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# The realization of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic by American learners of Arabic as a foreign language

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The Realization of the Speech Act of Refusal in Egyptian Arabic by American Learners  
of Arabic as a Foreign Language

Nader Morkus

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Secondary Education  
College of Education  
and  
Department of World Language Education  
College of Arts and Sciences  
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To my parents and to Laura with love

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# The Realization of the Speech Act of Refusal in Egyptian Arabic by American Learners of Arabic as a Foreign Language

Nader Morkus

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated how the speech act of refusal is realized in Egyptian Arabic by intermediate and advanced American learners of Arabic as a foreign language. It also compared the performance of the learners to that of native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and native speakers of American English. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between the learners' language proficiency and their pragmatic competence. In addition, it examined the extent of pragmatic transfer from L1 and whether there was a relationship between the degree of pragmatic transfer and the level of L2 proficiency. The study also examined how refusals are structured and organized at the discourse level.

Four groups participated in the study: 10 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, 10 native speakers of American English, 10 American learners of Arabic at the intermediate level, and 10 at the advanced level. Data were collected using enhanced open-ended role plays which consisted of 6 scenarios eliciting refusals of offers and requests in equal and unequal status situations. Both quantitative and qualitative data analytic methods were used for analyzing the interactions.

Results show that there were important differences between the two learner groups and the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic with regard to the frequency of direct and indirect strategies and individual strategy use. For example, the learners used a higher percentage of direct strategies and a lower percentage of indirect strategies than the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, especially in higher status situations. The learners

also used a higher percentage of the Statement of Regret and Request for Information/Clarification strategies and a lower percentage of the Postponement and Hedging strategies than the Egyptians. With regard to differences between the two learner groups, the advanced students were able to engage in more negotiation and use an overall lower percentage of direct strategies and a higher percentage of indirect strategies than their intermediate counterparts. Evidence of positive and negative pragmatic transfer was observed in the two learner groups; however a higher degree of transfer was observed in the advanced students. Individual differences among the learners were found to play a major role in how refusals were realized.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty five years linguists have investigated the realization strategies of speech acts across a number of languages and cultures. 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. For example, by saying “I am sorry”, a speaker is not only uttering a phrase in English but is also performing an act, that of apologizing. Speech acts that have been frequently investigated in the literature include apologies, requests, compliments, compliment responses, complaints, expressions of gratitude, refusals, and disagreements.

In the field of speech act research, a number of theories and concepts have formed the theoretical framework for the empirical investigation of speech acts cross-culturally. The work of language philosophers such as Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) has formed the basis of our understanding of speech acts. Other important concepts and theories include communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1974), pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983), theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and to some extent theories of culture and intercultural communication (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Triandis, 1995). Some of these concepts and theories will be discussed in chapter two.

Speech acts have been investigated for a number of reasons. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) explain that the empirical investigation of speech acts can provide a better understanding of how human communication is carried out through the use of linguistic

behavior. In addition, a major objective of cross-cultural speech act research is to describe similarities and differences in the way communicative interactions are carried out under similar circumstances across different languages and cultures. Speech act research can also have an important role in identifying the social and cultural norms and beliefs that inform speech act realization in a given speech community (Meier, 1995, 1997; Richards & Schmidt, 1983). In addition, it can provide empirical data against which theories of politeness (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987) and of intercultural communication (e.g., Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Triandis, 1995) can be evaluated. Finally, cross-cultural speech act research is particularly important in the field of foreign and second language teaching and learning. Findings from speech act studies can be an invaluable source for foreign language teachers and developers of teaching materials (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996). It has been observed that teaching these pragmatic aspects of language can minimize intercultural communication breakdowns and help reduce cultural stereotyping (Meier, 1995; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993).

In the following paragraphs a brief overview of speech act research is provided with particular attention paid to Arabic speech act studies, and refusal studies. This will be followed by an explanation of the rationale for the present study, which will be followed in turn by a description of the design of the study, including data collection and methods of data analysis. The last section of this chapter includes a description of the limitations and delimitations of the study as well as information on how the proposal is organized. Finally, a short glossary of terms relevant to the present study is provided.

## Speech Act Research

Speech act studies can be classified into four broad categories. First, there are those studies that are referred to as intra-lingual as they focus on examining speech acts within a single language or culture, such as apologies in Korean (Hahn, 2006) or compliments in Chinese (Yuan, 1998). A second group of studies is referred to as cross-cultural, and these examine the realization of speech acts in two or more languages or cultures; for example, comparing the speech act of apology in Arabic and American English (Bataineh, 2004), or examining refusal strategies in German and American English (Beckers, 1999). A third group of studies examines the effectiveness of different data collection methods in speech act research, such as comparing writing-based data collection instruments to observation of naturally-occurring speech (Golato, 2003). A fourth group of studies focuses on the language learner by examining how learners perform speech acts and how their performance compares to that of native speakers of L1 and L2. These learner-centered studies are generally referred to as interlanguage pragmatic studies.

The interlanguage pragmatic studies can also be further subdivided into four sub-categories: descriptive studies, instruction-based studies, study-abroad studies, and studies investigating the realization of speech acts online. The descriptive studies describe the strategies used by learners and compare them to those used by native speaker of L1 and L2. The word *strategies* here refers to the semantic formulas speakers use to perform a certain speech act. For example, the strategies used for performing the speech act of refusal may include: apologizing, thanking, giving an excuse, giving an explanation, expressing hesitation, setting conditions for acceptance, expressing empathy

etc. Analysis of these strategies also includes an examination of the mitigation devices speakers use to soften the illocutionary force of their refusals (e.g., hedging devices such as modifiers or quantifiers). Tamanaha (2003), for example, examined the realization of the speech acts of apology and complaint by American learners of Japanese and compared their performance to that of native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of American English. The present study falls within this sub-category of descriptive, learner-centered, speech act studies.

The second sub-category of instruction-based studies (also called interventional studies) includes studies that examine the effects of instruction on the development of the language learner's pragmatic competence. For example, Rueda (2004) looked at whether pragmatic instruction improved Colombian EFL learners' ability to produce the speech acts of requests, apologies and compliments appropriately and whether the effects of such instruction were retained over time.

The third sub-category of study abroad studies includes studies that are usually longitudinal and examine the effects of study abroad programs on the foreign language learner's acquisition of pragmatic competence. For example, Warga and Scholmberger (2007) investigated the effects of immersion in the target language community on the pragmatic competence of a group of learners. They specifically examined the development of the pragmatic ability in the production of the speech act of apology by a group of Austrian learners of French who spent ten months studying at the University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada.

Finally the fourth sub-category of interlanguage speech act studies refers to those studies that explore how language learners realize speech acts online. This is a new but growing field of investigation. Chen (2004), for example, investigated how Taiwanese students communicated meaning successfully in their e-mail correspondence with their American counterparts. He examined how the Taiwanese students' speech act behavior as well as their cultural background affected their communication online. Although some might argue that this group of studies belongs to the sub-category of descriptive studies, the use of the medium of computer-mediated communication, and what it entails in terms of the type of language used as well as other methodological implications warrants the investigation of this line of research under a separate category. This will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

With regard to data collection methods, most of speech act studies have used the Discourse Completion Test (DCT), which was first introduced by Blum-Kulka (1982). This popular elicitation instrument consists of descriptions of a number of scenarios, each of which requires the participant to produce a certain speech act (e.g., apology, complaint, compliment) Participants can perform the speech act in writing (written DCT) or orally (oral DCT). Other data collection methods include the role play which involves the researcher or some other native speaker role playing, or acting out, a number of scenarios with the participants. These scenarios are designed to elicit specific speech acts. Speech act data can also be collected through observation of naturally-occurring speech. These different methods will be explained in detail in Chapter Two. Data analysis in speech act research has usually included both quantitative and qualitative methods. Almost all speech act studies include frequency counts of the different strategies used by

speakers in realizing speech acts. In many of these studies both descriptive and inferential statistics are used. Qualitative analysis is also used, especially in studies that use naturally-occurring data or role play data.

