

8 PREFERRED AND DISPREFERRED RESPONSES TO OFFERS AND REQUESTS

8.0 Introduction

The previous two chapters have examined how offers (Chapter 6) and requests (Chapter 7) are linguistically realized to encode politeness. In uttering these acts, S intends for H to accept the offer or comply with the request. On the other hand, H can, for various reasons, decline/refuse the offer/request. This chapter looks at how offers and requests are accepted/granted and declined/refused. The table below shows the number (yielded from the corpus) of preferred and dispreferred responses to these speech acts.

Table 8.1: No. of preferreds and dispreferreds

| Speech act \ Type of response | Preferred | Dispreferred |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Offer | 21 | 26 |
| Request | 31 | 23 |
| Total | 52 | 49 |

Conversation analysts have identified two types of response available to a speaker when presented with an offer or request: one is to accept and the other is to refuse. Accepting the offer or request is the preferred response while refusing it is the dispreferred response. However, “the notion of preference ... does not refer to

speakers' or hearers' individual preferences. Rather it is a structural notion that corresponds closely to the linguistic concept of markedness" (Levinson, 1983:307). This concept of preference organization is illustrated by the contrastive examples below:

- (1) *Levinson, 1983:307*
Child: Could you .hh could you put on the light for my .hh room
Father: Yep
- (2) *Levinson, 1983:308*
C: Um I wondered if there's any chance of seeing you tomorrow
 sometime (0.5) morning or before the seminar
 (1.0)
R: Ah um(.) I doubt it
C: Uhm huh
R: The reason is I'm seeing Elizabeth

In both examples, the first part constitutes a request. In (1), the request is granted "without significant delay and with a minimal granting component "Yep"" while in (2), the request is refused "after a one second delay, and then, after further delay components (*ah um*, the micro-pause ()), by a non-minimal turn ("I doubt it"), followed by an account or reason for rejecting the request for an appointment" (Levinson, 1983:308). In (1), the granting of the request is the preferred second and in (2), the rejection is the dispreferred second.

B and L (1987) have suggested that the choice between these two alternative responses is determined, to a certain extent, by face considerations. In order to address face concerns, acceptances of offers and requests are preferred over refusals.

By accepting the offer or request, the offeree/requestee communicates that he shares the offerer/requester's want to have his offer accepted or his request complied with, and thus pays him positive face. According to Pomerantz (cited in B and L, 1987:38), preferred responses are "direct, often abbreviated and structurally simple, and typically immediate". These features of preferreds are also present in Bahasa Melayu when offers are accepted and requests granted. The next section will discuss how these acts are linguistically realized.

8.1 Preferred Responses to Offers and Requests

As stated above, offers are accepted and requests granted without delay using short responses that are simple in structure. Bahasa Melayu also displays these features when a speaker responds positively to an offer or request. Apart from a verbal response, the data also showed non-verbal responses where acceptance of the offer, in particular, was demonstrated by physical action, e.g. the hearer sat down or lifted the cup/glass to drink when invited to do so. Below are some typical responses used in BM to indicate the acceptance of an offer (A offers/invites and B accepts):

(3) A: ...*Minumlah air tu!*
...Do have a drink!

B & C: *Ya,ya! Ya,ya!*
Yes, yes! Yes, yes!

- (4) A: *Eh, duduklah Bang Majid.*
Oh, do sit Bang Majid.
- B: *Ya, ya, baik, terima kasih.*
Yes, yes, okay, thank you.
- (5) A: *Ini airnya, pak cik. Jemputlah.*
This is your drink, pak cik. Please help yourself.
- B: *Ya, ya, terima kasih.*
Yes, yes, thank you.
- (6) A: *Petang nanti awak singgahlah ke rumah. Saya tunggu.*
Drop by the house this afternoon. I'll be waiting.
- B: *Baiklah!*
Okay!

The words *ya* (“yes”) and *baik(lah)* (“okay”) as used in the utterances above typify the preferred responses to offers. These are often followed by the word *terima kasih* or “thank you” which conveys S’s appreciation of H’s offer. In utterances (3) through (5), *ya* is repeated a few times probably to emphasize S’s acknowledgment of the offer. The examples above involved offers that can be immediately accepted. In instances where the offer can only be accepted at a later time, i.e. a future invite, the recipient of the offer then promises acceptance by saying *insyallah* (“if God wills it”). Below are two examples:

- (7) A: *Senang-senang datang ke tempat kami. Ubi kayu dan jagung tu adalah.*
Come over to our place when you’re free. There are tapioca and corn.
- B: *Insyallah kalau lapang sampailah saya ke sana.*
If God wills it, I’ll get there if I’m free.

- (8) A: *Kalau encik sampai ke kampung kami jangan lupa singgah ke rumah saya di belakang surau itu aje.*
If you're in our village, don't forget to drop by my house which is just behind the prayer house.
- B: *Insyallah.*
If God wills it.

To Malays, who are also Muslims, the Arabic phrase *insyallah* as a response to an offer is understood as follows: I will make every attempt to accept the offer but in the event that I am unable to do so, it is because God has not willed it. In short, *insyallah* implies conditional acceptance. Some preferred responses in BM are also followed by the recipient's acknowledgment of the offerer's generosity or the trouble the recipient has caused the offerer. Utterances (9) and (10) below illustrate these two forms of face-oriented strategy, respectively:

- (9) A: *...Eh, ini ada pengat sedikit untuk ibu...*
...Oh, here's (a little) dessert for you...
- B: *Terima kasih nak, engkau terlalu baik pada ibu...*
Thank you my child, you're too kind to me...
- (10) A: *Silakan, silakan minum.*
Please...please have a drink.
- B: *Ah, banyak benar menyusahkan encik.*
Oh, I've caused you so much trouble, sir.

In terms of the level of power and distance, speaker B in utterance (9) is of high P (the base of power is age) yet close to speaker A. In (10), B is of low P (social position being the power factor) and distant from A. Speaker B's recognition of A's generosity in utterance (9) could be attributed to B's want to pay A positive

face while B's mention of the imposition on A in (10) pays him negative face since the utterance is a form of apology. Although accepting the offer enhances the offerer's positive face (rather than threatens it), speaker B's compliment of A in (9) is perhaps due to their closeness to each other while B's apology for imposing on A in (10) is due to the distant relationship between them. The reference to the distance between both speakers is also evident in the use of *nak* (my child) and *encik* (sir) in examples (9) and (10), respectively.

It has been mentioned in chapter 1 (see p. 3) that there is a variety of language expressions in BM that can be used to communicate politeness due to the indirectness inherent in them. Some of these are idioms, adage, hints, and innuendos. Thus, it is not uncommon to respond to an offer by using figurative language when accepting the offer. Such responses would necessarily be long, complex in structure and indirect, and thus, would deviate from the expected features of preferreds. A search of the corpus yielded only one instance of this use. The extract is given below:

- (11) [level of social distance is high and A's relative power over B is low; figurative language underlined]

A: *Sudi pulalah kiranya datang ke pondok kecil kami di hulu. Tapi tempat kami, encik, tak adalah rumah batu beratap genting. Cuma yang ada, dinding papan beratap rumbia.*
Come to our hut upcountry, if you like. Our place doesn't have brick houses with tiled roofs, sir. All we have are wooden walls with thatched roofs.

B: *Hai, bukan rumah yang hendak menyambut orang datang. Orang di dalamnya. Kasar orangnya gelaplah rumahnya. Baik orangnya berserilah rumahnya.*

Well, it is not the house which receives guests. It's the people in it. If the people are coarse, then the house is unwelcoming. If they are good, then it is welcoming.

Due to B's high P, A's offer is made by giving deference to B in the form of belittling her house which A is inviting B to visit. In accepting the invitation, B indirectly states that she is not concerned with the type of house B lives in because it does not reflect the type of occupants residing in it. Here, B has not only addressed A's positive face by accepting the invitation but B has also done so by complimenting A's humble disposition. B's use of indirectness in paying A positive face, in terms of the effort that is expended in the use of figurative language, encodes the sincerity by which the invitation is accepted more than politeness. It is the perception of the Malays that when acceptance of offers (and also requests, as discussed next) is indirectly realized using figurative language this is done to encode sincerity.

