A Pragmatic Study of Peripheral Modification of Request in Selected Political Speeches


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دراسة تداولية للمحسنات اللفظية للطلب في خطابات سياسية مختارة

Abstract

Despite the range of request strategies that could be used in various situations with different people for various purposes and in various ranges of politeness, still people use different peripheral modifications to show more solidarity. These modifications are of different types and meanings. Their usage doesn't affect the request; on the contrary, they can be used to intensify or to mitigate the request.

Many studies have investigated the act of request, yet no one had studied request strategies and the peripheral modifications used in political speech which are usually spoken by people who hold higher status as well as power that enable them to speak without no need for modifications. This research aims to study these modifications (if there is any) in selected political speeches. It also aims to study the request strategies used in these speeches.

Theoretical Background:

In its broader sense pragmatics means "the study of the ability of the language users to pair sentences with context in which it would be appropriate" Levinson (1983:24). Hence, speakers (especially politicians) are usually aware of their choices of sentences, especially when it is a request. This
requires attention as request is a directive act that might threaten the face of
the addressee. The speaker should consider politeness principles to convey
what he wants appropriately. And to know what politeness means, several
linguists (Goffman(1967), Lakoff(1973), Grice(1975), Leech(1983)) attempt
to characterize aspects of politeness and to account for the rules that govern
the use of language in context. Being polite is a difficult business to learn
because it involves understanding not just the language but also the social and
cultural values of the community. The most impressive research is done by
Brown and Levinson(1987). It produces the deepest and comprehensive
account of perspectives of politeness in conversation analysis. They seek for
linguistic universals that explain politeness phenomenon across language
cultures, cultures and domains. Once such universals are identified and
associated with their conversational implication, they will have enormous
value for applied linguist. Brown and Levinson also point out that much of the
differences between the nominal meaning and implications of an expression
can be explained in the light of politeness theory.

Like the cooperative principles, politeness principles might be formulated
as a number of maxims that people should follow in addressing others.
Lakoff(1973) presents these maxims:

- Don't impose.
- Give options.
- Make your receiver feel good.

Yule(1996) on the other hand, formulates these maxims as:

- Being tactful.
- Being generous.
- Being modest.
- Being sympathetic.

**Request Strategies:**

Trosborg(1995:187) defines request as " an illocutionary act whereby a
speaker (requester) conveys to a hearer (requestee) that s/he wants the
requestee to perform an act, which is for the benefit of the speaker". 
Considering Searle's classification of illocutionary acts (i.e., representatives, directives, expressives, commissives and declarations), researchers let requests fall under the second category, that of directives. For him a request is regarded as "an attempt to get the hearer to do an act which speaker wants the hearer to do, and which is not obvious that the hearer will do in the normal course of event or of the hearer's own record" (Searle, 1969: 66). Green (1975: 121), on the other hand, defines request as "the method used in polite society for getting someone to do something" and he proceeds to say "the utterer of a request is someone who has or is acting as if he has no authority or power to compel compliance". So, it is clear that in request, the requester doesn't enjoy any kind of authority or power over the hearer. He just wants to be more polite. A request can be uttered in a direct or indirect way. The direct way can be used to communicate the literal meaning that the word expresses, i.e.; the focus is on the direct relationship between the form and function. Indirect ways, however, are concerned with a different type of meaning, the meaning which varies from the apparent surface meaning. In this way, the form and the function are not related directly. Most of the time, what we mean is actually not in the words themselves, but in the meaning implied" (Cutting, 2008: 16). In this research, we are most concerned with the indirect way rather than the direct one.

As for the strategies of request, there are nine strategy types that could be used to make requests. Blum-Kulka (1989: 18) mentions them as follows;

1. Mood drivable: utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals the illocutionary force (e.g, 'Leave me alone.', 'Clean up that mess.').

2. Perfomatives: utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named (e.g, 'I am asking you to clean up the mess.').

3. Hedged Performatives: utterances in which the naming of the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions (e.g, 'I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier the scheduled.').

4. Obligation statements: utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act (e.g,'You'll have to move that car.').

