Request Strategies of Emma Woodhouse in "Emma" By Autumn De Wilde

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Abstrak

Studi ini menerapkan teori Trosborg (1995) pada strategi permintaan Emma Woodhouse dalam film Emma (2020), yang disutradarai oleh Autumn de Wilde. Penggunaan permintaan oleh Emma menunjukkan status sosial, kepercayaan diri, dan hubungannya, serta aturan hierarkis Regency England. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjawab tiga pertanyaan kunci: Jenis strategi permintaan apa yang digunakan Emma Woodhouse dalam film tersebut; Bagaimana strategi ini mencerminkan status sosial dan hubungannya dengan karakter lain; Apa fungsi strategi permintaan Emma dalam film tersebut. Analisis deskriptif kualitatif studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa strategi langsung paling sering digunakan, terutama dengan karakter berstatus sosial rendah, seperti Harriet atau pembantunya. Pendekatan ini sejalan dengan rasa kekuasaan Emma dan posisi istimewanya dalam masyarakat. Sebaliknya, Emma menggunakan strategi tidak langsung dan sopan dengan individu dengan kedudukan sosial yang sama atau lebih tinggi, seperti Tuan Elton atau Frank Churchill, yang menunjukkan pemahaman tentang kesopanan sosial dan menjaga muka. Analisis ini menunjukkan bagaimana strategi permintaan Emma mencerminkan perkembangan pribadinya, yang menunjukkan perubahan dari ketegasan menjadi empati saat ia menegosiasikan harapan masyarakat. Studi ini menekankan hubungan antara bahasa, dinamika sosial, dan pengembangan karakter, yang menjelaskan bagaimana metode permintaan berfungsi sebagai alat pengaruh dan penanda hubungan dalam latar sejarah.

Kata kunci : *Bahasa, Pragmatik, Strategi permintaan, Film, Emma*

Abstract

This study applies Trosborg's (1995) theory to Emma Woodhouse's request strategies in the movie Emma (2020), directed by Autumn de Wilde. Emma's use of requests indicates her social status, confidence, and relationships, as well as the hierarchical rules of Regency England. The research aims to answer three key questions: What types of request strategies does Emma Woodhouse use in the movie; How do these strategies reflect her social status and relationships with other characters; What are the functions of Emma's request strategies within the film. The study's qualitative descriptive analysis reveals that direct strategies are most frequently used, particularly with characters of lower social status, such as Harriet or her maid. This approach is aligns with Emma's sense of power and her privileged position in society. In contrast, Emma employs indirect and polite strategies with individuals of equal or higher social standing, such as Mr. Elton or Frank Churchill, demonstrating an understanding of social decorum and the preservation of face. The analysis demonstrates how Emma's request strategies reflect her personal development, indicating a shift from assertiveness to empathy as she negotiates societal expectations. This study emphasizes the link between language, social dynamics, and character development, shedding light on how request methods function as both tools of influence and markers of relationships in historical settings.

Keywords : *Language, Pragmatics, Request Strategies, Movie, Emma*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a key tool for human communication, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and intentions. It refers to a system of pragmatics cues that let people express themselves and communicate with others (Alshami, 2019). Beyond its structural components, language is strongly embedded in culture and history, influencing and reflecting the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which it is employed (Alshami, 2019).

Pragmatics is a focus of linguistics that investigates how context affects how language is used to convey meaning. Pragmatics considers not only linguistic structures, but also the relationship between speakers, hearer, and context. According to (Purwo, 1990 in Alfira, 2021) pragmatic is the study of appropriate speech meaning utilizing context-bound meaning. When consider its context and how it is used in a communication event. Pragmatics places a strong emphasis on context because language is rarely utilized in isolation. Every utterance is influenced by who is speaking, to whom, where, and under what conditions it is made. This approach allows for a deeper analysis of how language functions in real life, when intended meanings are frequently hidden beneath social rules, contexts, or speaker intents.

