
The Use of Request Strategy in Leave the World Behind Movie

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Abstract

The title of this study is "The Use of Request Strategy in the Movie Leave The World Behind by Sam Esmail." The purpose of this study is to analyze how characters in the movie make requests or ask someone to do something. The analysis is based on Trosborg's request theory using a descriptive qualitative approach. This study collected 18 data from dialogues in the movie. The analysis found that there are six request strategies used by the characters. The most frequently used strategy is the hint strategy, which allows characters to express their desires implicitly, avoiding the impression of being forceful or offending the listener. Besides the hint strategy, other identified strategies include questioning the hearer's ability or willingness, statements of the speaker's wishes and desires, statements of the speaker's need and demands, statements of obligations and necessities, as well as the use of imperatives. The findings show that the variation in request strategies reflects the social dynamics and relationships among the characters, influenced by the specific context and communication objectives within the movie.

Keywords

Pragmatic, Request Strategy, Leave The World Behind Movie



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INTRODUCTION

Language is a unique phenomenon that differentiates humans from other living creatures. It involves organizing sounds or their written form into larger units such as morphemes, words, sentences, and utterances. Language provides a structured system of symbols and rules, allowing us to express complex ideas and convey meaning. Without language, we would rely on simple forms of nonverbal communication, which would greatly limit the complexity and range of human interaction. Science that studies about language is Linguistics.^{1,2} Explains that linguistics is a field of study that examines the characteristics and complexities of language. It refers, language is not only understood as a system of grammar and phonology, but also as a communication tool that involves the use of social and cultural contexts.

One branch of linguistics that highlights this aspect is pragmatics. Pragmatics uses the meaning of words as a foundation. This is where it diverges from semantics. According to

¹ H Kridalaksana, *Hakikat Bahasa*, 1997.

² (in Talohanas & Yuwana, 2024)

Levinson³, pragmatics is related to the relationship between language and context, which is the basis for understanding language. In other words, it involves the language user's ability to connect and adapt sentences to the appropriate context. The main tool in communication between speakers and interlocutors is speech acts. Speech act theory examines how speaking influences both the speaker and the listener. According to Austin & Urmson⁴, the term "speech act" refers to actions carried out through speech. He introduces "constative utterances" as statements that describe something and can be judged as true or false, while "performative utterances" are statements that not only describe an action but also perform the action as they are spoken. Requests are one important example of a speech act that is often studied in this theory.

A request is a polite or formal way of asking someone to do something, reflecting the speaker's intention. This aspect of requesting has been thoroughly examined in speech act theory. Trosborg (1995)⁵ describes a request as an illocutionary act in which the speaker expresses a desire for the hearer to perform an action that benefits the speaker.

In addition to exploring requests within the framework of speech acts, understanding various forms of communication extends to different media, such as movies.⁶ describe a movie as a sequence of static images that, when projected on a screen, appear to move due to a visual effect known as the phi phenomenon. As a visual art form, movies provide a medium through which complex ideas and emotions are communicated, using a combination of dialogue, actions, and visual elements. Examining request strategies in movies allows researchers to analyze how characters use speech acts in a way that reflects social norms and cultural expectations, which are crucial elements for authentic storytelling and audience engagement.

There are several studies related to this discussion. The first research was the work.⁷ In this research, four demand functions were found in *The Man in Toronto Movie*, there are requests for information, action, permission and requests for goods. The most dominant function is the request for action, which is carried out by social figures who have a higher status than the recipient. Another research⁸ was conducted to identify differences in the choice of request strategies used by three age groups, as depicted in the American TV series *Full House*. The research found that adults more frequently used direct requests, while younger age groups tended to use indirect requests. The results also indicated that all age groups were inclined to choose direct strategies when social distance was negative. However, when social distance was positive, the choice of strategies had to be adjusted according to the speaker's authority. Next, studied the request strategies used by non-native English-speaking students (Indonesians) and university professors who are also non-native English speakers (Japanese) through email. The results showed that different patterns of request strategies emerged, with the requests made by students appearing more forceful. Meanwhile, the conventionally indirect strategy in the form of query preparation was found to be preferred when

³ (in Puspitasari et al., 2022)

⁴ (in Rizki & Golubović, 2020)

⁵ (in Purwaningrum & Harmoko, 2023)

⁶ Bordwell David, *Film Art: An Introduction 12th Edition* (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2020).

⁷ Agustinus Deni, Christina Maya, and Iriana Sari, "An Analysis of Request Speech Act in the Man From Toronto Movie," *Humaniora Scientia* 9, no. 1 (2023): 43–52.

⁸ Yemima Febriani and Sharifah Hanidar, "Request Strategies in the American TV Series Full House," *Lexicon* 6, no. 1 (2019): 51–58, <https://doi.org/10.22146/lexicon.v6i1.50308>.

writing low imposition email requests; however, this strategy seemed less effective when students wrote high imposition requests. Conversely, Indonesian students tended to use many instructional strategies and left it to the professors to interpret their intentions in the emails. There are similarities and differences between several studies mentioned previously. The similarity is the analysis of the speech act of request, even though the goals carried are different. Some of the research focuses on films, TV series and emails.

