different ways of nonnative speakers when using a foreign language compared to the native speaker itself. According to Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993: 196) “interlanguage pragmatics is concerned with the ways in which nonnatives do things with words in a second language. The phenomena investigated from this perspective may relate to both pragmatic and discourse knowledge”. When we talk about interlanguage, it can be related to both pragmatic and discourse knowledge. Speech act can be classified in three categories. There are locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. The description of the category speech act is based from Austin and Searle. In utterances have the goal and the function. Base on the goal of utterance we can use speech act. The term speech act was made by Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1969). Austin makes between three kinds of speech act, there are: “Locutionary act, it is performing the act of saying something. The example is he said to me ‘Shoot her!’ meaning by ‘shoot’ shoot and referring by ‘her’ to her. Illocutionary act, it is performing an act in saying something. The example is he urged (or

advised, ordered) me to shoot her. Perlocutionary act, it is performing an act by saying something. The example is he persuaded me to shoot her.

There are kinds of the speech act of suggestion according to Guerra and Martinez study (2006) with four categories there are Direct Suggestion, Formalized Forms; Indirect Suggestion; and Non-Conventionalized Forms. Categories of Direct Suggestions are divided into Performative Verb with example is "I suggest that you" and Imperative with example "trying using...". Category of Conventionalized Forms are divided into Interrogative Forms, Possibility, Should, Conditional, Need, and Recommend. Category of Indirect Suggestions is divided into Impersonal. Category of Non-Conventionalized Forms are divided into Inclusive 'we', Other Formulae such as Obligation, Likes and Dislikes, Just Giving Suggestion without using any structure, and Not Giving a Suggestion. Brown and Levinson agree with Lakoff that the foremost aim of politeness is avoiding conflict. The politeness has the goal to give care and respect each other.

Brown and Levinson sum up human politeness behaviour in four strategies: *bald on record*, *positive politeness*, *negative politeness*, and *off-record-indirect* strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987:92). The *bald on-record strategy* does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's "face". There are two strategies; those are cases of non-minimization of the face threat and cases of FTA-oriented bald-on-record-usage. The *positive politeness strategy* shows you recognize that your hearer has a face to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and expresses group reciprocity. According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 103-129), there are fifteen strategies can be used to express positive politeness. The *negative politeness strategy* recognizes the hearer's face. Negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the H's negative face, i.e., his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his action unimpeded. Brown and Levinson (1987) regard negative politeness as the heart of respect behaviour, performing the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness are divided into five strategies: be direct, don't presume, don't coerce hearer, communicate speaker's want to not impinge on hearer, redress other wants of hearer's. *Off-record indirect strategies* take some of the pressure off. According to Brown & Levinson (1987:211), the last strategy of politeness is off record indirect strategies. If a speaker wants to do an FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, he can do it off record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it. Off record more indicated to 'indirect speech'. Off record strategy consist of two main strategies, there are invite conversational implicature and be vague or ambiguous.

### C. RESEARCH METHOD

The approach this research is a qualitative method with the type of survey. This type of research is chosen because the data are one of social phenomena that is language usage. In this research, the writer collects the data of suggestion strategy by Indonesian EFL learners. This research has function to know how Indonesia EFL learners understanding. A research includes research questions, data collection, analysis, interpretation and report writing. According to Creswell (2007:6) "The research follows the basic process of research such as introduction, questions, methods of data collection and analysis". The object of this research is suggestion strategies and politeness strategies were used in written expression used by Indonesian EFL learners. The subjects of this research are Indonesian EFL learners in Java. The number of this subject is forty persons. They are twenty persons of first semester and twenty persons of third semester of English department on Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The data of the research are written data of the suggestion strategies and politeness strategies used by Indonesian EFL learners. The data source is taken from the result of

discourse completion tasks (DCTs) that included the suggestion strategies and politeness strategies done by Indonesian EFL learners. The data were collected by DCTs. The data were collected from EFL Indonesian learners in Java. Researcher made DCTs in short written description of scenarios. The DCTs is completed with some instructions how the learners or the informants should give their answers. The learners were asked to write the suggestion sentences what he or she would say, based on the provided situations (Brown, 2001). Adding the social situations in DCTs are controlled, expected the instrument is capable of bring out responses that reflect social status and other contextual variables (Kwon, 2004). Technique of Analyzing Data is after gathering the data, the writer analyzed the data by doing some steps, as follows: the first is giving code to the data. The writer gives the code that consisted of describing from Discourse Completion Test/ Semester/ Number of the Sentence/ Using Suggestion Strategy; the second is finding out suggestion strategies are used by Indonesian EFL learners in different semesters used the type of suggestion strategies based on Guerra and Martinez's theory; the third is detecting politeness in the use of suggestion Indonesian EFL learners based on by Brown and Levinson's theory; and the last is drawing conclusion.

