

Request Strategies in Javanese and Balinese Speakers: A Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

This study utilizes qualitative descriptive research designs to analyze and compare the request strategies of Javanese and Balinese speakers based on cross-cultural pragmatic studies. The data were obtained using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) method which was compiled based on two social variables Brown & Levinson (1987), called power and distance from 24 Javanese speakers and 24 Balinese speakers and analyzed using the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) method from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), by classifying head acts in three strategies; 1) direct conventional, 2) indirect, and 3) nonconventional indirect. This study's results are generally dominated by direct conventional strategies, in which social variables, specifically power and distance, serve as the primary determinants in speech selection. While common patterns are observed in situations involving intimate relations or high-authority positions, such as interactions between friends, superiors and subordinates, or husbands and wives, significant disparities emerge in low-power contexts. Javanese speakers tend to employ conventional indirect strategies when interacting with lecturers, whereas Balinese speakers more frequently utilize such strategies in the context of children addressing parents. Culturally, the selection of these strategies is a manifestation of deeply rooted politeness values, specifically the concept of *andhap ashor* through

the *unggah-ungguh basa* system (Krama/Ngoko) in Javanese society, and the principle of *unggah-ungguhing basa Bali*, which is influenced by social stratification (*wangsa*) and the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy. Both aim to preserve social harmony and mutual respect within interpersonal interactions.

Keywords: *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics, Speech Act, Request Strategy, Javanese, Balinese*

INTRODUCTION

Requests are usually employed to ask the speech partner for something. Asking is a directive speech act performed so that the speech partner acts per the speaker's words (Searle, 1979). Directive speech acts can be performed in various ways based on the situation and relationship between speakers and speech partners, for example, speech acts intended to provide direction (Tseng, 2023), give orders (John et al., 2019), appeal (Vincent et al., 2023), and so on. The use of directive speech acts in the form of requests, for example, asking for something without having to inconvenience or offend speech partners, must be accompanied by the use of politeness devices, such as honorifics, hedges, or speech levels to minimize the occurrence of face-threatening acts (FTA) (Kroeger, 2018).

Speech acts require each individual in a cultural or ethnic group to have different ways, be they in terms of the strategies being employed, social factors, values, and so on. Wierzbicka (2003) explains cultural and language differences in the context of speech acts through the study of "different cultures; different languages; and different speech acts," that is to say, differing cultures shall have different languages. Different languages, in turn, have different speech acts. She highlights how language and culture impact the manners by which people convey messages, requests, or rejections, for example, within Javanese and Balinese communities, respectively.

Javanese people are considered delicate in conveying a request speech, and it shall be regarded as polite when the speech meets the principles of wisdom, the principle of formality, *tepa selira*, the principle of appreciation and humility, *andhap asor*, and the principle of indirectness (Rahadini & Suwarna, 2014). Politeness is also measured through the use of high, medium, and low levels of language (*krama-madya-ngoko*) (Beeman, 2014), which is known as the *unggah-ungguh* (Isfandani,

2017; Wahyuni, 2021). The employment of the *unggah-ungguh* is supported by the utilization of intonation, attitude, gestures, and facial expressions (Wardana et al., 2022). Errington (1998) posited that the emergence of speech styles based on the level of language is a symbol of Javanese ethnicity (Forth, 2014). As with the Javanese, the Balinese also have a communication system called the *anggah-ungguhing basa* (language levels) or the *sor singgih basa* (Suandi & Indriani, 2016). The utilization of this level is influenced by social stratification and can generally show the language politeness of the Balinese people (Paramartha & Erawati, 2024).

In cross-cultural communications, the request strategies' role is crucial in achieving communication goals and establishing harmonious interpersonal relationships when conveying wishes to speech partners. Therefore, a deep understanding of the request strategies in both languages becomes vital. This helps to avoid potential misunderstandings and ensure the realization of effective cross-cultural communication and mutual respect. Several relevant studies have been conducted by Ninomiya & Shadayeva (2020); Chintawidy & Sartini (2022), and AlMujaibel & Gomaa (2022) comparing request speech act strategies between different languages and dialects, emphasizing the cultural and habit differences between communities that in turn affect differences in preferences of speech act strategies.

