

## Refusal Strategies in Two *Harry Potter* Movies

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### A B S T R A C T

This research investigates refusal acts and the strategies used in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* movies. It aims to identify what types of refusal acts are used by the characters in the movies and how they are expressed throughout the movies. The data were obtained from the two movies. A total of 91 refusals and 12 adjuncts were found in the movies. The results indicate that indirect refusals were more commonly used (65%) than direct refusals (35%). However, the direct strategy *negative willingness/ability* is the most commonly used (26%), followed by the indirect strategies *Attempt to dissuade interlocutor* (21%) and *Reason/Explanation* (18%). The findings seem to suggest that the characters in the Harry Potter movies tend to express their refusals indirectly, especially through persuasion and explanation.

**Keywords:** *direct refusal, indirect refusal, refusal, speech act, refusal strategy.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Refusal is the opposite response to acceptance. It is the condition when the hearer does not do the expected response. People generally use the word 'no' to speakers' statements. However, saying 'no' is not the only way to refuse. According to Beebe, Takashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), there are fourteen refusal strategies; *Flat "No", Negation of a Proposition, Regret/Apology, Mitigated Refusal, Wish, Reason/Explanation, Statement Alternative, Set Condition for Future or Past Acceptance, Promise for Future Acceptance, Statement of Principle, Statement of Philosophy, Attempt to Dissuade Interlocutor, Acceptance that functions as a refusal, Avoidance*. In addition, people have to pay attention on the context and social factors or background of knowledge when they refuse to avoid unpleasant feeling.

There have been several investigations of refusals (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006; Kasih, 2015; Montero, 2015; Setiono, 2015; Yamagashira, 2001). Felix-Brasdefer (2006) investigated the

refusal strategies used in a Mexican community, Tlaxcala, by examining the linguistic strategies and perceptions of politeness among male university students during refusal interactions in three politeness system: solidarity, deference, and hierarchy (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). Twenty male Mexican university students (all native speakers) participated in the study. The data were collected using open role-plays, supplemented by retrospective verbal reports during formal or informal interactions. The results of this empirical study showed that social factors such as power and distance play a crucial role in determining appropriate degrees of politeness in Mexican society.

Kasih (2015) investigated indirect refusal strategies found in two American movies: *RV* (2006) and *We're the Millers* (2014) and three British movies: *ChaletGirl* (2011), *Cuban Fury* (2014), and *Hot Fuzz* (2007). Her research attempted to demonstrate the different strategy between the refusals shown in American and British movies. The data used to support her research were taken through an observation from

the subtitle of these five movies. The results showed that out of the 92 refusal utterances, 50 were found in the American movies and 42 from the British movies. Based on the findings, the most frequently used strategy in the American movies is Mitigated Refusal (22%) and in the British movies, the most common strategy is Reason/Explanation (40,46%). The results of this research suggested that the American and the British have their own ways in delivering refusal. To minimize the negative effects of being refused the Americans tend to hedge the refusal for making the utterances sound politer and the British tend to explain why they cannot fulfill the interlocutor's demand.

Montero (2015) examined the most common refusal strategies used by a group of students from the Pacific Regional Center of the University of Costa Rica. Participants were provided with a copy of the Discourse Completion Test and were required to write down how they would refuse in a real conversation. The Discourse Completion Test was examined based on the classification of direct, indirect or adjuncts (Morkus, 2014). It was found that indirect strategies were preferred in all situations, and strategies of postponement and giving excuses or reason were the most frequently refusal strategies used in the situations under study.

Another study by Setiono (2015) investigated strategies in English used by the English Department students of Universitas Gadjah Mada to refuse native speakers' requests. This study attempted to identify and classify the direct and indirect strategies used to express the refusals which showed that there were 360 refusal utterances produced. It was found that combination of strategies was the most frequently used strategy when expressing refusal (76.1%). Moreover, regret-reason was proven as the most frequently combination of strategies used (56.3%). Furthermore, single strategy that was used the most frequently was reason/explanation (9.4%), followed by both apology/regret and alternatives (3.6%) each. These results indicated that in expressing refusals in English, the students tended to make an apology, followed by explanation about their reasons as to why they could not fulfill the proposed requests. The findings also proved

that females and senior classes are more flexible and used a variation of strategies.

