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## REFUSAL STRATEGIES IN THE MOVIE *THE WALKING DEAD*: A PRAGMATIC STUDY

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**Abstract:** This research discussed refusal strategies used by the characters in the movie *The Walking Dead* in season 9 featuring 16 episodes. This research aimed to find out type of refusal strategies and the mostly used by the characters in the movie. This research focused on Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz's theory about direct and indirect refusal. Then, the data were analyzed by using qualitative descriptive method. To get the data, it used subtitle itself on the movie by watching all of episodes to find out valid data. The research results show that there are 35 data. There were 18 direct refusal, 13 indirect refusal and four data that used two strategies in one conversation. Therefore, the mostly used is direct refusal, 18 times. Direct refusal used non-performative statement and negative willingness while indirect refusal used as giving reason, explanation, attempt to dissuade interlocutor, statement of regret, avoidance (verbal and non-verbal), unspecific reply, and adjuncts to refusal that is appreciation.

**Keywords:** *direct, indirect, pragmatic, refusal strategies*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most important things that human needs. Through language, people not only can deliver and receive message, but also declare something, state what they want, express what they feel and even refuse another people's offer. It depends on where they were talking and to whom they were talking, like differences gender, age and social status. There is a way to avoid misunderstanding in communication that is by learning about pragmatics. In pragmatic studies, this phenomenon is called speech act. Speech act is a central point of pragmatics. Austin (1962) defines speech act as the actions performed in saying something. Speech acts is the study which deals with how to do things with words. Meanwhile, speech acts consist

of several categories, one of them is speech act of refusal. Through speech act of refusal, people can study how to refuse something politely or impolitely depending on the context and situation. Therefore, refusal strategies are the way when someone doesn't agree or reject the speaker. People can minimize the damage of the speaker face by using refusal strategies such as direct or indirect refusal.

Based on that phenomenon, this research focus on analyzing type of refusal strategies and the mostly used by the characters in the movie *The Walking Dead*. So, the entitled of this research is refusal strategies used in the movie *The Walking Dead*. *The Walking Dead* is the best TV series and has gotten high rating from some websites. This movie can be interesting and beneficial for many people, especially in the characters and story because it can be a reference for movie makers to make a great movie in this era, also for people who want to make a research from this movie. This movie reveals a lot of refusal utterances which are needed in this research as data resource. Refusal strategies in the way or utterance when the people reject or refuse interlocutor offer, request, invitation and suggestion. All of data in this movie analyzed and it needs an explanation to know and differentiate all the types clearly. Further analysis is needed to make the types of refusal strategies clearer and can be understood by a lot of people. Therefore, this research explains the types of refusal strategies and the mostly used refusal strategies used in the movie *The Walking Dead*. To get the proper analysis, the types of refusal strategies are analyzed using speech act of refusal, refusal strategies and context of situation. To avoid wide discussion, this research focuses on analyzing refusal strategies used by the characters such as refusing speaker for request, offer, invitation, and suggestion based on Beebe et al (1990).

The significance of this study is giving the readers a better understanding about refusal strategies used in study of pragmatics and giving benefit for the readers who are interested in speech acts of refusal theory. Moreover, this research aims to help communication run in harmony by applying refusal strategies to save speaker face.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The theory which related to this research are pragmatics, context of situation, speech acts of refusal, and refusal strategies.

Hence (1993: 42) defines pragmatics as the study of the conditions of human

language uses as these are determined by the context of society. Besides, Leech (1983: 6) states that pragmatics is the study of meanings in relation to speech situation. Dell Hymes (1974) gives a concept for describing context of situation, which he uses the word of SPEAKING as an acronym for the various factors he deems to be relevant. Gass & Houck (1999: 2) states speech acts of refusal represents one type of dispreferred response. Refusal is one of relatively small number of speech acts which can be characterized as a response to another's act, rather than as an act initiated by the speaker. According to Yang (2008: 1047), refusal is initiated by four types of acts: request, invitation, offer, and suggestion. Each type can be subcategorized in terms of their different communicative functions.

Refusals often include explanations/reasons why such refusals are necessary. Refusal strategies function to reassure the recipient of the refusal that he or she is still approved of but that there are necessary reasons for the refusal, and that the refuser regrets the necessity for the refusal (Beebe *et al.*, 1990). Beebe *et al.* (1990) proposed a classification of refusals comprised of three categories: direct refusals; indirect refusals; and adjuncts to refusals (in Scarcella, p. 55-73).

### **Previous Studies**

Learning from previous research is the way to improve our skill. In completing this research, some previous studies which are relevant to the basic principle of this analysis were used. Refusal strategies had been a common topic which is conducted by other researchers. However, there are some researchers who are interested in analyzing refusal strategies. Here are some previous researches related to this research which are relevant with pragmatics especially in refusal strategies. First, a study by Putri (2010) entitled "Refusal Strategies in English Speech: A Pragmatic Study". Second, Rahmi (2015) conducted her study entitled "Refusals Used in The Great Gatsby Movie". The last, a research conducted by Krisma Pawestri and Nina Setyaningsih (2014) entitled "Refusal Strategies Used by Dre in The Karate Kid Movie."

