

# Strategies Of Minangkabau Women To Request As Depicted In Novel ‘Arini Bias Rindu’

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**Abstract.** From the perspective of gender, women are generally expected to be more polite in speaking. Therefore, when these women make a request that will impose others, they absolutely select the appropriate strategy not just as a Minangkabau people but also as the women. That women must behave and speak politely is taught since childhood. Most parents quite often claimed that their daughters must speak and behave well because they are girls. Girls are not supposed to be like this but must be like that. The way the parents educate the children indirectly has built the concept of gender. Their daughters are distinguished differently from their sons since they were at an early age. Moreover, the rules are also applied in speaking and the way of speaking. The girls must be polite and speak tenderly but not THE sons. This situation occurs as the social regulation. It is obeyed and practiced by almost every family regardless of various backgrounds. Every single family tends to do this. This phenomenon will lead to when they are adults they will speak in accordance to their gender. One of them is the way how to make a request. A request is a kind of action that is asking someone else to do something. In the request, the hearers are supposed to act based on the instruction. Thus, the request must be carefully made so that what is being instructed will be fully obeyed. Some researches indicated that the request is of high possibility to threaten ones' face. Thus, some strategies can offer alternatives to requests. This writing is aimed at describing the strategy of Minangkabau women to request. Each strategy will have not only an impact on the hearers but also the speakers. There are some considerations for women to make and to choose the way of request. The data are taken from a best seller novel titled ‘Arini Bias Rindu’ written by Naya R. The novel talks about a woman who had to get married to her cousin (father's niece). Her husband did not treat her as a wife, but this woman could patiently face all those bad things. She could manage to get through all the trials she faced. Any utterances uttered by the female characters containing the request will be the data. The observational method with note-taking techniques was applied to take the data. An interview is also conducted with selected informants related to the position and roles of Minangkabau women in society. The analysis was related to the concept of the speech act of request and Minangkabau *kato nan ampek*. The result of the analysis is descriptively presented. Having analyzed the data, it is found that there are five strategies used by Minangkabau women in making requests in the novel. They are 1) giving alternatives, 2) asking, 3) informing, 4) questioning, and 5) offering. Informing is used more often than others. It implies that the implicitness of Minangkabau women in requesting is also in line with the concept proposed by Errington [1] and Revita [2] that Minangkabau people tend to speak indirectly.

**Keywords:** gender, Minangkabau women, request, speech strategy

## 1 Introduction

Man and woman are sometimes treated differently. It is due to the social phenomena where the society regards these two creatures are not similar. This perspective brings about the impetus of educating children based on gender. For example, a son can do certain things but not the daughter because they are not similar. Moreover, the daughters must behave and speak politely but not for the sons. Such kinds of different treatment created another way and feature of females when communicating.

Beeching [4] and Speer [6] stated that females tend to use different choices and frequencies of lexical items. Males seldom use the features. Even these features are in line with their position in society. It can be seen in the following utterances 1-2 how mother urges their daughters to behave as a society ruled.

1. *Awak padusi ndak buliah ngecek kareh-kareh. Anak padusi harus sopan.*  
'A girl may not speak hard. The girls must be polite.'
2. *Kalau jadi anak padusi tu karajonyo memang di rumah.*  
'Being a girl makes you stay at home because that is what a girl is supposed to.'

These utterances 1-2 are often uttered by mothers or the society to the girls when they look impolite or do something beyond the common thing. For example, the girls may not play football because it is only for boys. The girls cannot play with guns or kites cause it is only for boys. The girls may playthings girly toys; otherwise, they are regarded as strange. Such a way of mindset is found almost in every ethnicity, including Minangkabau.

Minangkabau people are identical with the way the society communicate, following the rule of speaking [7] called *kato nan ampek*. *Kato nan ampek* becomes the guidance for Minangkabau people to speak. Even though it does not specifically regulate the way people speak to, Minangkabau women are expected to speak politely in every situation [8], especially when requesting.

