



REFUSAL STRATEGIES MADE BY INDONESIAN AND INTERNATIONAL EFL LEARNERS

THESIS

**BY
LESTARI KASIH
NPM 21602073072**



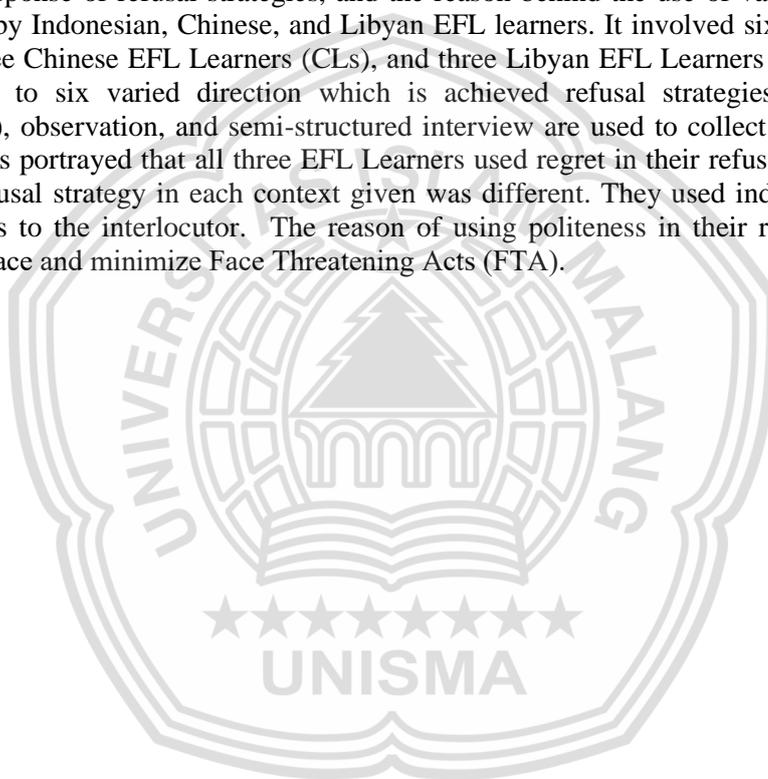
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ABSTRACT

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Key words : *Refusal Strategies, Indonesian EFL learners, International EFL Learners, Politeness*

Refusal is a problematic speech act for someone who is learning a certain language they have never used as a child such as English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Negative responses to an interlocutor's request are often applied to approve a refusal. In the classroom interaction, learners and lecturers tend to negotiate their requests using various strategies of refusal. Miscommunication appeared when they failed to transfer pragmatic competences. The objectives of this research is to investigate types, the response of refusal strategies, and the reason behind the use of various refusal strategies as performed by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners. It involved six Indonesian EFL Learners (ILs), three Chinese EFL Learners (CLs), and three Libyan EFL Learners (LLs). They were asked to respond to six varied directions which achieved refusal strategies. Discourse Completion Task (DCT), observation, and semi-structured interview are used to collect the data for further analysis. Findings portrayed that all three EFL Learners used regret in their refusal strategies. However, the use of refusal strategy in each context given was different. They used indirect refusal strategies as acceptances to the interlocutor. The reason of using politeness in their refusals is to maintain interlocutor's face and minimize Face Threatening Acts (FTA).

