



## Gender Differences in Performing Refusal Strategies to an Invitation by Students at SMAN 4 Padang

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the gender differences in performing refusal strategies to an invitation by students at SMAN 4 Padang. This study was a descriptive quantitative research. The data were collected by using DCT (discourse completion test) that was distributed to 10 males and 10 females students. The data were analysed by using the refusal classification from Takashi and Beebe (1990). The result showed that both gender is mostly using indirect strategy to refuse an invitation. However, male tend to give shorter refusal than females students and did not pay attention to the context, such as power and social distance. Beside, female students used more indirect and longer answer and strategy to refuse an invitation and make it clear by combined some refusal strategy, such as statement of regret, wish and statement of alternative. The longer the refusal the more polite the answer that students give. It found that female students is more polite than male students.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In daily life people cannot be separated from communication. Communication is a tool that help human to communication to each other. One of the tools that people use to communicate is language. There are some aspects that included into languages. One of them is gender. Gender is a behaviour that constructed by the environment. Gender has an important role in languages. According to the Wodak (2019) Gender is not a pool possessed by a person, but something a person does. Gender shows that there are some differences between male and females in doing languages such as how the tone that both gender use, how the gesture, and how they use language in communicating.

In delivery messages gender use so many language, such as English. messages, the learners have to master speaking skills. There are some speaking materials related to the pragmatic context called speech act. Speech acts are suggestions, invitations, complaints, offers, and refusals. For the refusal strategies in context of the pragmalinguistic is divided into three based on the Beebe et. Al (1990). There are direct strategies, which are divided into two, performative nonperformative. Second is indirect strategies, which are divided into eleven strategies. There are statement of regret, wish, excuse/explain/reason, statement of alternative, set condition for future, Promise of future acceptance, statement of principle, Statement of philosophy, attempt to dissuade, acceptance that function as refusal and avoidance. The last refusal is adjunct, which is divided into four. There are gratitude, statement of positive opinion, statement of empathy and pause/filter. Furthermore, this theory was the indicator that used in this research. From some research that have been conducted by the researcher there in no study focus on refusal to an invitation.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this study was descriptive research with a quantitative approach. Descriptive research is a Kothari (2004) stated that the main purpose of descriptive research is a description of the current phenomenon or condition. The researcher used descriptive research in order to describe and analyze gender differences in performing refusal strategies in considering the interlocutor's social level and power. The students at 12 grade at SMAN 4 Padang was chosen by random sampling in order to make every sample has the same opportunity. Fraenkel (2011) stated that all of the populations have the same chance of being selected using a simple random sampling technique. The DCT (Discourse Completion Test) was used to be the instrument for collecting the data. The DCT used because the researcher expect the participants to give their answer toward the situation given. The DCT covered daily life that aim to make the test more contextual. Before doing the research the instrument was validated by Prof. Dr. Jufrizal, M. Hum. Then the data analyses using the formula

$$P = f / N \times 100\%$$

in which,

P = percentage (each type of refusal strategy)

f = frequency (each type of refusal strategy)

N = Total number of refusal strategies.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Research Finding*

#### 1. The male students refusal strategies

| Strategies/Contexts      | P+SD+     |             | P+SD-     |             | P=SD+     |           | P=SD-     |             | P-SD+     |            | P-SD-     |             |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
|                          | F         | %           | F         | %           | F         | %         | F         | %           | F         | %          | F         | %           |
| <b>Direct Strategies</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>39,3</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>41,9</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>34,3</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>33,</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>41,3</b> |

