Refusal Strategies in L1 and L2 among Undergraduate Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract: Speech act of refusal has been one of the important topics that has received a lot of attention among many researchers and theorists in the discourse pragmatic research over the past few decades. Though the speech act of refusal has been pursued by many researchers in eastern languages, a few studies have been done especially in the Saudi context to investigate the speech act of refusal among non-native speakers. Accordingly, in the present study, the researcher has tried to explore refusal strategies employed by a group of Saudi EFL learners when making refusals to invitations, requests, offers and suggestions in their first language (Arabic) and second language (English). To this end, forty-four ELT undergraduate students form Qassim University in Saudi Arabia, participated in this study. The data was obtained from 12-items written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) that consisted of various interlocutor statuses (low, high and equal). The analysis was based on the classification of refusal strategies proposed by Beebe et al. (1990). The results indicated that the participants used more indirect strategies in Arabic in comparison to English, mainly statement of regret, care for the interlocutor's feeling, giving reasons. Additionally, they mostly employed direct strategies to an interlocutor of lower status. The findings also indicated that students' responses to 12 scenarios in English were largely inappropriate and inaccurate because they were too direct, due to students' lack of knowledge of the role of social status when issuing refusals to a person of high status. When refusing in their native language, the students tended to be less direct in their refusals by offering preceding "reasons" or "explanations". Findings suggest that, to help students become better communicators in English, it is important to teach them directly the most common speech acts, especially those they might frequently use in their everyday conversations with professors and classmates. Moreover, implications and recommendations for future research were suggested based on the given results.

Keywords: Pragmalinguistic failure; Speech act, Refusal strategies**;** Discourse completion task, Status of interlocutor

INTRODUCTION

To communicate effectively and appropriately in a second or a foreign language, language learners need to develop all aspects of communicative competence. Communicative competence involves two types of competence: 1) grammatical competence, which is a knowledge of the language code and the rules of the language, such as morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology (Darwish 2016), and 2) pragmatic competence, which is the ability to

use language effectively to accomplish a certain communicative intention as well as to understand language in a certain context (Lin, 2010). Successful communication entails not only the knowledge of grammar and text organization but also the pragmatic aspects of the target language. Knowing 'how to speak accurately' does not assure knowing 'how to speak properly' (Cohen, 1996). In addition to grammatical rules, learners need to acquire the rules of L2 pragmatics in order to interact effectively with L2 native speakers (Alsairi, 2019).

It is worth mentioning the fact that pragmatics plays a crucial role in the process of communication. This can be understood in the words of Rezvani and Ismael (2017) who said that "the role of pragmatics is vital in producing and decoding messages in a language". Similarly, Zangoei and Derakhshan (2014) point out that pragmatic competence is crucial to successful communication as it will facilitate matters to interlocutors to convey their communicative intention and to comprehend the message. In addition to this, Zangoei and Derakhshan stated that "in order to communicate appropriately in a target language, pragmatic competence in the second or foreign language must be reasonably well-developed". Lack of adequate knowledge of pragmatic rules of the target language may lead to a breakdown in communication known as "pragmatic failure in which speakers could run the risk of appearing uncooperative, insensitive, impolite, rude, or inept. (Bardovi-Harlig et al, 1991), and interlocutors tend to perceive a pragmatic failure as an offence rather than simply a deficiency in language knowledge (Boxer, 1995). Research in interlanguage pragmatics has shown that ESL learners' performance of speech acts is often different from that of native speakers because of limited knowledge of L2's sociolinguistic rules (Kwon 2003). As a result, communication breakdown may occur.

The concept of the speech act was first introduced by Austin (1962), and it captures an important feature of language: saying something can also involve doing something. Speech acts can be thought of as 'functions' of language, such as complaining, thanking, apologizing, refusing, requesting, and inviting (Morkus, 2009). One speech act in which communication breakdowns can possibly occur is the speech act of refusal. The concept of refusal is one of the most complex issues which have been the focus of numerous studies, since from a sociolinguistic perspective, as mentioned by Felix-Brasdefer (2006), they are sensitive to social variables such as gender, age, level of education, power and social distance. In the present study, the researcher selected the speech act of refusal for two reasons: first, this concept is among the most complex issues in the process of communication and deals with such phenomena as face-saving activities and second, due to the fact that every day and in every situations people perform the act of refusal frequently, one of the important topics in research on discourse pragmatics has been considered to be the speech act of refusals. Honglin (2007) defined speech acts of refusal as "the utterance, which is spoken out to perform the action of refuse" (p.67). In other words, "A refusal is a speech act by which a speaker "denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor" (Bella, 2010, p.2). Similarly, Umale (2011) said, Refusal is a "face-threatening act that tends to disrupt harmony in relationships". Due to its sensitivity, a refusal can be perceived differently between speaker and listener. It is a negative response to another speech act issued in the form of a request, invitation, an offer or suggestion (Abdul Sattar, Che Lah, & Suleiman, 2011). In

response to requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions, an acceptance or agreement is usually preferred, while refusing and rejecting are not. Thus, refusal is a face-threatening act to the interlocutor because it contradicts his/her expectation.

The speech act of refusal has been identified as the main challenge for EFL learners because it can cause undue offense and communication breakdown. As a face-threatening act, it is particularly sensitive. In most cases, EFL students are more likely than NSs to offend their interlocutors in the process of performing the act of refusal, because the extant obstacle of linguistic proficiency is compounded by the threatening nature of the speech act (Darwish, 2016). A refusal is a dispreferred response that contradicts the expectations of interlocutors; hence pragmatic competence is necessary to carry it out appropriately. Due to their nature, refusals can affect people's relationships adversely if perceived as impolite or uncaring. According to Umale (2011), refusals may damage the positive face of the speaker and threaten the negative face of the listener. Therefore, the author continues to "mitigate threats to face" caused by refusals, speakers can use politeness strategies (p. 19). Refusal tends to be used in indirect language with mitigation, delay and explanation whereas the acceptance or agreement tends to be direct without much delay, mitigation or explanation. Refusal usually includes explanations and reasons why such refusal is necessary. Generally, saying "no" is difficult for native speakers. If refusals are challenging for native speakers (NSs) as they may involve lengthy negotiation moves, the situation becomes even more worse and complex in interactions between NSs and non-native speakers (NNSs) or between NNSs-NNSs. In fact, refusing is a complex task for NNSs since it may be conducive to communication failure. Pragmatic inappropriateness may arise as a consequence of limited linguistic proficiency in the L2 or a lack of L2 sociocultural knowledge. In the EFL context, this sociocultural gap makes awareness and instruction of adequate refusals a necessity.

