

Polite Requests by Korean Learners of Indonesian

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the polite requesting competence of 25 Korean learners of Indonesian. The data are compared to the requests produced by 25 Indonesian native speakers. Based on a questionnaire of politeness in three socially different situations, the Korean and Indonesian participants in this study were asked to make requests in the three situations. The situations were classified according to the three politeness systems on the basis of social relationship between speaker and addressee: hierarchy, deference, and solidarity. This study demonstrates that both groups tend to use the query preparatory strategy in making requests. However, due to cultural differences between Korea and Indonesia, the respondents in the two groups behave differently in terms of how they modify the head acts and how they use the politeness markers. In addition to that, this study also shows that in performing polite requests the Korean learners lack some pragmatic knowledge in applying the passive form *di-* and third person possessive pronoun *-nya* 'him/her' which are commonly used by Indonesian speakers to avoid the direct form *you* or *your*.

Key words: Second language learning; Politeness; Request strategies

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INTRODUCTION

In learning a second language, the knowledge of language itself will not be useful if it is not combined with the knowledge of language use (Hymes, 1972). Second language learners need to be equipped with pragmatic knowledge, or knowledge of how language should be related to a particular context or situation, so that they can judge the appropriateness of a given utterance in the target language. In this case, the learners are expected to learn the socio-cultural aspects of the speakers of the target language and to understand their ways of life and thinking.

A number of studies on second language learners have shown that due to the lack of this pragmatic competence, learners quite often have communicative problems in performing speech acts in the target language (e.g. Hassall, 2003; Umar, 2004; Liang & Han, 2005; Yu, 2006; Alfattah & Ravindranath, 2009; Abdolrezapour & Eslami-Rasekh, 2010; Shams & Afghari, 2011). In making requests, for example, learners may not be aware that they are carrying their own cultural background, so what they consider polite may be considered impolite by the speakers of the target language. If that happens, it is very likely that misunderstandings may happen.

In this small study, the writer looks at how 25 Korean students who are studying Indonesian make requests in three different situations in the target language. For a comparison, the writer collects data from 25 Indonesian native speakers who were asked to make the same requests in Indonesian. This study especially aims to investigate how the Korean learners of Indonesian adopt polite requesting strategies in the target language. It also focuses on how cultural differences affect the choice of polite requesting strategies in Indonesian.

1. POLITENESS THEORIES

Of the politeness theories proposed by a number of scholars, the politeness theory introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987) seems to be the most influential. Brown and Levinson argue that we all have two kinds of face wants: negative face and positive face. Negative face refers to the freedom of action and freedom from imposition, while positive face is the expression of involvement or belonging in a group, which includes the desire to be liked and approved of (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.62). For Brown and Levinson, speech acts can be “face threatening” in the sense that someone’s strategy, for example in making a request, may endanger his/her personal relationships with the addressee. In order to maintain a good relationship with the addressee, a speaker has to choose an appropriate strategy in performing speech acts.

In relation to the face wants, Brown and Levinson (1987) differentiate two different types of politeness: positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness is solidarity oriented and therefore it emphasizes shared attitudes and values. When someone talks to a friend, he/she will normally use the friend’s first name rather than his/her last name. This indicates that positive politeness is expressed when the interlocutors do not focus on their status differences. By contrast, negative politeness pays people respect and avoids intruding on them. Indirect requests such as “This job’s taking longer than we predicted” may be interpreted that you would like your addressee to stay longer to finish the job. Negative politeness, thus, is expressed when the speaker thinks that there is a social distance between him/her and his/her addressee.

The concept of status differences and social distance is also adopted in Scollon and Scollon’s (2001) politeness systems. Scollon and Scollon (2001) argue that there are three politeness systems on the basis of social relationship between speaker and addressee: (a) hierarchical politeness system, (b) deferential politeness system, and (c) solidarity politeness system. The hierarchical politeness system is one where the relationship between speaker and addressee expresses power and social distance [+Power, +Distance]. In the deferential politeness system, the interlocutors are considered to be equals or near equals but treat each other at a distance [-Power, +Distance]. As for the solidarity politeness system, it involves neither power difference nor social distance [-Power, -Distance].

