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Requests strategies among the Anlos: A qualitative research

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Abstract
The primary aim of this study is to investigate different types of requests and request strategies by Anlo conversational participants in natural settings. This purpose hinges on the background that requests in Anlo may be direct or indirect. The study employs qualitative research design. The population for this study is from three out of the thirty-six indigenous Anlo towns. In all, thirty-six respondents made up of children (aged between 9 and 14 years), youth (aged between 15 and 39 years) and the elderly (aged from 40 years and above) were selected from the three sites. The data collection instruments used for this study are observation, interview, role play and the use of discourse completion tests (D.C.Ts). Requests in Anlo are grouped into two major categories namely; direct and indirect. Indirect requests are further sub-divided into conventional indirect requests and non-conventional indirect requests. Direct requests in Anlo are normally made in a commanding fashion. The use of address term however reduces or mitigates the illocutionary force of the request.

Keywords: address terms, conventional indirect, honorifics, interlocutors, requestee, socio-cultural

Public Interest Statement

The primary aim of this study is to investigate different types of requests and request strategies by Anlo conversational participants in natural settings. This purpose hinges on the background that requests in Anlo may be direct or indirect.

Introduction

A request is a directive speech act. Its illocutionary purpose is to get the hearer to do something in circumstances in which it is not obvious that he/she will perform the action in the normal course of events (Felix-Brasdefer, 2010; Searle, 1969). According to Nguyem and Ho (2013), requests have been the most researched speech acts to date in cross-cultural, variational and interlanguage pragmatics (Shively, 2011; Upadhyay, 2003; Woodfield, 2008; Lin, 2011). In Ghana, if an Akan request involves an imposition on a requestee, the imposition will not be imposed by the "requester," but by the society as a whole because of that society's collective culture and social interdependence. In the same sense, direct requests may not be construed as harsh or impolite, unless the interpersonal relationship between the requesters and the recipients is ignored. The relationship between a "requester" and a "requestee" is a key variable in structuring the request. Thus, personal context plays a significant role in determining the linguistic form to be selected or used, how such a form is used, and how it is interpreted by the requestee.

Requests for certain items or services can be made (directly or indirectly) by certain people without such people being considered impolite or without the requestee's face being threatened. For example, in formal situations, superiors can, directly or indirectly, request subordinates to do certain things for them, and the subordinates will not feel imposed upon. In a village chief's palace, for example, subordinates may even feel honored to undertake the requested action or to provide the requested item (if they have it). For their part, superiors have a social obligation to help subordinates, so a subordinate who refuses a request by a superior may be seen as disrespectful (Obeng, 1997). In addition to exploring the pragmatic and sequential structure of requests, it will be established that appropriate request text formulation and performance are determined more by an intricate interplay of socio-cultural convention and considerations than any other thing.

Statement of the problem

Requests are a means of soliciting assistance (Zhang, 1995). It may be expressed verbally or non-verbally in most cultures. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) states that request as a social behaviour is more conveniently and effectively communicated through the linguistic medium. Requests in the Anlo society are usually not considered impositions on recipients, because of that society's collective culture and social interdependence, and that direct requests may not be construed as harsh or impolite, unless the interpersonal relationship between the requesters and the recipients is ignored. Thus in any speech community, request text formation and its performance constitutes a body of knowledge that members of the speech community must acquire in order to become socially integrated. The acquisition of the knowledge and skill for request performance becomes more imperative considering, the fact that request feature more prominently in our everyday verbal exchanges.

Among the Anlos, the word request interprets a variety of verbal interactions whose sole purpose is to solicit assistance. It is important that these varieties of request be identified and their mode of performance addressed. By making a request, the speaker impinges on the hearer's claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. This general misconception that all types of requests are imposition results in some Anlos even refraining from requesting what is justifiably their right.

Requests are universal. This is because every language and speech community in the world employs it in one way or the other during a communicative encounter. That notwithstanding, the way they are employed and structured may vary from language to language and from one speech community to the other. Although Anlos make requests, there is no documentary evidence that suggests the types or strategies that are employed in this area of Ewe land. It is in this regard that this study is undertaken.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate different types of requests or request strategies found among Anlo conversational participants in natural settings. It is intended to explore the various request strategies and responses to such strategies.

Literature review

Kuang et al. (2006) examines the many varied forms that the speech act of request takes in children's language use from 5 Malaysian families. They found out that young children are capable of employing different strategies when making requests in English, but the choice of strategies is dependent on the variable of the addressee, i.e. whether it is the mother, father, sibling (brother/sister) or maid. Their result illustrated that these five Malaysian children tend to be more direct when it comes to getting things done for themselves. However, it is clear that even young children are aware of power differentials and language used for solidarity as contrasted to language used to show distance and power. To them, many studies have been conducted to investigate how children with various cultural backgrounds make requests using different forms from this perspective. Ervin-Tripp (1977) writing on the types of request stated that children have at their disposal a range of both direct and indirect forms for requesting and although indirect requests increase with age, younger children have as many ways of expressing requests as the older children. This was affirmed by Read and Cherry (1978). In adding his voice to this, Papafragou (2000) states that it is believed that children use the imperative directives more frequently than requests in the form of questions or hints.