The concept of speech acts is central to pragmatic analysis, and it refers to the actions we conduct with language, such as requesting, commanding, or apologizing. (Yule, 1996 in Hamnu et al., 2023) defines speech act as an action carried out using spoken expression. Speech acts are so essential for understanding how language can be utilized to attain certain communication goals while influencing the behavior of others. He emphasizes that utterances comprise not only of words and grammatical structures, but also of specific acts, such as making requests or giving commands. Speech acts are typically divided into three parts: the locutionary act (the actual utterance and its literal meaning), the illocutionary act (the speaker's intended meaning), and the perlocutionary act (the impact of the utterance on the listener). Within this framework, requests are viewed as a form of illocutionary act in which the speaker attempts to persuade the listener to do something.

A request is a type of communicative act in which one person (the speaker) requests another person (the hearer) to execute a certain action. (Searle, 1976 in Chintawidy & Sartini, 2022) view requests as directed speech acts that try to persuade the listener to take action. He underlines that the success of a request is dependent on the listener's ability to recognize the speaker's goal. (Brown & Levinson, 1987 in Yunita & Wahyudi, 2020) defines requests are simply face-threatening actions because they limit the listener's freedom of action. According to (Trosborg, 1995 in Lestari et al., 2024) request is an illocutionary act in which a speaker (requester) asks a listener (requestee) to perform an act that benefits the speaker. The act can be a request for non-verbal goods and services, such as an object, action, or service, or a verbal request, such as for information. Requests can range in directness—from blatant mandates to polite, indirect suggestions—and are frequently influenced by the speaker's and hearer's relationship, as well as social context. Trosborg categorizes request strategies according to the directness of the request. This classification includes:

a) **Indirect Strategies (Hints)**
   Indirect strategies, in which the speaker indicates a request without expressly asking, such as "It's getting cold in here," causing the hearer to infer that the window should be closed.

b) **Hearer - Oriented Conditions**
   Hearer - oriented conditions are strategies in which the speaker makes a request that indirectly asks the hearer to do something while still following a conventional pattern, such as "Could you please close the window?".

c) **Speaker - Based Conditions**
   Speaker based - conditions are strategies that involve the speaker politely expressing their needs or desires, such as "I would like you to close the window." While remaining indirect, it focuses on the speaker's wishes.

d) **Direct Strategies**
   Direct strategies entail the speaker issuing an express demand or command, such as "Close the window." This approach is typically used when the speaker has authority over the hearer or when the situation allows for directness.

Requests have numerous functions in communication, allowing speakers to affect the actions of others while negotiating social norms and relationships. According to (Searle, 1979 in Chintawidy & Sartini, 2022), the primary function of a request is to persuade the hearer to perform an action for the benefit of the speaker. Requests are necessary for obtaining practical goals, but they also serve as tools for maintaining or negotiating social dynamics like hierarchy and politeness. In addition to Searle, (Brown & Levinson, 1987 in Yunita & Wahyudi, 2020) state that requests have a face-threatening function because they impact on the hearer's autonomy. Speakers frequently use polite request strategies to decrease the threat to the listener's negative face (the desire to act freely without imposition). This polite framing can serve several social goals, including expressing respect, recognizing social hierarchy, and maintaining positive relationships.

Request strategies are inextricably linked to politeness, as speakers routinely adjust the directness of their requests in response to cultural norms and power dynamics. Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory is one of the most influential theories for explaining politeness, and it centers on the idea of "face." According to (Brown & Levinson, 1987 in Himawati et al., 2024) Face refers to the public self-image that everyone attempts to preserve. Brown and Levinson differentiate between two sorts of faces: positive faces (want to be liked and approved) and negative faces (desire not to be imposed upon). When making a request, speakers must consider the potential threat to the listener's negative face, because requests impose themselves on the listener. To decrease the imposition, speakers can use politeness strategies such as hedges ("Could you perhaps..."), softeners ("I was wondering if..."), and indirect language.

Movies, as a visual storytelling medium, have an important role in showing and reflecting social reality, human emotions, and interpersonal interactions. Movies frequently use dialogue, visuals, and sound to express meaning, making them an effective medium for studying complicated linguistic and social issues. (David et al., 2019) defines a movie as a series of still images that, when shown on a screen, give the illusion of moving images due to the phi phenomenon. They emphasize that a movie is an artistic medium that can incorporate narratives, emotions, and even abstract concepts, delivering an experience separate from other media due of its dynamic nature.