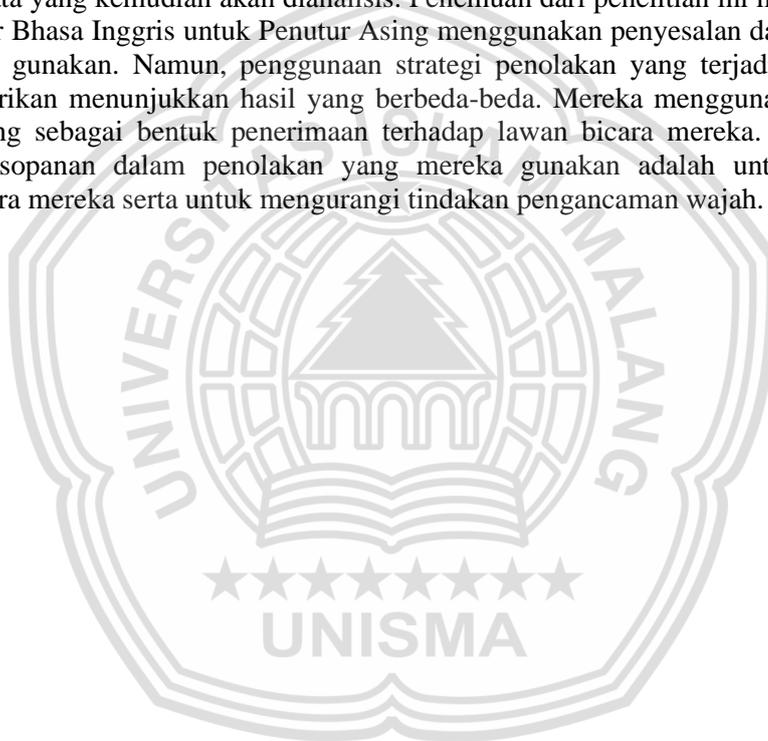


ABSTRAK

Kasih, Lestari. 2020. *Refusal Strategies Made By Indonesian and International EFL Learner*. Tesis. Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Pasca Sarjana, Universitas Islam Malang. Pembimbing: **Dr. Alfian Zuhairi, M.Pd.**

Key Words : *strategi penolakan, mahasiswa Indonesia, mahasiswa Internasional*

Penolakan merupakan suatu strategi tindak tutur yang tidak mudah bagi seorang yang sedang mempelajari suatu bahasa tertentu dimana mereka belum pernah mempelajari sebelumnya seperti pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing. Negatif respon terhadap permintaan dari lawan bicara seringkali dilakukan untuk melakukan penolakan. Sebagai contohnya adalah interaksi dikelas, peserta didik dan dosen cenderung melakukan sebuah negosiasi atas sebuah permintaan satu sama lain dengan menggunakan strategi penolakan. Tidak tersampainya pesan dari penutur muncul ketika penutur suatu bahasa gagal untuk mentransfer kompetensi pragmatis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki tipe, respon dari sebuah strategi penolakan, serta alasan dibalik penggunaan strategi penolakan tertentu yang dilakukan oleh pembelajar Bahasa Inggris dari Indonesia, China, dan Libya. Penelitian ini melibatkan enam Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris dari Indonesia, tiga Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris dari China, dan tiga Pembelajar Bahasa Inggris dari Libya. Mereka diminta untuk menanggapi enam situasi yang berbeda dalam sebuah konteks penggunaan strategi penolakan. DCT *Discourse Completion Task*, observasi, dan semi-terstruktur wawancara digunakan sebagai instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data yang kemudian akan dianalisis. Penemuan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ketiga pembelajar Bahasa Inggris untuk Penutur Asing menggunakan penyesalan dalam strategi penolakan yang mereka gunakan. Namun, penggunaan strategi penolakan yang terjadi dari setiap konteks yang telah diberikan menunjukkan hasil yang berbeda-beda. Mereka menggunakan strategi penolakan tidak langsung sebagai bentuk penerimaan terhadap lawan bicara mereka. Alasan dari penggunaan strategi kesopanan dalam penolakan yang mereka gunakan adalah untuk menjaga perasaan dari lawan bicara mereka serta untuk mengurangi tindakan pengancaman wajah.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The research is about refusal strategy focusing on Indonesian and International students when they have classroom interaction. This chapter presents the elaboration of the background of the study, the research questions, and the purpose of study. This chapter also included the significance of study, the scope and limitation, the definition of key terms and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Every single day, as human beings, we communicate each other to convey information, share our thoughts and feelings, and maintain relationships. Depending on the nature of a situation we may use linguistics or non-linguistic (e.g. facial expression, body language) modes of communication. Good communication requires not only linguistic knowledge, but also an understanding of social and cultural factors in a situation. The evolution of human communication has taken shape over a period of thousands years, and both men and women all over the world have contributed to the way we communicate today.

