

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the summary of findings and the implications drawn from the study in relation to refusals will be looked at. In the beginning part of this chapter, the summary is discussed first followed by implications and recommendations for further studies. Generally, this study gives an insight into the different refusal strategies used by teenagers when they attempt to refuse.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The analysis of this research was done based on one particular set of refusing situation, which is between the university students and their lecturer. The researcher stated three research questions in chapter one. The three research questions are answered accordingly based on the data collected.

Research Question 1: What direct or indirect strategies are used by Malaysian teenagers to make refusals?

Based on the analysis done, the researcher identified two types of refusal strategies that were used by the subjects to make refusals namely the direct and indirect strategies as proposed by Beebe et. al. (1990). Out of a total of 80 subjects, 49 of them were direct while 31 were indirect. The two strategies were further categorized into several sub-

categories. For the direct strategy, there were two sub-categories which comprise performative and non-performative strategies. For performative strategy, there were a total of 2 subjects who used this strategy when they made refusals while for non-performative strategy which comprises “No”, with its subcategories, and negative willingness or ability, there were a total of 21 and 26 subjects who used them respectively.

Where the performative strategy was concerned, both of the subjects rejected the researcher’s request by mentioning that they do not have confidence in their command of the English Language. Apart from that, for the subjects who used the non-performative strategy, most of them refused because they did not have the confidence needed to be on the stage. The researcher gathered these responses after she continued asking for the reason when the subjects refused her request. Apart from confidence, the subjects also rejected because they felt that they did not have the command of the English Language needed for them to accept the request of the researcher. Out of the 49 subjects who used the direct strategy, 43 of them were the weaker users of the English Language (based on their English in SPM) where they scored a 6C for the paper. Based on the data for direct strategy used by the subjects, it can be concluded that the subjects used the direct strategy because they did not have the command of the English Language needed to refuse the researcher’s request in any other manner.

On the other hand, the researcher indentified five sub-categories (see chapter 4) for indirect strategies used by the subjects namely avoidance, unspecific or indefinite reply, statement of alternative, excuse, reason or explanation and non-verbal strategy. Out of the 5 sub-categories, avoidance is the indirect strategy that was used by most of the subjects, which consists of 12 subjects. This is followed by 9 subjects who gave

acceptance that functions as a refusal or disagreement, 4 who gave statement of alternative as well as excuse, reason and explanation respectively and 2 for non-verbal strategies which comprises laughter and hesitation.

In the sub-category of avoidance, the data suggests that all the subjects apply the strategy of avoidance by repeating part of the request. This means that the subjects repeat what the researcher said. Generally, when a statement is repeated, it means that the listener wants to confirm if he or she has misheard the statement. However, in some of the replies by the subjects, the data suggests that the subjects repeated the statement to buy time. They seem to do this in order to gain more time to think of a suitable reply to be given to the researcher as in some parts of the data, the subjects were seen not to be paying attention to the answers given by the researcher.

In the next sub-category, the data suggests that the subjects apply the strategy of acceptance that functions as a refusal or disagreement by giving unspecific or indefinite reply. In most parts of the data, the subject gave the answer “don’t know” instead of refusing directly. Based on this, it can be said that the subjects were not sure on how to react to the question posted by the researcher. They did not want to accept the request but at the same time, they did not want to refuse. Actually, the subjects did not realize that by not refusing, they are saving the researcher’s as well as their positive and negative face as refusal is a face threatening act.

In the sub-category of statement of alternative, the subjects gave the researcher a few alternatives in reply to the researcher’s question. In this case, the subjects seemed to be assisting the researcher in solving the problem while at the same time, they did not want to be a part of the solution. Therefore, in most of the replies, the subjects actually

suggested their friends' names to be put into consideration. Again, by doing this, the subjects are employing the face saving act.

In the sub-category of excuse, reason and explanation, there were 4 subjects who employed this strategy. All of them said that they do not have any experience in being an emcee and therefore, that seemed to be a strong reason for the researcher not to choose them to be the emcee. All these are seen as an excuse or a reason which are all followed by an explanation of why the researcher should not choose them.

In the last sub-category, which is the non-verbal strategy, there were two types on non-verbal strategy involved which is laughter and hesitation, which consists of one subject each. In the first one, the subject employed the laughter strategy where she responded to the question posted by the researcher with a laugh, without uttering a word. At first, the researcher was not sure whether or not she understood the question posted as she kept laughing. Ultimately, the researcher realized that the subject did not understand the question being posted. On the other hand, the subject who hesitated kept delaying the answer by asking a lot of question and giving a lot of excuses. The data also suggests that the subject is employing the face saving act to save the researcher's as well as his or her own face.

