

**A PRAGMATIC STUDY: THE EXPRESSION OF REFUSAL FOUND IN
BRIDGERTON TV SERIES**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor
Degree of Education in English Department School Teacher Training and Education**

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Surakarta, 4 November 2021

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SEBUAH STUDI PRAGMATIS: EKSPRESI PENOLAKAN DITEMUKAN DALAM SERIAL TV BRIDGERTON.

Abstrak

Ekspresi penolakan merupakan lawan dari sebuah respon terhadap penerimaan dan sangat sensitif terhadap beberapa aspek. Penelitian ini bertujuan (1) mendeskripsikan jenis penolakan serta (2) mendeskripsikan strategi dari ekspresi penolakan yang terdapat pada seri Bridgerton. Jenis penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Data dari penelitian ini berisikan kutipan-kutipan ekspresi penolakan yang terdapat pada seri Bridgerton yang dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan tehnik dokumentasi. Teknik dokumentasi dilakukan dengan cara menonton serta membaca naskah film, mengaris bawahi percakapan yang mengandung penolakan dan kemudian menuliskannya. Penulis menggunakan teori dari Beebe dkk. serta Yang dalam menganalisisnya. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 9 subkategori dari tipe penolakan yang ditemukan dalam kategori penolakan dalam meminta, penolakan dalam penawaran, penolakan dalam menyarankan, serta penolakan dalam mengundang. Selain itu, terdapat 14 subkategori dari strategi penolakan yang ditemukan dalam strategi secara langsung, tidak langsung, serta tambahan. Penulis menemukan non performatif dalam startegi langsung, pernyataan penyesalan, harapan, penjelasan, pernyataan alternatif, mengatur penerimaan masa lalu atau masa depan, menyatakan prinsip, mengkritik permintaan/permohonan, ancaman/pernyataan negatif kepada pemohon, permintaan bantuan dan empati, kurangnya minat, dan penundaan dalam strategi tidak langsung. Dan yang terakhir, pengisi jeda dan rasa syukur atau penghargaan dalam strategi tambahan. Strategi tidak langsung adalah yang paling dominan, karena dapat melunakkan penolakan.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, tindak tutur, ekspresi penolakan, tipe penolakan, strategi penolakan

Abstract

Refusal expression is the opposite of a response to acceptance and is very sensitive to several aspects. This research aimed (1) to describe the types of refusal and (2) to describe the strategies of refusal expression found in the Bridgerton series. The type of this research is descriptive qualitative. The data from this research contained excerpts of refusal expressions in the Bridgerton series collected using documentation techniques. Documentation techniques are carried out by watching and reading manuscripts, underlining refusal conversations, and writing them down. The writer used the theory of Beebe et al and Yang in analyzing it. The results showed 9 subcategories of refusal types found in the refusal of requests, refusal of offers, refusal of suggestions, and refusal of invitations categories. In addition, there are 14 subcategories of refusal strategies found in the direct, indirect, and adjunct strategies. The writer found non-performative in direct strategies, statements of regret, wish, explanation, alternative statements, regulating past or future acceptance, statement of principle, threat/statement of negative consequences to the requester, criticize the request or requester, request for help, empathy, and assistance, lack of enthusiasm, and avoidance in the indirect strategies. And the last, pause filler and gratitude or appreciation in adjunct strategies. The indirect strategy is the most dominant, because it can soften the refusal.

Keywords: Pragmatics, speech acts, refusal expression, types of refusal, strategies of refusal

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the essential activities in human life. In the communication process, speakers will produce utterances to get changes or influences from listeners due to what they say. In communicating, what someone says may have a different meaning than what is said, and this is called a speech act (Austin, 1962). Speech acts are actions performed using language, such as asking, complaining, or refusing. According to Searle (in Fauziati, 2016), the speech act is a functional communication unit.

The phenomenon of refusal expression can be found in TV series because it reflects everyday life. The writer found example of refusal expression in the *Bridgerton* TV series, as follows.

Penelope Featherington : “Should you allow me to delay only a year, just as Lady Bridgerton has done for Eloise, I may remain dedicated to my studies, perhaps.”

Portia Featherington : **“The answer is no, Penelope.”**

The example above showed the refusal of request for acceptance, because Penelope asked her mother to delay her debut. In addition, this example also demonstrates a direct strategy of the so-called non-performative expression of refusal, where Portia rejects Penelope's request by saying "no" outright.

