

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Searle (1976) in Cummings (2005: 8) classifies request under the category of directives which have been regarded as “attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something”. More specifically, Trosborg (1995: 187) defines the speech act of request as an illocutionary act whereby a speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that requester wants the requestee to perform an act which is for the benefit of the speaker.

Request is the most common speech act used by people to ask someone to do something. According Reiter (2000), request consists of two main parts, namely the core request or head act, and the modification items. Whereas the former has been defined as the main utterance which has the function of requesting and can stand by itself, the latter refers to those peripheral elements that follow or precede the request head act in order to mitigate its pragmatic force. These modification elements can be distributed into two groups: (1) internal act, that is, linguistic elements that appear within the same request head act (e.g. could you just pass me the salt?); and (2) external modification, that is, devices that occur in the immediate linguistic context surrounding the request head act (e.g. the soup is a bit sweet. Could you pass me the salt?). While Trosborg (1995: 205) classifies three levels of directness for requests: (1) direct (e.g. please wash my dirty clothes); (2) conventionally indirect (e.g. May I borrow a pen?); and (3)

indirect request (e.g. I don't have a pen). Each level of direct and conventionally indirect consists of sub strategies represented a long a continuum, while non-conventionally indirect requests contain only one strategy: hint. In addition, for conventionally indirect request, the request perspective was analysed according to the role of the agent using a speaker (can I borrow your note?) or a hearer (Can you lend me your notes?).

The speech act of request has been widely examined in pragmatic research. For example Wichmann (2004) investigated the meaning of intonation "please" in requests which was similarly studied by Martinez (2009). Other study examined request used by second language learners, for example Mohamed (2012) examined the role Negative Politeness in request used by non native speakers of English which was similarly studied by Romina (2009). Request was also studied cross culturally, for example Yaqubi and Afgari (2011) studied cross cultural different the use of request in Persian and English. Moreover, Request was studied in various social situations, for example Ahangari and Masoumeh (2009) studied request strategies between Iranian EFL Learners and Canadian native speakers of English in various social situations. On the other study, Macaulay (1999) examined indirectness and gender in request for information in Canada. Henceforth, Yeung (1995) studied polite request in English and Chinese business correspondence in Hongkong. Request was studied in sociopragmatic, for example Sangpil (2004) examined sociopragmatic analysis of Korean requests. While, Hasal (2003) examined requests by Australian learners of Indonesian. Although previous studies have examined requests in different perspectives, the

use of request in films has been rarely investigated, and hence this study is to fill in this gap. Thus this present study examines requests used in a film.

Request which commonly occurs in daily interpersonal conversation is often reflected in the conversation of characters in some art forms such as plays and movies or films. As for the latter, it commonly imitates or at least reflects its usage in the real life people where the films are created or in other in which the films intend to depict. Although the life in films is “created” still they reflect certain culture so does the language used in it.

“Inception”, as the source of data of this study, is a film classified as an action film in which one or more heroes is thrust into a series of challenges that require physical feats, extended fights and frenetic chases. In telling the story, the film marker does not only involve physical acts but also language including speech acts. In the Inception, the characters frequently use many types of request. The following are examples used by the characters in *Inception*.

Context: The dialogue is happening in the living room hotel at day. There are two persons there, the requester is Cobb and the requestee is Saito. Cobb and Saito both wake up. Cobb asks Saito and his team indirectly to continue the dream in the deep dream level because the dream has not finished yet.

Cobb : “*You came prepared, hmm?*”
Saito : “Not even my head of security”.

In Trosborg's (1995) strategy, the utterance “*You came prepared, hmm?*” belongs to an indirect request in the form of mild hints because Cobb (the requester) implies a request to Saito (the requestee) to prepare the second dream levels. Cobb (the requester) tended to use impositive intention to convey the interlocutor to do the act together by intonation *hmm?*. The pragmalinguistic

forms “*hmm*” includes in lexical/phrasal downgraders in the form of hesitator in which the hesitation signals reveal the requester’s doubt as to the appropriateness of speaker’s request. The politeness strategy of the utterance is included as bald on-record in which it shows that all the speakers often implied low imposition with close and familiar relationship applied by indirect strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Context: The scene below happened when Eames and Saito are in a balcony. The requester is Eames and the requestee is Saito. They decide to create a three layered dream. Eames looks for someone to be heir. Then, Saito proposes Robert Fischer who is a million-dollar oil company heir. It is due to Fischer’s father is a key part of the empire.

Eames : *Can you get me access to this man here?*

Saito : Browning, Fischer Sr’s right hand man. Fischer Jr’s godfather.

It should be possible. If you can get the right references.

Eames : References are something of a specialty for me, Mr. Saito.