In cinematic and literary adaptations, characters' dialogues reflect not just their personalities but also the social standards of their time, such as how they seek or demand things from others. A notable example is Emma, a 2020 movie directed by Autumn de Wilde that is based on Jane Austen's 1815 novel "Emma". It tells the story of Emma Woodhouse, a wealthy and beautiful young woman in early nineteenth-century England who enjoys meddling in her friends' and neighbors' affairs. Despite her best intentions, Emma's matchmaking efforts frequently result in misunderstandings and issues for both those around her and herself. Emma gains self-awareness from these interactions, learning important lessons about love, humility, and the consequences of her actions. The movie provides a rich landscape to analyze language use, particularly through its main character, Emma Woodhouse, a young woman of high social standing who constantly communicates with others using a range of request methods.

The speaker's and listener's social status and power dynamics frequently impact their requests. In Emma, the protagonist is wealthy and privileged, which influences how she interacts with others. Emma's strong social standing allows her to be more direct in her requests, especially when dealing with others of lower status. Her interactions with peers and elders, such as Mr. Knightley, may encourage her to employ more indirect strategies, reflecting the complexity of social hierarchies in the Regency era.

Several considerations influenced the choice of the movie "Emma" and Emma Woodhouse as the subject of this study. Emma Woodhouse is a complex protagonist who is frequently presented as both charming and headstrong. Her personality and privileged social status allow her to connect with others in ways that tell much about Regency power dynamics and cultural standards. Emma's numerous relationships, ranging from family and friends to those of lower social standing, give rich ground for examining various request strategies. Emma's character provides a nuanced investigation of how social status, gender roles, and personal relationships influence the way she formulates requests, making her a perfect subject for a pragmatic research based on Trosborg's (1995) framework.

METHOD

The request strategies employed by Emma Woodhouse in the Autumn de Wilde directed movie Emma (2020) are examined in this study using a qualitative descriptive method. (Lambert, V. A., & Lambert, C. E., 2012 in Nurjanah, 2021) state that the purpose of qualitative descriptive is to give simple explanations of occurrences as they happen in their natural environments. They also emphasize that qualitative descriptive studies are a suitable approach for research on language use and communication strategies since they seek to provide detailed accounts of events or actions without greatly abstracting or altering the data. Emma's request strategies and how they represent her relationships, social standing, and power dynamics in the movie may be thoroughly examined thanks to this research approach. Trosborg's theory of request strategies serves as the theoretical foundation for this investigation.

The data is sourced from the movie, which is based on Jane Austen's novel and shows complex interpersonal interactions and social hierarchies in the Regency era. This makes the movie a perfect place to study language use and request strategies. As part of the data collecting process, relevant conversations in which Emma uses speech acts categorized as requests are transcribed. Emma and the hearer's relationships, the individuals involved, and the social factors—such as politeness and power—will all be carefully considered when evaluating each request. Using Trosborg's (1995) theory, the analysis divides requests into direct and indirect strategies. The results will examine type of request strategies that Emma's employs, the social and power dynamics, and the function of the request strategies themselves and how they relate to broader issues in the movie, such as gender, power, and social class.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter analyzes Emma Woodhouse's request strategies in the movie Emma (2020). The analysis follows Trosborg's (1995) request strategy classification, focusing on four types: Indirect Strategies (Hints), Hearer-Oriented Conditions, Speaker-Based Conditions, and Direct Strategies. The data show that Emma uses a variety of strategies and the functions, with her choice of strategy heavily influenced by the social context, her relationship with the hearer, and her own personality traits.

Type of Request Strategies

Table 1

NO	REQUEST STRATEGIES	FREQUENCY
1	Indirect Strategies (Hints)	5
2	Hearer - Oriented Conditions	4
3	Speaker - Based Conditions	5
4	Direct Request	15
	TOTAL	29

From to the table above, Emma uses a total of 29 request strategies throughout the movie. Emma uses direct requests more frequently than any other type of request. Emma employed direct strategies 15 times out of 29 total request techniques, followed by speaker-based conditions 5 times, indirect strategies 5 times, and hearer-oriented conditions 4 times.