#### D. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

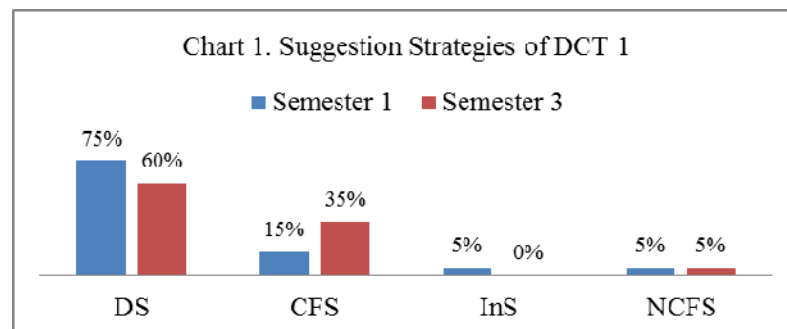
##### 1. Suggestion Strategies Conducted by Indonesian EFL Learners in the different Semesters

The suggestion strategies conducted by Indonesian EFL learners in the different semesters. The data of suggestion strategies were analyzed using the theory of suggestion strategy by Guerra and Martinez.

###### - The first situation (DCT1)

The first DCT was equal status in working place. The learners acted as worker in a work place that they have a close friend. The situation was you giving a suggestion to a close friend who has condition is not being healthy in the work day and the same time your close friend has wedding invitation. Participants of Indonesian EFL learners came from the first semester and the third semester.

The first DCT, the writer founded the different variation of the first semester used four categories of suggestion strategies consisted of DS, CFS, NCFS, and InS while the third semester used three categories of suggestion strategies consisted of DS, CFS and NCFS. The first semester used Direct Suggestion (DS) 75% almost similar learners of the third semester used Direct Suggestion (DS) 60%, Conventionalized Forms Suggestion (CFS) 15% by the first semester less than Conventionalized Forms Suggestion (CFS) 35% by the third semester, Indirect Suggestion (InS) 5% by the first semester but the third semester did not use it, and Non-Conventionalized Forms Suggestion (NCFS) 5% by the both semester. The most category of suggestion strategies was DS by the both semester, followed CFS and the least category of suggestion strategies was NCFS and InS. It could be seen the following as:



- a) Direct Suggestion (DS)
1. Performative Verb (PV)  
(DCT1/ST1/05/PV) **I suggest you to take rest in home** and I will inform your boss that you are not able to come.  
(DCT1/ST3/01/PV) **I suggest you go to your friend's wedding party** and I will tell CEO that you are in bad condition now.
  2. Imperative (It)  
(DCT1/ST1/01/It) Please, **take a rest today or your recovery** because you still have tomorrow for your job.  
(DCT1/ST3/12/It) I prefer for you to get someone who can send your praise and honor to the couples who have married. **Have someone to tell to your Boss that you cannot come to office.** Get someone to send your permission to leave work or medical record from doctor that states that you are sick.
- b) Conventionalized Forms Suggestion (CFS)
1. Conditional (C)  
(DCT1/ST1/04/C) You have obligation in our job place, so **if you finished your job you can go to your friend marriage** but if you not finished it yet, you have to finished it first.
  2. Interrogative Forms (IF)  
(DCT1/ST3/03/IF) Hey Dude, I feel not good with my body. **Can you replace me to come a meeting?** If you help me it is very good friend.
  3. Possibility (P)  
(DCT1/ST1/09/P) **You may take a permission** both are your working and wedding invitation.
  4. Recommendation (R)  
(DCT1/ST3/07/R) **I recommend you to go to doctor first** so you can do your activity.
  5. Should (S)  
(DCT1/ST3/09/S) Nadia you look so pale, I thought **you should go to the doctor and have rest at home.** You shouldn't to have work and go to wedding ceremony.
- c) Indirect Suggestion (InS)
1. Impersonal (Is)  
(DCT1/ST1/02/Is) **It's better if you not come to the wedding** and rest in home.
- d) Non-Conventionalized Forms Suggestion (NCFS)
1. Obligation (O)  
(DCT1/ST1/03/O) **You must take a rest.**  
(DCT1/ST3/02/O) **You must give him a call first** after you recovered then just go and visit to congratulate their marriage.

