

Male and Female Mitigation in Institutional Conversation Setting: Viewed from the Strategies in Speech Acts

Fatma, Sumarlam, Sarwiji Suwandi, and Ani Rakhmawati
Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Central of Java, Indonesia

Keywords: Directive Speech Acts, Communication Strategy, Mitigation Marker, Academic Situation.

Abstract: As a multidisciplinary field, pragmatics tries to explain meaning and language structure by referring to aspects beyond the language itself. Phenomena in using language still demands an investigation on sociopragmatic field completely. This research aims to investigate how academic society choose and utilize mitigation in using speech acts especially directive speech acts. Besides investigating the mitigation marker, the researcher also consider local language elements as a choice of communication strategy to show honor, intimacy, and other values. Mitigation choice used in the context of interaction between male and female becomes singular uniqueness in this field since it involves how they try to understand each other linguistically. This research uses sociopragmatic approach with descriptive qualitative as the method. Based on the use of linguistic strategies, several variables are found: (1) social distance between locutor and interlocutor determined based on the general variable, socio-economic background, and culture; (2) social stratification between locutor and interlocutor, (3) difference of mitigation between male and female in academic situation. The use of mitigation is not only about the locutor's choices to treat the interlocutor, but also about a reflection of social causes and psychological causes which resemble the character in expressing language. Through language, moral and value and behavior can be expressed; it includes saying thank you, discussing with someone older or younger, and replying someone in academic situation.

1 INTRODUCTION

In many countries with rich of local tradition like Indonesia, women have their own way to express refusal. Specifically, utterance used by women community has different choice of language compared to those used by men, including in expressing refusal (Al-rausan, Awal, & Salehudin, 2016: 19). This diversity of language is further used as a gender marker (Andrade, 2014:21). The specialness of women's refusal acts can also be seen in academic discourse context of female undergraduates in Central Sulawesi. The variety of studies on speech acts in academic discourse becomes more important and interesting due to its continuity and synergy towards the previous study done by Saddhono & Fatma (2016); Fatma, Sumarlam, Suwandi, & Rakhmawati (2017), dan Kasim, Sumarlam, Suwandi, & Rakhmawati (2017).

In the international level, similar research which studies on speech acts, gender, and ethnography of communication has been done by Hasim, Alam, & Yusoff (2014); Marshall (2015); Ying, Heng & Abdullah (2015); Khan & Gorski (2016); as well as

Brock, Borti, Frahm, Howe, Khasilova & Kalen (2017) on wide and multi-context scope. The refusal acts on spoken academic discourse by the ethnicity of Kaili, Bugis, and Manado in Central Sulawesi is shaped by the use of body language, sign language, implicit meaning, and the traits of the local accents and dialects themselves. The refusal acts is used by the women to express disagreement, unwillingness, reluctancy, or to do or not to do something. Thus, the variety of refusal acts viewed from gender, ethnography of communication, and the use of local accents are regarded as unique to be studied in this research.

Until now, several relevant research about gender, especially on the difference between men's and women's choice of languages is so many. It is proved simultaneously that research about discourse construct related to gender still becomes popular issue both in national and international levels. Some of the research is done by Yeganeh dan Ghoreyshi (2015), who study about the gender difference on the use of academic discourse marker in Iran; and Ishikawa (2015), about the difference of diction used by female and male undergraduates in Asia.

Similarly, in Indonesia, gender is also studied. Some of the noticeable research is conducted by Subandi (2006), who studies about language deviation on using men's choice of language by women as a form of resistance towards gender issue; Udasromo (2010), about gender study on intercultural society in France; and Kentary, Ngalm, and Prayitno (2015), about teacher's illocution viewed from gender and Javanese culture background.

Women are recognized by their grace, beauty, emotionalism, and care while men are perceived by their strength, rationality, manliness, and might. The shift of characteristics and traits from time to time and from a place to another, or being different from one class to another, is called as the concept of gender. The expounding of characteristics and traits is exchangeable (Fakih, 2013: 8). The concept of gender refers to the different characteristics of men and women shaped by the society and culture. The gender marker is caused by many factors including social and cultural construct, empowerment, and socialization (Genella, Stickels, Stickels, 2017: 1).