How one says "no" is more important in many societies than the answer itself. Therefore, sending and receiving a message of "no" is a task that needs a special skill. The interlocutor must know when to use the appropriate form and its function, the speech act and its social elements depending on each group and their cultural linguistic values (Al-Kahtani, 2005:36). Refusing in an appropriate way is taken to be evidence of pragmatic competence since the speech act of refusal is an extremely face-threatening act which is most likely to damage the addressee's face very easily (Sa'd and Qadermazi, 2014). Refusals threaten the addressee's negative face, that is, the desire that his/her future choice of actions or words be uninhibited. According to Al-Kahtani (2005), refusals are often realized through indirect strategies, which require a high level of pragmatic competence.

In fact, the action of refusal is performed in our daily lives and in a variety of situations. Refusals occur in all languages and play a significant role in everyday life communication. Due to its importance, the speech act of refusal has been investigated in a number of languages in a number of languages such as Japanese (Sadeghi and Savojbolaghchilar, 2011), Korean (Kwon, 2003), German (Beckers, 1999) and English (Sasaki, 1998). It has also been investigated in Arabic in a number of studies that looked at how native speakers of Arabic, native speakers of

English, and, in some cases, Arab learners of English realize this speech act (Al-Issa, 1998; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002; Stevens, 1993).

Many studies have been conducted to investigate and identify the use of refusal strategies in different languages. However, little research has been done especially in the context of Saudi Arabia to investigate only the speech act of refusal among non-native speakers (Alsairi, 2019; Al-Kahtani,2005; Al-Shalawi, 1997). Accordingly, understanding and familiarization with Saudi culture and the way Saudis refuse using Saudi Arabic language are required to improve communication with Saudis. In this study, the researcher has tried to investigate the use of strategies by Saudi college English language students in refusing invitations, requests, offers, and suggestions in Arabic (L1) and in English (L2).Taking the refusal speech act as a case in point, it sought to discover how Saudi EFL college students used Arabic and English when refusing requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions presented to them in a set of scenarios. The scenarios were organized in a way that would involve interlocutors of differing social status: high, equal, and low.

Rationale of the study

The rationale for selecting and conducting a research on the speech act of refusal to be the focus of the present study was:

First, as explained by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss- Weltz (1990) refusal is a complex speech act to realize and it requires a high level of pragmatic competence to be performed successfully. It usually involves extended negotiation and the use of indirect strategies to minimize the offense to the hearer.

Second, this speech act of refusal is also sensitive to other sociolinguistic variables such as the status of the interlocutors relative to each other (e.g., refusing a request from a friend versus a supervisor at work).

Third, Beebe et al. (1990) further explain that this speech act reflects "fundamental cultural values" and involves "delicate interpersonal negotiation" that requires the speaker to "build rapport and help the listener avoid embarrassment" (p. 68). This speech act, therefore, warrants investigation since the potential for offending the hearer and the possibility of communication breakdown are high. In addition, previous research on the speech act of refusal in Arabic has shown the potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication between Arabs and Americans (Al-Issa, 1998; Stevens, 1993).

The purpose of the study

Taking the refusal speech act as a case in point, the present study attempts to investigate 1) the use of strategies by Saudi EFL students in refusing invitations, requests, offers, and suggestions in their first language (L1) and in second language (L2). In addition, it presents the pedagogical implications of the present study on the use of refusal strategies in English by native speakers of Arabic.

Research Questions

In line with the above-mentioned purposes, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1.a) What are the strategies used for refusals by Saudi students in their first language (L1)?

1.b) What are the strategies used for refusals by the same students in their second language (L2)?

2. What are the pedagogical implications of the present study?

Review of literature

This section deals with the literature review outlining the relevant issues regarding speech act of refusal. Accordingly, the researcher provides a review of both theoretical and the empirical research studies that investigated the speech act of refusal.

Theoretical Concept of Speech Act

Speech act theory created on the principles introduced by Austin (1962). John Searle (1969) defined the term 'speech act' as a minimal unit of discourse. According to Searle, to understand language, one has to understand the speaker's intention since language is intentional behavior. A speech act is normally a sentence but it can also be a word or phrase as long as it signifies the intention of the speaker. When a person speaks, s/he performs an act. A speech is not only used to designate something, but it also does something. A speech act emphasizes the intent of the act as a whole. Searle also stated that the ability to comprehend the speaker's intention is necessary to figure out the meaning of the utterance. Without the speaker's intention, it is difficult to understand the words as a speech act. According to Searle, speakers can adopt a variety of speech acts to achieve their goals or intentions, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. Kasper and Rose (2001) provide more specific speech acts such as apology, request, complaint, and refusal.

Theoretical concept of refusal speech acts

Refusal is a kind of speech act that occurs when a speaker directly or indirectly says no in response to requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz: 1990). In response to requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions, acceptance or agreement are usually preferred, while refusing and rejecting are not. Thus, refusal is a face-threatening act to the requester, inviter, offerer and suggester because it contradicts his/her expectation. Refusal can mean disapproval of the interlocutor's idea and therefore, a threat to the interlocutor's face. Refusal tends to be used in indirect language with mitigation, delay and explanation whereas the acceptance or agreement tends to be direct without much delay, mitigation or explanation. Refusal usually includes explanations and reasons why such refusal is necessary. Generally, refusal strategies function to reassure the recipient of the refusal that she or he is still approved of but that there are some necessary reasons for the refusal, and the refuser regrets the necessity for the refusal.

According to Beebe (Beebe et al. 1990), refusal strategies can be classified into two categories, which include direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategies use 1) performative verbs and 2) non-performative statement. The indirect strategies include 1) statement of regret; 2) wish; 3) excuse, reason, explanation; 4) statement of alternative; 5) set condition for future or

past acceptance; 6) promise of future acceptance; 7) statement of principle; 8) statement of philosophy; 9) attempt to dissuade interlocutor; 10) acceptance that functions as a refusal; 11) avoidance: verbal and nonverbal. Adjuncts to refusals such as statement of positive opinion or gratitude may also be included in refusal speech acts.

Previous Research on Refusal Speech Acts

Several major investigations into the topic of refusal speech acts have been conducted in various languages such as Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008;), Arabic (Abdul Sattar et al, 2010; Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Issa, 1998, 2003; Al-Kahtani, 2005; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Morkus, 2009; Nelson, et al 2002; Stevens, 1993), Persian (Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Gholamia, and Aghaeib, (2012)), Chinese (Chang, 2009), Korean (Kwon, 2004), and German (Beckers, 1999).

Foreign Studies on Refusal Speech Acts

Refusals have been examined cross culturally; that is, researchers compared refusals in different languages. For example, in the study done on the comparison of refusal speech acts among Chinese and American English, Honglin (2007) came to the conclusion that both Chinese and American used varied expressions to refuse something and also their directness in refusals varied with situations and cultures. Both languages adopted both direct and indirect speech act of refusals. Americans were more direct than Chinese in their refusals but Chinese considered refusals as face-threatening acts; thus, they used politeness strategies in their refusals. In addition, "the Chinese tend to emphasize restoring relationship between people, while the Americans emphasize solving the problems in question" (p.67).

