

## THE USE OF REQUEST STRATEGIES IN THE MOVIE *THE PROPOSAL*

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### INTISARI

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki tindak tutur permintaan yang digunakan dalam film The Proposal. Secara khusus, penelitian ini mencoba mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis permintaan utama dan modifikasi eksternal yang diungkapkan oleh para tokoh dalam film tersebut. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah ungkapan – ungkapan yang mengandung strategi permintaan. Data tersebut kemudian diklasifikasikan dan dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori strategi permintaan yang dikemukakan oleh Blum-Kulka dan Olshtain (1984). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada 75 ungkapan yang mengandung strategi permintaan, yang kemudian diklasifikasikan ke dalam sembilan jenis permintaan utama dan tujuh jenis modifikasi eksternal yang mengubah permintaan utama. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa permintaan langsung dengan menggunakan mood derivable adalah strategi yang paling banyak dipilih dalam mengungkapkan permintaan utama. Selain itu, precursors adalah modifikasi eksternal yang paling umum digunakan oleh para tokoh untuk mendapatkan perhatian dari lawan bicara agar melaksanakan tindakan yang diminta.*

*Kata kunci: konteks, tindak tutur, permintaan utama, modifikasi eksternal*

### ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the requests used in the movie *The Proposal*. In particular, it attempts to identify and classify the request head acts and external modification delivered by the characters in the movie. The data used in this research are utterances containing request strategies. These data, then, are classified and analyzed using the theory of request strategies proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The results show that there are 75 utterances containing request strategies, classified based on nine types of the request head acts and seven types of external modifications that modify the head acts. It is also found that direct request by means of *mood derivable* is the most preferred strategy in expressing request head act. Furthermore, *precursors* is the external modification most commonly used by the characters to get the hearer's attention and to fulfill something requested.

Keywords: context, speech acts, request head acts, external modifications

## INTRODUCTION

Language has important roles for people to build communication. Language can express the intention of the speaker. When people produce utterances that contain words and grammatical structure, they usually do some actions through their utterances which are later called “speech act” (Finegan, 1992: 307). Austin specifies speech acts into giving order, making promises, complaining, requesting, and refusing among others (Austin, 1962: 98-99).

Searle’s classification of illocutionary acts defines request as a directive form which is aimed to get the hearer to do something (Searle, 1969: 66). Literally, request means an action of formally and politely asking for something (Hornby, 2005: 996). For instance, when someone says “*Open the door, please!*”, he or she actually performs an action of asking the other to open the door. By expressing a request, the speaker basically expects that the hearer is able to interpret and carry out certain thing. However, the hearer, as the interpreter of that speech act may do or decline what is expected by the speaker. Thus, the speaker should notice some aspects in requesting such as politeness, word choices and expression to make sure that the hearer can get the intention and complete it well.

Requests include a main utterance which carries the actual meaning of what is said. This is called a request head act (Memarian, 2012: 26). In the realization, people can express it directly or indirectly to deliver the intention. The notion of direct request is simply indicated by a literal reading of the grammatical form and vocabulary of the sentence uttered, while indirect request can be initially indicated by the use of modification utterances

which are not related to the function. However, it should be noted that the context is also important to consider whether a particular utterance may be interpreted as request or not.

Requests face threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1978) that the speakers need to be competent about in order to have a successful result in communication. Hence, the speakers may combine external modification of utterances to mitigate and soften the speech act of requests.

In accordance with the previous passage, this research investigates speech act in term of request strategies. Request takes different forms and has various modifications. It is interesting to know how people express and modify the request to avoid misunderstanding toward the hearers. This research aims to investigate the requests used in an American movie *The Proposal*. More explicitly, it attempts to identify and classify the request head acts and external modifications used by the characters of the movie. The data used are utterances produced in the movie *The Proposal* is a popular comedy drama movie directed by Anne Fletcher. Drama movie is a good alternative source to find situation representing the real life.

The data collected were classified based on strategies of the request head acts and external modifications proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The request head acts were categorized into nine types; *mood derivable*, *explicit performatives*, *hedge performative*, *locution derivable*, *scope stating*, *language specific suggestory formula*, *reference to preparatory conditions*, *strong hints* and *mild hints*. Meanwhile, external modifications which modify the request head acts were categorized into seven types; *precursors*, *preparators*, *disarmers*, *reasons*, *alternatives*, *expression of positive politeness*, and *combination of modifications*. A

combination of modifications is included in the classification because sometimes a speaker might deliver a request by combining two or more utterances as the supportive moves. The data, then, were analyzed by elaborating the context of each utterance in the movie and applying employed Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's theory (1984) of request strategies.

## METHOD

### 1. Context

Context has an important role in pragmatic studies. As defined by Mey (1993: 38), context is the surroundings, the widest sense, that enable the participants in communication process to interact, and that make the linguistic expression of their intelligible. When there is a conversation, the speaker and the hearer must share a similar understanding of what is being talked about in order to gain the goal of the conversation.