Finally, Yamagashira (2001) conducted a research on the pragmatic transfer that occurs when first language speakers use their own communicative strategies to refuse even though they speak the second language. He investigated both Japanese and American participants by comparing their language patterns used to make refusals in different situation. Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was developed for his research from nine Japanese and eight Americans in three different universities. The DCT was a written role-play questionnaire consisting of 12 situations; divided into four types and each type included three status differentials. In addition, each situation could only be answered by a refusal. The results of this research showed that pragmatic transfer in refusal situations occurs most frequently in a request situation when the one who refused were of higher status than the one requested.

This study investigates refusals and the strategies used to express them in *Harry Potter and The philosopher's Stone* and *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets* movies. These movies provide many examples of the use of direct and indirect refusals considering the number of characters in the movies with their various backgrounds and personal complexities. In addition, this study also examines adjuncts to refusals used in the movies.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section attempts to elaborate the theoretical underpinnings of this study. The theoretical framework consists of speech acts, refusals, and context. Speech acts belong to the domain of pragmatics regarding the performance of an utterance. The concept of speech acts was first developed by Austin (1962), and defined as a set of utterances by which people perform a specific function such as apologizing, complaining, requesting, refusing, complimenting, or thanking. Austin (1962, p. 60) identified three different components of speech acts: (i) locutionary, (ii) illocutionary, and (iii) perlocutionary acts. A locutionary act refers to the literal meaning of an

utterance; an illocutionary act refers to the intended meaning of an utterance; and a perlocutionary act is the actual effect by saying something.

As stated by Searle (1969), all linguistic communication involves the production of speech acts, such as offering apologies, asking questions, making promises, or refusing. As a speech act, a refusal is a negative response to an offer, request, invitation and suggestion. A refusal is important because it takes place in our daily life. It is often difficult to reject requests. Rejecting a request appropriately involves not only linguistic knowledge, but also pragmatic knowledge. It is even harder to express the rejection in a foreign language, where one might risk offending the interlocutor. One may have a wide range of vocabulary and a sound knowledge of grammar, but a sheer misunderstanding may still arise if one does not apply pragmatic knowledge appropriately.

Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 195) define the speech act of refusal as follows: The negative counterparts to acceptances and consenting are rejections and refusals. Just as one can accept offers, applications, and invitations, so each of these can be refused or rejected. In many cultures, how one says “no” is probably more important than the answer itself. Therefore, sending and receiving a message of “no” is a task that needs special skills. Depending on ethnicity and cultural-linguistic values, the speaker must know the appropriate form, its function, and when to use it. The skill of refusing another’s offer, request, or invitation without hurting the interlocutor feelings is very important since the “inability to say ‘no’ clearly has led many non-native speakers to offend their interlocutors” (Ramos, 1991, cited in Al-Kahtani, 2005).

Refusals are face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and belong to the category of commissive because they commit the refuser to not performing an action (Searle, 1974, p. 27). A refusal functions as a response to an initiating act and it is considered a speech act by which a speaker “fails to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor” (Chen, Ye & Zhang, 1995, p. 121). From a sociolinguistic perspective, a refusal

is important because it is sensitive to social variables such as gender, age, level of education, power, and social distance (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Fraser, 1990; Smith, 1998). It can be concluded that a refusal is a complex speech act that requires not only long sequences of negotiation and cooperative achievements, but also “face saving maneuvers to accommodate the noncompliant nature of the act” (Gass & Houck, 1999, p. 2; Félix-Brasdefer, 2006, p. 2160).

Context plays an important role in interpreting a sentence. The same utterance will have different meaning if the context of each utterance is different. According to Leech (1983, p.13), Context is any background knowledge assumed to be shared by speaker and hearer and which contributes to hearer’s interpretation of what a speaker means by a given utterance. Mey (2001, p. 39) suggests that context is dynamic, not a static concept; it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and which the linguistic expression of their interaction become not clear enough to be read.