5. Want statements: utterances which state the speaker's desire that the hearer carries out the act(e.g,'I really want you to stop bothering me.').

6. Suggestory formulae: utterances which contain suggestions to do X (e.g,'How about cleaning up?').
7. Query preparatory utterances containing references to preparatory conditions (e.g., ability, willingness) as conventionalized in any specific language (e.g., 'Could you clean up the kitchen, please?' 'Would you mind moving your car?').

8. Strong hints: utterances containing partial reference to object elements needed for the implementation of the act (e.g., 'You have left the kitchen in a right mess.').

9. Mild hints: utterances that make no reference to the request proper (or any of its elements) but are interpretable as requests by context (e.g., 'I am a nun!' in response to a persistent hassler).

These nine strategies are then compiled by Blum-Kulka and House into three categories. They pull together the most direct request strategies (called impositive) and combined 6 and 7 and categorize them as conventionally indirect requests. The two types of hints are categorized as one strategy called "hints".

Now it is important to say that an utterance should consist of certain conditions to be considered as a request and these conditions are known as

**The Happiness Conditions of Request:**

Searle (1969:66) suggests the following conditions of request:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of condition</th>
<th>The formulation of the condition in the request case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. propositional content</td>
<td>The speaker 'S' predicates a future act 'A' of the hearer 'H'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. preparatory</td>
<td>1. 'S' assumes 'H' can do 'A'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'A' without being asked.</td>
<td>2. it is not obvious that 'H' would do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sincerity</td>
<td>'S' wants 'H' to do 'A'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. essential to get 'H' to do 'A'.</td>
<td>The utterance counts as an attempt by 'S'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gordon and Lakoff's (1975:90) felicity conditions of request are rather similar to those of Searle. For them, the felicity conditions of requests are:

1. Speaker has a reason for wanting the request done.
2. Speaker assumes that the hearer can do it.
3. Speaker assumes that the hearer would be willing to do it.
4. Speaker assumes that the hearer wouldn't do it otherwise.

Allan, on the other hand, seems to have a rather different view, for him the felicity conditions of requests are:

1. Preparatory condition: S has a reason to believe that H can (or might be able to) do A.
2. Sincerity condition: S wants the deed D done specifically by H.
3. Illocutionary intention: S reflexively intends the utterance U to be recognized as a reason for H to agree to do A.

These conditions show clearly that the important thing in request is doing the action without obliging the hearer, on the contrary, the speaker shows his desire trying not to impose himself over the hearer or doing any offense. Making the requester try to keep his face as well as the requestee's face from threatening and this is what is known as "face want".

**Request and Face Want:**

A participant in a conversation usually tries to save their face, i.e., each participant tries to protect his/her face. "Face" is defined as "the public self image that every member of society wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson, 1978:66). Also, they make a general distinction between negative and positive face. A person's negative face might be defined as "the need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others". While a person's positive face can be defined as "the need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others"( Yule,1996:61-62).
However, an illocutionary act of impositive nature can threaten the face. A face threatening act is "any act that puts face wants at risk" (Verschueren, 1999:45). Request, for example, is a face-threatening act. By making a request, the speaker impinges on the hearer's claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. What might minimize the imposition or the threatening is the variety of direct and indirect way for making a request. The speaker might prefer the indirect strategy of request rather than the direct one to ensure cooperative reaction of the requestee.

Trosborg (1995) claims that requests consist of two parts; the head act or the core request and the peripheral elements which are additional elements that might follow or precede the head act. These modifications are optional and they can be subtracted from the utterances without changing the directive force of the utterance. Some of these modifications are grammatical modifications such as adverbs, but others have different grammatical forms such as changing the mood, tense or aspect of the verb. The ability to use these modifications appropriately shows the pragmatic proficiency of their users. Using these devices with the directive face threatening act varies the politeness degree involved in such act. Also they help to decrease or intensify the degree of imposition of the request. This ability requires that the speaker should have a linguistic as well as socio-cultural knowledge of these devices and their correct way of usage in the appropriate situations. This knowledge allows the speaker to select the suitable choice that is suitable for the situation, the relationship between the participants as well as the contextual constraints involved in that situation (Leech:1983; Thomas:1983).

