

IS REFUSAL ABLE TO REFLECT AN IDENTITY?

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Abstract: This paper describes refusal, the degree of refusal, politeness, and identity reflected in refusal. The qualitative method of ethnography communication study was applied to explain the research objectives. The refusals are described and explained such as: direct refusal, giving a response, postponement, confirmation, reason, offering an alternative, silence, apology, and avoiding direct refusal. The high degree of refusal politeness is postponing, reasoning, offering an alternative, apology, and avoiding direct refusal while giving a response, confirmation, silence, and direct refusal have a low degree of politeness. Sukabumi Sundanese identity is reflected as a friendly society since they use a high degree of refusal politeness in postponing, reasoning, offering an alternative, apologizing, and avoiding direct refusal—reflecting an individual interactive experience through language resulting from a real identity. The study of language, culture, and identity considers how a society uses language to form its world, especially in social roles and cultural identity in a society.

Keywords: identity, refusal, Sukabumi Sundanese society

INTRODUCTION

Speaking and greeting are often performed by a human with others in their interaction. Each society in a particular culture has ways to express an idea when communicating. The speech act uttered by someone will reflect from which ethnic group they come from. On the contrary, a particular ethnic group with a specific culture will be seen clearly from the uttered speech act.

In Sundanese culture, if someone states a refusal that does not offend the interlocutor, it is going to be expressed by various strategies and reasons that can be accepted by the interlocutor (Sukmawan, 2016, p. 312; Sukmawan et al., 2014, p. 266). When someone refuses, the speech act will threaten the addressee's face. A refusal is likely expressed in various forms, such as direct refusal, giving a response, postponing with reason, or confirmation. It is expressed to maintain face and minimize FTA risk (Sukmawan, 2017).

Such politeness strategy is highly respected by Sundanese society because the social interaction between individuals and others is not pleased to offend the addressee's feelings. It is going to dispute and dissent among others in Sundanese society members. It is reflected in the Sundanese expression *ulah ngaliarkeun taleus ateul* (do not spread itchy taro). It means do not spread anything that can cause something terrible or restlessness.

Sundanese culture is well known for its hospitality. The relationship between individuals and others in Sundanese society is based on the attitude of "*silih asih, silih asah, dan silih asuh*." It means that every individual must love, teach, and care for each other to create an atmosphere colored by intimacy, peacefulness, and familiarity (Sukmawan et al., 2014, p. 266).

This attitude and cultural value are described clearly in the interaction pattern of Sundanese society. The values culture is eternalized to be forgotten by Sundanese society as the owner of culture that is not realized, loved, and understood deeply. Sundanese culture has the highest values in speaking. However, in practice, speaking with local values, wisdom is not paid attention to anymore and is understood by most Sundanese society in Sukabumi.

The discussion of the linguistic aspect, particularly in refusal, has been studied by many researchers. However, the study of linguistics related to social identity in Sundanese society is not studied and still needs to be conducted. As far as it is concerned, the linguistic studies related to refusal in Sundanese have been conducted by Muniroh (2013), who studied Indonesian refusal responses as an English learner. Mulyani (2013) researched Sundanese refusal realization related to face-saving and losing face, Chojimah (2015) discussed refusal and politeness strategy by using status social parameters, and Solihah & Imperiani (2019) researched refusal strategies that learners spoke of Sundanese ethnic group.

The study is not only in Sundanese but also in other languages related to identity refusal, as has been analyzed by Banister et al. (2019). They discussed how refusal reflects identity from drinking culture. Siebold and Busch (2015) mentioned that Spanish and German speakers were difficult to refuse because they wanted to give an excellent image to the addressee. Besides, the refusal by native speakers of British English and non-native speakers of Saudi is reflected in British and Saudi culture who study in the UK (AlBugami, 2019).