Cutting (2002) proposes three kinds of context. The first one is situational context. This context refers to physical environment or what the speakers can see around them at the moment of speaking, including demonstrative physical gesture that can insert the meaning of the utterance. The second one is background knowledge context. This context might be either cultural general knowledge about areas of life or interpersonal knowledge that includes private and specific knowledge of the speakers' history. The last one is co-textual context that is the context of the text itself, usually known as the co-text. Co-text is a linguistic part of the environment which includes grammatical cohesions such as reference, substitution, and ellipsis, and also lexical cohesions such as repetition, synonyms,

superordinates, and general words. Below is the example of context in interpreting and understanding an utterance.

- (1) Margaret : Andrew!  
Andrew : Margaret!  
Margaret : **I can't swim!**

(Taken from *The Proposal*)

The conversation above indicates Margaret's request to Andrew to rescue her from drowning. As shown in the movie, the situational context is apparently the freshwater. While the interpersonal knowledge is the description that Margaret cannot swim. The utterance *I can't swim* represent that she indirectly asks Andrew to help her because she does not want to sink in the freshwater. The co-text of the conversation is the word *I* that is the first person singular personal pronoun. It is a referring expression which refers to the person speaking. The act in which the speaker uses linguistic forms to enable the hearer identifying something called a reference. Without context, it is difficult to understand the intention of Margaret's utterance.

### 2. Speech Acts

Finegan (1992: 307) defines speech act as actions that are carried out through language. According to Austin (1962: 98-99), speech act relates with the actions performed by the speaker in saying something. He divides these acts into three levels, namely locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the act of saying something, describing or informing the basic act of utterance or production. Illocutionary act is the act of doing something, what the speakers are doing with words or the specific purpose the

speakers have in mind. Lastly, perlocutionary act is the effect of speech act uttered by a speaker to his hearer. Below is an example of the illustrating of these acts:

- (4) Andrew : Margaret! **Stop talking!**  
Gotta say something.  
Margaret : OK.

(Taken from *The Proposal*)

In the previous dialogue above, the locutionary acts are what Andrew says *Margaret! Stop talking! Gotta say something*. Meanwhile, the illocutionary act of what Andrew says is that he wants Margaret to stop talking. Lastly, the perlocutionary act is that Margaret is accepting his request by saying *OK*.

As mentioned before, illocutionary act is the function of utterances. Searle (1969) classifies speech acts into five types based on illocutionary act; representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaration.

- 1) Representatives: acts representing statements of a fact certifiable as true or false, such as suggestion, description, claim, etc.
- 2) Directives: acts intended to get someone to carry out an action, such as command, order, invite, request, etc.
- 3) Commissives: acts committing the speaker to a future course of action, such as promise, offer, refuse, etc.
- 4) Expressive: acts indicating or expressing the speaker's feeling or attitude, such as apologize, condolence, thank, etc.
- 5) Declaration: acts bringing about the state of affair, such as blessing, marrying, baptism, etc.

There are certain conditions that have to be met in order for a speech act to be

successfully performed. In this regard, Searle (1969: 66) presents four rules called felicity conditions which are needed to fulfil a speech act. Below are the felicity conditions of request (Searle 1969, in Levinson, 1983: 239):

1. Propositional content : future action of the hearer.
2. Preparatory : the speaker believes that the hearer can do the action; it is not obvious that the hearer would do the act without being asked.
3. Sincerity : the speaker wants the hearer to do the action.
4. Essential : counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do something.

The example below presents utterances containing request which was completed with its context and time occurrence:

- (2) Margaret : Jordan! **I need for you to send the boxes in my office to.....to this address, please. This one right here. This address right here. OK? Can you do that?**

Jordan : Uh, yes. Sure.

**Context:** Margaret is in the office. With 24 hours to pack and depart to Canada, Margaret cleans out her office. As she is very busy, she need some help from her coworker. She then asks Jordan, one of her coworkers, to send her stuffs to certain address.

(Taken from *The Proposal*)

The previous dialogue involves two characters talking about particular topic. The context is provided to help a reader understand the dialogue better. In

the conversation, the propositional content is sending the boxes. Margaret believes that it is possible for Jordan to send the boxes for her; Jordan has the ability to send it. Sincerely, she wants Jordan to send the boxes. Margaret's words count as an attempt to get the hearer to do the action. Therefore, it can be recognized that the dialogue contains request strategies.

In term of directness, Yule (1996: 133) distinguished speech acts into direct and indirect speech acts. Whenever there is direct relationship between the form and the function, then it is called direct speech act. For instance when someone wants to know about something, he or she might ask the hearer by using interrogative sentence so that the hearer can provide the information needed, such as the following example: "*Can you write a poem?*". However, whenever there is an indirect relationship between the form and the function, it will be called indirect speech act. For instance when someone says "*Can you pick me up to campus?*", it cannot be treated as a question at all instead of a request so that the hearer may carry out the action requested by the speaker.