Sadler and Eroz (2001) also reported the Turkish and Americans used fillers while refusing followed by an utterance to express their gratitude and appreciation toward the addressee, while the speakers of Lao used utterances of regret which were followed by adjuncts. Comparing with each other, the Turkish refused less than speakers of other languages. Besides, they did not answer very differently in different types of refusal situations; that is, refusing a request was followed by an excuse or explanation, along with uttering some sorts of regret. In an invitation situation, they expressed their regret while they wanted to refuse a person with a higher status. To refuse an offer, they used gratitude and appreciation following an excuse or reason.

In a recent study, Chang (2011) examined the problems that Chinese learners of English encounter when performing refusals in English. Both production and perception data were collected by means of closed role-plays and a meta-pragmatic questionnaire completed by two groups of American and two groups of Chinese participants. While the American participants used substantially more direct refusals in comparison with the Chinese participants, no statistical difference was observed in their performance with regard to the use of indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts. Moreover, the reasons and explanations given by the Chinese group contained more specific and important details while the American group did not give detailed reasons for their refusals.

Nguyen (2008) investigated the similarities and differences in the refusals of requests between Australian native speakers of English and Vietnamese learners of English using a

modified version of the DCT developed by Beebe et al. (1990). Although the findings of this study showed some similarities in the refusal speech act production of the two groups, frequency of refusals offered by Australian native speakers of English and Vietnamese English language learners differed. The number of refusal strategies used by the Australian English speakers did not vary according to the social status of the interlocutor. However, the Vietnamese English learners showed more sensitivity to social power and social distance, and produced fewer refusals while dealing with interlocutors of higher status. Furthermore, the refusals of Vietnamese participants were more elaborate in comparison to those of their Australian counterparts. Vietnamese speakers of English used more statements of regret, statements of sympathy, terms of address, reasons and excuses in rejecting requests than the Australians did.

The study of Allami & Naeimi (2011) investigated the differences and similarities among the refusal productions of native speakers of Persian, Persian speaking learners of English and American native speakers. They found that Iranian and American speakers had differences in the frequency, shift and content of semantic formulae they used in their refusals of higher, equal and lower status person.

Arabic Speech Act Studies

Among the several studies on Arabic, Morkus (2014) compared the refusal of requests and offers among ten Egyptians and ten American native speakers of English. Egyptian participants use more refusal strategies compared with American native speakers, and Egyptian participants use more redundant refusal strategies particularly in the case of higher social power interlocutors. Instances of L1 pragmatic transfer appear in the Egyptians' refusal strategies by using L1-oriented proverbs. Both groups use different reasons to account for invitation refusal. Whereas the Egyptians use family reasons, American participants use personal reasons. Morkus's (2014) study is useful to the current study as there will be a comparison between the present study findings and that of Morkus, particularly in the number of refusal strategy choices between Saudi advanced learners and British participants, and in the influence of social power on the choice of refusal strategies.

With an attempt to uncover the problems posed on the FLL when realizing the speech acts in the target language, Al-Kahtani (2005) also compared the production of refusal strategies by Americans, Arab learners of English and Japanese learners of English. The findings indicated that three groups were different in the ways they formed their refusals in accordance with semantic formulas, order, frequency, and the content of semantic formulae.

In a similar vein, refusal strategies used in Egyptian Arabic and American English have been investigated (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary 2002). The results of this study revealed more similarities than differences between refusals in Egyptian Arabic and American English. Both groups utilised considerably more indirect strategies than direct strategies in their refusals. Both American and Egyptian groups used more direct strategies in response to interlocutors of equal social status compared to interlocutors of either higher or lower social

status. Consistent with the findings of Liao & Bresnahan (1996), Nelson et al. also found that the Americans generally used more strategies than the Egyptians in the process of each refusal.

AL-Issa (1998) investigated refusal strategies using a written DCT made by Jordanian Arab speakers and Americans. His findings showed that Jordanians made use of regret statements (e.g. I'm sorry) more than their American counterparts. Both groups, however, followed their strategies with reasons and explanations.

Another study was conducted by Al- Shalawi (1997) who studied the types of the semantic formulas used by Saudi and American students in refusing requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions. The results of this study showed no significant differences between the two groups; they used the same semantic formulas. The only difference arrived at was the number and content of the semantic formulas which reflected cultural differences between the two communities.

This review of the existing literature on the speech act of refusals demonstrates that a relatively large number of studies done on issues related to different types of speech acts in different settings. The majority of these studies are similar to the present study in that they dealt with the speech act of refusals and data were collected based on a completion discourse test. But there are some differences between the present study and the previous ones in that they only collected data from male participants. They also differ in that the previous studies only investigates invitation and request refusals, while the present study examined refusal to requests, offers/invitations and suggestion. Whereas the previous studies conducted researches on the comparison of refusal speech acts among different participants from various settings, the present study has been done on one group of participants who adopted their first language and second language in refusing invitations, requests, offers, and suggestions. However, little research has been done especially in the context of Saudi Arabia to investigate the speech act of refusal (Alsairi, 2019; Al-Kahtani, 2005; Al-Shawali, 1997). This declaration can be supported through Alsairi's (2019) words who stated "research conducted in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context reports that the range of speech acts and realization strategies is quite narrow". Therefore, what seems to be missing from the line of research on refusals is a comparative study of refusal strategies as used by EFL and non-English learners in their first language (Arabic) and second language (English). So, the researcher considered this issue as a research gap thus bridging this gap by the present research. As a result, in this study, the researcher wanted to investigate the use of strategies by Saudi college English language students in refusing invitations, requests, offers, and suggestions in Arabic (L1) and in English (L2).

Research Design

Participants

The total number of participants in the DCT was 44 participants (females). The data were collected from undergraduate students. The participants were the third-year English major students from the English Department of the College of Arts and Sciences at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. The study was conducted after obtaining permission from the dean of the college

to collect data from the students. The proficiency level of the students was determined using their GPA. The age of the students varied from 19 to 21 years old. Students were Arabic public-school graduates. None of them had travelled to an English-speaking country.

Tools of the study

The following sections describe the research data collection and analysis methods used in the study.

1 Discourse Completion Test (DCTs)

The instrument employed in the present study is a discourse completion task, in which the subjects, after reading a written description of a situation, are asked to write down what they would say in that situation. In order to complete the given discourse naturally, each blank needed to be filled out with refusals.

The DCT developed for this study was guided by the situations in the DCT developed by Beebe et al. (1990) that was used and adapted in various cross-cultural and ILP studies (e.g., Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Chang, 2009; Kwon, 2004; Nelson et al 2002; Shalawi, 1997; Al-Kahtani, 2005).

The DCT developed for this study was made in two versions, one in English and the other in Arabic, to be the nearest to the students' natural conversations. Both versions consisted of 12 situations respectively. They were divided into four groups: three requests, three invitations, three offers and three suggestions. In each situation, refusal was made to interlocutors of higher, equal or lower status. Each situation could only be answered by a refusal. (See Appendix B).