Brown and Yule (1983) mention the main contextual factors that affect the use of peripheral modifications. These are; first, power which refer to the relative power of the speaker with reference to the hearer (teacher- student, boss- employee). Thus, people who hold a lower power need to use such mitigations to soften the impositive nature of the request when dealing with people of a higher power. Second, social distance which refers to the degree of familiarity between interlocutors (friends/ strangers). So, friends might not need such modifications while strangers need them to successfully accomplish the act. Third, ranking of imposition which depends on the type of imposition the speaker is forcing upon the hearer. Hence, the requester who ask for an expensive thing or something hard to be done uses such modifiers to get his request done unlike the speaker who needs something easy or something cheap.
In addition to this, the transactional and interactional purposes of interaction affect on the use of these modifiers. Therefore, if the aim behind the speech is to transmit information as when a teacher direct his orders to his students in a lecture, or a boss when directing his employees, they don't need to use these modifiers. On the contrary, when the purpose of interaction is interactional i.e, maintaining relationships, this makes the speaker indulge in seeking for these modifiers. Peripheral modifications can be divided into two types: internal and external modifications. The former type is achieved through devices within the same head act while the latter are localized not within its immediate context. In neither case do the modifications affect the level of directness of the act nor do they alter its propositional content. External modifications are additional expressions whose function is merely to support the request proper so as to modify its illocutionary force by mitigating or aggravating it.

**Peripheral Modifications:**

**Internal modifications:**

According to Blum-kulka, *etal.* (1989:60) internal modifications are classified into downgrader for softening the request, upgrader for intensifying coerciveness of request.

**Downgraders:**

1. Syntactic downgraders: these are syntactic expressions used to modify the request by making it of less impositive force (Blumkulka, et.al., 1989 281). There are various syntactic downgraders that can be used for this purpose. These are:

   a. question which is considered more polite than statement. Brown and Levinson (1987:146) suggest that asking someone to do something presupposes that he can and is willing to do it, e.g.,
   
   Can you hand me the paper?

   b. past tense/ negation: whether simple or progressive, past tense with /or without negation make the request more possible to be fulfilled. Expressions like *could, couldn't, I wandered etc.* are good examples.

   Could(not) you hand me the paper?
c. tag question: one of the widely used forms of mitigations is the use of tag questions. Using them lessen the impact of directness of the requests, e.g.,

Hand me the paper, will you?

d. conditional clause: another mitigator that can be used to distance the request further from reality, e.g.,

I would like to borrow some of your records if you don't mind lending me them.

e. embedding: the request can be embedded to be less direct. It can be embedded within expression of hope, delight, thanks, etc., within an expressing tentativeness, or within an expression of personal opinion (subjective). The embedding is usually included within a conditional clause, e.g.,

I hope you'll be able to give me a hand. (hope)

I'd be so happy if you'd give me a hand. (delight)

I'd really appreciate it if you'd be able to give me a hand. (appreciative)

I wonder if you would be able to give me a hand. (tentative)

I think that maybe you wouldn't mind giving me a hand. (subjective)

f. ing-form: using the continuous aspect emphasizes the meaning expressed by the embedded clause, e.g.,

I was wondering if you'd give me a hand.

g. modals: certain modals can soften the request, e.g.,

Might not I come with you?

2. Lexical /phrasal downgraders: these are Lexical expressions used to modify the request (Blumkulka et al., 1989 283).

a. politeness marker: words like 'please' 'kind' are usually used to sweeten the illocutionary force of the request, e.g.,

Hand me the paper please!

Would you be kind as to send us your catalogue?
Also, "please" has an emphatic function when used to seek for cooperative behavior from the addressee, e.g.,

Richard! stop driving, please! (Leech: 2014: 162)

One more function of "please" is reinforcing the illocutionary force of the speaker's utterance, e.g.,

Oh! why don't you shut up please! (Leech: 2014: 162)

b. consultative device: the addressee might be consulted in an attempt to soften the request, e.g.,

Maybe you wouldn't mind helping me.

