

AN ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY JAVANESE STUDENTS IN REFUSAL SPEECH ACTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SECOND SEMESTER AND SIXTH SEMESTER STUDENTS

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Abstract: This research article investigates the politeness strategies employed by Javanese students in performing the speech act of refusal. The purpose of this research is to explore the cultural and linguistic factors that influence the use of politeness strategies among Javanese students when they are engaged in the speech act of refusal. This descriptive qualitative research includes a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to gather the required data. The participants of this research are ten undergraduate students in the second and sixth semester majoring English literature in State Islamic University of Malang. The data collected from the DCT were analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as a framework. The findings indicate that Javanese students use a variety of politeness strategies, such as positive politeness, negative politeness, and bald-on-record, depending on the social status of the interlocutor, the level of refusal imposition, and the context of speech act. In addition, the findings also reveal that Javanese students prefer to use indirect strategies in refusal speech acts. This preference is reflective of the cultural norms of indirectness and politeness that are prevalent in Javanese society. Implications of the findings for language instruction and intercultural communication are discussed in the article's conclusion. This discussion emphasizes the significance of raising awareness of cultural and linguistic differences that may arise in communication.

Keywords: Speech act, Refusal strategies, Javanese students

INTRODUCTION

The study of politeness strategies has been a significant area of research in intercultural communication, as it plays a crucial role in maintaining positive relationships and avoiding conflicts. However, the application of politeness theory to real-life communication situations has been a subject of ongoing debates among scholars. Some argue that politeness theory oversimplifies the complexities of social interaction, while others maintain that it is an essential tool for effective communication. Politeness is a crucial aspect of social communication, especially in intercultural communication settings. The use of appropriate politeness strategies in speech acts, such as refusals, is essential to maintain harmonious relationships and avoid misunderstandings between interlocutors.

Politeness strategies and speech acts of refusal have been extensively studied in cross-cultural communication. (Retnowati, 2018, Wijayanto, 2019; Dewi et.al, 2020) carried out research to examine how Javanese people express refusal strategies. Furthermore, other studies have documented the refusal strategies utilized by EFL learners in the Indonesian context (Rahayu, 2019; Sartika et.al, 2020; Rusdi et.al 2022). However, there is a lack of research on how politeness strategies are employed in the speech act of refusal among

Javanese students. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the politeness strategies used in the speech act of refusal among Javanese students. This study focuses on Javanese students because they represent a significant population in Indonesia, and their language and culture have been influenced by various factors, including religion, tradition, and modernization. Additionally, the comparison between second semester and sixth semester students provides an insight into how their language proficiency and socialization experiences may affect their use of politeness strategies in refusals. In addition, Javanese culture is known for its emphasis on politeness and respect for others, which is reflected in the language used by its speakers. Refusing a request or invitation, for example, can be seen as impolite or disrespectful if not done appropriately. Therefore, it is important to understand how Javanese students use politeness strategies to convey their refusals.

Refusal, often known as a face-threatening act (FTA), is the act of expressing a speaker's non-acceptance, denying, or disagreeing with a request, an invitation, a recommendation, or an offer (Saad, et.al 2019). In addition, refusal is an action that frequently happens in everyday communication and refers to the rejection of ideas, invitations, offers, or requests. There are a number of options available to people when rejecting an offer or anything (Putri & Sitohang, 2022). Every person has their own way to refuse something. However, spoken acts of rejection, which represent one sort of disfavoured response and may be challenging to apply, are conventions or techniques to remember. Since the addressee's behaviours are not positively addressed, it may cause offense on their behalf. When the act of refusal is realized, civility is unavoidably required in order to reduce the insult. Social distance, relative power (social standing), and the gravity of the act all influence the decision of how to carry out threatening conduct, such as refusing (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Speakers therefore often use politeness strategies to mitigate the negative effects of refusals and maintain positive social relationships.

Depending on cultural standards, the social setting, and the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, different politeness methods may be employed in refusals. Moreover, refusal is very culturally context dependent (Sahin, 2011). Because every society has a unique manner of preserving the good reputation of speakers and minimizing the damage posed by refusals, people from various cultures will utilize various refusal strategies. Individuals from different cultures typically employ varied rejection techniques since each culture has unique means of preserving their positive attributes and minimizing threat (Brown & S. Levinson, 1987). For example, Indonesia's various cultural groups, the Javanese, have its unique method of realizing rejection. Javanese people are by nature symbol-filled performers who employ indirect communication techniques to convey their ideas (Endraswara, 2010 cited in Retnowati, 2018). In addition, the Javanese people have a sophisticated system of politeness built into their language.