Obeng (1999) as quoted by Agyekum (2005) states that request may be simple or complex, direct or indirect depending on the nature of the request and the relationship between requester and the addressee. Since request is a speech event, it involves participants as a requester (the speaker) and the requestee (the addressee). The participants involved in the request event consider the social class of each other in line with the acronym GRAPD: G- gender, R- rank, A- age, P- power, and D- distance. Zhang (1995) categorized requests in Chinese into two types: direct and indirect. Even direct ones can be viewed at different direct levels. She described indirectness in modern conversation between Chinese as being "associated with information sequencing…. the more one beats around the bush the more indirect one's speech becomes" (1995, p.82). Zhang's study focused on the strategies used by adult speakers driven by politeness concerns in order to redress face. She claimed that in Chinese culture, requests are often regarded as signs of a good relationship and respect.

Different from these studies which examined requesting as a speech act, Li (2000) advocated that requesting is not only a speech act realized in a single utterance or pair of utterances but should be a pragmatic activity that is achieved sometimes over a series of utterances or accomplished only after an extended period of time. Thus, she adapted an ethnographic approach to collect data from the full context of the speech act, and drew heavily on self-reports or narrative accounts of speech acts, not just observed events. The contextualized examples provided in this research illustrated how, through exposure and participation in social interactions and with the assistance of experts or more competent peers, an immigrant woman came to internalize target language and cultural norms and developed communicative competence in English as a Second Language in the workplace. More specifically, she learned to make requests more directly than she had been accustomed to doing by adopting certain sociolinguistic strategies and expressions.

Meng (2008) conducts a study that revealed that mothers tend to make both direct and indirect requests, using a wide range of linguistic forms and communicative strategies in different contexts with their children. However, children use more direct requests than indirect ones when they communicate with their mothers, but they do use indirect requests with out-group members

such as peers and other adults. The results of this study illustrates what Kuang et al. (2006) find that even young children are aware of power differentials and language used to show that. Children are also aware of the language used to show distance and power. They know how to choose the appropriate strategies and linguistic forms based on different situations recognizing sociological variables like social distance, power and degree of imposition. Children learn linguistic forms and communicative strategies from their mothers by imitating the way they make requests. More importantly, children are educated about the sociocultural norms which shape people's behavior in daily interactions with their mothers.

Language acquisition is also a language socialization process. Language socialization theory considers language learning as the simultaneous acquisition of linguistic knowledge and sociocultural knowledge (Ochs, 1993). Li (2000) advocates that sociocultural information is encoded in the organization of conversational discourse. Language learners therefore acquire tacit knowledge of principles of social order, systems of belief, and sociolinguistic conventions through exposure to and participation in language-mediated interactions.

Results of a study conducted by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) reveal that request strategies could be classified into three categories depicting the relative social power between the interlocutors. They are as follows: higher-ranking to lower-ranking, equal to equal and lower-ranking to higher-ranking request strategies. These strategies are generally expected to be influenced by the relation between the interlocutors, i.e., the requester and requestee and the relative dominance over each other. Another variable that governs the relationship between the requester and the requestee is the social distance. This is where the requestee is seen either as an acquaintance or a stranger to the requester.

Among the pioneer studies on requests was Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). The findings of the CCSARP have suggested that requests pose a threat to the hearer's negative face, i.e. the freedom of action and freedom from imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Therefore, the speaker has to employ appropriate linguistic means in order to minimize the degree of imposition that his or her requests may impinge on the hearer and protect the hearer's negative face. One way in which the speaker can minimize the imposition is by selecting an indirect strategy instead of a direct one (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). This is because indirectness implies tentativeness on the part of the speaker and optionality for the hearer (Leech, 1983, p.108). The speaker may also use syntactic modification such as negative or modal structures as distancing elements and hedging devices (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

In a later study on native speakers' perceptions of politeness and indirectness in English and Hebrew, Blum-Kulka (1987) further points out that conventional indirectness is preferred over non-conventional indirectness (i.e. strong or mild hints) in requests in these languages. According to this study, politeness refers to the balance between two needs: Pragmatic clarity and avoidance of coerciveness. This balance is achieved only in the case of conventional indirectness but not in the case of nonconventional indirectness or directness. Preference for either pragmatic clarity or non-coerciveness will result in a decrease in politeness. Therefore, directness is often equated to impoliteness because it shows a lack of consideration for face. At the same time, nonconventional indirectness also implies impoliteness because it lacks pragmatic clarity. Many other empirical studies on requests in English have supported the findings of Blum-Kulka et al. (1987), documenting that native speakers prefer conventional indirectness, particularly the query preparatory strategy while dis-preferring directness in requests (e.g. Barron, 2008; House & Kasper, 1987; Octu& Zeyrek, 2008; Trosborg, 1995; Woodfield, 2008).