As for complying with a request, this act is linguistically realized using simple structures, much like accepting an offer. Below are some examples where A makes a request and B complies with it:

(12) A: *Aziah nak pinjam ini, ya?*
I want to borrow this, okay?

B: *Ambillah.*
Do take (it).

(13) A: *Aziah baca, ya?*
I'll read (it), okay?

B: *Bacalah...*
Do read (it)...

(14) A: *Encik hanya menokok lima ribu ringgit sahaja lagi.*
You only add just/merely five thousand ringgit more.

B: *Baiklah!...*
Okay!...

For utterances (12) and (13), B grants the request using an imperative structure. The imperative verb, *ambil* and *baca* in (12) and (13), respectively represents the type of action requested by A; specifically a request for permission to carry out a certain action. This form of short and direct response (i.e. characteristic of preferreds) is, however, “softened” by the emphatic particle *lah*. The use of *lah*, while providing emphasis to the verb, also deemphasizes the directness inherent in such a sentence-type. This particle appears to provide a Malay speaker who wants to comply with a request with a direct response but without the abruptness that is sometimes associated with such a response in BM. In terms of intonation, a fall in pitch on the syllable *lah* also functions to “soften” the inherent directness of a direct response. In (14), *baiklah* signals B’s agreement to A’s request. In situations where the request can only be performed at a later time, the preferred response often includes the phrase *insyallah*. Here, *insyallah* is read in the same way as that for accepting offers. Below is an example:

(15) A: *Tolonglah encik. Harapan kami kepada encik sajalah.*
Do help sir. You're our only hope.

B: *Insyallah, akan saya tolong.*
If God wills it, I'll help.

When requests were indirectly made (e.g. takes the form of questions), it was found that some preferred responses were phrased in the form of answers to these questions. Consider the following examples:

(16) A: *Kalau dia memberi apa-apa berita pada kau, dapatkah kau menyampaikan pada aku...?*
If he sends you any news, can/could you let me know...?

B: *Ya, kalau aku dapat...*
Yes, if I can...

(17) A: *...jika kiranya kau mendengar apa-apa pula daripada...Kuan, bolehkah kau katakan padaku?*
...if you hear anything from...Kuan, can/could you tell me?

B: *Tentu boleh Swee Lan. Aku akan beri berita pada kau...kalau aku dapat.*
Of course Swee Lan. I'll give you the news...if I can.

The responses given by speaker B in (16) and (17) above answer speaker A's question about B's ability to perform an act, i.e. to give information. Since A's request for information can only be complied with at a later time, B attends to the literal meaning of the request in providing the preferred response. In situations where the requested information is immediately available, the speaker is then able to respond to both the literal and intended meanings of the indirect request. It should be noted here that this "attentiveness" is more than just a case of being conventionally polite since the two speakers have been warned not to speak to

each other. This perhaps explains the use of the conditional “if” after the affirmative “yes” and “of course” in (16) and (17), respectively.

When responding to a request, being attentive to all aspects of the request, particularly requests for information, as a means of being polite is a hypothesis proposed by Clark and Schunk (1980). The attentiveness hypothesis states: The more attentive the hearer is to all aspects of the speaker’s request, within reason, the more polite H is (Clark and Schunk, 1980:121). Under this hypothesis, a response can be characterized as attentive when it has the following four features:

- (1) precision: H should provide the requested information as precisely as required,
- (2) clarity: H should express the requested information clearly,
- (3) completeness: H should take seriously the literal meaning, as well as the indirect meaning by including a literal answer to the question before providing the requested information, and
- (4) informality: H should put S at ease by not being too formal, or too informal, for the occasion (ibid:121-2).

The responses in the above examples, (17) in particular, exhibit these features.

It has been mentioned earlier that figurative language is also used in granting requests as a means of communicating the speaker’s sincerity in complying with a request. Consider the examples below:

- (18) [A is inquiring whether B will agree to a marriage between A's nephew and B's daughter; A's relative power over B is low and level of social distance is high; figurative language underlined]

A: ...*Inilah dia sebentar cincin tanya yang nampaknya nak ditinggalkan di sini. Kalau tak ada rintang halangnya, kok bersetuju, simpanlah. Tapi jika ada kiranya aral yang melintang, kami terima balik cincin itu.*

...Here's the ring (which symbolizes a marriage proposal) that we'd like to leave here. If there are no obstacles and there is agreement, do keep it. But if there are obstacles, we'll take the ring back.

B: *Hai, kecil tapak tangan nyiru kami tadahkan.*

Well, we're more than happy to oblige (English gloss).

- (19) [Related to the situation in (18) above, A is asking for more time to consider the proposed marriage between A's daughter and B's son; A has high P over B and D is high; figurative language underlined]

A: *Jadi beginilah Encik Salleh. Menengok keadaan yang begini, taklah dapat saya hendak memutuskan perkara ini sekarang. Biarlah saya simpan dulu cincin ini hingga pada satu masa yang baik. Mintalah saya bertanggung dulu, Encik Salleh!*

So here's the thing Encik Salleh. By the look of things, I can't decide on the matter now. Do let me keep this ring till a suitable time. I'm asking for a postponement, Encik Salleh!

B: *Kalau dah begitu kata sebelah pihak sana, saya yang di sebelah sini tak pulak hendak memaksa. Kata orang, biar lambat asal selamat.*

If that is your say, I, for my part, am not going to insist. As the saying goes, it's better to be safe than sorry.

In example (18), B uses an adage to comply with the request. As the English gloss suggests, saying *Kecil tapak tangan nyiru kami tadahkan* communicates B's enthusiasm in granting the request. This enthusiastic response is perhaps necessary given the large request made by A (the size of the request is evident from the options that A has made available to B, i.e. either keep the ring or return

it. Furthermore, A explicitly states that B should comply with the request only if it does not pose any difficulties to B (“If there are no obstacles and there is agreement, do keep it”). Apart from communicating enthusiasm, B’s response also communicates sincerity. Given an appropriate context, earnestness is equated with sincerity in the Malay society. Communicating these attitudes can also be seen as a means of downplaying the status difference (the basis of P in this example) since B has material wealth, and A has none.

As for example (19), B’s use of the adage *Biar lambat asal selamat* suggests agreement with A’s request for postponement of a decision. In addition, its use is B’s way of commending A on his decision. Also, the implicit agreement and compliment from B are sincere and they are not due to some pressure on B’s part to address A’s high P. B’s prior utterance, i.e. “If that is your say, I, for my part, am not going to insist”, imply that B is of the opinion that he can insist on a decision if he so chooses but he will not in this situation.

B and L (1987) have also noted that face considerations help to explain the preference for offers over requests. Essentially, inducing an offer over making a request can be regarded as advantageous to face for both the speaker and the hearer. In making a request by means of inducing an offer, the speaker provides the hearer with the option to “opt out” of the request. The availability of this option enables H to maintain his negative-face want to be free from imposition. On the other hand, H can pre-empt the request by making an offer and in doing so

enhances his positive face. As for the speaker, inducing an offer from the hearer removes the potential face threat which accompanies a request refusal.

For example, Drew (1984) (cited in B and L, 1987) gives the following description of how an offer is pre-empted by a request: If A announces the acquisition of some new furniture, B can interpret this as an invitation to come and see it and thus, pre-empts the invitation by requesting permission to do so. By doing so, B addresses A's positive face want, namely "a display of caring about what is important" to A which in this case, is sharing A's excitement about the new furniture. B and L (1987) suggest that the above description is an instance of indirect 'fishings' where A's report of an event is used to elicit a request.

The concept of 'fishings' is similar to one of Asmah Haji Omar's (1992) types of indirectness in Malay, i.e. beating about the bush (B.A.B.) (see p. 225 for details). An example of how indirect 'fishings' is used in Malay to induce an offer is given below:

(20) *Khadijah Ibrahim, 1993:148-49 (simplified)*
[between two female relatives]

A₁: *Eh Za, kita nak tanya sikitlah. Katanya awak nak pergi U.S., betul ke?*
Hey Za, I want to ask a little. I hear that you'll be going to the U.S., is that so?