This research focuses on the request strategies used by all the characters in the movie *Leave the World Behind*. The Movie tells the story of Amanda Sandford and her husband, Clay Sandford, who are on vacation with their children, Rose and Archie, at a rented house in the countryside. Their vacation is disrupted when the homeowners, G.H. Scott and his wife, Ruth, unexpectedly arrive with news of major riots and a citywide blackout. With a plot that combines elements of psychological thriller, the movie explores human relationships, dependence on technology, and the impact of a world slowly falling apart. All the characters in the movie express various emotions through the requests they make to one another. Therefore, *Leave the World Behind* serves as the primary data source for this research, which aims to examine the use of request strategies by the characters in different situations, identify the strategies most frequently used throughout the movie, and compare these patterns of requests with those in everyday communication.⁹ Eight different strategies for requests that researchers will use in this research.

Hints

This strategy requires the speaker to convey the request indirectly by bringing up an unfavorable situation first. By crafting statements like that, they subtly imply a desire or expected outcome to the listener. This approach also includes the clever use of questions to help the listener grasp the speaker's intended meaning.

e.g., It's cold here.

Questioning Hearers Ability/Willingness

When speakers employ this strategy, they expect the listener to understand the question as a request, rather than simply asking if the listener is able or willing.

e.g., Can you pass the mayonnaise?

Suggestory Formulae

The speaker deliberately invests importance in his request and downplays his personal interest in the outcome of his actions.

e.g., Why don't we go out for dinner tonight?

Statement of Speaker's Wishes and Desires

This strategy aims to maintain the speaker autonomy, often conveyed politely so that the listener does not feel burdened or forced to take the requested action.

e.g., I would love it if you could come to my birthday party this weekend.

Statement of Speaker's Need and Demand

The speaker explicitly expresses their requirement by stating that they need it and expect to have it.

⁹ Trosborg

e.g., I need coffee

Statement of Obligations and Necessities

The speaker asserts dominance by using authority, both personal and institutional. Compliance is expected, and failure to comply is considered inappropriate.

e.g., You must wear a seatbelt when driving

Performatives

The speaker delivers a direct and authoritative request, expecting cooperation.

e.g., I order you to clean up this mess immediately

Imperatives

The imperative form expresses an authoritative command, asserting the speaker's control over the listener.

e.g., Close the door, please

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research applies a qualitative approach because it discusses a research problem where the variables are unknown and require exploration Creswell (2012).¹⁰ The data source for this research is the conversations among characters in the movie *Leave the World Behind*. First, the researcher watched the film *Leave the World Behind*. Then, the researcher listened to the statements made by the characters while watching the film. In the final part, the researcher highlighted the request utterances within the film. The analysis begins with identifying and classifying the request utterances in the film. Using foundational theories about request strategies and their functions, each data segment is then explained in detail. Finally, the researcher draws conclusions from the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the collected data, there are 18 utterances made using the following request strategies: Hints, Questioning the hearer's ability or willingness, Statement of the speaker's wishes and desires, Statement of the speaker's needs and demands, Statement of obligations and necessities, and Imperatives. Six utterances were made using the hints strategy. Two utterances used the Questioning hearer's ability/willingness. Two utterances used the Statement of the speaker's wishes and desires strategy. Three utterances were made using the Statement of the speaker's needs and demands strategy. Two utterances used the Statement of obligations and necessities strategy, and tiga used the Imperative strategy. The strategies for making requests in communication refer to various approaches used to convey a request.

No	Request Strategy	Data
1	Hints	6
2	Questioning hearer's ability/willingness	2
3	Statement of speaker's wishes and desires	2

¹⁰ (in Averina & Widagda, 2021)

4	Statement of speaker’s need and demand	3
5	Statement of obligations and necessities	2
6	Imperatives	3
	Total	18

Tabel 1. Request Strategy in “Leave The World Behind Movie”

Data 1 (Hint Strategy)

The Hints strategy presented in Leave The World Behind is thoroughly explained in the following details.



(1:15:57 – 1:15:44)

Ruth : Maybe it was a plane that we don’t know about.

Amanda : Archie, why don’t you go get change.

Ruth : Rose, maybe you should too.

The characters in the dialogue are Archie, Rose, Amanda, and Ruth. This dialogue focuses on Amanda asking her son, Archie, to change his clothes. The scene takes place in the dining room, where the atmosphere becomes tense after a loud noise is heard. The sound is so disruptive that they cannot identify its source. In this context, Amanda makes her request with the phrase, “Archie, why don’t you go get changed.” This request is an example of a hint strategy, where Amanda uses a more subtle and implicit approach. She does not directly state that she wants Archie to leave the dining room, but her intention is implied in her words. By asking Archie to change his clothes, Amanda is actually trying to guide her son away from this uncomfortable situation. Amanda’s main goal is for the adults, including herself and Ruth, to discuss the ongoing situation without the children overhearing or feeling anxious about what might be happening. This illustrates how Amanda is trying to protect her child from anxiety and information that could be confusing or frightening for Archie. Thus, the request is not just an ordinary request but also carries a deeper layer of meaning related to her emotional protection of her child in a high-pressure situation.