3. Downtoner: these are words (usually adverbs) used to mitigate the directive force of the request. Modal adverbs like perhaps, simply, possibly, rather, just in the sense of only, e.g.,

Perhaps you could hand me the paper.

4. Understatement: which can be used to suggest that the cost will be small to the requestee if he do the action, e.g.,

Can you speak up a bit please.

Leech (2014: 161) labeled them as diminishers (belittlers) and he puts them with downtoners.

He (Ibid) also proposes that adjectives like tiny, wee, teeny-weeny, as well as verbs and nouns associated with smallness can also be used to fulfill the same function, e.g.,

Will you pop and get some chip if I get some money.

Can I have a word with you?

Can I have a tiny sip, please?

5. Hedge: the speaker can use hedges to lessen the impact of the request. Certain expression such as may I ask, could I ask, may I beg etc., are good examples, e.g.,

May I ask all those in favor, please to show their hands those against. (Leech: 2014: 165)
6. Hesitators: if the speaker hesitates before uttering the request, this signals that he has certain qualms about asking the request, e.g.,

I er, erm. er wonder if you'd er . . hand me the paper.

7. Interpersonal marker: some expressions such as you know, you see, I mean (cajolers) are used to maintain relationship and to attract the hearer's attention, interest, understanding etc. Other expressions that are called appealers such as okay, right can also be used for the same purpose, e.g.,

You wouldn't mind help me, I mean, would you?

Could you do that for me, okay!

**Upgraders:** unlike the downgraders that tone down the impact of the request, upgraders have opposite function which is to increase the impact of the utterance on the hearer. These are,

1. Adverbial intensifier: intensifiers such as really, terribly, very, quite, so, etc, intensify the request or the adjective involved within the request, e.g.,

You really must come and see me.

I'd be terribly grateful if you'd help me out.

2. Do-construction: the emphatic function of do is another modifier, e.g.,

Oh, really, do come and see us, we'd be so pleased.

3. Commitment upgraders: the speaker commitment towards the request can be stated throughout the use of certain expression such as I'm certain, it's obvious, surely, positively, etc., e.g.,

You surely wouldn't mind helping me.

4. Lexical intensification: the choice of the lexical words used by the speaker are indication of his attitude whether positive or negative, e.g.,

You would be such a darling if you help me just this once.
**External modifications:**

These are additional statements that are used to support the request. Dissimilar to the internal modifiers that are used within the head act or actual request, external modifiers precede or follow the actual requests. External modifiers can be classified according to Blum-kulka, et al.(1989).

1. **Grounder:** phrases that allow the speaker to give reasons, explanations or justifications for his requestee, e.g.,

   I would like an assignment extension *because I couldn't deal with the typing time.*

2. **Disarmer:** a phrase with which "a speaker tries to remove any potential objections the hearer might raise upon being confronted with the request"(Blum-kulka, et al., 1989:287). For example,

   *I know that this assignment is important but could you......?*

3. **Preparator:** phrases that prepare the hearer for the request, e.g.,

   *I really need a favor.............*

4. **Getting a precommitment:** phrases that check on the potential refusal by trying to get the hearer to commit before uttering the act, e.g.,

   *Could you do me a favor .......?*

5. **Promise:** the speaker might make a promise to be fulfilled upon the completion of the action, e.g.,

   Could you give me an extension ?*I promise I'll have it ready by tomorrow.*

6. **Imposition minimiser:** phrases added to minimize the imposition of the request on the hearer, e.g.,

   I would like to ask for extension. *Just for a few days.*

7. **Apology:** the speaker uses phrases by which he apologizes from the hearer for the imposition of the request, e.g.,

   *I'm very sorry* but I need an extension on this project.

8. **Discourse orientation move:** phrases that have an orientation functions but it is not necessary that they have mitigation functions, e.g.,
Data Collections:

Two political speeches were to be examined. One of them is Bush's speech when he was the president of USA and the other one is Obama's as he is the current president. The topic of both speeches is very closed which is to counterterrorism. They are chosen on purposes. First, to see how people of the higher power and social rank request the people. In other words, which request strategy is used widely. Second, to see what are the peripheral modifications they use. Finally, the researchers will try to see whether there is a difference in the use of these strategies and modifications between the two presidents as they belong to two different parties (republican and democratic).