Refusal strategy is an act performed by any speaker in expressing what they intended to. It is used for negotiation about rejection of what they feel which is determined in daily communication, classroom interaction and public space

communication. Some studies define that speech act refusal is to minimize the face of addressee. At this point, politeness is necessary whenever the refusal is released or not. Brown (1987) defined that the choice of strategies in refusal is found by social distance, relative, social status, and severity in threatening acts. It means that refusal is able to see and perform from different social distances, different social status, and different problems of speakers. So, it is interesting in discussing more about refusal strategies, especially its development in different social roles in the language teaching-learning process.

Refusal strategy is still important especially in language teaching which has appeared in pragmatic competence of refusal strategies. The failure to transfer some information may cause misunderstanding to the interlocutors and even some serious communication of language users who are insensitive, impolite or inept people. Pragmatic competence requires a variety of abilities in using and interpreting a language in context, Bulm Kulka, (1993). Pragmatic competence is the most important competence for second and foreign language. The failure of pragmatics has serious focus than grammatical errors as native speakers. It is claimed that pragmatic failure has more serious consequences than do grammatical errors as native speakers tend to delight pragmatic errors as offensive, Thomas (1983:97). Moreover, language learners have to gain an appropriate pragmatic competence to interact with target language.

Furthermore, the way we say something has an important role to what to say. It is a simple statement in the significant rule of speech which implies the pragmatic convention of target language that dictates rules of social language use.

The failure of pragmatic competence will lead to communication breakdown; it means while most language learners have a difficulty or no difficulty in acquiring the linguistic aspects of target language. One of previous research has analyzed nonnative speakers having difficulty in realizing face-threatening acts in refusing politely. For example, Umale (2011) argued that the most often nonnative speakers lack the pragmatic competence to refuse politely and appropriately when they interact with other. He concluded that while nonnative speakers tried to sound polite when refusing, their too long answers often led to pragmalinguistic failure

The inability to refuse politely becomes significant encounters between speakers from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Beebe (1990, as cited in Sa'ad, 2017) declared that the lack of sociolinguistic ability is most likely to lead to offence: "the inability to say 'no' clearly and politely has led many nonnative speakers to offend their interlocutors". Similarly, a discussion of encounters between native speakers and Japanese speakers of English, Lo Castro (1997, as cited in Sa'ad, 2017) confirmed that nonnative speakers often feel uncomfortable with native speakers' lack of linguistic politeness. Therefore, refusal strategies need to pay attention in keeping communication politely. Refusal strategies still become a concern for everybody who rejects or negotiate with others in their business but each culture brings a different way to perform refusal strategies.

The way of learner showing refusal strategies is various, especially in three different culture of the same ethnic as Asian. Every culture has own rule and

it affects the learner's pragmatic competence to whom they speak to. One of the problem here, such as Indonesian EFL learners may have own rule to refuse what they reject to. Fitriana (2016) found that refusal strategies based on Beebe et al., (1990) is male and female Indonesian learners in learning English used different refusal strategies. All males use reason/explanation strategies in their refusal strategies, such as *I can't be a good learner, I am not sure, I am able to do it, or performing in front of the class is too difficult for me.*

In contrast, female perform their feeling and keep their solidarity toward their friends in expressing regret such as *Sorry for canceling our schedule, I am sorry for postponed project, or sorry, I can't come to this course.* Indonesian females' learners perform indirect refusal strategies such stated above. Those are indirect strategies which are performed by Indonesian learners. Moreover, the influence of refusal strategies used between males and females' learners is from degree of intimacy and their feelings.