Ninomiya & Shadayeva (2020) conducted an analysis targeting native Kazakh and Japanese speakers, the result being that Japanese language participants utilized indirect strategies for interlocutors who had equal power, close distance, high imposition, and often utilized anonymous request strategies. Kazakhs, conversely, utilize imperatives more, and are more allowed to use imperatives than the Japanese. AlMujaibel & Gomaa (2022) analyzed the Kuwaiti Arabic (KA) and British English (BE) dialects, with the result that KA and BE participants used conventional indirect forms in the form of preparatory and power queries as sociological variables in the selection of the strategy used. The conventional direct strategy, meanwhile, is used when the speaker has high power. Chintawidy & Sartini (2022) analyzed two groups of native speakers from two different tribes in Indonesia,

called the Javanese and Sundanese. The results showed that direct conventional strategies in the form of derivable mood and conventional indirect strategies in the form of preparatory queries are two strategies that are widely used by Javanese and Sundanese speakers. In particular, Javanese speakers use more direct strategies than their Sundanese counterparts.

In contrast to Napoli & Tantucci (2022), Brocca et al. (2023) focus on analyzing the factors that influence interlanguage speech act strategies in film dialogue and instant messaging. Napoli & Tantucci (2022) analyze pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behavior in British and Italian film dialogues. The results showed that social distance and directness significantly influenced mitigation and intensification strategies. The correlation of the two approaches appears to be stable in both languages. Mitigation is usually used at high social distances and when requests are made indirectly. However, there are differences in the Italian language concerning the manner in which intensive modifiers are used in close social settings. Meanwhile, Brocca et al. (2023) analyzed requests in the form of instant messages from students who spoke Italian as a second language (L2) with Austrian German as the first language (L1) and compared them with Italian speakers (L1). The findings reveal differences in understanding how to structure requests concerning directness and face-saving strategies. Likewise, similarities exist between all participants with L1 speakers in the request structure.

Based on previous research conducted, the components of the analysis were compared in the form of pragmatic competence of language learners and language speakers across countries and local countries; only one study took into account ethnic differences. This study aims to expand the capture between two ethnic groups in Indonesia by analyzing request strategies from Javanese and Balinese ethnicities through the following research questions: 1) How similar and different are the request strategies used by Javanese and Balinese speakers?; 2) To what extent do social variables (power, distance) impact the request strategies used by Javanese and Balinese speakers? and 3) How are cultural values and norms reflected based on the request strategies used by Javanese and Balinese speakers?

Therefore, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of cross-cultural pragmatic study research and become a reference for further researchers in analyzing request strategies with cross-cultural backgrounds. More specifically, it provides insight to the general public in comprehending Javanese and Balinese cultures when making requests. This could help them communicate better with Javanese and Balinese speakers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to investigate and interpret the request strategies, influencing factors, and cultural values inherent in Javanese and Balinese speech. According to Dawson (2007), this design is instrumental in examining the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences of specific social groups within their actual contexts (Rose et al., 2020). The data were gathered from 48 participants comprising 24 Javanese and 24 Balinese speakers within an age range of 18 to 45 years. This demographic was specifically selected as it represents a biologically and physically productive stage of life, characterized by active engagement in everyday linguistic communication (Ramlah & Sartini, 2023). Although the 24 participant group represents a relatively limited sample size, this number is considered sufficient to provide an in-depth understanding within a qualitative research framework (Hennink et al., 2017).

Data collection was conducted using an online, written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) distributed via Google Forms. As a pragmatic research tool, the DCT serves as an effective medium between naturally occurring and written speech, allowing for the systematic manipulation of situational features while facilitating the collection of large datasets (Byon, 2005; Ivanovska et al., 2016). Despite extensive criticism regarding the relevance of using Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), which are argued not to fully replicate naturally occurring interactional data (Ogiermann, 2018; Sweeney & Hua, 2016). Particularly in terms of capturing multimodal interaction such as prosodic features, gestures, and situational proximity (non-verbal elements employed to signal politeness and deference

toward interlocutors), and intra ethnic variables, such as differences in regional background (urban, rural) and education level.

The DCT was employed in this study to elicit pragmatic competence and request strategies used by Javanese and Balinese speakers through an in-depth analysis of head acts and linguistic modifications. The DCT instrument was meticulously designed, grounded in everyday life contexts familiar to both groups of speakers. To minimize the inherent limitations of the DCT, the scenarios were carefully designed and culturally grounded in the everyday life contexts of Javanese and Balinese speakers. The instrument consisted of five distinct speech situations operationalized based on the sociological variables of power and distance from Brown & Levinson (1987) to maintain systematic consistency across the sample.