Data Analysis:

A variety of request strategies have been used in these speeches but, what was so widely used is 'obligation'. In Obama's speech, the modals 'have to', 'must' and 'need' are used to intensify the obligation and they are 'have to' and 'must' which are used more than 'need', e.g.,

First, we must remain unwavering in our fight against terrorist organizations.

Second, we have to confront the warped ideologies espoused by terrorist like al-Qaeda and ISIL.....

We need to do more to help lift up voices of tolerance and peace, especially online.

The use of strong hints is obvious in this speech. He uses hints that show his opinion towards the act, e.g.,

The Syrian civil war will only end when there is an inclusive political transition and government that serves Syrians of all ethnicities and religions.
And given the existing news cycle, that can give a very distorted impression.

Obama's references to the desired requests are very clear in these sentences which are the existence of an inclusive political transaction in the first example and not to think that Muslims are those people we are told about from the news. In the first example, he accuses the Syrian government of being the cause of war that will not end if they will stay. The second example is an accusation to the nations that they are not objective in their judging others and they should stop that.

Want statements also used. The sentences shows his desire toward the request to be fulfilled, e.g.,

Today, I want to suggest some areas where I believe we can focus on as government.

Another strategy used in this speech is mood derivable in which the verb indicates the illocutionary act, e.g.,

So let's share the truth of our faiths with each other.

Performative strategy have been used once, e.g.,

I urge your nations to join us in this urgent work.

Similarly, Bush varies in his use of request strategies and he has used the same strategies that Obama uses no more no less. The only difference is in the number of the sentences that are considered as requests. Both Obama and Bush concentrate on the use of obligations and strong hints more than other strategies. The other two strategies namely: performative and want statement have been used once and the want statement have been used twice in both speeches, e.g.,

We must help Iraq defeat those who threaten its future and also threaten ours.

He also concentrates on the use of strong hints, e.g.,

To the Iraqi's neighbors who seek peace: The violent extremists who target Iraq are also targeting you.
Here is a hint for the Iraqi's neighbors in order not to stay watching what is happening in Iraq because it will not stop there. They should secure their country.

The success of a free Iraq matters to every civilized nation.

Another hint to nations to stand with Iraq in its fight against terrorists because this will keep their countries save as terrorists know no limits.

Bush also refers to his desire that all nations should help revitalize Iraq's economy through the use of want statement, e.g.,

We encourage all nations to help, by implementing the International Compact to revitalize Iraq's economy.

Performative is exemplified in the following example, e.g.,

I ask you to join me in supporting the recommendations General Petraeus has made and the troop levels he has asked for.

Finally, the last strategy is mood derivable, e.g.,

Let us come together on a policy of strength in the Middle East.

Throughout this analysis, it seems clear that both Obama and Bush depend on the direct strategies of request more than the indirect ones. They concentrate on the use of obligations depending on the social rank and power they have. Their usage of the strong hints do not indicate that they are trying to mitigate (not all the time) as the use of hints "is not particularly polite, and to avoid face threat they often need to be embellished with some show of reluctance to bother the other person" (Leech, 2014:158). Or, "they can be impolite, in accusing O of some misdemeanor (contra approbation maxim) or they can more indirectly imply an accusation" (Leech, 2014:158).

As for the use of peripheral modifications, Bush deals with somehow various types of them rather than Obama does. In his speech, Obama uses different types of external modifications, namely; discourse orientation move, disarmer, grounder and imposition minimizer, e.g.,

To the Iraqi's neighbors who seek peace: The violent extremists who target Iraq are also targeting you. (discourse orientation move)
Realizing this vision will be difficult, *but it is achievable.*

Our military commanders believe we can succeed. (disarmer)

*And for the safety of the future generations of Americans,* we must succeed. (grounder)

*And tonight our moral and strategic imperatives are one:* We must help Iraq defeat those who threaten its future and also threaten ours. (imposition minimizer)

The speech is not empty of the internal modifications. He uses different types of these modifications, e.g.,