In everyday life, we often use a refusal while communicating. According to Searle and Vanderveken (1985) (in Chunli & Nor, 2016), refusal is the negative opposite of acceptance. Just as one can accept offers, applications, and invitations, one can also turn each down. In line with that, Al-Eryani (2007) explains that refusal is a negative response to an offer, request, invitation, and suggestion. Since refusal is a speech act that somewhat includes a kind of rudeness, using an inappropriate refusal strategy can damage the relationship between the interlocutors (Brasdefer, 2008). Refusal is a tough speech act because its realization is sensitive to various aspects, such as cultural norms, social status, initiating acts of refusal, degree of formality, pragmalinguistic competence, and politeness or facial maintenance (Wijayanto, 2019). In addition, refusal is often played out in a long sequence that involves negotiating a satisfactory outcome (Houck & Gass, 1999).

A disagreement response to a request, invitation, offer, or suggestion is the definition of a refusal (Beebe et al., 1990). However, from the initiation of refusal above, Yang (2008) proposed subcategories of each initiation, such as in refusal of requests, it divided into refusal of requests for assistance, refusal of requests for acceptance/agreement/permission, refusal of requests for information, and refusal of requests for action. Whereas the refusal of offers, it divided into refusal of offers for gifts, refusal of offers for opportunities, refusal of offers for foods/drinks, and refusal of offers for favours. In addition, there are two subcategories in the refusal of suggestions, namely solicited and unsolicited suggestions. Furthermore, finally, there are two subcategories in the type of refusal of invitation, namely actual and ritual invitations.

Because refusal is very complicated, we must determine the appropriate strategy in order to minimize face threats. Beebe et al. (1990) proposed three strategies for refusal: direct, indirect, and adjunct. In the direct strategy, there are two subcategories, namely performative verbs "*I Refuse*" and non-performative verbs "*No*", "*I Cannot*". Meanwhile, indirect have eleven subcategories. There are statements of regret, wishes, explanations or excuse or reasons, alternative statements, regulating past or future conditions, promises of future acceptance, statement of principle, statement of philosophy, attempts to obstruct the interlocutor; statement of negative consequences, the function of acceptance as refusal, and avoidance. Furthermore, the last strategy is adjunct. Adjunct itself is a strategy that is used as a compliment when using direct or indirect strategies. There are four subcategories of adjunct: feeling or agreement, empathy statement, pause fillers, and gratitude or appreciation. In everyday life, refusing requests, invitations, offers and suggestions often happen. In making a refusal, the speaker can use both direct and indirect refusal or bias also adds adjunct to avoid being rude.

Many studies discussed the expression of refusal, one of which was research from Retnowaty (2018). This study aimed to analyze the refusal strategies used by Javanese language teachers. Moreover, the researcher tried to describe how the refusal strategies used by Javanese language teachers to the recipient status. This research used a qualitative descriptive method. Moreover, the researcher used the discussion completion task (DCT) method as the method used by the researcher in collecting data. The results of this study indicated that each respondent used a different strategy in a refusal. However, this study showed that most of the participants used an indirect strategy in refusing. The researcher explained in this study that the centralization of participation used an indirect strategy because it is more polite to use when refusing something. The study results reflect and show the fact that teachers are role models in teaching politeness in refusal.

In this research, the writer focused on refusal expression in different data source. The writer used manuscripts from the *Bridgerton* TV series because many conversations contained expressions of refusal. Furthermore, those conversations would become data for analysis.

Based on the explanation above, the writer arranged research objectives as follows: (1) to describe the types of refusal or initiating act of refusal expression and (2) to describe the strategies of refusal expression. Moreover, to analyze the data, the writer used theory from Yang (2008) to analyze the types of refusal expression and theory from Beebe et al. (1990) to analyze the strategies of refusal expression.

2. METHOD

This type of this research was descriptive qualitative research. The researcher used document analysis as design for this study. The subject of this research were characters who said expressions of refusal in the series. Meanwhile, the object of this research were excerpts that contained the expressions of refusal itself. The data of this research were the utterances produced by the characters. Meanwhile, the data source was from the *Bridgerton* scripts. The data collection techniques in this research were watching and reading the script and series, choosing utterances containing expression of refusal, then determine and write the types and strategies of refusal expression, and analyze the data based the theories of Yang (2008) and Beebe et al (1990).

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on data above, the researcher concludes the findings of refusal expression which are presented in the following tables 1 and 2

3.1 Types of Refusal Expression

After analyzing the types of refusal expression, the researcher found 4 types of refusal expression from 100 data taken from *Bridgerton* TV series. As shown in the following table 1

Tabel 1. Types of Refusal Expression

No	Types of Refusal Expression	Examples	Number of cases	Percent
1.	Refusal of Request		Total:52	52%
	a) Request for action	Lady Danbury : Would it pain you to wear some color, Your Grace? The London season is already terribly	21	21%