However, findings from research on other languages do not necessarily agree with the claim that conventionally indirect request strategies represent the highest degree of politeness

(Byon, 2006; Hassall, 2001; Wong, 1994; Rue & Zhang, 2008; Upadhyay, 2003; Vu, 1997, 1999; Wierzbicka, 1985; Lin, 2011). Disagreeing with Searle (1975 p. 64) who claims that "[i]n directives, politeness is the chief motivation for indirectness", Wierzbicka (1985) maintains that this rule applies only to the English language and the Anglo-Saxon cultures.

Studies on Polish requests show that imperatives can serve as polite requests in Vietnamese as a native language especially when accompanied by mitigating devices such as intonation, the use of appropriate address forms, personal pronouns or modal particles (Wierzbicka, 1985).

Research on requests in Asian languages, such as Bahasa Indonesia, Korean, Nepali, Mandarin Chinese and Vietnamese has also challenged the claimed direct link between indirectness and politeness (e.g. Byon, 2006; Hassall, 1999; Wong, 1994; Rue & Zhang 2008; Upadhyay, 2003; Vu, 1997, 1999; Lin, 2011). For example, although conventionally indirect requests constitute the most frequently used realization strategies in Bahasa Indonesia (51%), direct requests also make up a large proportion in this language (42.7%) (Hassall, 2001, p. 102). Similarly, politeness in Korean requests can be expressed by means of direct strategies coupled with honorifics (Byon, 2006, p. 66). Conventional indirectness, on the other hand, is not significantly correlated with politeness in this language (Lin, 2011 p.78). The most frequently used form of requests in Nepali is the basic imperative construction and politeness can be conveyed by means of honorifics rather than by changing the directness level of sentences (Upadhyay, 2003, p. 118).

Speakers of Mandarin Chinese also demonstrate an overwhelming preference for bald on record strategies as they tend to associate directness with sincerity while regarding conventionally indirect requests as inappropriate (Wong, 1994; Rue & Zhang, 2008). Generally, these findings do not endorse the direct relationship between politeness and linguistic indirectness, suggesting that this relationship is interpreted differently across cultures. To date, speech acts in general and requests in particular in Vietnamese have been under-represented in pragmatics literature.

Among the few available studies, Vu (1997) has offered a valuable insight into requests and politeness in Vietnamese. She collected naturally occurring requests by a group of Vietnamese native speakers as they were communicating in various social contexts. Her studies show that Vietnamese speakers prefer a high level of directness in making requests and rely more considerably on supportive elements with politeness effects rather than on indirectness for expressing politeness. Indirectness is also considered a politeness device; however, it does not rank as high as mitigated directness on the politeness continuum. Overall, despite a growing interest in requests in the last few decades, earlier studies have focused on a fairly limited range of languages, thus inadequately shedding light on our understanding of how this speech act is manifested in various contexts of cultures.

Methodology

The study employs qualitative research design. A research is qualitative if it describes events and persons specifically without making use of numerical data (Best & Kahn, 2006). Specifically, the ethnography of communication approach to qualitative study is employed since the study focuses on an aspect of culture. In effect, the ethnography of communication is deemed the appropriate approach to this study because it enables the researcher to record by participating in some activities or observing the people from their own cultural perspectives as they go about their normal daily activities. The population for this study is from three out of the thirty-six indigenous Anlo towns. These are Anloga, Woe and Keta. Anloga is the traditional capital of the 36 Anlo towns and the seat of the Anlo paramountcy. Woe is also one of the major earlier settlements of the Anlo Traditional area. It is the right wing seat of the three Asafo Divisions of Anlo. The administrative capital of the Anlos is Keta. These three indigenous Anlo fishing settlements are located at the South-Eastern part of Ghana. They are at the tail end of Accra – Dabala – Keta trunk

road.

In all, thirty-six respondents made up of children (aged between 9 and 14 years), youth (aged between 15 and 39 years) and the elderly (aged from 40 years and above) were selected from the three sites. The data collection instruments used for this study are observation, interview, role play and the use of discourse completion tests (D.C.Ts).

Data for the study was collected precisely at Anloga, Woe and Keta. Data was gathered at places where people use the language at. Request expressions of interest to the researcher were spontaneously produced. Communicative events recorded were those where request expressions were used such as traditional ceremonies or rites (outdooring, marriage, funeral, etc.) with an electronic recorder, a field note and a pen. Data was also gathered at other places where language was used spontaneously. The researcher's task was to identify the various request types and the styles used by the speakers in the course of their speeches. Some places where the data was collected include the Chief's palace, community centers, homes, schools, markets, farms, beaches, lorry parks, funeral grounds, bars and streets.

