INDONESIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' REFUSAL STRATEGIES IN EFL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

Refusals need to be performed in such a way; moreover, if they have to be performed by students, who have a lower power, to their teachers, who have a greater power. The objectives of this article are to find out 1) the language/s used by the senior high school students to realize their refusals in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes and 2) the refusal strategies used to refuse their teachers' directives. To reach the objectives, audio-recording ofthe English teaching learning process in a natural setting accompanied by observation was done in 37 classes at different senior high schools in Lampung Province. The recording took 2 x 90 minutes in each of the classes. The recordings were then transcribed into a written form and the refusals performed by the students as well as their contexts were identified.The identified refusals, whether they wereexpressed in English, Indonesian or local language, were classified by kinds of language,andrefusal strategies by using Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz's classification in Wijayanto (2013).The results showed that the students produced refusals in Indonesian and English to their teachers' directives. The refusal strategies employed by the students found in this study were'no directly', 'excuse, reason, explanation for not complying', 'statement of an alternative', 'promise of future action', 'avoidance by keeping silent', and 'avoidance by laughing'.

Keywords: directives, refusal strategies, direct and indirect refusals

Introduction

A number of studies on refusals in English performed by native speakers and non-native speakers of English have been done, e.g. Moaveni (2014), Tanck (2002).Moaveni (2014) conducted a study to find out refusals committedby native speakers and non-native speakers of English. Refusals of sixteen undergraduate American students and thirty-two international students were elicited through discourse completion technique (DCT). The results of this study indicate that when using email, all groups demonstrated preference for direct refusal. American females preferred expressions of gratitude and stating positive opinions, whereas American male provided reasons and alternatives. The international students used a greater variety of semantic formulas; however, they lacked positive opinions and providing alternatives. Additionally, the international students tended to use more regret than the American students. The international students (both male and female) also tended to use more specific excuses as compared to more general excuses used by the Americans. Tanck(2002) investigated refusals by native speakersof English (Americans) and and non-native speakers through DCT. Tanck found that English native speakers' refusals consisted of three components regardless of the same or higher social status, that is, 1) expression of regret, 'I am sorry'; 2) an excuse "I have to pick up a friend at the airport, 3) an offer of alternative, (Can we meet again tomorrow?On the other hand the non-native speakers of English (Chinese, Thai, Spanish students,etc.) did not give specific excuse but in other contexts (student-student) the students' refusals were similar to the native speakers', that is,providing specific excuses.

Refusals in English by non-native speakers of English were also investigated bySa'd, Hatam, and Qadermazi (2014), Yinling, 2012. Sa'd, Hatam, and Qadermazi (2014) studied the possible effect that exposure to English has had on the use of refusal strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners compared with those of non-English learners when refusing in

their native language, Persian, who responded to a Persian DCT. The results showed the first four most frequently used refusal strategies by both EFL and non-English groups were found to be "Non-performative statement" (in the case of direct strategies and in the form of "I can't"), "Statement of regret", "Excuse, reason or explanation" and "Attempt to dissuade interlocutor" (in the case of indirect strategies), and the most frequently used adjuncts to refusal strategies by both EFL and non-English groups were "Statement of positive opinions, feelings or agreement" and "Gratitude/Appreciation".

There have also been some studies on refusals in Indonesian by native speakers of Indonesian, for example, Chojimah (2015);Nadar, Wijana, Poedjosoedarmo, and Djawanai (2005), Sutrisna, Suandi, and Putrayasa (2015) as well as refusals in regional languages in Indonesia. i.e, Wijayanto (2013). Chojimah (2015) conducted a study to find out Indonesian university students' refusal strategies in Indonesian through DCT distributed to 161 students which resulted in 2898 corpus data. Data analysis suggested that in general, the refusal strategy across social-status relationships and across initiating acts is consistently patterned, that is, indirect strategy was more dominantly performed by the students. Criticizing, presenting other agenda, showing a preference, and stating self-limitation were the semantic formulas that were frequently used for refusing indirectly. The study proved that social-status does not influence much to the choice of refusal strategy, but it contributes to the choice of politeness strategies.