### *Arabic Speech Act Studies*

A number of Arabic speech act studies have been conducted over the past 15 years and these include intralingual studies, cross-cultural studies as well as interlanguage studies. Nelson, El Bakary and Al-Batal (1993), for example, looked at how the speech act of complimenting is differentially realized in Egyptian Arabic and American English. Hussein and Hammouri (1998) examined the realization of the speech act of apology in Jordanian Arabic and American English. Some Arabic speech act studies also examined speech acts realized by Arab learners of English. For example, Ghawi (1993) looked at how Arabic-speaking EFL learners realized the speech act of apology and how their performance compared to that of native speakers of American English. Taylor-Hamilton (2002) also looked at how Emirati learners of English realized the speech act of giving directions in English and compared their performance to that of native speakers of Emirati Arabic and native speakers of British English. These studies have revealed interesting and important findings about how speech acts are differentially realized in Arabic and English. These and other studies will be further discussed in Chapter Two.

With regard to studies investigating the speech act of refusal in Arabic, a number of studies have been conducted. Stevens (1993), for example, examined how Egyptian learners of English realized the speech act of refusal and compared their performance to that of native speakers of English and native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. Al-Shalawi

(1997) also looked at how Americans and Saudis differentially realized the speech act of refusal in equal and unequal status situations. Another refusal study that looked at the language learner was conducted by Al-Eryani (2007) who looked at the refusal strategies of Yemeni EFL learners and compared their performance to that of native speakers of Yemeni Arabic and native speakers of American English. These Arabic refusal studies have revealed important and consistent differences with regard to how the speech act of refusal is realized in Arabic and English. These and other Arabic refusal studies will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2, where their significance and relevance to the present study will be explained.

#### Rationale and Statement of the Problem

The rationale for conducting speech act research in general was outlined above, so this section starts with the rationale for selecting the speech act of refusal in particular to be the focus of the present study. First, and 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. This speech act 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). 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 speech act of refusal has been investigated in a number of languages such as Japanese (Henstock, 2003), Korean (Kwon, 2003), German (Beckers, 1999), Spanish (Ramos, 1991) 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; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002; Stevens, 1993). While these studies have contributed to our understanding of the strategies, or semantic formulas, commonly used in the realization of the speech act of refusal, the majority of these studies suffered from a methodological limitation: they used a writing-based data elicitation instrument, namely the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (explained above), which elicits a single-turn response. The appropriate realization of the speech act of refusal, however, tends to be characterized by lengthy, dynamic interaction that stretches over a number of turns, and as Gass and Houck (1999) explain, involves negotiations of semantic, pragmatic, and social meanings. A data elicitation instrument that elicits a single-turn response cannot capture this kind of dynamic interaction, which is often characteristic of the realization of the speech act of refusal. Hence, such an instrument would not be adequate for the study of this speech act.

For this speech act to be examined properly, a different elicitation method is required: a method that would capture this kind of dynamic negotiation of meaning, and would elicit multi-turn interactional data. The method that meets these requirements is

the role play method, and it will be explained in detail in Chapter 2. In addition to using this elicitation method, there is a need to use an analytic framework that can examine how this speech act is realized over a stretch of discourse. In other words, it requires a discourse-level analytic framework for analyzing interactional data in order to understand how the refusal discourse is structured and how refusals are negotiated and recycled over a number of turns. Based on this understanding of how the speech act of refusal should be properly investigated, it becomes clear that traditional approaches to the study of refusal, (e.g., using DCT) are not adequate.

A number of researchers have realized this methodological limitation in traditional speech act research, using the DCT, and have, instead, conducted studies that elicited interactional data, using the role play method; they also used discourse-level analytic frameworks for analyzing their data. These researchers have tended to rely exclusively on the role play method for collecting their refusal data. They examined refusals in a number of Spanish dialects including Peruvian Spanish (Garcia, 1992), Venezuelan Spanish (Garcia, 1999), Mexican Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002), Peninsular Spanish (VonCanon, 2006) as well as in the speech of Japanese EFL learners (Gass & Houck, 1999). These researchers have made valuable contributions to the field of speech act research in two ways. First, they elicited interactional data, and secondly, they developed new discourse-level analytic frameworks for analyzing their data. Developing new discourse-level analytic frameworks is particularly important since traditional data analysis techniques associated with the DCT are only designed for analyzing one-turn responses, and cannot be used for analyzing interactional data.

The present study continues this new but growing line of research of eliciting interactional data and analyzing speech acts at the level of discourse. It also made improvements on previous research studies in two ways. First, it enhanced the design of the role play in order to ensure a high level of consistency, hence validity, in the data elicitation process. This is explained in detail in Chapter 3. Secondly, it investigated types of refusal that were not examined previously in research using the role play method. For example, while previous studies were limited in their elicitation of refusals to equal status situations and situations where an interlocutor of a lower status refuses offers or requests from an interlocutor of a higher status, the present study extends the investigation to include situations in which an interlocutor of a higher status refuses offers or requests from an interlocutor of a lower status.

The present study is also the first to elicit interactional data and to examine the speech act of refusal cross-culturally at the level of discourse in a non-Western language. In addition, the present study is the first speech act study in Arabic to use the role play method for data elicitation, and it is the first to analyze speech act data at the level of discourse in Arabic. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the present study is the first Arabic speech act study in the literature to investigate how American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal (or any other speech act for that matter) in Arabic.

#### Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate the speech act of refusal as realized by American learners of Arabic as a foreign language, native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, and native speakers of American English. The focus of the study is to investigate how

American learners of Arabic at the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency realize this speech act in Egyptian Arabic and how their performance compares to that of native speakers of American English and native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. The goal here is to find out if there is a relationship between the learners' language proficiency and their pragmatic competence. Another focus of the study is to investigate the extent of pragmatic transfer from the learner's L1, and whether there is a relationship between the degree of pragmatic transfer and the level of L2 proficiency. Also, by examining pragmatic transfer at the level of discourse, the present study is one of a very small number of studies that investigate pragmatic transfer at that level. The study specifically aims to answer the following research questions:

#### Research Question One (A)

In what ways if any do intermediate American learners of Arabic differ from native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in their realizations of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

#### Research Question One (B)

In what ways if any do advanced American learners of Arabic differ from native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in their realizations of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

### Research Question Two (A)

What is the extent of pragmatic transfer from English when intermediate American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

### Research Question Two (B)

What is the extent of pragmatic transfer from English when advanced American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

### Design of the Study: Data Collection and Analysis

The present study has a descriptive design that utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The study used the Enhanced Open-Ended Role Play method (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) for data collection. An enhanced role play differs from a traditional role play in that it includes detailed contextualized information about the setting and the interlocutors. Data were collected from three groups of participants: American learners of Arabic, native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, and native speakers of American English as shown below:

- 1) 20 American learners of Arabic: 10 at intermediate and 10 at advanced level
- 2) 10 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic
- 3) 10 native speakers of American English

With regard to data analysis, all data were transcribed and coded according the classification scheme proposed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). According

to this scheme, refusal strategies are classified into Direct and Indirect refusals, in addition to Adjuncts to refusals. The Direct refusals refer to actual refusal expressions such as “No” or “I refuse.” Indirect refusals, on the other hand, refer to strategies speakers use to soften the illocutionary force of their refusals and to minimize the offense to the hearer such as excuses, alternatives, and statements of regrets. Adjuncts to refusal do not form part of the refusal itself but are external modifications to the main refusal and they soften the illocutionary force of the refusal by expressing solidarity with the hearer such as statement of positive opinion. This classification scheme is explained in detail in Chapter Three. Also please refer to the section Definition of Terms at the end of this chapter for a description of this classification scheme.