Considering the previous studies, the refusal study, which discusses refusal related to Sundanese society identity in Sukabumi, has yet to be conducted and gives a chance to study. However, the research on refusal to Sundanese society in a pragmatic study has been conducted by Sukmawan et al. (2014), who summarized that the refusal realization of Sudanese society in Sukabumi was able to reflect language politeness.

In an ethnography communication study, linguistic research on refusal, culture, and identity still needs to be conducted, primarily on Sundanese society in Sukabumi. Even though the research relates to language, culture, and identity in anthropolinguistics and ethnography communication that studies the relationship between culture and speaker behavior has been conducted by K Jha (2018). Alshammari (2018) also conducted the sameness thing, which studied a learner's deep comprehension of language, identity, and cultural differences. Parajuli (2021) studied language's role in forming speaker culture identity in a society. Besides, the study of maintaining character identity in culture, especially in the Samin speech community, has also been conducted by Hidayati and Shofwani (2019).

Based on the explanation above, this research tries to present how refusal can reflect the identity of Sukabumi Sundanese society. The analysis differs from the researchers' previous language, culture, and identity study. Therefore, considering the previous study, this research needs to be conducted. The paper describes and explains how refusal, degree of refusal politeness, and identity of Sukabumi Sundanese society are reflected in language use, particularly in refusal.

METHOD

Sudaryanto (1992) mentioned that the concept method in research was divided into descriptive, comparative, and structural. Based on the discussion in this paper, the concept of the descriptive method was applied to see language facts in Sukabumi Sundanese society and the utterances spoken by the Sundanese speech community empirically.

The qualitative method of ethnography communication study was applied to describe and explain the datum as a conversation between the speaker and addressee. It is done to observe the way of Sundanese society's communication behavior, especially in language use of refusal. Data collection was applied using the *Simak* method and the *Cakap* method. The *simak* method technique were *sadap*, *libat cakap*, *simak bebas libat cakap*, record and note taking. The *cakap* method technique was done by *pancing*, *cakap semuka*, *cakap tansemuka*, record, and note taking (Sudaryanto, 2015).

Data was an oral speech act in refusal of Sukabumi Sundanese society. The datum was a daily Sundanese spoken of Baros municipality and Surade subdistrict Sundanese speech community. The data comprised words, phrases, and sentences related to refusal utterance. The population was all speech acts from Sukabumi Sundanese society that showed refusal.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Language and communication cannot be separated. Both of them complete each other and fill. Communication will take place because there are language symbols that humans produce. The language will only be meant if the communication context gets involved. In this case, the context that gets involved is a social context. What form of language is a result of human interaction in communication?

Language and communication need a device that is retained in a culture. From this perspective, it starts to think of a language, communication, and culture that bring forth a new science, namely ethnographic communication. Ethnography communication is the development from anthropolinguistics that is comprehended in a communication context. Ethnography of communication studies the role of language in a communicative context from a society that studies how language is used in a society with different cultures (Kuswarno, 2011, p. 11).

Ethnographic communication is a sociolinguistic approach that considers language use in society related to social values and culture. It can be concluded that ethnography communication connects the study of sociology in interactional analysis, role identity, and anthropology with the background of habituated language use in a communication context when the language is exchanged (Kuswarno, 2011).

Hymes (cited in Hall 2002, p. 22) stated that a working framework: 1. the group's speech constitutes a system; 2. Speech and language vary cross-culturally in function; 3. the speech activity of a community is the primary object of attention. Furthermore, Hymes (as cited in Kuswarno 2011, p. 14) explained that the scope of ethnography communication study is (1) patterns and function of communication, (2) nature and definition of a speech community, (3) means of communicating, (4) components of communicative competence, (5) relationship of language to the world view and social organization, and (6) linguistic and social universals and inequalities. On the other side, ethnographic communication enables us to explain and comprehend communication behavior in culture within the context of place and time, and most importantly, it can formulate concepts and theories for developing human communication globally.