Based on the chart 1 and examples above, the writer founded sameness and difference that learners of the first semester used four categories of suggestion, there were DS, CFS, InS, and NCFS with six strategies while learners of the third semester used three categories of suggestion, there were DS, CFS, and NCFS with six strategies. The first semester and the third semester used strategies of DS which consisted of It and PV. The first semester used strategies of CFS which consisted of C and P while the third semester used strategies of CFS consisted of IF, R, and S. The first semester used strategy of InS was impersonal but the third semester did not use it. Then, the first semester and the third semester used strategy of NCFS was O.

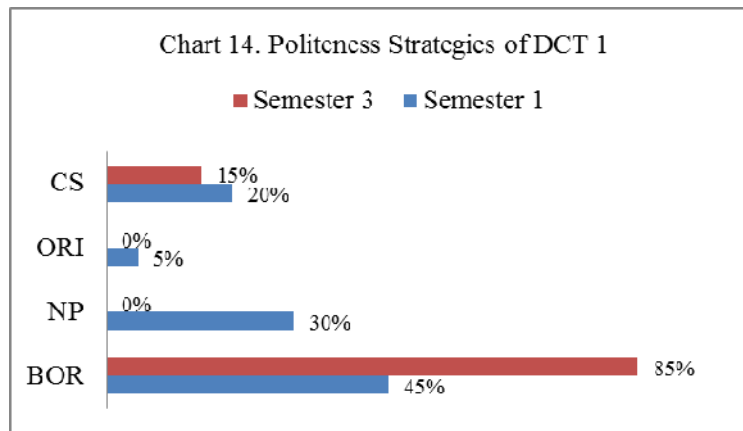
## 2. Politeness Strategies Conducted by Indonesian EFL Learners in the different Semesters

The politeness strategies conducted by Indonesian EFL learners in the different semesters. They from different semester who consisted of the first semester and the third semester in university. The data were analyzed using the theory of politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson. There are four major categories of politeness strategies. There are *bald on record*, *positive politeness*, *negative politeness*, and *off-record-indirect* strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987:92).

### - The first situation (DCT1)

The first DCT was equal status in working place. The learners acted as worker that they have a close friend. The situation was you giving a suggestion to a close friend who has condition is not being healthy in the work day and the same time your close friend has wedding invitation.

The first DCT, writer founded participants of Indonesian EFL learners who consisted of the first semester and the third semester used some politeness strategies in giving a suggestion. Some of them used suggestion strategies which sameness and difference in DCT 1. The writer founded politeness of the first semester used Bald on-Record (BOR) 45%, Negative Politeness (NP) 30%, Off-Record Indirect (ORI) and Combination Strategy (CS) 20% while the third semester used Bald on-Record (BOR) 85% and Combination Strategy (CS) 15% .



#### a) Bald On-Record (BOR)

(DCT1/ST1/05/BOR) **I suggest you to take rest in home** and I will inform your boss that you are not able to come.

(DCT1/ST3/01/BOR) **I suggest you go to your friend's wedding party** and I will tell CEO that you are in bad condition now.

The examples above were taken from the first semester and the third semester. The examples above used the first politeness strategy from Brown and Levinson's theory. It was Bald On-Record (BOR) which was included in cases of FTA-oriented bald on-record-usage. Those examples indicated the offers expression in imperative with saying "*I suggest you to take rest in home*" and "*I suggest you go to your friend's wedding party*". The two examples of "*I suggest*" had sameness in applied BOR with subject adding imperative.

#### b) Negative Politeness (NP)

(DCT1/ST1/04/NP) You have obligation in our job place, **soif you finished your job you can go to your friend marriage** but if you not finished it yet, you have to finished it first.