The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. For the quantitative analysis, frequency counts of the semantic formulas used in the realization of the speech act of refusal was calculated and compared across the six refusal situations, the three groups of participants and across the two proficiency levels of the language learners. Descriptive statistics was used for analyzing the data. The data were also analyzed qualitatively using discourse-level analytic frameworks in order to reach a better understanding of how refusals are negotiated and recycled over a number of turns. Please refer to Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the design of the study.

### Significance of the Study

As explained above, the present study makes a valuable contribution to the literature in a number of ways. First, it is the first study to investigate how American learners of Arabic as a foreign language realize the speech act of refusal (or any other

speech act for that matter) in Arabic. It is also the first Arabic speech act study to collect interactional data using the role play method. Hence, it is the first speech act study in Arabic to examine how refusals are negotiated turn by turn over a stretch of discourse. In contrast, earlier speech act studies in Arabic relied exclusively on the DCT, which elicits single-turn responses. In addition, the present study introduced improvements on the data collection method in order to increase the level of consistency and validity in the elicitation process. Finally, it is one of a very small number of speech act studies that examine pragmatic transfer at the level of discourse.

#### Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

First, the delimitations of the study: it is possible to generalize the findings of the study to only American learners of Arabic studying at American colleges and universities. With regard the Egyptian participants, generalizations can be made to native speakers of Egyptian Arabic who have resided in the US for less than three years. As for native speakers of American English, generalizations can be made to English-speaking American students at colleges and universities in the US. The study does not make generalization claims beyond these three groups. Also, since the study is limited to the Egyptian dialect of Arabic, no generalization claims are made to other dialects of Arabic.

One important limitation in the present study is that gender was not controlled for. This is a particularly important point since previous Arabic speech act studies of refusal (Al-Issa, 1998) have found gender-based differences in the realization of this speech act. For this reason other refusal studies in Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) and in Arabic (Al-Shalawi, 1997) controlled the variable of gender. In both of these studies, for example, all

the participants were male. Another variable that was not controlled for was the age of the participants.

One other limitation in the study is that the participants' length of stay in Egypt was not controlled for. While the researcher collected information about the length of the participants' stay in Egypt, this variable was not controlled for in the present study. In other words, the participants in the study included students who spent 5 weeks in Egypt and students who spent 2 years.

### Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter One is the introduction and it provides a brief background about speech act research with a focus on Arabic studies and refusal studies. Next it presents the rationale for the study as well as a statement of the problem, and this is followed by the research questions. After that, the design of the study is briefly described and information about the participants and data collection and analysis is provided. Finally, the significance of the study is highlighted and information about its limitations and delimitations is provided. The last section of this chapter includes definitions of the terms frequently used in the present study.

Chapter Two presents the review of the literature, which begins with information about the theories and constructs that have informed the empirical investigation of speech acts and these include, for example, communicative competence, pragmatic competence, pragmatic transfer, and theories of politeness. This is followed by an overview of speech act research with a special focus on Arabic speech act studies and refusal studies.

Particular attention will be paid to the refusal studies that informed the design of the

present study. Next, data collection methods in speech act research will be described and the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods will be discussed.

Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the data collection and analysis methods utilized in the present study. It starts with a description of the participants and this is followed by a detailed explanation of the data elicitation instrument, including information about how the instrument was designed. The section that follows deals with data collection procedures, which are described in detail. Finally, data analysis procedures are explained and numerous examples from the data are provided. The last section of Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the pilot study.

Chapter Four provides a comprehensive description of the findings of the study. The first section presents the quantitative findings including counts of total number of words and turns, as well as average turn length used by each group in each role play. This is followed by frequency counts of the different strategies used and their distribution by group, role play, and strategy type (i.e., Direct, Indirect, and Adjunct). The second section provides findings of the qualitative analysis and it consists of three parts. The first part deals with an examination of the reasons and excuses used by the learners in the four groups. The second part deals examines the stages of refusal and how the four groups differed with regard to their use of Direct and Indirect strategies in the two stages of refusal. The last part of the chapter provides an in-depth content analysis of 9 interactions selected from the four groups. This examination focuses on the following four areas: strategy selection, individual differences, language proficiency and pragmatic competence, and the use of Direct and Indirect strategies in Higher status situations.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the findings of the study. It starts with a discussion of the quantitative findings including counts of total number of words and turns as well as frequency counts of the refusal strategies used by each group. The second section provides a discussion of the qualitative findings. The section that follows it provides a summary of the discussion for answering each of the research questions. This is followed by a section that compares the findings of the present study to previous refusal studies including Arabic refusal studies. Next, the pedagogical implications of the study are presented. The last section the chapter provides suggestions for future research.

### Definition of Terms

In this section a number of terms that are particularly relevant to the present study are defined in an alphabetical order. These terms are used in different sections of the proposal, and some of them may be defined in detail in the main body of the proposal. However, they are listed here with brief definitions for ease of reference.

#### *Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) Classification Scheme of Refusal Strategies*

This classification scheme is frequently mentioned in the present proposal, and it refers to the coding scheme of refusals that Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) proposed in their study of refusals in Japanese, English, and in the speech of Japanese learners of English. Their classification scheme consists of three broad categories: Direct Refusals, Indirect Refusals and Adjuncts to Refusals. Direct Refusals refers to phrases such as “No,” “I can’t” or “I refuse”. Indirect Refusals are indirect strategies speakers use to minimize the offense to the hearer and they can include, for example, statements of regret, excuses, alternatives, or conditional acceptance. Adjuncts to Refusals, on the other

hand, refers to preliminary remarks that cannot stand alone or function as refusals, and these include, for example, expressions of gratitude or positive opinion of the interlocutor. These strategies also minimize the offense to the hearer.

*Closed Role Play* (See Role Play)

*DCT*

This refers to Discourse Completion Test/Task, which is the most popular data elicitation instrument in cross-cultural speech act research. It was first developed by Blum-Kulka (1982) and is usually a written task in which participants are required to produce a certain speech act by writing what they would say in a particular situation. The original format of the DCT usually included a *rejoinder* after the description of a scenario, and in this way it looked like an incomplete dialogue that the participant is asked to complete by providing the required speech act. The *rejoinder* then helps to guide the respondent to produce the required speech act. The scenarios in a DCT typically each varies by the status of the interlocutors relative to each other as well as the social distance between them. These variables have been identified to be particularly important in cross-cultural speech act research. A DCT can also be administered orally, and in this case the scenario is read to the participant and the participant responds by producing the required speech act. This is referred to as an oral DCT to distinguish it from the more traditional, written DCT. The following is an example of a classic DCT scenario adopted from Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, p. 71).

*A friend invites you to dinner, but you can't stand this friend's husband/wife.*

*Friend: How about coming over for dinner Sunday night? We're having a small dinner party.*

*You:*

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*Friend: O.K., maybe another time.*

### *Diglossia*

The Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (Crystal, 2003) defines diglossia as a situation where two different varieties of a language co-occur throughout a speech community; each variety has a distinct range of social functions. These two varieties are usually referred to by sociolinguists in terms of high and low, and this corresponds generally to the difference in formality between them. The high variety is learnt in school and tends to be used in formal situations such as religious services, radio programs and “serious” literature. The low variety, on the other hand, is learnt at home and is used in family conversations and other relatively informal situations. Crystal’s definition aptly describes the linguistic situation in Arabic where Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is the formal, high, mostly written, variety of Arabic, and the dialect (the Egyptian dialect in the present study) is the informal, low, mostly spoken variety of Arabic.