Nadar, Wijana, Poedjosoedarmo, and Djawanai (2005) studied refusals in English and Indonesian by analyzing 390 English refusal corpus and 390 Indonesian corpus. The result of the study indicated a tendency that English refusals consist of one or two speech acts while Indonesian refusals consist of 3 and 4 speech acts, that is a combination of offering, appreciation, reason expressing regret, expressing inability, request, asking for apology, agreement, suggestion, or reluctance.Refusals in both languages employ politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Lavinson (1987).

Most of the previous studies on refusal which can be reviewed use DCT to obtain the data and the subjects were university students or public. Therefore, this article presents a part of the results of a study conducted by Nurweni, Sudirman, & Mahpul (2015) investigating speech acts performed by senior high school teachers and students in EFL classes, that is, kinds of language to realize their refusals in EFL classes and refusal strategies they use to refuse their teachers' directives, where the data were collected from natural setting of EFL classes.

Method

The data of this descriptive study were elicited through audio-recording of the English teaching learning process in a natural setting in 37 different classes of senior high schools in Lampung Province and through observation. The recording took 2 x 90 minutes in each of the classes. The recordings were then transcribed into a written form and the refusals performed by the students and their contexts were identified. The identified refusals, whether they were expressed in English or Indonesian, were analyzed to see the refusal strategies employed by the students by using Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz's classification in Wijayanto (2013).

Results and Discussion

The results showed that 35refusals made by the students to their teachers' directives appeared in 8 of 37 classess observed. The students' refusals were realized in Indonesian and English. Although the teachers' directives were in English, some of the students' refusals were in Indonesian. Moreover, if the the teachers spoke Indonesian, the students' responses tended to be in Indonesian.

Table 1 Number of students' refusals by refusal strategy and language

No	Refusal Strategies	Indonesian	English	Nonverbal	Total
1	No directly	0	2	0	2
2	Excuse, reason, explanation for not complying	5	1	0	6
3	Statement of an alternative	1	0	0	1
4	Promise of future action	1	0	0	1
5	Avoidance by keeping silent	0	0	24	24
6	Avoidance by laughing	0	0	1	1
	Total	7	3	25	35

The refusal strategies employed by the students used non-performative verbs.Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz's classification of refusal starategies by using non-performative verbs in Wijayanto (2013) consists of 'no directly'; apology/regret. (e. g., 'I'm sorry ...'; wish (e.g. 'I wish I could go to your party'); 'excuse, reason, explanation for not complying'; 'statement of an alternative'; set conditions for future acceptance (e.g. 'if I am not busy, ...); 'promise of future action'; statement of principle (e.g. 'I never do business with friends'); Statement of philosophy. (e.g. 'One can't be too careful); attempt to dissuade interlocutor with some strategies such as stating negative consequences to the requester (e.g. 'I won't be any fun tonight.'); acceptance that functions as a refusal. Instead of refusing at first hand, interlocutors initiate their refusals by giving an acceptance to the invitation, offer and suggestion. (e.g. 'yes, but...; 'avoidance by means of verbal act (changing the subject) orby means of non-verbal act (silence or physical departure)'. However, the students in this study employed some of them, namely, 'no directly', 'excuse, reason, explanation for not complying', 'statement of an alternative', 'promise of future action', 'avoidance by keeping silent'. In addition to those kinds, it was found that a refusal strategy used by one of students was a combination of two kinds of the strategies, that is, 'no directly' followed by 'excuse, reason, explanation for not complying'.

No Directly. In speech event (1) below the students (Ss) said **No** when the teacher (T) asked them to close their English books because the teacherwanted to review the material which has just been presented.

(1) T: Ok, I want you to close your English books, *tolong* (please). Close your English books, please? Do you like to close your book? Like it or not.
Ss: No.
T: But I like it. *Ya* so sorry. Close your English books. Ok, before I continue with another report text, let me ask you some questions. What is report text?

Excuse, reason, explanation for not complying. In speech event 2, the teacher asked a student (Feby) to go back to her group, Shaka c'mon, but she refused by giving a reason that she and the other members have not finished.

(2) T: Feby, back to your group, Shaka c'mon!
S: We are not finish yet.

In speech event (3) below the students refused the teacher's invitation to work on the next material by giving an explanation that the teacher had given a homework in the previous meeting and as usual in the next meeting they expect that they together with the teacher will check the homework that they had done.