Several studies reported that Chinese refusals also tend to be indirect. Moaveni (2014) found that Chinese learners use most direct strategies in refusal act. Using a slightly modified version of Beebe et al.'s (1990) written DCT, Chang (2009) investigated pragmatic transfer comparing refusals of Chinese learners of English with those of native speakers of American English. Chang found that the Americans preferred direct refusal strategies (e.g., more frequent use of direct formulas, providing more direct excuses), while the Chinese learners of English tended to use indirect refusal strategies such as wishing, which showed influence from the learners' native language. Chinese learners also had the highest regret

response in the situation where one had to refuse to lend notes to a classmate. Chinese learners also used indirect refusal strategies and regret. It means the use of indirect strategies demonstrates that the learners are aware of face-threatening effect of refusal that creates certain degree of intimacy to the addressees.

Al-Ateeq (2016) investigated the use of refusal strategies of Saudi male and female students. Data were analyzed and classified as proposed by Beebe et al. (1990). Results showed that students apply more indirect refusal strategies than direct ones. They also use adjuncts in their refusal statements. In line with Al-Ateeq (2016), Al-Mahroqi and Al-Aghbar (2016) examined the refusal speech act performed by Omani EFL college students. Results revealed that Omani EFL students used indirect refusal strategies most frequently than direct ones. The direct refusals were performed mostly when refusing requests and suggestions. Moreover, Omani EFL learners used regret more when refusing requests and they showed consideration for the interlocutor's feelings when refusing offers. Besides, Omani learners were not sensitive to the social status of the interlocutors when using the speech act of refusal.

So, that is why saying no is not easy to both Arabian and Omani which have similar culture and first language as Libyan learners and for nonnative speakers. However, refusal strategies for Asian and African are various and it is rarely to say direct refusal when Asian and African reject what they feel to the interlocutors. Even though saying no is easy, it is difficult to say directly for non-westerners.

Cross-cultural refusal studies clearly have shown that there are differences between the Indonesian, Chinese and Libyan EFL learners. They have their own rule to perform refusal strategies which involve every culture they have. Indonesia is known as a polite country where Indonesian has a high friendliness and high politeness. In the same phenomenon, Chinese is also well-known as a polite country yet both Indonesian and Chinese have the same ethnic that is *Asia* which is identically with high degree of intimacy and politeness. On the other hand, Libyan may have similar etiquette because Libyan belongs to the unity of Africaunlike Indonesia and Chinese. Every society on ethnic groups also has their own rules and custom to perform refusal strategies such as Yasser (2016) defined that the Jordanian participants use more gratitude than Chinese when refusing someone invitations by the same status and low status. Similarly, Sa'ad (2017) noted that refusal strategies have positive influence of pragmatic competence with low proficiency levels between Iranian and American learners has the positive result of pragmatic competence development of learners with low proficiency. The new research, Shareef (2018) showed that different gender has a great effect of refusal strategies in some ways between Syria and Kurdish. Both of them use more strategies when refusing requests than offer but the position of gender to play a significant role for the choice of refusal strategies by both groups.

The previous studies did not portray implications towards the theories underpinning refusal strategies in the same ethnic that is Asian where they have the same culture style as “polite country”. It brings curiosity to analyzing refusal strategies about Asian countries such as Indonesia, Chinese, and African countries

as Libya. Even though they have different ethics as Asian and African, there are some differences that are found in refusal acts such as Indonesian is famous with high politeness but now Indonesian society performs indirect strategies for equal, low and high interlocutors. In the same field, Chinese also prefers to perform indirect strategies rather than direct one in refusal acts. In contrast, Libyan are more careful to say refusal and they prefer to give an option during the refusal strategies performing to different levels of interlocutors.

Furthermore, this study focuses on different social roles which are described as a different rank of profession. It happens between the learners and lecturer and learners and peers. This case becomes the core of this research and it should be noted, however, that all the previous studies of refusal strategies that are reported in the open literature of previous study above to the best of author knowledge. This finding contributes to the field of communicative action in each cultural context and if the learners have not a pragmatic focus, a foreign language teaching will not encourage learners' metalinguistic awareness. Thus, pragmatic ability can develop proper planning of classroom activities. The case of refusal strategies has not been given great attention by the researchers in the previous study and this motivated the present study.

