

AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES AND FUNCTIONS OF REQUEST USED BY THE USERS FOUND IN EXO'S YOUTUBE COMMENTS

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Abstrak

Saat mengajukan permintaan, sangat penting untuk menggunakan strategi yang tepat untuk menyampaikan fungsi yang dimaksudkan secara efektif. Penelitian ini berfokus untuk menyelidiki strategi dan fungsi permintaan yang diungkapkan oleh pengguna YouTube di saluran EXO. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis berbagai strategi dan fungsi yang digunakan dalam membuat permintaan. Penelitian ini mengadopsi pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, memanfaatkan data yang bersumber dari permintaan yang dilakukan oleh pengguna YouTube di bagian komentar video YouTube EXO. Sumber data utama untuk penelitian ini adalah komentar yang diposting oleh pengguna di saluran YouTube EXO. Pengumpulan data melalui teknik dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori Trosborg (1995) dan teori Brown & Levinson (1987). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengguna YouTube menggunakan berbagai strategi permintaan, yaitu petunjuk, kemampuan/kemauan, formula sugestif, keinginan, kebutuhan dan tuntutan, pernyataan kewajiban, performatif, dan strategi imperatif. Peneliti juga menemukan empat fungsi permintaan: untuk mendapatkan barang atau jasa, untuk mendapatkan bantuan atau kerja sama, untuk mengungkapkan rasa terima kasih, dan untuk mengungkapkan solidaritas atau persahabatan.

Kata kunci: tindak tutur, permintaan, strategi permintaan

Abstract

When making a request, it is crucial to employ an appropriate strategy to convey its intended function effectively. This study focuses on investigating the strategies and functions of requests expressed by YouTube users on the EXO channel. This research aims to identify and analyze the various strategies and functions employed in making requests. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data sourced from the requests made by YouTube users in the comments section of EXO's YouTube videos. The primary data sources for this research are the comments posted by users on EXO's YouTube channel. The data collection through documentation techniques. The data were analyzed using Trosborg (1995)'s theory and Brown & Levinson (1987)'s theory. The results of the study show that YouTube users use a variety of request strategies, namely hints, ability/willingness, suggestory formulae, wishes, needs and demands, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives strategies. The researcher also found four functions of request: to obtain goods or services, to obtain assistance or cooperation, to express gratitude, and to express solidarity or camaraderie.

Keywords: speech act, request, request strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a human endeavor that frequently takes place. In conversations with others, language is crucial. People could communicate their thoughts, knowledge, and opinions to

others through language. The two types of communication are verbal and nonverbal, according to Buck & VanLear (2002). The act of expressing oneself and exchanging information is known as verbal communication. On the other hand, nonverbal communication is the act of communicating and exchanging ideas, thoughts, and feelings through the use of body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, and other nonverbal indicators. Language serves as a means of communication between speakers and listeners; hence communication cannot be divorced from language. Without language, it would be impossible for people to interact with one another on a daily basis.

According to Tregaskes et al., (2004), language teachers work to help their students reach their language learning goals by emphasizing that language is a combination of effective and cognitive ability to relate to or interact with other people. To improve communication abilities, the teacher must understand what communication is, have the bravery to express ideas and opinions, and practice frequently. The goals and objectives that must be communicated to others must be taken into consideration when using language for communication. Nevertheless, Language learners still struggle to communicate in a foreign tongue. This is due to the fact that they are unfamiliar with of these words in other languages.

Consequently, individuals learning a language must acquire proficiency in communicative competence to effectively engage in communication. Hymes (1972) proposes that communicative competence encompasses more than just grammatical knowledge; it involves utilizing grammatical competence across diverse communicative contexts. Conversely, Tarvin (2014) contends that communicative competence refers to the skill of utilizing language to effectively and appropriately communicate, considering cultural norms and resolving social issues through extensive interaction.