### *Enhanced Role Play*

This is a data elicitation method used in speech act research, and it differs from the traditional role play with regard to the amount of contextualized background

information that it is provided in each scenario eliciting a certain speech act. This can include information about the gender or age of the interlocutors, in addition to their educational backgrounds, their status relative to each other, the social distance between them, and the length of their acquaintance. Research has shown that prompts that are rich in such contextualized information can elicit more elaborate and richer data that resembles naturally-occurring speech (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000).

*NS*

Native speaker

*NSA*

Native speaker of Arabic

*NSE*

Native speaker of English

*NNSA*

Non-native speaker – Advanced

*NNSI*

Non-native speaker – Intermediate

*Open Role Play* (See Role Play)

### *Positive Correlation Hypothesis*

This hypothesis, which was proposed by Takahashi and Beebe (1987), posits that there is a positive correlation between the learner's level of L2 proficiency and the extent of his or her pragmatic transfer from L1.

### *Pragmatic Competence*

It generally refers to the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules that govern language use.

### *Pragmatic Transfer*

It generally refers to the transfer of knowledge about the socio-cultural rules governing language use from the learner's L1. Negative pragmatic transfer refers to the transfer of rules that are not consistent in L1 and L2, and positive pragmatic transfer refers to the transfer of rules that L1 and L2 share.

### *Rejoinder (See DCT)*

### *Role Play*

This refers to a data elicitation method that has been used in speech act research. There are two types of role plays: open and closed. A closed role play is similar to the oral version of the DCT (defined above), where the respondent is allowed to give a one-turn oral response to a prompt. This means that there is no interaction or negotiation involved in the realization of the speech act. In an open role play, on the other hand, a respondent is asked to act out the role play with the researcher or some other native

speaker, and this involves negotiation over a number of turns, which is similar to real-life interactions.

*Semantic Formulas* (See Speech Act Realization Strategies)

*Speech Act Realization Strategies*

This refers to the strategies, or *semantic formulas*, speakers use when performing a certain speech act. For example, the strategies used for performing the speech act of refusal may include: apologizing, thanking, giving an excuse, giving an explanation, expressing hesitation, setting conditions for acceptance, or expressing empathy. These strategies have been studied, classified, and compared across a number of languages and cultures in cross-cultural speech act research.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

This chapter starts with presenting the theoretical framework for the present study. First, a description of speech act theory is provided and this is followed by a description of the relevant concepts of communicative competence, pragmatic competence, and pragmatic transfer. Next, a discussion of the concept of politeness is provided and particular attention will be paid to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness since it has been used as a theoretical framework for most cross-cultural speech act studies. This theory of politeness forms part of the theoretical framework for the present study. The section that follows presents an overview of speech act research in the past 20 years with close attention paid to studies that investigated the speech act of refusal as well as Arabic speech act studies. Refusal studies that informed the design of the present study will be reviewed in some detail, and both their data elicitation methods and data analysis methods will be discussed. Next, a review of data collection methods used in the field of speech act research will be presented and the advantages and disadvantages of each method will be discussed. The data collection method that was utilized in the present study will be discussed in detail.

However, before proceeding with reviewing the literature, it is important to point out the rationale for organizing this chapter. First, the theoretical framework is presented in order to provide the concepts, ideas and theories that form the theoretical foundation for the empirical investigation of speech acts. The next logical step is to present an

overview of speech act research that has been conducted over the past 20 years. The goal here is to present the reader with a panoramic view of this research in order to familiarize him or her with the type of studies that have been conducted, and more importantly, to show where the present study belongs in the literature. After presenting this general overview, the chapter moves on to present an in-depth review of Arabic speech act studies. This review aims to show the scope of research that has been conducted in Arabic and it also aims to show how previous speech act studies informed the present study. Next, this chapter presents an in-depth look at Arabic refusal studies as well as other particularly relevant refusal studies, since the speech act of refusal is the focus of the present study. This is a particularly important step as it will show, on the one hand, how previous studies informed the present study, and on the other hand, to point out the gap in the literature and show how the present study can bridge this gap. Finally, a review of the different data collection methods used in the field of speech act research will be presented in order to show the relative advantages and disadvantages of each method, and to present a justification for the method that was used in the present study.

### Speech Act Theory

The concept of the speech act was first introduced by Austin (1962) in his major work *How to Do Things with Words*. This concept captures an important feature of language: saying something can also involve doing something. For example, by saying “I am sorry” a speaker does not only produce a sentence in English but also performs an act, that of apologizing. Austin distinguishes three types of acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. A locutionary act refers to producing a sentence with a certain reference and sense such as *Can you pass the salt?* The illocutionary act, on the other

hand, is the act performed by uttering this sentence: in this case it is a request. Finally, the perlocutionary act refers to the effect of the illocutionary act on the addressee. For example, the address can react by passing the salt. Austin (1962) refers to illocutionary acts as performatives and makes a distinction between implicit and explicit performatives. For example, an explicit performative includes the actual performative verb, in this case 'promise' as in: *I promise to come early* whereas the implicit performative does not include the performative verb 'promise' as in: *I will come early*.

Another important aspect of the speech act theory is the concept of felicity conditions, which was first introduced by Austin (1962) and later developed by Searle (1969). According to this concept, for a speech act to be performed successfully, a certain number of conditions have to be met. For example, a speaker has to have the right to perform certain speech acts in order for them to be performed successfully. Searle (1969) also contributed to our understanding of speech acts by proposing a taxonomy of speech acts that include five categories: directives (e.g., requests, commands), commissives (e.g., promises, threats), representatives (e.g., assertions, claims), declaratives (e.g., declaring war), and expressives (e.g., apologies, thanks). The speech act of refusal, the focus of the present study, falls under the category of expressives according to Searle's taxonomy.

Speech acts have also been investigated by ethnographers of communication such as Dell Hymes (1962) who made a major contribution to our understanding of speech acts. He posited that speech acts are functional units in communication and are governed by the socio-cultural rules of communication in a given speech community. Hymes' main contribution was to draw attention to the social and cultural norms and beliefs that inform speakers' realization and interpretation of speech acts. This was particularly important

since it was a major component in the theoretical foundation on which the field of cross-cultural speech act research has been established.

Hymes' contribution also includes the taxonomy he proposed for understanding speech acts as units in communication. This taxonomy includes speech situations, speech events and speech acts. According to Hymes (1974), a speech situation takes place in a speech community and can take the form of, for example, a party or a meal. A speech event takes place within a speech situation, which can be a conversation at a party. Finally, a speech act takes place within a speech event, and this can, for example, be a promise or a request made by interlocutors engaged in a conversation at a party.

Hymes' most important contribution, however, is his introduction of the concept of communicative competence. This has been a very important concept in field of second language education in general and has formed the theoretical foundation for the empirical investigation of speech acts. In the following section this concept will be discussed in some detail.

### Communicative Competence

Hymes' (1962, 1974) pioneering work emphasized the importance of language as a system of communication in which knowledge of language use is as important as grammatical knowledge. While grammatical knowledge is still very important, especially as argued by Chomsky (1965), knowledge of the rules that govern the appropriate use of language is particularly important since without this knowledge a speaker cannot interact adequately with other members in a given speech community. This knowledge would

allow a speaker to know, for example, what to say, when to say it, to whom and how to say it in a socially and culturally appropriate way.