After the situations are designed, the researcher consults with some experts of English to confirm whether these situations are feasible in their university life. Four experts were asked to evaluate the situations to ensure that the given instructions and situations in the DCTs did not include unclear statements. Two native speakers of English (who have a Ph. D in Literature, have over 20 years of experience in teaching English to both native and non-native speakers of English) and two EFL professors in Linguistics (They have more than14 years of experience teaching linguistics to non-native speakers of English) assessed these situations with respect to language usage, clarity and comprehensibility. Based on the feedbacks received from the experts, some wording changes were made in the situations. And then, these situations are further modified to achieve the cultural feasibility. In so doing, the reliability and the validity of this research are ensured.

Procedures

In order to collect the DCT the researcher coordinated with another instructor to ask their students to volunteer to fill in a questionnaire that consists of two versions (Arabic and English Versions). Students finished their class agenda before collecting the data so that students were not distracted by doing other tasks such as class assignments or quizzes to avoid the effect of other extraneous factors. Administering the DCT generally took about 20 minutes in each class

and the instructions were presented orally. The first situation in both versions was acted out loud by the researcher before filling the written DCT.

After collect and coding the Arabic and English versions, a comparison was made. In order to find out the refusal strategies that the learners have adopted in refusing invitation, offer, suggestion or request, a detailed analysis of the student answers given to the situations in order to assess both their receptive and productive knowledge was conducted. The students' answers were checked and the appropriate answers were counted in both versions. Then, the results were compared quantitatively. Lastly, the answers were analyzed one by one. The answers that were pragmatically appropriate but grammatically not were considered to be appropriate, since the aim of these tests was to assess learners' performance of refusals, not grammatical knowledge.

The data of refusals were classified into categories and subcategories of refusal strategies based on the taxonomy of refusal proposed by Beebe et al. (1990). The present study for the most part adopts the classification by Beebe et al., which to my knowledge provides the most comprehensive and widely used taxonomy of the semantic formulae for refusals to date (see appendix C for Beebe et al.'s classification table).

Coding and analysis of refusals

The data were coded in light of the taxonomy developed by Beebe et al. (1990) that was used for coding Japanese refusals. It was found to be the most suitable for the strategies collected from the DCT for two main reasons. First, the semantic content of the refusal strategies found in Beebe's taxonomy could be reflected on the data rendered by the DCT. Second, using this taxonomy enabled the researcher to compare the data collected from the Arabic version to the English one to see if there were differences in the strategies used in both versions.

Strategies were coded on two different levels. The first level was for rating the refusal strategies into direct, indirect and adjunct to refusals. They were then divided into subgroups based on the semantic content of the refusal strategies as shown in Tables presented in the results and discussion section. The second level of coding was numerical coding for quantitative data analysis which was carried out on SPSS

RESULTS and Discussion

This section will present the results of the main study both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results will be presented according to the research questions which deal with the issues in the following three parts:

The refusal strategies used by Saudi EFl learners in both Arabic and English versions.

1.a) What are the strategies used for refusals by Saudi students in Qassim university using English as their L2?

1.b) What are the strategies used for refusals by the same students in Qassim university using their native Saudi Arabic?

2. The implications of the present study

The answer of the first question

The first part explores the frequencies of the refusal strategies collected from the DCT and the field notes displayed according to the social aspect of power (High- Equal- Low) followed by qualitative analysis of the semantic content of the refusal strategies used in each situation.

To answer the first question raised, the researcher adopts a quantitative discourse analytic approach to the comparison of the participants' conversational pragmatic behavior in both versions. Refusals gathered from DCTs (English and Arabic) were divided into three categories which were direct, indirect and adjuncts to refusals. The frequencies of using these strategies were counted and displayed in the following tables. By using such an approach, this study aimed to identify and explore changes in the refusal strategies adopted by the participants in the Arabic version as compared to the English one.

After the refusal data were collected, they were coded into semantic formulas. A semantic formula refers to 'a word, phrase or sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question' (Cohen 1981). In coding the refusal data in terms of semantic formulas, the refusal taxonomy developed by Beebe et al. (1990) was used. For example, if a respondent refused an invitation to a friend's house for dinner, saying "I'm sorry, I already have plans. Maybe next time," this response was coded as consisting of three refusal strategies as shown in the brackets:

I'm sorry	I already have plans	Maybe next time
expression of regret	excuse	offer of alternative

The total number of semantic formulas of any kind used for each situation was obtained for each of the participants. Then, I counted the frequency of each formula for each situation and listed them.

Refusal of Request

The situations 1, 2 and 3 were regarded as a request. In these situations, the participants were supposed to refuse a request. Most of the respondents using English adopted direct strategies to refuse a request in the English DCT such as "No" and "Negative Ability". Table (1) shows that the percentage of respondents (54.55%) using 'No' in most situations was quite high, particularly in situations in which the interlocutors were of equal or of lower status, such as a friend's request. They don't recognize that the use of direct strategies such as "No, I can't" can be interpreted as an insult to the interlocutor. Saudi learners sometimes offend native speakers when they refuse even though they don't intend to do so. This may be because they have not learnt the appropriate and acceptable ways to refuse in American or British culture. The indirect refusal expression was occasionally used by few participants. Some respondents tend to use indirect expressions such as 'sorry', and 'I am busy' without giving any explanation.

The findings have shown that EFL learners prefer to resort to more direct strategies when addressing to people in a lower position. It is worth noting that requests were softened by the use of some lexical phrases such as "please", "excuse me" and "I wonder if" since the requestee is a

stranger to the requester. The preference of directness in this situation may be considered as an instance of solidarity politeness strategies, in that it expresses camaraderie.

Table (1) also indicated different outcomes in the results obtained especially by the learners when responding to the Arabic and English versions. To clarify this, the Saudi students using English showed concentration on the direct strategies when refusing the request situations. The direct strategies such as "NA", "No" were used here scoring similarly 50% for the former strategy and 54.55% for the latter one, particularly in situations in which the interlocutors were of equal/low status. However, some few existences of "wish" as well as "positive opinion" but not exceeding 9.09% are also noticeable in this position.