### 3. Request

According to Brown and Levinson (1987: 65), requests are face-threatening to both the speaker and hearer. It indicates that by initiating a request, the speaker breaks the hearer's freedom from imposition. To minimize the imposition, the speaker needs to employ indirect strategies rather than direct ones. The variety of direct and indirect ways for making requests seemingly available to speakers in all languages. The scale of directness can be categorized as follow.

- 1) The most direct, explicit level, realized by requests syntactically marked as such, such as imperatives, or by other verbal means that name the act as a request, such as performatives (Austin, 1962) and 'hedged performatives' (Fraser, 1975)
- 2) The conventionally indirect level; procedures that realize the act by reference to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance, as conventionalized in the language (these strategies are commonly referred to indirect speech acts; an example would be 'could you do it' or 'would you do it' which mean as requests)
- 3) Nonconventional indirect level, i.e. the open-ended group of indirect strategies (hints) that realize the request by either partial reference to object or element needed for the implementation of the act ('Why is the window open'), or by reliance on contextual clues ('It's cold in here') (Blum-Kulka et al, 1894: 201).

Most of the time, what we mean is actually not in the words themselves, but in the meaning implied (Cutting, 2002: 16). Requests include a main utterance which carries the actual meaning of what is said. This is named a request head act (Memarian, 2012: 26). Head acts refer to the request proper or the main strategy employed to make the request. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's taxonomy (1984: 202) classifies request head acts into nine types as follow.

- 1) Mood derivable: the grammatical mood of the verb in the utterance marks its illocutionary force as a request.
- 2) Explicit performative: the illocutionary force of the utterance is explicitly named by the speakers.

- 3) Hedged performative: utterances embedding the naming of the illocutionary force.
- 4) Locution derivable: the illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution.
- 5) Scope stating: the utterance expresses the speaker's intentions, desire or feeling the fact that the hearer will do something.
- 6) Language specific suggestory formula: the sentence contains a suggestion to something.
- 7) Reference to preparatory conditions: utterance contains reference to preparatory conditions (e.g. ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed) as conventionalized in any specific language.
- 8) Strong hints: utterance contains partial reference to object or to elements needed for the implementation of the act (directly pragmatically implying the act).
- 9) Mild hints: utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable through the context as requests (indirectly pragmatically implying the act).

It should be noticed that request is different from command in term of the outcome. In command, the speaker assumes that the hearer will fulfil the act ordered. Usually, the speaker who realizes a command has higher authority than the hearer, such as physical or institutional authority so that the hearer cannot refuse what the speaker asks to. Meanwhile in request, the speaker assumes that the outcome will be successful if only the hearer agrees to comply. It means that in requesting, the speakers express their intention so that the hearer considers it as a

reason or part of a reason to do something (Kreidler, 1998: 190-191)

Furthermore, the speaker might also choose to support or emphasize the speech act of request by external modifications. External modification does not affect the utterance used for realizing the act, but rather the context in which it is embedded, and thus indirectly modifies illocutionary force (Faerch and Kasper, in Blum-Kulka et al, 1984: 204). External modifications are classified in Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) as supportive moves that may be attached either before or after the head act to mitigate the illocutionary force of the request. The modified classification of the external modifications (Blum-Kulka et al, 1984 in Felix-Bradesfer, 2005: 68) is as follow:

- 1) Preparators: prepare the hearer for the request (e.g. Hey, *I need a huge favour*. Could you please lend me your note?)
- 2) Disarmers: prevent refusals in return to requests (e.g. Could you please lend me your note? *I know you have beautiful handwriting*).
- 3) Precursors: draw the interlocutor's attention to the request (e.g. *Hello buddy, how are you today?* Could you lend me your note?).
- 4) Reasons: justify the request (e.g. Could you please lend me your note? *I just missed class yesterday*).
- 5) Alternatives: facilitate negotiation among the interlocutors (e.g. Could you please lend me your note? *I will return it tomorrow*).
- 6) Positive politeness: can be agreement, gratitude, and empathy to end the interaction politely (e.g. *I am very grateful if you lend me your note*).

## FINDINGS

### 1. Types of Request Head Acts in the Movie *The Proposal*

There are total of 75 utterances containing request strategies used by the characters in the movie. Those are classified into nine types of request head acts including three levels of directness. Table 1 below summarizes the results of the data analysis in the term of these strategies.