There have been a number of attempts to develop models based on Hymes' concept of communicative competence. This includes work by Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman and Palmer (1982). Canale and Swain (1980), for example, proposed a theory of communicative competence to be used as a general framework for understanding second language learning. According to this theory, communicative competence consists of three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of morphological and phonological rules as well as syntactic and lexical knowledge. Sociolinguistic knowledge consists of two types of knowledge: socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The socio-cultural rules of use refer to the rules that govern how an utterance is produced and interpreted within a certain speech community. The rules of discourse refer to the rules of cohesion and coherence, as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The third major component of communicative competence, strategic competence, refers to verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. It is important to indicate that this model was later revised by Canale (1983), whereby sociolinguistic competence was limited to the socio-cultural rules of language use and discourse competence became a separate component. In this new model, sociolinguistic competence refers to how utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts and how this depends on the contextual factors such as status of the participants, purpose of interaction or the norms and conventions governing interactions.

Canale's (1983) model is particularly important since it emphasizes the importance of the socio-culturally-based rules that govern language use. This kind of knowledge has been referred to by other researchers as pragmatic competence. This important concept, which has been used as the theoretical basis for studies investigating how foreign language learners realize speech acts in the target language, will be examined next.

### Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence generally refers to knowledge of the socio-cultural rules that govern language use. A number of models have been proposed to describe this kind of knowledge. For example, Fraser (1983) defines pragmatic competence in terms of conveying an attitude. He describes communication as an interaction between speaker-meaning and hearer-effect and is accomplished successfully when the speaker conveys his or her attitude to the hearer. He argues that this attitude can only be conveyed and interpreted through pragmatic competence. Another model was proposed by Faerch and Kasper (1984) in which pragmatic competence was divided into two categories: declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. The declarative knowledge includes six categories of knowledge: linguistic, socio-cultural, speech act, discourse, context, and knowledge of the world. The procedural knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the process of selecting and combining declarative knowledge from these categories. Bachman (1990) proposed another model that divides pragmatic competence into illocutionary and sociolinguistic competencies. The illocutionary competence has four main functions: ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative. The sociolinguistic

competence, on the other hand, is divided into four categories: sensitivity to differences in dialect, sensitivity to register, sensitivity to naturalness, and knowledge of the culture.

As can be seen from these models, pragmatic competence involves a complex set of inter-related factors, both linguistic and socio-cultural. It comes as no surprise then that this kind of knowledge is very difficult for non-native speakers to acquire. Language learners often fail to follow the socio-cultural rules that govern language behavior in the target language, and this has been referred to in the literature as pragmatic failure.

Thomas (1983) explains that there are two reasons for this pragmatic failure: a) learner's lack of linguistic means to convey his or her pragmatic knowledge, and b) cross-cultural differences as to what constitutes appropriate cultural behavior. When learners lack this socio-pragmatic knowledge of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior in L2, they often draw on their knowledge of appropriate language behavior from L1. This important phenomenon has been referred to as pragmatic transfer, and will be the topic of the next section.

### Pragmatic Transfer

Pragmatic transfer has been defined by Wolfson (1989) as the transfer of the rules of speaking or the conventions of language behavior. Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) refer to it as the transfer of L1 socio-cultural competence when performing L2 speech acts or any other language behaviors in L2. Negative pragmatic transfer has been defined as the transfer of norms that are inconsistent across L1 and L2 (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). Positive transfer, on the other hand, refers to the transfer of norms that L1 and L2 share.

Thomas (1983) makes an important distinction between two types of pragmatic transfer: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic. Pragmalinguistic transfer refers to the transfer from L1 of utterances that are syntactically and semantically equivalent but are interpreted differently in the two cultures. This, for example, includes the use of L1 speech act realization strategies or formulas when interacting in the target language. Sociopragmatic transfer, on the other hand, refers to transfer of knowledge about the social and cultural norms that govern language use in a given speech community. This kind of knowledge includes, for example, how status or social distance is perceived in a given speech community and how this might affect the way speech acts are realized.

As explained above, pragmatic failure is seen as a violation of the socio-culturally-based rules of language use. This can also be seen as a violation of the norms of polite behavior in a given speech community. In fact the concept of politeness and what constitutes polite behavior has been at the center of research investigating cross-cultural speech act realization. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) explain that two major issues that cross-cultural speech act research has dealt with are the value and function of politeness in speech act realization and the universality of politeness phenomena across languages and cultures. This important concept of politeness will be discussed next.

### Politeness

A number of theories have been proposed to provide a conceptual framework for understanding politeness phenomena. One of the earliest attempts was the work of Goffman (1967), who described politeness within the framework of a general theory of

behavior. He also introduced the important concept of face, which was later incorporated into Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. This concept of face will be explained in detail below. Lakoff (1975) also made an important contribution to our understanding of politeness, which she defines in terms of the desire to reduce friction in social interaction. She proposed rules for polite behavior and showed how syntactic and lexical strategies can be used to convey politeness. In a similar way, Leech (1983) also proposed a number of maxims of politeness that are comparable to Grice's (1975) maxims of conversation. Leech and Lakoff's approaches have, however, been criticized on the grounds that such static rules can be infinite since the nature of interaction can vary greatly depending on the setting, the interlocutors and the purpose of the interaction (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Watts, 1992).

Brown and Levinson (1987) made an important contribution to the study of politeness by proposing a theory of politeness that is not rule-based but rather based on the idea that the goal of politeness is to minimize the imposition on the hearer. This is probably the most influential theory of politeness to date and is particularly important in the field of cross-cultural speech act research. In fact, the majority of cross-cultural speech act studies conducted in the past 20 years have adopted this theory as their theoretical framework. This important theory is reviewed below.

#### *Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness*

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness is based on the concept of face, which was first introduced by Goffman (1967), as explained above. The concept of face can be generally defined as a person's public self-image. Brown and Levinson make a

distinction between two types of face: positive face and negative face. A person's positive face refers to the person's desire to be liked and approved of by others, whereas his or her negative face refers to his or her desire to be free from imposition.

Based on this concept of face, Brown and Levinson propose two types of politeness: negative and positive. Positive politeness attends to the hearer's positive face, and this is achieved by conveying to the hearer that his or her desires and wants are in a way similar to the speaker's desires and wants. The strategies Brown and Levinson suggest for achieving this type of politeness emphasize solidarity and rapport between speaker and hearer by expressing sympathy to the hearer and using terms that signify in-group membership. Negative politeness, on the other hand, attends to the hearer's negative face by showing that the speaker does not intend to impede the hearer's freedom of action or invade his or her personal space.

Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that there are certain speech acts that are by definition face-threatening. These face-threatening speech acts, or FTA's, can be classified according to whether they threaten the speaker's face or the hearer's face, and whether they threaten the positive face or the negative face. For example, the speech act of requesting threatens the hearer's negative face since it shows that the speaker intends to impede on the hearer's freedom from imposition. The speech act of refusal, which is the focus of the present study, threatens the hearer's positive face since it shows that the speaker does not care about the hearer's wants or desires and that the speaker's desires are not the same as the hearer's desires.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also propose three factors that affect the seriousness of an FTA. These are the relative power of speaker over hearer (Power) (e.g., an interaction between a professor and a student vs. an interaction between two students); the social distance between hearer and speaker (Distance) (e.g., an interaction between strangers vs. an interaction between family members); and the weight, or rank, of the imposition (Rank) (e.g., asking someone to pass the salt vs. requesting to borrow someone's car). It is important to point out that Brown and Levinson view these factors as universal.

According to Brown and Levinson, speakers have one of three options when performing FTA's. They can "go bald on record" and this means that they perform the speech act without softening or mitigating its illocutionary force. This can be due, for example, to the relative authority of speaker over hearer. The second option is to "go on record" by using politeness markers such as mitigation strategies (e.g., hedging). The third option is to "go off record" and this means minimizing the imposition on the hearer, and can be achieved by using hints or metaphors and making the speaker's intention vague so that the actual intent of the speech act would be open for negotiation.