This study employed a dual theoretical framework to ensure analytical depth. Universally, the Brown & Levinson model is utilized to enable cross-cultural comparisons using the parameters of power and distance. Subsequently, the findings will be re-analyzed through the internal lens of each respective culture to capture nuances that may remain obscured by the universal analysis. And to ensure data integrity, the DCT underwent a pilot validity and reliability test with four respondents before being finalized and disseminated to the target participants, who responded in their respective native languages. Example:

Situation: *You're an older sister feeling unwell. You want to ask your younger sibling to head to the pharmacy to buy medicine.*

Question: How would you say the request for help to your sister?

Answer: *(must be filled by participants)*

Dek, tumbasno obat nang apotek (Javanese)

Dek, beliang ubad di apotik (Balinese)

The analysis followed a multi-stage process, beginning with the coding and categorization of responses in Microsoft Excel based on speaker group and situational context. Request strategies were then classified using the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) framework from Blu-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), focusing on the "head act" as the primary unit of analysis. Responses were categorized into three strategy types: direct conventional (imperatives and performatives), conventional indirect (query preparatory), and non-conventional

indirect (hints) (Blum-Kulka et al., 1992). Finally, the findings were examined through the lens of social variables from Brown & Levinson (1987) and cross-cultural pragmatics, Wierzbicka (2003), to discern the cultural norms and values reflected in the linguistic choices of both Javanese and Balinese speakers.

The social variables proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) are considered universal in nature. However, their values are culturally contingent upon each ethnic group. This framework is useful for understanding cultural aspects of politeness strategies and levels of formality according to hierarchical relationships and social status within society. Factors that are central to the systems of *unggah-ungguh basa* in Javanese and *unggah-ungguhing basa* in Balinese. Accordingly, the present study positions Brown & Levinson (1987) model as a partial explanatory framework for conducting a comparative analysis of politeness strategies employed by Javanese and Balinese speakers in making requests.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Based on the research problems raised, this section presents the results of the study to answer the questions in the study, including request strategies used by Javanese and Balinese speakers as outlined in the tables, followed by the discussion of the results of the analysis, of the influence of social variables in the selection of request strategies from two speakers, and finally, a reflection of the values of the culture internalized in the community.

Request Strategies in Javanese and Balinese in Every Speech Situation

Situation 1. You are a new student asking your lecturer to re-explain the material that has been delivered related to Speech Action Theory from Austin on points that you do not yet understand.

Question: How do you express that request to your lecturer?

Table 1. The frequency of use of request speech acts is based on three types of strategies in situation 1.

Strategies	Frequency	
	Javanese	Balinese
Direct Conventional	9	18
Conventional Indirect	14	4
Nonconventional Indirect	1	2
Total	24	24

Table 1 shows the frequency and three types of strategies used by Javanese and Balinese speakers in low-power (-P) situations, namely the position of speakers (students) with low power, while lecturers with high power and high distance (+D) show high social distance between students and lecturers with unfamiliar relationships. For Javanese speakers, 9 (nine) participants employed the Direct Conventional Strategy, 14 participants employed Direct Conventional, and 1 participant employed Non-Conventional Indirect. Meanwhile, 18 Balinese speakers utilized the Direct Conventional Strategy, 4 participants utilized the Conventional Indirect Strategy, and 2 participants utilized the Non-Conventional Indirect Strategy. Based on these data, it was discovered that there were differences in the usage of request strategies in situations of low power (-P) and high distance (+D). Javanese speakers mostly employ the Conventional Indirect Strategy, while Balinese speakers employ the Direct Conventional Strategy.

The research findings indicate a dominance of conventional direct strategies among both Javanese and Balinese speakers. The CCSARP scheme consistently categorizes these strategies based on their linguistic forms. Furthermore, the findings suggest that politeness within these two ethnic groups is not merely encoded in their linguistic strategies, rather there is a complex interaction among honorifics, registers, and the broader context. Although the DCT and the CCSARP scheme possess inherent limitations, the integration of a local cultural lens helps explain that “direct” is not entirely synonymous with being “impolite” within a hierarchical pragmatic system.

Previous literature has extensively documented a tendency toward the use of indirect strategies in Javanese and Balinese cultures, as evidenced in studies conducted by Sukarno (2015, 2018) on Javanese and Arnawa et al. (2022), Netra et al. (2024) on Balinese. However, the present study reveals that conventional direct strategies dominate the data among Balinese speakers and, to some extent, among Javanese speakers. This finding does not necessarily contradict previous research; it suggests that indirectness is not invariably realized in every speech act produced by speakers and interlocutors, but may instead be manifested through alternative linguistic and pragmatic resources.

