

# LANGKAWI

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## VARIOUS SPEECH SEQUENCES OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN DOING REQUEST VIA SHORT MESSAGE SERVICE

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### Abstract

*Interaction, if not wisely considered, may be very risky. The unwise utterances may lead to misunderstanding. When this happens, pragmatic failure is of great possibility occur. This writing is aimed at describing the some variations of speech sequences in doing request and the reasons of using each variation. The data are the request uttered by English Department students Andalas University to their friends, their lecturer and vice versa at the campus. Data are collected by observational method, interviewing and note-taking technique. To analyze the data, pragmatic and referential identity method is used. The result of analysis is naratively and descriptively presented. Having been related to the concept of speech act of request (Revita, 2008) and context (Yule, 1986), it is found that there are four variations of speech sequence when English Department students do request. They are (a) (1) 1 in 1; (b) 2 in 1; (c) 3 in 1; and (d) multi acts in 1. The choice of these variations is basically based on several reasons, namely (i) social; (ii) psychological; (iii) cultural ; and (iv) religious aspect.*

*Keywords: Sequence, request, short message service*

### Abstrak

*Interaksi yang tidak dilakukan secara bijak berpotensi untuk bersifat riskan. Hal ini disebabkan tuturan yang disampaikan dapat memicu terjadinya kesalahpahaman. Jika hal demikian terjadi, kegagalan pragmatik dapat timbul. Oleh karena itu, dalam tulisan ini dipaparkan beberapa variasi kebahasaan yang terkait dengan sekuensi yang digunakan dalam melakukan permintaan via pesan singkat. Data merupakan tuturan permintaan via pesan singkat yang dilakukan oleh mahasiswa Jurusan Sastra Inggris Universitas Andalas kepada dosennya. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan metode simak dengan teknik interview dan catat. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode padan pragmatik dan referensial dengan mengacu kepada konsep yang dikemukakan Revita (2008) dan Yule (1986). Hasil analisis dipaparkan secara deskriptif-naratif. Dari hasil analisis ditemukan empat variasi sekuensi tutur yang digunakan mahasiswa Sastra Inggris dalam melakukan permintaan via pesan singkat, yakni (1) 1 in 1; (b) 2 in 1; (c) 3 in 1; dan (d) multi acts in 1. Ada empat faktor yang mendasari pilihan penggunaan variasi ini, yaitu aspek (1) sosial; (2) psikologi; (3) budaya; dan (4) agama.*

*Kata kunci: sekuensi, permintaan, pesan singkat*

## INTRODUCTION

As a means of communication, language can be used for several functions such as to express the feeling or to direct someone else to do something. These functions may be realized by several ways. The realization is commonly based on pragmatic reason. This is what is called as pragmatic variation of speech act.

Request as one of speech act is used to direct someone else to do something. Request is a kind of action in which the hearer reacts based on speaker's utterance. For example, when a mother wants her daughter to get up, she is of possibility to say as follows:

- (1) My dear Anind, wake up, please!
- (2) Anindya, my dear! It's time to wake up. It's already 6 o'clock.
- (3) Anindya! Anindya! My baby girl. Are you not going to pray Shubuh? The time is almost over.

These three utterances are for request. The mother wanted her daughter to wake up since that daughter must go to school. If she does not wake up, she will be late due to traffic jam. Mother may use several ways to do this-- syntactically by using imperative sentence (1), declarative (2) and interrogative (3). Furthermore, the sequences chosen are also various. The first is containing 1 utterance; the second has 3 utterances; and the third has 5 utterances. These choices have different reasons and different force. Based on the utterances, the daughter, theoretically, will react based on the meaning of the utterances. This daughter may react differently, she may refuse to wake up if she does not want to.

This is what we call as request. Request is an act of imposing the hearer to react based on the utterance of the speaker (Revita, 2008). The request is division of directive

utterance in which the hearer may obey or deny. In other words, in request, the hearer has no obligatory to follow or to do what the speaker wants, unlike command in which the hearer, whether likes or dislikes, must do what the speaker wants (Kreidler, 1998). Request is a bit similar with suggestion (another division of directive) where the hearer may also refuse. However, in request, the speaker takes profit but not in suggestion, the profit is for the hearer. The clearer explanation can be seen in the following table.