Requesting is commonly perceived as courteous approaches to persuade the recipient to perform a certain action. According to Searle's (1979) categorization of speech acts, requests belong to the expressive category, as they are employed by the speaker to express their emotions or feelings. Searle's classification of speech acts, one kind of speech act that frequently occurs is a request. This type of speech act concentrates on asking someone to do something and gives the recipient the choice between complying with the request or not. Speech acts of request precede nonverbal actions as a pre-event act. This study primarily centers on expressive speech acts, specifically requests, where the speaker conveys their emotions by making a request to the recipient or hearer.

When making a request, it is important to employ a strategy to ensure that the request is targeted and effective. A request strategy refers to the approach used by a speaker to achieve

the desired action when making a request. Each individual has their unique way of making requests. To make a request effective, several strategies should be employed. These request strategies commonly emerge in natural conversations. Various strategies can be utilized when engaging in a request speech act, aiming to avoid misunderstandings that may hurt the feelings of others. One such strategy, proposed by Trosborg (1995) encompasses eight categories, including hints, ability/willingness, permissions, suggestory formulae, wishes, needs and demands, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives.

When making a request, it often serves various functions, which can differ depending on the context of the speech. Understanding the function of a request requires careful examination of the surrounding context. Brown & Levinson (1987) propose categorizing request functions into four main types: to obtain goods or services, to obtain assistance or cooperation, to express gratitude, and to express solidarity or camaraderie.

Relevant research has been done previously, namely the type of request strategies, conducted by Sulistyowati (2013), Alida & Nisa (2014), Husna (2018), Tambulana (2020), Ardianingsih (2020), and (Prihatin & Aflahatun, 2020). Then, politeness strategies in request in terms of type, conducted by Krisnoni (2013), Wuryantini (2017), Dzikriyah (2018), Amer, Buragohain, & Suryani (2020), and Putra & Agung (2023). The analysis to figure out and categorize the request head acts and external modifications used by the movie's characters conducted by Sari (2014). Then, the analysis of performance of cross-cultural politeness strategies by Said (2016). Furthermore, it is seen from how language manifest politeness by Tanto (2018). The linguistic markers, and the social contexts analysis conducted by Sukarno (2018). The request strategies analysis research that has been conducted was used to analysis movies, series, Algerian speech community, EFL English learners, text messages WhatsApp and Line Messenger, Javanese speakers, BSE English student's book for Senior High School, Industrial Engineering students, and telecoms company's CCCS staff and customers.

Based on this explanation, this research is different from previous studies. This research includes research on request strategy and request function. Then, the difference lies in the data source studied in this study. So that this research is expected to be able to contribute to explaining the request speech act in more detail about the strategies of request and the function of request. The research was conducted due to the existing phenomena regarding the use of request that are often found in communications made by someone. This study uses YouTube comments on the EXO channel as data sources. The difference between this study and previous research lies in the theory used to analyze the data. This research tries to expand the previous theory about request strategies by Trosborg (1995). In addition, researchers use the request

function from Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Based on the explanation of the research above, the objectives of this study were:

2. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative methodology as it focused on descriptive analysis. The method relied on data primarily expressed through descriptions, words, opinions, and similar forms. It was particularly suitable when investigating individuals or groups as research subjects. The researcher employed a qualitative approach to examine and describe the request strategies and their functions as observed in the comments left by users on EXO's YouTube videos. The data of this research were excerpts containing speech acts of request. The data source was EXO YouTube comments. The data were analyzed using Trosborg (1995)'s theory and Brown & Levinson (1987)'s theory. The data were collected as follows: 1) The researcher searched for EXO YouTube channel, 2) The researcher watched the videos in EXO YouTube channel, 3) The researcher read the comments uttered by YouTube users of the videos, 4) The researcher underlined request utterances, 5) After all the data had been in written form, the researcher selected the users' utterances that contained speech acts of request, 6) Finally, the researcher used the request strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995), and the functions of request proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher divides this section into two parts: results and discussion.