## **METHOD**

### **Research Method**

This research will explain type of refusal strategies and the mostly used that uttered by the character in the movie *The Walking Dead*. This research is a qualitative

research used descriptive method as the technique of analysis. It needs a description and qualification to find out the meaning of the data. So, this research will use descriptive qualitative method because it intends to describe the types of the utterance and context of situation.

### **Data Source**

The source of data in this research is taken from the movie *The Walking Dead* that has been released on October 31, 2010, developed by Frank Darabont for AMC. This movie is based on the comic book series by Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, and Charlie Adlard. The data is taken from the movie *The Walking Dead* in Season 9 featuring 16 episodes. The duration of movie in every episode is  $\pm 44$  minutes. The main data is taken from the script of the movie.

### **Data Collection**

The data were taken from the dialogue of characters in the movie *The Walking Dead*. In order to find the data easily, the writer watched intensively the movie till the end while read the script of the movie. Then, found utterances that contain refusal strategies. The last, wrote the data on the cards.

### **Data Analysis**

To make this study easier and to answer the research problems after the data were collected, they were systematically analyzed by the writer. The writer conducted the analysis as follows:

- After all the data gathered, the data was identified based on the type of refusal speech act that uttered by the characters relevant to the topic of study. In the case types of speech acts namely: request, invitation, offer, and suggestion.
- After that, the data was classified based on type of refusal that uttered by characters in responded to requests, invitations, offers and suggestions that used direct and indirect refusal in the movie *The Walking Dead*, so that the writer can know which refusal strategies are mostly used in the movie.
- Then, all of data was analyzed based on Beebe et al theory that used refusal strategies and explain it clearly using simple words.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The total of refusal strategies used in the movie is 35 utterances. Those data divided into two types namely direct and indirect refusal. There were 18 direct refusals and 13 indirect refusals while two type refusal in one conversation there were 4. So that the mostly used refusal strategies by the characters in the movie *The Walking Dead* is direct refusal which appear 18 times. In direct refusal, they used non-performative statement were like saying “No”, “I don’t”, “I can’t”. It implies that the speaker directly refuses by using negative willingness. In the conversation, the researcher found 2 types of refusal strategies in one data such as they used direct by applying non-performative like saying “No” and followed by indirect refusal by giving explanation and otherwise. In addition, the characters in the movie also use indirect refusal such as giving reason, explanation, attempt to dissuade interlocutor, statement of regret, avoidance (verbal and non-verbal), unspecific reply and adjuncts to refusal is appreciation.

Example:

The conversation in **Fragment 1 (10.07) episode (2)**, the participants in the conversation are Justin and Henry. The conversation happens in forest, in daylight. The purpose of this conversation is Justin needs more water because he is still thirsty. The conversation runs when Henry offers water to Justin but he is not satisfied, then Justin requests Henry to give the water again by saying “I’m still thirsty”. It is request for agreement. However, Henry refuses Justin’s request uses direct refusal by applying non-performative statement by saying “No” followed by negative willingness. It can be seen by saying “You can’t” in order to make Justin realize because clean water is difficult to find and another people there have not get drinking water. So that, the intention of the utterance is **direct refusal** by applying **non-performative** and **negative willingness**.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### Conclusions

Based on the research findings and discussions, there are 35 conversations that use refusal strategies. There are 4 types to response refusal. specifically, such as in response to request, offers, invitation and suggestion. In response to request, there are 12 conversations, then in response to offer, there are 11 conversations. In response to invitation, there are 5 conversations, and the last, in response to suggestion, 7

conversations. Refusal strategies divided in two types namely direct and indirect. In direct refusal has found 18 data while there are 13 data in indirect refusal. In addition, there are 4 data which use 2 refusal strategies in one conversation. Therefore, **the mostly used** by the character in the movie *The Walking Dead* is **Direct refusal (18 times)**. As a result, the characters of this movie used direct and indirect refusal. In direct refusal dominant applying non-performative statement like saying “No” and negative willingness like saying “I can’t” and “I don’t”. While indirect refusal such as giving reason, explanation, attempt to dissuade interlocutor, statement of regret, avoidance (verbal and non-verbal), unspecific reply and adjuncts to refusal is appreciation.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the conclusion, this research is suggested for researchers, students and readers. The first, this research is suggested for researchers who are conducting research by taking a pragmatic approach as a guidance, especially in speech acts of refusal. Then, the second for students, especially in English Literature who are interested in refusal strategies as a thesis topic. They are suggested to find out and analyze other movies by using pragmatic approach in refusal strategies such as direct and indirect refusals. The students have to know the context of situation with whom they are talking and where they are talking. And also have to know the meaning of utterance. Those theory can help the students to know what speaker means. The last, for the readers, this research can help the readers to understand how to refuse offering or opinion other people politely in order to save the speaker’s face.

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