Such view on society causes marginalization on women not only in working place, but also in the house, society, and even culture. Gender is also a part of power and discourse in the social change. For Foucault (1980), power and knowledge are important, especially in matter of that discourse and knowledge can be the means to gain power. Therefore, through the process of using knowledge, power has been implemented into various aspects like the social, ethnic, sexual, and religion domination. Linguistics and feminism view explain the gender difference on linguistic behavior. Feminism theory has been widely used by experts in studying the relation between language and gender (Ogunsiji, Farinde, dan Adebisi: 2012). It is not only on the scope of society, but also on the level of discussion and the use of discourse which are used to comprehend the sole differences between men and women, especially in basic spoken refusal acts in power discourse context.

This study focuses on the refusal acts delivered by female undergraduates viewed from gender by using speech acts theory through the identification of speech forms – declarative, imperative, and interrogative. The focus of the research is based on the view that any form of utterance can represent and express certain act either directly or indirectly (Baydak, 2015: 16). The difference of expression also occurs on the female undergraduates' choice of language as well. Choice of language used in refusal acts towards men's speech tends to be different than that is used to women's.

2 METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative with the approach of SPEAKING ethnography of communication by Hymes (1996) Pragmatic, gender, and ethnographic views are used in this research to understand specific local conditions based on cooperative and politeness principles in which the female undergraduates use refusal acts. In this research, not all the eight factors are used to explain the problem. Communicative design, in the perspective of this research, is based on the use of language which contextually has meaning; and it is used to know the social communicative function (Mudiono, 2011: 162). The speech context pragmatically eases the language analysis process. This research emphasizes on the use of speech context which involves extralinguistic and linguistic context. The former refers to socio-cultural aspect while the latter emphasizes on how language is used. Praag, Stevens, and Houtte (2017: 393), on their research, state that in order to realize the communication purpose, the speaker is encouraged to use strategy and interpretation in communication. Therefore, the implementation of ethnography of communication method and gender perspective is used to expound the cultural background and social norms, like level of education, gender, social status, intimacy, and the others; in the real situation.

Qualitative approach is chosen since the data collected from the subjects are majorly about the subjects' communication process. This research is conducted in Tadulako University with its multi-ethnic context with the female undergraduates as the subjects of study – their multi-ethnicity is emphasized. The data are in the form of spoken speech in academic discourse (in lectures) both formally and non-formally. The data analysis uses Miles and Huberman's interactive model (2014: 15-24) which involves (1) data collection, (2) data reduction, (3) data display, and (4) data verification or conclusion drawing.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding depicts diversity of refusal acts used by the female undergraduates towards their college friends. By the diversity, reflected the characteristics of choice of language used by the female undergraduates in refusing their male college friends' speech. In terms of language use, it can be inferred that both socio-cultural and situational context influence their speech.

Hsia Lü (2017:14) states that there is a code marker in intercultural academic context which reflects individual's style of communication and verbal conflict. This equilibrium becomes the basis to meet the purpose of communication since one can paraphrase their social dimension by using their own language or the other languages and referring to the linguistic structure or their own linguistic ability (Hamers & Blanc, 2000:9).

The expounding of several findings on the process of interaction in Tadulako University, Palu is as follows.

3.1 The Forms of Refusal Acts Refusal Acts by Ordering

Utterance in the form imperative is a type of utterance that makes use of its real function. Briefly, Kunjana (2005:36) divides imperative sentence in Indonesian language into five classifications. They are (1) ordinary imperative sentence, (2) requesting imperative sentence, (3) permissive imperative sentence, (4) inviting imperative sentence, and (5) demanding imperative sentence.

In relation to refusal acts of imperative sentence, the interlocutor prefers to order the speaker back (Gildersleeve & Hernandez, 2012). It can be seen in the following dialogue.