3.1 Result

After classifying the data, the researcher subdivided this section into two distinct sections: research strategies of request and the function of request.

3.1.1 The Strategies of Request

The researcher classified the strategies of request based on theory by Trosborg (1995) found on YouTube EXO. The researcher took 97 comments on nine of the YouTube videos of the EXO's YouTube channel as the data of this study. From the data, the researcher found eight strategies of request which are hints, ability/willingness, suggestory formulae, wishes, need and demand, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives.

3.1.2 Hints

From the data obtained, there are nine requests related to hints. This strategy usually used requestee (speaker) hides the request and not mention it directly in the speech. In particular, this meaning is implicit. The example taken from the data is "I couldn't laugh because *I was*

confused by the audio and subtitles anyway." (RSH). The phrase *"I was confused by the audio and subtitles anyway"* refer to one of the YouTube videos that had no subtitles for foreign listeners. It made it difficult for the speaker (requestee) to understand what was being said. They were categorized as hinting because speakers wanted to avoid stating their intentions explicitly or using hinting strategies. In this case, the listener asked EXO to provide subtitles and make their voices sound clearer by changing the microphone.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) *"...I can hardly keep up with the subs because they are out of control but I love it!"* (RSH)
- (2) *"Can't wait to see all of them doing the challenge."* (RSH)
- (3) *"Can't wait for their comeback as a team."* (RSH)

3.1.3 Ability/Willingness

From the data obtained, there are three requests related to ability/willingness. This strategy commonly used the communication approach that refers to the listener's ability or will to execute the intended action. Request the strategy's willingness to comprehend the respondent's willingness to take the desired action. The excerpt example taken from the data is *"Hhhhhhhhhh can anyone agree that this group of guys is really what homies mean! They're just so real to exist as human beings and I really like their honesty!"* (RSA). The word *anyone* refer to YouTube users who watch videos on the EXO channel. The context in this data is the listener's asked anyone that EXO is home. The listener expressed willingness for other YouTube viewers to agree to his request, which is to acknowledge that EXO is home. In this situation, home is a permanent residence that cannot change our hearts. Listeners in the above situation also demonstrate their loyalty to EXO.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) *"Can we make this as an ongoing series..."* (RSA)
- (2) *"Can we have Kai dancing ballet, please?"* (RSA)

3.1.4 Suggestory Formulae

From the data obtained, there are two requests related to Suggestory formulae. This is the strategy of requesting suggestion. It provides direction on the request's rationale. The example taken from the data is *"Sehun-ah, it's nice to see you eat... probably a full mukbang vlog next? I'm happy you were able to get some time to relax..."* (RSF). The strategy request in this section is *"Probably a full mukbang next vlog?"* It is categorized as a suggestion formula because the speaker does not question a specific condition based on the speech partner but emphasizes cooperation with the speech partner to fulfill the speaker's request. In this case, listeners suggest Sehun as the subject of the video to do mukbang, which means eating in large

quantities and various kinds, because listeners see Sehun creating content where Sehun is eating in the video.

The other example from the data “*It would be nice to keep on making this kind of content.*” (RSF). It is classified as a suggestory formulae since the speaker does not challenge a specific condition but instead emphasizes cooperation with the other person's speech to accomplish the speaker's suggestion. In this situation, listeners recommended EXO as the subject of the video to create something else similar to Kai's content because the speaker noticed Kai's video was full of sarcasm, which made the video funnier.