|                              |           |             |           |             |           |            |           |             |           |             |           |             |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Performative                 |           |             |           |             |           |            |           |             |           |             |           |             |
| No-performative              | 4         | 12,1        | 1         | 3,22        | 1         | 3,5        | 1         | 3,1         | 1         | 3,3         |           |             |
| Negative Willingness         | 9         | 27,2        | 12        | 38,7        | 10        | 34,5       | 10        | 31,2        | 9         | 30,5        | 12        | 41,3        |
| <b>Indirect Strategies</b>   | <b>20</b> | <b>60,7</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>58,0</b> | <b>18</b> | <b>62</b>  | <b>22</b> | <b>65,6</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>66,7</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>58,6</b> |
| Statement of regret          | 16        | 48,4        | 11        | 36          | 13        | 45         | 13        | 40,6        | 14        | 46,6        | 13        | 44,8        |
| Wish                         |           |             |           |             | 2         | 7          | 1         | 3,1         | 1         | 3,3         |           |             |
| Reason/explain/exc use       | 2         | 6           | 2         | 6,5         | 2         | 7          | 6         | 18,8        | 2         | 6,6         |           |             |
| Statement of alternative     |           |             |           |             |           |            |           |             |           |             |           |             |
| Set condition for future     |           |             |           |             |           |            |           |             |           |             |           |             |
| Promise of future acceptance |           |             | 2         | 6,5         |           |            |           |             |           |             | 3         | 10,3        |
| Lack of enthusiasm           | 2         | 6           | 2         | 6,5         | 1         | 3,5        |           |             | 1         | 3,3         | 1         | 3,4         |
| Adjuncts                     |           |             |           |             |           |            |           |             |           |             |           |             |
| Gratitude                    |           |             | 1         |             |           |            | 1         | 3,1         |           |             |           |             |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>33</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>31</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>29</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>32</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b>  | <b>29</b> | <b>100</b>  |

2. The female students refusal strategies

| Strategies/Contexts        | P+SD+     |             | P+SD-     |             | P=SD+     |             | P=SD-     |             | P-SD+     |             | P-SD-     |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
|                            | F         | %           | F         | %           | F         | %           | F         | %           | F         | %           | F         | %         |
| <b>Direct Strategies</b>   | <b>4</b>  | <b>10,8</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>2,9</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>2,94</b> | <b>2</b>  | <b>6,7</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>7,14</b> | <b>4</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| Performative               |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |           |
| No-performative            |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |           |
| Negative Willingness       | 4         | 10,8        | 1         | 2,9         | 1         | 2,94        | 2         | 6,7         | 2         | 7,14        | 4         | 13        |
| <b>Indirect Strategies</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>89,2</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>97,1</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>97,0</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>93,3</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>92,8</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>87</b> |
| Statement of regret        | 8         | 21,6        | 10        | 29          | 6         | 17,6        | 5         | 16,7        | 6         | 21,4        | 7         | 22,5      |
| Wish                       | 1         | 32,         | 1         | 31,         |           |             | 6         | 20          | 4         | 14,2        | 5         | 16,       |

|                              |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                              | 2         | 4          | 1         | 4          |           |            |           |            |           |            |           | 1          |
| Reason/explain/excuse        | 11        | 29,8       | 10        | 29         | 5         | 15         | 5         | 16,7       | 7         | 25         | 5         | 16,1       |
| Statement of alternative     |           |            | 2         | 5,7        | 5         | 15         | 4         | 13,3       | 4         | 14,2       | 4         | 13         |
| Set condition for future     |           |            |           |            | 2         | 5,9        |           |            |           |            |           |            |
| Promise of future acceptance |           |            | 1         | 2,85       | 3         | 8,8        | 4         | 13,3       | 2         | 7,14       | 2         | 6,45       |
| Lack of enthusiasm           | 1         | 2,7        |           |            | 3         | 8,8        | 4         | 13,3       |           |            | 1         | 3,57       |
| Attempt to dissuade          | 1         | 2,7        |           |            | 7         | 20,5       |           |            | 3         | 10,7       | 3         | 9,7        |
| Adjuncts                     |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |
| Gratitude                    |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |           |            |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>37</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>35</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>31</b> | <b>100</b> |

3. The differences between male and female students refusal strategies

| Refusal Strategy         |                        | P+SD+ |       | P+SD- |       | P=SD+ |      | P=SD- |      | P-SD+ |       | P=SD= |       |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                          |                        | M     | F     | M     | F     | M     | F    | M     | F    | M     | F     | M     | F     |
|                          |                        | F     | %     | F     | %     | F     | %    | F     | %    | F     | %     | F     | %     |
| <b>Direct Strategy</b>   | Perfor mative          |       |       |       |       |       |      |       |      |       |       |       |       |
|                          | Non perfor mative      | 4     | 12,1  | 1     | 3,22  | 1     | 3,5  | 1     | 3,1  | 1     | 3,3   | 1     | 4,37  |
|                          | Negat ive Willingnes s | 9     | 24,72 | 4     | 11,87 | 1     | 3,29 | 1     | 3,54 | 1     | 3,7   | 3     | 10,48 |
| <b>Indirect Strategy</b> | State ment of regret   | 1     | 4,84  | 8     | 21,6  | 1     | 3,09 | 2     | 6,35 | 6     | 17,44 | 1     | 4,67  |
|                          | Wish                   |       |       | 1     | 3,22  | 3     | 9,11 | 3     | 9,27 |       |       | 1     | 4,6   |



to Chojimah (2015) noted that, Indonesian EFL learners tend to use indirect strategies in refusing speech act such as invitations, suggestions, and request.