	<p>b) Request for permission /acceptance/ agreement</p> <p>c) Request for favour</p> <p>d) Request for information</p>	<p>monotonous as it is. Must your wardrobe do the same? Simon Basset : <i>I was told this look is all the rage</i></p> <p>Lady Bridgerton : Lord Berbrooke, you look in a great deal of pain. Shall we continue this in a more private location? Nigel Berbrooke : <i>I require no further conversation.</i></p> <p>Lady Bridgerton : The duke will be joining us as our guest at Vauxhall tomorrow evening. I admit, it was not easy to convince him to come. Anthony Bridgerton : <i>You overstep.</i></p> <p>Daphne Bridgerton : Tell me your name. Your name, sir? Simon Basset : <i>Am I honestly to believe you do not already know my name? If you desired an introduction, madam, I do believe accosting me to be the least civilized</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p>8</p> <p>7</p>	<p>14%</p> <p>8%</p> <p>9 %</p>
2.	<p>Refusal of Suggestion</p> <p>Unsolicited Suggestion</p>	<p>Mrs Scoffs : You may wish to listen to her, my lady. Shepherding four young ladies through these endless rounds of affairs at the same time. Can you imagine the competition ? Lady Featerigton : <i>Well, how much competition can this cousin provoke? She came of age on a farm, she has a mere four-figure dowry, and as for her appearance. Well, let us hope Miss Thompson is more presentable than the legions of unkempt animals she has spent her entrie life tending to back home.</i></p>	<p>Total:30</p> <p>30</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>30 %</p>
3.	<p>Refusal of Offers</p> <p>a) Offer for Favour</p> <p>b) Offer for Food/Drink</p>	<p>Anthony Bridgerton : Should I ring for a servant? Daphne Bridgerton : <i>No. No, do not wake them</i></p> <p>Anthony Bridgerton : I shall fetch you a glass of lemonade Daphne Bridgerton : <i>No. You have already done so much for me tonight</i></p>	<p>Total:14</p> <p>10</p> <p>3</p>	<p>14%</p> <p>10%</p> <p>3%</p>

	c) Offer for Opportunity	Lord Featherington : I am not here to invest. I have a more lucrative proposition in mind. Say, for you and I to come to some arrangement... as to the outcome of your next fight? Will Mondrich : <i>I'm sorry to have taken your time, my lord, but I think you would be wise to leave.</i>	1	1 %
4.	Refusal of Invitation		Total:4	4%
	Actual Invitation	Lady Danbury : You must excuse the, uh, disordeliness. As you know, I'm to host a ball this evening. Simon Basset : <i>That is what I was hoping to discuss. I have only returned to London to deal with my late father's affairs. I'm afraid it leaves me no time to... socialize. And so, while I appreciate your most gracious invitation, Lady Danbury, I must ask you to accept my regret.</i>	4	4%
	TOTAL		100	100%

The finding of types of refusal expression is supported by Yang (2008) which states that there are 4 types of refusal expression: (1) refusal of requests, (2) refusal of offers, (3) refusal of suggestions, and (4) refusal of invitations. It is clear that the researcher found 4 types of refusal expression, namely refusal of requests there are 52 data (52%), refusal of suggestions there are 30 data (30%), refusal of offers there are 14 data (14%), and refusal of invitations there are 4 data (4%). It is showed that the most dominant in the types of refusal expression used by the characters in the *Bridgerton* series was refusal of requests with 52% percentage. This type of refusal of requests had a high percentage because it is often used by characters in the series, and the conversation caused the initiation act of refusal expressions, such as refusal of requests for action, refusal of requests for favour, refusal of requests for information, refusal of requests for agreement/permission /acceptance.

The finding of types of refusal expression is supported by previous research, such as the research that conducted by Putri (2010). This research found 40 data of refusal expression in *Ugly Betty* series. Based on the use of the types of refusal expression, Putri found 10 data on refusal of requests, 10 data on refusal of suggestions, 10 data on refusal of offers, and 10 data on refusal of invitations. Moreover, compared to Putri's finding, the difference lies in the data source, namely the serial title, and it can make the context different too. In addition, the present

study does not analyze the sequences of refusal like Putri's research. While, the similarity is seen in the finding which also contain the types of refusal expression used the theory from Yang (2008).

3.2 Strategies of Refusal Expression

Based on this analysis, the researcher found 3 strategies of refusal expression. The researcher used the tehory of Beebe et al (1990) to analyze the strategies of refusal expression. The result can be seen in the following table 2.