Data 2 (Questioning Hearer’s Ability/Willingness Strategy)

The Questioning hearer's ability/willingness strategy presented in Leave The World Behind is thoroughly explained in the following details.



(1:58:46 – 1:58:30)

G.H : Clay, Amanda, we could absolutely refund you your money.

Amanda : You want us to leave? I-It's the middle of the night. My, my children are sleeping upstairs. You come in here and talk about refunding our money. I-I think I need to call the company. I don't even think you can do this. Um, there's got to be a number on their web--

The dialogue takes place in the kitchen, involving characters Amanda, Clay, G.H, and Ruth. In this context, Amanda acts as the requester who poses a question, while G.H serves as the listener receiving the inquiry. Both characters are strangers meeting for the first time during this dialogue, which adds tension and uncertainty to their interaction. She uses the questioning hearer's ability/willingness strategy, which refers to the hearer's ability to carry out the requested action. Amanda, feeling anxious and confused, asks G.H about the situation they are facing. She inquires whether she and her family need to leave the rental house on the first night of their vacation, even though their children have just fallen asleep. This question reflects her concerns about potential discomfort and the uncertainty of the situation they are encountering. Although Amanda's tone seems urgent and worried, G.H has no intention of evicting her and her family from the house. He is the owner of the rental home they are staying in, and his presence there is not meant to instill fear or panic, but rather because he has a right to be in that space. G.H is not there as a threatening figure but rather as someone emotionally and legally attached to the house. This interaction illustrates the complexity of the relationships among the characters and how uncertainty can impact communication between them.

Data 3 (Statement of Speaker's Wishes and Desires)



(1:10:32) – (1:10:26)

G.H : Yes, exactly like how you got here. But listen to me, please. This is dangerous what you're

doing, for you and your family.

Ruth : Dad, let them go.

This dialogue involves two characters, G.H and Clay, where G.H acts as the requester and Clay as the recipient of the request. The conversation takes place as Clay's family plans to leave their rental home after Clay recounts a tense experience in which a large drone dropped thousands of red papers bearing the message "Death to America." This moment clearly creates an atmosphere of tension and deep concern, as the information indicates a serious potential threat. In the dialogue, G.H employs a request strategy based on desire, which is evident in the statement, "But listen to me, please." With this expression, G.H is trying to persuade Clay's family not to rush into leaving the house. G.H is pleading with Clay to understand that the situation in the city is currently very dangerous, especially for the safety of Clay's family. Through this emotionally charged request, G.H attempts to convince Clay that staying in the house is a safer option compared to going outside and facing the uncertainty that may await them. In the context of request strategies, the term "wish" refers to the effort to express a desire or preference when making a request. This involves clearly conveying what the requester aims to achieve. In this situation, G.H is not only trying to convey important information but also expressing the hope that Clay and his family will reconsider their decision. By including his desire for Clay's family to listen and consider what he is saying, G.H can increase his chances of receiving a positive response. Thus, this strategy serves not only to communicate a request but also to build an emotional connection and strengthen his argument, thereby enhancing the likelihood of obtaining the desired response.

CONCLUSION

Request strategy is an essential component of conversation. In the movie *Leave The World Behind*, the characters employ various request strategies throughout their interactions. Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that many characters prefer to use elliptical requests as a direct approach when making their requests. By utilizing this strategy, the speaker aims to clearly express their intentions while also maintaining a level of subtlety in their communication. However, there are moments when the speaker recognizes the need to simplify their requests, opting for straightforward expressions to avoid misunderstandings. In these instances, they choose to be more direct in their approach, clearly outlining their needs or desires. This shift in strategy not only aids in clarity but also enhances the likelihood of compliance from the listener, fostering a more effective and open line of communication. The study identifies six out of eight¹¹ strategies for making requests: Hints, Questioning the hearer's ability or willingness, Statements of the speaker's wishes and desires, Statements of the speaker's needs and demands, Statements of obligations and necessities, and Imperatives. Among these, the hints strategy is the most commonly used. In this approach, offering hints or suggestions can initiate negotiation or persuasion, encouraging the recipient to consider or comply with the requester's intent. This method emphasizes flexible communication, providing cues that allow the recipient to interpret and respond without the

¹¹ Trosborg, *Interlanguage Pragmatics: Requests, Complaints, and Apologies*.

pressure of strict instructions. However, hinting can sometimes lead to ambiguity, so it's essential to consider the context and choose the strategy that best supports the request's objectives.

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