Context can be classified into situational context, background of knowledge context, and co-text (Cutting, 2002). Situational context describes the reason why something is occurring and the appropriate behavior and actions associated with the situation. Typically used in regards to communication, the situational context of speech influences what is considered socially appropriate and how the message is received. Situational context also refers to the reason why one speaks. Situational context is often thought as the event itself.

Background knowledge context is an essential component in learning because when interpreting a sentence, sometimes people understand differently and with the background of knowledge it helps a person to understand when a textbook simply cannot provide a rich context prior to reading since the explanation is based on the knowledge itself.

Co-text is the linguistic environment of a word. It refers to linguistic material in the surrounding text. In structure of enthymeme, for

example, one of premise is part of co-text of a conclusion while the suppressed premise is not in the text, but available in the context.

## METHODS

The data of this research were utterances containing refusal acts taken from the script of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* based on the British-American film released on November 16, 2001, directed by Chris Columbus and distributed by Warner Bros Pictures. Another script was from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* which was released on November 15, 2002, directed by Chris Columbus and distributed by Warner Bros Pictures. The scripts of the movies were downloaded from <http://tomfeltonandmore.tripod.com/home.id9.html> and [http://haette-du-sorcier.com/IMG/pdf/CoS\\_Script.pdf](http://haette-du-sorcier.com/IMG/pdf/CoS_Script.pdf). However, as the scripts do not provide the time of each utterance, the subtitles were also utilized as secondary data sources downloaded from <http://subscene.com/>.

The procedures of the data collection are as follows. First of all, after the scripts were printed, they were read and synchronized with the movie subtitles. This was done by reading the scripts and watching the movies at the same time and also taking notes of the time stamps of the utterances.

Subsequently, the data of refusal acts found were sorted based on the refusal strategies proposed by Beebe, Takahashi, Uliss-Weltz (1990): direct strategies, indirect strategies, and adjuncts. Based on the classification, the data were calculated and presented in a table. To find the dominant types of refusal acts, we counted the percentage of each type of refusal acts. The data uttered with adjuncts to refusal were also analyzed and presented in a table. Following the table, the explanation of the classification of refusal strategies was presented.

Finally, the data were re-checked and analyzed with the context. After that, the refusal acts were coded and the explanation of the realization features of the refusals in the two movie scripts was presented afterwards. Below is an example of the use of a direct strategy of refusal using negative willingness/ability. It is used when

the speaker directly refuses that he or she will not do, give, or accept something from the requester.

(1) 00:04:53 - 00:05:22

Harry: What terrible things? Who's plotting them?

Dobby: **I can't say.** (Direct strategy, negative willingness/ability)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Altogether, 91 refusal utterances were found in *Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone* and *Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets*. Those utterances were classified using Beebe, Takahashi, Uliss-Weltz's theory (1990). This section discusses the findings of the refusal strategies. Table 1 below presents the frequency and distribution of direct and indirect refusal strategies used in the two movies.

Table 1. Frequency and distribution of refusal strategies in the movies

Refusal Strategies	No.	%
<b>Direct Strategies</b>		
1. Flat "No"	8	8.79
2. Negative willingness/ability	24	26.37
<b>Indirect Strategies</b>		
3. Regret/apology	2	2.19
4. Mitigated refusal	9	9.89
5. Reason/explanation	16	17.58
6. Statement alternative	1	1.14
7. Statement of principle	4	4.39
8. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	19	20.87
9. Acceptance that functions as refusal	2	2.19
10. Avoidance	6	6.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The most frequently used individual refusal strategy appears to be *negative willingness/ability* with 24 occurrences (26.37%), followed by *attempts to dissuade interlocutor* with 19 occurrences (20.87%), and *reason/explanations* with 16 (17.58%). The remaining strategies are

below 16 occurrences. However, Table 1 indicates that out of the 91 refusals, 32 (35%) were expressed by the characters using direct strategies and 59 (65%) using indirect strategies. This seems to suggest that the characters in the two movies tend to express their refusals indirectly. The following sub-sections present and discuss in detail the two strategies.