During the period of the observation, the researcher occasionally employed the rapid and anonymous survey method (Coates, 1993, p. 5) in which he sometimes played the role of a buyer. Questions that were on socio-cultural life related to the requests in Anlo were asked. The researcher then wrote the responses in a notebook. The researcher sometimes recorded the conversations with the electronic recorder. Participants whose interactions were recorded were informed about the study and they freely gave their consent for the use of conversations.

The researcher also conducted interviews to obtain information on request expressions in Anlo to seek clarification on some of the forms of request encountered. Unstructured interviews which allow the respondents free room to respond to questions were used. This method enabled the researcher to electronically record the voices of the informants as well as the styles and strategies they employed in their requests.

Role Play is a scenario specified and informants are asked to act the specific roles verbally. The greatest strength of the role play lies in the fact that they give the researcher the chance to examine the speech act in its full discourse context. This makes role plays much richer source of gathering information. With this, the researcher had the chance of observing the specific strategies employed by the respondents in specific context.

Discourse Completion Test (D.C.Ts) are written or oral questionnaire containing situational descriptions, followed by short slots with empty spaces for the speech act under investigation. They are tests that consist of incomplete discourse sequences that represents socially differentiated situations were given out to respondents. Respondents are asked to write out in the empty spaces what they would say in a given situation. Olshtain and Cohan (1983) used this method in their study of apologies in Hebrew and English. It was also used for most of the studies in the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989).

The researcher adopted these sources of data collection because he did not expect a single source to provide him with all the necessary insights into the request forms used among the Anlos. This study focused on request as a directive speech act whose illocutionary purpose is to ask someone to do something for which under normal circumstances the person would not have done. The researcher's preoccupation was to transcribe the request expressions in the utterance. Data for the study was analyzed using Agyekum's (2005) GRAPD socio-linguistic variables: G-gender, R-rank, A-age, P-power, and D-distance. The naturalistic logic approach of qualitative data analysis was used.

The researcher differs in view expressed by Schafer (1967) as cited in Capo (1991) that theory is not controlled by the data but data are manufactured by the theory. The choice of this approach of data analysis was informed by the fact that it allows the researcher to derive

meaning by interpreting what is said by the participants. The data analysis involved translating of the data gathered, coding and organizing it into categories or under sub-headings, describing and interpreting it.

Coding categories were developed taking into consideration the purpose of the study. The researcher went through the coding and the categorization again ensuring that the various data collected were put under the right sectional heads. The researcher consulted two elderly educated Anlo men in their early 70s to help in test of reliability. In this sense, all the different aspects of the requests (head act, pre-commitment, etc.) were presented to each of them at different times and at different places for them to categorize them according to their understanding. In all, inter-rater agreement for all three of us was pegged at 72%. This is considered a good rate as it signifies that there is a great deal of agreement in most of the categories.

Results

Requests are grouped into two major categories namely; direct and indirect. Indirect requests are further sub-divided into conventional indirect requests and non-conventional indirect requests.

Direct Request

Obeng (1999) reports that direct requests in Akan are in the form of command sentences. In particular, they 'tell' requestee to do the requested action or provide the requested item. The verbs used are in the imperative mood. Most of these direct requests are made with an overt subject and address form followed by a verb and then followed by the requested item or service. Obeng gave the syntactic structure of direct request in Akan as follows:

> NP (+ address) + V (+ imperative mood) + N (+ requested item/service) + (S'(+ justification)) The NP may be a proper noun (e.g., Ama, Kwadwo, etc.) or a pronoun (e.g., mo 'you (pl.)').
> Akan request syntactic structure (Obeng 1999) above, applies to request in Anlo as well. The excerpts 42 and 43 illustrate the above syntactic structure in Anlo.

> 42. *Azaglo: <u>Gbemu,gbeneane miano.</u>*
> *Azaglo: Gbemu,   pluck   the coconut   for us to drink.*
>   *NP   V   N   S*

> 43.   Mawusi   Senyo,   ƒo   gbea   le mɔnu.
>   Mawusi: Senyo,   weed   the grass   at the courtyard.
>   NP   V   N   S

As pointed out in the structures in excerpt 42 and 43, the NP may be a vocative (a term that can be used to address someone like **Gbemu, Senyo**) and a verb in the imperative mood as **'gbe'**'pluck' *or* 'ƒo' 'weed'. This is followed by the requested item **'ne'** '*the coconut'* and the reason for the request 'ne miano' '*for us to drink*'. Obeng (1999) gives the example below in Akan to illustrate this point:

> AA (husband, age 40), is sitting at one end of a table. He asks his wife Ama (age 39), to pass him a book that is at the other end of the table. AA: Ama, pagya nwoma no ma me. 'Ama, give me the book.' Ama: Eni. 'Here it is.' AA: Mo. 'Thanks.'

