



# Indonesian Students' Acquisition of English Address Terms: A Case Study in a University in the United Kingdom

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## Abstract

This study explored on how the transfer of Indonesian Address Terms (ATs) influenced the production of English ATs and in what ways Indonesian students accommodated the acquisition of the English ATs during the study abroad. This study focused on the five participants who were recruited through the purposive sampling. Designed to capture the participants' experiences, this study employed a qualitative case study approach. The written discourse completion test and semi-structured interviews were employed to look at the pragmatic transfer and the acquisition of the address terms. The findings indicated that students' home cultures of showing politeness by addressing people through contextual variables were challenged under the local cultures which view the equality and casual direct addressing as politeness. Participants were also found to show salient efforts to accommodate the English ATs in multifaceted ways. These efforts shed light to the teaching of English ATs in classroom. Implications to teaching English ATs in classroom in Indonesia are also discussed.

## Keywords

Address terms, cases study, English address terms, politeness, pragmatic failure,

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## Introduction



This study stems from my experiences in which my first language (L1) norms which address people asymmetrically based on social status conflict with the foreign language norms which address people equally. It aimed at discovering how Indonesian students produced and acquired the English address terms during their study abroad experience. In fact, the need to show politeness has been the central of why learners transfer their L1 address terms into their second language (L2) communication. Their L1 norms interfere with their perception about politeness, thus causing pragmatic failure. As a result, instead of being polite, students are assumed to create a distance. This interference is known as sociopragmatic failure (Barron, 2003; Kasper 1992; Thomas, 1983).

It is well known that different countries have different ways of addressing. Address terms elevate L1 norms and are closely related to the ways how politeness is defined (Kirkpatrick, 2002). For example, studies show that in China addressing people is meant to respect people and to indicate the level of formality (Li, 2004; You, 2014). In Australia, there has been a change in address term 'mate' usage which used to be addressed for man only (Lerner, 2003; Rendle-Short, 2009). 'Mate' is now considered proper for man and woman which marks how the studies about address terms have garnered attention in the field of applied linguistics. There is also a growing number of studies in the pragmatic development on learners who spent short courses, a semester even a year during the study abroad within the last decade (Barron 2003; 2006; Hassal, 2013; Schauer, 2009; Shively, 2011). Several studies have been conducted to focus on how Indonesia ATs are acquired by the speakers of English (e.g., DuFon, 2000; Hassall, 2013). However, in Indonesia, studies of ATs were conducted to investigate the acquisition and the transfer among the local languages or between one particular local language to Bahasa (Djenar, 2007; Susanto, 2016) and compare the English and Indonesian ATs through their usages in literature and different professions (Iragiliati, 2006). Very few studies were found to investigate the pragmatic development of Indonesian students in address terms of production and acquisition in a study abroad context.

Therefore, aiming to enrich the literature of the Indonesian students ATs' acquisition, this current study focused on how strictly raised students with hierarchical ATs produced and acquired the English ATs in a study abroad context. Hoping to contribute to the teaching of English address terms in Indonesia and to prepare the incoming Indonesian learners to the UK, this study sought to find out: (1) How does the transfer of Indonesia's address terms influence the production of Indonesian students' English address terms during their study abroad? (2) In what ways do Indonesian students acquire of the English address terms during their study abroad?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Pragmatic competence***

Students improve their pragmatic competence during their study abroad (Hassal, 2006). Hoffaman-Hicks (2000), however, contends this idea by claiming that only modest pragmatics developments are gained during the study abroad. In the latest study, new findings indicate that students can acquire the pragmatic competence even during the short term stay in a foreign country but L1 transfers highly impede the pragmatic development (Hassal, 2013; Taguchi, 2017).



Pragmatic competence involves forms and uses of the L2 norms (Bardovi-Harlig, 2010). When trying to make conversation in a culturally different place, learners usually struggle to make known of her choices without having to violate the L1 norms (DuFon, 2003). They are expected to use the L2 linguistic forms and skills when performing sociocultural functions (Taguchi, 2017). They also try to imitate the locals using unexpected 'L2 expression' which usually results in misinterpretation (Hassal, 2004). Incompetence to adopt the L2 expression results in pragmatic failure. In most cases, failure always leads to confusion. Apparently, pragmatic failures are most likely to occur during the intercultural communication. Therefore, pragmatic failure will be used to analyze the address terms production in this study.