Hymes (as cited in Kuswarno 2002) views language as being unable to be separated from communication. From this statement, ethnography sees language in a social context. The social context that supports the utterance meaning or speech act is the context of the situation. The context of the situation relates to the speech act. Hymes tries to abbreviate with the term that he is arranged as the aspect of speech or communication. SPEAKING consists of setting, participant, end, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norm, and genre.

Refusal as a language study that wishes to be presented in ethnography communication perspectives is refusal, uttered by Sundanese society in Sukabumi. There are eight ways to express refusal: silence, offering an alternative, postponement, accusing others, avoiding direct refusal, giving no specific reaction reason, and stating an invitation.

The different thing about refusal is stated by Sukmawan (2014) that refusal is an effort which is done by the speaker not to comply with the addressee's demand. Refusal in Sundanese can be stated implicitly and explicitly. The explicitness refusal is done to show the speaker's disability to do what the interlocutor wants, and the implicitness refusal is done not to offend the interlocutor's feelings to have good cooperation in communication.

Sukmawan (2016, p. 311) mentioned that refusal in realization must be suitable with politeness principles, which someone believes. Politeness in refusal is considered one of the essential aspects of creating harmoniousness in the interaction between one another. It means that refusal is expressed not to offend other people's feelings (Sukmawan, 2022, p. 647). Politeness relates to the relation between two persons, the speaker, and the addressee. It is essential to respect the addressee in language politeness (Leech, 1983, p. 131).

Furthermore, there is the politeness scale used in language politeness, namely Leech and Brown, and Levinson scale of politeness. The first is Leech scale politeness (Leech, 1983). There is a cost-benefit scale, optionality scale, indirectness scale, authority scale, and social distance scale. Then, the scale of Brown and Levinson's politeness (1987). In their scale there are three scales of politeness in utterance, which are determined by contextual, social, and cultural. The scale of politeness is the social distance between speaker and hearer, the speaker and hearer's relative power, and the degree of absolute ranking of imposition in the particular culture.

In the studied refusal as a reflection of the identity of Sukabumi Sundanese society, a scale of Brown dan Levinson's politeness (1987) is applied to forms of Sundanese refusal spoken by Sukabumi society. The analysis uses the parameter of social distance between speaker and hearer, the speaker and hearer's relative power, and the degree of absolute ranking of imposition in the particular culture. Using three scales of such politeness, the low or high scale measures a degree of refusal of politeness in refusal.

A degree of politeness is determined from each parameter of a politeness scale. Finally, it has been used to measure whether the utterance of refusal is polite or impolite.

A person's identity is not released from a social aspect. Other people's views determine our identity in practice. According to Riley (2007, p. 16), identity is determined by social structure, and the important thing is language and societal interaction. It is also expressed by Hall (2002, p. 35) that in language use, at the same time, we show a particular identity that we form.

Riley (2007) stated that the source of personal identity is the social aspect. Identity is not formed or through to the part of the event. Identity is a social interaction product between an individual and other members of society—reflecting an individual interactive experience through language resulting from a real identity. The structure of society, language, and interaction is the source of personal identity.

This discussion presents how language can reflect Sukabumi Sundanese society's identity from an analysis of refusal utterance. Here, the discussion is as follows.

Direct Refusal

It says a direct refusal to request by the interlocutor. It is because the interlocutor expresses an inability directly to comply with the speaker's demand with a reason. Giving reason after a refusal directly by the interlocutor is to strengthen the refusal that shows the interlocutor's inability to comply with the speaker's demand. The phrase *teu tiara* (cannot) uttered by the interlocutor in refusing is a parameter that the interlocutor's reply to a speaker's request is the expression in direct refusal. It can be seen from the exchange between the speaker and interlocutor as follows.

- Speaker : *Pami ayeuna-ayeuna kitu, pami bapa hoyong dianter ka Surade.*
If you can, take me to Surade.
- Interlocutor : *Teu tiasa bapa nuju praktek dugi ka kaping 20 Juni.*
I cannot, Sir. I am having an apprenticeship until June 20
Tah tos praktek eta teh, teras itu PKMD.
When it is finished, then I will have PKMD.