In this excerpt, AA's request involves "ordering" Ama to give him a book. Use of the address form**'Ama'** expresses rapport and closeness. Because this interaction is between intimates, the

address form has a mitigating effect on the request. Use of such day names is also for positive politeness. Obeng (1995) states that the use of day names is the most common address form between Akan couples. One might think that AA is impolite or that his request is an imposition on Ama and therefore a threat to Ama's face, since his request is direct and is neither preceded nor followed by a strong politeness marker. However, because the conversation is between intimates--husband and wife--little social negotiation or attention to linguistic marking of politeness is needed (Wolfson, 1988). The relationship between the requester and the requestee therefore plays a significant role in determining which linguistic form is selected, how it is used, and how it is interpreted by the hearer.

In the illustration, there is no evidence in the reply of the hearer, Ama, that AA, the husband is imposing anything on her. The example also lends a measure of support to the point that requests for certain items can be made directly by certain people without such people being considered impolite or without the requestee's face being threatened. Asking one's spouse to hand one a book is neither face-threatening to oneself nor to the spouse, even if the request is made in command form.

The Akan situation as illustrated by Obeng (1999) is not different from what pertains in Anlo. The example 44 (between a man, Atikpo, 38 years and the sister, Abla, 32 years) illustrates the above syntactic structure in Anlo. This was recorded on the 29th February, 2016 at Anloga.

44.   Atikpo: Abla, tso nuɖuɖua ve nam maɖu.
         Atikpo: Abla, bring the food for me to eat.

In the Example 44, the man's request might be seen as impolite or that his request is an imposition on Abla, his sister and therefore a threat to the sister's face. Atikpo's request is direct and not followed or preceded by any politeness marker. But since the whole interaction is between close relations (brother and sister) who happen to be intimates, just a little politeness strategy is needed. This, the requester does by addressing the sister by her day name (Abla). The use of the address term '*Abla*' is meant to establish rapport, closeness and as a softener. It is also to mitigate any face threat to the requestee. The use of day names such as Adzo, Kofi, Ama, Komla and others for addressing people indicates positive politeness. When one mentions the name of a requestee, the illocutionary force becomes minimal. Many people who do not have the socio-pragmatic orientation may be tempted to think that the man (brother) is impolite and that he is imposing his request on Abla, his sister, and therefore a threat to negative face. This is because his request is 'direct and neither preceded or followed by any strong politeness marker' (Obeng, 1999).

Since the conversation is between intimates, that is brother and sister, 'little negotiation or attention to linguistic marking is requested. The request strategy employed by the man lends credence to the point made earlier that, requests could be made directly by certain people by using a down toner such as address term, honorifics, etc. The requesters may not be considered impolite and may not also be seen as threatening the requestee's negative face. Taking Excerpt 44 into consideration, asking one's sister to bring food for the one to eat in Anlo culture is not a face threatening act even if the request is made in a command form.

Another Example on direct request is example 45. Here, the requestee directly makes a request but unlike Example 44. In Example 45, the request is prefaced with a politeness marker. A day name 'Afi' and a kinship deferential address form 'daɖia' meaning 'aunt' have been used as a preface. In this Example, a woman, 27 years requests of her aunty, 24 years to give her a pot to cook in. This was recorded at Anloga on the 27th February. 2016.

> 45. *Daɖia Afi, ɣe wo zea nam maɖeakple eme.*
>   *Aunty Afi, give me your pot to prepare 'akple' in it.*

It can be seen from the utterance in example 45 that the request is made in a commanding fashion with the use of the verb 'ɣe' *'lend'* but the use of the deferential address term '**Daɖia** – *amternal Aunty*' reduces or mitigates the illocutionary force of the request. Also, the requester calls the requestee '**Daɖia** – *maternal aunty*', although she, the requester is older than the requestee. This is because the two people in question are not intimates friends. The strategy used in this request type is meant to establish solidarity between them. Although older people can make direct requests to the younger ones without the use of mitigators, there are some exceptions as illustrated in example 45. A critical examination of the example 45 shows a grounder suffixed to the head act that is, the reason for requesting for the pot '***maɖeakple eme***'. This is meant to attract the sympathy and cooperation of the requestee which will compel the requestee to give out the requested item. In Anlo, when the requester does not know the 'day name' of the requestee, it is better to use words such as '**Aʄetɔ**' 'lord' or '**Aʄenɔ**'' housewife' rather than using attention getting devices such as 'hai, hey, hɛ etc'. This is to establish rapport and show politeness. When the requester and the requestee happen to be of the same day of birth, the requester will use 'ɖokonye' 'my name sake'.

Indirect Requests
Indirect request among the Anlos can be either conventional or non-conventional.