### Direct Refusal Strategies

As shown in Table 1, two sub-strategies were used by the characters in the movies in expressing their direct refusals: *flat “no”* and *negative willingness/ability*. The flat “no” sub-strategy was commonly used by the characters who have close relationships. Below is an example.

(2) 00:06:10 - 00:06:26

**Context:** *Harry is sad because he doesn't get any letters from his friends all summer. He went back to his room and found Dobby the elf-house. Somehow, Dobby got Harry's letters. Harry directly asks Dobby to give the letter back to him.*

Harry: Give me those. Now.

Dobby: **No!**

(3) 00:58:04 - 00:58:11

**Context:** *Harry was chasing the golden snitch, fingertips only inches from catching it when the rogue bludger smashes into Harry's arm and he broke his arm.*

Gilderoy Lockhart: Not to worry, Harry, I'll fix that arm of yours straight away.

Harry: **No. No. Not you.**

In example (2), when Harry asked Dobby to give the letter back, Dobby said flatly “No” to refuse Harry's request. Dobby's answer “No!” shows how he directly refuses Harry without any doubt. Similarly, in example (3), Harry's response can be regarded as a direct flat no strategy because Harry refused the offer.

The other direct strategy, negative willingness/ability, was used much more

frequently in the movies. This strategy is used to refuse something by saying an utterance with a direct meaning. Below are two examples illustrating the use of this strategy.

(4) 00:07:05 - 00:07:15

**Context:** *Dobby requests Harry Potter to promise that he won't go back to Hogwarts or he will make aunt Petunia's masterpiece of a pudding rises and drop it over the Mason's head. Ruined Uncle Vernon's important meeting and Harry will get punishment.*

Dobby: Harry Potter must say he's not going back to school.

Harry: **I can't.** Hogwarts is my home.

(5) 00:28:52 - 00:20:34

**Context:** *Hagrid and Harry are at a long table eating soup. Hagrid realizes something different in Harry's face. He asks if he's all right but what Harry wants is to know about the story of Voldemort, the one who killed his parents and gave him the scar.*

Hagrid: First, and understand this, Harry, cause it's very important. Not all wizards are good. Some of them go bad. A few years ago, there was one wizard who went as bad as you can go. And his name was V-... his name was V-...

Harry: Maybe if you wrote it down?

Hagrid: **I can't spell it.** All right, his name was Voldemort.

In example (4), Harry's refusal “*I can't. Hogwarts is my home.*” directly refuses Dobby with the negative willingness/ability strategy to express his unwillingness to leave Hogwarts. In example (5), Harry wants to know the name of the person who killed his parents, but Hagrid doesn't want to mention his name because it's forbidden. Thus, Harry suggests that he write it down but Hagrid's utterance “*I can't spell it*” suggests either his inability to spell or his reluctance to write it down and directly state Voldemort's name instead.

## Indirect Refusal Strategies

Several types of indirect strategies are used by the characters. One such strategy is *regret/apology*. This indirect refusal strategy mentions the speaker intention to refuse with his expression of regret or asking for forgiveness by saying “sorry”. This strategy is also used because when the characters refuse something, it is often followed by saying sorry or mentioning his or her feeling of regret to make the interlocutor understand why the speaker refuses. Below is an example.

(6) 01:55:35 - 01:55:59

**Context:** *Harry and Ron rush inside Gilderoy Lockhart’s office. As the defense against the dark arts teacher, Gilderoy is responsible to save Ginny Weasley who has been kidnapped by the monster inside the chamber of secrets. They want to give him some information that might work to defeat the monster. When the boys open the door, Gilderoy has already packed his bag and he wants to run away.*

Harry: Professor, we’ve got some information for you—are you going somewhere?

Gilderoy: Um, well, ye. Urgent call. Unavoidable. Got to go.

Ron: What about my sister?

Gilderoy: Well, as to that – most unfortunate. **No one regrets more than I.**

In example (6) above, Gilderoy expressed his regret because he could not help Harry and Ron to save Ginny Weasley because he was terrified by the monster inside the chamber of secret. His statement “*No one regrets more than I*” expresses his regret that he could not help them save Ginny.