Context:

The exchange occurred at the interlocutor's place at about 8 p.m. The participant is a lecturer, 35 years old, and the interlocutor is a student of 21 years old. They spoke in a daily informal Sundanese utterance. The speaker asked a request politely, and the interlocutor refused politely by using polite Sundanese.

A direct refusal in the utterance of *Teu tiasa bapa nuju aya praktek dugi ka kaping 20 Juni. Tah tos rengse praktek eta teh, teras itu PKMD* 'I cannot, Sir, I am having an apprenticeship until June 20. When it is finished, then I will have PKMD' which is uttered by a student woman of 21 years old who has a low degree of politeness in Sundanese politeness. The consideration is based on, to a degree, the social distance between a speaker and interlocutor determined by the different parameters of age, sex, and sociocultural (Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to Rahardi (2005, p. 68), a woman has a degree of politeness higher than a man. It is because a woman tends to relate more to something with aesthetic value in her daily life. However, in this case, her direct refusal that she is uttered on a request. Therefore, we conclude that a degree of politeness from her refusal in "*Teu tiasa bapa nuju aya praktek di Rumah Sakit dugi ka kaping 20 Juni. Tah tos rengse eta teh, teras itu PKMD* 'I cannot, Sir, I am having an apprenticeship until June 20. When it is finished, then I will have PKMD'. It is a form of a low degree of politeness.

Giving Response

The interlocutor gives a response to a request by indirect refusal and aims to avoid making direct responses. The aim is to accept the speaker's request. It shows in the exchange as follows.

- Speaker : *Bapa hoyong ieu kitu, hoyong dianter ka Surade.*
I want you to take me to Surade.
- Interlocutor : *Oh, ... dianter mah berarti kana.*
Oh, ... If I take you, I'll take
Nyaeta nuju riweuh ayeuna teh.
I mean, I am getting busy now.

Context:

The exchange was taken in a classroom at about half past twelve. The participant is a lecturer, 35 years old, and the interlocutor is a student of 21 years old. They spoke earnestly, but it was an informal exchange of Sundanese daily language use between the speaker and interlocutor, who responded with respect.

The refusal to give the response in the utterance of *Oh, ... dianter mah berarti kana* 'Oh, ... If I take you, I'll take' that is uttered by a man of 22 years old, and he is a student with a low degree of politeness. Based on Rahardi (2005, p. 68), a young man tends to have low politeness in speaking. Therefore, refusal by giving a response is applied to avoid a direct refusal and has a low degree of politeness.

Postponing

Postponing a request is used to express refusal on an indirect request. It is done by an interlocutor in order to satisfy a postponement. The aim is to accept directly the speaker's request. The giving reason then aims to avoid direct refusal that is done by the interlocutor in order not to offend the speaker. It can be seen in the exchange between the speaker and interlocutor as follows.

- Speaker : *Hoyong diieu, hoyong dianter ka ditu ka Surade.*
I want, want you to take me to Surade
- Interlocutor : *Kin pami liburlah.*
If it is a day off, if.

Context:

The exchange occurred at the interlocutor's place while sitting in front of his rented house. The participant was a teacher, 35, and an interlocutor who was a student of 23 years old. They spoke seriously in the informal situation between the speaker and the interlocutor, who respectfully replied.

The refusal of postponing in the utterance *Kin pami liburlah* 'if it is a day off, if,' which is stated by a student 23 years old, has a high degree of politeness. Rahardi (2005) mentions that a young man tends to have a low degree of politeness. However, in this case, it can be concluded that refusal with postponement has a high degree of politeness.

Confirmation

Confirmation is given to strengthen a refusal of a request. It is done by the interlocutor in order to satisfy the speaker on a postponement or reason. The aim is not to refuse directly an interlocutor's request. The exchange is as follows.