As maintaining and saving desired aspects of others’ face are crucial to performing politeness, the two elements, power and distance, have to be carefully considered before a speaker chooses a strategy. Brown and Levinson (1987) propose four different types of politeness strategies in order to avoid face threatening:

1) *Bald on record strategy*: This strategy is normally used by a speaker whose relationship with the addressee is

quite close. An example is a direct request expressed by a mother to her daughter: “Do the dishes. It’s your turn.”

2) *Positive politeness strategy*: This strategy is commonly used in situations where the interlocutors know each other fairly well. An example of positive politeness strategy is a request such as “I know you’ve been really busy lately, but could you type this letter for me?”

3) *Negative politeness strategy*: This strategy presumes that the addressee’s negative face is potentially threatened if the speaker does not show respect to the addressee. By uttering a direct request such as “I need \$50” the possibility is that the speaker may not get what he wants if his/her addressee’s negative face is uncomfortable. However, by using a negative politeness strategy such as “If it is possible, I would like to borrow \$50 from you. I need some money to purchase an important book” it is more likely that the speaker will achieve his/her goal because he/she gives more freedom of choice to the addressee.

4) *Off-the-record strategy*: This strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from imposing his/her will on the addressee. For example, by saying “It’s getting hot in here” the speaker may suggest that the addressee would open the windows or turn on the air conditioning without directly asking him/her to do so.

In relation to the strategies adopted in making requests, Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p.18) propose nine types of strategies, ranging from the most direct to the most indirect. They are:

1) *Mood derivable*: utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb indicates illocutionary force. E.g. Clean up the mess.

2) *Performatives*: utterances in which the illocutionary force is clearly mentioned. E.g. I’m asking you to close the window.

3) *Hedge performatives*: utterances in which the statement of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions. E.g. I would like to ask you to prepare my bill.

4) *Obligation statements*: utterances which state the hearer’s obligation to perform the act. E.g. You have to clean the mess.

5) *Want statements*: utterances which indicate the speakers desire that the hearer performs the tasks. E.g. I really wish you’d stop smoking.

6) *Suggestory formulas*: utterances which include a suggestion to do something. E.g. How about lending me some money.

7) *Query preparatories*: utterances containing reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability, willingness) as conventionalized in different languages. E.g. Could you lend me five pounds, please? Would you mind closing the door behind you?

8) *Strong hints*: utterances containing partial reference to an element needed for the performance of the act. E.g. You have left the kitchen in a terrible mess.

9) *Mild hints*: utterances that make no reference to the request proper, but can be interpreted as requests by context. E.g. I'm a nun (in response to a persistent hassler).

These strategies are often referred to as head acts (Blum-Kulka, 1982), or the main strategies that are employed to make requests. The head acts are often accompanied by the use of lexical/phrasal downgraders (internal modification), such as the use of *please*, or supportive moves (external modification).

2. POLITENESS ACROSS CULTURES

Performing speech acts can be face-threatening, in the sense that there is a risk that a speaker will threaten the hearer's face. Although politeness is universal, different cultures around the world have different notions and expectations about how speech acts should be expressed in language. Intercultural miscommunication may occur due to the cultural differences between a speaker and his/her interlocutor.

A study which is similar to this present study is conducted by Lee (2011). He makes a comparative study of Chinese learners of English and native English speakers in performing requests. The results of the study indicate that the lack of "politeness" in Chinese learners of English is caused by what Lee called "first culture interference." As Lee (2011, p.42) further mentions, "It is possible and quite probable that most Chinese learners of English below the advanced level are not aware of this difference in cultural expectations of politeness, as it is not a topic that is commonly addressed in English classes here in China." The different politeness behavior between English and Chinese is also observed by Yin (2009). Differences of linguistic politeness such as addressing, greeting, and complimenting between English and Chinese are not realized by the EFL learners in China and therefore should be addressed in EFL teaching (Yin, 2009, p.154).