When L1 values interfere with the L2 production, pragmatic transfer is supposedly to occur (Kasper, 1992; Zegarac & Pennington, 2008). "Pragmatic transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other languages that have been previously acquired (Odlin, 1989, p. 27)". In a recent study, pragmatic transfer is defined as "the influence of learners' pragmatic knowledge of language and culture other than the target language on their comprehension, production, and acquisition of L2 pragmatic information" (Rizk 2003, p. 404). Thus, since learners of L2 speak other languages, they will highly likely produce the pragmatic transfer.

Pragmatic transfer can take the form of either positive or negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when the L1 meaning transferred is the same as its L2 meaning which has also been considered as the evidence that there is a universality of pragmatic among languages. Leech (1983) asserts that positive transferability has a lot to do with linguistic forms. In this case, whenever one appears to use the right transfer during intercultural communication, he will be considered a competent user (Cutting, 2015). Nevertheless, wrong diction indicates incompetence and leads to miscommunication. "Miscommunication leads to misunderstanding when people from a different culture interact" (Cutting, 2015, p. 73). As a result, one can directly be identified as an outsider when he does not perform the right speech function (Yule, 1996). In fact, Thomas (1983) has suggested that pragmalinguistic competence can be taught conventionally at language class just like grammar. This sheds light into the English language teaching that the universality between the L1 and L2 can be taught to language learners at classroom.

Meanwhile, the negative one is known as a generalization and meaning transfer from L1 to L2 usage (Cutting, 2015; Zegarac & Pennington, 2008). Known as sociopragmatic failure, this failure refers to the transfer of prior L1 contextual variables, including social distance, power relationship, and the imposition (DuFon, 2000) to L2. Applied linguists (e.g., Leech, 1983; Kasper, 1992; Thomas, 1983) highlight that negative transfer roots in the overgeneralization of L2 linguistic forms. Learners in studying abroad may be influenced by their L1 contextual variables, thus, they are unable to make sense of the target language's norms. Further, negative transfer could take place in the form translating the 'formulaic expressions/address terms to perform different speech acts from L1 to express equivalent speech function in L2 (Rizk, 2003). This includes the politeness expressions which inevitably are different from L1's to L2's. As a positive transfer is only considered a matter of proficiency; negative transfer is considered as being impolite or overpolite as well as a reduced personality (Thomas, 1983). Interestingly, some studies have indicated that some students opt to allow L1 transfers although they are aware of the difference and the failure caused (DuFon,



2000; Kinginger, 2008). This is because the learner wants to “suit his own sense of identity within the L2 culture setting” (Hassal, 2013, p. 3).

In practice, a learner becomes fluent in his L1 pragmatic norms because he continuously receives feedback from the other language users which is scarce in foreign language learning and interaction. In fact, schools mainly teach students the linguistic competence instead of sociopragmatic competence. Students at the same time have never been provided feedback about their L2 pragmatics norms. This results in a false understanding that languages have universal pragmatic norms (El Samaty, 2005). There is a truth hidden that different languages have different pragmatics norms. The linguistic competence such as grammar can always be corrected but pragmatic competence can make a conversation be halt because it offends the interlocutor. This urges the importance of teaching L2 pragmatic norms at schools.

### ***Politeness and address terms (ATs)***

The concept of politeness plays an important role in a study abroad experience because it promotes the intercultural speaker (Byram, 2012) in which politeness is socially prescribed (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Cutting (2002) defines “politeness refers to the choices that are made in language use, the linguistic expressions that give people space, and show a friendly attitude to them” (p. 45). Further, politeness is inextricably linked with the concept of ‘face’ discusses. Politeness has a lot to do with the image that everyone wants to claim that is ‘positive face’ and ‘negative face’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Wardhaugh (2000) describes ‘positive face’ looks for solidarity and approval of others and ‘negative face’ is more to freedom from imposition. Nevertheless, different cultures and contexts bear different politeness. Students in a study abroad are supposed to be actively involving in a place in which two distinct language-cultures are promoted. This involvement includes the play of the politeness expressions which are found in affixes, ATs, words, and sentences (Richards & Schmidt, 1980).

In Indonesia, politeness is shown by what ATs are used on different contextual variables (Barron, 2003; DuFon & Churchill, 2006; Hassal, 2013; Rühlemann, 2007). Contextual variables can be defined as a power (the level of directness one can convey something), distance (the level of closeness in relation to how one produces speech), and imposition (the level of imposition when a request is made). Similar to Japanese and Chinese ATs (Li, 2004), Indonesian ATs are used asymmetrically to show respect, index the formality of the situation, and indicate the relationship of the interlocutors. Social factors usually manoeuvre the choice of terms; social status, gender, age, family relationship, transactional relationship, occupational structure race or degree of intimacy when addressing others (Wardhaugh, 2000). Failure to accomplish these variables will be considered as impolite.