Table 1. The Frequency and Distribution of Request Head Acts

No.	Directness Scale	Types of Request	NA	%
1	Direct	Mood derivable	35	47
2		Explicit performatives	1	1
3		Hedge performative	1	1
4		Locution derivable	8	11
5		Scope stating	4	5
		<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>65</b>
6	Conventionally indirect	Language specific suggestory formula	5	7
7		Reference to preparatory conditions	10	13
		<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>
8	Nonconventionally indirect	Strong hints	6	8
9		Mild hints	5	7
		<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that mood derivable is the most preferred types of request head acts compared to the others. From the total number of 75 requests found, this strategy

is used 35 times (47%), followed by reference to preparatory conditions and locution derivable strategy which are used 10 times (13%) and eight times (11%) each. Moreover, the speakers tend to use direct strategy to express their requests through conversations in the movie. The five types of direct request are used 49 times (65%). The number is followed by conventionally indirect which is used 15 times (20%) and end up by nonconventionally indirect strategy which is used 11 times (15%). It can be assumed that the tendency of using direct strategies in the movie *The Proposal* might be due to the relationship between the characters of the movie most of which are family members and friends. Therefore, it is possible for them to express requests in direct form. The section below is the analyses of the findings based on their types.

#### 1.1 Mood Derivable

There are 35 requests that are expressed through the use of the mood derivable strategy. Mostly, the requests are uttered by the speakers who are familiar with each other. According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), mood derivable is utterance in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force of request. This type is the most apparent strategy to show a request because the utterance directly indicates the request act and usually contains imperative or command expression. The request example discussed below represent the mood derivable strategy.

##### (3) **Help her with those.**

Annie : Andrew! **Help her with those.**

Andrew : I'd love to, but she won't let me do anything.

00:26:21,746 --> 00:26:27,107

**Context:** Annie and Grace pick Andrew and Margaret up to go home. As the Paxton home is located across the lake, the only way to get there is by boat. They are in the port. Before getting into the boat, Annie requests Andrew to help Margaret carry her lots of stuffs because it looks hard for her to take everything by herself to take by herself.

The dialogue shows that Annie uses mood derivable to express her request. It can be identified from the use of grammatical mood of the verb *help* to request to Andrew. Annie directly requests Andrew to help and take Margaret's stuffs. In this context, Annie is Andrew's grandmother which indicates that they have close relationship. So, by uttering the sentence *help her with those*, it is like an imperative sentence from a grandmother toward her grandson. However, it is considered as a request since Andrew refuses it in the conversation, while for order or command, it cannot be refused.

### 1.2 Explicit Performatives

This type is defined as the illocutionary force of the utterance which is explicitly named by the speakers (Blum-Kulka et al. 1984: 202). The speakers who use this type usually express mood of begging or mood of demanding to get the hearers perform something requested. Of the 75 requests found in the movie, only one request is expressed through the use of strategy of explicit performative. The example can be seen in the conversation between Andrew and Margaret below.

#### (4) **I told you to stop talking.**

Margaret: Oh, that's nice.

Andrew : **I told you to stop talking.**

Then we had our little adventure up in Alaska and things started to change.....

01:39:38,672 --> 01:39:47,311

**Context:** Andrew arrives in the office in New York out of breath and out of patience. He meets Margaret who is cleaning out her room because she has to depart to Canada in 24 hours. In front of the people in the office, he tries to tell Margaret that he falls in love with her for real. When he is telling how his life was very fantastic three days before, Margaret wants to give her comments. Before she says anything, Andrew asks Margaret to stop talking.

In the dialogue, Andrew gives the illocutionary force of the request explicitly by saying *I told you to stop talking*. This utterance is explicitly named by the speaker that he directly asks Margaret to stop talking or it means not to interrupt his explanation. By saying so, people in the office will understand what he requests to Margaret. The word *I told you* might indicate mood of demanding of the speaker. He really demands Margaret to stop talking. Even it is a direct expression, and it is more polite than if, for example, Andrew just say *stop talking*.

### 1.3 Hedged Performative

This is the only request which is expressed through the use of hedged performative strategy. This type can be identified by utterances embedding the



naming of the illocutionary force of request. It might be less direct than the previous two types. However, what the speaker requests to the hearer is still clear. The only hedged performative strategy found in the movie is presented below. It is uttered by Joe to his son, Andrew.

(5) **I'd like to discuss it again.**

Joe : **I'd like to discuss it again.**

You have responsibilities here. I think I've been more than understanding about your goofing off in New York. I need you to quit playing around...

Andrew: Here we go again. When are you going to start taking what I do seriously?

00:46:02,760 --> 00:46:16,533

**Context:** Joe is playing golf when Andrew comes and has chitchat with him. Then, Joe addresses him to discuss again about what he should do to the family empire.

The previous conversation between father and son contains the use of hedged performative strategy. The request said by Joe is considered as this type since that utterance embeds the naming of the illocutionary force. The word *I'd like* here gives the signal of this strategy. Joe obviously would like his son to talk over about what he should do to the family empire. It means that actually there is an illocutionary force of request embeds in his utterance. By expressing *I'd like to discuss it again*, the request is actually less harsh than if, for example, he just expresses his request by saying *discuss it again*. It might make Andrew feel more threatened or offended.

#### 1.4 Locution Derivable

In this type, the illocutionary point is directly derivable from the semantic meaning of the locution (Blum-Kulka et al. 1984: 202). This strategy contains obligation word to perform the act requested by the speaker. There are eight requests that can be classified into locution derivable strategy. The example of this strategy is discussed below.