Another study is by Park (2001), who focuses on the complaints made by Korean EFL learners. The data demonstrates that the Korean EFL learners perform pragmatic transfer from Korean to English. Although the learners wish to be polite and face-saving, their English complaints "can be perceived as aggressive, challenging, inappropriate and even rude" (Park, 2001, p.206).

The fact that politeness is culture-specific is also shown by Ogiermann (2009), who conducted a study on indirectness and polite requests in English, German, Polish and Russian. The four examined languages differ in terms of the construction patterns in making requests. The English and German data indicate that speakers of the two languages prefer to use much less imperative constructions than the Polish and Russian counterparts. However, despite the low frequency of politeness markers in Polish and Russian, these two languages show a particular

preference for "formulaic preparators and expressions of gratitude emphasizing the imposition of the request" and "internal and external modifiers minimizing the duration of the favour" (Ogiermann, 2009, p.210).

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigates polite requests produced by the Korean learners of Indonesian and focuses on two questions:

- What kind of politeness strategies are applied by the Korean learners of Indonesian?
- How do cultural differences affect their choice of polite requesting strategies in Indonesian?

4. SUBJECTS, INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE

4.1 Subjects

The subjects under this study are 25 Koreans – 15 males and 10 females – who were studying Indonesian at a university Language Center in Jakarta, Indonesia during the period of January 2010 to December 2010. The learners, who were in the upper intermediate level when the data were collected, were adults whose age varied between 25 to 45 years old. Some were employees who worked at Korean companies in Jakarta, some were students, and some others were housewives. In order to see the differences between politeness strategies used by the Koreans and Indonesians, the writer also looked at the politeness strategies produced by 25 Indonesian native speakers (they are all employees), 17 females and 8 males, aged between 30 to 51 years old. The same instrument and procedure were applied to both groups.

4.2 Instrument and Procedure

The instrument used in this study is a discourse completion test (DCT), which was originally developed for comparing the speech act realization patterns of native speakers and learners (Blum-Kulka, 1982). The test consists of six scenarios representing socially different situations. The situations were classified according to the three politeness systems proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001): hierarchy, deference, and solidarity. The DCT for both the Koreans and the Indonesians was presented in English for each situation (see Appendix). However, all participants were encouraged to ask questions for clarity if they had problems understanding the situations. Below is a brief description of each situation in the test:

Hierarchical politeness system (+Power, +Distance)

- Scenario 1: asking your professor for an extension to submit a paper
- Scenario 2: asking your boss for a permission to go home earlier

Deferential politeness system: (–Power, +Distance)

- Scenario 3: asking a colleague to lend you a pen
- Scenario 4: asking a stranger to lend you a lighter

Solidarity politeness system: (–Power, –Distance)

- Scenario 5: asking a friend to lend you his/her note
- Scenario 6: asking your younger brother to turn down the volume of the TV

The first two formal situations (Scenario 1 and 2) belong to the hierarchical politeness system where the relationship of the interlocutors expresses power and distance (+Power, +Distance). In this politeness system one person is in a more powerful position and the other in a subordinate position. The next two situations (Scenario 3 and 4) belong to a deferential politeness system where both interlocutors are of equal social status but share a distant relationship (–Power, +Distance). Of these two situations, a lower level of distance is observed in Scenario 3 since both subjects are colleagues. As for Scenario 4, both subjects do not know each other and it is the first time they met. The last two situations (Scenario 5 and 6) belong to the solidarity politeness system where both interlocutors are of equal status and their relationship is close (–Power, –Distance).