Table 1. Percentages of refusing requests (English and Arabic DCT)

Status of the interlocutor	English DCT	Arabic DCT
Higher	1. "No"(54.55%) 2. Negative ability (50%) **3.** Gratitude (50%) 4. Positive opinion (9.09%)	1 Excuse (95%) 2. Regret (75%) 3. Positive feeling 3. (59%) 4. Gratitude (50%) Negative ability (50%)
Equal	1. "No"(50%) 2. Negative ability (50%) **3.** Gratitude (50%)	1. Excuse (75%) 2. Positive feeling (50%) 3. 3. Regret (45.45%) 4. Negative ability, Gratitude (40.90%)
Lower	1. Gratitude (50%) 2."No"(50%), Negative ability (50%) 3. Statement of alternative (35%) 4. Wish (9.09%)	1. Excuse (75%) 2. Regret (50%) 3. Positive feeling 3. (40.90%) 4. Negative ability, Gratitude (40.90%) 5. Future acceptance 3. (27.27%)

As for performing refusals in Arabic version in different situations, the majority of the participants were able to differentiate between the direct and indirect strategies and know when and how to use them in different situations with persons of different status. Of refusing a higher status person, an example is situation 1, in which the speaker has to refuse a request from a professor asking for assistance (the refuser is in a lower status relative to the interlocutor). It was found that participants avoided direct strategies like [no] because saying "no" to someone's face is interpreted as an insult to the other person. The manner of avoiding saying 'no' is probably due to the fact that all the participants Using Arabic consider the 'face' of the interlocutor of the most importance in an interaction (Al-Issa, 2003). They do not want to hurt people's feelings or

insult people by saying 'no'. Instead, some used "negative ability". This strategy was softened by using an address term. Since the person to be refused was a professor, the use of "Prof." was usual for Saudi participants. They sought the satisfaction and the approval of the other person, trying to show their respect, consideration, and willingness to comply with the request by using indirect strategies. Results further indicated that the majority of participants favored the use of the semantic formulas [positive feeling], [regret], [excuse] and [alternative]. The subjects using Arabic showed their regret more frequently to a higher-status person than to an equal/low status person. The following are examples of responses as shown in their original forms, i.e. no editing for language was made:

Regret title explanation alternative

Sorry, prof. I have next class and I am late. Can I get another student to help you?

Regret negative ability alternative

Sorry, I can't but I can ask my friend to help you.

Following were some statements uttered repeatedly by most of the participants in situation 2 in which someone asked one of his classmates to borrow his notes. The refuser is in equal status relative to the interlocutor:

"Sorry, because my handwriting is terrible this time.

I wrote very quickly that session; so, you will be faced with a lot of problems while reading."

"I really like to help you, but I'm sorry, I also need the notes for tomorrow's exam. I'm sure others can help you."

"You know I'm really sorry, I need to study them tonight, it's better to ask someone else."

"Unfortunately, I don't have my notes with myself now."

When refusing an equal status person, it was found that most expressions were quite long, consisting of three types of refusal strategies including 'regret', 'excuse' and 'statement of alternative', such as, "I'm sorry, I need to read it tonight". Some participants suggested the help of others and thus made use of the alternative strategy, e.g., "My note is not complete, so may be you can borrow from someone else".

When refusing a low status person, such as in Situation 3, in which the speaker has to refuse a request from a high school student (and the interlocutors know each other very well as they are relatives) asking for help with his homework (the refuser is in higher status relative to the interlocutor), the most frequently used semantic formulas by the participants of the experimental group were [regret], to start their refusals, followed by [negative ability] then [excuse] or [future acceptance] or even [alternative]. [Negative ability] was used by some participants.

The findings have shown that Saudi EFL Learners tend to use direct strategies when requesting their acquaintance who is in lower position. In this situation, the participants use direct strategies because the speaker is in a higher position than the hearer (requestee). The use of direct requests in this situation shows solidarity and group reciprocity.

The findings have also shown that EFL learners prefer to use conventionally indirect strategies in addressing their acquaintances and friends when the ranking of imposition is very high. On the other hand, when the requestee is in a higher position, EFL learners use more indirect strategies

to show their respect and deference. Indirect request or negative politeness strategies are used to protect both of the requester and the requestees'' faces. The study has shown that learners' responses are influenced by their linguistic and cultural backgrounds; thus, it is suggested that Saudi learners of English should be aware of the socio-cultural and pragmatic differences between their L1 (Arabic) and English learnt as a foreign language.

Refusal of Invitation

The situations 4, 5 and 6 were considered as an invitation. In these situations, most of the participants of the two groups were supposed to refuse an invitation. The participants using English in their refusal to the invitation situations displayed direct strategies in the low-to-high status such as "no ". It was found that more than half of the percentage of the learners used "No, I can't" in all situations of invitations. Although 'negative ability' carries a degree of directness, it is less direct than 'no' in the respondents' opinions. They used 'negative ability' because they wanted to be direct, but were still able to sound polite. However, it was appropriate to say 'no' directly in certain situations, such as to friends because friends were close to them. In addition, a stranger was socially distant; therefore, directness was given the first priority. In the case of a professor, social status was an important factor, especially in Saudi Arabia which has 'a hierarchy-sensitive society' (Al-Kahatani, 2005). In most interpersonal communication in Saudi culture, a person of higher status is likely to be assertive and expressive whereas a person of lower status tends to be passive. Both groups used gratitude to refuse an invitation from a person of a higher status.

The findings have shown that Saudi EFL Learners using English as a second language tend to use direct strategies when inviting their acquaintance who is in lower position. In this situation, the participants use direct strategies because the speaker is in a higher position than the hearer (invitee). The use of direct requests in this situation shows solidarity and group reciprocity. These strategies fall under positive politeness strategies. TEFLL employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing „face" because they are influenced by their Saudi cultural background and traditions by which Saudi may resort to directness to address lower people in position.

Table 3. Percentages of refusing invitations (English and Arabic DCT)

Status of the interlocutor	The English DCT	The Arabic DCT
Higher	1."No"(54.55%) 2. Negative ability (50%) 3. Gratitude (45.45%) 4. Regret (27.27%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2. Gratitude (45.45%), 3. Regret (45.45%) 4. Negative ability (40.91%) 5. Positive feeling (30%) 6. wish (27.27%)
Equal	1."No"(50%) 2. Negative ability, 3. Gratitude (45.45%) 4. Regret ((27.27%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2. Regret (50%) 3. Gratitude (45.45%) 4. Negative ability (40.91%)

		5. Positive feeling (35%) 6.wish (20%)
Lower	1."No"(50%) 2.Negative ability, Gratitude (40.91%) 2. Regret (31.82%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2.Gratitude (45.45%) 3. Regret (45.45%) 4. Positive feeling, Negative Ability. (30%) 5.wish (20%)

On the other hand, the students using their native language in their refusals to invitation situations displayed different results. On the Arabic DCT, as compared to English DCT, the students use by far more indirect strategies, decreasing the use of direct ones proportionally. While statements of positive feeling were almost non-existent in the English DCT, they appear in all situations for all participants on the Arabic DCT. It is important to note here that, statements of explanation and gratitude are used frequently during Arabic DCT. Non-performative refusals, such as negative ability, are less frequently used in the Arabic DCT. Thus, the results from the responses to the Arabic DCT showed a rise in the use of both "positive opinion" and "gratitude" strategies to score similarly 40.91% each. No' was not used by any of the students when refusing an official's invitation in their native language. The learners' responses, in turn, show the uses of some frequent formulae in invitations such as "regret" and "NA" to score 45.45% vs. 40.91% respectively. There is also a rise in the occurrences of "excuse" to score 75% respectively.

However, the students using their Arabic language showed noticeable changes from their second language performance. This finding is greatly in line with Darwish 's (2016) who showed that there are undeniable differences between the EFL learners in the Arabic DCT results from their Arabic DCT results. The strategies used in the low-to-high status (L-H) were very close to the learning targets such as "gratitude", "positive feeling", "negative ability" and "explanation", especially, the patterns of "positive feeling" such as "I'd love to" and "I'd like to" were used very frequently by the students.