Based on the request types of the theory of Trosborg (1995), the utterance “*Can you get me access to this man here?*” belongs to conventionally indirect request (hearer-based condition) in the form of ability because the requester asks the requestee’s capacity to perform the desired act indirectly. It can be seen that Eames’s utterance “*Can you get me access to this man here?*” who asked Saito to perform Saito’s capacity to do access for Eames and the requestee (Saito) will consider requester’s request based on the condition in question. The pragmalinguistic forms “*get me access*” constitutes an external modification in the form of preparatory in which it is used by the requester to prepare all of everything speakers’ need before the act did. The politeness strategy of the utterance is negative politeness in which it shows that the speaker implies low

imposition to those of equal authority with familiar relationship (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

This research is very interesting to be conducted because the action movie in *Inception* has a lot of request data and a lot of order data become request data. Generally, action movie rarely sustains request data. Moreover, the request research is rarely conducted in the Indonesia research out of interlanguage pragmatic. Henceforth, request research is more often conducted in western research related interlanguage pragmatic about request. Western research more often takes a data in school not in movie.

The urgency of examining this speech act is to know the types of request strategy (indirect request, conventionally indirect request/ hearer-oriented the condition, conventionally indirect request/ speaker-based condition, and direct request), pragmalinguistic forms (internal modification and external modification), and the politeness strategy (bald-on record, positive politeness, and negative politeness) in western culture exactly American culture in *Inception* movie based on the context, the condition, the speaker's power (P), the speaker's social distance (D), and the speaker's imposition (R) when speakers asked the hearer to do the act and to grant speakers' request. It means that request strategy in *Inception* movie is part of the characters' communication with the hearer to sustain when the communication happens and speakers's wish can be granted using request strategy. In addition, speakers's request will support in American culture how they ask something to close relationship, familiar relationship, and unfamiliar relationship of equal power, lower power, and higher power using high

imposition, and low imposition.

Based on the reasons above, the writer is truly interested in studying the strategy, especially request strategy. Hence, the writer constructs the study entitled **“THE EXPRESSION OF REQUEST STRATEGY FOUND IN *INCEPTION* MOVIE: A PRAGMATIC STUDY”**.

B. Problem Statements

Based on the title and background, the researcher formulates the problem of the study as follows:

1. What types of request strategies are used by the characters in *Inception* movie?
2. What are the pragmalinguistic forms of requests used by the characters in *Inception* movie?
3. What politeness strategies are involved in the requests used by the characters in *Inception* movie?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study involve the following:

1. To identify the types of request strategies used by the characters in *Inception* movie.
2. To describe the pragmalinguistic forms of requests used by the characters in *Inception* movie.
3. To describe the use of politeness strategies used in requests by the characters in *Inception* movie.

D. Scope of the Study

This research paper investigates the type of request strategy, pragmalinguistic forms, and politeness strategy used by the characters in *Inception* movie 2010. Type of request strategy is analysed according to the taxonomy of request by Trosborg (1995). The pragmalinguistic forms of requests are discussed according to Kasper (1987). Whereas the politeness strategy is analysed according to Brown and Levinson (1987).

E. Significant of the Study

The finding of this study would be the description about the various types of requests performed by the *Inception* movie in a lot of contexts. The findings might contribute to the following area.

1. Theoretically

The researcher hopes that this research can give additional contribution especially in the study of request strategy in *Inception* movie especially action movie covered by american culture. Request strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995) were based on research in that the data could be limited. The findings of this study might contribute other strategies not covered in Trosborg. In addition, while politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) has been a relatively solid theory of politeness in western culture, the examples included in their book “Principle of politeness” tend to be limited. The findings of this study would show and provide more examples of how their strategies used in “real” conversations.

2. Practically

By doing this research the researcher gets information about how to ask to someone in urgent condition, gets information about the implication of pragmalinguistic forms in American culture, and gets information counter-image of native Americans especially in all the characters' dialogue as reflected in *Inception* movie. Although requests used in a movie are considered not real, they inform readers especially teachers, students, and next researchers how this speech act is realized in different conversations with different contexts. Generally speaking, movies are for entertainment, for that script makers or editors consider relatively easy language, though they still reflect the real language used by real people in real conversation. For non native speakers however, language used by characters often hinders them to enjoy the film. Though subtitles are often provided, they are often unhelpful, as they absorb attention: instead of enjoying the film the watchers are busy reading the subtitles. By understanding some daily language functions such as request could be very helpful for film watchers. The findings of this study could be practically helpful for those who like movies, as some findings describe the pragmalinguistic forms and strategies used by characters in "real" conversation.

In types of request strategy, readers, especially English language learners, are informed by the application in each request strategies, e.g. indirect request, conventionally indirect request (hearer-oriented

condition), conventionally indirect request (speaker-based condition), and direct request. In pragmalinguistic forms, they get more knowledge about the syntactic forms of requests especially the application in modal verb in which it can be showed in the characteristic of internal modification (syntactic down-graders, lexical/phrasal down-graders, and up-graders) and external modification. In politeness strategy, they are informed by the application of politeness theory of Brown and Levinson in “real conversation”.

F. Organization of Thesis

The organization of this thesis is given in order to the readers are able to understand the content of thesis. They are as follows: chapter I is introduction which consists of background of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, scope of the study, significant of the study, and organization of thesis. Chapter II is related the theory which covers pragmatics, pragmalinguistics, speech act, request, politeness, Brown and Levinson’s face saving strategy. Chapter III is the research method. It consists of type of study, object of study, data and data source, technique of collecting data, and technique for analyzing the data. Chapter IV is research finding and discussion. The thesis is ended with chapter V that is conclusion and suggestion.