In order to find the main strategy types used by both groups, the elicited data are analyzed based on Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) classification. Another aspect that is analyzed is the use of modification to the request strategies, which involves internal modifications and external modifications. Finally, some cultural differences between Korea and Indonesia are discussed in order to see how they influence the politeness strategies employed by the Korean learners of Indonesian.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section focuses on the results of the DCT, followed by a discussion about the findings. It deals with the use of request strategies and modifications to the request strategies used by both the Korean learners of Indonesian and the Indonesian native speakers. It also addresses the cross-cultural differences that affect the choice of the politeness patterns.

5.1 Request Strategies

Following Blum-Kulka (1982), the data were analyzed to find the request strategies applied by both groups. The six scenarios represent three different situations which depict three kinds of relationship between speaker and addressee. Scenario 1 and 2 indicate a hierarchical politeness system, Scenario 3 and 4 a deferential politeness system, and Scenario 5 and 6 a solidarity politeness system.

Scenario 1 and 2: Hierarchical Politeness Relationship

The first two scenarios designed for the DCT indicate a hierarchical politeness system where the relationship between speaker and addressee expresses social power and distance. Below are some sample responses for

scenario 1 and 2.

Scenario 1: You are a university student. Your paper is due tomorrow but you need a few more days to finish it. You ask your professor for an extension. What would you say to him/her?

1) *Maaf, saya perlu waktu untuk menyelesaikan paper.* "Excuse me, I need time to finish my paper." (Korean)

2) *Pak, maaf sebelumnya. Dikarenakan paper saya belum selesai, bolehkah saya meminta perpanjangan waktu 3 hari untuk menyelesaikannya?* "Sir, my apologies in advance. Because I haven't finished my paper, can I ask for a three-day extension?" (Indonesian)

Scenario 2: You are an employee. You are not feeling well and you ask your boss whether you could go home earlier. What would you say to him/her?

1) *Boss, apakah saya bisa pulang duluan? Sebenarnya badan saya tidak enak* "Boss, can I go home earlier? Actually I am not feeling well." (Korean)

2) *Pak, saya mau minta ijin pulang, karena saya merasa tidak enak badan.* "Sir, I'd like to ask for a permission to go home, because I'm not feeling well." (Indonesian)

The following table shows the request strategies used by the two groups.

The above table shows that both groups favor to use an indirect request type: query preparatory. Only 4% of the Koreans prefer a direct strategy: want statement. None of the Indonesians, in this case, use the direct strategy.

Table 1
Request strategies for Scenario 1 and Scenario 2

Relationship	Scenario	Strategy	Koreans	Indonesians
Hierarchical (+Power, +Distance)	1	Want statement	4%	0%
		Query preparatory	96%	100%
	2	Want statement	16%	4%
		Query preparatory	84%	96%

Scenario 3 and 4: Deferential Politeness Relationship

Scenario 3 and 4 are designed to elicit request strategies indicating a deferential relationship, where speaker and addressee are more or less at the same social level but they treat each other at a distance. Below are some sample responses:

Scenario 3: You are a university professor. You and your colleague (Professor Cho) are in the middle of a discussion. You want to write down something but you do not bring your pen. Then you asked him whether he could lend you his pen. What would you say to him?

1) *Saya lupa membawa pen. Saya bisa meminjam pen Anda?* 'I forgot to bring a pen. Can I borrow yours?' (Korean)

2) *Prof. Cho, hari ini saya lupa membawa pena. Bolehkah saya meminjam pena Anda?* 'Prof Cho, today I forgot to bring a pen. May I borrow yours?' (Indonesian)

Scenario 4: You want to smoke but you don't bring a lighter with you. Then you ask a stranger for a light for your cigarette. What would you say to him/her?