(3) T: *Lah kapan hafalnya.. Ya udah kalau nggak mau hafalan, kita lanjut ke material selanjutnya.* (So, when you would be able toremember.... Alright then if you do not want to recall, let's go on to the next material.)
Ss: *Ada PR, Pak.*(There is a homework, Sir.)

In speech event(4) the student refused the teacher's request by giving an excuse that the teacher he was the only student who was frequently asked by the teacher to answer or do something.

(4) T: Any question to Elf Course, Revo?
     S: Saya trus dari tadi. (I have frequently been asked since this class was started)

The student (Revo) refused to ask any questions by giving an excuse that he had frequently been asked before). It implied that the teacher should ask other students.

Statement of an alternative. The student refused her teacher's directive by providing an alternative as it can be seen in speech event (5) below:

(5) T: Ok. First group: Adelia, Bagus, Bagas, Dea. And then, *langsung cari temannya*! Please find your friends.
     S: *Pilih sendiri saja, Miss.*(We choose the members by ourselves, Miss.)
     T: No....no.... *Nggak, nggak...., ganti! Kamu bosen nanti kalau ketemu temanmu terus*. (No, No..., Change! You will get bored if you always meet the samefriends.)
     S: *Nggak*, Miss. (No, Miss)
     T: This is my rule. *Ini aturan saya. Silahkan ikuti.*(This is my rule. Please follow!)

In speech event (5) the studentindirectly refused grouping done by the teacher by supplying an alternative "*Pilih sendiri saja, Miss.*" but the teacher directly refused the student's alternative and giving a reason: "*Kamu bosen nanti kalau ketemu temanmu terus*". However, the student kept on refusing the teacher's command and so did the teacher.

Promise of future action. In speech event (6) below the students refused to do what the teacher asked her to by promising to do it later when she is able to recall.

(6) T: I hope you all make conversation one by one.
     S1: Apa si itu? (What is that?)
     T: *Yang belum hafalan ini*. Lia, Lia. (This is for those who have not got a turn to recall.)
     SL: *Belum, Pak.*(Not yet, Sir.)
     T: *Lah belum, belum, kapan majunya*? (Oh, not yet, not yet, when will you come in front?)
     SL: Ya nanti lho Pak, Pak. (Later, Sir, Sir.)

Avoidance by keeping silent. The students did not give any response to the teacher's request as it happened in speech event (7).

(7) T: Dwi, would you help me to clean the whiteboard first?
     S: (No response)

The student (Dwi) did not understand the meaning of the teacher's utterance 'Would you help me to clean the whiteboard first?', and therefore, he just kept silent when the teacher utterred it to him.The students avoided to the teacher's requests since they did not know what they had to give to the teacher. Here is the speech event that can show that.

(8) T: You know excursion?
     S: (No response)
     T: menceritakan tentang, kamu tamasya ya, an excursion, sebuah tamasya, suatu tamasya ok, and then, ..

Avoidance by laughing. The students avoided the teacher's request by laughing. This can be seen in the following speech event:

(9) T: Ok, today we are going to discuss about your experience ya, your ......ya. and than……in English we can call it as a ...? recount ya. ok...a...triana, do you have experience?
S: Yes, Sir
T: You have? Ok, would you like to tell me?
S: (laughing)
T: Ok, come on, come to the class, ya

The results of this study is in contrast with Moaveni's finding (2014) which showed that international students (non-native speakers of English) tended to use more regret than the American students. Besides that, Tanck (2002) findings showed that when refusing native speakers of English also used a set of devices, one of which is stating regret or sorry.

Conclusion

Refusals made by the students in EFL classes tended to be realized in Indonesian. This is likely due to their English which has not been well developed. Six kinds of refusal strategies, 'no directly', 'excuse, reason, explanation for not complying', 'statement of an alternative', 'promise of future action', 'avoidance by keeping silent', and 'avoidance by laughing' were employed by the students. The most frequently used strategy is avoiding by keeping silent, and if they expressed their refusals verbally, they didthem without any words of 'sorry' or adjuncts. This is in contrast with the previous findings on refusals by non-native speakers of English and does not conform with the way native speakers of English refuse. This implies that English teachers need to introducethe students how to refuse appropriately and how to respond if they do not understand what their teachers ask them to do in English.

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