(6) **So, you should... probably get studying.**

Andrew : So, these are the questions that INS is gonna ask us. Now, the good news is I know everything about you, but the bad news is that you have four days to learn all this about me. **So, you should... probably get studying.**

Margaret : You know all the answer to these questions about me?

00:21:51,276 --> 00:22:04,385

**Context:** Andrew and Maragret are in the plane to Alaska. Andrew informs Margaret the questions which will be asked by INS due to the following Monday interview. He considers that he will answer the questions quite well because he knows everything about Margaret, but unfortunately contradictory she does not know anything about him. Thus, he asks her to study and learn about him in four days.

In the example (6), Andrew makes some utterances one of which presents locution derivable. He utters *so, you should probably get studying* to semantically imply his request to Margaret. This utterance also indicates

obligation statement by means of the word *should*. Margaret is expected to get studying as Andrew requests. However, unlike the first example, Andrew essentially has less authority to make a request of obligation. It might be because of the close relationship between both of them and to let the interview off as they will have in the following Monday. Although it is considered as direct, it is softer than if, for example, Andrew said *so, get studying*.

### 1.5 Scope Stating

This strategy has an utterance that expresses the speaker's wishes, desire or feeling to get the hearer to do something. Four requests found expressed with this strategy. The example can be seen in the following discussion.

(7) **I want you to have it.**

Annie : **I want you to have it.**

Margaret: I can't. Can't take this.

Annie : I don't want to hear it.

01:16:51,506 --> 01:16:56,800

**Context:** Margaret is fitting her wedding dress in the tailor shop when Grandma Annie presents a gift necklace. The necklace has been given to her by her mother. Now, she wishes Margaret to have it because she will be her granddaughter in law in the next day.

Annie's utterance in that dialogue indicates the use of scope stating strategy. She is showing Margaret a beautiful gift necklace and then she utters that she wants her to have it. It will lead her to take that necklace since she will get married with Andrew in the following day and become part of the Paxton family. The word *I want* here represents the desire of the speaker

regarding to the fact that the hearer will do something requested. It might emphasize the intention of request so the hearer will understand and accomplish it well.

This strategy appears more polite as the speakers express their wish, desire or feeling in requesting to show that they really want something from the hearers. The words *I hope, I want, I wish, I need* are the signals of it.

### 1.6 Language Specific for Suggestory Formula

This type contains suggestion statements from the speakers in expressing the requests. It means that the speakers might get the hearer to do something through giving a suggestion. There are five utterances found in the movie which use this strategy. Below is the example of them.

(8) **So why don't you tell us exactly what a book editor does. Besides taking writers out to lunch and getting bombed.**

Joe : This must be Maggie.

Margaret: Uh, Margaret.

Joe : Joe. Pleasure to meet you.

Margaret: Pleasure's mine.

Joe : **So why don't you tell us exactly what a book editor does. Besides taking writers out to lunch and getting bombed.**

00:30:29,027 --> 00:30:42,862

**Context:** In Andrew's home, Margaret meets with some members of Paxton's family who are joining the welcoming party. She also meets Joe, Andrew's father. After having some introduction, Joe gives her a suggestion and indirectly asks her to tell them what a book editor does.

In the previous conversation, Joe utters the sentence *so why don't you tell us exactly what a book editor does* in expressing his request to Margaret. In that utterance he gives suggestion to Margaret which indirectly requests her to tell what actually a book editor does in the office since he knows that she is an editor in chief. He also continues his utterance by saying *besides taking writers out to lunch and getting bombed* to emphasize and make the request clearer. As this strategy implies the request act, it appears polite to be realized by unfamiliar people, like in this context that Joe and Margaret just already acquainted each other. Thus, it might make Margaret has no feeling of being forced to fulfill the request.

### 1.7 Reference to Preparatory Conditions

According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), this strategy contains the speakers' intention which considers preparatory conditions of the hearers. Preparatory conditions can be recognized as ability or willingness, the possibility of the act being performed. Thus, this type of request is usually initiated by the use of words *can/could* or *will/would*. Ten requests expressed with this strategy found in the movie. The example can be seen below.

(9) **Would you care for some hors d'oeuvres?**

Ramone : How are you?

Margaret : Good, good. Thank you.

Ramone : **Would you care for some hors d'oeuvres?**

Margaret : No, I'm fine. Thank you very much.

00:31:44,369 --> 00:31:47,635

**Context:** Margaret is joining the welcoming party in Andrew's

home. In the middle of Andrew's welcoming party, Margaret first meets Ramone who does serve meals and beverages for the people in that party. As a waiter, he offers Margaret some hors d'oeuvres and indirectly asks her to taste it.