1) *Permisi Pak. Bisakah Anda meminjamkan korek api*

sebantar? ‘Excuse me, Sir. Can you lend me your lighter for a moment?’ (Korean)

2) *Maaf, boleh pinjam korek api?* ‘Excuse me, can I

borrow your lighter?’ (Indonesian)

The following table shows the request strategies used by the two groups:

Table 2
Request Strategies for Scenario 3 and Scenario 4

Relationship	Scenario	Strategy	Koreans	Indonesians
Deferential (–Power, +Distance)	3	Mood derivable	0%	4%
		Query preparatory	100%	96%
	4	Mood derivable	0%	0%
		Query preparatory	100%	100%

Like the first two scenarios, in these two scenarios almost all learners also prefer to use the query preparatory strategy. For the deferential relationship, all the Koreans use the query preparatory strategy, indicating that they pay attention to the [+Distance] relationship.

Scenario 5 and 6: Solidarity politeness relationship

The last two scenarios (Scenario 5 and 6) are designed to elicit a solidarity relationship. In this case there is neither power nor distance between speaker and addressee. Interestingly, both the Indonesians and Koreans tend to use the query preparatory strategy for Scenario 5 but a more direct strategy (mood derivable statement strategy) for Scenario 6. However, the Koreans are more expressive and they sound very direct when the interaction involves siblings. The examples are stated below:

Scenario 5: You missed an important lecture yesterday. You want to borrow your friend’s notebook for just one day. What would you say to him/her?

1) *Saya tidak bisa menghadiri kelas kemarin. Bolehkah saya meminjam buku catatan Anda?* ‘I couldn’t attend class yesterday. May I borrow your notebook?’ (Korean)

2) *Aku kemarin gak ikut kuliah. Aku pinjam catatanmu dong.* ‘I didn’t attend class yesterday. Lend me your notebook.’ (Indonesian)

Scenario 6: You are in your room doing your homework. You think that the TV is too loud. You ask your younger brother who is watching TV to turn down the volume. What would you say to him?

1) *Hey, kurangi suara TV!* ‘Hey, turn down the TV volume!’ (Korean)

2) *Dik, tolong kecilin suaranya.* ‘Younger sibling, please lower the volume.’ (Indonesian)

The following table shows the request strategies used by the two groups:

Table 3
Request Strategies for Scenario 5 and Scenario 6

Relationship	Scenario	Strategy	Koreans	Indonesians
Solidarity (–Power, – Distance)	5	Want statement	40%	20%
		Query preparatory	60%	80%
	6	Mood derivable statement	92%	76%
		Query preparatory	8%	24%

As seen in the above table, although scenarios 5 and 6 indicate a solidarity relationship, it seems that for both the Koreans and Indonesians the quality of the relationship determines the politeness strategy. The degree of distance plays a significant role here. To a sibling, you can be very direct, but to a friend, the distance may not be as close as when you talk to your sibling.

One thing that is observable is that the Koreans have not developed the competence of using the informal language for this solidarity relationship. Informal *gak* (the formal form is *tidak* ‘no, not’), for example, only occurs in the Indonesian data.

5.2 Modifications to the Request Strategies

In the previous section we can see that basically both the Koreans and Indonesians apply the same strategies when they make requests in Indonesian. Although the politeness system indicates the same relationship, the quality of the relationship matters. The quality of distance and power between you and your colleague and you and a stranger you met on the street is not the same. The same thing also happens between you and your friend or between you and your sibling.

Apart from the request strategies mentioned in the previous sub-section, the two groups under this study also make modifications to the strategies by using some elements in order to mitigate or intensify the effect of their requesting strategies. This section discusses some typical modifications to the politeness strategies produced by both groups. The modifications involve (a) internal modifications, such as the use of address terms and politeness markers, and (b) external modifications, such as the use of additional statements prior or after the head acts.

5.2.1 Internal Modification

Internal modification to the request strategies is meant to give a semantic effect to the requests. It involves the use of address terms, politeness markers, and attracters.

5.2.1.1 Address Terms

The following table shows the types and frequency of use of the address forms used by the subjects for all scenarios.