In fact, there is a salient difference between Indonesian and English address terms. ‘*You*’ which is widely used in English ATs to address people from all age backgrounds is not applicable in Indonesian ATs. Although English address terms recognize the indexical politeness functions in titles such as Mr, Mrs, and Father for pastoral (Barron, 2006), English address terms have been maintaining the equality. Further, in contrast to the case of ‘*you*’ in English and *tu* and *vous* in French (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Magnan, 2002). Indonesian ATs are more contextualized. ‘*You*’ is only used when direct addressing people who are equally ranked with the interlocutor, or even younger. ‘*You*’ in Indonesia is also translated as ‘*Anda*’.



‘*Anda*’ is used formally in an event or meeting. For example, when one is giving a seminar, then he addresses his audiences as ‘*Anda*’. When used between two people, it shows that either they do not have a close relationship, or one of them is trying to draw distance.

The hierarchical relation influences the way people show their respect, addressing ‘*you*’ to the elders is very much avoided. Instead, Indonesians use vocative or social ATs which emphasise indirectness. At some cases, addressing vocative terms ‘*adik (sister/ brother)*’ to those younger than the interlocutor is considered politer than just addressing ‘*you*’. *Adik* indicates less imposition and high level of intimacy. Addressing with names or with vocative term ‘*adik*’ to younger people is considered to be more polite to show friendliness and closeness.

Indonesian kinship ATs are marked by ‘*father, mother, sister, brother, uncle, and aunty*’ which are usually used in family relationship. However, these can also be used when a speaker wants to show intimacy to his interlocutor. One can always address a stranger with ‘*ibu*’ (mother) or ‘*bapak*’ (father) if he wants to be polite. Meanwhile, Indonesian social address terms are marked by those used when meeting new people and/or strangers, daily transaction, formal situation including ‘*Mr, Sir, Ma’am. Madam, Miss, and Master*’. Social ATs usually involves the power play in them (Billmyer, 2000). Varied Indonesian ATs are inextricably linked with the context and the relationship between the interlocutors (DuFon, 2000). Inappropriate ATs in inappropriate contexts will be interpreted as sarcastic and rude (Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2002).

In contrast to Indonesian ATs, Taavitsainen and Jucker (2002) explain that English ATs are much reduced today. English ATs promote the equality principle than any other ATs. Apparently, English ATs are less sensitive to power and imposition but intimacy (Hijirida & Sohn, 1986). Besides, the number of English ATs is reduced to fewer numbers (Fischer, 2002). Although they still have ATs to address politely such as titles with last name and kinship terms, they address ‘*you*’ naturally to everyone.

**Table 1.** *The difference in following direct addressing*

<b>Indonesian ATs</b>	<b>English ATs</b>
Lea: <i>Lea</i> rindu <i>Ayah</i> ( <i>Lea Miss Father</i> )	Lea: <i>I miss you.</i>
<i>Ayah: Ayah</i> juga rindu <i>Lea</i> ( <i>Father also miss Lea</i> )	Father: <i>I miss you too.</i>

From the above excerpt, *Lea* addresses ‘*father*’ to show her respect to their hierarchical relationship. Meanwhile, *her father* addresses her with name to show intimacy. Name can, in Indonesia, be used not only to identify people but also to address them (Hudson, 2001). While in English ATs, speakers casually address ‘*you*’ regardless of their hierarchical position. This difference explains the ambivalence faced by the study abroad students aiming to be polite thus emphasizing asymmetrical relationship. An Indonesian student saying, ‘*Good Morning, Mister!*’ to his British professor, can create misinterpretation to being rude or joking. The conflict is caused by the different politeness norms between the two cultures. Given this insight, ATs competence is paramount within an intercultural communication (DuFon, 2010).



## **Methodology**

Aiming to investigate in what ways Indonesian students accommodated their English ATs acquisition and how Indonesian ATs' transfer influenced the production of the English ATs during their study abroad, this study employed a case study approach. It is best employed because it exposes participants' untold and unseen stories. Yin (1984) defines a case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context: when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources are evidence of use" (p. 23). To sum up, it explores the real situation experienced by the participants and gives insights of what the students are experiencing and struggling (Hatch, 2002). Also, it examines the real-life data and helps to explain the complexities which cannot be unpacked through any other approach (Yin, 2014).