((insertion sequence))

B₁: *Ala, bukannya pergi "holiday", kita dah terpaksa pergi. Ko tak, apa pulak kata orang.*
Well, I'm not going on a holiday. I feel compelled to go. If not, what will people say.

A₂: *Memanglah, kalau awak yang tak susah payah untuk adik sendiri, siapa pulak. Tapi eloklah juga, boleh "shopping".*
Of course, if you don't go through all this trouble for your own sister, who then. But it's great too, you can shop.

B₂: *Em...banyaknya duit nak "shopping"!*
Hm...(it's not like I have) so much money for shopping!

A₃: *Abis, takkan hantar nikah, balik kan?*
Well, you're not going just for the wedding and come back, right?

B₃: *Sikit-sikitlah...awak ni nak pesan ke?*
Maybe a little...do you want me to buy something?

In example (20) above, A's 'fishings' in A₁, A₂ and A₃ resulted in B's offer in B₃. According to Khadijah Ibrahim (1993) who is well-acquainted with her subjects, the speaker(A) does indeed want to ask B to buy something from the United States of America for her. Thus, A's 'fishings' are indirect means of making a request. In A₁, A seeks B's confirmation about her trip overseas. Then, in A₂, A suggests that B does some shopping. However, B, in B₂, does not consider this as a good suggestion as is suggested by B's response (i.e. *Em...banyaknya duit nak "shopping"!* (Hm...(it's not like I have) so much money for shopping)). Undaunted, A, in A₃, questions whether B's trip will be only about attending her sibling's wedding ceremony (Well, you're not going just for the wedding and come back, right?). In B₃, B admits that she may do a little shopping, and perhaps feeling compelled, asks A if she would like anything. This example illustrates how an intended request is pre-empted by an offer.

A search of the corpus yielded one instance where the speaker's reporting of events led to an offer. Consider the extract below:

(21) [between a chauffeur(A) and his employers B and C]

A₁: *Habis kena roboh mak encik. Ke manalah saya nak pergi, manalah anak isteri saya nak duduk, manalah kami nak tidur malam ini. Kalau saya seorang tak ada hallah, di masjid pun saya boleh tidur. Ini anak saya yang kecil tu tengah dedar pula badannya.*

Everything was demolished, ma'am. Where will I go, where will my wife and children live, where will we sleep tonight? If it were only me, not a problem then, I could sleep in the mosque even. Now, my youngest child is feeling feverish.

B₁: *Awak tak dapat menolong Mamat?*

Aren't you able to help Mamat? (B asks C)

A₂: *Tolonglah encik. Kalau dapat encik telefonlah pada pegawai yang menjaga tu, biarlah dapat buat rumah sebuah lagi. Tak lama encik membuat rumah kilat tu, satu malam saja dah siap. Sementara ini, biarlah saya tumpang di mana-mana.*

Please sir. If you could sir, do contact the officer-in-charge so that I could build another house. It doesn't take long to build a 'makeshift house' sir, it can be ready in just one night. In the meantime, let me take shelter somewhere.

C₁: *Tak boleh, tak boleh. Ini kerja salah! Kau baliklah dulu, tengok anak bini kau.*

I can't, I can't. This is wrong! Do go home first, check on your wife and kids.

B₂: *Habis, kalau tak ada rumah macam mana nak bermalam? Mamat, bawalah anak bini kau ke mari, tinggal di sini sementara ada rumah lain.*

Well, how is he to go home when there's no home? Mamat, do bring your wife and children here, stay here while looking for another house.

A's reporting of events to B and C in A₁ involves recounting how his house (which is illegally built on government land) has been demolished leaving him

and his family homeless. A also makes a request to C in A_2 where he asks for C's help to build another house which C (in C_1) turns down. A's reporting of events in A_1 and A_2 alludes to the fact that he and more importantly, his family have no shelter for the night. In B_2 , B offers to put up A and his family not just for the night but until A is able to find another place to stay.

To surmise, preferred responses to offers and requests in Bahasa Melayu range from short utterances (e.g. *ya, baiklah, terima kasih, insyallah*) to slightly long ones where the recipient of the offer compliments the hearer on his/her generosity or apologizes for imposing on him/her or the recipient of the request responds by attending to both the literal and intended meanings of the request. Preferred responses can also be phrased using figurative language in order to encode sincerity.

As mentioned earlier, preferred responses enhance H's positive face and are therefore non-face-threatening. Dispreferred responses, on the other hand, do threaten face and a speaker who has to respond with a dispreferred usually redresses it in order to address H's face wants. The following section looks at the linguistic realizations of dispreferreds.

8.2 Dispreferred Responses to Offers and Requests

When a speaker makes an offer or request, the addressee's negative face is under threat due to a perceived requirement (a possible result of politeness considerations) to accept the offer or to comply with the request (thus restricting H's freedom of action). At the same time, S's positive face is also threatened because H can choose to decline the said offer/request (thus unfulfilling S's desire for H's acceptance of the offer/compliance with the request). If H chooses to decline the offer/request (and fulfils his negative-face want), politeness conventions dictate that he does so with minimal threat to S's positive face. This can be done using positive-politeness strategies which redress the threat to positive face.

As previously mentioned, declining an offer or refusing a request is a dispreferred response. According to Levinson, dispreferreds are typically delivered: (1) after some significant delay; (2) with some preface marking their dispreferred status, often the particle "well"; (3) with some account of why the preferred response cannot be performed (1983:307).

To illustrate these features of dispreferred seconds, Levinson (1983) cites the following pair of invitations and their responses (from Atkinson and Drew 1979:58):

- (22) A: Why don't you come up and see me some//times
B: I would like to

- (23) A: Uh if you'd care to come and visit a little while this morning I'll give you a cup of coffee.
 B: hehh Well that's awfully sweet of you,
 ((DELAY))((MARKER))((APPRECIATION))
 I don't think I can make it this morning.
 ((REFUSAL OR DECLINATION))
 .hh uhm I'm running an ad in the paper and-and uh I have to stay near the phone.
 ((ACCOUNT))

In (22), the acceptance of the invitation is done without delay using a minimal and structurally simple response. In contrast, the declination in (23) is delayed using typical features of dispreferreds (as indicated by the terms in capitals) and is followed by an explanation for why the invitation is declined. In general, dispreferred turns typically exhibit the following features (Levinson 1983:334):

- (a) delays: (i) by pause before delivery, (ii) by the use of a preface (see (b)), (iii) by displacement over a number of turns via use of repair initiators or insertion sequences.
- (b) prefaces: (i) the use of markers or announcers of dispreferreds like "Uh" and "Well", (ii) the production of token agreements before disagreements, (iii) the use of appreciations if relevant (for offers, invitations, suggestions, advice), (iv) the use of apologies if relevant (for requests, invitations, etc.), (v) the use of qualifiers (e.g. I don't know for sure, but...), (vi) hesitation in various forms, including self-editing.
- (c) accounts: carefully formulated explanations for why the (dispreferred) act is being done.
- (d) declination component: of a form suited to the nature of the first part of the pair, but characteristically indirect or mitigated.

The elaborate means by which a dispreferred is delivered can be viewed as a politeness strategy. B and L (1987) observe that “the more effort S expends in face-maintaining linguistic behaviour, the more S communicates his sincere desire that H’s face wants be satisfied” (p. 93). Thus, the use of a substantial number of dispreferred features in declining an offer or refusing a request communicates S’s concern for H’s positive face and increases the relative politeness of the FTA. Prefaces such as token agreements and expressions of appreciations can be likened to two of the positive-politeness output strategies proposed by B and L (1987). Token agreements are used when S wants to appear to agree with or to hide disagreement of H’s preceding utterance and the use of appreciations are aimed at enhancing H’s positive face.

Bahasa Melayu is also equipped with linguistic forms which are commonly used when declining an offer or refusing a request. The following sub-sections look at these syntactic features as means of polite redress when performing these FTAs.