Conventional Indirect Requests
Weizman (1989) notes that, with conventional indirect requests, the hearer is guided by some grammatical or semantic devices used conventionally for that purpose. In such cases, the speaker exploits (a) the grammatical structure of questions with modals such as can or could (as in 'Could you please give me your pen?' considered polite and indirect as opposed to an impolite request such as 'Give me your pen'; or (b) the semantic meaning of an apologetic expression such as 'please', conventionally used to signal indirect requests, and as a clue for requestive interpretation. Anlos normally use certain strategies as conventional indirect strategies. Some of these are:

- ➢ The use of hedging devices such as 'ne anɔ bɔboe na woa; ne anyoa; ne maɖe fu na woa; ne mate ɖe dzi woa; ne mate ɖe dzi wo oa' meaning 'if it can/could be possible; if it can/ could be right; if it would not bother you'.
- ➢ The use of respect terms such as 'meɖekuku' meaning 'please; I beg'
- ➢ The requester using words such as 'ateŋu;' meaning could you / can you' in making the request rather than making imperative statements which are normally regarded as impolite.

Hedging devices such as address terms, honorifics, endearment terms among others indicate politeness and non-imposition of the request on the requestee. Some of the data collected are as follows:

> In Example 46, a buyer (a girl of about 18 years) asks a seller (a woman of about 55 years) to take her change after buying and paying for the items. This was recorded at Keta on the 25th February, 2016.
> 46. Nuʄlela: "Dada, meɖekuku, mateŋua xɔ ga gbagbaa?"
>   *Buyer: "Mother, please, can I take the change?*

In the Example 46, a politeness marker and a kinship deferential address form '**dada**' meaning 'mother' has been used to address the requestee though the requestee is not the biological mother of the requester. This is done to mitigate and tone down any face threat that may come with the request. In Anlo culture, communal way of living is cherished so much that everybody sees people around him/her as a family member. If two people are not directly related biologically, there is a belief that they may be related through marriage, clan or some other means. This is affirmed by the proverb in Anlo that '**amedomea kpɔdomie, menya afihi miado go le o**' meaning *'personal relationship is like how paths connect to each other, you don't know where two people would meet at'.* They say this in Anlo to remind the indigenes that they are in one way or the other related to one another. So, kinship referential address forms are used. In excerpt 46, though the requester (the young lady) is not a biological daughter of the requestee (the woman), she (the young lady) sees her (the woman) as her mother and this goes to tone down any face threat her request may cause her. She then proceeds with the use of politeness marker '**meɖekuku**' 'please' followed by a hedging device 'mateŋu' 'can I' and then finally, the real request '**axɔ ga gbagbaa**?' *'take the change?'*

Another illustration is Example 47. In this example, a man, (36 years) requests for a canoe from another man (aged 37) to be used for fishing. This was recorded at Woe on 12th February, 2016.

47.   Agboto: Aƒetɔ Yao, mateŋu aza wo tɔdziʋua ayi
                    tɔdzie etsɔa? matrɔe ve ne megbɔ.
            Agboto: *Lord Yao, can I use your canoe for fishing*
                    tomorrow? I will bring it back when I return."

The requester, Agboto starts with an address term '**Aƒetɔ**' 'Lord' to make the request polite and to mitigate any face threat that may come with the whole request process. The day name of the requestee '**Yao**' has also been used with the address term. The use of the requestee's day name, **Yao**, denotes rapport and is, therefore, a politeness strategy. Here, the requester reminds the requestee of their close relationship, since only close friends or relatives can address each other by their day names. The use of both a reverential title, '**Aƒetɔ**' 'Lord', and a solidarity address form, Yao, in the same context might sound contradictory but that is not the case in Anlo. The next in the sequence is a hedging device '**mateŋu**' 'can I' before the head act '*aza wo tɔdziʋua ayi tɔdzie etsɔa?*' 'use your canoe for fishing tomorrow?' The requester finally ended the request process by giving a promise of returning the item to the requestee on his (the requester's) return. This last part is also done to reduce the imposition and the possible face threat.

Although there is interdependence in Anlo society, if what is being requested involves significant expense, the requester uses devices to soften the force behind the request. Such devices, to some extent, give the requestee the opportunity to act contrary to the proposition inherent in the speaker's utterance. Thus, the requestee has an option of turning down the request. The use of the requestee's day name, Yao, denotes rapport and is, therefore, a politeness strategy. Here, the requester reminds the requestee of their close relationship, since only close friends or relatives can address each other by their day names. With both forms, the requester appears to suggest something like "although my request is a difficult one, remember, we are one people. The requester's statement of returning the requested item represents a "negative" politeness strategy, since it allows the requestee to decide on whether to give out the requested item or not.

Another Example is example 48. In this example, unlike examples 46 and 47, the request of the requestee has been turned down or refused but with a reason. This is an example involving

two sisters (Mansa aged 44 and Mana aged 39). The younger one, Mana requests of her elder sister, Mansa to accompany her to pay their condolence to a bereaved family (her husband's family) in the next village that afternoon.