Research Question 2: Does language proficiency have an impact on the strategy chosen?

Based on the analysis that was done, it has clearly shown that the subjects' language proficiency plays an important part in the refusal strategy chosen by the subjects. Out of the 40 subjects who scored "1A" in the SPM English, 72.5% of them used the indirect strategy when making refusals. Apart from that, out of the 40 subjects who

scored “6C” in the SPM English, 95% of them used the direct strategy when making refusal. This suggests that the language proficiency of the subjects plays a vital role on the strategy chosen in making refusals. This is because those with better language competence were able to express themselves better because they had the vocabulary as compared to those who are weaker in the language. They were able to construct convincing statements with the knowledge of the language that they have before actually refusing the researcher’s request. They were actually trying to save the researcher’s face as well as their own faces by not refusing directly. On the other hand, the subjects who rejected the researcher’s request by using the direct strategy are those who were weaker in the language. This shows that the subjects did not have the language competency needed for them to reject the researcher’s request. By rejecting the researcher’s request directly, they were able to put the message across where the researcher understood what they wanted.

Research Question 3: Does the number of turns taken reflect the language proficiency?

The data revealed that for the subjects who employed the direct strategy, they took fewer turns to refuse and for those who applied the indirect strategy, they took more turns to reject the researcher’s request. Based on the subjects’ background, most of the students who used the indirect strategy are subject who scored “1A” for their SPM English. This suggests that the subjects are better in the language compared to others and therefore, they were able to express themselves better as compared to those who were weaker in the language. On the other hand, most of the subjects who employed the direct strategy seemed to be weaker in the command of the English Language. Based on their background, most of them scored a C for their SPM English. This suggests that

these subjects have low proficiency and therefore they are direct as they do not have the language proficiency or ability to be indirect which requires more turns.

The analysis in chapter 4 has shown that a majority of the direct strategies used by the Malaysian teenagers to make a refusal was performed mainly through 1 turn. Apart from that, most of the indirect strategies performed by the Malaysian teenagers had occurred through more than 1 turn, with some refusal occurring only at the 5<sup>th</sup> turn. As has been said, the longer the turn, the more indirect the strategy used and the shorter the turn the more direct the strategy used.

From the analysis, it shows that only speakers with the language proficiency are capable of carrying on the conversation and therefore, the direct strategies applied by the speakers had occurred in the shortest of turn taking procedures. In contrast, much of the indirect strategies identified in this study had happened through a process of longer turns.

## **5.2 Implications of the Study**

The findings of this study reveals that the speech act of refusal is a face threatening act where serious considerations should be taken when employing it. However, the data also shows that the level of proficiency of a language, which in this case, the English Language, also influences the strategy that is being chosen. Therefore, the strategy chosen would also indirectly indicate a person's language proficiency because based on this study, most of the subjects who have low level of proficiency of the language employed the direct strategy and thus fewer turns were involved in making their refusal. On the other hand, the subjects who have high level proficiency of the language

employed the indirect strategy and more turns were involved in the attempt to make refusals.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

Researchers could conduct studies on refusals between male and female Chinese teenagers in Malaysia. Most researches that have been conducted so far involve Chinese and Japanese speakers. The research can be done with male and female participants of certain age group and comparison can be made on the strategies used by the two genders. This research will reveal information on the strategies used by male and female speakers leading to identification of similarities and between them. This study has identified various strategies used by teenagers to refuse. Thus, differences between the strategies used by the males and females in their attempt to refuse can be analysed. Do the males and females use similar or different strategies? The number of turns they take to refuse can also be looked into.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

This study has identified various strategies that are used in refusals by teenagers. The researcher used Bebee et al's (1990) framework and both the direct and indirect strategies were employed based on the data. All the subjects have employed the strategy that was proposed by Bebee et. al (1990) and most of them employed the direct strategy of refusal.

This data analysis revealed that the teenagers employ different refusal strategies according to their language proficiency. For example, the subjects who are weaker in

the language would be more direct as the proficiency level would affect the way he or she explains things. By being direct, the speaker has no intention of threatening the face of the hearer but to make sure that a clear message could be sent across. This is because they do not have the proficiency needed in explaining things. This analysis has helped the researcher to gain a better insight of refusal strategies used by teenagers in Malaysia.