8.2.1 Declining an offer in BM

As mentioned above, H’s positive face is likely to be threatened when his offer is declined. In Malay society, this FTA (if not sufficiently redressed) can imply that the offer made is not a good one that is worth accepting and this in turn threatens H’s want to have his goods (e.g. an offer of food or services) accepted or approved by S. This kind of implicature is evident from the common response in

question form to a direct refusal which is invariably (*Kenapa tak sudi ke?* ("Is it not to your liking/approval?"). This question can be avoided by immediately following a refusal with a reason for having to decline the offer (i.e. accounts).

Below are some examples from the corpus of how offers are declined in BM (A invites or offers and B declines):

(24) [between two neighbours]

A: *Nantilah saya suruh Rosnah buatkan air.*

I'll ask Rosnah to make some drinks.

B: *Tak payah, tak payahlah, baru saja minum tadi.*

There's no need, there's no need really, (I've) just had something to drink.

(25) [young lady to elderly lady]

A: *...Er, Nek Haji, marilah kita makan sekali.*

...Uh, Nek Haji, let's eat together.

B: *Ah, makanlah engkau Rosdiah. Aku tadi lagi dah makan dah.*

Oh, go ahead and eat Rosdiah. I've already eaten.

(26) [between friends]

A: *...Aku masuk buatkan air.*

...I'll go and make something to drink.

B: *Jangan susah-susah Ros. Aku datang ni pun sekejap aja.*

Don't go to any trouble Ros. I'm only staying a while.

(27) [between close friends]

A: *Nantilah minum dulu. Kejam saja Yah siapkan.*

Wait and have a drink first. I'll only take a while to make it.

B: *Ah, tak payahlah. Saya pun nak berjalan jauh. Karang tak ada pulak bas lagi.*

Oh, there's no need really. I've got a long journey to make. There may be no buses left.

(28) [between neighbours]

A: ..., *nanti saya buatkan air*.
..., I'll make some drinks.

B: *Ah, tak usah susah-susah Cik Pah, hari dah tengah hari ni, saya nak ke pasar*

Oh, don't go to any trouble Cik Pah, it's already noon, I'm going to the market.

(29) [mother to daughter]

A: ..., *nanti ibu ambikkan kopi*.
..., I'll get some coffee.

B: *Tak usah, ibu, nanti Melati buatkan sendiri*.
Never mind mother, I'll make it myself.

(30) [mother to daughter]

A: *Marilah dulu, makan kuih seri muka tu...*
Come and have some dessert first...

B: *Tak apalah mak. Nita mengantuk benar. Nanti sahur Nita makan*.
Never mind mother. I'm very sleepy. I'll eat it later (i.e. during the pre-dawn meal).

The examples above show that declinations are direct and are immediately followed by an account for the dispreferred act. Common phrases used to perform the FTA, i.e. to decline an invitation/offer, are *tak payah(lah)*, and *jangan/tak usah susah-susah*. The particle *lah* is often appended to these negative phrases to slightly reduce the “force” of these responses; it functions as a hedging particle. The recipient of the offer in examples (24) and (25) declines the offer of something to drink/eat on account of having had some drinks/food earlier. This reason, even if it is false, can be considered the standard account/explanation when declining offers in Malay.

In (24) and (27), *tak payahlah* (loosely translated as “there’s no need really”) is used by S to communicate the non-necessity of the offer, and this is explained by S’s inability to accept it. The offer is declined because S is unable to accept it and this account/explanation puts S’s positive face at risk rather than H’s. The same holds for utterances (26) and (28) where S declines by using the phrase *jangan susah-susah* and *tak usah susah-susah* (“don’t go to any trouble”), respectively.

Offers are also directly declined using *tak usah* and *tak apalah* (similar to English “never mind”) as in examples (29) and (30) above. The declinations in these utterances are followed by accounts that address H’s positive face, i.e. S “will help to obtain” H’s want for S to accept the offer. The phrases *tak usah* and *tak apalah* tell H that she need not act on the offer because S will do it herself (the account in (29): *nanti Melati buatkan sendiri* (I’ll make it myself)) or because S promises to accept the offer at a later time (that in (30): *nanti sahur Nita makan* (I’ll eat it later)). These accounts can be described as positive-politeness output strategy 10 (offer, promise) because they “demonstrate S’s good intentions in satisfying H’s positive-face wants” (B and L, 1987:125).

(31) below is another example where the declination is followed by a promise to accept the offer at a more suitable time. This account also pays the offerer positive face.

(31) [host to guest]

A: *Ah, di sini sajalah tidur malam ini. Besok boleh balik. Dapatlah kita makan semua dulu.*

Oh, just sleep here tonight. You can go home tomorrow. Then we can have a meal together.

B: *Ah, tak payahlah. Lain kali sajalah. Esok kalau dah jadi, ha, selalulah kami datang ke mari.*

Oh, there's no need really. Another time. We'll be coming here often once it (marriage between A's daughter and B's nephew) takes place.

Thus, in BM, offers/invitations are directly refused or declined often without delays or prefaces. However, the directness is usually hedged using the particle *lah* and the accounts which follow redress the threat to H's positive face brought on by the declination.

8.2.2 *Refusing a request in BM*

In a study of the linguistic elements that were used to refuse a request, Turnbull and Saxton (1997) (cited in Turnbull, 2001) identified four types of "refusal of compliance (RCp)" that contained "specific negative semantic elements" and one where RCp was by inference. These RCps are (Turnbull, 2001:45):

- (a) negate request: by using a performative particle the semantic meaning of which is "no". For example, "No" or "I don't think so".
- (b) indicate unwillingness: by negating desire or interest to engage in the requested activity (e.g. "I'm not interested in that").

- (c) performative refusal: by using a verb the semantics of which encodes negation. For example, “I better say no to this then” or “I think I’ll pass”.
- (d) negated ability: by negating ability to grant the request (e.g. “I can’t go”, “I won’t be able to make it”).
- (e) identify impeding event/state: by describing circumstances that, by inference, are understood as preventing or hindering compliance. For example, “I’ve got an exam” or “I have to work”.

It appears that the first four types of RCps (a through d) are used to baldly or directly refuse a request while the last RCp, given its indirectness feature, can be used to “soften” a refusal. Most of the time, a speaker who wants to refuse a request has to mitigate this act of non-compliance. This is because, like declining offers, refusing requests also threatens the requester’s positive face (i.e. by unfulfilling the requester’s want of the requestee to perform an act). In order to address this threat to S’s positive face, the requestee will, most likely, redress the refusal using positive-politeness strategies (as suggested by B and L (1987)). Also, this need to protect the requester’s face is predictably greater when he is of high status relative to the requestee.

According to Clark and Schunk (1980), polite redress or “mitigating the negative consequences of not complying” can be done in two ways: (1) apologies where H (the requestee) apologizes for not complying and (2) explanations where H

explains why he is not complying (p. 122). Furthermore, the use of these forms of redress suggests the requester's higher status and H's deferential position.

The effect of status on the amount of facework necessary when refusing a request was studied by Turnbull (2001) who found that a requestee did more facework oriented to repairing the threat to the requester's face "when the requester was of high status" (p. 41). In the same study, Turnbull (2001) also identified politeness strategies or "face-protecting acts" that were included within the head act of refusal, and that were described as a form of facework and as a way of "displaying a positive evaluation of the requester and his request" (p. 41). These acts are:

- (a) deferral attempt: an attempt to put off to some later time the decision to grant the request or to refuse to comply with the request. It is often done by offering to contact the requester at some later time, e.g. "Can I get back to you?"
- (b) endorsement: a show of interest or willingness to comply with the request were the circumstances of the world different than they actually are at present. This is achieved by indicating past or conditional willingness (e.g. "if it was a different day, sure" or "I would (love to)"), by showing a future willingness by offering to comply with a similar request at some other time (e.g. "next time").
- (c) positive regard: an act through which a requestee encourages the requester in some way. This can be expressed by "good luck" and "keep going down the list", "that's too bad" and "oh no" (Turnbull, 2001:51).

At a glance, the face-protecting acts “endorsement” and “positive regard” are similar to positive-politeness output strategy 1 (see p. 124). Here, the requestee attends to the requestor’s want by conveying to him that the request is admirable or interesting. As for “deferral attempt”, this is much like making an offer or promise to cooperate with the requestor in fulfilling the request at some later time (output strategy 10). Since the Malay people find it difficult to directly say “no” to a request (due to face considerations), it is predicted that they will employ other means (e.g. indirectness) to refuse the request, and these include the strategies proposed by B and L (1987) and Turnbull (2001).