Based on the discussion above, investigating politeness strategies on speech acts of refusal among Javanese students is necessary. For developing awareness of the sociocultural tactics employed by the majority of Javanese groups and the guidelines for their proper application in order to prevent pragmatic failure in Javanese culture (Retnowati, 2018). Research on politeness strategies in making refusals among Javanese students can help to identify the different types of politeness strategies used in different cultural contexts, and how these strategies are perceived and interpreted by different interlocutors. It can also help to develop more effective and culturally sensitive communication strategies in diverse contexts. Moreover, research on politeness strategies in making refusals can also shed light on the social and interpersonal dynamics of communication, including the ways in which speakers use language to manage social relationships and navigate power dynamics. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the understanding of the role of politeness strategies in Javanese communication and provide insights into the differences in politeness strategies

between second semester and sixth semester students. Additionally, the study may have implications for language teaching and learning, as it may help teachers develop effective strategies for teaching politeness in language classrooms. Therefore, the researchers formulated the following research questions:

- a. What are the differences in the types of politeness strategies employed by second-semester and sixth-semester Javanese students in refusal speech acts?
- b. To what extent do Javanese second-semester and sixth-semester students utilize direct and indirect refusal strategies?

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Politeness Strategies

Politeness is a fundamental aspect of social interaction that involves using appropriate language and behaviour to show respect, consideration, and concern for others. Yule (1998) defines politeness as a way of acknowledging someone's public self-image. Cruse (2006) supports Yule's viewpoint and explains that being polite involves minimizing negative effects on others' feelings and maximizing positive ones. Hence, politeness needs communication strategies that can be employed to prevent unpleasant situations. By utilizing politeness strategies, we are better equipped to manage our behaviour and language, thus allowing for productive and respectful interaction without causing harm to others by taking into account the situation.

Politeness strategies are an essential aspect of communication, particularly in social interactions in which maintaining a positive social image and avoiding conflict is crucial. They refer to the various verbal and nonverbal techniques that individuals use to mitigate face-threatening acts, such as making requests, giving orders, criticizing, or refusing. In different cultures, politeness strategies may vary, as cultural norms and expectations of communication differ. For instance, some cultures may value indirectness, while others may prioritize directness and clarity. The choice of a specific politeness strategy is influenced by factors such as the communicative context, the social distance between the interlocutors, the power relations, and the goal of the interaction. Effective use of politeness strategies can lead to successful communication, while their inappropriate use may lead to misunderstandings, conflict, or even loss of face.

Bald on record

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the "bald on record" strategy is a direct and unambiguous way of communicating a message. This approach does not attempt to protect the hearer's feelings and is therefore more straightforward. However, it also carries a higher risk of making the hearer feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. For this reason, it is often used among people who share a close relationship, like friends or family.

Positive politeness

Positive politeness is a communication strategy that aims to reduce the risk of threatening the hearer's positive face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987). Positive face refers to an individual's fundamental need for their public image to be acknowledged, validated, and appreciated by others. In essence, it is the desire to be accepted and desired by others. Positive politeness is a communication strategy that acknowledges the hearer's desire for respect and demonstrates that the speaker values their relationship with the hearer and is interested in maintaining group harmony. This strategy is typically employed in social situations where individuals are familiar with each other, such as among friends or colleagues.

Negative politeness

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness is a communication strategy that aims to address the negative face of the hearer. The negative face represents an individual's desire for freedom from imposition and a need for consideration from others.

Negative politeness is used to mitigate the potential threat to the hearer's negative face by creating a sense of distance and caution, allowing the hearer to maintain their autonomy. This strategy involves the use of indirect or soft language, apologies, and hedges. It is a remedial action aimed at minimizing the negative impact on the hearer's face and preserving social harmony. This is the most widely used and linguistically diverse strategy.