- Speaker : *Pan aya kaping dua puluh lima, nya libur teh?*
There is twenty-five a day off?
- Interlocutor : *Upami, atos terang deui mah dugi ka kaping dua puluhan.*
If it has known until twenty.

Context:

The exchange occurred at the interlocutor's place in front of the yard while sitting on the bench. The participant was a lecturer for 35 years, and the interlocutor was a student for 23 years. They talked seriously in informal situations by using daily Sundanese spoken language.

The refusal of confirmation in the utterance of *Upami, atos terang deui mah dugi ka kaping dua puluhan* 'If, it has known until twenty' has a low degree of politeness because it refers to Rahardi (2005) that a young man tends to have a low degree of politeness in the speech act. It is proven by the refusal to confirm who is stated by a young student of 23 years old.

Giving Reason

Refusal to give a reason is an indirect refusal uttered by an interlocutor to avoid refusal. The aim is not to offend and make a happy speaker. It is because the interlocutor does not comply with the speaker's request. Here, the exchange is as follows.

- Speaker : *Sumur hoyong ditutup.*
A well wants to be closed.
- Interlocutor : *Da perlu aya waktu meureun ka abdi mah.*
For me, it needs time.

Context:

The exchange was informal and full of intimacy in front of the interlocutor's yard. The participant was a lecturer at an elementary school, and the interlocutor was a worker for 43 years. They talked in the Sundanese daily spoken language. The speaker stated his request and the interlocutor refused by giving a reason.

The refusal to give a reason in the utterance *Da perlu aya waktu meureun ka abdi mah* 'For me it needs time' is uttered by a man 43 years old who works as a laborer and has a high degree of politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), someone's sociocultural background has a huge role in determining the politeness scale of utterance. Rahardi (2005) states that someone with a particular profession in society tends to have a degree of politeness higher than someone who works as a laborer. A man who works as a laborer will have low politeness. However, refusing to give a reason can be classified as a high degree of politeness.

Offering an Alternative

The offering is an alternative for avoiding the unhappy speaker in saying his/her request. In this case, the speaker offers an alternative with a reason to strengthen refusal. It can be seen in the exchange as follows.

Penutur: *Mi, Super.*

Mam, Super.

Mitra tutur : *Aya oge Nasional, Jang.*

It is Nasional, Jang.

Penutur : *Jarum Super teu aya nya?*

There is no Jarum Super?

Mitra tutur : *GG Mild geuning.*

There is GG Mill.

Acan balanja deui ieu teh.

I have yet to purchase it.

Context:

The exchange was informal and full of intimacy and took place in a coffee shop in the street. The participant was an old woman, 60 years old, and the speaker was a young man, 18 years old. They chatted full of intimacy and informality between the interlocutor as a seller and the speaker as a young man who wanted to buy a cigarette.

The refusal to offer an alternative in the utterance *Aya oge Nasional, Jang*, and *GG Mild geuning* 'It is Nasional,' and 'There is GG Mill' is uttered by an old woman 60 years old with her status a seller high degree of politeness. It is suitable with what Rahardi (2005, p. 68) stated, that a woman tends to have more politeness than a man. It is because, in reality, a woman tends to be more related to something with aesthetic value in her daily life.

Silence

Silence does not give any response. Silence is a refusal to request that is done by the interlocutor. The interlocutor does another activity to turn face to emphasize the refusal. Such refusal is impolite in Sundanese culture. It shows in the exchange as follows.

Speaker : *Ka Cilembu cenah tadi teh?*

To Cilembu, he said.

Cing ningali geura!

Let me take a look!

Interlocutor1 : *Lain nu nabrak, manehna nu nabrak.*

It was not someone who hit him, but he hit.

Speaker : *Oh, ... manehna.*

Oh, ... that's you.

Interlocutor2 : "..... (*cicing, ngabalieur*)

"..... (silence, turn face)".

