

**A STUDY OF POLITENESS STRATEGY IN REFUSAL
USED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS IN MADIUN
REGENCY**

PUBLICATION MANUSCRIPT

**Submitted to
Postgraduate Program of Language Study
of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting
Magister Degree of Language Study of English**



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**POST-GRADUATE PROGRAM of LANGUAGE STUDY
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY of SURAKARTA
2014**

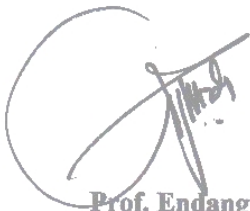
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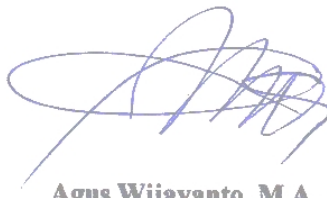
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The First Consultant,

The Second Consultant,

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Prof. Endang Fausiyati, M.Hum
NIK. 274

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, fluid, and somewhat abstract scribble of lines.

Agus Wijayanto, M.A., Ph.D
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A STUDY OF POLITENESS STRATEGY IN REFUSAL USED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS IN MADIUN REGENCY.

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Abstract

The study investigated politeness strategy in refusal conducted by the English teachers in Madiun regency relating to different social status levels and gender. The data were elicited, using discourse completion tasks (DCT), from 38 English teachers, 14 male and 24 female who teach in Junior high schools in Madiun regency. The collected data are analyzed by using Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategy. The refusal strategies were classified based on modified refusal taxonomy by Beebe *et al.* (1990).

The findings of the research are described in line with the problem statements as follows: first, The English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency applied two semantic formulae *indirect* and *direct strategies* in conjunction to adjunct identified by Beebe *et al.* (1990) across three refusals acts (invitations, offers and suggestions). The *indirect strategy* was the prominent refusal strategy especially in declining offers and suggestions where as the *direct strategy* was the highest strategy used in declining invitations. The second, the English teachers used all four politeness strategies (BOR, *positive politeness* (PP), NP, and OR) of Brown and Levinson (1987) across three refusals acts in more or less the same frequency, except in declining offers they did not use OR strategy. In declining invitations and suggestions, most of the English teachers applied PP strategy and the dominant type was PP 13 *Give reasons*. The dominant strategy in declining offers was BOR which most of them expressed *gratitude*. The third, the influence of social distance on politeness strategy used by the English teachers in declining invitations, offers, and suggestions was not significant. The most prevalent strategy in declining three acts of refusals across status levels was PP strategy. PP strategy mostly dominated the refusals to collocutors of equal and lower status but in refusals to collocutors of higher status, most of English teachers used NP strategy. The last, gender differences virtually has no influence on the choices of politeness strategy in three refusals acts across status levels. Both male and female English teachers conducted the same politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) in declining invitations, offers, and suggestions in more or less the same frequency. They used PP significantly the highest and OR was the least dominant strategy. Females used PP and NP little bit more often than males but males used BOR and OR little bit more often than females.

Keywords: Politeness Strategy, Refusal Strategy.

Introduction

Language has a major role in supporting the learners' success in learning and studying all fields of study and in the enlargement of learners' intellectual, social, and emotional. Language learning is supposed to help learners to know themselves, their culture, and the culture of others. The study of language is investigating grammar of language as well as utterances. The research of utterance is a level greater than how to form and pronounce a sentence. However, misinterpretations can still occur even though someone has a wide range of vocabulary and a sound knowledge of grammar if he cannot apply pragmatic competence properly.

According to Celce Murcia, language is communication. The goal of foreign language teaching is to develop communicative competence. A student can use language naturally if he has the capability to balance form (accuracy) and meaning (fluency). Therefore, it is very crucial for English teachers to master cross-culture and politeness and then teach them to the students so that the students can overcome all difficulties or culture shock in real-life communication.