Although Brown and Levinson's theory has been very influential as a framework for the empirical investigation of speech acts, it has been subject to a number of criticisms. Meier (1995), for example, criticizes the theory's focus on the hearer's face as the most important factor in defining and identifying an FTA, while ignoring the speaker's face. Brown and Levinson's claims of the universality of the concept of positive and negative politeness have also been challenged by empirical research. Speech act studies in Polish (Wierzbicka, 1985), Japanese (Matsumoto, 1988), and Chinese (Gu,

1990) have shown that the concept of negative politeness might be irrelevant in some cultures. In addition, Brown and Levinson's claims of a linear relationship between politeness and indirectness have also been shown to be empirically unsupported (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1985, 1991; Wolfson, 1989). Despite these criticisms, however, Brown and Levinson's theory remains a very useful analytical framework for understanding politeness phenomena cross-culturally, and especially within the framework of speech act research. In fact, the majority of cross-cultural speech act studies that have been conducted over the past 20 years have used this theory as a framework for understanding how speech acts are differentially realized in different cultures. Many of the components (explained above) of this theory have been proven to be useful tools for comparing and contrasting the realization strategies of speech acts cross-culturally. Despite its limitations, this theory remains the most powerful framework available today for the cross-cultural investigation of speech acts. An overview of this cross-cultural speech act research is presented below.

### Speech Act Research

Over the past twenty-five years a large number of research studies investigating the realization of speech acts within and across a number of languages and cultures have been conducted. A thorough examination of the literature revealed four areas of investigation. These are: intra-lingual studies, cross-cultural studies, learner-centered studies, and data collection studies. In the following paragraphs each of these areas will be briefly discussed. It is important to indicate that these studies are being briefly reviewed here in order to provide the reader with a general, panoramic view of the whole field of speech act research. While the studies that are mentioned in this section do

not necessarily inform the present study directly, they provide the reader with an adequate background about the field of speech act research in order to show its scope and the particular languages and speech acts that have been investigated. This also aims to situate the present study in the field of speech act research. For example, as will be explained below, the present study falls under the category of learner-centered speech act research, and under the subcategory of descriptive studies, as compared, for example, to interventional studies. So, this section serves as a general introduction to the field of speech act research, and it will be followed by a close examination of studies that are specifically relevant for the present investigation. Those are the Arabic speech act studies and refusal studies.

First, the intra-lingual studies focus on examining speech acts within a single speech community or culture. For example, Hahn (2006) looked at apologies in Korean and Yuan (1998) examined how compliments are realized in Chinese. Other less common speech acts have also been investigated within a single language or culture. Examples include the speech act of nagging in English (Boxer, 2002), thanking in Japanese (Ohashi, 2008), swearing in Arabic (Abdel-Jawad, 2000), and insulting in Cameroon French (Mulo, 2002). Many of these studies used naturally-occurring data for their investigation, but a large number of them also used other instruments that elicited data orally or in writing. These studies as a whole certainly contributed to our understanding of how speech acts are realized in a number of different languages and cultures. They provide important insights into the cultural norms and beliefs that inform communication styles in these different speech communities.

The second group of studies is referred to as cross-cultural and they examine the realization of speech acts in two or more languages or cultures. For example, Beckers (1999) compared refusal strategies in German and American English. Kim (2008) looked at the speech act of apologizing in Korean and Australian English while Eslami-Rasekh (2004) investigated reactions to complaints in English and Persian. Other studies also compared speech acts in three languages such comparing apology strategies in English, Polish and Hungarian (Suszczyńska, 1999). As a whole, these studies have offered important insights into how speech acts are differentially realized in a number of languages and cultures. Their findings have been important for foreign language teachers and textbook writers since by comparing the realization strategies of speech acts in different languages and cultures they can provide valuable information on how to perform these speech acts successfully, and may also help possible areas of difficulty for FL learners.

The third group of studies focuses on the pragmatic competence of the language learner. These learner-centered studies are referred to in the literature as interlanguage pragmatic studies. They can be further subdivided into four subcategories: descriptive studies, instruction-based studies, study-abroad studies, and studies investigating the realization of speech acts online. Each of these sub-groups will be briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, the descriptive studies compare the realization strategies of speech acts produced by learners to those produced by native speakers of the learners' first language and native speakers of the target language. Tamanaha (2003), for example, examined the realization of the speech acts of apology and complaints by American learners of

Japanese and compared their performance to that of native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of American English. Some studies also investigated the realization of speech acts by learners at different levels of proficiency. For example, Borderia-Garcia (2006) looked at how learners of Spanish at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels interpret and give advice and how their performance compares to that of native speakers of American English and native speakers of Spanish. Other descriptive studies also examined the learner's ability to judge the appropriateness of speech acts produced by other non-native speakers of the target language. Tokuda (2001), for example, looked at how American learners of Japanese evaluated the linguistic politeness of other non-native speakers of Japanese performing the speech act of request. He also examined whether the learner's language proficiency affected his or her judgments. It is important to indicate that the present study falls under this sub-category of descriptive, learner-centered, speech act studies. It examines how the speech act of refusal is realized in Egyptian Arabic by American learners of Arabic, and compares their performance to that of native speakers of American English and native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. These descriptive, learner-centered studies reviewed above, made important contributions to speech act research by focusing on a number of important learner-related issues. These include the extent of pragmatic transfer from the learner's L1, and the relationship between the learner's language proficiency and his or her pragmatic competence. Both of these important issues are also examined in the present study.

The second sub-category of interlanguage speech act studies is the instruction-based studies. These studies examine the effects of instruction on the development of the language learner's pragmatic competence, specifically with regard to his or her ability to

perform speech acts successfully. For example, Rueda (2004) explored whether pragmatic instruction improved Colombian EFL learners' ability to produce the speech acts of requests, apologies and compliments, and whether the effects of such instruction were retained over time. Liu (2007) also looked at the effects of explicit pragmatic instruction on the acquisition of requests by college-level EFL learners in Taiwan. Liu investigated the relative effectiveness of presenting instruction through two media: face-to-face class instruction and computer-mediated instruction, using e-mail and WebCT. In another study, Vellenga (2008) examined the effectiveness of instruction on the acquisition of requests and refusals by upper-intermediate ESL learners in the US and EFL learners in Japan and Lithuania. These instruction-based studies have made important contributions to the field of foreign language teaching and learning by providing important research-supported recommendations to foreign language teachers on how to best teach the pragmatic aspects of a foreign language. Their findings are particularly important not only to foreign language teachers, but also to curriculum and textbook writers.

The third sub-category of inerlanguage speech act studies can be referred to as study-abroad studies. These studies, which are usually longitudinal, look at the effects of study abroad programs on the development of the foreign language learner's pragmatic competence. For example, Warga and Scholmberger (2007) investigated the effects of immersion in the target language community on the pragmatic competence of a group of learners. They specifically looked at the development of pragmatic ability in the production of the speech act of apology by a group of Austrian learners of French who spent ten months studying at the University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada. Schauer

(2004) also examined a group of German students studying English at a British university for one academic year and how this experience affected their performance of the speech act of requesting. Matsumura (2007) also looked at the development of Japanese students' ability to offer advice in English after they spent eight months in Canada. These studies are important in the field of speech act research since they specifically investigate the effects of study abroad on the development of the learner's pragmatic competence and particularly his or her ability to perform speech acts successfully. The findings of these studies can help improve study-abroad programs by making them more effective as language learning experiences, particularly with regard to creating opportunities for developing the learner's pragmatic competence.