### ***Participants***

Participants were chosen using purposive and homogenous sampling criteria for its relevance to the scope of the research (Bernard, 2002). As this study aimed at uncovering the Indonesian students who shared similar traits and characteristic (Walliman, 2011), I considered this sampling as the best one to be employed. There were five participants in this study. They were MA, RZ, NG, SS, and ZeRo. All the participants were master students in a university in the UK. The participants' ages ranged from 23 – 26 years old. Two of them are males (RZ & SS) and the others are female (MA, NG, and ZeRo). There was no gender preference employed in this study, the gender variety was simply because more females were willing to participate. Some participants lived in a university's accommodation while some lived in a private accommodation. All participants were considered to have advanced to proficient English users based on their IELTS score. No one reported to have lived abroad before. The participants would have stayed by 7 months by the time this research was carried out.

The information stored by the participants was treated as confidential and kept to the greatest extent possible. All participants were identified by initials to ensure their confidentiality. The researcher also committed to distributing the informed consent form before any information transfer to ensure the participants know the purpose of the study and that this study would do no harm to the participants. The participation was basically voluntary. Participants were advised that the result of the study might be published in the form of research article.

### ***Data elicitation and analysis***

Discourse Completion Test (DCT), from Barron's (2006) study, 'Learning to Say 'You' in German: The Acquisition of Sociolinguistic Competence in a Study Abroad Context' which was designed based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) contextual factors; social distance, power and imposition, was adapted with modifications. The DCT was written in Bahasa Indonesia to provoke a more natural cognitive process to the participants. Despite their L2 language proficiency, previous studies show that all mastered languages are active when bilinguals and/or multilinguals are using other language (Marian, 2003; Kroll, Bobb & Wodniecka, 2006). Therefore, using Bahasa Indonesia in the DCT highly likely provides the



more natural situations faced when making interaction with the local people during their study abroad. The responses from data DCT were elicited through Google documents. There were six situations within the DCT. English ATs occurrence within the data were coded and categorized. Then, pragmatic failure and L1 transfer when addressing were thematically analyzed.

The semi-structured interview questions served as the exploration and confirmation to the DCT. The semi-structured interview suited best because it scrutinizes the understanding behind a specific phenomenon. Kasper (2008) suggests that semi-structured interviews can serve as a tool to triangulate the interpretations made by the researcher who conducts research using a multimodal approach and what is more, data collected can be used as the main source. Hence, semi-structured interview was employed to investigate the production and the acquisition of English ATs. During the interview, the participants could always refer back to their DCT's answers. I also developed more questions based on their responses to allow a room for participants to tell the reasons behind their specific address term choice. The interview took 30 minutes to complete and was recorded with an audio to for data validation and transcription purposes.

To analyze the semi-structured interview data, the qualitative content analysis was employed (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Using the qualitative content analysis, Mayring (2007) adds that codes and categories emerge from the data analysis theme. In this study, after the data had been coded, categories were generated. Then the analysis was made to draw explanation and to make sense of the phenomenon. Direct quotations from the data were attached to the explanation to increase its trustworthiness.

To ensure the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of my study, I put verbatim examples from the interviews. Additionally, I also did member checking (Mukminin, Ali, & Fadloan, 2015; Mukminin, Masbirorotni, Noprival, Sutarno, Arif, & Maimunah, 2015; Mukminin & McMahon, 2013).

## **Findings**

This study explored on how the transfer of Indonesian address terms (ATs) influenced the production of English ATs and in what ways Indonesian students accommodated the acquisition of the English ATs during the study abroad. The analysis of the interview data indicated that five major issues were related to how the transfer of Indonesian address terms (ATs) influenced the production of English ATs and in what ways Indonesian students accommodated the acquisition of the English ATs during the study abroad, including: the transfer in the production of English address terms, accommodating the English address terms acquisition, language socialization, investment, and corrective feedback.

### ***The transfer in the production of English address terms***

After analyzing the data elicited through the DCT, the study found that there were some transfers as pragmatic failure done by the participants. All of them are listed as follows:

**Uncle**, affected by social status, power, and rank, which are highly valued in Indonesia, all the participants in the study transferred the Indonesian ATs into English in the given situation. As conditioned in DCT, they were asked to offer their uncle a drink but were



refused. In Indonesia, uncle has a higher status and bigger power, thus needs to be addressed with 'uncle' to show respect. Calling names or avoiding addressing uncle by addressing 'you' is an act of disrespect. Five out of five participants wrote 'uncle' on 'beverage situation'.