3.1.5 Wishes

From the data obtained, there are thirty-one requests related to wishes. Wishes are when the speaker speaks and focuses on the speaker's condition. Therefore, the speaker's desires become the discussion's main center. The example taken from the data is “*I wish there's an extended version of the say you love me part. I want more!*” (RSW). The phrase *say you love me* refer to one of the songs in Kai's album. This is classified as a request for hope because the speaker wanted the listeners here, EXO's channel, to immediately carried out the speaker's order without an answer in the form of a sentence or phrase. After all, the speaker only wished to be the main focus of the interaction. In this situation, the speaker requested that the EXO channel provide an extended video of Kai's song, "say you love me." In the video, there was only footage of less than 1 minute, which dissatisfied the speaker, so the speaker hopes that the EXO channel will provide videos with a longer duration.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) “*I wish I could have heard Jongdae talk a little more :(*” (RSW)
- (2) “*I hope you are happy and just stay true to yourself.*” (RSW)
- (3) “*I hope one day I can sing with him.*” (RSW)

3.1.6 Need and Demand

From the data obtained, there are thirty-two requests related to Need and Demand. Need and Demand is heavily taxed, and speakers who employ this strategy tend to be more straightforward. The example taken from the data is “*Seeing Chen smile and being a little loud again is a joy... now I just want Lay a part of something and that would be the best comeback a true return of Kings.*” (RSN). In the sentence “*I just want Lay a part of something*”, the speaker mentioned Lay, a member of EXO. It is classified as a need request because when the speaker spoke, she focused only on her condition. Because Lay hadn't been participating in their project in a long time, the speaker wanted Lay to be a part of EXO's content. The speaker

wished to Lay to be part of something. Something here referred to the content contained in the EXO's channel.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) "...please I need more chaotic EXO variety shows." (RSN)
- (2) "...I want to talk with Kai and other members so much." (RSN)
- (3) "We need more of EXO and these kinds of contents...." (RSN)

3.1.7 Statement of Obligations

From the data obtained, there are two requests related to statement of obligations. This request strategy uses auxiliary verbs such as have, should, and must to identify utterances as requests. The arrangement would have moral implications. The example taken from the data is "It makes me want to cry when I see him working without sleeping, being in cold weather, being filled with thoughts of what might not come out well. But then, is just EXO's essence of *keep working and improving* when they are already the best." (RSO). The phrase "*keep working and improving*." referred to Kai as the subject. This strategy referred to orders that someone must carry out. In this phrase, the speaker told Kai to keep working and improving. And when Kai (the listener) read it, he would immediately carry out the speaker's request.

The other example taken from the data is "After watching this masterpiece What I thought is I have to work harder more than now. *EXO-L, we have to give them best comeback support. Fighting! Saranhaja.*" (RSO). The word *we* refer to EXO-L and the word *them* refer to EXO. This is categorized as a statement of obligations because the speaker requested the fans, i.e., EXO-L to give their best support for EXO. After that, the listener must immediately carry out the speaker's request.

3.1.8 Performatives

From the data obtained, there are one request related to performative. This strategy is use of performative verbs that indicate the meaning of the request, such as commanding, requesting, ordering, and so on, expressly characterizes the utterance as a performative request. The example taken from the data is "*I would have loved to see Chen more screen time... give him his place, don't leave him off camera. they are all part of EXO. thanks for all being together again with Kai.*" (RSV). This is a performative sentence because the speaker used a softer sentence which may limit the illocutionary power of the utterance. The speaker commands that Chen should get more screen time.

3.1.9 Imperatives

From the data obtained, there are seventeen requests related to imperative. Imperative is a type of speech act that signifies that communication is a command in its purest and most

authoritative form. Because the speaker has authority over the audience, listeners must do what the speaker requires. The example taken from the data is “Loved this. *More EXO teasing each other please*. Every member should do this for their solo.” (RSI). This is classified as an imperative since the speaker gave an order to EXO to made video content of EXO teasing each other. Furthermore, the speaker instructed in the following sentence that *every member should do this!* That gave the speaker power over the audience. The word *please* in the statement indicates tenderness.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) “...*Now please release 2nd part!*” (RSI)
- (2) “*EXO World Tour please...*” (RSI)
- (3) “...*We're are looking forward to see you more so please do that often.....*” (RSI)