The fourth sub-category of interlanguage speech act studies refers to those studies that look at how language learners realize speech acts online. This is a new but a growing field of research. Chen (2004), for example, examined how Taiwanese students communicated meaning successfully in their e-mail communication with their American counterparts. He specifically looked at how the Taiwanese students' speech act behavior as well as their cultural background affected their communication online. Al-Shalawi (2001) also examined the strategies Saudi ESL students used to mitigate their disagreements in their online discussions. In another important study, Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) investigated how university students who are native and non-native speakers of English differentially realized the speech act of requesting in e-mails sent to their professors. In a similar study, Lee (2004) looked at the strategies Chinese ESL learners used in realizing the speech act of requesting in e-mails sent to their teachers. Although some might argue that this sub-category of studies belong to the descriptive speech act

studies (reviewed above), the studies investigating the realization of speech acts online should be considered as a separate category for the following reason: these studies use the medium of computer-mediated communication (CMC) while traditional speech act studies investigate face-to-face communication. The use of the CMC medium has two important implications: First, the language used in online communication is inherently different from either oral or written language since it has characteristics of each, and therefore, it warrants investigation in its own right. Secondly, there are important methodological implications for the use of this medium since there is the possibility of collecting naturally-occurring data, and actually comparing two sets of naturally occurring data using this medium. In other words, there are new possibilities for data collection using this medium that are not available in face-to-face interactions. The studies have certainly made important contributions to our understanding of how speech acts are realized online and how this differs from face-to-face communication. Such studies have important implications for foreign language educators especially those who make use of computer-mediated communication in teaching the pragmatic aspects of foreign language.

The fourth group of studies in speech act research includes those studies that investigate data collection methods. These studies compare different data elicitation methods in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each method. The most popular data elicitation method in the field of speech act research is the Discourse Completion Test (DCT). This writing-based elicitation instrument usually consists of a number of scenarios, each requiring the participant to produce a certain speech act (e.g., apology, request, refusal). This instrument will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Because of the popularity of this instrument, the majority of studies investigating data collection methods in speech act research compare the DCT to other data collection methods. Hinkel (1997), for example, compared the DCT to multiple choice data for eliciting the speech act of giving advice. Schauer and Adolphs (2006) also compared the DCT data to corpus data in the production of expressions of gratitude. In another important study, Golato (2003) compared DCT-elicited data to naturally occurring data in the production of compliment responses. Other researchers also tried to modify the DCT in different ways to enhance its effectiveness. Billmyer and Varghese (2000), for example, modified the DCT by providing prompts rich in contextual information for eliciting the speech act of requesting. These studies are certainly important since they advance the field of speech act research by enhancing its data collection methods.

In the preceding paragraphs a general overview of speech act research was provided. As explained above, the goal was to provide the reader with a general overview of the field of speech act research, and to also situate the present study in the literature. In the following section an in-depth examination of a number of important Arabic speech act studies will be presented in order to familiarize the reader with the scope and depth of Arabic speech act research.

### *Arabic Speech Act Studies*

In the following paragraphs a number of Arabic speech act studies are reviewed in some detail. There are a number of reasons for this. First, it is important to understand the literature on speech act research in Arabic in order to understand how the present study is situated in this literature. Secondly, some of these studies also informed the present

study with regard to the research method and data analysis. Thirdly, and more importantly, findings from these studies will be relevant with regard to discussing findings from the present study. Findings from these studies also provide useful insights about Arab culture and can contribute to our understanding of results from the present study. It is also important to indicate that some of these studies are cross-cultural, some are intralingual, and some focus on the foreign language learner. These studies used different data elicitation methods including observation of naturalistic data and the DCT in addition other innovative methodology that will be explained below. The speech acts of apologies and compliments seem to have received more attention than any other speech act in Arabic. Studies investigating these speech acts will be reviewed in the following paragraphs. Next, an important and relevant study investigating the speech act of giving directions in Arabic and British English will be reviewed. It is important to indicate that each of the studies reviewed below will be followed by a brief statement about its significance and how it will contribute to the present study. This section ends with a paragraph synthesizing the most important findings of these studies and explaining the relevance of these studies to the present study.

Bataineh (2004) looked at the speech act of apology in Jordanian Arabic and American English. She used two DCT's for her study: one based on previous research (Sugimoto, 1997) and the other was designed by the researcher herself. The participants in her study were 200 Arabic-speaking Jordanians and 200 English-speaking American, and each group was equally divided by gender. Findings from the study indicate that Jordanians differed from native speakers of American English in their frequent use of certain apology strategies: statements of remorse, promising not to repeat offense,

invoking the name of Allah, and using proverbs. Americans, on the other hand, used more compensation strategies, and blamed themselves as well as others for the offense. The researcher also found gender-based differences in the data. For example, Jordanian males used more statements of remorse while Jordanian females tended to assign the blame to themselves more than others. American females, on the other hand, tended to apologize using statements of remorse more than their American male counterparts.

This cross-cultural apology study is significant in a number of ways. First, it sheds light on certain strategies that are used more frequently in Arabic than English. In fact, some of the Arabic strategies this study identified are used only in Arabic and do not appear in English data, and these include the use of proverbs and invoking the name of God. This is particularly significant since it reveals certain aspects of Arab culture such as the importance of religion and the frequent reference to God in everyday conversation. Another important contribution of this study is its investigation of gender differences in Arabic and English. Bataineh's study is certainly relevant to the present study because it reveals important aspects of Arabic communication style that highlights differences and similarities between Arabic and English speech act realization strategies.

Another recent apology study was conducted by Nureddeen (2008) who looked at apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic. The researcher used a written DCT which consisted of 10 situations that varied with regard to social distance and power relationships between the interlocutors as well as different degrees of the severity of the offense. The participants were 110 Sudanese college students and were equally divided by gender. The DCT was written in the Sudanese dialect to encourage participants to respond in the same dialect. Findings from the study indicate that there is a tendency

towards positive politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) in the Sudanese society. Also, participants preferred not to apologize explicitly and used instead indirect apology strategies for face-saving.

This intralingual apology study is also significant because it made methodological improvements on previous studies, particularly with regard to the use of the dialect to elicit speech act data. This is certainly a more valid method for data collection because of the diglossic situation in Arabic. This study, however, like Bataineh's (2004) study, elicited data in writing rather than orally, and in this way it is similar to the overwhelming majority of speech act studies in Arabic. An important contribution of this study, however, is that it showed that there is a preference for positive politeness strategies in the Sudanese society.

Ghawi (1993) investigated the production of the speech act of apology by Arabic-speaking EFL learners. The respondents were 17 Arabic-speaking intermediate EFL students and 17 native speakers of American English, which formed the control group. The researcher used a closed role-play technique that consisted of 8 situations; the interactions were audio-taped. A week before administering the role-play the Arab respondents were interviewed for information about their perception of the specificity or universality of apology across languages (e.g., they were asked questions such as *Do you think that speakers of English apologize more or less than speakers of your native language?*). One of the interesting findings of this study is that all the Arab participants said that they felt Americans apologized differently, specifically that Americans apologized more frequently and at times unnecessarily. For example, some of the Arab participants stated that Americans even apologized to their children, implying that this

was less common in the Arab culture. Findings from the study also showed that the Arab learners transferred some strategies from Arabic, particularly the explanation strategy. The findings indicate that, despite some accommodation to L2 norms, the Arab learners' sociopragmatic norms are sometimes transferred to L2. The study also suggests that the extent of pragmatic transfer of certain apology strategies may be related to the learners' perception of the language universality or specificity of the speech act of apology.