Context:

The exchange was informal, with wondering and curiosity from a speaker that was taking place in a coffee shop. The participant was an old woman of 60 years old as seller, interlocutor1 was a woman of

46 years old as a buyer, and interlocutor² was a student of 17 years old. They talked with Sundanese in the daily spoken language.

The refusal of silence in the action of “..... (silence, turn face) that is expressed by a young man of 17 years old as a student has a low degree of politeness. It is suitable with what Rahardi (2005, p. 68) said that a young man tends to have a low degree of politeness in the speech act. Based on Rahardi's statement, it can be concluded that the refusal by silence has a low degree of politeness.

Apology

An apology with a strong reason by the interlocutor means not disrespecting the speaker because the interlocutor can not comply with the speaker's request. It shows in the exchange as follows.

Speaker : *Tadina mah bapa teh hoyong dianter ka nu kamari sonten tea.*

I ask you to take to the place that we visited yesterday.

Interlocutor : *Punten we bapa, abdi teu tiasa nganter ka mana-mana.*

I apologize; I can't take you anywhere.

Da abdi ge seueur urusan pami di dieu mah.

I have a lot of work to do here.

Pan Umi tos sepuh, pami aya nanaon teh ka abdi.

My mom has been well in the year; if she needs to, she will ask me.

Context:

The exchange was informal at the interlocutor's house between the speaker as a guest and the interlocutor as a host. The participant was a man, 35 years old, a guest, and the interlocutor was a student who was 24 years old. They talked with Sundanese in the daily spoken language.

The refusal of apology in the utterance of *Punten we bapa, abdi teu tiasa nganter ka mana-mana* 'I apologize, I can't take you anywhere' that is uttered by a man of 24 years old as a student has a high degree of politeness. It is different from Rahardi (2005, p. 68) statement that a young man tends to have a low degree of politeness. However, Sundanese culture supposes that a young man has a high degree of politeness in speaking with an older or respected man. The status social scale between speaker and hearer is based on asymmetric position in language scale politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Avoiding Direct Refusal

Avoiding direct refusal, the interlocutor expresses her refusal indirectly with her reason's refusal. It is done by the interlocutor in order to make the speaker happy with her interlocutor's reply. It can be seen from the exchange as follows.

Speaker : *Bu, sareng tuangna.*

Mam, let us have it together.

Interlocutor : *Sok we sareng si Ujang, entos ibu mah tadi.*

You have it with my son; I have already had it.

Context:

The exchange between the speaker and the interlocutor was informal and full of intimacy at the interlocutor's house. The participant was a man, 35 years old, as a guest, and the interlocutor was a housewife, 58 years old, as a host. They spoke with a polite Sundanese. The speaker asked a request politely, and the interlocutor refused by avoiding direct refusal.

The refusal of avoiding direct refusal in the utterance *Sok we sareng si Ujang, entos ibu mah tadi* 'You have it with my son, I have already had' that is uttered by a housewife of 58 years old has a high degree of politeness. It is suitable with what has been stated by Rahardi (2005, p. 68): a woman tends to have a higher degree of politeness compared to a man. It is because, in reality, a woman tends to be more related to something with aesthetic value in her daily life.

CONCLUSION

The refusal of direct refusal, giving a response, postponement, confirmation, reason, offering an alternative, silence, apology, and avoiding direct refusal reflect Sukabumi Sundanese society identity. It has proved to be a high degree of refusal politeness in postponing, reasoning, offering an alternative, apologizing, and avoiding direct refusal.

Refusal to give a response, confirmation, silence, and direct refusal has a low degree of politeness. Refusal in Sundanese can reflect Sukabumi Sundanese society identity as a social interaction product between individual and member of society group—the reflection of an individual interactive experience through language results from a real identity. Society structure, language, and interaction is identity source (Riley, 2007). The study of language, culture, and identity considers how a society uses language to form its world, especially in social roles and cultural identity in a society.

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