The request strategies can be summarized in the table below:

Table 1. The Strategies of Request

Fields	Number of Cases	Percentage
Need and Demand	32	32,99%
Wishes	31	31,96%
Imperatives	17	17,52%
Hints	9	9,27%
Ability/Willingness	3	3,1%
Suggestory Formulae	2	2,06%
Statements of Obligations	2	2,06%
Performative	1	1,04%
Total	97	100%

3.1.10 The Function of Request

The researcher classified the functions of request based on theory by Brown & Levinson (1987) found on YouTube EXO. The researcher took 92 comments on nine of the YouTube videos of the EXO’s YouTube channel as the data of this study. There are to obtain goods or services, to obtain assistance or cooperation, to express gratitude, and to express solidarity or camaraderie.

3.1.11 To Obtain Goods and Services

From the data obtained, there are thirty-one functions of request to obtain goods and services. To obtain goods and service is the first function of request. This request function is often used to ask for things we need or want, such as food, drink, or information. The data taken from the data is “I hope the management will resolve well. *I just want my KING EXO to come back with*

full formation, well-deserved promotion, and of course a world tour.” (RFS). This is classified as a function to obtain goods and services because the speaker requested that EXO respond with a complete formation or full members. The speaker also wished for EXO to receive well promotions and embark on a world concert tour. Obtaining a service is an aspect of this. The speaker also wanted to request details about when they would make a comeback.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) “...*We need to hear their vocals!*” (RFS)
- (2) “...*I just want Lay a part of something and that would be the best comeback....*” (RFS)
- (3) “*It would be nice to keep on making this kind of content....*” (RFS)

3.1.12 To obtain assistance or cooperation

From the data obtained, there are twenty-three functions of request to obtain assistance or cooperation. This request function is often used to ask for help or cooperation from others, such as when we need someone to hold a door open or collaborate on a project. The example taken from the data is “I watched it 4 times already and laughed each time. *Now please release 2nd part!*” (RFA). It is classified as a request function because the speaker wanted EXO to release part 2 of Kai's album promotional video soon. This sentence had a function as a collaboration tool between the speaker and EXO's channel. The speaker felt happy, and EXO also benefited from that content. So, the sentence *Now please release the 2nd part* is included in the function to obtain assistance or cooperation.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) “...*please, we want to see hyper Soo with EXO too.*” (RFA)
- (2) “...*I hope this is just the start of them performing actively as a group again.*” (RFA)
- (3) “*Please make more fun content of EXO!*” (RFA)

3.1.13 To express gratitude

From the data obtained, there are thirty-seven functions of request to express gratitude. This request function is often used to express gratitude to others by requesting that they continue to do something they already do. The example taken from the data is “Ahhh, I needed this... *thank you so much for always making me feel better on bad days.*” (RFG). It is classified as a request function because the speaker thanked EXO for their content made the speaker feel better. The speaker also needed this content when EXO members joke with each other to make the speaker felt even happier. It included a request function to express gratitude.

The following are the other examples from the data:

- (1) “...*I'm so incredibly proud and happy for him. Please be always happy and healthy, my star.*” (RFG)

(2) “...we are being blessed with all this EXO content.” (RFG)

(3) “Whoever came up with this idea is a genius. Please, we need more...”(RFG)

3.1.14 To express solidarity or camaraderie

From the data obtained, there are one function of request to express gratitude. This request function is often used to build rapport with others by requesting a shared interest or experience. The example taken from the data is “Hhhhhhhhhh can anyone agree that this group of guys is really what homies mean! They're just so real to exist as human beings and I really like their honesty!” (RFC). The word anyone refers to EXOL as fans of EXO. It is classified as a request function because the speaker invited EXOL to make EXO the most comfortable home or group where they live. It showed the request function to show a sense of solidarity and camaraderie.