- Speaker : Tinggal *sadikiini* kupon. *Ambe jo!*
(a)
(there is only few coupons left, Just take it!)
- Interlocutor : *Kase akang* yang *laeng jo.* (b)
(give the coupons to others)
- Speaker : *Baku ganti lah kan torang te apa!*
(c)
(why don't we do it alternately!)
- Interlocutor : *liatugas* masing-masing *jo. Nyanda salah ngana bilang pa kita itu!*
(just do our own responsibility. It is not me that you should give an order to!) (d)

In the above dialogue, the speech of Interlocutor is a form of refusal acts shown by ordering Speaker back. The thing that can be the reference is the existence of imperative marker in Manado Language which is the word *jo*. Moreover, it is supported by speech act context. The context that underlies that refusal acts is the setting, topic, and participants. In their research findings, Su (2017: 72) and Pallawa (2013: 176) state that there are various languages that can be used in a speech act. Based on the

context, the use of local language gives more pragmatics implication to Interlocutor. The use of local language shows Indonesian multilingualism means that can be retained to be used in informal communication without neglecting its good language structure.

3.2 Refusal Acts by Giving Comment

Speaker (Male) : Apa *depe* beda *katu'* itu puisi kontemporer dulu *deng* sekarang, Mala?
(What is the difference between contemporary poetry in the past and nowadays, Mala?)

Interlocutor (Female) : Ada di halaman berapa itu *depe* penjelasan. Buka saja itu bukunya W.S Rendra yang *torang so* kopi kemarin, *dang.*
(The explanation can be found in W.S Rendra's book that has been copied. It must be on a certain page.)

Yang penting *nganapahami* dulu itu kontemporer *koa'* apa.
(the most important thing is that we should understand what contemporary is first)

Without using any negation marker, the above dialogue seems to be a common declarative sentence. However, based on the underlying context, Interlocutor refuses the order by explaining or commenting that explaining the meaning of contemporary is more important than asking. That speech, semantically, shows refusal acts by using direct declarative sentence functioning as direct refusal.

In many definitions, culture describes many things including how to represent each speech. Speech reflects the speaker's identity. In line, Ogunsiji, Farinde, and Adebiyi (2012: 203) describe that language (including the speech act) which has to do with maintaining interaction, power, and interpersonal norm is different from male and female. Male speaker marks his every speech act with powerful speech while female speaker marks his every speech act with powerless speech.

3.3 Refusal Acts by Satirizing

In expressing refusal, there is difference between undergraduates if the topic of the speech is related to subject matter that tends to be rigid, serious, and formal. However, when the topic has nothing to do with certain subject matter or academic things, the undergraduates' speech is more fluent. Sometimes, it becomes unstructured and involves satire that ends up on refusal acts. This thing is explained by Mills (2003: 227) that there is a certain stereotype between male and female in interpreting the form of tendency in formal context or on topic discussed, and whether the female participant uses face threatening act or not.

Refusal acts by satirizing is expressed by using speech that has different meaning to maintain the speaker's feeling, face saving act.

- Speaker(Male) : Ki, **So te** ada bensinnya barangkali ini **sampe** sigma. (a)
(Ki, we run out of gasoline to go to Sigma street.)
- Speaker (Female) : Perasaan baru kemarin diisi ini **ech**. (b)
(I think I have just filled the gasoline.)
- Interlocutor (Female) : **Samadeng** bohong. Ini **ngana pake** lagi, **bemana** mo Full. (c)
(It is a waste since you use it again, the gasoline will not be fully filled.)
- Speaker (Male) : **So itu**. (d)
(I see.)

Based on the underlying context, sentence (b) is an indirect refusal acts in the form of irony. It is supported by sentence (d). Refusal acts involving satire is expressed by using a sentence having different form and intention to perform face saving act.

3.4 Refusal Acts Strategy and Refusal Acts Context

Refusal acts can be expressed directly or indirectly. Direct speech is a type of speech in which the form and the intention are the same (Halim dan Razak, 2014: 21). Declarative sentence is used to state, imperative sentence is used to order, and interrogative sentence is used to ask questions. It is different from indirect speech. The strategy used in indirect speech is functioning a certain sentence to

convey intention that is different from its form. Interrogative sentence, for example, is used to order, or declarative sentence is used to refuse, etc.