No	Types of Directive	Profit	Obligatory
1.	Command	Speaker and Hearer	V
2.	Request	Speaker	X
3.	Suggestion	Hearer	X

**Table 1. Directive and Its Features**

Request is closely related to hearer’s face. This is due to request imposes hearer to act. Hearer acts based on what the speaker says. When the speaker inappropriately choose the way to request, the hearer may be shy or get insulted. So, request must be carefully done.

One way to carefully do request is by using the proper and correct strategy--sequence. Sequence means the order of the utterance to come to the request it self. According to Novalinda and Revita (2012), in doing request there are four sequences used by young Minangkabau generation. They are:

1. 2 in 1 Sequence. This sequence uses two strategies in which one of them is the content of request. The content of the request may come before of after supporting utterance. Essentially, no difference between the request of which the supporting sentence comes previously or finally. This position, however, gives a little bit influence toward the focus of all utterances.

2. 3 in 1 Sequence. This kind of sequence contains three chronological order of request. The content of the request may positionize at the beginning, the middle, or at the end.
3. 4 in 1 Sequence. This kind of sequence uses four kinds of strategies in doing request.
4. Multi in 1 Sequence. The request done by this kind of strategy is structured by more than four strategies. This kind is rarely found, otherwise in certain context, like the possibility to fulfill the request.

These kinds of strategies let people choose what strategy they like. The foundation of choosing certain strategy is due to several reasons. Revita (2010) divides some aspects influencing the choice of the strategy in interaction. They are:

(1) The Characters of the Speaker

Every individual has their own characteristics. Some are patient and some others are temperamental. These characteristics may sometimes be reflected from the way they speak or from the strategy they choose in communication

(2) The Competence of the Speaker

Knowledge is may influence someone in speaking. Knowledge is of relatedness to linguistic repertoire. The larger one's linguistic repertoire, the better their knowledge in speaking. This statement is in line with several choices of ways in communication. Those who know more will speak properly in proper situation.

(3) The Psychological Aspect of the Speaker

The psychological condition of the speaker can also be seen from the way they speak. When someone is in anger, the language tend to be rude or the suprasegmental aspects, like intonation or dynamicity is unstable.

#### (4) The Relationship among the Participants

The relationship between the participants much more influence their language in various interaction. Two close friends will speak differently from two people who just met. This is in line with whether their relation is close or not.

Every community has own way of communicating. This way is categorized unique since this makes them different from others. This uniqueness may reflect their identity.

English Department students have their way of delivering their willingness and intention. Ideally, they try to be carefully save ones' face. This is due to the politeness aspects are often integrated in any courses given to them. This can be seen from the sometimes implicitness preference and metaphorical utterances in communication. Mostly, English Department students try to speak as polite as possible. Even when the utterances are uttered to the older and more respectful like their lecturer. They prefer not to use direct and literal utterances. For them, indirect and non-literal ones are preferable and comfortable. Perhaps, this is influenced by their cultural background as the eastern whose community is concerned more for social consideration.

English Department students are commonly led to learn and mirror form any phenomenon of life, like the place they live and community they belong to. From this, they may think and rethink before saying something.

In communication, English Department students are quite often using request. Even the request is commonly done via media, like mobile phone. The facilities are provided easily and cheaply by this mobile phone. For example is short message service. Therefore, request via short message is preferred to communicate.

Ironically, that request may potentially threaten one's face even when it is done via short message service is sometimes ignored. If request is not carefully done, the hearer may react negatively or get insulted. Even when the request is addressed to the lecturer. The speaker may be in difficult situation and regarded impolite. This can bring about the disharmony among the participants of interaction.

Based on the above phenomena, the writer is of great interest to describe the way English department students do request, from the sequence used. In this paper, there are two main problems analyzed. They are (1) what are the speech sequences of request used by English Department students and (2) what are the reasons of choosing certain sequence to request.