In the previous dialogue, Ramone's utterance obviously contains reference of preparatory conditions. The sentence *would you care for some hors d'oeuvres?* indicates that Ramone indirectly wants Margaret to have and taste some hors d'oeuvres as he serves in the party. The use of word *would* is the typical of this strategy that is to seek the hearer's willingness. This strategy might imply request expressions politely even uttered by people who do not know each other like Ramone and Margaret. It also represents that this is a polite term when the speaker interacts with a stranger.

### 1.8 Strong Hints

As categorized as nonconventional indirect strategy, the utterance of requests in this strategy contains hints that are partial reference to object or to elements needed to carry out the act (Blum-Kulka et al. 1984: 202). In other word, this strategy is directly implying the request. From the data collected, there are six requests belong to this strategy. Below is one example of them.

(10) **Mary from Miss Winfrey's office called. She's on the line.**

Andrew : Sorry to interrupt.

Margaret: What? What!

Andrew : **Mary from Miss Winfrey's office called. She's on the line.**

Margaret: I know.

00:10:37,937 --> 00:10:42,098

**Context:** Margaret is in the Bergen's office when Andrew suddenly comes in. He tells Margaret that there is a call from Mary and then implies to answer it.

In the previous conversation, Andrew's utterance can be classified as strong hints strategy because he indirectly makes request to Margaret about the phone call. The utterance *Mary from Miss Winfrey's office called* is a hint that there is call for her that should be answered. Then, he utters *she's on the line* that imply a request to answer the call right away. Similar to the first example, this request utterance is also spoken by a speaker who is less authorized. As Margaret's secretary, Andrew expresses his request using this strategy to show polite behavior toward his boss.

### 1.9 Mild Hints

Mild hints is the most indirect strategy among the request types proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). When employing this strategy, the speakers make the utterances which have no reference to be appropriate requests, but could be interpreted through the context as requests. This strategy is usually uttered by the speakers who are familiar and have close relationship with the hearers. This might be because of using this strategy needs the hearers' understanding to interpret the request. In other words, the hearers should not catch the speakers' utterance word-for-word, but rather infer the hidden intention in that utterance, so that it can be performed successfully.

There are five requests which categorized as this strategy. An example is discussed below.

- (11) **Well. Looks like I won't be getting much sleep with the sun streaming in.**

Margaret : **Well. Looks like I won't be getting much sleep with the sun streaming in.** Thank you.

00:40:09,974 --> 00:40:23,910

**Context:** One night, Andrew and Margaret are in the bedroom. They need to take a rest after having a long journey from New York. When Andrew almost falls asleep, Margaret is still trying to close her eyes. She cannot sleep because of sun shines. She indirectly wants Andrew to close the window.

The previous dialogue said by Margaret is classified as mild hints. The utterances *well, looks like I won't be getting much sleep with the sun streaming in* has no reference to the request as it should be. She does not directly utter her request to Andrew instead she uses a hint to tell that she will not sleep well with the sun rays streaming in to the room. It means that she indirectly requests Andrew to close window so that the room will not be too bright anymore and she can go to sleep.

Through the classification and discussion of the data, it can be seen that the request strategy most used by the characters in the movie is direct strategy by means of mood derivable. Then, it is followed by conventionally direct strategy by means of reference to preparatory conditions. As stated by Blum-Kulka (1989: 201), the more direct a request is, the more transparent it is and the less of a

burden the recipient bears in interpreting the request. It means that the hearers might get the request effectively. The direct requests used by the characters in this movie are not always showing bad manner of impoliteness. But, it rather indicates the closeness and familiarity between them, considering that the story of this movie is about family and work environments. For instance, it can be observed in the context of the conversation between boss and coworkers, grandmother and the grandson, as well as among the characters and their friends.

## 2. Types of External Modification of the Requests in the Movie *The Proposal*

There are six strategies of external modifications and one additional strategy, namely *a combination of modifications*. This additional strategy is included in order to analyze requests that contain more than one modifications. Table 2 below presents the distribution of external modifications found in the data across three levels of request strategies.

Table 2. The Frequency and Distribution of Request External Modifications

No.	Types of External Modification	Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Nonconventionally Indirect	Total	%
1	Preparators	6	0	3	9	12
2	Disamers	3	0	0	3	4
3	Precursors	12	4	5	21	28
4	Reasons	13	1	0	14	19
5	Alternatives	4	1	0	5	7
6	Positive Politeness	1	2	1	4	5
7	A Combination of Modifications	10	7	2	19	25
TOTAL					75	100

Based on the table 2, it can be seen that the most frequent modifications used by the characters are precursors. There are 21 or about 28% strategies from the total number of 75 requests found in the movie. It is followed in slightly the same number by a combination of modifications which is used 19 times (25%) and reasons which is used 14 times (19%).

External modification does not affect the utterance used for realizing the act, but rather the context in which it is embedded, and thus indirectly modifies illocutionary force (Faerch and Kasper in Blum-Kulka et al., 1984: 204). Table 2 shows that the types of external modifications appear almost in all request strategies. Most of external modifications

are used by the speakers as an attempt to elicit the hearers' cooperation to bear the actual request. Thus it can mitigate the face-threatening nature of request.