In studying the data, it was found that most refusals were made by equal- or low-status requestees to high- or equal-status requesters. Predictably, very few requests were made to high-status requestees mainly because of the power differential. An instance (utterance (32) below) where a request was directed at a high-status hearer resulted in a direct refusal. It should be mentioned though that the request involved asking the requestee to use his position in an unethical way.

(32) [employee to employer]

- A: *Tolonglah encik. Kalau dapat encik telefonlah pada pegawai yang menjaga tu, biarlah dapat buat rumah sebuah lagi...*
Please sir. If you could sir, do contact the officer-in-charge so that I could build another house...
- B: *Tak boleh, tak boleh. Ini kerja salah!*
I can’t, I can’t. This is wrong!

In this example, B refuses the request by negating his ability to grant it. B says *Tak boleh, tak boleh* (“I can’t, I can’t”). In addition, he provides an account for

this direct refusal: the requested act is against the law. The fact that an explanation is tagged to the bald refusal suggests B's need to address the low social distance between A and himself (B's high P does not necessitate any explanation).

Apart from providing accounts to address low D, and at the same time positive face (when a request is refused by high P requestees), they can also function to threaten positive face. It is not uncommon for Malay speakers to use accounts to criticize a requestor for making a request. Below is an example:

- (33) *Khadijah Ibrahim, 1993:144-45 (simplified)*
[between a 9-year old child(A) and her mother(B)]

A: *Mak, tadi dekat sekolah, masa Juju tengah pergi dekat meja cikgu, ada budak curi "eraser" Juju dengan "liquid ink" Juju.*
Mum, in school today when I went to the teacher's desk, some kid stole my eraser and liquid ink.

((insertion sequence))

B: *Kan mak dah kata. Awak mesti jaga harta awak baik-baik. Takkan asyik nak beli saja. Bulan lalu baru "liquid ink". Minggu lalu baru saja beli "eraser". Awak kalau tak reti nak jaga harta awak, jangan bawak ke sekolah! Tak habis-habis!*
I've told you before. You must look after your things with care. I can't keep buying them. Last month it was the liquid ink. The eraser was bought just last week. If you don't know how to care for your things, don't take them to school! It never ends!

B's lengthy account in example (33) above details the reasons for not complying with the request, i.e. B had reminded A about looking after the lost items and the items which A had indirectly requested were bought only recently. It is clear from the utterances which follow that this account is meant as a criticism of A and is

not meant as a form of positive-face redress. A, in responding to the criticism and perhaps in protecting her positive face, replies in the following way: *Juju boleh beli pakai duit Juju!* (“I can buy them using my own money!”).

In the following discussion of request refusals, except for example (34) (which is a request for permission), all requests require some form of action from the requestee and the size of these requests, on their own, is considered large. The examples below involve equal-status speakers who have close relationships with each other (A makes the request and B refuses it):

(34) [between friends]

A: *Boleh Aziah baca?*
Can/Could I read (this)?

B: *Aaaa, tapi sajak ini tidak untuk disiarkan.*
Uh, but this poem is not meant for publication.

(35) [between close friends]

A: *Aku minta, janganlah kau menyebut soal-soal agama lagi*
I'm asking you not to mention religious matters anymore.

B: *Kau yang menyebutnya dulu, Zarim, dan kalau agama itu sesuatu yang suci apa pula yang ditakutkan menyebutnya?*
You mentioned it first, Zarim, and if religion is a sacred thing what is there to fear in mentioning it?

(36) [between husband and wife]

A: *Awak tolong tuliskan sikit ucapan saya.*
(You) help write (a little) my speech.

B: *Manalah saya tahu apa yang awak nak ucapkan, buatlah sendiri.*
How would I know what you want to say, do do it yourself.

(37) [wife to husband]

A: *Hantarkan pagi-pagi!*

Send it first thing tomorrow morning!

B: *Eh, pagi-pagi macam mana pulak. Besok kan hari kerja.*

Hey, it can't be first thing tomorrow morning. Tomorrow is a work day.

(38) [wife to husband]

A: *Baik. Sekarang cuba awak jadi tuan rumah dan aku jadi orang datang ya.*

Alright. Now you try playing the host and I'll play the guest, okay?

B: *...nanti dulu.*

...wait just a minute.

The refusal in (34) can be described as off-record where B prefaces his refusal by using a hesitation marker (i.e. *Aaaa*) and then violates the Relevance Maxim. This Gricean maxim is violated by B because his response, i.e. "...but this poem is not meant for publication", is not "explicitly relevant" to the question "Can I read (this)?". This violation serves as a hint for A to interpret what is implicated by B's response, i.e. to ask "Why did B say that?". Correctly interpreted, B's response is an indirect way of refusing the request or simply put, of saying "no". This off-record strategy, apart from addressing A's face concerns, also allows B to avoid responsibility for the FTA (to deny that it is his intention to refuse the request by uttering such a response, if he so chooses).

The request refusal in (35) is also off-record. Here, S says more than is required (violation of the Quantity maxim) and "invites H to consider why". Given the context (what is implicated by B's response in this instance is dependent on the

immediate context), B's response is an indirect means of non-compliance. This off-record strategy is marked by a rhetorical question (violation of the Quality maxim) which conversationally implicates that B will continue to mention religious issues (and therefore, will refuse to comply with A's request).

In (36), B's refusal of compliance (RCp) is of the type where he indicates his unwillingness to engage in the requested activity ("How would I know what you want to say"). This non-desire to participate is conveyed more clearly by the phrase that follows ("do it yourself"). Here, B's refusal is bald-on-record and unredressed. B's refusal to comply with his wife's request in (37) is also on-record. However, B does not directly refuse to perform the requested act; he disagrees with *when* it is to be done. In other words, B's response is "an attempt to put off to some later time" the performance of the act requested. This "deferral attempt" is followed by a reason (i.e. B has to work on the said day). In (38), B also makes an attempt to defer his (non-)compliance with the request. This is achieved by him literally asking A for time to consider the request (...*nanti dulu* (...wait just a minute)).

The examples above show that contrary to predictions (following B and L (1987)), request refusals by close, equal-status speakers are not characteristically bald-on-record. Refusals are also mitigated by deferral attempts or performed off-record.

Non-compliance with a request by low-status speakers was also found in the data.

Consider the examples below:

(39) [brother-in-law to younger sister-in-law and husband]

A: *Dalam menghantar cincin pula, ... perkara ini sebenarnya, terpulanglah kepada emak dan bapa saudaranya, iaitu kau Kassim dan Minah.*

As for delivering the ring, ... this matter is really up to both of you in your capacity as his aunt and uncle.

B: *Lain orang sajalah. Tuk penghululah.*
Someone else. The village headman.

(40) [same as above]

A: *Jadi macam mana kalau kau pergi hari Isnin depan ni?*
So, how about going this coming Monday?

B: *Ah, hari Selasa esoknya itu sajalah, bang.*
Ah, this coming Tuesday, bang

(41) [employer to employee]

A: *... kita pergi berdua, ya?*
... we'll go together, okay? (to a party)

B: *Maaflah Encik Johar, saya tak dapat pergi.*
I'm sorry Encik Johar, I'm unable to go.

The participants in utterances (39) and (40) are family members. However, the requestees do not choose to baldly refuse the request from their relatives. In both examples, B suggests an alternative means of performing the requested act. In (39), the alternative involves a different person while that in (40) a different day. In suggesting that another person should be asked to perform the act, B in (39) indirectly refuses to comply with the request. In a "deferral attempt" in (40), B puts off her decision to grant the request to some later time than the one suggested

by the requester. In short, the request refusal is mitigated by shifting the task to someone else (utterance (39)) or by shifting it to another day (utterance (40)).

The word *saja* (lit.: “just, merely”) which follows the alternatives, i.e. *lain orang sajalah* and *hari Selasa esoknya itu sajalah*, appears to “soften” the refusals. This is because *saja* connotes non-importance or insignificance. Thus, the requestees’ use of this word in making the suggestions implies that these suggested alternatives can be taken lightly if the requesters so choose. The particle *lah* tagged to *saja* emphasizes this further.