48.   Mana: Woadaga, ne ɖe manye fuɖeɖe nawo o ɖe,
          Miateŋua do gbe na ekutɔwo ŋdɔ ya? Tso
          eyi enya dzɔa miede kpɔ o.
     Mansa: Ao, ɖe meyina tsi lege ne mayi takpekpe le
          dua mee ya.
     Mana: Aah yoo. Mesi.
     *Mana: My children's aunty, if it won't be a bother, can
          we go and pay our condolence to the bereaved
          family this afternoon? Since we heard the news,
          we never made a follow-up.*
     *Mansa: No, I am just going to take my bath and go to
          a meeting in town.*
     Mana: Aah, Ok

The requester who happens to be the younger sister of the requestee starts the whole request process with an address term and a kinship term 'Woadaga' 'my children's aunty'. This shows that the requester and the requestee are close relations and that the children of the requester would call the requestee 'aunty'. Then she continues with the use of a hedging device. The requester begins to use a disarmer to soften the face threat that may accompany her request by giving the reason to justify her request. Despite the use of all these devices which have an illocutionary force of convincing, mitigating and softening any face threat that may come with the request, the requestee turns the request down because she had a meeting to attend.

Non-conventional Indirect Requests
Grice (1975) writes that nonconventional indirect requests involve ambiguity, obscurity, and prolixity in the requester's utterance. The requester specifically and intentionally employs ambiguous and vague strategies to convey meanings that differ, in some way, from that of the utterance. In such cases, the pragmatic competence of a hearer is very important in determining the true significance of the utterance meaning. Specifically, an indirect request may be identified by a hearer as a request if he or she can detect the fact that the requester intends to convey a meaning other than or more than the utterance meaning. The requester in this case normally uses hints.

According to Weizman (1989), a hint is an utterance that, under certain circumstances, may be interpreted as an indirect request. It inherently opaque and leaves the hearer uncertain as to the speaker's intentions. Hints are not used in a conventional request. An example of a requestive hint would be an utterance such as '*it is cold in here*', this is used when the speaker wants the hearer to close a door or a window. Anlo conversational participants resort to hints in managing a wide range of communicatively difficult encounters, including requests, conveying bad news, rebukes, and apologies. Example 49 was recorded at Anloga on the 28th February, 2016. In this, a man (Gbeve) wants the wife (Savi) to wash a shirt for him.

49.   Gbeve: Savi, awu ya ƒoɖi lo, eʋeʋem ha. Ne meduia
          Amewoa dzu srɔnye lɔlɔa nam ŋutɔ. Ne amea ɖe
          anyae namea anyo ŋutɔ.

Savi: Nye Aƒetɔ, meɖekuku megado awu ƒoɖi aɖeke ne
amewo nanɔ nye dzum o lo, manyage ne meɖa nua
vɔ.
Gbeve: Yoo mesi.

*Gbeve: Savi, this shirt is very dirty, it is smelling too. If
I wear it, people would insult my loving wife for
me. If someone can wash it for me, it would be
good.*
*Savi: My Lord, please, don't wear any dirty clothes for
people to be insulting me, I will wash it when I
finish cooking.*
Gbeve: Okay I have heard.

The man making the request here (Gbeve) is the husband of the requestee (Savi) and in Anlo culture, one of the duties of a woman among others is to see to it that the husband's clothes are always neat and nice. Women in Anlo culture are expected to wash their husbands' clothes. When a man wears dirty clothes, Anlo society in general turns to see the wife of that man as lazy and irresponsible. The man (Gbeve), knowing this, was indirectly requesting the wife to wash his dirty clothes for him. This was done indirectly and tactfully to lessen the face threat to the requestee.

The requestee (Savi) rather shows her submissiveness as a wife to the husband by using an address term by referring to the husband as '**nye Aƒetɔ**' '*My Lord*'. The 'nye' is an adjectival pronoun which is used to qualify the noun '**Aƒetɔ**'. It also shows possession which has an illocutionary meaning of the man being hers. This is followed by an expression of respect '**meɖekuku**' before telling the husband not to wear any dirty clothe for people to be insulting her (the wife). She then uses a commissive to make a promise to the husband '*menyage ne meɖa nua vɔ*'

Another illustration of the non-conventional indirect request is seen in example 50. This was recoeded at Anloga on the 29th February, 2016. Here a youngman, Semekor (aged 37) who is a businessman staying in Accra pays a visit to his uncle, Adzoyi (aged 62). Adzoyi is the younger brother of Semekor's mother. The two siblings (Adzoyi and Semekor's mother) stay in their family house at Anloga. Semekor's mother is a widow and unemployed. During a meeting with his nephew, Adzoyi made a non-conventional indirect request through the use of two proverbs. This is illustrated in example 50 as follows:

50.   *Adzoyi: Vinye, ne atie kua atitae dzena eye ne ame aɖe ve nu
wo neto aɖua, ɖe wovea amea nu wotua aɖu. Fofowo
megali o, ewoe le eteƒe. Edɔa ɖeke megale nye kple
dawo si o yata megaŋlɔ mi be o.*
*Semekor: Yoo, enyrui, mesi. Mawɔ eme dɔ. Xɔ nu vi ya gbɔ.
Eŋkɔnye sege kpuie. Akpe.*
Adzoyi: Yoo, esɔgbɔ ŋutɔ, Akpe.