Table 4
Use of Address Terms

Address terms	Indonesians	Koreans
<i>Pak</i> 'Sir'	74	11
<i>Bu</i> 'Madam'	23	8
<i>Prof</i> 'Professor'	5	9
<i>Dik/Adik</i> 'Younger sibling'	19	1
<i>Mbak</i> 'Older sister'	5	-
<i>Mas</i> 'Older brother'	4	-
<i>Boss</i> 'boss'	-	2

Table 4 shows that the Indonesians use more kinship terms of address than the Koreans. The address term "*Pak*", for example, occurs 74 times and is distributed in all situations except for situation 5 and 6. However, in the case of professional titles such as *Prof* and *Boss*, the Koreans use these more frequently than the Indonesians.

5.2.1.2 Politeness Markers

The table below shows the politeness markers used by both groups and their frequency of use:

Table 5
Use of Politeness Markers

Politeness markers	Indonesians	Koreans
<i>Tolong</i> 'help'	22	2
<i>Mohon</i> 'beg'	5	-
<i>Maaf</i> 'sorry'	12	7
<i>Permisi</i> 'excuse me'	-	5

Table 5 indicates a significant difference between the Koreans and the Indonesians in terms of the use of politeness marker *tolong* 'help.' For the Indonesians, *tolong* can be used in any situations, even in a solidarity relationship. For the Koreans, on the other hand, the closer your relationship is, the more direct you can be.

Another politeness marker that is not used by the Koreans is *mohon* '(I) beg'. This word is usually used when you make a request to someone older than you are or someone you respect.

Interestingly, the Koreans make a distinction between *maaf* "sorry" and *permisi* "excuse me". This is because each of the words has its equivalence in the Korean language. "Sorry" is equivalent to *mi an ham ni da*, and "excuse me" to *sil ré ham ni da* (personal communication).

5.2.1.3 Attracters

Apart from address terms and politeness markers, some learners use attracters or attention getters such as 'hey'.

Table 6
Use of Attracters

Attracters	Indonesians	Koreans
Hey	-	7

The attracter *hey* is used by the Koreans in situation 8, in which the relationship between the speaker and the addressee is very close. None of the Indonesians use this kind of attracter.

5.2.2 External Modification

In general, the two groups do make considerable external modifications to the head acts or request strategies, especially for the hierarchical and deferential relationships. The modifications can be either prior or after the head acts. Examples are the following:

Mohon maaf, Bu. Apakah diperbolehkan saya minta perpanjangan waktu untuk mengumpulkan tugas karena masih belum selesai '(I) ask for forgiveness, Madam. Can I ask for an extension to submit my paper because I haven't finished it.' (Indonesian)

Ibu, saya belum menyelesaikan PR. Sebenarnya saya perlu waktu lagi. Maaf, Bu. 'Madam, I haven't finished my homework. Actually I need more time. I'm sorry, Madam.' (Korean)

An interesting case in the Korean data (Scenario 6) is the syntactic modification *Kalau begini, Anda² mungkin mati!* "If it is like this, you may die!" In Korean, this kind of expression is very commonly used among peers or siblings (personal communication). This indicates that in making this type of request, the Korean relies heavily on his native culture, which does not sound appropriate in Indonesian.

Tony, turunkan suaranya sangat tinggi. Ini mengganggu saya. Kalau tidak, saya akan berkata kepada Ibu. Kalau begini, Anda mungkin mati! Hehehe... 'Tony, turn down the volume. It disturbs me. If you don't do it, I'll let Mom know. If it is like this, you may die! Hehehe...'

The following table shows how the two groups make external modifications to the request strategies - either prior or after the head acts.