Among Javanese speakers, Conventional Indirect strategies dominate the observed data, a pattern that can be understood as reflecting the strong adherence to the cultural value of *andhap asor*. In several participant responses, preparatory queries were employed, enabling speakers to convey a request without explicit imposition, thereby mitigating potential face threats to the interlocutor. By contrast, the dominance of conventional direct strategies was identified in the data from Balinese speakers. Within the framework of *angguh-ungguhing basa*, politeness is not necessarily realized through indirectness of speech acts. It may be expressed through lexical choices, honorific markers, and other politeness formulae. Examples of the Utilization of the Conventional Indirect Strategies for Javanese Participants:

Pak Dosen, kulo dereng paham Teori Tindak Tutur Austin, menopo saged dipun jelasaken malih?

(Mr. Professor, I have not understood the speech act theory from Austin. Can you explain it again?)

Underlined is the sentence's head act of the participant's speech in the form of preparatory queries spoken by students to their lecturers.

Examples of the Utilization of the Direct Conventional Strategies for Balinese Participants:

Ampura, Bu Dosen, tiang nenten mengerti Teori Tindak Tutur saking Austin. Tulung diulang penjelasannya. Matur Suksma

(I am sorry, Mrs. Professor. I have not understood the speech act theory from Austin. Please, explain it again. Thank you)

Underlined sentences are head acts expressed by students to their lecturer explicitly.

Situation 2. You're on the road, suddenly the gas runs out, and you don't have any money with you. You call your close friend to approach and ask for help in buying gasoline at the nearest station.

Question: How do you express that request to your close friend?

Table 2. The frequency of use of request speech acts is based on three types of strategies in situation 2

Strategies	Frequency	
	Javanese	Balinese
Direct Conventional	13	19
Conventional Inderect	2	0
Nonconventional Indirect	9	5
Total	24	24

Table 2 shows the type and number of frequencies of using request strategies by Javanese and Balinese speakers in equivalent power situations (=P), namely the power/position of the speaker and the interlocutor is equal, and the low distance (-D) illustrates the social distance between the speaker and the interlocutor with close relations. For Javanese speakers, 13 participants utilized the Direct Conventional Strategy, 2 participants utilized the Conventional Indirect Strategy, and 9 participants utilized the Non-Conventional Indirect Strategy. Whereas for Balinese speakers, 19 participants utilized the Direct Conventional Strategy, and 5 participants utilized the Non-Conventional Indirect Strategy. Based on the data in Table 2 above, it is discovered that in the situation of equal power (=P) and low distance (-D) there are similarities between Javanese and Balinese speakers, namely the usage of request strategies in the form of Direct Conventional, which dominates speech. Examples of the Utilization of Direct Conventional Strategies for Javanese Participants:

Aku jaluk tulung tukokno bensin
(Could you buy me some gasoline?)

The speech above shows imperative speech spoken by a speaker to his close friends, which is marked by the *tukokno* [Would you mind getting me...] speech acts and further smoothed using polite injunction in the form of *jaluk tulong* [...please].

Examples of the Utilization of Conventional Direct Strategies for Balinese participants:

Dek, ngideh tulong beliang tiang bensin dumun
 (*Dek, please buy me some petrol first*)

The underlined one shows the head act spoken by a speaker to his close friends in the form of performative speech with the polite injunction value of *ngideh tulong*

Situation 3. You are a director in a company, and you are in a meeting with the leader. When you are going to present, important files and files that will be presented are left on the office desk. You intend to ask your secretary to take the file.

Question: How do you express that request to your secretary?

Table 3. The frequency of use of request speech acts is based on three types of strategies in situation 3

Strategies	Frequency	
	Javanese	Balinese
Direct Conventional	19	17
Conventional Inderect	3	4
Nonconventional Indirect	2	3
Total	24	24

Table 3 illustrates the type and frequency of usage of three types of request strategies for Javanese and Balinese speakers in high power situations (+P) showing the power/position of a director (superior) as higher than his secretary (subordinate) who has lower power/position (-P) and high distance (+D) showing the social distance between the director and his secretary with mutually familiar but rather distant relations. For Javanese speakers, 19 participants utilized the Direct Conventional Strategy, 3 participants utilized the Conventional Indirect strategy, and 2 participants utilized the Non-Conventional Indirect strategy. Meanwhile, 17 Balinese speakers utilized the Direct Conventional Strategy, 4

participants utilized the Conventional Indirect Strategy, and 3 participants utilized the Non-Conventional Indirect Strategy. Based on the data in the table above, there are similarities in the use of request strategies in the form of Direct Conventional in situations of high power (+P) and high distance (+D) for Javanese and Balinese speakers. Examples of the Utilization of Direct Conventional Strategies for Javanese Participants:

*Tulung jupukno file ndek mejoku kono.
 (Please get me the files on my desk)*

The above speech is spoken by a director (superior) to his secretary (subordinate) in the form of an imperative, which is marked by an act of ‘jupukno’ speech and smoothed with the word *tulung* to show politeness. Examples of the Utilization of Direct Conventional Strategies for Balinese participants:

*Geg, ngidih tulung jemakan berkas-berkas di mejo ruang tiang.
 (Geg [Balinese reference style to younger men/women], please get the files on my desk).*

The above speech is spoken by a director (superior) to his secretary (subordinate), in the form of an imperative which is characterized by a speech act ‘jemakan’ that is smoothed with the word *ngidih tulung*.

Situation 4: You are a child who wants to ask your parents for permission to play with friends outside the house.

Question: How do you express that permission request to your parents?

Table 4. The frequency of use of request speech acts is based on three types of strategies in situation 4

Strategies	Frequency	
	Javanese	Balinese
Direct Conventional	13	10
Conventional Inderect	11	13
Nonconventional Indirect	1	1
Total	24	24

Table 4 shows the type and frequency of using request strategies in Javanese and Balinese speakers with a low power situation (-P), showing that the child's power/position is lower than that of parents who have high power (+P) and low

distance (-D), showing the social distance from children with parents with close relationships. For Javanese speakers, 13 participants utilized the Direct Conventional strategy, 11 participants utilized the Conventional Indirect strategy, and 1 participant utilized the Non-Conventional Indirect strategy. Meanwhile, 10 Balinese speakers utilized the Direct Conventional strategy, 13 participants utilized the Conventional Indirect strategy, and 1 participant utilized the non-conventional Indirect strategy. Based on these data, it was discovered that there were differences in the usage of request strategies in situations of low power (-P) and low distance (-D). The dominant Javanese speakers employ the Direct Conventional request strategy, while the Balinese speakers employ the Conventional Indirect request strategy. Examples of the Utilization of Direct Conventional strategies for Javanese participants:

*Emak aku pamit atene dolan neng omahe koncoku.
 (Mom, I'll be playing at my friend's house).*

The above speech is expressed by a child to a parent, in the form of an imperative '*aku pamit*', which is the intention conveyed directly. Examples of the Utilization of Conventional Indirect Strategies for Balinese Participants:

*Pak tiang dados main sareng timpal?
 (Dad, can I play with my friends?)*

The above speech is spoken by a child to a parent, in the form of a preparatory query.

Situation 5: You are a husband coming home from work and feeling hungry. You asked your wife to make a meal.

Question: How do you express that request to your wife?

Table 5. The frequency of use of request speech acts is based on three types of strategies in situation 5

Strategies	Frequency	
	Javanese	Balinese
Direct Conventional	12	19
Conventional Indirect	6	2
Nonconventional Indirect	7	3
Total	24	24

Table 5 shows the strategy and frequency of the request strategy utilized by Javanese and Balinese speakers in high power situations (+P), revealing that the power/social position of the husband (+P) is higher than that of the wife (-P), and the low distance (-D) shows the social distance from the husband and wife with close relations. In Javanese speakers, 12 participants employed the Direct Conventional strategy, 6 participants employed the Conventional Indirect strategy, and 7 participants employed the non-conventional Indirect strategy. Whereas in Balinese speakers, 19 participants employed the Direct Conventional strategy, 2 participants employed the Conventional Indirect strategy, and 3 participants employed the non-conventional indirect strategy. Based on the data above, it is discovered that there are similarities in the use of request strategies in situations of high power (+P) and low distance (-D) in Javanese and Balinese speakers, namely utilizing Direct Conventional strategies. Examples of the Utilization of Direct Conventional Strategies for Javanese speakers:

Yang, tulung damelno maem aku luwe. Suwun.

(Darling, please cook me a meal, I'm hungry. Thank you)

Underlined is the head act of a husband's speech to his wife in the form of an imperative, which is marked by the word 'damelno', further refined with the word tulung and a greeting that reveals affectionate politeness. Examples of the use of direct conventional strategies in Balinese speakers:

Buk... seduk gati.. gaenang nasi goreng telur ceplok nah.