In his explanation, Mills (2003: 244) states that female speakers used feminine strategy to show her politeness in such a way that is different than male speakers. The following is the indirect strategy example used by female undergraduate to refuse Interlocutor. One of the examples is as follows.

- Speaker (Female) : Jam berapa selesai? (a)
(what time will you finish it?)
- Speaker (Male) : Kutunggu **makinah**?(b)
(I will wait, ok?)
- Interlocutor(Female) : **Sampe Sore kamasuk**, tapi **lyee** nanti saya liat dulu bemana bisajie tidak.) (c)
(I will work till evening, but let see if I can go or not)

In the context of the above dialogue, there is refusal acts in sentence (c) though there is the use of honorific in Bugis as a politeness marker or as a way to show respect to the interlocutors. By using dialect, the intention can be conveyed. Found by Schwarz & Shahr (2017: 115) in their study about classroom talk, it is found that certain dialect is needed to show acceptance or refusal by using specific opinion. Based on social and cultural factor, it can be concluded that social status and race are factors and reasons to convey indirect refusal acts (Göçtü, R. and Kir, M.: 2014).

This thing is emphasized by Imai, Kanero, dan Masuda's (2016: 70-71) finding that language is influenced by the place where our culture is formed. Culture and language influence one's word choices. Based on the social status underlying the speech, the intimacy between Speaker and Interlocutor can be seen through the use of linguistic marker *lye* that means *iya* in Bahasa or *ok* in English. That linguistic marker is usually used to speak to older people or used to break the ice though the previous sentence contains refusal to Speaker offer. This is used by the female undergraduate to maintain Interlocutor's feeling as well as considering the norm and culture.

The intimate relation between Speaker and Interlocutor shows solidarity and care supported by the same cultural background. Secova (2017:3) explains that the combination of social background and linguistic conditioning between two languages influence pragmatics function in a certain speech. Refusal acts is actually not initiated by the speaker. Instead, it is determined by the interlocutor based on

the previous order involving politeness strategy and social status among interlocutors (Morkus, 2014:87). Besides, the other things considered are ethnicity and gender between Speaker and Interlocutor. The following is the example.

- Speaker (Male) : **Kase** pinjam dulu, **nga pe doi** Sra. (a)
: (Isra, Lend me your money)
- Interlocutor (Female) : Kita saja mo ba bayar ini, Napa kost ba tunggu e. (b)
(I should pay for my boarding house, I have been billed)
- Speaker (Male) : Pinjam. **Nya'** kita minta. (c)
: (Lend me. I'm not asking for free)
- Interlocutor (Female) : **Ede, pe enak e. Nga** kira **kita** pegawai pegadaian ini. (d)
(Hmm, no way, I'm not pawnshop employee) (smiling)

The context of the speech emphasizes the context that is related to setting, topic, and the relation among participants, Speaker dan Interlocutor. The effectiveness of oral communication can be related to some communication variables or components that are interpersonal ideology, situation, the relation between interlocutors, setting, intention, and the intimacy (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Nur 2009: 23). In communicating, female speakers tend to utter linguistics forms that make the speech act more polite (Göçtü & Kir, 2014: 282-283).

Some people that listen to refusal acts in sentence (b) and (c) may feel it to be rude since the female speaker utters *enak saja!* (No way!). However, considering the context and the intimacy between Speaker and Interlocutor, the female undergraduate's direct refusal acts is polite. Intimacy is expressed based on the shared culture. Besides, the female speech as stated by Lakof (2001) is characterized by lexical marker, question tag, and high intonation in uttering declarative sentence. They use polite form and avoid the use of swearing words.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Refusal acts uttered by female speakers clearly shows refusal whether it is expressed through satire

or other more understandable words. The use of satire in refusal acts is not intended to satirize. Instead, it is used to show care to the interlocutor and to create more comfortable situation so that fun conversation can take place (Filippova, 2015: 209; Hassan, Z.M, 2014). In a different context, Nur (2007) has been explored speech components used by female and male speakers' in the form of informal refusal, invitation, and request.