According to Permendiknas RI No 22, 2006: 277-278, The goal of teaching and learning English at SMP/ MTs is that students can achieve the functional level to communicate orally and in writing to resolve everyday problems, whereas for SMA / MA is expected to reach the level of informational as they are prepared to continue their education into university/ college.

The English teachers are suggested to have pragmatic and Sociolinguistic competence and also instruct the students about what to say and how to say

politely in English in a certain situation. Ideally, teachers should expertly introduce polite or appropriate utterances in a way that language functions are focuses as well as the forms. However, the English teachers in Madiun Regency as non native speakers, who are judged “fluent” in a second language due to their mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of that language may still lack pragmatic and Sociolinguistic competence ; in other words, they may still have problem to produce language that is socially and culturally appropriate. Their ability to use English correctly in specific social situations in using language may still weak.

Refusals are a pragmatic breakdown which may certainly cause unintended offence and/or fail in communication. The actions of refusals can break the face of an interlocutor because they go opposing to the hopes of the hearer. There are some varieties in refusal, however, most the English teachers in Madiun regency, as non native speakers have limited variety in refusal. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study in pragmatic competence of English teachers in Madiun Regency, especially the politeness strategy used in refusal.

the objectives of this research are: to explain the refusal strategies, to explain the politeness strategy used in refusal, to explain the influence of social distance on politeness strategy used in refusal, and to explain the influence of gender differences on politeness strategy used in refusal.

Research Methodology

The data is politeness strategies in refusal used by the English teachers of Junior high school in Madiun regency, East Java. To know the English teachers’

politeness strategy in refusal, the researcher will use questionnaire as an instrument to collect the data. The questionnaire which made up of situations is analyzed to find out the kinds of politeness strategies in refusal used by the English teachers in Madiun Regency and also the influence of social distance and gender deferences on politeness strategy in refusal based on the classification of refusal strategies of Beebe *et al.* (1990) and Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategy.

The researcher will give the situations of refusal in finding the differences strategies used by means of a series of discourse completion tasks (DCTs), based on Beebe *et al.* (1990). The DCTs in this study contained nine scenarios. Each scenario represented one of three different status relationships (collocutor is of lower, equal, or higher status) and three initiating acts of refusals (invitation, offer, or suggestion). Three DCT scenarios required participants to decline those of higher, equal, and lower status' invitation, other three scenarios required the participants to refuse an offer to those of higher, equal, and lower status, and the last three scenarios involved declining to those of higher, equal, and lower status' suggestion.

DCT used in this research is Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT). According to Rose and Kasper (2001: 301), WDCT is a pragmatic instrument that requires the participants to read a written description of a situation and ask them to write what they would say in that situation. In this research, the respondents are asked to fill the questionnaire with opened-ended type on those some situations. Finally, the researcher analyzes the result of Discourse

Completion Tasks (questionnaire) carry out by male and female English teachers who teach in junior high school and compare them.

Result and Discussion

Refusal Strategies

Based on the research conducted, the English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency applied two semantic formulae *indirect* and *direct strategies* in conjunction to adjunct identified by Beebe *et al.* (1990) across three refusals acts (invitations, offers and suggestions) to collocutors of higher, equal and lower status. There were also *wish of good time (wig)* found in refusals to invitations and uncategorised strategy in refusals to suggestions. On the whole, the *indirect strategy* was used more frequently than the *direct* one and the dominant *indirect strategy* was *excuse*.