(Mom... [I'm] so hungry. Cook me fried rice with omelette, please)

Underlined is the head act of a husband's speech to his wife in the form of an imperative marked with the word gaenang

From the data above, in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, the conclusion is that for Javanese and Balinese speakers as a whole, the situation if the average speaker utilizes more Conventional Direct strategies. Speakers directly speak according to the situation presented in DCT in various forms of speech acts. Based on data on the situation of 2 equivalent power (=P) and low distance (-D), the situation of 3 high power (+P) and high distance (+D), and the situation of 5 high power (+P) and low distance (-D) speakers of Javanese and Balinese, most frequently utilize the Direct

Conventional strategy. Meanwhile, the difference was underscored in the situation of 1 low power (-P) and high distance (+D) of Javanese speakers most frequently utilizing the conventional indirect strategy, while Javanese speakers most frequently utilized the Direct Conventional strategy. In the situation of 4 low power (-P) and low distance (-D), Javanese speakers most frequently utilize the Direct Conventional strategy, while Balinese speakers most frequently utilize the Conventional Indirect strategy.

The Influence of Social Variables (power and distance) on the Usage of Request Strategies for Javanese and Balinese Speakers

Social variables in the form of power and distance are factors that have an important role for individuals in shaping how they communicate. This finding indicates that social roles are not always equivalent, either in terms of power relations or cultural expectations. Differences in the conceptualization of social roles among Javanese and Balinese speakers significantly influence the realization of the request strategies employed, as each culture fundamentally possesses a distinct approach to perceiving the relationship between speakers and interlocutors.

Javanese Speakers

In the Javanese context, social relations are understood as moral relations governed by the value of *andhap ashor*. Consequently, relationships involving lecturers, directors, or parents are symbolically constructed as asymmetrical, positioning these figures as holders of higher authority who are entitled to respect. As a result, speakers of lower social status predominantly employ indirect strategies accompanied by mitigating devices to preserve face and maintain social harmony.

Although the present study employs an analysis focused on head acts, the findings indicate that politeness in Javanese is not solely reflected through the indirectness of request speech acts, but is also manifested through the use of internal and external modifications. As observed in Situation 1, it is highlighted that the speech expressed by a student with low power (-P) to his lecturer, who has

higher power (+) utilizes a Conventional Indirect request strategy. Speech requests are carried out indirectly conventionally, which is characterized by the form of preparatory queries, for example: “*Apa sampeyan gelem njelasno maneh?*” (Do you want to explain again?) or “*Nedi tulung ngulang materi maneh nopo kerso?*” (Would you please explain the material once again?) The request forms employed by the speakers are not only indirect in nature. They are further mitigated through the use of lexical items that reflect the speaker's cautious stance and humility.

By contrast, in situation 3, the request strategy employed by a director with higher power (+P) toward a secretary with lower power (-P) is predominantly realized through a direct conventional strategy, manifested in the form of imperative speech acts. Example: *Tulung jupukno file ndek mejoku kono* (Please get the file from my desk). Structurally, the request is realized instantly without abandoning politeness elements, which are manifested through the use of address terms such as “*mas, mbak, buk, atau kang*”, as well as mitigating markers including “*tulung, ngapunten, jaluk tulung, nyuwun tulung, njaok tulung, ngapunten tulung*”. For example, “*Nyuwun tulung jupukno file nang mejo kantorku*” (Please, [would you] take the file from my office desk). This modification of direct strategies through the incorporation of address terms and mitigation markers demonstrates that directness is not necessarily perceived as impolite. Rather, it becomes polite when combined with appropriate politeness markers that align with the social context.

In addition to the factor of power, the use of request strategies among Javanese speakers is also influenced by social distance. As observed in Situation 2, where the speaker and the interlocutor hold equal power (=P) and share close, familiar social relations (-D), a conventional direct strategy is predominantly employed. The speaker directly expressed the request for his speech in imperative form, for example: *Aku jaluk tulung tukokno bensin* (Please buy me some gasoline). Nevertheless, speakers continue to attend to politeness by employing forms of address, such as *pren, rek* [colloquial forms of ‘guys’], *mas, dek, lur* to maintain solidarity and interpersonal closeness within the interaction. Example: “*Rek tumbasno aku bensin, ngko duwik e tak genteni*” (Guys, get me some petrol, I'll pay

you back later), or “*Lur, njaluk tulung tukokno bensin eceran*” (Guys, let’s buy some retail gasoline)

Based on the findings discussed above, an analysis focusing on head acts indeed limits the comprehensive interpretation of cultural meanings. Nevertheless, the data indicate that the values of *andhap asor* and politeness are still realized through the use of internal and external modifications, such as address terms, mitigation markers, lexical choices, and other linguistic devices. Therefore, the request strategies employed by Javanese speakers can be understood not only in terms of the types of head acts used, but also through other linguistic resources that likewise reflect Javanese cultural norms and values.