Potentially, as a kind of verbal expression, refusal acts is influenced by intimacy, sociocultural, academic context, and multiethnic context between the interlocutors. The forms, strategies, and contexts of female speakers' refusal acts are indicated by negation markers as *nyanda'* and *te*. Negation marker is equal with the word *tidakin* Bahasa and the word *no* in English. Generally, while the communication takes place, the female undergraduate faces informal situation. Therefore, the use of the word *tidakis* rare. The tendency to use the word *tidakis* simplified by using the *nda*. This shows how negation marker *nyada'* and *nda'* is used in refusal acts. Moreover, there is the use of honorific *honorifik* *kithat* means *kitain* Indonesian and we in English to respect older interlocutor which is Interlocutor though there is the same race and ethnic to express refusal acts between Speaker and Interlocutor. In addition, the topic and the participants involved in the communication influence the refusal acts chosen by female undergraduates.

REFERENCES

- Andrade, M.S. (2014). The Successful Educational Journeys of American Indian Women: Forming Aspirations Higher Education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 16(1), 21-38.
- Al-rousan, M. Y., Awal, N.M., & Salehuddin, K. (2016). Compliment Responses among Male and Female Jordanian University Students. *Gema online*, 16(1), 19-34.
- Baydak, A.V., Scharioth, C., & Il'yashenco. I.A. (2015). Interaction of Language and Culture in the Process of International Educational. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 215, 14-18.
- Brock, C.H., Borti, A., Frahm, T., Howe, L., Khasilova, D., Kalen., K.V. (2017). Employing Autoethnography to Examine Our Diverse Identities: Striving Towards Equitable and Socially Just Stances in Literacy Teaching and Research. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 19(1), 105-125.
- Brown & Levinson. Esther (Ed). (1987). *Universal in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Brown & Levinson. (1987). *Politeness*. New York: Cambridge University.
- Fatma, Sumarlam, Suwandi, S., & Rakhmawati, A. (2017). Showing Respect in A Multicultural Society in Central Sulawesi: A Sociopragmatics Study of Directives Speech Acts in A Local Language in University Academic Environment. Special Issue Edition of *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (S)*, 25(S), 99-114.
- Fakih, M. (2013). *Gender Analysis & Social Transformation*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Filippova, E. (2014). Developing appreciation of Irony in Canadian and Czech discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 74, 209-223.
- Gallena, S., Stickels, B., & Stickels, E. (2017). Gender Perception After Raising Vowel Fundamental and Formant Frequencies: Considerations for Oral Resonance Research. *Journal of Voice*, 1-10.
- Gildersleeve, R.E., Hernandez, S. (2012). Producing (im)Possible Peoples: Policy Discourse Analysis, In-State Resident Tuition and Undocumented Students in American Higher Education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 14(2), 1-19.
- Göçtü, R. and Kir, M. (2014). Gender Studies in English, Turkish, and Georgian languages in terms of grammatical, semantic and pragmatic Levels. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 158, 282-287.
- Hamers, J.F., & Blanc, M.H.A. (2000). *Bilingualism and Bilingualisme*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Halim A., N.A., and Razak A., N. (2014). Communication Strategies of Women Leader in Entrepreneurship. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 118, 21-28.
- Hasim, N.M.H., Alam, S.S., & Yusoff, N.M. (2014). Relationship between Teacher's Personality, Monitoring, Learning Environment, and Students' EFL Performance. *Gema Online*, 14(1), 101-117
- Hassan, Z.M. 2014. Language Contextualisation and Culture. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 136, 31-35.
- Hsia Lü., P. (2017). When Different "Codes" Meet; Communication Style and Conflict in Intercultural Academic Meetings. *Language & Communication*, 1-14.