### (1) RZ, in Beverage situation

You : Hi, *Uncle*, how are you? Do you want to join me?  
U : Hi, I'm good! But I have another thing to do right now, so I can't join you, maybe next time?

*Sir*, two out of five participants addressed 'Sir' in the accident and lift situation. ZeRo, affected by the transfer of politeness and contextual variables in Indonesian ATs, put the speaker of the seminar to have more power than her. Either because she viewed him as someone who is older or ranks socially higher than her, she addressed 'Sir' as 'Bapak'. Consequently, she addressed herself as just 'you' because it is unproblematic for the older to call the younger one with a name according to the Indonesian ATs.

### (2) ZeRo, in Lift situation

Speaker : Are you heading home now?  
Me : Ah, yes *Sir*. I am going to my house near city centre.  
Speaker : What a coincidence. I am going that way too. Do you want me to give you a ride?  
Me : I am very pleased for you offer, *Sir*. I was about to say that I am meeting my friend soon before heading home.  
Speaker : Oh, really?  
Me : Yes, I would be happy too, but maybe not now.  
Speaker : Well, no problem. See you later  
Me : See you

*Miss*, two out five participants used 'Miss' to address their imaginary interlocutor in 'Accident situation'. 'Miss' is basically used to politely address a girl who is considered unmarried or a woman with professional title in a special occasion; like a waitress at restaurant, a teacher at school (Dunkling, 2008). Nevertheless, the usage of 'Miss' addressed by NG in this context was surely affected by the transfer of Indonesian ATs.

### (3) NG in Accident Situation

You : Hi! little girl, let me help you with handling this stuff  
Girl : Thank you, *Miss*. You are so kind

*Lovely*, NG, at the Beverage situation, wrote that the uncle addressed her as 'lovely'. In this case, it is an improper choice of the word because lovely is used to show appearance.

### (4) NG at the beverage situation



Uncle : Hi, *lovely*, I am good. I just finished meeting with my client on building next to this café

*Son*, given the context that RZ had to address a priest, RZ apparently was affected by the Indonesian ATs in which he put the priest as someone who socially ranked higher than him. RZ addressed the priest based on the contextual variation rules in the accident situation. Using ‘son’ he grappled the fact that the priest was older and both of them were complete strangers (Schneider, 2003).

**(5) RZ at the accident situation**

C : I'm very sorry, *son*, let me take you to the hospital

***Accommodating the English address terms acquisition***

Having analyzed and presented the findings that the participants experienced the transfer of Indonesian ATs into the production of the English ATs, the study continued to investigate in what ways the participants accommodated their English ATs. The findings of this study highlighted that the Indonesian students accommodated the English ATs in several ways.

***Politeness ambivalence and L1 transfer***, since the concept of politeness between Indonesia and English is different, all the participants had expressed their reluctance to adapting the English ATs. Worrying that calling names would make him look impolite, RZ expressed that he had to ask a friend who had studied in the UK previously about how to address the professor. Having told that he just needed to address the professor with his name, he still sent the email in doubt. He also described a situation where he would most probably be confused of what to say.

**(6) RZ, explaining his ambivalence to address a stranger**

RZ : Well, I am still confused if I happen to meet someone on the street, like (.) she drops her belonging, then what should I say, how I should address her?

Similarly, SS thought that calling ‘you’ and ‘name’ to older people seemed disrespectful. So did NG who, at the other hand felt shocked when she first got into the UK. She accounted how the English ATs she learnt back at Indonesia were different to the reality in the UK. While MA said she also found it to be rude to call names to people, she later described how she met someone old and was confused how to greet her,

**(7) MA, explaining her confusion how to address someone older**

MA : because, ah I don't know how I should address that ‘Hi’ with, I don't know her name.

I : [hmm, you don't] [*bhmm iya benar*]

MA : When I first met her, she smiled. Ah: it feels disrespectful to only say



‘Hi. She has aged, been old, and been elderly. So, I was like, ‘Hi Madam’.

Driven by the need to show politeness, there is a big possibility that the L1 transfers will likely engender the pragmatic failure. Moreover, since the contextual factors have been nurtured within themselves, transfers may occur automatically. ZeRo, like the other participants, took her professor’s age into consideration, which made her uncomfortable to address her with her name. She said that the professor had aged, that in In Indonesia she would ‘salim’ her (an act of kissing elderly’s hand to show respect).

**Noticing and imitation**, listening, paying attention, and being aware of the ATs used, the participants managed to accommodate them. All participants admitted to noticing the difference between Indonesian and English ATs. From listening attentively to being aware of the significant difference, they gained understanding, thus imitating the English ATs. SS said that he watched his British friends closely when conversing.