Table 2. Strategies of Refusal Expression

No	Strategies of Refusal Expression	Example	Number of Cases	Percent
1.	Direct Non-Performative	<i>"No", "I Cannot", "I do not want", and "I will not"</i>	Total:29 29	29% 29%
2.	Indirect a) Explanations or excuse or reasons b) Attempts to obstruct the interlocutor i. Criticize the request or requester ii. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester iii. Request for help, emphaty, and assistance	<i>"I am all danced out for the night, Colin"</i> <i>"I can think of worse matches for Daphne than a duke."</i> <i>"If you desired an introduction, madam, I do believe accosting me to be the least civilized."</i> <i>"What am I to do, Penelope? I will be a good wife to Colin, and he a good husband and father... however young and well-liked by you he may be"</i> <i>"Pen, I neither know nor have time for any of these men"</i>	Total:66 27 11 9 3 5	66% 27% 11% 9% 3% 5%

	c) The Function of Acceptance as Refusal; Lack of Enthusiasm]	<i>"I had a brief question to ask Marina"</i>	4	4%
	d) Avoidance; Verbal; Postponment	<i>"Lady Danbury, I must ask you to accept my regret."</i>	3	3%
	e) Statement of Regret			
	f) Statement of Principle	<i>"I do not take this decision lightly, but this is the way things are handled amongst gentlemen"</i>	1	1%
	g) Wish	<i>"I wish to leave."</i>	1	1%
	h) Alternative Statement	<i>"Were I looking for a list of debutantes and their dubious accomplishments, I could have stayed home and read Lady Whistledown"</i>	1	1%
	i) Regulating Past or Future Acceptance	<i>"That is what I was hoping to discuss."</i>	1	1%
3.	Adjunct		Total:5	5%
	a) Gratitude or appreciation	<i>"I Thank you for your offer, Sir Phillip"</i>	4	4%
	b) Pause fillers	<i>"Um..."</i>	1	1%
	TOTAL		100	100%

The finding of strategies of refusal expression is supported by Beebe et al (1990) which states that there are 3 strategies of refusal expression: (1) direct strategies (2) indirect strategies, and (3) adjunct strategies. It is clear that the researcher found 3 strategies of refusal expression, namely direct strategies there are 29 data (29%), indirect strategies there are 66 data (66%), and adjunct strategies there are 5 data (5%). It is showed that the most dominant in the strategies of refusal expression used by the characters in the Bridgerton series was indirect strategies with 66% percentage. The characters often used indirect strategies because because this staregy is

the way that effective enough to be used in everyday conversation, because it can make conversations or interactions polite.

The finding of types of refusal expression is supported by previous research. The first research was conducted by Retnowaty (2018). This study found 189 data of refusal strategies including direct, indirect, and adjunct strategies. Compared with Retnowaty's finding, the difference lies in the source of the data, where she used a collection of results from discourse completion task (DCT), while the present study used TV series. In addition, Retnowaty's research does not analyze the types of refusal because that type is used directly as a situation used in DCT. While the similarity is seen in the finding which also contain the strategies of refusal expression. The second research was conducted by Kasih (2014). This study found 92 data of refusal strategies including direct, indirect, and adjunct strategies collected from two American and three British Movies. Compared to Kasih's findings, the difference lies in the data sources, namely different movie titles. In addition, the previous research aimed to compare the refusal strategies in American and British movies, while the current study only focused on analyzing one series. In addition, previous studies did not analyze the types of refusal expression. While the similarity is seen in the findings which also contain strategies of refusal expression

4. CLOSING

The results of this study indicate that the researcher found four categories of refusal types, including refusal of requests, refusal of suggestions, refusal of offers, and refusal of invitations. In this case, the researcher did not find all subcategories of the four types mentioned above, such as refusal of invitations for ritual invitation and refusal of offers for gift. In this type, the dominant type that appears was the refusal of requests with a total of 52 data (52%). This type of refusal of requests had a high percentage because it is often used by characters in the series, and the conversation caused the initiation act of refusal expressions, such as refusal of requests for action, refusal of requests for favour, refusal of requests for information, refusal of requests for agreement/permission /acceptance. Meanwhile, from the second research question, the researcher found all strategies in a refusal, including direct, indirect, and adjunct. But, in this case, the researcher did not find all subcategories of the three strategies mentioned above. The most widely used strategy in refusal is indirect strategy with a total of 66 data (66%). However, the characters combined two types of refusal strategies in this refusing, such as negative willingness added with an explanation. Combining two refusal strategies can help the refuser

reduce the face threaten. From this research, there were many variations of the initiation acts of refusal or type of refusal. And this initiation can influence many variations of strategies used in refusing. And this can happen because native speakers can produce more variety in speech. In this present study, the author contributes to the English teacher as their reference to improve and enrich their ability to express refusal. The importance of understanding refusal in everyday life requires the types of refusal and refusal strategies so that later in refusing something it does not offend the speaker and avoids misunderstandings in refusing. Understand that this research has limitations, where the scope of research material is limited to the types of refusal and refusal strategies contained in the *Bridgerton* TV series. The present writer realizes that this research paper is far from perfect. The author hopes that other researchers can develop this research on other objects such as types and strategies of refusal in social media, not only in series/movies. In addition, other researchers can also add a research focus such as its relationship with age or gender.

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