The non-compliance with the request in example (41) is prefaced by an apology (*Maaflah*) before B refuses it by expressing her inability to accompany the requester (*Saya tak dapat pergi*) (Turnbull’s RCp). No accounts are given for the refusal. This form of refusal can be considered direct since it does not sufficiently redress A’s positive face nor does it address his high status. However, given the formal setting (i.e. workplace), the assigned roles, and the inappropriateness of the request, this directness is deemed appropriate.

In summary, the refusals discussed above, where the requestee puts off complying with the request to some later time, suggests that someone else performs the requested activity or opts for an off-record strategy, address the requester’s positive face. The power differential and the level of familiarity do not clearly influence the directness level of the refusals since bald refusals are directed at

both low- and high-status requesters. The size of the request, in terms of its reasonableness, appears to be a better predictor of the level of directness used to perform this FTA.

8.3 Subsequent Versions of Offers and Requests

When a speaker makes an offer or request, he intends that the hearer accepts (the offer) or complies with it (the request). In the event that the offer or request is declined/refused, S may choose “to issue some subsequent version” of the speech act in question “to attempt to deal with this ... rejection” (Davidson, 1984:103). According to Davidson, a *subsequent version* of an offer or request is a display of the offerer/requester’s “attempts to deal with some inadequacy, trouble, or problem with the initial offer/request, where such an inadequacy, trouble, or problem may be adversely affecting the acceptability of” the said act (1984:105). Further, the doing of some subsequent version of a speech act is also a “display” that the offerer/requester is attempting to make “possible, desirable, or necessary” the acceptance of the offer or request (ibid.). Davidson (1984) also observes that “such a display may sometimes be required by considerations of politeness or etiquette” (p. 125n). The doing of a subsequent version also provides the hearer with a next place for a response (Davidson, 1984).

The circumstances under which a speaker may decide to do a subsequent version are when his offer/request is met with silence, actual rejection, or a weak

agreement. In such instances, a subsequent version can be done by “adding more components, providing inducements, or giving reasons for acceptance” which are displays “of the speaker’s attempts to receive a preferred response”, i.e. acceptance of the offer/request (Davidson, 1984:107). Below are instances where the doing of a subsequent version occurred after the “initial formulation” of the speech act was met with silence, rejection, or weak agreement (examples (42), (43), and (44), respectively):

Davidson, 1984 (simplified)

(p. 105)

- (42) 1. C: Well yih c’n both stay
 2. (0.4)
 → 3. C: Got plenty a’ room,
 4. B: Oh I–

(p. 108)

- (43) 1. A: Gee I feel like a real nerd you c’n ahl come up
 2. here,
 3. (0.3)
 4. B: Nah that’s alright wil stay down here,
 → 5. A: We’ve gotta
 → 6. color TV

(p. 113)

- (44) 1. A: Uh will you call ‘im tuhnight for me,
 2. B: eYeah
 3. (.)
 → 4. A: Please

The arrowed utterances in the examples above are the subsequent versions. In (42), C does a subsequent version after getting no response (i.e. the silence in line 2) from B. If C interprets this silence as an indication that B is having some problem with the offer, then the subsequent version is C’s attempt to make it now

possible for B to accept the offer. C's subsequent version in (42) suggests that B's acceptance of the offer will not be an imposition on C since C has enough room to accommodate two people (marked by the word "both"). The initial offer in (43) is met with rejection and the offerer may take this actual rejection as "a display of some trouble with or inadequacy of the ... offer" (Davidson, 1984:107). Thus, the doing of the subsequent version in (43) is an attempt to make the initial offer more desirable in the hope that the offer will be accepted. By saying "We've gotta color TV", A implies that if B accepts the offer, B gets to watch colour television.

As for (44), the initial request is met with a weak agreement (line 2) and here, the requester "may take this weak agreement as being possibly rejection-implicative" (Davidson, 1984:112). The doing of a subsequent version in (44) displays that speaker A has taken "this possibility of rejection as coming from some inadequacy in the initial request" (ibid.). Therefore, A performs the (conventional) indirect request again by adding "Please" (line 4). This then makes the request explicit and emphatic (in the example given, the syllables for "please" are stressed and lengthened).

As aforementioned, subsequent versions may be motivated by politeness considerations and "may actually have very little to do with whether or not ... the offer or request is accepted or rejected" (Davidson, 1984:125n). As such, the subsequent versions in examples (42) and (44) can be viewed as politeness

strategies. The remaining part of this section will look at the doing of these subsequent versions as a means of addressing politeness concerns.

8.3.1 *Subsequent versions of offers*

B and L have also observed that politeness considerations may necessitate the performance of an offer or a request “over a conversational sequence, instead of being confined to one utterance or turn” (1987:233). As such, making an offer usually involves the following sequence: the offer is “made once, refused, made again, refused, made again, and at length accepted or finally refused” (ibid.). Such a sequence allows the offeree to be cajoled into accepting the offer (achieved by the offerer making the offer several times). This is seen as a politeness strategy since the offerer implicitly suggests that by accepting the offer, the offeree is, in no way, incurring a debt (i.e. the offerer is sincerely making the offer and expects nothing in return). Simply put, making an offer in this way minimizes the face threat that is associated with accepting the offer. Below is an example of such an offer sequence:

Brown and Levinson, 1987:233

- (45) A₁: Would you like a drink?
B₁: Oh no, it's all right.
A₂: No, I insist.
B₂: OK, I'd love a double whisky.

Viewed from the perspective of the politeness principle (PP), Leech suggests that an offer sequence such as that in (45) “can (arise) through the conflict of the Tact

and Generosity Maxims” (1983:136). Essentially, working on the assumption that the offerer is observing the Generosity Maxim in making the offer (i.e. the offer is made for politeness’ sake) the offeree declines the offer. The offerer, on hearing this declination, infers that this is due to the offeree’s observation of the Tact Maxim (the offer is declined for the sake of politeness). Therefore, the offerer (still observing the PP) renews the offer more strongly; consider A₂ in example (45). To the offeree, this renewed offer possibly implicates the offerer’s observation of the same politeness maxim and thus, also bound by the PP, declines once more. According to Leech, this “game of conversational ping-pong will continue until one of the participants yields to the greater politeness of the other” (1983:111).

In Iranian society, this offer-decline sequence is “a very strong social convention” and therefore, its use in conversation, when appropriate, is expected and required from its members (Koutlaki, 2002). In view of this Iranian convention, Koutlaki (in a study of how offers and expressions of thanks function in Iranian society) has found that when an offer is repeatedly refused, the offerer may ask the following question of the offeree, “Do you refuse because it is expected of you”, to ascertain whether the refusal is genuine or is *dictated by convention* (2002:1742). Convention also dictates that in doing a subsequent version of an offer, the offerer has to be more insistent. In her study, Koutlaki cites an example where “guests may leave the dinner-table half-hungry because they were not

offered food with sufficient insistence, and therefore, were unable to help themselves to as much food as they wanted” (2002:1746).

A search of the corpus has also yielded the use of subsequent versions when an offer is declined. Consider the following examples where A does some subsequent version of an offer (A is the offerer and B the offeree). Level of Px/D interaction and additional context (when necessary) are given within square brackets:

(46) [A and B are close and of equal status]

A₁: ..., *nanti saya buat air*.
..., I'll make some drinks.

B₁: *Ah, tak usah susah-susah Cik Pah, hari dah tengah hari ni, saya nak ke pasar.*
Oh, don't go to any trouble Cik Pah, it's already noon, I'm going to the market.

A₂: *Eh, nantilah minum dulu. Saya bukan nak buat apa-apa tinggal masak nasi saja, yang lain semuanya dah dibuat si Idah.*
Hey, wait and have a drink first. I don't have much to do, just rice to cook, Idah has done everything else.

B accepts the offer.

(47) [level of social distance between A and B is high and A's relative power over B is high]

A₁: *Silakan duduk.*
Please have a seat.