- Hymes, D. (1996). *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Imai, M., Kanero, J., and Masuda, T. (2016). The Relation Between Language, Culture, and Thought. *Current Opinion in Psychology Scient Direct* (8), 70-77.
- Ishikawa, Y. (2015). Gender Different in Vocabulary Use by University Students. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 593-600.
- Kasim, F., Sumarlam., Suwandi, S. & Rakhmawati, A. (2017). A Cross-cultural and Intercultural of Indirectness Speech Act: The Use of – Interference Local Language in Academic Discourse at Central of Sulawesi. *International Journal of Pedagogy and Teacher Education*, 2, 117- 126.
- Kentary, A., Ngalim, A., & Prayitno, J.H. (2015). Teaching Teacher's Discourse Behind the Culture of Java: Gender Perspective. *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora*, 16(1).
- Khan, M., & Gorski. (2016). The Gendered and Heterosexist Evolution of the Teacher Exemplar in the United States: Equity Implications for LGBTQ and Gender Nonconforming Teachers. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 18(2), 15-38.
- Kunjana, R. (2005). *Imperative Politeness in Indonesian Language*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Lakoff, R. (2001). *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harper & Row Publisher.
- Marshall, P.L. (2015). Using My 'You Lie Moment' to Theorize Persistent Resistance to Critical Multicultural Education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education* 17(2), 117-133.
- Morkus, N. (2014). Refusal in Egyptian Arabic and American English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 70, 86-107.
- Mudiono, A. (2011). Ethnographic Study of Communication of Indonesian Assertive Illocution in Informal Education. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 2011, Vol 18 (2).
- Nur, Y. (2009). *Women's Language in Contextual (A Pragmatics Review)*. Malang: Surya Pena Gemilang Publishing.
- Nur, Y. (2007). *Expression of Refusal Speech in a Gender Perspective (A Theoretical Review)*. Malang: Surya Pena Gemilang Publishing.
- Miles, B. Matthew., A. Michael Huberman. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Penerjemah: Tjejep Rohendi Rohidi. Jakarta: UI Press.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and Politeness (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ogunsiji, Y., Farinde, & Adebisi. (2012). Language, Gender, and Culture. *British Journal of Art and Social Sciences* 6(2), 202-210.
- Pallawa, B.A. (2013). Function Words of Andio Language Viewed from Syntactical Aspect. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(2), 175-185.
- Praag, L.V., Stevens, P.A.J., & Houtte, M.V. (2017). How Humor Makes or Breaks Student-Teacher Relationships: A Classroom Ethnography in Belgium. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 393-401.
- Saddhono, K., & Fatma. 2016. The Form and Function of Local Language in Directive Speech Act at A University in Central of Sulawesi. *Jurnal Lingua Cultura*, 10 (1), 37-42.
- Secova, M. 2017. Discourse-pragmatics Variation in Paris French and London English: Insight from General Extenders. *Journal of Pragmatics* 114 (2017) 1-15.
- Schwarz, B.B., & Shahar, N. (2017). Combining the Dialogic and the Dialectic: Putting Argumentation into Practice in Classroom Talk. *Journal Learning, Culture, and Social Interaction* 12, 113-132.
- Su, H. (2017). Local grammar of speech act An exploratory study. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 111, 72-83.
- Subandi. (2006). Deviation of Male Language Use by Female Speakers as a Form of Reflection on the

- Condition of Mental Contrast to Gender Differences. *LENTERA Jurnal Studi Perempuan*, 2(2).
- Udasmoro, W. (2010). *Discourse Subaltern* in the Intercultural Society: Observing the Gender Relations of Hijab and Woman Headed in France. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences* 14 (1), 1-22.
- Yeganeh, T.F., & Ghoreyshi, M., S. (2015). Exploring Gender Differences in the Use of Discourse Markers in Iranian Academic Research Article. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 192, 684-689.
- Ying, H.S., Heng, C.H., Abdullah, A.N. (2015). Language Vitality of Malaysian Languages and Its Relation to Identity. *Gema Online*, 15(2), 119-136.