Table 7
Use of External Modifications

Relationship	Scenario	External Modifications	Koreans	Indonesians
Hierarchical (+Power +Distance)	1	Prior	20	23
		After	5	2
	2	Prior	25	25
		After	-	-
Deferential (-Power +Distance)	3	Prior	3	2
		After	5	8
	4	Prior	5	-
		After	-	3
Solidarity (-Power -Distance)	5	Prior	10	2
		After	5	11
	6	Prior	5	2
		After	10	20

Table 7 demonstrates that when the hierarchical relationship is valued, then speakers tend to use an external modification that is prior to the head acts. This indicates that the hearer's negative face is potentially threatened and so it is very important for the speakers to state a good reason for making the requests. In contrast, when the relationship is solidarity-oriented, the speakers – especially the Indonesians in the data – tend use an external modification after the head acts. This suggests

that for this particular situation, negotiation prior to the request is not considered important.

6. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KOREA AND INDONESIA

It is well-understood that cultural differences play a significant role in the realization patterns of speech acts. This means that in performing speech acts, second language learners tend to rely heavily on their own cultural backgrounds. This section will discuss the influence of cultural differences which affects the choice of polite requesting strategies in Indonesian.

Cross-cultural evidence that can be seen in the data is the use of address forms. As indicated in Table 4, the Koreans use fewer kinship terms of address such as *Pak*, *Bu*, *Mbak*, *Mas* in comparison to the Indonesian counterparts. Interestingly, however, they use more professional titles such as *Prof* and *Boss* than the Indonesians. In this case, it seems that there are some complex sociolinguistic factors that influence the proper choice of address terms. As observed by Hwang (1991, p.1), in contrast to the American culture, the Korean culture is oriented on "title + family name".

While American culture is first-name oriented, Korean culture is title and family-name oriented. Titles like "doctor", "professor", and "teacher" are used, with or without family names. In fact, English loan words such as "Mr.", "Mrs" and "Miss" are commonly used when there is no title on hand. First names in Korean culture are restricted in use. They are used most commonly among peer groups of children and young people, and by an older person addressing a child or younger person in the family.

In a personal communication with a Korean student, I found out that social status is a very important aspect in the Korean culture. When you address someone, you have to treat him/her with deference by mentioning his/her position if he/she has one. A teacher, for example, will be addressed by *sunsengnim* "teacher". A professor will be addressed as *kyusunim*. Someone who has the position of a manager will be addressed by Last Name + *kwazangnim* (e.g. *Zhang kwazangnim*). It is not surprising, then, that the Korean learners produce very few address terms as they may have difficulties in expressing the right address terms in Indonesian.

In contrast with the Koreans, the Indonesians use a variety of kinship terms of address. The most frequently used address forms used are *bapak/pak* "Mr./sir/father" and *bu/ibu* "Mrs./madam/mother" which can be used to address a stranger, someone with a higher position, or someone older. *Bapak/pak* or *bu/ibu* can occur by itself without being followed by a proper name. The address terms *Mbak* "older sister" and *Mas* "older brother" also occur in the Indonesian data, but they are not used by the Koreans. In Indonesian, the use of *Mbak* and *Mas* does not necessarily indicate that the interlocutor is older than the

speaker. They may be used to address a stranger or a fellow worker, or used as a polite way to avoid using names.

Another observable aspect is that Indonesians quite often use the politeness marker *tolong* "help". This word can be used for any politeness levels. In addition to *tolong*, the polite marker *mohon* "beg" is also used when the request is addressed to someone older or someone you respect. For the Koreans, it seems that a direct request is not necessarily a problem. As observed by Rue & Zhang (2008, p.294): "While direct requests may be considered impolite in other languages, this is not necessarily the case in Korean where the apparent impoliteness of a direct request is often mitigated by add-on honorifics."

A typical indirect politeness strategy that is lacking in the Korean data is the use of passive *di-* and second person pronoun *-nya* "his/her". In Indonesian, this negative politeness strategy is normally used in order to avoid the use of the address form *you* and third person pronoun *your*. The following examples will illustrate the typical elements used.

(a) The use of passive form *di-*

Unlike Western languages where the use of a second personal pronoun *you* is very common for a request, it is not the case in Indonesian. There is a tendency for the Indonesians avoid being direct by the use of passive form *di-*, as shown in the following Indonesian data:

Maaf Bu. Bolehkah waktu penyelesaian tugas ini diperpanjang?