B₁: *Tak apalah, kami ni sekejap aje, berdiri pun boleh.*
Never mind, we'll only take a while, (we) can just stand.

A₂: *Eh, duduklah.*
Oh, do sit.

B₂: *Tak usah susah-susah, encik, dulu saya datang ke pejabat encik, berdiri saja.*
Don't go to any trouble, sir, when I was in your office before, (I) just stood.

A₃: *Eh, itu saya sibuk, lagi pun sekejap saja. Dan ini di rumah, lain. Duduklah.*
Oh, I was busy then. Besides, it was only a while. This is at home, it's different. Do sit.

B accepts the offer.

(48) [A has high P over B and social distance between A and B is low]

A₁: *...Marilah duduk.*
...Do come and sit.

B₁: *Terima kasih, ibu, saya cuma hendak bertanya kepada ibu kalau-kalau mahu ikut menyaksikan perarakan merdeka malam ini.*
Thank you, ibu, I just want to ask you if you want to come and watch the independence procession tonight.

A₂: *Marilah duduk dulu, Melati. Inilah anak ibu, Affandi, yang selalu ibu ceritakan itu. Dia telah pulang. Berkenalanlah.*
Do come and sit first, Melati. This is my son, Affandi, who I've always told stories about. He's back. Do get to know each other.

B accepts the offer.

(49) [A and B's distance is low and power is equal]

A₁: *Hoi, apa yang dibuat berdua duduk situ, tu? Marilah ke mari, duduk atas kerusi ni.*
Hey, what are the two of you doing sitting there? Do come here, sit on this chair.

B₁: *Ah, tak kuasa aku. Orang nak makan sirih, nak mengapa-apa semua di sini, ni.*
Oh, I don't want to. One wants to eat the betel-leaf, to do whatever it's all here.

A₂: *Eh, ada nak berbual-bual sikit ha.*
Oh, I want to chat a little (with you).

B₂: *Ila tu? Atas tikar ni kan lebih baik lagi? Apa nak berkerusi meja benar...*
So? Isn't it better on this mat? Why do we need chairs and tables...

B declines the offer.

(50) [A has high P over B and D is low]

A₁: *...Mamat, bawalah anak bini kau ke mari, tinggal di sini sementara ada rumah lain.*
...Mamat, do bring your wife and children here, stay here while looking for another house.

B₁: *Itulah, kalau saya tak ada tempat tinggal, saya nak minta cuti barang dua tiga hari, nak selesaikan hal anak bini saya dulu.*
Well, if I don't have a place to stay, I want to ask for maybe two or three days leave to sort out the affairs of my wife and children first.

A₂: *Bawalah anak bini kau tinggal sementara sini. Kalau kau cuti lama, susah pula encik kau. Tadi dia bawa kereta sendiri balik, dia penat, kena maki orang lagi...*
Do bring your wife and children to stay here in the meantime. If you go on a long leave, it will be difficult for your boss. He was tired after driving the car home just now, and he was hurled insults by someone...

B accepts the offer.

In example (46), the doing of a subsequent version in A₂ involves informing B that A does not have many household chores left to do. B can infer from this that accepting the offer will not inconvenience A, i.e. it will not impose on A's negative-face wants, and also it should not result in B feeling indebted to A. A's choice of subsequent version is also perhaps due to the equal P low D relations

since the shared background knowledge between the participants enables B to accept the offer without further coaxing (i.e. after one subsequent version).

The offer-decline sequence in example (47) illustrates how the offeree (i.e. B) is cajoled into accepting the offer. Given the power differential and the high distance, the offerer A deems the cajoling necessary in order to gain acceptance from B, at least in Malay society. (47) also typifies the conflict of politeness maxims suggested by Leech. Here, A does two subsequent versions of the offer (i.e. A₂ and A₃) before B finally accepts it. The initial offer and its subsequent versions are done bald-on-record with *sila* and *lah* as politeness hedges. The use of directness in making and renewing the offer is motivated more by the sincerity factor than by the power factor (A has high P over B). Furthermore, in Malay, this directness also suggests the seriousness or firmness of the offer.

After the first subsequent version in A₂, B, in B₂, provides a reason for declining the offer by relating an incident where B was not offered a seat when he last met with A in A's office (B states, "...when I was in your office before, (I) just stood"). B's statement could also allude to the formality of the situation then. A reads this as a mild reproach for not satisfying B's positive-face needs before and in A₃, A provides a reason for the oversight (even though this is unnecessary given A's high P). A then attempts to satisfy B's face wants by making the offer again which is then accepted. Note that before renewing the offer, A indicates that the setting has changed; it is now informal ("This is at home, it's different"). This is done perhaps, to convince B to accept the offer.

In addressing the inadequacy or problem with the initial offer, the subsequent versions in (48) and (49) contain the reason for making the said offer. Specifically, A does the subsequent version in (48) by reiterating the offer followed by a reason. In (49), A does not renew the offer in doing the subsequent version. Instead, A provides just the reason for the initial offer. The offeree in (48) finds the reason given adequate and accepts the offer while the offeree in (49) does not and declines it. Taking into account the sociological variables, B's acceptance of the offer in (48) can also be motivated by the P differential since B has low P over A (the offerer) while the declination in (49) is "assisted by" the participants' closeness and equal status. In short, subsequent versions of offers see the offerer making the offer several times and/or giving reasons for making the offer.

The subsequent version in example (50) also contains the reason for making the offer; this is preceded by a renewal of the offer. However, the subsequent version addresses the problem that may arise if B does not accept the offer more than it functions as an attempt by A to make it possible for B to accept the said offer. The reason contained in the subsequent version is also a response to B's initial rejection of the offer. B, in B₁, indirectly declines the offer to take shelter in A's house by requesting for leave to find temporary shelter. B's initial refusal is probably due to his unwillingness to impose on A whom has high P over B given A's role as B's employer. This reluctance can also be the reason why A, in A₂, implies that B's acceptance of the offer would help A (or more specifically, A's

husband) rather than trouble her. This implicature is generated with A saying “If you go on leave, it will be difficult for your boss” in A₂. Also, the initial and subsequent offer are done baldly in order to communicate the sincerity of the offer and consequently, to make it possible for B to accept it. The bald strategy used here is not due to the low P low D relations.

8.3.2 *Subsequent versions of requests*

In examining subsequent versions of requests, B and L have found that requests usually “follow, or are followed by, detailed reasons for requesting” (1987:233). This polite modification of requests in doing a subsequent version aims to address the requestee’s face needs, in particular his negative-face concerns. Consider the following examples identified from the corpus where A (the requester) does a subsequent version after the initial request is refused by B (the requestee). Additional context is given when necessary:

(51) [A and B are close and are of equal status]

A₁: *Boleh Aziah baca?*
Can/Could I read (this)?

B₁: *Aaaa, tapi sajak ini tidak untuk disiarkan.*
Uh, but this poem is not meant for publication.

A₂: *Kerana itulah Aziah lebih ingin membacanya.*
That’s why I’d like to read it more.

B₂: *Bacalah, tapi sajak ini hanya khayalan saya saja.*
Do read (then), but this poem is just a figment of my imagination.

B grants the request.

(52) [same as above]

A₁: *Awak tolong tuliskan sikit ucapan saya.*
(You) help write (a little) my speech.

((insertion sequence))

B₁: *Manalah saya tahu apa yang awak nak ucapkan, buatlah sendiri.*
How would I know what it is that you want to say, do do it yourself.

A₂: *Dah saya buat sikit-sikit. Tapi awak tolong tambahkan lagi, tentang moral pemuda-pemudi kita, tentang kewajipan kaum ibu dan suri-suri rumahtangga, tentang cara mendidik anak supaya menjadi anggota masyarakat yang berguna pada bangsa, negara dan agama Islam kita yang suci.*
I've done a little of it. But help me to add to that the moral of our youth, the responsibility of mothers and housewives, ways of teaching the child to be a member of society who's useful to his race, country, and Islam our holy religion.

((insertion sequence))

B₂: *Nantilah kejap, saya nak ke jamban...*
Do wait a while, I want to go to the loo...

B complies with the request.