Emma's frequent use of direct strategies demonstrates her privileged social standing, confidence, and strong personality. As a wealthy and important young woman in Regency-era England, Emma is used to exerting authority over individuals of lower status. Direct requests allow her to express her desires in a clear and strong manner, which is consistent with her confidence in her own social superiority and control over others. This strategy encourages her society's hierarchical standards, which frequently mandate communication techniques based on socioeconomic class.

Indirect Strategies (Hints)

Picture 1

Mr. Woodhouse:
"What a pity it is that Mr Weston ever thought of her!"
Emma:
"Papa! Mr. Weston is such a good-humoured, pleasant, excellent man. He thoroughly deserves a good wife. And you would not have had Miss Taylor live with us forever, when she might have a house of her own?"

(Duration: *03.53*)

From the conversation above, between Emma and her father, Emma employs indirect strategies in the form of hints according to Trosborg's theory. Mr. Woodhouse is concerned and unhappy about Miss Taylor and Mr. Weston's marriage. Emma, who is in favor of the marriage, attempts to persuade her father by providing plausible reasons without directly pressuring or telling. This indirect strategy enables Emma to transmit her views in a more subtle manner, in keeping with her father's sensitivity toward change.

Instead of explicitly asking her father to accept Miss Taylor's marriage, Emma drops hints by praising Mr. Weston and emphasizing that Miss Taylor deserves her own home rather than living with them forever. Rhetorical statements like **"You would not have Miss Taylor live with us forever, when she could have her own house?"** suggest Emma's goal without making a direct request.

Hearer – Oriented Conditions

Picture 2

Harriet:
"You think I ought to refuse him."
Emma :
"I lay it down as a general rule, Harriet, that if a woman doubts as to whether she should accept a man or not, she certainly ought to refuse him."

(Duration: *26.34*)

From the conversation above, between Emma and Harriet, Emma employs hearer - oriented conditions strategies according to Trosborg's theory. Harriet has just received a proposal from Robert Martin and is seeking Emma's advice on what to do. Emma, who is opposed to the relationship, offers broad advice that influences Harriet's decision but is still based on Harriet's feelings of doubt. Emma is not aggressive; instead, she emphasizes the need of listening to her own doubts. By responding, **"If a woman doubts as to whether she should accept a man or not she certainly ought to refuse him,"** Emma focuses her advice on Harriet's own uncertainties, so the final decision is based on Harriet's experiences or emotions rather than Emma's desires. This demonstrates that Harriet, the listener, is at the center of the decision.

Speaker - Based Conditions

Picture 3

Mr. Woodhouse:
"Emma, you should not make matches and foretell things. Whatever you say always comes to pass. You must not make any more"
Emma:
"I promise you to make none for myself, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people. It is the greatest amusement in the world. And after such success, you know!"

(Duration: *04.42*)

From the conversation above, between Emma and her father, Emma employs speaker - based conditions strategies according to Trosborg's theory. Emma was confident in her matchmaking abilities, having previously been successful, and saw no reason to give up simply because her father was concerned. When Mr. Woodhouse asks Emma to quit putting people up, she agrees only to not set herself up. Emma's response: **"I promise you to make none for myself, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people. It is the greatest amusement in the world."** indicates an emphasis on her own desires rather than her father's request. She did, however, underline that she would continue to set people up for "amusement". Thus, despite her father's request, Emma's decision was motivated by her desire to continue to be involved in other people's affairs

Direct Strategies

Picture 4

Emma:
You are so disheveled!
Harriet:
I am always ill at Christmas.
Emma:
Get back in bed at once.

(Duration: *34.12*)

From the conversation above, between Emma and Harriet, Emma employs direct strategies according to Trosborg's theory. Emma was talking to Harriet, who appeared ill at Christmas. Emma felt the obligation to care for Harriet, therefore she gave Harriet a direct order to return to bed. Because of her higher social status, Emma feels no need to communicate with Harriet in an overly polite manner, so she gives a direct order Emma's request: **"Get back in bed at once"** is a clear request since Emma gives strict directions without adjustment or politeness. Emma does not use a soothing tone or suggestion, but rather offers direct instructions.