The goal of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of refusal strategies used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners in different social roles intended to fill in the gap for avoiding cross-cultural miscommunications. The contribution of this study is obvious as the resulting outcomes can be capitalized as guidelines to the lecturers when they teach

heterogeneous learners with different cultures when the refusal strategies are performed by the learners.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background and limitation of the study, the researcher decides three problem statements, those are:

1. What are refusal strategies used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners in interactions with different social roles?
2. How do Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners respond to the interlocutors in refusal interactions with different social roles?
3. Why do Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners apply different refusal strategies in different social roles?

1.3 Objectives of the study

Referring to research questions, this particular study is aimed at finding out:

1. To identify the types of refusal strategies are used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners in interactions with different social roles.
2. To find out the interlocutors' responses used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners in interactions with different social roles.
3. To explain the reason why Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners apply different refusal strategies for different social roles.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give theoretical, practical and pedagogical significance. Theoretically, as the research aims to explore not only types and how Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners use refusal strategies but also the reasons they used, the result of this research can provide a more comprehensive picture of underlying principles of refusal strategies. It also contributed to deepen understanding and be one of the additional references in Pragmatics branches on speech act of refusal strategies in the learning process to avoid miss-understanding in pragmatic competence.

Practically and pedagogically, this study aims to add new knowledge for the lecturers who have heterogeneous learners when performing refusal strategies and for the learners are able to use appropriate refusal strategies in different social roles so that they can avoid miss-understanding of cross-cultural communication in refusal strategies. It is also expected to be useful for the next researchers who interested in the same field in analyzing refusal strategies.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on refusal strategies used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners in different social roles from opening until closing the activities in the classroom activities. The limitation of this study is only to find the types of refusal strategies used by Indonesian, Chinese and Libyan EFL Learners, to determine the response of the interlocutors about refusal strategies and to know the reason why use different refusal strategies.

The next limitation of this study was when the researcher planned to interview Libyan EFL learners, they cancelled the schedule. Then, Libyan EFL learners agreed with the day of the interview but the numbers of Libyan EFL learners were only three people. Whereas, the researcher needed four Libyan EFL learners to interview them, one person was sick and she could not come to the interview. The interview continued with three Libyan EFL learners. Almost all the answers were quite similar and the lack of one learner did not have a big effect on the data collection, because three learners had been a representative in this study.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding, the following terms are provided:

1. Refusal Strategies

Refusal strategies is a strategy of rejecting someone's thought or refusing someone's intention in interpreting a threatening act.

2. Interlocutors

Interlocutors are people with whom the learners are having a conversation or someone who is involved in a conversation and who is interpreting someone else.

3. Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies is the concept of keeping face which is defined as etiquette of someone in showing good manners to others, such as behavior, speech and so on.

4. Different Social Roles

Different social role is the social standing of a person as compared to others in a group or situation such as lecturers to learners and learners to peers.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presented the conclusion and suggestion related to the findings. The conclusion deal with the results of the types of refusal strategies, the responses of Indonesian, Chinese and Libyan EFL learner about the refusal strategies, and the reason why used different refusal strategies to show politeness. The suggestions are aimed to the lecturer, EFL learners and future researcher to follow up this research finding.

6.1 Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is divided into three parts, first is about the types of refusal strategies used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners for different social roles, second is about the response of Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners to the interlocutors about refusal strategies, and the third is the reason why they applied different refusal strategies to show politeness.