The *indirect strategy* was the prominent refusal strategy especially in declining offers and suggestions. To decline offers, participants used two semantic formulae *indirect strategies* and *direct strategies* which consisted of (ina) *inability* and (no) *no directly*. In *indirect strategies*, participants mostly used (*dis*) *dissuade* and (*alt*) *alternative* which were frequently in conjunctions to adjunct *gratitude* (*gra*) and *filler* (*fil*). The most common sequence order of *indirect strategies* was: *gra + dis ± alt*. The *indirect strategies* *excuse* (*exc*), *Promise of future acceptance* (*fut*), *apology* (*apo*), and *empathy* (*emp*) were also found but in low frequency. Table 1. below shows the summary of the sequence of semantic formula and adjuncts in direct and indirect strategies which were used in declining offers:

Table 1

The use of Refusal Strategy in Offers

DTC	Strategy		Sequential Order		
			1	2	3
DTC 1 Higher Status	Direct	No	No	Gratitude	Dissuade/± alternative
		Ina	Inability/filler	Gratitude	±alternative/±Inability
	Indirect		Gratitude	Dissuade	± Dissuade/ ±alternative/±empathy
			Gratitude	alternative	-
DTC 2 Equal Status	Direct	No	Gratitude	No	Future/ alternative
		Ina	No	Gratitude/Dissuade	±Alternative
	Indirect		Positive	Inability	Future
			Gratitude	Alternative/ Dissuade	±Alternative
DTC 3 lower Status	Direct	No	No	Gratitude	±Dissuade/±alternative
		Ina	Filler	Gratitude	Inability
	Indirect		Gratitude/ Filler/apology	Gratitude/±Dissuade	Dissuade/Gratitude/ Dissuade

The *indirect strategies* in declining suggestions had various sequence of semantic formula and adjust and the dominant strategy was *excuse*. Participants tended to put adjunct *gratitude* in the first slot and some others put *positive opinion*. Table 2 below shows the summary of the sequence of semantic formula and adjusts in *direct* and *indirect* strategies which were used in declining suggestions:

Table 2

The use of Refusal Strategy in Suggestions

DTC	Strategy		Sequential Order			
			1	2	3	4
DTC 1 Higher Status	Direct	No	No	Dissuade		-
		Inability	Inability	Apology/ Dissuade	Alternative	-
	Indirect		Gratitude	Dissuade/Alternative		-
			Gratitude	Dissuade	Alternative	-
DTC 2 Equal Status	Direct	No	Positive/Gratitude	No	-	-
		Inability	Positive	Apology	Inability	Excuse
	Indirect		Positive/Gratitude	Excuse/Future		-
			Positive	Excuse	Excuse/ Future	-
DTC 3	Direct	No	No	Gratitude	Dissuade/± Alternative	±Alternative

lower Status		Inability	Gratitude	Inability	-	-
	Indirect		Gratitude	Dissuade/Apology	-	-
			Positive	Dissuade	Gratitude	

The *direct strategy* was the highest strategy used in declining invitations. All *direct strategies* were *Inability* and there were not any *no directly* strategies. The sequence order of *direct strategies* in DTC1, 2, and 3 were more or less the same: *pos+ apo+ ina+ exc/±fut*. In conducting *direct refusal strategies* most participants used *Inability* in conjunction with *adjunct* and *indirect strategies*. Table 3 below shows the summary of the sequence of semantic formula and adjusts in direct and indirect strategies which were used in declining Invitations:

Table 3

The use of Refusal Strategy in Invitations

DTC	Strategy	Sequential Order				
		1	2	3	4	5
DTC 1 Higher Status	Direct	Positive	apology	Inability	± Excuse/ ± future	
		Positive	Inability	Excuse	± future	
	Indirect	Positive	Excuse	±Wishing	± future	
		Positive	Apology/ ±Gratitude	Excuse		
DTC 2 Equal Status	Direct	Positive	apology	Inability	Excuse/±Future	±Future
	Indirect	Positive	Excuse	±Wish good time/ ±apology	±Future	-
DTC 3 Lower Status	Direct	Positive	apology	Inability	Excuse/ ±Future	-
	Indirect	Positive	Excuse	± Wish good time	-	-
		Positive	apology	Excuse	-	-
		Apology	Excuse	-	-	-

The researcher found that there is similarity between Wijayanto's findings (2011) in his research which investigated similarities and differences between refusal strategies conducted by British native speakers of English (NSE) and Javanese learners of English (JLE) and Wijayanto's findings (2013) in his paper

which investigated refusal strategies conducted by British native speakers of English (NSE) and Javanese learners of English (JLE) with this research as this research continues Wijayanto's studies.