Yet *ultimately,* the way forward depends on the ability of the Iraqis to maintain security gains. (adverbial intensifier)

*And it means* the efforts by Iran and Syria to undermine that government must end. (interpersonal marker)

*It is never too late* to deal a blow to al-Qaeda. (commitment upgrader)

The best way to secure your interest and protect your people is to stand with the people of Iraq. (lexical intensification)

Similarly, Obama's speech is not empty of these modifications but, he doesn't vary in his choices of the types of modifications in the same way Bush does. He uses the external modifications more than the internal ones. Those modifications are grounder and discourse orientation move, e.g.,

*Terrorists prey upon young impressionable minds.* So let's bring our youth together to promote understanding and cooperation. (grounder)

*And all of us,* regardless of our faith, have a responsibility to reject it. (discourse orientation move)

He also uses three types of internal modifications, namely; downtoner, interpersonal marker and embedding, e.g.,
What's most needed today, perhaps, are more dialogues within countries ...(downtoner)

Today, I want to suggest some areas where I believe we can focus on as government. (interpersonal marker)

So if we're serious about countering violent extremism, we have to get serious about confronting these economic grievances. (embedding/downgrader).
Conclusions

1. Depending on their higher social rank and their power both speakers use the direct strategies of request more than the indirect one.

2. In their requests, they depend highly on obligations rather than any other strategy. Also, the use of the pronoun 'we' shows their insistence in doing the requested act i.e., they are included in the fulfillment of the act.

3. Their use of the indirect strategy 'strong hint' is to some extent not for politeness purposes but as accusing most of the times.

4. Even though they have made a kind of variation in the use of request strategies but still, their highly used strategies are obligation and strong hints. Other strategies namely, performative and want statement have been used only once and mood derivable have been used twice in both speeches.

5. The use of peripheral modifications are not too many as compared with number of the used requests.

6. There is a clear tendency to use external modifiers more than the internal ones.

7. Discourse orientation move which is an external modifier is used four times in Bush's speech and two times in Obama's. These modifiers are used not as mitigators but as orientation factors.

8. The second type of modifier that is repeated a number of times is grounder. They precede their requests by a number of justifications.

9. Regarding the number of the requests, the number of the variety in the use of the request strategies and the number of the peripheral modifications used in both speeches, it seems very clear that Obama's imperative sense is much more strong than that of Bush. This might be due to the time of the speech and the situation for which the speech is prepared. The time and situation are much more dangerous at Obama's time than at that of Bush.

10. Although they hold the higher power and rank in the world, still both of them use some kinds of peripheral modifications. This is because they are addressing the presidents and leaders of nations.
References


### Appendix

**Table (1)**

Frequencies and percentages of request strategies, internal modifications and external modifications

*Obama's speech*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request Strategies</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mood drivable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performative</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Hedged performative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obligation statement</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Want statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggestory formulae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Query preparatory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong hint</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mild hint</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Modifications</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic downgraders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
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<td>Lexical/phrasal downgraders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtoner</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposition minimiser</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse orientation move</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix

#### Table (2)

Frequencies and percentages of request strategies, internal modifications and external modifications

**Bush’s speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request Strategies</th>
<th>Internal Modifications</th>
<th>External Modifications</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>0.24%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mild hint</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Syntactic downgraders | 0 | 0% |
| Lexical/phrasal downgraders | 1 | 0.12% |
| Downtoner            | 0 | 0%  |
| Understatement       | 0 | 0%  |
| Hedge                | 0 | 0%  |
| Hesitators           | 0 | 0%  |
| Interpersonal marker | 1 | 0.12% |
| Adverbial intensifier| 1 | 0.12% |
| Do- construction     | 0 | 0%  |
| Commitment upgraders | 1 | 0.12% |
| Lexical intensification | 0 | 0%   |
| Grounder             | 1 | 0.12% |
| Disarmer             | 2 | 0.24% |
| Preparator           | 0 | 0%  |
| Getting a precommitment | 0 | 0% |
| Promise              | 0 | 0%  |
| Imposition minimiser | 1 | 0.12% |
| Apology              | 0 | 0%  |
| Discourse orientation move | 4 | 0.48% |