The participants using their first language usually began their refusal with 'gratitude' or 'regret' followed by 'explanation' (e.g., 'Sorry, but I'm not prepared enough to address the group. Maybe next time', 'Thanks, I'm honored, but I am really too busy'). In the equal-to-equal (E-E) status, the "gratitude" strategy was also frequently used by the students which was very common in the learning targets. Subsequent statements (In Arabic DCT) were said commonly by most of the participants in situation 5 in which someone invited his/her friend to dinner:

"I'd love to but I myself will have a guest that night."

"Thanks. I was invited to another party."

"Sorry, Tomorrow, I have a really difficult exam."

"I wish I could, but I am busy on Sunday night."

And in the high-to-low status (H-L), students also frequently used "regret" strategy which was also ranked as the most frequent strategies in the learning targets. The majority of the participants also used indirect strategies such as an excuse, a reason or an explanation in order to

refuse an invitation which were sometimes preceded or followed by a sense of regret. Following were some sentences uttered frequently by most of the participants in situation 6 in which a freshman invited a senior student to dinner:

"Thank you for your invitation but I was invited somewhere else so sorry, I have to go there."

"Thank you for your intimate invitation. I have to excuse you, because I am so busy at that time."

In refusing an advisor's invitation to attend a lecture, the subjects of the experimental group usually began their refusals with 'positive feeling' followed by 'explanation'. Typical refusals by the subjects are, for example, 'I'd love to, but I can't this weekend' and 'I'd love to, but I have a lot of stats homework due in the morning'. Unlike the subjects of the control group began their refusal with 'No' followed by 'negative ability' followed. For example, they said 'No I can't go. There's a party at my house too.' Following were also some statements expressed commonly by most of the participants of the treatment group in situation 4 in which a boss invited the interlocutor to attend a lecture:

"Sorry, but the next Sunday is my birthday party. I hope you accept my apology."

"I am sorry but I was invited to a wedding party."

Really! So sorry but next Sunday my husband and I are going to celebrate our first anniversary with our families and some friends!

Refusal of Suggestion

The situations 7, 8 and 9 were viewed as a suggestion. In these situations, the participants were supposed to refuse a suggestion. Resembling the previous situations, a large number the participants in the Arabic DCT used direct strategies such as "No", a Negative ability in order to refuse a suggestion which were sometimes preceded or followed by a sense of regret. This may be because they have not been taught appropriate and acceptable ways to refuse in American culture.

The students using the English as a second language showed concentration on the direct strategies when refusing suggestion situations. Thus, "No" of 59% constituted the main strategy used in the first position. In addition, "NA" and "regret" were also used here scoring similarly 45.45% for the two former strategies and 36.36% for the "Gratitude" strategy.

Table 3. Percentages of refusing requests (English and Arabic DCT)

Status of the interlocutor	The English DCT	The Arabic DCT
Higher	1."No"(59%), 2.Negative ability,Regret (45.45%) 3.Gratitude, (36.36%)	1. Explanation (70%) 2. Statement of alternative (50%) 3.Positive feeling (50%) 4. Gratitude (30%) **5.** Negative ability, (27.27%)
Equal	1."No"(54.55%) 3. Negative ability (54.55%) 3. Gratitude (45.45%) 4. Regret (22.73%)	1. Explanation (60%) 2. Gratitude (45.45%) 3. Positive feeling (20%) 4. Regret 3. (20%)

Lower	1."No"(50%) 2. Negative ability, Gratitude. (45.45%) 3. Regret (27.27%)	1. Explanation (70%) 2. Positive feeling (50%) 3.Statement of alternative (45%) 4. Gratitude (45.45%) 5. Negative ability, Regret (20%)

As indicated in table (3), the percentages for the refusals to suggestions increased in the Arabic DCT. The learning targets in refusals to suggestions were "Statement of alternative", "positive feeling" and "explanation". In refusing an advisor's suggestion to take a certain course, all subjects were similar in terms of frequently used refusal strategies. Usually they used one refusal strategy in their refusals, which was "positive feeling" followed by 'explanation'. For example, they said, 'I think I know enough to be able to do it' and 'I don't think I can't fit it into my schedule'. They also used 'statement of alternative', such as 'I prefer to study this course myself' or 'I'd rather take that next semester'.

In refusing a friend's suggestion to narrow a research topic, the majority of the participants using first language were similar in terms of the content of 'explanation'. They usually explained their reasons in terms of relevant information and the limitations of time or resources. For example, they said 'I wanted to show how this affects a variety of areas rather than focuses on one aspect' or 'That would be nice if I had the time'. 'Compared to the English DCT, the EFL learners using Arabic sounded more polite by using 'gratitude' in their refusals, such as 'Thank you for your suggestion. That's a good idea, but I think it will be too narrow.'

When refusing a high school student's suggestion to do more conversation practice in a tutoring class, all the students of the experimental groups used 'regret' followed by 'explanation' as the most frequent strategy. Subsequent statements were also articulated frequently by most of the participants in situation 9 in which a student made a suggestion to his/her teacher to do more conversation practice:

 "Sorry, we should stick to the syllabus prescribed by the university."

"Excuse me dear, but I have to confess that this is not feasible now. You should have talked to me about it earlier."

 "Learning grammar is an essential element for conversation."

"I try to see your recommendation for the next semester."

"Oh, you are right, but you know the time is short and we do not have much time to spend on conversation."

Refusal of Offer

The situations 10, 11 and 12 were considered as an offer. In these situations, the participants were supposed to refuse an offer.

The English DCT results of the students showed the same strategies used in the previous tables. Thus, "gratitude", "regret" and the direct "No" occur frequently. This result is definitely due to the lack of refusal instructions and procedure given to this class.

Table 4. Percentages of refusing offers (English and Arabic DCT)

Status of the interlocutor	The **English DCT**	The **Arabic DCT**
Higher	1."No"(59%), Negative ability (54.55%) 2.Gratitude, (50%) 3. Regret (50%)	1. Explanation (95%) 2. Gratitude (59%) 3. Negative ability (54.55%), 4.Positive feeling (50%) 5.Regret (50%)
Equal	1."No"(59%) 2. Negative ability (54.55%) 3.Gratitude (50%) 4. Regret (50%)	2. Gratitude (80%) 3. Explanation (65%) 4.Positive feeling (59%) 5.Regret (50%)
Lower	1."No"(50%) 2. Negative ability, (50%) 3.Gratitude (45.45%) 4. Regret (40.90%)	1. Gratitude (75%) 2.Explanation (54.55%) 3.Positive feeling(50%) 4.Negative ability(50%), Regret (50%)

By contrast, the Arabic DCT results, as Table (5) also revealed, showed a big difference in comparison to the English DCT. Following the Arabic semantic order in this context, "Explanation" (54.55%) and "positive opinion" 50% and "wish" 13.64% shows some noticeable uses. However, there were still some occurrences of "gratitude" but of 75% in this position. Another noticeable use was the "regret" strategy to score 50%. Besides, there were some slight occurrences of other strategies such as "excuse", "gratitude". The following examples illustrate how the participants using Arabic showed development in their performance in the Arabic DCT:

"You know I really like the place I am so; I really can't afford being anywhere else rather than here."