Furthermore, as precursor is the most frequent modification used by the characters (20 times), it appears 11 times in direct request strategies, four times in conventionally indirect, and five times in non-conventionally indirect strategies. It thus can be inferred that the use of precursor in requesting is one of simple devices to lessen the threat involved in the request. Moreover, it might be a polite attempt to modify request, so that the hearers will fulfill something requested effectively. The sections below discuss and analyze each of the external modifications in requesting used by the characters in the movies.

## 2.1 Preparators

Preparator is commonly found ahead of request utterances. According to Felix-Bradesfer (2005: 72), this modification functions as pre-sequences and often occurs within the same request sequence at the beginning of the interaction. There are nine preparators found in requesting and appear only in two strategies that are direct and non-conventionally indirect strategies. These modifications are used by the speakers to introduce the request or to prepare hearer for an upcoming request. The example discussed below represents the use of preparator in expressing request.

(12) Grace: I was thinking, if you'd like, **maybe we could head down your way for the holidays this year.**

The bold typed utterances above are the head acts while the non-bold typed

ones are the preparators. In the example (12), it can be seen that basically there is a long sentence of request uttered by Grace. It, however, consists of three utterances, two of which are the preparators. Those utterances precede and modify the request head act. The speaker utters *I was thinking, if you'd like* to prepare the hearer for the upcoming indirect request *maybe we could head down your way for the holidays this year*. By means of this strategy, Grace seems to want to get some kind of agreement that the hearer is willing to fulfill something requested. By means of preparators, the speakers try to make the request clearer and prepare the hearers for the request, so they will respond and probably do something requested effectively.

## 2.2 Disarmers

By employing disarmers in requesting, the speaker "provides reasons to 'disarm' the addressee from the possibility of refusal" (Márquez-Reiter, 2000: 93). It means that disarmers can avoid refusals in return to request since request is an act of asking for something. There are three disarmers through direct request strategies. The example can be seen below.

(13) Andrew : **Don't take this the wrong way.** You are a very... very beautiful woman.

The non-bold typed utterances spoken by Andrew in example (13) above can be classified as a disarmer. It indicates his awareness of a potential offense which can indirectly anticipate the possible refusal of his request (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989: 205). By uttering *you are a very... very beautiful woman*, Andrew seems to admire the hearer, so she will not refuse his request not to take the wrong way.

### 2.3 Precursors

As stated by Felix-Bradesfer (2005: 73), precursors are external elements which function to draw the interlocutor's attention to the request. Since the inventory of precursor varies among languages, it can be indicated by the use of titles, greetings, names, apology formula, and discourse markers in modifying the request head acts. There are total 21 precursors found through the data that appear in each level of request strategies. Below are the examples of them.

- (14) Andrew: Margaret, **stop it.**
- (15) Andrew: Sorry to interrupt. **Mary from Miss Winfrey's office called. She's on the line.**

The non-bold utterances above are the use precursors in requesting. Example (14) represents the use of precursor by means of names. By addressing the hearer's name, the speaker wants to get the hearer's attention to perform the intended request. Furthermore, apology formula can also be used to modify the request head acts. In example (15), the speaker utters *sorry to interrupt* before uttering his indirect request to answer the call. This kind of precursor not only attracts the hearer's attention but also politely and indirectly mitigates the threatening effect of request.

### 2.4 Reasons

Reasons or grounders (Blum-Kulka et al. 1984) can be easily recognized by stating the speaker's reasons in expressing request. A speaker who uses this modification usually gives a reason or a justification why he or she wants to get the hearer to do something. This modification

may precede or follow the request head acts. From the total data found in the movie, 14 modifications are classified as reasons that modify direct and conventionally indirect request strategies. The examples are discussed below.

- (16) Grace: Oh, we canceled your reservation. Family doesn't stay at a hotel. **You're gonna stay in our home.** Annie: **You two need to stop fighting.** You'll never see eye to eye. But you're family.
- (17) Andrew: **Now give me a nice big hug.** We don't want them to think we're fighting.

The non-bold typed utterances above show the use of reason devices in expressing direct request. In example (16), there are two utterances preceding the main request that indicate reasons. By saying *oh, we canceled your reservation. Family doesn't stay at a hotel*, Grace tends to give specific reasons why the hearer should stay in their home. By uttering specific reasons, the intention of the requests might be explained detailed to the hearer. Thus, the speakers seem to have slightly different force of request and the strength as well.

Meanwhile, in examples (17), the speaker only states one utterance as a reason of their requests. However, it has explained why the requests are made and should be performed by the hearers. Attaching reasons in request might give stress on the request that the speaker really wants the hearer to do something requested. In order word, it can be used to reinforce the request, so the hearer is willing to fulfill something requested.