Another indirect refusal strategy is *mitigated refusal*. This strategy is used to refuse an offer, request, or suggest by making the statement tacit and more delicate to the requester. Sometimes when the speaker wants to refuse, how s/he refuses is different from the requester’s understanding so this mitigated refusal strategy also expresses the speaker’s politeness towards other people. Here is an example.

(7) 00:40:37 - 00:41:20

**Context:** *All new students gather on a higher level inside Hogwarts. Professor McGonagall has just explained to them about Hogwarts’ rules. While the students were waiting, Draco Malfoy introduces himself to Harry Potter but Ron snickers at his name. Later, Draco insults Ron and he tells Harry that he shouldn’t make friends with the wrong person.*

Draco: It’s true then, what they’re saying on the train. Harry potter has come to Hogwarts. This is Crabble and Goyle, and I’m Malfoy ... Draco Malfoy.

Ron: (Ron snickers at his name)

Draco: Think my name’s funny, do you? No need to ask yours. Red hair, and a hand me down robe? You must be a Weasley. Well soon find that some wizarding families are better than others, Potter. Don’t want to make friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.

Harry: **I think I can tell who the wrong sort of myself**, thanks.

The dialogue in (7) suggests a less direct refusal by Harry to Draco presumably because it was Harry’s first encounter with Draco. Harry is portrayed as a kind and caring boy hence his statement.

*Reason/explanation* is another indirect refusal strategy that functions to deliver a reason or explanation as to why people refuse. It also acts as a cause or justification for an action or event. When the characters refuse something, they usually give a reason or explanation why they refuse in order to make the interlocutor understands.

(8) 01:39:00 - 01:39:45

**Context:** *Harry, Ron, and Hermione believe that Professor Snape is behind the entire bad event recently at Hogwarts. Part of Hagrid’s mind believes that everything happens because of Snape. But on the other hand, he refuses the children’s request to believe them because Snape is one of Hogwarts teachers.*

Hagrid: I agree but **Snape is one of the teachers protecting the stone!** He's not about to steal it!

Another strategy used to directly express a refusal is *statement alternative*. This strategy is used to refuse something indirectly by giving another option or choice to the requester. It suggests a way to retain rapport without making the situation indelicate. Below is an example.

(9) 00:47:44 - 00:47:53

**Context:** *At the great hall inside Hogwarts, all students gathered to eat dinner. Numerous ghosts come pouring from the walls, sailing along. One of the ghosts appears and greets the students from Gryffindor house.*

Ron: Hey, I know you! You're nearly headless Nick!

Nick: **I prefer Sir Nicholas** if you don't mind.

In example (9) above, the utterance "*I prefer Sir Nicholas*" shows that the ghost dislikes the way he is being addressed and instead politely asked Ron to refer to him as Sir Nicholas as it sounds more respectable because he refuses to acknowledge a rather indelicate nickname of headless Nick.

*Statement of principle* is also an indirect refusal strategy. This is a statement in which a person or organization describes their beliefs and intentions, as shown in the following example.

(10) 00:27:30 □ 00:28:32

**Context:** *Harry is looking for a wand and Hagrid recommends him to buy at Ollivander's. Harry goes into the store, quietly. He looks around. There are shelves of wands and a man appears on a ladde andr looks at Harry. He smiles and introduces himself as Ollivander. Later, Ollivander shows him a wand, which is destined for Harry and has the other half that gave him a scar.*

Ollivander: I remember every wand I've ever sold, Mr. Potter. It just so happens that the phoenix, whose tail feather resides in your

wand gave one other feather, just one. It is curious that you should be destined for this wand when its brother gave you that scar.

Harry: And can you tell me who owned that wand?

Ollivander: Uhm, **we do not speak his name.** The wand chooses the wizard, Mr. Potter. It's not always clear why, but I think it is clear that we can expect great things from you. After all, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named did great things...terrible, yes, but great.

In example (10), Olivander's utterance "*we do not speak his name*" means that he upholds the common belief that Voldemort's name is forbidden to be spoken due to his notoriety in the past.