"I see that would be great if I could go there but I have many businesses here."

"*I'm really happy to hear this good news but as a matter of fact, it's very difficult for me to buy a ticket plane every day, so I have to stay here."*

"I really do appreciate your favor. Honestly, I know it's an opportunity not for everyone but I really cannot move to another city."

In their first languages (Arabic), Saudi English language learners generally used more indirect than direct refusal strategies. The preference for generally using more indirect refusal strategies stems from the fact that refusals are inherently face threatening speech acts and the recipient of a refusal might take it as a sign of disapproval, dislike or ultimately impoliteness. Therefore, some degree of indirectness is usually present when refusals are given (Beebe et al. 1990). In line with the findings of previous studies (Alasiri, 2019; Darwish, 2016; Al-Issa 2003; Allami & Naeimi 2011; Kitao 1988; Kwon 2004; Nelson et al. 2002), the participants used

reasons and explanations more often than any other semantic formula either as a head act or a supportive move. The findings of the study also confirmed that the Saudi learners of English perceived giving reasons and explanations as an efficient strategy to soften their refusals and to make them more polite.

In conclusion, there was a big difference between the Arabic DCT and English DCT. Qualitatively, teaching refusals to requests, offers, invitations and suggestions are required. In general, the above results indicate that Saudi EFL students were able to use more appropriate Arabic refusals patterns than English ones.

Question Two

Pedagogical implications

Refusals are difficult things to perform even in one's native language. They may be more difficult in a foreign language. In order to decrease misunderstandings between native speakers of English and EFL learners to a minimum, it is important to teach the learners how to refuse appropriately in various settings. However, it seems that the importance of social appropriateness has not been emphasized much in most English language learning materials and teaching methods. What is necessary for better language learning is language instruction which incorporates a performative emphasis on sociolinguistic and pragmatic knowledge of English.

1. Teaching "when", "to whom" and "how" to refuse

Teaching strategies of English refusals is very important; however, merely teaching strategies is not enough. The learners also need to know when and in what situation they are supposed to use these strategies because a single strategy cannot be used for every situation. For example, an expression of gratitude can be used as a refusal to an invitation (Thank you so much, but ….), but usually it is not used as a refusal to a request.

2. Refusal in English text books

Usually students learn the language by using a textbook. As the trend of foreign language instruction has been moving toward the communicative approach these days, textbooks also should be designed in a way which promotes the improvement of the learners' communicative ability in the target language. In order to communicate smoothly in a foreign language, the students need to learn language which is authentic and socially appropriate in the target culture. However, it seems that vey few English textbooks are designed with consideration of the authenticity and social appropriateness of the language. Therefore, English textbooks should introduce some examples of refusals which include several strategies to perform refusal successfully. However, at present, very few learning materials take this matter into consideration seriously.

3. Teaching methods

Several scholars such as kwon (2004), and kondo (2001) have declared the importance of teaching pragmatic aspects of the English language, (i.e. how to do things with English words), though classroom activities. They state that the English value harmonious relations with others and those learners of English need to learn how to talk with native speakers without offending

them. If the learners learn only English vocabulary and grammar, they may apply these words and rules to the discourse strategies of their native language, and this may offend the native speakers. However, very few scholars actually discuss how the language teacher can teach the socio linguistic/ pragmatic aspects of the English language. The importance of teaching sociolinguistic aspects of English has been widely recognized these days. Now it is time for us to move further than that, and to discuss how we can teach them.

One way to teach sociolinguistic aspects of English language is to design and use English textbooks which consider the importance of these aspects and incorporate them in the materials they represent. However, the learners need to have enough opportunities to practice what they learn. They need to practice the appropriate way of using the language within a certain situation in order to have a real knowledge of the language (king and silver, 1993). The classroom is one of the places where the learners can practice what they learn; therefore, the instructors have to design their teaching plans carefully in order to have the learners practice appropriate use of the language in context.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to discover whether there are differences between the refusal strategies used by Saudi students in ESL and their native language, to examine the differences and the effect of the Saudi culture on their L2 production. After analyzing the results of the study, the following conclusions could be drawn. First, the results suggest a big difference between the students' realization of refusals in L1 and L2.

Second, Arabic refusals rendered by the research reflected some socio-cultural aspects related to the Saudi society. Arabic refusals have shown that the subjects using first language (Arabic DCT) on refusals significantly adopted the indirect strategies which are different from their refusals in English as a second language. The findings also indicated that students' responses 12 scenarios in English were largely inappropriate and inaccurate because they were too direct, due to students' lack of knowledge of the role of social status when issuing refusals to a person of high status. Language mistakes were mainly in the sentence structure, which affected the meaning clarity. When refusing in their native language, the students tended to be less direct in their refusals by offering preceding "reasons" or "explanations". Results from the quantitative analyses indicated that indirect refusal strategies were more popular than direct strategies for the Saudi students in Qassim universities using Arabic as their L1.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, not many studies have examined the realization of refusals in L1 and L2 within a Saudi university context. However, the results of the study supported the past studies that reflected the communication style of the Saudi context which is more of an indirect style such as Alsairi (2019) and Al-Kahtani (2005). On the other hand, the study displayed different results in relation to the speech acts of refusals produced by Arab students as Darwish (2016) and Al-Issa (2003) reported more of socio-pragmatic than pragmalinguistic transfer in his data. For example, Al-Issa (2003) reported that about 30% of

Jordanians in his sample used future acceptance, which corresponded to the extensive use of /inšallah/ God willing in their responses.

In conclusion, findings suggest that, to help students become better communicators in English, it is important to teach them directly the most common speech acts, especially those they might frequently use in their everyday conversations with professors and classmates. Moreover, implications and recommendations for future research were suggested based on the given results.