The off-record

The off-record or indirect communication strategy is a way to reduce the pressure on the speaker. It involves using language that is not straightforward, and its intended meaning may require interpretation by the listener. In this approach, the face-threatening act is carried out through an indirect illocutionary act, which can be interpreted in multiple ways. This provides the speaker with plausible deniability if the hearer takes offense at the underlying message.

b. Refusal in Speech Act

Refusal is a manner of rejecting the speaker's request, so to speak (Retnowati, 2018). Some hearers decline requests for a variety of reasons, such as not wanting to offend other people or for fear of appearing uncaring to the one making the request. Whether the request is expected honestly or not, refusing is the act of demonstrating one's incapacity or unwillingness to fulfil the request for certain reasons (Azis 2000). Rejecting requests, invites, offers, and ideas is a valid response strategy (Rahayu, 2019).

Each sort of refusal is divided into subcategories according to the various communicative purposes they serve (Beebe et al, 1990). The subcategories of refusal are direct, indirect and adjunct of refusal.

Direct

There are three kinds of direct strategy in refusal: Performative for example "I refuse", Non-performative the example by saying "No" and Negative willingness or ability for example "I can't." "I won't"

Indirect

Indirect has eleven kinds of strategies to refuse there are: 1. Statement of regret for example "I'm sorry..."; "I feel terrible...", 2. Wish the example is "I wish you get a lend of ..", 3. Excuse the example "I have a headache", 4. Statement of alternative, 5. Set condition for future or past acceptance (e.g., "If you had asked me earlier, 6. Promise of future acceptance (e.g., "I'll do it next time"; 7. Statement of principle (e.g., "I never do business with friends.", 8. Statement of philosophy (e.g., "One can't be too careful."), 9. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor (e.g., "I won't be any fun tonight" to reuse an invitation), 10 Acceptance that functions as a refusal, 11. Avoidance.

Adjuncts to Refusal

In this kind of type there are four kinds of adjunct to refusal, first is statement of positive opinion or agreement for example: "That's a good idea", second is statement of empathy for example "I realize that you in a difficult situation", third is pause fillers such as "Oh" and "uuh", fourth is Gratitude or Appreciation.

METHOD

Research design

This study used a comparative research design. The study compared the politeness strategies used by two groups of Javanese students, from the second-semester and sixth-semester, in the context of refusal speech acts. The researchers collected data using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and a similar data collection procedure to ensure consistency and comparability of the data. The study used a cross-sectional design, where data was collected at one point in time, allowing for a comparison of the politeness strategies used by

the two groups of students. The researchers employed a qualitative method to analyze the data collected.

Participants

The selection of participants for this research involved specific criteria to ensure that the participants were relevant to the study's research questions and objectives. In this case, the participants were undergraduate students who were studying in the English language department at the State Islamic University of Malang. This criterion was chosen because the study aimed to explore politeness strategies employed by Javanese students in refusal speech acts, which relates to language use and communication practices. The sample size of the study consisted of five students from the second semester and five students from the sixth semester, making a total of ten participants. The selection of participants was based on purposive sampling, where the researchers chose participants who met the specific criteria of being Javanese undergraduate students in their second or sixth semester. This method of sampling allowed the researchers to focus on a specific group of participants who were likely to provide relevant data to answer the research questions.

Instrument

A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and Interview was used in this study. The DCT is a widely accepted tool in pragmatic research that aims to elicit data related to participants' use of language in social situations. By using a DCT, the researchers could collect data on how Javanese students employ politeness strategies in refusal speech acts in various social contexts. The DCT involved the participants receiving a brief description of each situation, which identified the context, level of intimacy, and social power among the participants involved. This information was necessary as it allowed the participants to understand the scenario and respond appropriately. For example, the level of intimacy between the participants may have affected the politeness strategies used in their refusal. The research instrument used in the study was adapted from Qadi (2021). The DCT consisted of six scenarios, and participants were required to provide written rejections for an equal number of invitations, offers, suggestions, and requests. The interview used to follow up the DCT itself to gain a depth of information and data from the participants. That approach was likely chosen as it allowed the researchers to explore the different ways that Javanese students employ politeness strategies in refusing speech acts across various social situations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of DCT

Politeness strategies in situation 1

In situation 1, you are faced with a request from a friend to fill in a questionnaire. However, you refuse it because you have a lot of tasks to complete and cannot fulfill their request at this time. You should then explain the reason for your inability to fulfill the request, while making it clear that you value their request.

The speech act of refusing a request or offer performed by the sixth semester students demonstrates the use of various politeness strategies to convey the refusal in a courteous and respectful manner. The strategies employed include apologizing and providing a reason for the inability to fulfill the request, expressing regret and offering a conditional agreement, apologizing and giving a direct refusal due to a busy schedule, expressing regret and providing an indirect refusal while expressing a desire to help, and apologizing and offering a future alternative. The use of these politeness strategies highlights the importance of tactful communication and consideration for the feelings of others. By using appropriate language and tone, the speaker can politely refuse a request without causing offense or hostility.