**(8) SS, explaining how he notices and imitated the English ATs**

- SS : I prefer to listen to them, and imitate.  
KS : Hmm  
SS : So, when they are talking to each other, I prefer to observe.  
KS : Hmm  
SS : [...] from observing, I noticed, “Oh this is the way the say this expression” or anything.

NG similarly expressed that she accommodated the ATs acquisition by noticing how her British friend casually addressed the professor, thus she grasped the understanding that she should do it that way. In addition, ZeRo who had a chance for visiting the primary school also noticed the differences between the use of formal ATs at school and the casual ATs outside the school. Being called ‘Miss’ at the class, she admitted to be shocked. Then she came into understanding that at school, people addressed formally, thus, she imitated them.

**(9) ZeRo, noticing social ATs are used in the formal transaction**

- ZeRo : Just like that, but, but when coming into the class, in fact, they address differently. So, they call ‘Miss’ and ‘Mister’ between teachers.  
I : Hmm  
ZeRo : Uh ho, the thing is, I was called ‘Miss’. One of the teachers addressed me as ‘Miss’. “How are you, Miss” I was so confused. I was like, ‘so they use ‘Miss’ at this kind of place’.  
I : hmm  
ZeRo: because outside, they just call names.  
I : [they just call names]  
ZeRo: Ah, I was shocked (*ah kaget sih*).

Noticing the different usage of the ATs in the different contexts, ZeRo then imitated how they addressed the teachers in the school.



### ***Language socialization***

Beside noticing and imitating, some participants accounted that they accommodated the English ATs through interacting with the local people. Having lived in the private accommodations, SS and ZeRo claimed to gain advantage since they had more access to genuine interactions. While SS said that he was accustomed to call his housemates without using Indonesian ATs, ZeRo built friendship with her housemate and exchanged English endearment ATs like ‘darling’ ‘sister’ and ‘babe’ to show closeness between them.

#### **(10) ZeRo, explaining how she socializes with her flatmates**

ZeRo: For I have been close with one of my housemates, and so far, she started our friendship by addressing me as ‘darling’. I prefer to call her darling or sometimes sister.

I : Hmm

ZeRo: I sometimes call her ‘Babe’ as well.

### ***Investment***

At some degree, some participants were invested to learn the language to be accepted in the community. SS said that he learnt to properly address because he realised that he needed to make his interlocutor feel comfortable talking with him. SS added that by making them comfortable he would feel comfortable as well. The same concerns were also expressed by RZ, MA and ZeRo. They thought that being able to use the proper ATs would make you gain a social acceptance. Thus, all of them committed to adapt the ATs because they believe behaving based on the context is the priority. However, NG expressed that the need to be accepted is not the only reason why she wanted to use the proper address terms. She said that through gaining the proper address terms, she could gain more access to genuine English conversation. Thus, she could improve her English which would add more value when she goes back to Indonesia.

#### **(11) NG, explaining her investment in acquiring the proper ATs**

NG : [Uh huh,] I mean I think like. Yeah, it bears arrogance in there. I mean I have stayed in the UK for a year. It’s like a basic thing that when I go back to Indonesia, I want my English to sound more sophisticated.

I : Okay

NG : What a waste to studying in the UK if my English is just around ABCs!

I : Hmm

NG : And, I am expecting a better job.

### ***Corrective feedback***



The readiness of the native speaker to correct the learners' mistakes proves to scaffold the pragmatic development of the learners. Actively giving feedback to the ATs production, rather than simply letting it go because it is just a matter of proficiency or assuming it to be an act of impoliteness has showed its effectiveness in the experience of Indonesian graduates. Being corrected by their professor, of how she wanted to be addressed, NG and ZeRo admitted to have learnt properly.

**(12) NG, explaining how her professor provides her with corrective feedback**

NG : Yes. So, at the first time, if I am not mistaken, I addressed my professor, saying, 'thank you, thank you Ma'am [...] so she was like, 'Just call me, Laurinda'.