Suggestion for future research:

Below are possible suggestions for further research:

1. A study may investigate the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) among Saudi EFL learners.

2. A research can handle the impact of L2 environment on the development of L2 pragmatic competence.

3. The study can be replicated using natural speech data instead of the written data.

4. The study can be replicated using different types of the speech acts and a larger number of samples.

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Appendix A

Table 3.2 Contents of Instructional Materials and Time for EG and IG

L-H=a lower refuser to a higher interlocutor

E-E= an equal refuser to an equal interlocutor

Time	Unit	Dialogue
The 1st Week: 2 hours	1.Refusals to Invitations	1.Refusing a teacher's invitation to a party (L-H) 2. Refusing a friend's invitation to see a movie (E-E) 3. Refusing a junior classmate's invitation to speak for an orientation program (H-L)
The 2nd Week: 2 hours	2.Refusals to Suggestions	1. Refusing a boss's suggestion to change a project design a little bit (L-H). 2. Refusing a friend's suggestion to have a party in your house (E-E) 3. Refusing a high school student's suggestion to skip the details (H-L)
The 3rd Week: 2 hours	3.Refusals to Offers	1. Refusing a dean (teacher)'s offer of teaching assistantship (L-H) 2. Refusing a friend's offer for a ride (E-E) 3. Refusing a cleaning lady's payment for a broken vase (H-L)
The 4th Week: 2 hours	4. Refusals to Requests	1. Refusing a mother's request (L-H) 2. Refusing a classmate's request to use a computer (E-E) 3. Refusing a junior member's request for an interview (H-L)

H-L= a higher refuser to a lower interlocutor

Appendix A

Discourse Completion Test

Directions: Please read the following situation and then complete them by refusing. Pretend you are the person in the situation. You must refuse all requests, suggestions, invitations, and offers. Do not spend a lot of time thinking about what answer you think you should provide; instead, please respond as naturally as possible and try to write your response as you feel you would say it in the situation.

Request

1. You are a college student. Your professor asks you to stay after school to help prepare for a reception for new students, but you are very busy this week. How will you refuse if you need to? (request: refusing to higher status)

You refuse this request by saying: --

2. You are a college student. You attend classes regularly and you take really good notes. Your classmate often misses a class and asks you for the lecture notes. One of your classmates who

often miss class asks you for the lecture notes. But you just don't want to lend your notes. (Request: Equal status).

You refuse this request by saying:

:--

3. You only have one day left before taking a final exam. While you are studying for the exam, one of your junior relatives, who is in high school, asks if you would help him with his homework but you cannot. (request: refusing to lower status)

You refuse this request by saying: -- --

Invitation

4. You are in your professor's office talking about your final paper which is due in two weeks. Your professor indicates that he has a guest speaker coming to his next class and invites you to attend that lecture but you cannot. (Invitation: refusing to higher status)

You refuse the invitation by saying.:-- --

5. It is Friday afternoon. You meet your close friend in the front of the library. He says that he is going to have a picnic next Sunday and invites to join, but you cannot go (Invitation: Equal Status).

You refuse the invitation by saying.:-- --

6. You are a senior student in your department. A freshman, whom you met a few times before, invites you to lunch in the university cafeteria but you do not want to go. (Invitation: refusing to lower status)

Freshman: I haven't had my lunch yet. Would you like to join me?

You refuse the invitation by saying.:-- --

Suggestions

7. You are a first semester senior at the university and since pre-registration is next week; you are planning your schedule for your final semester. You have already put together a tentative schedule, but you need to get approval from your head of the department (HOD). You have taken one course with HOD during your first year, and have failed. You do not like to take any other course with him/her, as s/he is very strict. S/he says that s/he has offered a course you need to take and suggests that you take it. (Refusing to higher status)

You refuse by saying**:** _____ ---------------------------- ---

8. I have read the topic of your research. I find it a very wide. To make it researchable, I suggest you narrow research topic. (refusing to equal status)

You refuse by saying**:** --- --

9. You''re a language teacher at a university. It is just about the middle of the term now and one of your students suggests that the class would be better if you could give them more practice on conversation and less on grammar. (Refusing to lower status)

You refuse by saying : -- --

Offer

10. You have already finished a lecture and are going home. It starts raining heavily. You start running fast to reach the gate. Suddenly a car stops. It is your professor. He offers to give you a ride to the university gate, but you know he usually goes out of the gate opposite to yours. (offer: refusing to higher status)

You refuse by saying: --- ---

11. You are going through some financial difficulties. One of your friends offers you some money but you do not want to accept it. (offer: refusing to equal status)

You refuse by saying: --- --

12. You are a college student. You have a high school friend. He is the most kind and generous person you have ever known. One day he drops by your flat while you are doing your assignment. He knows that you don't have a printer. Your friend offers you his printer to use. However, you do not want to use his printer and you refuse his offer. (Refusing to lower status)

You refuse his offer by saying: -- --

Appendix B

Classification of refusals

I. Direct

A. **Performative** (e.g., " I refuse")

B. **Nonperformative** statement

1. "No"

2. Negative willingness ("I can't". "I won't". "I don't think so".)

II. Indirect

A. **Statement of regret** (e.g., "I'm sorry…"; "I feel terrible…")

B. **Wish** (e.g., "I wish I could help you…")

C. **Excuse, reason, explanation** (e.g., "My children will be home that night."; "I have

a headache.")

D. **Statement of alternative**

1. I can't do X instead of Y (e.g., "I'd rather…" "I'd prefer…")

2. Why don't you do X instead of Y (e.g., "Why don't you ask someone else?")

E. **Set condition for future or past acceptance** (e.g., "If you had asked me earlier, I would have…")

F. **Promise of future acceptance** (e.g., "I'll do it next time"; "I promise I'll…" or "Next time I'll…"-using "will" of promise or "promise")

G. **Statement of principle** (e.g., "I never do business with friends.")

H. **Statement of philosophy** (e.g., "One can't be too careful.")

I. **Attempt to dissuade interlocutor**

1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the request (I won't be any fun tonight" to refuse an invitation)

2. Guilt trip (e.g., Waitress to customers who want to sit a while: I can't make a living off people who just offer coffee.")

3. Criticize request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion);

4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request.

5. Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g., "Don't worry about it." "That's okay."

Appendix D

Instruction and Criteria for Rating and Assessing Students' Answers to Written DCT

A. Instruction for Rating

You are to rate the appropriateness of the responses of EFL learners to the written DCT items on the four aspects: correct expressions, amount of information, strategy choices, level of formality. Explanations of these aspects are provided below.

1. Correct Expressions

This category includes the typical expressions used for refusals in different refuser status. You may depend on your native speaker's intuition to judge the correctness. The question to ask is: How appropriate is the wording/are the expressions? You may rely on the expressions sample provided in "Criteria for Rating". Linguistic accuracy, however, is not the focus of the study. Do not let some minor errors to influence your rating.

2. Amount of Information

A lengthy explanation for refusal is needed for some native speakers. But non-native speakers of low proficiency might use very direct and thus shorter-than-native-speakers utterance. If a refusal begins with "I can't" without any reason or explanation may be judged as inappropriate. The question is: How appropriate is the amount of information?

3. Strategy Choices

This category refers to refusal strategies like explanation, positive feeling, gratitude etc. used by native speakers. Those who can choose the strategies provided in "Criteria for Rating" can be regarded as the holder of scale of 5. You may judge according to your intuition. The question is: How appropriate is the strategy choice?

4. Level of Formality

Formality can be expressed through word choice, phrasing, use of title, choice of verb forms. Use of colloquial speech can be appropriate in American English when the situation is informal and between friends, families and co-workers. Yet a degree of appropriateness can be applied. You are the judge. The question is: How appropriate is the level of formality?