However, based on the responses of the second semester students, it appears that they did not understand the instruction or the request for a refusal. None of the responses show an explicit refusal, which may indicate a lack of proficiency in understanding or expressing refusals. Instead, the responses show a willingness to help, but with conditions such as "when my work is done" or "let me do it for you." The response "Oo this is final research project, yes of course I will help you to fill the questionnaire, but I do my tasks first yeah" seems to be a bit ambiguous as it does not clearly state when the student will help fill the questionnaire, but instead suggests that they will do it after completing their own tasks.

Politeness strategies in situation 2

In situation 2, your neighbour has asked to borrow your new car, but you are concerned about the possibility of damage or other issues that may arise if you lend it to them. You are asked to refuse the request.

In these speech acts of refusal performed by the sixth semester, the speakers use various politeness strategies to convey their inability to fulfil a request while maintaining a respectful tone. The first strategy used is a "preventive excuse," in which the speaker pretends to have a prior commitment that requires the use of their car. The second strategy is "conditional agreement," where the speaker offers to lend their car but with a condition. The third strategy is "apology and referral to an alternative," in which the speaker apologizes for their inability to fulfil the request and suggests an alternative solution. The fourth strategy is a direct refusal, which can be considered less polite. However, the use of friendly language, such as the word "bro," can soften the refusal. Lastly, the fifth strategy used is "apology and explanation," where the speaker apologizes for their inability to lend the car and provides a specific reason for their refusal. These strategies help to maintain a respectful tone while conveying the inability to fulfil the request.

Compared to the responses from the second-semester students in the given scenario, all pertain to the act of lending a car. None of them can be considered as a clear refusal as DCT scenario. Response 1 suggests the willingness to lend the car, but at a later time, indicating a compromise. Response 2 politely declines the request by stating that the car is being used by someone else. Response 3 agrees to lend the car but requests careful handling, which serves as a face-saving strategy to ensure the car's safety. Response 4 expresses regret and concern but fails to clearly refuse the request. Additionally, the verb used in this response should have been "lend" instead of "borrow." Lastly, response 5 also expresses regret but cites an invalid reason for not lending the car, which is that it had just been serviced. These responses suggest a low level of proficiency and understanding of the students towards the given scenario.

Politeness strategies in situation 3

In situation 3, you are asked to imagine that your boss has requested you to work overtime on a weekend, but you have other commitments. You are asked to give a response by refusing the request.

The five students from the sixth semester made speech acts of refusal by employing various politeness strategies to soften the impact of the refusal. In the first response, the speaker uses the politeness strategy of mitigation by apologizing and providing an excuse to refuse the request. In contrast, the second response uses the direct refusal strategy, emphasizing the importance of weekends as a time for rest. The third response uses the indirect refusal strategy by offering an alternative day for the work and citing a conflicting commitment. The fourth response uses a straightforward refusal strategy by apologizing and stating that the speaker has other plans for the weekend. Finally, in the fifth response, the speaker uses a reminder of a prior agreement as a form of indirect refusal, avoiding direct confrontation. Each strategy serves the purpose of refusing the request politely while

minimizing the negative impact on the relationship between the speaker and the person making the request.

The responses provided by the second semester students regarding working overtime on the weekend can be divided into two categories: those that clearly refuse the request and those that do not. Responses 1, 4, and 5 all show a clear refusal to work overtime, with Response 1 using a direct refusal strategy and Responses 4 and 5 using a face-saving strategy. The students in these responses use polite language to express regret and provide reasons for not being able to work overtime. However, Responses 2 and 3 do not show a clear refusal. Response 2 agrees to work overtime without any hesitation or conditions, while Response 3 shows willingness to work but suggests completing a prior commitment first. Overall, the responses indicate that some students have a good understanding of how to refuse a request politely, while others need further instruction to improve their communication skills.

Politeness strategies in situation 4

In situation 4, you are presented with the scenario where a friend has asked you for a large sum of money as a loan. However, you are not comfortable with the idea and need to refuse their request.