The request strategies can be summarized in the table below:

Table 2. The Functions of Request

Function	Number of cases	Percentage
To express gratitude	37	40,21%
To obtain goods or services	31	33,69%
To obtain assistance or cooperation	23	25%
To express solidarity or camaraderie	1	1,1%
Total	92	100%

3.2 Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the researcher found eight request strategies, namely hints, ability/willingness, suggestory formulae, wishes, need and demand, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives. The results of this study are in line with the results of research by Sulistyowati (2013), Husna (2018), and Saboe (2022), who found eight request strategies, namely hints, abilities/willingness, suggestory formulae, wishes, need and demand, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives. In general, the results of this study support the research of Sulistyowati (2013), Husna (2018), and Saboe (2022) because the researchers used the same theoretical framework, namely, the theoretical framework of Trosborg (1995). Trosborg (1995) proposed eight request strategies: hints, ability/willingness, suggestory formulae, wishes, need and demand, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives. Thus, the results of this study support Trosborg's theory (1995).

However, if you take a deeper look, the results of this study are different from the results of research by Sulistyowati (2013), Husna (2018), and Saboe (2022). The difference in the results of this study lies in the frequency of the amount of data used. In the research results,

Sulistiyowati (2013) found 61 request strategies, Husna (2018) found 55 strategies, and Saboe (2022) found 16 strategies. Meanwhile, the results of this study found 97 demand strategies. The difference in the frequency of the number of requests is possible because of differences in research data sources. The research data source used by Sulistiyowati (2013), Husna (2018), and Saboe (2022) are films, so their research produces more limited data. Meanwhile, the results of this study use comments on the EXO YouTube channel so that the selection of data becomes wider.

Moreover, the results of this study indicate that researchers found four functions of requests. The four functions of requests are to obtain goods or services, to obtain assistance or cooperation, to express gratitude, and to express solidarity or camaraderie. The results of this study support the theory of Brown and Levinson (1978). They put forward four functions of demand: to obtain goods or services, to obtain assistance or cooperation, to express gratitude, and to express solidarity or camaraderie. The request function is one of the studies of speech acts that are rarely studied. According to Trosborg (1995), requests have two main functions, namely to core requests or head acts and peripheral modification devices. Core request or head act, according to Trosborg (1995), functions as a request and can stand alone. According to Trosborg (1995) this function is used as the ability to express requests indirectly or conventionally. Therefore, the researchers found differences with the results of this study because the functions of Trosborg (1995) were too broad, so they needed to match the results of this study. Meanwhile, this research is more focused and direct, so a more general, indirect, or conventional function cannot be found in the results of this study.

4. CLOSING

The study presents its conclusions on how to address the issues discussed in the previous sections. Firstly, the researcher identifies various request strategies used in EXO's YouTube comments. YouTube users employ four main strategies: hints, ability/willingness, suggestory formulae, and wishes, need and demand, statements of obligations, performatives, and imperatives. Secondly, the study examines the functions of these requests and identifies four main purposes: to obtain goods or services, to obtain assistance or cooperation, to express gratitude, and to express solidarity or camaraderie. Overall, the study demonstrates a prevalence of theory usage and a wide range of request strategies with diverse variations. The most commonly used strategy is need and demand percentage of 32.99% of the requests, while the least used is performative, comprising only 1.04%. This suggests that viewers often establish a personal connection with content creators and make straightforward requests to

foster more intimate interactions. Regarding functions, the most frequently observed function is to express gratitude at 40.21%, while the least observed is to express solidarity or camaraderie at 1.1%. This indicates that YouTube users tend to convey their requests in a respectful, appreciative, and positive manner, using expressions of gratitude to increase the likelihood of their requests being acknowledged and fulfilled by content creators. By thoroughly comprehending request strategies and the functions of requests, this research brings valuable insights to education. Its findings offer practical knowledge that can effectively enhance communication and interpersonal abilities within educational environments.

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