Furthermore, the male students also used direct strategies non performative and negative willingness. Direct strategy was sometimes preferred by participants when refusing someone. By using direct strategy, it means the students want to show the interlocutors their refusal straight forward to the points. From Guo (2012) stated that direct strategies were more frequently used among close relation. But in the finding of the study, the researcher found that male students use *indirect strategy (regret)* as strategy predominantly when refusing someone with equal status to them in which are their friends. In this result show that the longer the refusal that students give is more polite the answer.

The second concerned research problem is the refusal strategies used by female students. The findings show that female students almost all used indirect strategies. The highest indirect refusal strategies is regret and wish. Female students tend to refuse an invitation by saying sorry and saying “I wish I could go” as a the best refusal and polite way to refuse an invitation. This is also giving the evidence of the theory from Chojimah (2015) stated that Indonesian learners tend to use indirect strategy to refuse. However, Chang (2009) noted that the overused of regret could because the culture of the students that saying sorry is a expression to say an apology.

The third research problem is what is differences of the refusal strategies used by male and female students. The findings show that male students used direct refusal strategies almost in every context, this means the male students did not pay attention to the power and social distance of the interlocutor. Beside the female students used mostly indirect strategies to be more polite in refusing an invitation. Then the female students also make sure the strategies they used is longer to make an excuse. For example female students answer the refusal with regret and then combined it with the excuse/explanation, wish, statement of alternative, promise of future acceptance, etc. This show that female students pay attention to the social distance and power of the interlocutor and make sure the answer is polite enough. It is related to Lakoff in his book entitled *Language and Women 's Place* (1975) states that men speak shorter and on point. It is different from women who are not strict and using longer and polite words.

The researcher also found out that the both gender used indirect strategy to situations. This is also related Indonesia, that its people tend to use indirect way to communicate. Based on Kartomiharjo (1999), Indonesian people prefer to refuse politely without focus on the conditions such as power, and social distance of interlocutors. The other study that giving more evidence is from Liao and Bresnahan (1996) and Capar (2014) stated that people will prefer use indirect strategies when refuse something. The way of they refuse in a polite could keep the harmonism between people. That is why the participants used indirect strategy to every level of status.

From general, the most used refusal strategy for both gender is regret. The students said sorry to almost of the situations of the interlocutor. Sorry could be means that the students know sorry is the best way and polite way to refuse an invitation. However, statement of regret sometimes having other meaning. From As

Chen (1995) stated that in certain conditions the word sorry means strong refusal or a big no. Additionally when refusing the interlocutor whose power status is higher, the students always used regret or apology. This may be explained by Klimozak-Pawlak (2014) that people in lower power tend to use apology to refuse something. This theory could be a justification of why the participants used apology or saying sorry to refuse high power status.

Female students also gave more varied and longer answer than male students. Female students tend to combine some refusal. For example they used statement of alternative and combine the refusal with other strategies. It is also related to the theory from Chen and Zhang (1995) said that statement of alternative alternative provides a way to avoid a direct confrontation. It also aims to shows the influence of “respectfulness” and “modesty” dimension (Gu, 1990).

The male students also chose adjuncts to refuse an invitation beside none of the female students used adjuncts. From three kinds of adjunct, participants used gratitude mostly to refuse the invitation. It is refers to Wannaruk (2008) stating that people give gratitude for two purposes, exposing indebtedness and shutting down the conversation. Then from Leech (1983) has a hospitable function aimed to keep the harmonious among the students/participants. The strategy maintains a feeling of solidarity and interpersonal warmth between familiar interactants when expressed in appropriate situations. Through expressing gratitude, the uneasiness and displeasure brought by refusal can be trimmed down since it can be evidence for the feeling of respect and interpersonal closeness between interactants. Hence, the refusal of gratitude is a polite way (Chojimah, 2015).

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