In a speech act of refusal in lending money, the five students from the sixth semester employed various politeness strategies that can be observed. The first strategy used is offering a less amount of money to give them the chance to loan. The speaker indirectly refuses the request by saying that they are not sure if they can help with a large amount of money, but they have some amount that can be borrowed. The second strategy used in example 2 is straightforward refusal by saying they cannot lend a large sum of money due to their own financial obligations. The third strategy used in example 3 is to suggest an alternative solution, such as borrowing money from a bank. The fourth strategy used in example 4 is a direct refusal by saying they have other needs that must be fulfilled. The last example 5 uses a direct refusal by saying that the speaker needs the money too, but also suggests the possibility of borrowing from other friends who have a lot of money.

Compared to the second semester students, response 1 does not show a clear refusal to the request for a loan, but instead offers an excuse for not being able to lend the money. Response 2 is a direct refusal strategy, but may not be completely honest, as the person may have some money but simply doesn't want to lend it. Response 3 shows a compromise strategy by offering to lend some money but not a large amount, while also providing an explanation for the limited amount that can be lent. Response 4 is a face-saving strategy that avoids directly refusing the request for a loan by saying that the person does not need it. Finally, response 5 uses a direct refusal strategy but is vague and does not provide a clear explanation for why lending the money is not a good idea. Overall, only response 2 provides a clear and honest refusal to the request for a loan. The other responses either offer excuses, compromises, or vague refusals.

Politeness strategies in situation 5

In DCT situation 5, you are asked to imagine a scenario and then provide a response to a specific speech act. In this case, the scenario is that your roommate has suggested going out for dinner at an expensive restaurant, but you cannot afford it, and you are being asked to refuse their suggestion.

The responses given by students from the sixth semester in regard to refusing invitations or requests exhibit various types of politeness strategies. In the first response, the speaker uses an informal way to refuse by expressing surprise and suggesting another option. The second response employs a questioning strategy to propose an alternative that is affordable but still enjoyable. The third response begins with a positive remark, followed by a polite apology for not being able to attend and asking for another suggestion for the future.

The fourth response is straightforward but still acknowledges the request with a polite apology and an explanation. The fifth response uses a hedging strategy to express uncertainty while proposing an alternative that fits the speaker's preference. Overall, these responses show the speakers' attempts to maintain social harmony and show respect towards the person making the invitation or request.

In the given scenario where a roommate suggests going out for dinner at an expensive restaurant, but you cannot afford it, several responses were given by the second semester students. The first two responses, "I'm sorry, I still have a business" and "sorry, I have something to do," were not direct refusals and did not address the suggestion of going to an expensive restaurant. However, both responses were polite as they included an apology. The third response, "Sure we can go out for dinner but in another restaurant yes, because I've been in that place," effectively refused the suggestion by proposing an alternative restaurant and providing a reason for not wanting to go to the expensive restaurant. The fourth response, "Sorry, actually I want to follow you, but I don't have much money to go there," was honest about not having enough money for the expensive restaurant but also suggested a willingness to follow the roommate's suggestion. However, it may not be an effective way to refuse the suggestion as it may leave room for negotiation. The response was polite as it included an apology and the word "sorry." The fifth response, "I'm sorry my friend, but my money is not good for an expensive restaurant," was a clear and direct refusal to the suggestion. The response was polite as it included an apology and the word "sorry." Overall, the responses varied in their effectiveness in refusing the suggestion and their use of politeness strategies.

Politeness strategies in situation 6

The last DCT involves a charity organization that contacts you and requests a donation. However, you are not interested in donating at the moment and need to refuse the request.

The responses given by students from the sixth semester to refuse a charity organization's request for a donation vary in their use of politeness strategies. The first response is a polite refusal, using a mitigating phrase to express regret and offering an alternative solution for a potential donation in the future. The second response also uses an apologizing expression to show regret but provides a reason for the refusal and implies that the student has already donated elsewhere. The third response is another polite refusal that expresses gratitude for the information and requests for future donation sessions, indicating a potential willingness to donate in the future. The fourth response uses a simple expression of apology and a vague promise to consider a future donation. Finally, the fifth response is a polite refusal that empathizes with the charity organization's cause but explains that the student is unable to donate at the moment, with a suggestion of a future possibility of donation. Overall, all of the responses use politeness strategies such as mitigating expressions, apologies, gratitude, and alternative solutions to show respect and consideration towards the charity organization's request.