The example above was taken from the first semester in DCT 1 but the third semester did not use it in DCT 1. The example above used the third politeness strategy from Brown and Levinson's theory. It was Negative Politeness (NP) with said "*if you finished your job you can go to your friend marriage*". The example above indicated tentative consisted of the use of the subjunctive and the use of remote possibility markers where it don't coerce hearer. But, learners of the third semester did not use negative politeness strategy in DCT 1.

c) Off-Record Indirect (ORI)

(DCT1/ST1/02/ORI) **It's better if you not come to the wedding** and rest in home.

The example above was included of the fourth politeness strategy. It was Off-Record Indirect (ORI) from Brown and Levinson's theory. It indicated ORI when speaker said "*It's better if you not come to the wedding*". Speaker said "*it's better*" indicated give hints of ORI that giving association clue where speaker gives a related kind of implicature triggered by mentioning something associated with the act required of hearer. But, learners of the third semester did not use off-record indirect in DCT 1.

d) Combination Strategy (CS)

(DCT1/ST1/07/CS) **Rohim I give you a suggest to take a rest until you feel better** and forgot all and ask forgive to your friends.

(DCT1/ST3/13/CS) **Naila I give suggestion that you should go to doctor first.** Your healthy is number one and it's better if you contact your friend that you can't come, your friend of course will understand you.

The examples above were taken from the first semester and the third semester. The examples above included combination strategy. The combination strategy consisted of Positive Politeness (PP) and Bald On-Record (BOR) where the two strategies from Brown and Levinson's theory. The first strategy used markers such as address forms and ellipsis liked examples above "*Rohim and Naila*" who indicated positive politeness and the second strategy indicated offers expressions in imperative of cases of FTA-oriented bald on-record-usage by said "*I give you a suggest to take a rest until you feel better*" and "*I give suggestion that you should go to doctor first*" which used BOR of politeness strategy.

Guerra and Martinez study (2006) divided suggestion strategies into four categories, there are direct suggestion, conventionalized forms, indirect suggestion, and non-conventionalized forms. In those four categories divided into fourteen strategies, there are performative verb, imperative, interrogative forms, possibility, should, conditional, need, recommend, impersonal, using 'we', obligation, likes and dislikes, just giving suggestion without using any structure, and not giving a suggestion. Based on these data, the writer founded 20 data learners of the first semester and 20 data learners of the third semester. The total of the two groups was 40 data. The writer founded that two groups of learners used nine suggestion strategies, there are performative verb, imperative, interrogative forms, possibility, should, conditional, recommend, impersonal, and obligation. And other founded was Indonesian EFL learners influenced Bald On-Record of politeness strategies in giving a suggestion.

The writer founded learners of the first semester used Direct Suggestion (DS) 75%, Conventionalized Forms (CF) 15, Indirect Suggestion (InS) 5%, and Non-Conventionalized Forms (NCF) 5% while learners of the third semester used Direct Suggestion (DS) 60%, Conventionalized Forms (CF) 35%, and Non-Conventionalized Forms (NCF) 5%. Based on finding and analyzing was known that learners of the first semester and learners of the third



semester used the most strategies was performative verb and imperative of direct suggestion. The other suggestion strategies frequently used of the two groups was interrogative forms, possibility, should, conditional, and recommend of conventionalized forms. The least suggestion strategies which were used non-conventionalized forms was obligation and Indirect suggestion was impersonal.

Respondents of the first semester and third semester were from Indonesian, especially in Java region. This Java region had rule environment, so giving suggestion could influenced the rule. The rule was called “sopan santun”. Learners of the first semester and learners of the third semester used addressee based on sociopolitical and status which was influenced with rule of sopan santun in Java. Some of respondents or learners used addressee when gave a suggestion to other person. Learners of the first and learners of the third semester were influenced of politeness in gave a suggestion. They were influenced the most of politeness strategies in giving a suggestion was Bald On-Record (BOR).

#### E. CONCLUSION

Indonesian EFL learners which consisted of learners of the first semester and learners of the third semester used some strategies in giving a suggestion and they were influenced of politeness when giving a suggestion. They used the most suggestion strategies were performative verb and imperative of direct suggestion and influenced politeness strategies which the most was Bald On-record.

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