The next indirect refusal strategy is *attempt to dissuade interlocutor*. This strategy can be expressed through the use of a threat or a statement of negative consequences to the request (11), or through a criticism to the request or requester (12).

(11) 02:25:20 - 02:25:45

**Context:** *Harry Potter just free Dobby from his master, Lucius Malfoy. Lucius is angry at Harry Potter because he made him lose his servant. He's ready to hurt Harry with his wand but Dobby steps between them.*

Dobby: You shall not harm Harry Potter!

Lucius: **Mark my word Harry Potter. You'll meet the same sticky end as your parents one of these days.** They were meddles some fools too.

(12) 00:05:17 - 00:05:28

**Context:** *Petunia leads Dudley over to the family room, where there are a number of presents. Dudley stares.*

Dudley: How many are there?

Vernon: Thirty-six. Counted them myself.

Dudley: **Thirty-six?! But last year I got thirty-seven!**

Lucius' utterance in example (11) expresses a refusal admitting the fact that Dobby is freed by Harry Potter. Therefore, Lucius threatens him by reminding the fate of his parents. In example (12), Dudley shows his disappointment simply by a trivial matter of lacking one present. It might mean that since he received more presents last year, this year his parents should give even more presents. His utterance "Thirty-six?!" is his refusal and a means to criticize his parents for the lack of one present.

Next is the strategy of *acceptance* that functions as a refusal through the use of an indefinite reply. Using this indirect refusal strategy, the speaker is not certain in meaning or detail to the requester.

(13) 02:24:26 - 02:24:41

*Context: Harry comes up running, thrusts the diary into Malfoy's hand. He offers the book to him because he believes the book that creates the unlucky events recently at Hogwarts belongs to Lucius Malfoy.*

Lucius: Mine? **I don't know what you're talking about.**

In example (13) above, Lucius' utterance "I don't know what you're talking about" implies his refusal to acknowledge the book which is actually his in order to prevent the truth to be revealed. Hence, he deliberately states his unawareness of it.

The last indirect refusal strategy is *avoidance* through topic switch, repetition of part of a request, and postponement. Topic switch can be categorized as an indirect refusal strategy because the speaker refuses the suggestion, offers, or requests by switching the topic of the conversation (14). Repetition of part of a request is used when the speaker wants to avoid the request, offers, or suggestion. S/he repeats the request indirectly to show uncertainty to fulfill the request (15). Finally, postponement is used when the speaker refuses by showing the action of postponing in order to answer the request, suggestion, or offer (16).

(14) 00:01:52 - 00:02:20

*Context: Harry's owl pet, Hedwig, was bored inside the cage and making noises. Uncle Vernon asks Harry to control the owl but Harry requests him to let the bird out for a while. Since owls are pets used to send letters in the wizard world, Vernon refuses Harry to let the bird go because he's afraid Harry will send the letter to his friends. He refuses him by changing the topic to remind Harry that he should be grateful for what he has.*

Harry: But I haven't gotten any messages. From any of my friend. Not one. All summer.

Vernon: I should think you'd be more grateful. We raise you since you were a baby, give you food off our table, even let you have Dudley's second bedroom purely out of the goodness of our heart.

(15) 01:44:02 - 01:44:30

*Context: Outside, at night, Mr. Filch is leading four students to Hagrid's hut. They were punished for being out of bed after hours. The punishment is to go inside the forbidden forest with Hagrid.*

Filch: Oh, For God's sake, pull yourself together. You're going into the forest, after all! Got to have your wits about you.

Draco: **The forest?** I thought that was a joke! We can't go in there. Students aren't allowed. And there are werewolves!

(16) 02:22:02 - 02:23:11

*Context: Harry hands Hedwig to a trainman, and walks to an open door of the train with Hermione. Hermione waves to Hagrid, who waves back. Hermione gets in the train and suggests that Harry get inside because the train is about leaving soon. Harry sees Hagrid and decides to say goodbye before he leaves.*

Hermione: Come on, Harry.