(53) [A is asking B to represent him in delivering a ring to the family of a prospective bride for A's son. A has high P over B and distance between A and B is low]

A₁: *Dalam menghantar cincin pula, ...perkara ini sebenarnya, terpulanglah kepada emak dan bapa saudaranya, iaitu kau Kassim dan Minah.*
As for delivering the ring, ...this matter is really up to both of you in your capacity as his aunt and uncle.

((insertion sequence))

B₁: *Lain orang sajalah. Tuk penghululah.*
Someone else. The village headman.

A₂: *Ini bukan kerja tuk penghulu. Ini tiba giliran pada engkau.*
Tiba pada anak engkau esok, giliran aku pulak.
This is not a job for the village headman. Your turn has come.
When it comes to your child later, that will be my turn.

B complies with the request.

(54) [A wants B to return a ring which was accepted on both their behalf but without their consent. A and B are close status equals]

A₁: *Hantarkan pagi-pagi!*
Send it first thing tomorrow morning!

B₁: *Eh, pagi-pagi macam mana pulak. Besok kan hari kerja.*
Hey, it can't be first thing tomorrow morning. Tomorrow is a work day.

A₂: *Minta cutilah.*
Ask for leave then.

B₂: *Perkara sikit ini pun hendak minta cuti.*
Ask for leave on a small matter as this.

B refuses the request.

The requester in (51), in doing the subsequent version in A₂, is responding to the sentence meaning rather than the speaker meaning of the preceding utterance, i.e. the request refusal in B₁. A's choice to respond to the direct meaning is either intentional or unintentional. B₁ provides A in A₂ with a reason for making the request; the reason can be detailed as follows: A would like to read B's poem because it will not be published and thus, will not be made available for the general reading public which includes A. The words *kerana itulah* ("that's why") marks A₂ as a reason-giving form of response to B₁.

The subsequent version A_2 in example (52) is an attempt by the requester to minimize the seriousness of the request that involves asking B (the requester's spouse) to write a speech. In the initial version A_1 , this large request is mitigated with the word *sikit* (lit.: "a little"). In A_2 , the request is further mitigated when A says she has written a small part of the speech, i.e. this statement ("I've done a little of it") conversationally implicates that A is not asking B to write the whole speech. A only needs B to add a few details (which A lists down). A's detailing of the points of the speech can also be motivated by the question in B_1 , i.e. "How would I know what it is that you want to say". It is likely that B in B_1 intends the question to be read as a rhetorical one but A (intentionally or otherwise) chooses to read it as an information-seeking question and in A_2 provides the information.

In (53), the initial request and its subsequent version are done by providing the reasons alone. Specifically, A in A_2 elaborates on the reasons given in A_1 . This elaboration is directly related to the refusal in B_1 where B suggests that A asks someone else. In doing A_2 , A disagrees with B's suggestion and explains why he disagrees ("This is not a job for the village headman") before providing a reason for the requested act (to support that given in A_1) by alluding to B's family obligation. In addition, A promises to reciprocate with the same act when it is required of him.

In doing the subsequent version A_2 in example (54), A suggests a means by which it would be possible for B to comply with the request. Specifically, A suggests

that B asks for leave in order to return the ring. Both the initial request and its subsequent version are performed bald-on-record. This strategy is most probably due to the urgency of the situation, apart from the participants' intimate relationship as husband and wife. B, however, does not share this urgency and thus, is not dissuaded by A's doing of the subsequent version in A₂. B makes this known in B₂ when he says "Ask for leave on a small matter as this".

Subsequent versions can also be issued when the requester is questioned about the motive for the request. This can implicate a potential rejection of the request. Although such subsequent versions are not found in this study, another study on politeness in Malay language (Khadijah Ibrahim, 1993) has found their use in such instances. Below are two examples from that study:

Khadijah Ibrahim, 1993

(55) p. 217-18 (simplified)
[between wife(A) and husband(B)]

A₁: *Bak, awak ni asal hari Jumaat mancing aja. Cuba awak lapang-lapangkan masa sikit.*

Bak, you go fishing every Friday. Try to find time (to be at home).

B₁: *Kenapa awak ni? Apa hal pulak?*

What's up with you? What's the matter now?

A₂: *Kawan tengok 'resal' test budak ni. Semuanya dah turun. Dia orang dah besar. Dia pun pandai tanyakan awak. Kenapa asyik tak da rumah. Asyik keluar mancing aja.*

I've looked at the children's test results. Their grades are down. They've grown up. They ask about you. Why you're never home. Always out fishing.

((insertion sequence))

B₃: *Apa dia orang kata?*
What did they say?

A₄: *Tak dalah. Awak sibuk nampaknya, sibuk na...entah apa-apa. Kawan ni tak pandai. Awak yang masuk universiti, awak tak malu ke. Bapaknya masuk universiti orang kata, anaknya tak pun pandai macam bapak dia.*
Nothing really. You're busy it seems, very busy. I'm not smart. You're the one who went to a university, so aren't you ashamed. People will say that the father went to university but the children are not as smart as the father.

B₄: *Yalah, yalah...nanti kawan tengokkan.*
Alright, alright...I'll look into it.

B complies with the request.

(56) p. 219-20 (simplified)
[between brothers]

A₁: *Chul, engkau nak pakai van tak hari Ahad ni?*
Chul, will you be using the van this Sunday?

B₁: *Apasal? Mestilah aku pakai. Tak pakai van nak pakai apa pulak?*
Why? Of course I'm using it. If I don't use the van, what will I use then?

A₂: *Takda aku nak naik Air Hitam hari Sabtu ni. Adalah. Nak beli barang sikit. Kereta aku mana muat nak isi barang-barang.*
Well, I'm going to Air Hitam this Saturday. You know. To buy a few things. There's no space in my car to put things.

B₂: *Kau nak isi apa yang tak muat?*
What is it that you can't fit into your car?

A₃: *Adalah. Pasu-pasu. Bunga-bunga plastik nak buat jual...engkau taulah. Boleh tak? Aku letaklah kereta aku kat rumah engkau. Pakailah...engkau nak pakai.*
Stuff. Flower pots. Artificial flowers that can be sold...you know. Can I? I'll leave my car at your place. Do use it...if you want.

B₃: *Engkau bawak jangan gila-gila.*
Don't drive like a madman.

B grants the request.

In the examples above, each subsequent version issued by the requester, i.e. A₂ and A₄ for example (55) and A₂ and A₃ for (56), is an attempt at answering the requestee's question pertaining to the initial request or the request proper (this is assuming that the requestee knows that a request has been made to him). These subsequent versions also provide the reasons for making the request which in both examples are considered sufficient for the granting of the said request.

To surmise, subsequent versions of requests are done by minimizing the seriousness of the request or by providing reasons for it. In the given examples, the initial request refusal provides the requester with the reason(s) for the requested act.

8.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has looked at how offers and requests in Bahasa Melayu are accepted and refused in the light of face concerns. It was found that speakers, when making a preferred response (accepting an offer or granting a request), used short responses that were direct and simple in structure. Such responses are *ya*, *baiklah*, *terima kasih*, and *insyallah*. In terms of addressing face concerns (i.e. encoding politeness), accepting an offer includes complimenting the offerer's generosity or

apologizing for the trouble the offer has caused while agreeing to a request involves responding to its literal and intended meanings.

In declining offers, this dispreferred response is done without delay or preface. However, it is followed by an account for the declination. Phrases such as *tak apa(lah)*, *tak payah(lah)*, *tak usah(lah)*, and *tak usah susah-susah* are commonly used. The hedging particle *lah* is often tagged to these phrases to “soften” the directness present in them. Face redress is provided by accounts that address the offerer’s positive face. In the case of request refusals, the amount of facework necessary to redress this FTA is influenced by the reasonableness of the request more than by power or distance. Strategies used to redress this FTA range from deferral attempts to off record.

Subsequent versions of offers and requests also display considerations for face. Essentially, offers are made several times and/or followed by reasons (in subsequent versions) in order to address possible inadequacy or problem with the initial offers. As for requests, subsequent versions consist of reasons for making them. Giving reasons is considered a face-minimization strategy (negative face in the case of requests) since the use of this strategy communicates the requester’s reluctance to impose on the requestee but he is doing so for good reason.