**Discussion**

***The Indonesian ATs transfer in the production of English ATs***

When performing the L2 ATs, learners may experience the transfer from his L1. As has been discussed in the previous parts of the study, the transfer from L1 can be either positive or negative. The learners, addressing with L1's ATs may not be compatible to the L2's. Consequently, as one context bears different politeness, performing generalization and L1 transfers are considered as lack of proficiency, and even impoliteness. Having raised in respect to the contextual variables, the participants showed that they were yet affected by the power, distance, and imposition (DuFon, 2000) when addressing. Pragmatic failure as the result of negative transfer and generalization was encountered by all participants. As pragmatic failure can cause someone to be judged as being impolite (Thomas, 1983), arguably some participants had been seen impolite by the local people through their English ATs usages. This can be seen on NG's account. She explained how the shopkeeper showed no reaction when she said, "thank you, Sir". NG thought that the man was just being arrogant for not replying her back. However, we can grasp that it might be NG who was seen by the man to be impolite for addressing him 'Sir' for it might make him feel old or assume that NG created distance. Through all the transfers made, the findings indicate that all the participants had experienced at least one unpleasant or uncomfortable experience because of the L1 transfer. Participants' intention to be polite had ended in vain because no one had told them that the politeness markers in addressing people are apparently different between Indonesia and the UK.

Some participants might, at a certain point, learn from noticing and imitating the local people of how to address people properly. But, the transfer of L1 still impedes their proper usage of English ATs. To account an explanation, all participants said that they were aware of using English ATs, but most of the time, they forgot using them. NG explained, "*kalaupun aku 100% sadar, tapi kadang-kadang* (If I am a 100% aware, which is only sometimes)". The similar finding was also found by Hassal (2013, p. 11) where the participants admitted that they produced the improper address terms unwittingly, "I would use *kamu* with my classmates, but I just forget to." These findings also aligned with previous studies like Barron (2006), Hassal (2012), and DuFon (2006).



Furthermore, the participants were seen to have learned the new English ATs in the past few months. English ATs, such as 'lovely' appeared in the data. Nevertheless, the participants had not addressed them at the right place. Wanting to show a close relationship with the imaginary uncle given in the DCT, NG wrote that the uncle addressed her as 'lovely'. Despite the fact that it is used by a male speaker to a younger woman, 'Lovely' does not suit this context. It is apparently used to "comment on the appearance of the person, rather than the feelings of the speaker" (Dunkling, 2008, p. 160). Nevertheless, the data showed that one of the participants had successfully adapted the English address terms without encountering failure. English AT 'son' also was found to have been employed by the participants. Although, pragmatic transfer still interferes in the production of AT 'son', RZ seemed to make a salient effort to adapt the English ATs.

This first research question gave insight of the struggle of the Indonesian students during the study abroad in addressing people. Aiming to promote politeness, they transferred the Indonesian ATs to English ATs but ending up as impolite. This suggests that the teaching of English in Indonesia should include more pragmatic and culture about the language taught. How to address people appropriately in English should be prioritized because it is the basic of building the communication. Indeed, the English speakers are not comfortable to be addressed using the contextual variable but casual by calling names and direct ATs 'you'. Giving English ATs in English classroom may help coping learners' pragmatic failure when conversing with others and avoid misunderstanding, at worst seen as sarcastic.

### ***Ways in accommodating the English address terms acquisition***

Although all the participants expressed their ambivalence in adapting the English ATs and encountered various awkwardness when they first used them, they gradually accommodated the ATs through various ways. Participants were found to acquire the English ATs by noticing how the locals used the English ATs. The participants made time to listen to the conversation between the locals and grasped that a certain AT was used on a certain occasion. Although they still sometimes unwittingly produced the improper ATs, participants made an conscious effort of using the right ATs to fit in and build a rapport with the locals (Hassal, 2013).

Providing corrective feedback has been proven to scaffold the participants' English ATs acquisition. When ZeRo's and NG's professor asked them to address her with her name rather than 'professor' or 'ma'am', both grappled understanding of how to use the proper English ATs. The similar situation can also be seen in the case of Arina, one of the participants in Belz and Kinginger's (2003) study. She was not making any changes in addressing her professor when corrected by the researchers. However, once corrected by her professor, she was able to address him properly. This shed light that students best acquire the proper L2 ATs when the native speakers readily provide them a correction to the improper ATs' production. Native speakers needed to give corrective feedback to the learner to scaffold the production and the acquisition of their ATs. Learners' production and acquisition might be stagnant and desensitized if the native speakers instead of correcting let and accept the improper ATs production (Belz & Kinginger, 2003).

Learners' investment also plays a big role in the students' pragmatic development. Investment, which is the "the connection between a learner's desire and commitment to learn a language" (Norton and Toohey, 2011, p. 415), unpacks the learners' intention of gaining the



proper English ATs. In this study, participants were found being invested in their ATs acquisition because they wanted to gain social acceptance and gain added value when they went back to Indonesia. SS admitted learning how to use proper address terms because he knew if he wanted to make his interlocutor comfortable speaking with him, he needed to be like one of them. He, therefore, invested in his intercultural interaction and was able to socialize, thus, get accepted into the community. NG, on the other hand, wanted to gain expertise. She wanted acknowledgement when she went back home to show how fluent she was in English as a result of studying abroad. This finding highlighted that learners' investments in the language learning influenced their responses to the language learning during study abroad experience.