Harry: **One minute.**

In example (14), Vernon expresses his refusal to Harry's request to let the owl being



released by switching the conversation explaining his abundant generosity to Harry and how Vernon longs for him to express his gratitude to his family. In example [28], Draco's utterance "*The forest?*" emphasizes his refusal to Mr. Filch's request to go inside the forest as he further states it is prohibited for students. In example (16), Harry refuses Hermione by saying "*One minute.*" To postpone the request to board the train.

### Adjuncts to Refusal

Table 2. The frequency of Adjuncts to refusals

Adjuncts to refusal	No.	%
1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	3	25
2. Statement of empathy	3	25
3. Pause fillers	3	25
4. Gratitude/appreciation	3	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 2 demonstrates that all adjuncts have the same frequency. *Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement* with 3 (25.00%) occurrences, *statement of empathy* with 3 (25.00%) occurrences, *pause fillers* with 3 (25.00%) occurrences, and last *gratitude/appreciation* also with 3 (25.00%) occurrences. The following sub-sections present and discuss these adjuncts to refusals.

The *statement of positive opinion, feeling or agreement* adjunct is used to show that the speaker feels certain or positive in regards to something that is somehow different from another person, as shown in the following two examples.

(17) 01:39:00 - 01:39:45

**Context:** *Harry, Ron, and Hermione believe that Professor Snape is behind the entire recent mishaps at Hogwarts. Part of Hagrid's mind believes that everything happens because of Snape. But on the other hand, he refuses the children's request to believe them because Snape is one of Hogwarts' teachers.*

Hagrid: **I agree** but Snape is one of the teacher protecting the stone! He's not about to steal it!

(18) 00:16:10 - 00:17:20

**Context:** *Everyone has gathered in front of the large fireplace. Mrs. Weasley offers Harry a flowerpot. At the bottom is a layer of very soft dust. Harry frowns in confusion. Mrs. Weasley requests him to travel by floopowder. Ron interrupts and refuses his mom's request for Harry.*

Ron: That's a good idea, but Harry never travels by floopowder, mom.

Hagrid's initial utterance "*I agree*" in (17) and Ron's "*That's a good idea*" in (18) belong to statements of agreement. However, they can also be regarded as adjuncts to refusal as Hagrid avoids complying with Harry's request to believe him regarding Snape and so does Ron to his mother as he presupposes that Harry needs to be taught how to travel with floo powder.

Another type of adjunct to refusal is statements of empathy. This adjunct is a polite and respectful statement that shows that a person understands and cares for another individual's problems. Below is an example.

(19) 01:01:30 - 01:02:07

**Context:** *Dobby is once again asking Harry Potter to leave Hogwarts immediately because terrible things are about to happen. Harry asks Dobby to tell him what the terrible things are, but Dobby refuses to tell the truth.*

Harry: Repeat itself, you mean the chamber of secrets? Tell me Dobby, when did this happen before? Who's doing it now?

Dobby: Dobby cannot say, Sir. **Dobby only wants Harry Potter to be safe.**

(20) 01:38:54 - 01:39:35

**Context:** *Night time. Hermione, Ron, and Harry are running across the wet ground to Hagrid's hut. They knock on the door and it's open.*

Hagrid: Oh, hello. Sorry, don't wish to be rude, I **know you want to play but I'm in no fit state to entertain today.**

In dialogue (19), Dobby expresses his refusal and his concerns at once. The utterance “*Dobby cannot say sir*” is the obvious refusal whereas “*Dobby only wants Harry Potter to be safe*” acts as his empathy towards Harry Potter as he cannot tell Harry what is happening in the Chamber of Secrets despite its urgency. In example (20), as Hagrid expresses his refusal, he further states his understanding of the nature of their visitation. The utterance “*I know you want to play but I'm in no fit state to entertain today*” functions as a statement of empathy in order to make the refusal less indelicate for Harry and his friends.

Pause fillers are adjuncts to refusal used when the speaker take pauses in their utterances. Fillers are generally not recognized as purposeful or containing formal meaning, usually expressed as pauses such as *uh*, *like* and *err*, but also extending to repair (“*He was wearing a black—uh, I mean a blue, a blue shirt*”). This is also common to those with articulation problem such as stuttering. An example is shown below.