The first conclusion is about the types of refusal strategies used by Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners in different social status. In this part, the data were taken from Discourse Complexion Task (DCT) and the result of DCT showed that Indonesian EFL learners used regret and negative willingness to peers, regret and avoidance for low to high and regret and negative willingness for high to low level. In the same line, Chinese EFL learners used Regret and saying no for peers, regret and self-defense for low to high, and regret and

negative willingness for high to low level. Then, Libyan EFL learners used future acceptance for peers, regret and future acceptance for low to high and high to low level. To sum up this first research question, all three EFL learners almost used regret in their refusal strategies to soften their refusal and it might be as the characteristic of South Asians and African who identical with friendliness and polite people. So they were used regret even though when they refused someone.

The second one is about the response of Indonesian, Chinese, and Libyan EFL learners to the interlocutors about refusal strategies. The findings of second research question are Indonesian EFL Learners used refusal strategies saying no, negative willingness, self-defense, and explanation. They performed around nine times in refusing and responding of the refusal strategies. Six of them had final outcome in refusal response was acceptance; two final outcomes were compromise and one of refusal. Then, the initial response of them was refuse, sincere acceptance, non-acceptance, and alternative and postpone. Chinese EFL learners did not perform much refusal strategies, which were around five times, and they used refusal strategies of positive opinion, regret, excuse, sarcasm, and negative willingness. The final outcome in refusal response was acceptance and compromise. Then, the initial response of them was sincere acceptance, alternative, and non-acceptance. Libyan EFL learners almost never refused in the class and there were only three times. The results were Libyan EFL learners used refusal strategies of regret and future acceptance. The final outcome in refusal response was acceptance. Then, the initial response of them was sincere accepted. But the unique one happened when the lecturer asked LL to present the assignment, she accepted and there was not refusal. To conclude this second

research question, indirect refusal strategies used for getting acceptance in this response but when direct strategies applied in refusal act, the final outcome of refusal responses is refusal. Whereas, when regret is combined with indirect strategies, the initial outcome of alternative appears and the negotiation also is a part of it. The final outcome will be compromise or acceptance.

The third one is the reason why Indonesian, Chinese and Libyan EFL learners applied different refusal strategies to show politeness. The findings are Indonesian and Chinese EFL learners had the same result and the result is they used positive politeness for peers, negative politeness for low to high and bald-on record for high to low level. The reason is because they wanted to keep feeling and heart of peer by using positive politeness, to reduce social distance and keep the solidarity. Negative politeness was used for low to high because they were afraid for being impolite, so the message commonly could not be delivered directly so the purpose of the talk is stated very careful. Bald-on record is used by high to low because of the power behind. In the same line with this, Libyan EFL learners were used positive politeness for peer to keep the solidarity. Negative politeness was used for keeping heart and saying sorry expressed more in this part. In other hand, high to low level used negative willingness because it had a distance and they also must be keep the face even though to low level. So, Indonesian, Chinese and Libyan EFL learners have an intention to use politeness inside their refusal and their refusal has a meaning to keep interlocutors face and heart. As South East Asian and North African, they have similarity one another in refusal act, respond the refusal and giving the reason but the differences of them are caused by the culture, tradition and family education as their habitual action.

6.2 Suggestions

By taking into consideration the finding of this study, the researcher has some suggestions for the follow-up:

6.1.1 EFL learners

It is suggested to EFL learners when using refusal strategies to the lecturer in polite way. It is often found direct refusal to reject lecturer instruction in the class. By using regret and indirect strategies are better to them and lecturer's response will be acceptance and in a good way.

6.1.2 Lecturer

The lecturer should be known the impolite meaning of EFL learners' refusal. It is useful for avoiding miss understanding in pragmatic competence in the classroom since some of EFL learners are from different countries and different culture.

6.1.3 Researcher

It is wise to attempt in holding the same kind of research with different subject in refusal strategies and in different angel of other aspect in analyzing refusal strategies. The findings have a function to the next researcher in order to know when refusal strategies are applied in different social roles, the result of it has significantly help to avoiding miss understanding the pragmatic competence in the classroom interaction between learners and lecturers, especially for international class where have different culture and different tradition.

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