However, these responses from the second semester students show different ways to refuse a charity organization's request for a donation. Response 1 and 2 are effective in refusing the request by stating that the person is cashless indicating that they do not want to donate. Response 3 suggests a willingness to donate but also indicates that the person has very little money. It may be an effective way to refuse the request as it proposes an alternative donation to a mosque. The use of the words "of course" and "but it's okay, right?" show a willingness to compromise and make the response polite. Response 4 is not a clear refusal as it states that the person is not sure for it. It may leave room for negotiation or for the organization to follow up. Response 5 suggests a willingness to donate but proposes an alternative donation other than money. It may be an effective way to refuse the request while still showing support for

the organization. Overall, the responses vary in their effectiveness in refusing the request and their use of politeness strategies.

Findings of Interviews

The interview was conducted with a total of four participants, comprising two second-semester students and two sixth-semester students. The researcher employed a selection process for determining the participants to be interviewed. This process involved careful analysis of the questionnaire responses that generated further inquiries, as well as consideration of responses that exhibited noteworthy characteristics.

The interview findings from sixth-semester students revealed their utilization of both direct and indirect strategies when conveying refusals. The choice of strategy was contingent upon the context and the recipient of the refusal. Direct strategies were employed when refusing peers, whereas indirect strategies were employed when refusing individuals who held higher positions or authority, such as older individuals or professors. The interview results with second-semester students indicate that they frequently employ direct strategies as they find it easier to convey refusals. However, they occasionally utilize indirect strategies, but primarily when interacting with professors, which is a less common occurrence given their limited interactions with professors at this stage.

It can be concluded that sixth-semester students employ a combination of both direct and indirect strategies, whereas second-semester students predominantly rely on direct strategies.

Discussion

The findings of DCT (Discourse Completion Task) provide insights into the use of politeness strategies in speech acts of refusal among students. The sixth-semester students demonstrated proficiency in using various politeness strategies to convey their refusal in a respectful and courteous manner, whereas the second-semester students displayed a lack of understanding or proficiency in using such strategies.

The sixth-semester students employed various politeness strategies, including apologizing, providing a reason for inability, expressing regret, offering a conditional agreement, indirect refusal, and providing a future alternative, to convey their refusal to fill in a questionnaire. On the other hand, the responses of the second-semester students showed their willingness to help but with conditions, indicating a lack of proficiency in understanding or expressing refusals.

The sixth-semester students used preventive excuses, conditional agreements, apology and referral to an alternative, direct refusal, and apology and explanation strategies to convey their inability to lend a car while maintaining a respectful tone. However, the second-semester students' responses showed a low level of proficiency and understanding of the given scenario.

The sixth-semester students employed various politeness strategies, including mitigation, direct refusal, indirect refusal, straightforward refusal, and reminder of prior agreement, to refuse working overtime on the weekend. The second-semester students' responses showed a clear refusal in some cases but also showed a lack of understanding in other responses.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of effective communication and consideration for the feelings of others, particularly in situations where one has to refuse a request. The use of appropriate language and tone can help to convey the refusal politely without causing offense or hostility. It is also essential to develop proficiency in using various politeness strategies to convey refusals effectively, which can be achieved through practice and training.

Moreover, this study shows the significance of teaching pragmatic competence in language classrooms. The findings of this study indicate the importance of developing pragmatic competence in students to help them understand and use various politeness strategies in different situations. Therefore, language teachers should incorporate pragmatic competence development in their curriculum to help their students develop effective communication skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this discussion reveals that sixth-semester students demonstrate a higher proficiency in using politeness strategies to convey refusals compared to second-semester students. The former display a wider range of strategies and effectively employ them to maintain a respectful and courteous tone. On the other hand, the latter exhibit a lack of understanding or proficiency in using politeness strategies, often expressing willingness with conditions, or displaying a limited understanding of the given scenarios.

The study emphasizes the importance of effective communication and consideration for others' feelings when refusing requests. It underscores the significance of appropriate language and tone in conveying refusals politely, without causing offense or hostility. Developing proficiency in various politeness strategies is crucial, and it can be achieved through practice and training.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the need to incorporate pragmatic competence development in language classrooms. This study underscores the importance of teaching students' pragmatic competence to understand and utilize politeness strategies in different situations effectively. Language teachers should integrate pragmatic competence training into their curriculum to help students enhance their overall communication skills. Additionally, a suggestion for future research could be to investigate the impact of cultural factors on the use of politeness strategies in speech acts of refusal among students.

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