(21) 01:55:35 - 01:55:59

**Context:** *Harry and Ron rush inside Gilderoy Lockhart's office. As the defense against the dark arts teacher, Gilderoy is responsible to rescue Ginny Weasley who has been kidnapped by the monster inside the chamber of secrets. They want to give him some information that might work to defeat the monster. When the boys open the door, Gilderoy has already packed his bag and he wants to run away.*

Harry: Professor, we've got some information for you—are you going somewhere?

Gilderoy: Um, well, ye. Urgent call. Unavoidable. Got to go.

Ron: What about my sister?

Gilderoy: **Well**, as to that – most unfortunate. No one regrets more than I.

Gilderoy in the example above (21) in says “well”, which functions as an adjunct to his refusal to save Ginny.

The last type of adjuncts to refusal is *gratitude or appreciation* which is used to show appreciation for and to return kindness by the speaker to the interlocutor, as shown in the following examples.

(22) 00:19:10 - 00:19:20

**Context:** *Hagrid walks with Harry to buy Harry's school supplies. They go to a corner store, where it leads to The Leaky Cauldron bar. There are numerous wizards inside because that is the secret entrance to Diagon Alley. Suddenly, Tom the bar keeper greets Hagrid and offers him a drink.*

Tom: Ah, Hagrid! The usual, I presume?!

Hagrid: No thanks, Tom. I'm on official Hogwarts business today. Just helping young Harry here buy his school supplies.

(23) 00:40:37 - 00:41:20

**Context:** *All new students are gathered on a higher level inside Hogwarts. Professor McGonagall just explained to them about Hogwarts rules. While the students are waiting, Draco Malfoy introduces himself to Harry Potter but Ron snickers at his name. Later, Draco insults Ron and tells Harry that he shouldn't make friends with the wrong person.*

Draco: It's true then, what they're saying on the train. Harry potter has come to Hogwarts. This is Crabble and Goyle, and I'm Malfoy ... Draco Malfoy.

Ron: (Ron snickers at his name)

Draco: Think my name's funny, do you? No need to ask yours. Red hair, and a hand me down robe? You must be a Weasley. Well soon find that some wizarding families are better than others, Potter. Don't want to make friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.

Harry: I think I can tell who the wrong sort of myself, thanks.

In example (22), Hagrid's utterance "No thanks, Tom. I'm on official Hogwarts business today. Just helping young Harry here buy his school supplies." can be considered as a gratitude/appreciation because Hagrid says "thanks" to refuse the offer when the barkeeper wants to give him a drink and he explains that he's not coming for a drink instead just passes through because he wants to go to the Diagon Alley and helps Harry to buy his school supplies. Similarly, in example (23), Harry says "thanks" to show his gratitude and appreciation to the offer.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the characters in two *Harry Potter* movies apply 10 out of the 14 refusal strategies proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). They are *Flat "No"*, *negative willingness/ability*, *Regret/apology*, *Mitigated refusal*, *Reason/explanation*, *Statement alternative*, *Statement of principle*, *Attempt to dissuade interlocutor*, *Acceptance that functions as a refusal*, and *Avoidance*. However, in general they tend to express their refusals indirectly.

Based on the findings, there are 91 utterances that can be classified as refusals; 8 refusals were expressed using the flat "no" strategy, 24 using the negative willingness/ability strategy, 2 using the regret/apology strategy, 9 using the mitigated refusal strategy, 16 using the reason/explanation strategy, 1 using the statement alternative strategy, 4 using the statement of principle strategy, 19 using the attempt to dissuade interlocutor strategy, 2 using the acceptance that functions as a refusal strategy, and 6 using the avoidance strategy.

It can also be concluded that the characters in the two *Harry Potter* movies produced the negative willingness/ability direct refusal strategy more frequently than the other strategies. The negative willingness/ability strategy is used most frequently used in the movies (26.37%). This is probably due to the straightforwardness of the characters. Their backgrounds and personalities allow them to be candid and thoughtful throughout the movie which is evident from the negotiation and alternatives when rejecting requests.

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