In fact, study abroad is widely believed as the best medium for L2 pragmatic development and ATs acquisition (Hassall, 2012; Kinginger, 2008). To a certain degree, this belief is well justified. This is mirrored in how ZeRo and SS who lived with local housemates got access to the English ATs. They got access to genuine interactions, thus, supported their English ATs acquisition. Nevertheless, the kind of genuine interaction through language socialization is also problematic. In fact, the proper ATs acquisition and production do not depend on how many interactions but the quality (Isabella-Garcia, 2006). Living in natural situations may not be impactful to language learning as well as the ATs acquisition. It is mostly because language is gained through the courses, not through studied exclusively. Therefore, having bound to the courses, they rarely establish a natural contact to the native speakers (Barron, 2006) either because they are too busy with their course works or because they simply do not try to. NG, RZ and MA revealed that they did not talk to many people other than those at the academic background, such as professors, administrative staff, and classmates. NG said that she spoke Indonesian on a daily basis with other Indonesian friends, 'So my only chance to speak English is when I go to the city centre'. This finding leads into an understanding that study abroad is not an assurance for language learning and pragmatic acquisition. There is a need to know that only if the learners challenge their comfort zone to interact and socialize with the L2 speakers that they can improve their language learning and pragmatic competence. Otherwise, study abroad will not be impactful to students' language learning as has always been thought by many people.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored on how the transfer of Indonesian address terms (ATs) influenced the production of English ATs and in what ways Indonesian students accommodated the acquisition of the English ATs during the study abroad. Study abroad provides Indonesian students with a whole new different world in which they immerse in the culture and address people to communicate. The findings revealed that the participants were still experiencing the transfer from their L1 in which they were still affected by Indonesian ATs when addressing people in their study abroad experiences. Their cultures of showing politeness by addressing people through contextual variables were challenged under the local culture which views equality and casual direct addressing as politeness. In fact, the participants were found to accommodate the English ATs in multifaceted ways; noticing and imitating, investments, language socialization, and corrective feedback. Furthermore, the participants showed salient efforts to accommodate the English ATs for they wanted to build rapport with the local people and wanted to add their value when they went back to their country.



This effort increases awareness among the participants thus motivated them to challenge their comfort zone and socialize with the locals despite some transfers that may occur during the conversation.

This study has provided further understanding on how students encountered pragmatic failure when using the English ATs in a daily context to address the local people. The participants addressed 'sir' and 'miss' which ended up seen as being impolite. Some were confused how to start communication with people because of their contradictory belief about how to address people. Therefore, this study suggests the importance of teaching English ATs at schools. What happens in English Language Teaching in Indonesia is that English ATs are designed to fit the Indonesian ATs, thus literal translation based on the contextual factor is the kind of English ATs taught to the students. Students are widely taught to call 'sir' as 'bapak' to everyone older. As a result, when talking to the native speakers, students are assumed impolite when they are trying to be polite. Authentic materials about English ATs should be taught to students from the early age, however, teacher needs to emphasize the different culture bears different politeness. Thus, students will be well-aware when to use the English ATs and Indonesian ATs. That way, the ambivalence and the pragmatic failures can be reduced when they converse with the native speaker or get into the English-speaking countries like UK.

### **Implication**

The findings of this study showed that the participants accommodated the English ATs in various ways. Although at first, the participants were all ambivalent about the concept of being polite in addressing, they managed to learn through time and through the interactions they encountered. These findings shed light into the teaching of the English ATs in classroom. The framework of teaching English ATs could be then designed through noticing the differences between both ATs and imitating the usages. Teacher can also increase the awareness of the students to realize why the acquisition of appropriate ATs is paramount to a successful conversation. Teacher can provide the direct feedback to the students when practicing, so their learning is scaffolded. Finally, socialize through the language is what teacher needs to encourage the students the most. Students need to be exercised to be actively seeking the chance to use the English ATs through language socialization. Finally, the finding of this study suggests that study abroad is not a guarantee for a genuine language learning and practice expected because of the lack of language socialization from the students. Therefore, students need to be pro-active in initiating the conversation and in return native speakers are advised to actively provide corrective feedback to the learners.

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