## **METHOD**

The research is conducted at Andalas University, Kampus Limau Manis Padang. The data are any request utterances addressed by English Department students to their friend and their lecturers and vice versa in Andalas University campus. Data are collected by observational method, non-participatory and participatory, note-taking, recording, and interviewing technique (Sudaryanto, 1993). The data analysis is done by identity method correlated with theory proposed by Revita (2008), and Yule (1996). The result of analysis is descriptively presented.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

Sequence is synonymous with the order. In doing request, English Department students use various sequences or orders-- one way, two ways, or three ways. This can be seen in the below explanation.

**A. 2 in 1 Sequence**

2 in 1 sequence means that there are two utterances, whether similar or different acts, which function to request. For example is as demonstrated in data (4) – (5) below.

(4) *Muthia, are you in hurry? I need you to talk about our research.*

(5) *You must come to our home on Sunday, at May, 26<sup>th</sup>. My mom says so. She really expects that you will be there in my brother's wedding*

Datum (4) occurs in a campus where the interaction involves two lecturers. The utterances are uttered by a senior student to his junior. The senior wants talk about the research they are conducting. To do that, the senior said *I need to talk about our research*. This utterance is a kind of request since the speaker wants the hearer to do something. The hearer, in this case, may refuse to do it. However, to anticipate this refusal, the speaker precedes his request by asking the availability of hearer's time *Are you in hurry?*

To do request, the speaker uses two acts, (1) asking information and (2) request itself. It means that the speaker applies 2 acts in 1 sequence--2 in 1 sequence--in which the request is preceded by asking information.

In datum (5), the participants involved are a student and a student. The dialog occurs at lecturer's room. The student's mother has close relationship with this lecturer that they long get acquaintance. The student's brother is going to have wedding party. To invite the lecturer, this student says, *You must come to our home on Sunday, at May,*

26<sup>th</sup>. This invitation is followed by further information that is the coming of the interlocutor.

Similar with datum (4), datum (5) has 2 in 1 sequence but different configuration. The first has previously informative utterance, meanwhile, the latest has finally informative utterance. This kind of various position-based sequences is due to the close relationship and different power of the participants.

### ***B. 3 in 1 Sequence***

Request can be delivered by using quite long sequence. This implies that the content of the request may be preceded or followed by other acts. Even, the request itself may locate at the beginning, middle, or final. The following data (6) – (8) are the examples.

(6) *Wow, your jeans are very good. It must be very expensive. **It, however, is very tight for you.***

(7) ***Can I go down town with you?** I must be in the hospital soon. No bus since 20 minutes ago.*

(8) *We got assignment from school to have writing about English Language. **May I borrow your book about it?** We have been looking for to the library but we don't find it.*

Datum (6) occurs in the campus. This is uttered by the lecturer to her student who is wearing quite tight jeans. The lecturer usually dislikes the female students wearing such tight jeans. Even, she makes the rule in her class that no tight cloth for every female students. Once, she meets a student with tight jeans on the way to the dean office. The lecturer suddenly praises how good and expensive the jeans that student has.

However, this praise is followed by statement that the jeans are very tight. This utterance is not only a statement but request not to wear such the jeans anymore.

To do request, the lecturer uses two utterances preceding. This is done due to the educational reason. Besides, the lecturer does not want to threaten her student's face. So many students are present in the speech event.

Different position in similar kind of sequence is used by speaker in datum (7). The content of request itself is done at the beginning of the conversation. The speaker is in hurry. He has to go to the hospital. He has waited for the bus for 20 minutes. No bus passed. Finally, when he saw one of his student driving the motorcycle, he stopped him. He directly asked him for the drive.

The speaker does not ask the hearer where to go anymore. He already knew that at the time, his student must go down town. It is not campus/school hour anymore. Time for students to go home.

The situation of being in hurry makes the speaker uses the content of the request preceding the dialog. Even though the speaker is more powerful than the hearer, he tries to use polite request. The speaker gives several reasons and explanations why he asks for the drive--(1) he must be soon in the hospital and (2) no bus after his 20 minute waiting.