Balinese Speakers

As in their Javanese counterpart, social variables in the form of power and distance are factors in the selection of request strategies utilized by speakers, and also apply to the Balinese. The power of the speaker and the interlocutor could influence the choice of strategies utilized by the speaker. As displayed in Table 5, which outlines Situation 5, namely the request strategy expressed by a husband with high power (+P) to his wife with low power (-P), the speaker with the highest frequency utilizes the direct conventional strategy. A husband directly expresses the request in his speech in an imperative form, for example: “*Luh, bli teke megae seduk, jakanang bli dedaran*” (“Honey, I’m hungry, please cook me some food”). The one underlined is the head act of a husband’s speech in the form of an imperative marked with the word *jakanang*.

Conversely, the use of a conventional indirect strategy has the highest frequency in Situation 4, outlining the request strategy expressed by a child with low power (-P) to parents with high power (+P). A child expresses his request indirectly, conventionally using the form of a preparatory query. Example: “*Pak, tiang dados main sareng timpal?*” (Dad, can I play with [my] friends?)

The power of speakers and interlocutors, the distance of speakers and interlocutors are also factors that influence the request strategy used by Balinese speakers. As outlined in Situation 2, the speech expressed by the speaker to the

interlocutor with equivalent power (=P) and low distance (-D) is a relationship of mutual acquaintance and familiarity with the most frequency utilizing a request strategy in the form of direct conventional. The speaker directly expressed the request for his speech in imperative form, for example: "*Dek, ngideh tulong beliang pole bensin dumun*" (*Dek, please buy me gasoline first*). In the example, the imperative form is marked by the word "*beliang*". In addition, just as Javanese speakers utilize polite forms in speech, Balinese speakers likewise apply them in theirs. Among them are the use of polite forms that begin with a greeting, for example: *dek, bli, gek, gus*; followed by polite forms using word affixes, for example: *tulung, tulongin, nunas tulung, ngidih tulung*.

Cultural Values and Norms Reflected in the Request Speech Response in Javanese and Balinese Speakers

Like the concept of cross-cultural pragmatics, the Whorfian hypothesis provides the possibility that there is a relationship between language and culture, namely that language affects how we perceive the world, and language can reflect regional, ethnic, social, and gender origins in society. Second, the principle of Wierzbicka in cross-cultural pragmatic studies is how meaning is created and understood in different cultural contexts. Through these cultural differences, there are different languages and speech acts that can reflect the values of the culture itself. Including how request strategies are used by Javanese and Balinese speakers.

Javanese Culture

Javanese culture in its daily life prioritizes smooth, virtuous, and polite speech (Diana, 2021). Like the Javanese *saloka* (proverb) "*Serat Basa Basuki*", which means that humans in carrying out their daily tasks must be careful, polite, and courteous, adjusting to the situation, conditions, place, and time. The value of politeness in Javanese culture is actualized through the usage of '*andhap asor*' (Rahadini & Suwarna, 2014) from speakers and interlocutors, respectively. For example, speech between students and their lecturers, there are '*andhap asor*' norms that must be observed by students in the form of the use of politeness norms, called the levels of

language or '*unggah-ungguh*' in the form of vocabulary and English or a mixture of both.

As outlined in Situation 1 in DCT: "*Pak Dosen, ngapunten. dalem dereng paham. saged dipun ulang?*" ("Professor, excuse me. I don't get it yet, could you please repeat it?") The speech reveals respect and courtesy to the interlocutor whose social status is higher. Had the student used the level of language in the form of ngoko vocabulary, then it would be considered impolite, even disrespectful, to the interlocutor. Example: "*Buk sepurane tolong jelasno materine soale aku rung paham*" ("Miss [Professor], please explain this material again; I don't quite get it").

Second, the utilization of salutations such as *dek, mas, kang, nduk, cak, lur, pak, buk, rek, mbak*. As observed in Situation 3 in DCT: "*Kang ngapunten tulung jupukno berkas ndek kantor*" ("Kang, please, would you kindly get the file at the office?"). Third, the use of appropriate closing words, for example, *matur suwun, geh, ngapunten, matur nuwun, suwun, njeh, nggeh, ngge, nggih*. As observed in Situation 2 in DCT: "*Tulung, parani aku nang area A, trus tumbasno bensin nang toko B. Aku keentekan bensin. Suwun.*" ("Please, pick me up at Area A, then buy gasoline at Store B. I'm out of gas. Thanks").