Politeness Strategies

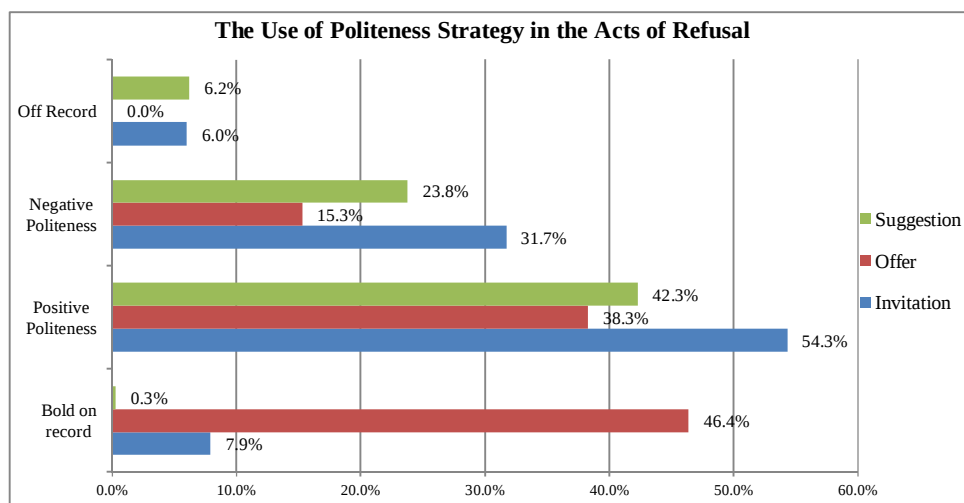
The English teachers used all four politeness strategies (BOR, PP, NP, and OR) of Brown and Levinson (1987) across three refusals acts in more or less the same frequency, except in declining offers. They did not use OR strategy in declining offers. The most prevailing strategy was PP and the least strategy was OR as none of the participants used it in declining offers. Many teachers used NP strategy but not as often as PP.

In declining invitations and suggestions across three status levels, most of the English teachers applied PP strategy and the dominant type was PP 13 *Give reasons*. Most PP strategies initiated the refusal to invitations which was dominated by PP1 *notice; attend to hearer*. The dominant strategy used in declining offers was BOR which most of them expressed *gratitude* and PP was used just little bit lower than BOR. PP strategy was the most dominant strategy used in declining suggestions, and the highest type was PP13.

In declining three refusal acts across status levels, the English teachers used more or less the same strategy of Brown and Levinson (1987), especially in refusals to collocutors of equal and lower status. The most prevalent strategy in declining three acts of refusals across status levels was *positive politeness* (PP) strategy. *Positive politeness* (PP) strategy dominated the refusals to collocutors of equal and lower status but the dominant type was different, most teachers tended

to use PP1 in refusals to collocutor of equal status and PP11 in refusals to collocutor of lower status. While in refusals to collocutors of higher status, most of English teachers used NP, especially NP3 *give deference*. From data above the researcher found that the influence of social distance on politeness strategy used by the English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency in declining invitations, offers, and suggestions was not significant. Chart 1 below shows the percentages of the use of politeness strategies in declining invitations, offers, and suggestions.