Sorry Madam. can time completion task this **be** **lengthened**

'I'm sorry, Madam. Can the time of completion for this task be lengthened?'

(b) The use of third person possessive pronoun

Another typical indirect politeness element that is used by the Indonesians is the third person possessive pronoun *-nya*, which literally means "his/her." In this case, *-nya* is used to avoid the use of *you*, as in the following example:

Mas, boleh pinjam korek apinya?

Older may borrow lighter-his/her brother

'Older brother, may I borrow **your** lighter?'

CONCLUSION

Politeness is universal but the way people express it differs cross-culturally. The linguistic data provided in this paper shows how the Koreans and Indonesians respond to different situations using polite requesting strategies in Indonesian.

An interesting finding from this study is that both the Koreans and Indonesians do not use all nine request strategies that are proposed by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). The strategy that occurs mostly is query preparatory. Strategies such as suggestory formula, strong hint, or mild hint do not occur in the data. Further research that involves more participants may result in the use of more strategies.

For the Koreans, since hierarchy is a very significant aspect in their culture, the way they show it is by how they modify the head acts. The Indonesians, on the other hand, show distance or closeness in terms of the use of formal or informal language. Politeness marker *tolong* 'help' is often used by the Indonesians in any situations. *Mohon* 'beg' is another politeness marker that does not occur in the Korean data. In Indonesian, directness is usually shown not by the use of active imperative forms but by the way someone gives a command (tone, intonation, etc.).

Another interesting finding is the fact that the Koreans prefer to use professional titles than the kinship terms of address. In Korean, when two people of asymmetrical status are involved in a conversation, the one with a lower status will address the other with an honorific title. In Indonesian, on the other hand, kinship terms of address are more preferable than honorific titles.

Seemingly, the main problem for the Korean learners of Indonesian is that they do not have adequate knowledge in using typical indirect politeness strategies in the target language, such as the use of passive *di-* and third person possessive *-nya* in order to avoid the direct form of *you* or *your*.

This study confirms others' findings that pragmatic competence plays an important role in performing polite requesting. For the Koreans in this study, understanding the socio-cultural structure of the Indonesian speaking community will help them perform Indonesian polite requests more appropriately.

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APPENDIX 1

Name :
 Nationality :
 Age :
 Occupation :
 Gender : Male / Female

There are 6 scenarios below. You are expected to make a request in Bahasa Indonesia for each scenario. Suppose you were under the scenarios, what would you say? Please be as natural as possible.

SCENARIO 1

You are a university student. Your paper is due tomorrow but you need a few more days to finish it. You ask your professor for an extension. What would you say to him/her?

.....

SCENARIO 2

You are an employee. You are not feeling well and you ask your boss whether you could go home earlier. What would you say to him/her?

.....

SCENARIO 3

You are a university professor. You and your colleague (Professor Cho) are in the middle of a discussion. You want to write down something but you do not bring your pen. Then you asked him whether he could lend you his pen. What would you say to him?

.....

SCENARIO 4

You want to smoke but you don't bring a lighter with you. Then you ask a stranger for a light for your cigarette. What would you say to him/her?

.....

SCENARIO 5

You missed an important lecture yesterday. You want to borrow your friend's notebook for just one day. What would say to him/her?

.....

SCENARIO 6

You are in your room doing your homework. You think that the TV is too loud. You ask your younger brother who is watching TV to turn down the volume. What would you say to him?

.....

APPENDIX 2

Name :
 Nationality :
 Age :
 Occupation :
 Gender : Male / Female

There are 6 scenarios below. You are expected to **make a request in Bahasa Indonesia** for each scenario. Suppose you were under the scenarios, what would you say? Please be as natural as possible.

SCENARIO 1

You are a university student. Your paper is due tomorrow but you need a few more days to finish it. You ask your professor for an extension. What would you say to him/her?

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