### 2.5 Alternatives

Stating alternatives can be one of the devices to modify request head acts externally. It is usually used to facilitate negotiation among the interlocutors and to smooth the interaction (Felix-Bradesfer, 2005: 75). This modification may occur either preceding or following the request head act. There are five modifications of alternatives that modify the direct and conventional indirect request strategies. The example is shown below.

(18) Andrew: **Relax, all right?** We'll order another phone, same number. We'll go into town tomorrow and get it.

The use of alternatives can be seen by means of non-bold typed utterances above. In example (18), the speaker states alternative devices after uttering his direct request that asks the hearer to relax. The utterances *we'll order another phone, same number. We'll go into town tomorrow and get it* show that speaker is trying to offer cooperation for the accomplishment of the request. It might assure the hearer to perform something requested before.

## 2.6 Positive Politeness

There are only four expressions of positive politeness that modify three level of request strategies found in the movie. An expression of positive politeness is used to smoothen the request utterance and yet minimize the imposition itself. According to Felix-Bradesfer (2005: 75), it is mostly realized by means of agreement, gratitude and empathy to end the interaction politely. The example of positive politeness is presented below.

(19) Margaret : **Well. Looks like I won't be getting much sleep with the sun streaming in.** Thank you.

Expression of positive politeness in requesting can be realized by stating

gratitude. It is presented in the example (19) that the speaker utters *thank you* to the hearer after delivering intention in her indirect request. This expression might politely raise the hearer's face since the speaker indirectly interrupts her or his freedom of action.

## 2.7 A Combination of Modifications

Besides stating a single modification, a speaker can also use a combination of two or more external modifications in order to modify the request. This kind of combination allows the speaker to choose modifications that are appropriate for her or his situation and create a more polite device in getting the hearer to do something. From investigating the data, there are 19 requests which are modified by a combination of two and three modifications. These combinations occur in the realization of three levels of request strategies. Below are the examples of requests which is modified by two or three external modifications.

(20) Andrew: So, Margaret. **Marry me.** Because I'd like to date you.

(21) Andrew: Hey, uh... I have a little favor I need from you, buddy... Margaret's on that plane. I got to talk to her. **Can you stop it?**

The non-bold typed utterances in example (20) represent the use of a combination of two external modifications that are precursor and reason to modify the direct request. Firstly, Andre uses a precursor to get the hearer's attention. He calls the name of the hearer before uttering his request to marry him. The second modification is reason. By uttering *because I'd like to date you*, Andrew serves his reason why the hearer should not refuse his request before. This kind of combinations might strengthen the request,



so the hearer is willing to fulfill it effectively.

Beside a combination of two modifications, a combination of three modifications is also used in expressing request. In the last example, there is a little bit long sentence that contains three combinations of external modifications. The use of these combinations is shown in non-bold utterances. Andrew combines a precursor, preparator and two reasons to modify his main request. He starts by uttering *hey* as a discourse marker to gain attention from the hearer. It is the use of precursor. Then, the utterance *I have a little favor I need from you, buddy* is a preparator that gives introduction before uttering the main request. Thus the hearer might understand that the speaker wants something from him. The last two non-bold utterances are reasons why he utters an indirect request. He needs to talk to Margaret who is on the plane, that is the way he tries to seek the hearer's willingness to stop the plane. By using this combination, the speakers try to minimize the threats given to the hearers' faces. Therefore, requests modified with this combination can be considered as very polite.

From the previous explanation, it can be seen that the external modifications are strategies that the speakers use to mitigate their intention before or after delivering the main request. As stated by Nadar (1998: 62), most of external modifiers are means by which the speaker tries to elicit the addressee's cooperation to support the actual request. In other word, those can be used in order to have appropriate and successful requests. It means that using external modifications might increase the success of performing accepted requests.

## CONCLUSION

The result of this research shows that there are 75 utterances containing request strategies, classified based on the request head acts and external modifications that modify the head acts. Based on the findings, direct request by means of *mood derivable* is the most preferred strategy in expressing request head act. This strategy is used 35 times (47%), followed by *reference to preparatory conditions* and *locution derivable* strategy which are used 10 times (13%) and eight times (11%) each. The tendency of using direct requests might due to the relationship between the characters in the story. Most of the characters are family members or friends, thus it is possible to make request directly. Moreover, direct request is not always an impolite action, but it rather shows the closeness and familiarity of the characters in the movie. By means of direct request, the speakers might get the intention effectively because the more direct a request is, the more apparent it is and the burden of the addressee is lessen in interpreting a request.

Furthermore, the result also presents that *precursors* are commonly used external modification by the characters to modify their requests. It is used 21 times (28%) through the data collected, followed by *a combination of modifications* which is used 19 times (25%) and *reasons* which is used 14 times (19%). Precursors might be one of simple devices to be expressed by speaker to get the hearer's attention to fulfill something requested. By means of external modifications, the speakers might have an appropriate and successful requests, because the external modification attempts to make the addressee supports the actual request.

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