Chart 1

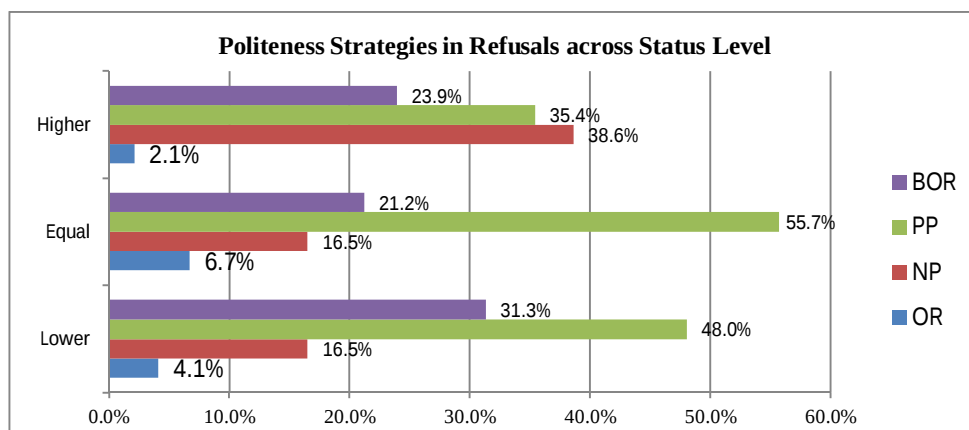


Politeness Strategies in Refusals across Status Level

In declining invitations across three status levels, PP was the most dominant strategy used by participants, especially to collocutor of equal status and OR strategy was the lowest one. The dominant type across three status levels was PP13, especially in declining the invitation to collocutors of higher status. The most dominant strategy used to decline offers across three status levels was BOR, especially to collocutors of equal and lower status and the lowest one was NP

strategy. The most dominant strategy used by participants in declining suggestions to a collocutor of higher status was NP strategy. While in declining suggestions to equal and lower status, most teachers tended to use PP strategy significantly more frequently than other strategies. Chart 2 below shows the percentage of politeness strategies in refusals used by the participants across status level (higher, equal, lower status).

Chart 2



Politeness Strategies in Refusals across Different Genders

In declining invitations, offers, and suggestions across different genders, male and female English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency conducted the same politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) in more or less the same frequency. Both male and female used PP significantly the highest and OR was the least dominant strategy. BOR and NP were also used by both of them in more or less the same frequency but not as often as PP. Females used PP and NP little bit more often than males but males used BOR and OR little bit more often than females.

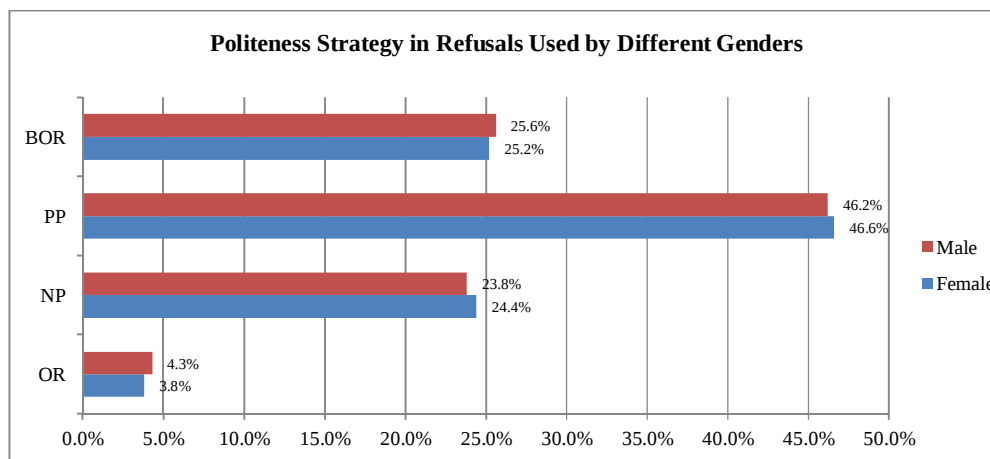
In declining the invitations, both males and females had the same tendency in the choices of politeness strategy and approximately the same in frequency. They mostly had a tendency to use PP strategy and some others used NP strategy. They rarely used BOR strategy and OR strategy. Females used PP and NP more frequently than males but males used BOR and OR more frequently. Females used 8 PP types and males used 7 PP types; and the most dominant type used by both of them was PP13.