Requesting is defined as an action that asks someone to do something based on what we said [9]. The request is categorized as directive [10]. In a directive, the speaker steers the hearer to do. There is a process of imposing someone else in making a request. The request, therefore, must be politely dan carefully done. There must be some strategies implied in order for what is requested to be obeyed by the hearer. It can be seen in the following examples:

3. *Lamak bantuaknyo kue nan Faiz makan yo.*  
'Your cookies look yummy, don't they?'
4. *Dima Aqeela bali jilbab tu? Rancak bana kalau dipakai.*  
'Where did you buy that veil? It is very beautiful to wear.'

Literally, utterances 3 and 4 mean to praise. However, as it is related to the context, what the speakers intended might be requesting for the cookies and the veil. When the utterances were produced by the pregnant women, all the requests must be fulfilled. It is related to the belief that every request of pregnant Minangkabau women cannot be refused.

### Speech Act of Request

The request is categorized as the speech act [10]. A speech act is defined as an action performed via language [9], [11], [12]. When saying something, the speaker does not only deliver information or say something but also doing something.

The fundamental core or unit of speech act is an illocutionary act [4] among the three pillars of speech act [13], [14], locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the act of saying something, illocutionary act is the act of doing something, and perlocutionary act is the effect of the locutionary [15], [16]. Illocutionary is regarded as the foundation of the act because it is the core of the three acts. We can see the following utterances 5-6:

5. *Take a seat, please!*
6. *You have a very nice shirt but not for this event.*

Being analyzed from the three pillars of the speech act, the utterance 5-6 have locution *Take a seat, please!* and *You have a very nice shirt but not for this event.* What the speaker says literally is locution. However, what the speakers say can be different from what they mean. Utterance 5 can be easily understood that what the speaker means is asking the hearer to sit but not utterance 6, in which literally, the speaker praised how nice the shirt the hearer wore. What the speaker means is that she reminded or asked the hearer not to wear that shirt because it is not suitable for the event. Thus, what she means is totally different from what she said. As the hearer sit and change the appropriate cloth, it is categorized as the perlocutionary act.

Illocutionary act is divided into five taxonomies, namely assertive, expressive, commissive, declaration, and directive [10][4]. The request is part of a directive because what the hearers do is based on what the speakers want. This speech act is very quiet costly and risky since not all people like to be instructed. Even [2] claimed that the request is closely related to the potency of threatening one's face. When the request is not carefully done, the hearer may be insulted. Thus, the correct strategy needs to be constructed. Moreover, women as the creature that is urged to be polite in many aspects, especially in Minangkabau ethnic [2] will select the appropriate strategy to request.

This paper is aimed at describing the strategy of Minangkabau women in making the request. Women in Minangkabau are not only mothers for the children but for the tribe but also called as *limpapeh rumah gadang* 'Pillar of Minangkabau traditional house'. The role of Minangkabau women is significant since they are the ones to share the problem, to inform the news, and to ask for a suggestion. This important role must be in line with the way they speak, indicating wisdom.

### 3 Method

The data are taken from a novel titled *Arini Bias Rindu*. Naya R writes this novel which talks about a Minangkabau girl who got married to her cousin, son of her aunt (younger sister of her father). The girl tried to love her husband but not her husband. From time to time, she kept playing her role as a wife, but no response from her husband. Even after her father's death, her husband still kept behaving as usual, ignorance, being silent, or paying no attention. Then, she asked to continue her magister study at a university on Javanese island.

When staying at a distance, the husband realized that he could not live without her attentive wife. He looked for his wife, but he did not get her. Finally, after six months of leaving, she got back home because her mother-in-law got severe pain. She met her husband in the hospital. She felt nothing but not her husband. Seemingly, her husband has loved her very much. He regretted all he had done to his wife.

In the dialog involving the women characters in the novel, the participants still maintain and indicate the identity of Minangkabau women. The tradition and philosophy of Minangkabau people are still running. Therefore, any utterances containing the request became the data. Observational methods and note-taking techniques were used to collect the data. The analysis is done using the concept of the speech act of request and politeness by [17] [2]. The result of the analysis is narratively presented.