In datum (8), the participants involved are two students. They are classmate but not so close. Once, the speaker got assignment to write about English Language. She has been looking for the libraries but no books related to that topic found. She, then, got information that the hearer has the book. She comes to hearer's boarding home to borrow the book.

In borrowing that book, the speaker said that *May I borrow your book about it?* This utterance is a kind of request in which the speaker wanted the hearer to lend her the book. The speaker does not directly come to the point of the request, but precedes the utterance by giving information that she got assignment from school. This request is also followed by other information that she got no related book in the library.

The use of request in such sequence is due to the common relation between the participants. Even though they are classmate, they are not too close. So, the speaker prefers this kind of sequence of request.

### C. 4 in 1 Sequence

4 in 1 sequence means that in doing request, there are four acts, whether similar or different, involved. One of these four is the content of request itself. For instance as being seen in the following data (9)-(10).

- (9) *What do I have to do? Roby, I am going to have thesis exam. I also have to pay my rent-house. You are the only one with whom I share. Please help me!*

In datum (9), there are two participants involved, they are friends. The speaker is in need of money. She is going to have thesis exam. Furthermore, she also must pay her rent-house. Much money she needs at the time. She does not get any money yet from her parents. She realizes that she has no enough money to pay this all.

The one who often helps her is her friend to whom she often shares problem. Her friend is rich enough. Whenever she needs help, her friend usually hands her hands. At that time, she really needs a lot money. She, then, comes to her friend's home and asks for help. She said that *Please help me!* This utterance is regarded request because there

is an imposition on hearer's response. Before she comes to the content of the request, the speaker gives information about her condition (1) *I am going to have thesis exam*; (2) *I have to pay my rent-house* and (3) *You are the only one with whom I share*. She even precedes the conversation by giving question *What do I have to do?* This question is not only question, but a kind of complaint or a trick to attract/ to touch hearer's humanity.

Even though the participants are close friend, since the topic is about money, the speaker tries to carefully deliver it. Money sometimes is quite sensitive thing in ones relationship and in certain culture/community. So, if the topic of the conversation is about money, participants must pay attention.

#### ***D. Multi in 1 Sequence***

Multi in 1 sequence means that in doing request, someone uses more than four utterances including the content the request itself. This kind of sequence is preferred due to several reasons. For example is to keep one from being insulted or the character of the speaker who likes speaking using very long sequence. The example of this sequence can be seen in (11) – (12) below.

(10) *I am sorry, Da X (Term to address brother or someone who is male and older than speaker). I come to your house early in the morning. Perhaps this bothers your time to read. But I cannot keep from the problem anymore. It is really painful. I get problem with Mom A. I don't know what happen with me. That's why I force myself to come here to tell you.*

(11) *Wow, what a beautiful rose that you have! Seemingly, you like planting the rose. So many colorful roses. Look, that rose is very distinctive. The color*

*makes me in love. It is in beautiful flowerpot. Is it possible to plant that rose in my home?*

In data (10) – (11), the request is done by using many utterances supporting the content of the request. Datum (10) uses eight utterances and datum (11) seven utterances.

Datum (10) is uttered by a male student to his senior in a library. The speaker has problem with his lecturer who is labeled by the students as the killer. He is very frightened and shocked. He cannot keep the pain anymore. He suddenly finds this senior to complain about. He comes to the library where his is reading there. He knows that this senior will dislike. Due to he cannot keep it anymore, he keeps finding and telling the senior about the problem. He expects that the senior may find the way out from the problem.

To minimize the discomfortability of the senior, the speaker precedes his request by many utterances (five) and several acts. It begins with apology and followed by giving information. The request is followed by two other utterances to assure the interlocutor that the speaker must see him because he cannot keep away from worry.