Social Status and Power Dynamics

Picture 5

(Duration: *02.21*)

Emma Woodhouse's request strategies differ greatly depending on the social status of the person she is approaching. When speaking to people of lower social status, such as her maid or Harriet Smith.. Emma frequently makes direct requests to demonstrate her authority and control. For example, in a moment where Emma instructs her maid to cut flowers, she says, **"Not that one! The next."** She demonstrated her position of authority without employing courtesy cues. This straightforward style is usual when Emma speaks to those she considers beneath her.

Picture 6

(Duration: *46.21*)

In another example, when Harriet, who is infatuated with Mr. Elton, passionately reads an excerpt from one of his sermons, Emma, becoming agitated, interrupts her with an abrupt and powerful statement: **"Enough about Mr. Elton!"**. This conversation demonstrates Emma's directness and lack of politeness when addressing Harriet, a person of lesser social standing.

Picture 7

(Duration: *22.12*)

In contrast, when Emma interacts with someone of equal or greater social status, such as Frank Churchill or Mr. Elton, she becomes more indirect and polite. For example, When Emma, Harriet, and Mr. Elton are together, Mr. Elton admires Emma's collection of unfinished sketches. Emma quietly redirects the focus away from herself and toward Harriet by making a recommendation about her portrait. Her statement, **"What an exquisite possession a good picture of her would be!"** is an indirect request. Instead of explicitly requesting Mr. Elton to sketch Harriet, she frames the request as a compliment. This demonstrates Emma's ability to persuade without being overly direct or forceful, while keeping the etiquette anticipated in interactions with someone of Mr. Elton's status.

Picture 8

(Duration: *1.25.11*)

In another example, when Emma invites Frank Churchill to the picnic, her statement **"We are going to Box Hill tomorrow. It is not the Grand Tour, but it will be something for a young man so much in want of change."** is an indirect request. She frames the invitation lightly, without immediately commanding him to attend the event. She delicately urges Frank to attend by framing it as something that could benefit him, rather than forcing him to.

The Functions of the Request Strategies

Emma Woodhouse's request strategies in Emma (2020) serve multiple purposes, representing her social status, relationships, and character growth throughout the film. Firstly, Emma used direct request strategies to assert her dominance and influence over individuals of lower class, such as Harriet or her maid. This direct approach allows her to preserve her position as a social superior, and her requests mirror the hierarchical structure of Regency-era society. Emma strengthens her dominant position and clearly expresses expectations by providing direct instructions without using polite indicators.

In contrast, When Emma interacts with people of higher or equal positions such as Mr. Elton or Frank Churchill, she uses indirect strategies to maintain social conventions and protect the "face" of her interlocutors. Emma can look polite and considerate by making indirect requests, which acknowledge her peers' autonomy while avoiding overt imposition. This is consistent with Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, which holds that indirect language can help maintain social harmony by reducing possible risks to the hearer's face. Emma's character grows, as she utilizes more indirect strategies, demonstrating her growing knowledge of how her words affect others.

Through these varied request strategies, Emma's language not only assists her in navigating complex social interactions, but also reflects her personal progress and adaptation to cultural expectations.

CONCLUSION

This study examined Emma Woodhouse's request strategies in the movie Emma (2020), using Trosborg's (1995) classification to determine how social context, relationships, and social status influence her language use. The study discovered that Emma frequently employs direct request strategies, particularly when dealing with people of lower status, such as Harriet or her maid. Emma's frequent use of direct strategies demonstrates her confidence in her social position and sense of authority within the Regency-era class hierarchy. Her clear directives are consistent with her privileged status, allowing her to express needs and expectations without using indirect or polite language.

When talking with someone of equal or greater status, such as Mr. Elton or Frank Churchill, Emma makes indirect and polite requests. This adjustment reflects her understanding of social hierarchy and the need of maintaining face in interactions with peers and superiors, which is

consistent with Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory. Finally, Emma's language reflects both her own development and the rigid social conventions of her time, in which requests function as both tools for accomplishing goals and markers of social and interpersonal dynamics. This study emphasizes the complicated relationship between language, and social status, in historical contexts.

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