Fourth, the usage of polite pronouns, for example: *tulung, ngapunten, jaluk tulung, nyuwun tulung, njaok tulung, ngapunten tulung, nedi tulung*. As outlined in Situation 1 in DCT Example: "*Nedi tulung ngulang materi maneh nopo kerso?*" ("Please, would it be too much to ask that you explain the material again?") In addition, the level of language in Javanese culture is utilized as community etiquette, which is a code of manners that is used as a set of norms to regulate the social behavior of the Javanese community itself (Errington, 1985).

Balinese Culture

The Balinese language is the soul of the Balinese community itself. It contains the values of local wisdom that color the life of Hinduism and Balinese Culture. Linguistic interaction in Balinese society is governed by the system of *unggah-ungguhing basa Bali*, which regulates language use according to social status (Rahayu et al., 2022). The findings of this study indicate that the relationship

between this system of speech levels and the selection of request strategies is correlational rather than directly causal. Core cultural values such as respect, politeness, and the principle of *Tri Hita Karana*, which emphasizes harmony in the relationships between humans and God, among humans, and between humans and nature (John et al., 2019), function as an ideological foundation that frames the pragmatic construction of requests. Nevertheless, these cultural values do not rigidly determine a preference for indirectness at the level of request strategy selection.

The dominance of direct conventional request strategies observed across various contexts may be understood as reflecting an alternative interpretation of the concept of harmony in Balinese pragmatics. Rather than prioritizing mitigation through indirectness, interactional harmony may instead be achieved through communicative clarity, efficiency, and the avoidance of ambiguity, particularly in institutional or task-oriented settings. In such contexts, direct conventional strategies, when realized through the appropriate use of address terms, honorifics, and politeness expressions, function to maintain relational balance while simultaneously ensuring mutual understanding.

Accordingly, the findings indicate that Balinese cultural values function as a flexible interpretive framework that shapes how linguistic strategies are employed and interpreted. The preference for direct conventional strategies demonstrates how Balinese speakers pragmatically negotiate cultural ideals of harmony with situational demands, such as role relations, institutional contexts, and the need for communicative efficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes request strategies in Javanese and Balinese cultures based on cross-cultural pragmatic studies. The findings are as follows: on average, Javanese and Balinese speakers predominantly employ direct conventional strategies across most situations presented in the DCT. This commonality is particularly evident in contexts of equal power and low distance (Situation 2), as well as high-power scenarios (Situations 3 and 5). Disparities, however, arise in

low-power contexts; in high-distance settings (Situation 1), Javanese speakers prefer conventional indirect strategies, whereas Balinese speakers favor direct conventional ones. Conversely, in low-distance settings (Situation 4), Javanese speakers lean towards direct conventional strategies while Balinese speakers utilize conventional indirect ones. The selection of these strategies is intrinsically linked to the social variables of power and distance, reflecting respective cultural values: the "*unggah-ungguh basa*" system in Javanese society and the "*angguh-angguhing basa Bali*" in Balinese society, which is rooted in the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy and social stratification.

The findings of this study do not negate Wierzbicka (2003) claim that different cultures have different languages and distinct realizations of speech acts; rather, they provide further empirical support for and extend this claim. The cultural differences between Javanese and Balinese speakers observed in this study are not solely reflected in the choice of head act strategies, but are more saliently manifested through the use of mitigating devices and the ways in which these strategies are contextually grounded in the speakers' respective cultural values. The similarities found in the selection of request strategies indicate the presence of situational constraints in certain contexts. Such as the purpose of the request and the structure of the relationship between speaker and interlocutor. Which may override culturally grounded preferences for indirectness. Nevertheless, cross-cultural differences remain prominent in specific contexts, particularly when more complex politeness demands arise from variations in social relations and perceived social distance.

Accordingly, this study demonstrates that pragmatic practices are not merely reflections of static cultural values, but rather emerge from a dynamic interaction between cultural norms and situational factors. Culture does not always rigidly determine the type of request strategy employed. Instead, it plays a more substantial role in shaping how such strategies are linguistically realized and mitigated. From a theoretical perspective, these findings underscore that ethnic differences within a single national context reflect a coexistence between the

universal properties of language and locally specific pragmatic norms, particularly in the selection and realization of request strategies. Despite these findings, this study is limited by its small participant size. Future research is encouraged to include a larger sample and incorporate semi-structured interviews to achieve more extensive and nuanced data.

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