Different from (10), datum (11) involves a male student with a female one. At the time, the female student is planting the roses in the campus as one of the program for the green earth. The male student likes and is in love with the female. He, then, comes close to the girl. When he sees many kinds of colorful roses in the girl's hands, the man directly exclaims praising the beauty of the roses. He said that *Wow, what a beautiful rose that you have!* This exclamation is followed by other acts containing information and expression. At last, he said that *Is it possible to plant that rose in my home?*

This question is not a question. It bears a request. Flower here refers to the girl herself. What he means is the interlocutor. He has been in love for quite long time. He knows that he was still studying at that time. Now, he tries to express his heart and proposes to commit with the girl. To do this, that speaker uses figurative language 'flower' indicating that girl.

Furthermore, not only figurative language, the speaker also uses multi in 1 sequence to do his request. This is due to the aspect of politeness and his character of speaking indirectly.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that English Department students may use several ways-based on pragmatic sequence in doing request. The choice of these sequences are basically due to some contextual factors. In one sequence it is possible that more than one factors coming up to bring about the choice of certain pragmatic sequence. In other words, two or more contextual factors may come simultaneously. For example, in datum (10), the cultural and social aspect is the reason of using multi in 1 sequence.

Therefore, overall, these contextual factors stimulating the choice of certain pragmatic sequence are classified into four. They are:

*(1) Social factor*

This factor can be seen in datum (4), (8) and (10) where the speaker knows his position. Related to the aspect of language and power, the conversation addressed to interlocutor whose age is similar with the speaker (4). Meanwhile, in datum (10), the interlocutor is older than speaker. Thus, the speaker chooses the proper sequence of act, 2 in 1 and multi in 1.

In datum (8), even though the participants involved are as the same age, but the speaker prefers 3 in 1 sequence. This is due to their not being close each other.

*(2) Psychological factor*

When people is under pressure, they sometimes break the rule of speaking. However, it is quite often that those people are successfully control their language in doing request. This can be seen in datum (7) and (9) where the speaker is in hurry to the hospital and really in need in money. They choose 3 in 1 and 4 in 1 sequence.

*(3) Cultural factor*

English Department students tend to speak carefully, especially when it is addressed to the older and the lecturer. This can be seen in their choice of sequence in doing request. B For instance datum (10) where the speaker tries to show the respect to the hearer. This is due to the hearer is older than him. As the one who was born in society that considers much on the age of the interlocutor, speaker prefers the polite pragmatic sequence namely multi in 1. Datum (11) is also pragmatically cultural where the speaker uses figurative language to do request. Furthermore, in specific context, like datum (5), speaker uses 2 in 1 sequence. This is related to the purpose of the request that is to invite. In certain soceity, there are wise words *berita buruak bahambauan, berita baiak baimbauan* 'If the news are bad, the society will directly come without any invitation, like the death, but for good news, like wedding party, they must be invited litearly and directly, otherwise they will not come'. Based on this, speaker in datum (5) uses 2 in 1 sequence since he comes to invite the hearer for his brother's wedding party.

*(4) Religious factor*

English Department students and lecturers are mostly moslem. This is quite often implemented in the way the students speak. For instance as being seen in datum (6). The hearer is wearing the tight jeans which disobeys the Islam's rule of clothing. As the lecturer who has responsibility to educate her students, the speaker then reminds that student by requesting her not to wear such jeans anymore. The way she requests is quite polite in order the hearer is not shy and loose her image.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

'There are various ways of going to Rome'. These wise words imply that in communication, especially doing request, there are various sequences can be applied. Even the speaker has broad linguistic repertoire, there are many choices to elect proper request.

Having related to the phenomena of doing request by English Department students, the writer found that there are four sequences of English Department students in doing request namely (1) 2 in 1 sequence; (2) 3 in 1 sequence; (3) 4 in 1 sequence; and (4) multi in 1 sequence. In certain context, 1 in 1 sequence is also found. This happens when the time and the situation is very strict. For example, in a public transportation, the speaker can say to other passenger *Please shift!* or *Help!* when someone is being robbed.

These choices are based on four contextual factors. They are (1) social; (2) psychological; (3) cultural; and (4) religious factor.

The above conclusion is still based on interaction and communication via short message service. The sequence will be more various when the data are explored to oral communication. Even, this can also be seen from other kinds of speech act, like commissive, expressive, or assertive.

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