Both males and females had the same tendency in refusing the offers,; they only used three politeness strategies, BOR, PP, and NP. BOR was used most frequently and PP was little bit less frequent than BOR. Most males and females used BOR preceding the refusal to offers and *gratitude* expression was mostly used to express BOR. NP was the least dominant strategy used by both of them and they did not use OR in declining offers. Females used BOR and PP more often than males but males used NP more frequently.

In declining suggestions, both males and females mostly tended to use PP strategy with more or less the same in percentage. Males used PP strategy more often than females. Females used eight types of PP which was dominated by PP11, while males used only five types which was dominated by PP13.

From the data the researcher found that gender differences virtually has no influence on the choices of politeness strategy in three refusals acts across status levels. Chart 3 bellow shows the percentage of politeness strategies in refusals used by the participants across different genders (males and females):

Chart 3



Conclusion

The researcher found the differences and the similarities of refusal strategies conducted by the English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency in three acts of refusals was not too significant. The English teachers applied two semantic formulae *indirect* and *direct strategies* in conjunction to adjunct identified by Beebe *et al.* (1990) across three refusals acts (invitations, offers and suggestions) to collocutors of higher, equal and lower status. There were also *wish of good time (wig)* found in refusals to invitations and uncategorised strategy in refusals to suggestions. On the whole, the *indirect strategy* was used more frequently than the *direct* one and the dominant *indirect strategy* was *excuse* but most of refusals strategies were initiated by adjunct *gratitude*. It ensures the researcher that most teachers refused the invitations, offers, and suggestions to three status levels indirectly to be polite, and to show appreciation most of refusals were initiated by adjunct *gratitude*. The *indirect strategy* was the prominent refusal strategy especially in declining offers and

suggestions. The *direct strategy* was the highest strategy used in declining invitations.

In declining invitations, the English teachers used a noticeably higher proportion of *direct* refusal strategies than *indirect* ones due to the influence of L1 (negative pragmatic transfer) or simply deviation/ difference (idiosyncratic usage). They did not use *no directly strategy* but they applied *inability* in all *direct strategies*. The most common sequence order of *direct strategies* was *pos+ apo+ ina+ exc/±fut*. *Wishing have a good time* (wig) was also used but in low frequency.

The English teachers used all four politeness strategies (BOR, PP, NP, and OR) of Brown and Levinson (1987) across three refusals acts in more or less the same frequency, except in declining offers. They did not use OR strategy in declining offers. The most prevailing strategy was PP and the least strategy was OR as none of the participants used it in declining offers. Many teachers used NP strategy but not as often as PP. In declining invitations and suggestions across three status levels, most of the English teachers applied PP strategy and the dominant type was PP 13 *Give reasons*. The dominant strategy in declining offers was BOR which most of them expressed *gratitude* and PP was used just little bit lower than BOR.

The English teachers used more or less the same strategy of Brown and Levinson (1987) in declining refusals across status levels, especially in refusals to collocutors of equal and lower status. The most prevalent strategy in declining three acts of refusals across status levels was *positive politeness* (PP) strategy.

Positive politeness (PP) strategy dominated the refusals to collocutors of equal and lower status but the dominant type was different, most teachers tended to use PP1 in refusals to collocutor of equal status and PP11 in refusals to collocutor of lower status. While in refusals to collocutors of higher status, most of English teachers used NP, especially NP3 *give deference*. From data above the researcher found that the influence of social distance on politeness strategy used by the English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency in declining invitations, offers, and suggestions was not significant.

In declining invitations, offers, and suggestions across different genders, male and female English teachers of junior high school in Madiun regency conducted the same politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987) in more or less the same frequency. Both male and female used PP significantly the highest and OR was the least dominant strategy. BOR and NP were also used by both of them in more or less the same frequency but not as often as PP. Females used PP and NP little bit more often than males but males used BOR and OR little bit more often than females. From the data the researcher found that gender differences virtually has no influence on the choices of politeness strategy in three refusals acts across status levels.

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