*Adzoyi: My son, when a tree dies, a shoot of that tree comes up
and when someone helps you to grow your teeth, it is
your duty to help that person to remove his when the
time comes. Your father is no more, you are the one in
his place. Your mother and I have no work doing now
so don't forget us.*

Semekor: Okay, uncle, I have heard you. I will do what is

> *needed. Take this little thing. You will hear from me*
> *soon. Thank you.*
> Adzoyi: *Okay, it is much, thank you.*

Through this, Adzoyi has succeeded in requesting money from the nephew, Semekor for the sister and himself. He starts the whole request process with a kinship address term '**Vinye**' *'My son'*. The perlocution of this to the nephew is to comply with what he is about to tell him. This is because in Anlo culture, children are expected to obey and comply with propositions and orders from their parents. The use of '**vinye**' is also to reaffirm the close relationship between him and the nephew. The use of this shows the interrelationship, communal and the interdependence that exist among the Anlos. He then proceeds with two proverbs to mitigate lessen the face threat that may come with it. They are also to convince the youngman that he needs to be responsible and take care of them by giving them money. He understood this well. Finally, he gives out an amount of money to that effect.

Example 51 is another illustration of the non-conventional indirect request in Anlo. In this excerpt, a man, Akpabli (aged 29) meets his friend's wife Selorm (aged 27) preparing a local dish '**ayikple**'. He indirectly requests for some. This was recorded at Keta on the 25th February, 2016. The illustration is as follows:

51.   Akpabli: *Miasrɔ, mezɔ nyuie. Nye nuɖuɖu vevietɔe nye eya*
> *ɖam nele. Nyemega ɖui kpɔ o. megblɔe ne srɔnye zi*
> *geɖe gake metsɔ ɖeke eme o. Nye velia nu viviwo*
> *ɖum ŋutɔ yatae wo lame kpɔm. Gake egba ya,*
> *mezɔ nyuie.*
> Mesiwotso: *Nye Aƒetɔ, megavɔ o, ebi gɔha ho. Mi kata miaɖui zi*
> *ɖeka.*
> Akpabli: *Oooh nenema? Akpe do ŋgɔ.*
> Mesiwotso: *Mesu akpe o.*
> Akpabli: *Our wife, I have walked well. The food you are preparing*
> *is my favorite. I have taken it now for a very long time. I told*
> *my wife several times to be preparing it but she seems not*
> *to be interested. My friend is really eating good food. That*
> *is why he is looking fresh. But as for today, I have walked*
> *well.*
> Mesiwotso: *My lord, don't worry, it is almost ready. We can all take*
> *it together.*
> Akpabli: *oooh is that so? Thank you in advance.*
> Mesiwotso: *Don't mention it.*

In the Example 51, the requester, Akpabli starts the whole request process by addressing his friend's wife as '*Miasrɔ*' '*our wife*'. This is to show the communal relationship among the Anlos and the close relationship that exists between the requester and the requestee. The perlocutionary force of this is that I expect you to give me food the same way you give food to your husband. He continues to indirectly request for the food. In Anlo culture, when you meet a friend eating, he would have to invite you. If he does not, he would be seen as a mean person. The same way if you are invited and you refuse without giving a good reason for your refusal, you would in turn be seen as a mean person. So, in typical Anlo communities, when you are preparing a meal you need to make provision for any unexpected visitor. Because of this, Akpabli does not see his intrusion

as something that would threaten the face of his friend's wife. He continues to give the reasons why he must eat the food. Though his request is not direct, the requestee realizes it. She assures him that his request is already considered.

Conclusion

Requests in Anlo are grouped into two major categories namely; direct and indirect. Indirect requests are further sub-divided into conventional indirect requests and non-conventional indirect requests. Direct requests in Anlo are normally made in a commanding fashion. The use of address term however reduces or mitigates the illocutionary force of the request. For the conventional indirect requests, Anlos normally use hedging devices, address terms and honourifics to help mitigate the imposition. For the non-conventional indirect ones, riddles, proverbs and hints are used to mitigate whatever face threat that may come with it. Requesters may lose face if they pay no attention to the linguistic markings of politeness. The relationship and expectations of interactants, as well as sociocultural context, are significant in the interactional management of requests. This supports Wolfson's (1988) notion that the strategies through which interlocutors negotiate their relationship with others help to explain the behavior of requesters and requestees. In particular, it shows that, given the mutual relevance of linguistic form and social and contextual concerns in discourse, a thorough understanding of both the requesters' and requestees' sociocultural milieu and of the total communicative context is required to fully understand request events in Anlo.

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