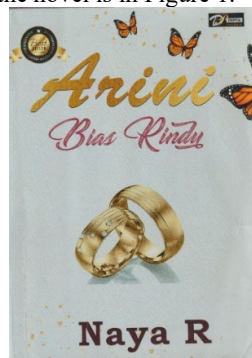
### 3 Result and Discussion

In making the request, there are five strategies used by Minangkabau women depicted in the novel. They are 1) giving alternatives, 2) asking, 3) informing, 4) questioning, and 5) offering. The occurrences of these strategies are illustrated in table 1.

**Table 1.** The Occurrences of the Request Strategies of Minangkabau Women's Utterances

| Num. | Utterances   | Strategy Used      |
|------|--|--------------------|
| 1    | <i>Maafkan Umi, Nak.</i>   | Asking             |
| 2    | <i>Tapi untuk kali ini, tolonglah jangan mempersulit keadaan, Nak.</i> | Asking             |
| 3    | <i>...Arini wuduk dulu sebentar ya, Tek..</i>                          | Informing          |
| 4    | <i>...Kenapa tidak kita coba saja untuk menemui Umi, Uda...</i>        | Offering           |
| 5    | <i>Baiklah. Tetapi tidak ada kan yang berubah dalam hubungan kita?</i> | Questioning        |
| 6    | <i>Uda harus memilih, aku atau dia.</i>                                | Giving alternative |
| 7    | <i>Arini ke kantin sebentar ya, Yah.</i>                               | Informing          |

The requests were uttered by Minangkabau women in a novel titled, 'Arini Bias Rindu' written by Naya R. The cover of the novel is in Figure 1.

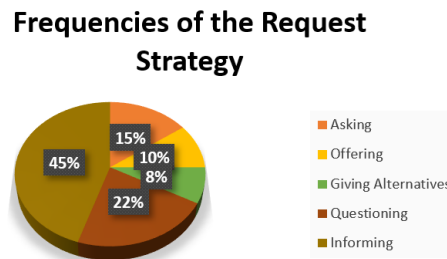


**Fig 1.** Cover of 'Arini Bias Rindu'

As one of the best seller novels among many novels she wrote, 'Arini Bias Rindu' reflected the character of Minangkabau women. That a Minangkabau woman should be well behaved and

speaking politely can be seen in the woman characters in this novel. To make a request, they used several strategies. Each strategy is used differently, based on the context. For example, when Arini asked for permission from her father to leave, she did it politely by saying, *Ndak apa-apa ayah Arini tinggal?* 'Is it fine to leave you for a while?' Arini did not want to go to the canteen for breakfast. She wanted to accompany her father staying in the hospital. Since her father forced her to do so, she hardly fulfilled her father's suggestion.

Asking, informing, offering, questioning, and giving alternatives are some strategies preferred by Minangkabau women to request in this novel. Among these five strategies, the frequencies of use vary, as being displayed in Figure 2.



**Fig 2.** The Frequencies of the Request Strategy

Informing became the most preferred strategy used by Minangkabau women in this novel, 45% followed by questioning (22%), asking (15%), and offering (10%). The least used strategy is giving an alternative, 8%. The giving alternative is used at a certain time only when one of the characters, Bela, asked her boyfriend to choose her or her boyfriend's wife. Bela had an affair with a man who had married already. Having asked to choose her or the wife, Bela requested using the alternative *Uda harus memilih, aku atau dia*.

The implementation of the strategy of informing in making the request is due to the characters of Minangkabau people who tend to speak indirectly. It is in line with [16] that Minangkabau women utilized implied meaning in communication. The phenomenon is also closely related to the concept of Minangkabau society as *Bundo Kanduang*. *Bundo Kanduang* is a wise woman to whom the society consults, to whom the society asks for permission, and the one that enlightens *nagari* (society). Thus, Minangkabau woman is expected to be careful in all aspects.

#### 4 Conclusion

A request is a kind of action where the hearers do action based on the speaker's instruction. The request should be carefully made because it is of great possibility to threaten one's face. Minangkabau women, therefore, selected appropriate strategies to request to minimize the effect. The Minangkabau woman characters in the novel titled 'Arini Bias Rindu' used five strategies to make the request. They are 1) giving alternatives, 2) asking, 3) informing, 4) questioning, and 5) offering.

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