This apology study is also significant in many ways. First, it is one of the earliest Arabic speech act studies that looked at the language learner and investigated the extent of pragmatic transfer from the learner's L1. One important finding from the study is that there is evidence of sociopragmatic transfer from the learner's L1. Another important contribution of this study is that the researcher conducted interviews with the Arabic learners to gauge their beliefs and perceptions about differences between American and Arab cultures regarding apology, which is particularly important since it provides insights into how such perceptions can affect intercultural communication between members of these two speech communities. Finally, this study is significant because the researcher used a closed role play technique for eliciting the data. Although this is certainly an improvement on the traditional written DCT, it is still similar to an oral DCT, which elicits a single-turn response from the participants and does not elicit any interactional data. The present study, however, makes an improvement on Ghawi's study and other Arabic speech act studies by using the open-role play method, which elicits interactional data; this method will be explained in detail in Chapter Three. One limitation in Ghawi's study, however, is that the researcher did not use native speakers of Arabic for eliciting baseline data in Arabic in order to compare Arab learners' L2 speech acts with speech

acts realized in Arabic by native speakers of Arabic. Therefore, his conclusions about transfer from Arabic should be interpreted with caution.

Nelson, El-Bakary and Al Batal (1993) looked at the speech act of complimenting in Egyptian Arabic and American English. They asked 243 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and 256 native speakers of American English to recall the last compliment they heard or gave to someone. The results revealed a number of similarities between Egyptian and American compliments and these included, for example, the use of adjectival compliments, preference for direct complimenting, and frequent praise of physical appearance. However, there were some differences between the two groups as well. For example, the Egyptian participants tended to give longer compliments and use more similes and metaphors, as well as formulaic expressions and cluster compliments. The Egyptians also tended to give more compliments on appearance and personality. The American participants, on the other hand, tended to compliment the person's skills more frequently. Finally, both groups seemed to prefer direct rather than indirect compliments.

This cross-cultural study is significant because it shows how speech act studies can provide very useful insights into the culture and the communication style of a given speech community. In this study, certain characteristics of Egyptian communication style were highlighted. These include, for example, the tendency toward verbosity and a preference for the use of formulaic expressions including metaphors and similes. This study is significant because it draws attention to how differences in speech act realization strategies can reveal important cultural differences and provide useful insights into the socio-cultural norms and beliefs that inform the communication style of a given speech community.

In another study, Nelson, Al-Batal and Echols (1996) looked at compliment responses in Syrian Arabic and American English. The researchers conducted interviews with the participants (89 Americans and 32 Syrians) to collect the data. This data elicitation technique was innovative since the interviews with the participants started with questions eliciting demographic information, then after a few questions the interviewer complimented the interviewee on a certain aspect of his or her personality or appearance. The interviewer listened carefully and wrote down the compliment responses he received from the participant after the interview. Results from the study show that both Americans and Syrians were more likely to either accept or mitigate the illocutionary force of a compliment than to reject it. Both groups used similar strategies (e.g., agreeing, compliment returns, deflection of qualifying comments). The American participants, however, differed from their Syrian counterparts in that they used more appreciation tokens. On the other hand, the preferred Syrian response, appreciation with formula, did not appear in the American data. The use of formulaic expressions was common in the Syrian data but did not appear in the American data. Also, the Arabic compliment sequences were much longer than the American ones.

This study is also significant in a number of ways. First, it used an innovative data collection technique, which can elicit data that is close to naturally-occurring data. This study is then unique among cross-cultural speech act studies that investigated Arabic, since the overwhelming majority of these studies used a written DCT for data collection. This study also reveals interesting characteristics of Arabic communication style especially with regard to complimenting. The findings from this study, like the findings from the study reviewed before it, point toward a strong preference in the Arabic

communication style for the use of formulaic expressions, and the tendency toward verbosity. This study is relevant to the present study since it reveals important characteristics of Arabic communication style. Such characteristics will be further discussed in relation to findings from the present study in Chapter 5.

In another study investigating compliment responses, Farghal and Al-Khatib (2001) examined compliment responses in Jordanian Arabic. The data were collected by three groups of student research assistants at the Yarmouk University in Jordan. These groups consisted of 5 females, 4 females and 2 males. They collected the compliment responses in natural settings by complimenting male and female students on campus: in corridors, cafeterias and classrooms. They all used specific compliment formula common in Jordanian Arabic to elicit compliment responses. They collected a total of 268 responses to compliments. Findings from this study show a preference for simple responses rather than complex ones. Also males responded differentially when they were complimented by other males versus females. In addition, male respondents tended to accept compliments more frequently than their female counterparts.

This intralingual study is also significant since it revealed important characteristics of complimenting behavior in Jordanian society and it shows interesting differences between Arab males and females. This study provides useful insights not only into complimenting behavior in Jordanian society but also in Arabic communication style in general.

In another complimenting study, Farghal and Haggan (2006) looked at how Kuwaiti undergraduate EFL students responded to compliments given to them in English

by their peers. Their data consisted of 632 compliment responses, two thirds of which were in English and the rest were non-verbal or in Arabic. As part of a class project, 79 students in two sections of a Discourse Analysis class were asked to report on 8 instances in which they paid a compliment to a fellow college student in English and to take note of the compliment and the response they received for it, including any non-verbal responses. All the complimenters and receivers of compliments were females. There was no measure of English proficiency but the researchers explain that all the students at this college were “fluent” in English. The analysis focused on the frequency and content of simple and complex responses (whether the responses included one illocution or more) as well as non-verbal responses. Results show that there is a strong influence from native culture on compliment responses. This was apparent with regard to the use of formulaic expressions from Arabic that were translated into English and used as compliment responses. Negative pragmatic transfer was also apparent in the frequency of certain illocutions in compliment responses.

This study is also significant since it investigates foreign language learners and it examines pragmatic transfer with regard to complimenting behavior. Like most intralingual studies in Arabic, this study examined naturally-occurring speech. One important finding in the study is the extent of the pragmatic transfer observed. Farghal and Haggan’s study is also significant because, like the other complimenting studies reviewed above, it shows a strong preference for using formulaic expressions in Arabic when realizing this speech act. Such tendency was also observed in the speech act of refusal in the present study as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Another Jordanian study that looked at compliments was an intra-lingual study conducted by Migdadi (2003) who examined how Jordanians give and respond to compliments. He specifically looked at differences between males and females as well as between people from different age groups. Naturally occurring examples of compliments and compliment responses were gathered by 10 fieldworkers in a site in Irbid, Jordan. Findings indicate that people who share the same gender, age or level of “traditionalism” compliment each other more frequently than people who differ in any of these categories. Men and women also differ in their responses to compliments. For example, women prefer questions in their responses whereas men prefer blessings and disagreements.

This is also another significant study that examined compliments in Jordanian society. Like other intralingual speech act studies in Arabic, this study used naturally-occurring data and provided an in-depth analysis of complimenting behavior in that speech community. This study is important because it provides further insights into Arab culture with regard to the socio-cultural norms and beliefs that inform the communication style, and this includes how speech acts are realized. It examined the important variables of age, gender and status and how they affect complimenting behavior in Jordanian society. These variables are certainly important with regard to speech act realization and they have been found to be particularly significant in collectivistic cultures like the Arab culture.

Another particularly important study was conducted by Taylor-Hamilton (2002) who looked at the speech act of giving directions in English and Emirati Arabic. Data were collected from three groups of participants: a) 118 male Emirati EFL students giving directions in English, b) 46 male Emirati students giving directions in Emirati

Arabic, and c) a group of 50 native speakers of British English, both males and females giving directions in English. The researcher collected the data by asking the participants to give her directions on how to go to certain places in Abu Dhabi. She also collected ethnographic information about Emirati culture by interviewing two Emirati nationals. Data were coded and analyzed for strategies used as well as success or failure in giving directions. The researcher also looked at the relationship between social variables (e.g., age, length of residence, length of English study, foreign travel, work status) and the success or failure in giving directions. The study identified a number of differences in strategy use between native speakers and non-native speakers. For example, while native speakers of Emirati Arabic and native speakers of British English used landmarks frequently in giving directions, Emirati EFL students did not use such landmarks as frequently. Also both EFL students and Arabic L1 speakers did not use street names as frequently as the British English speakers. Follow-up ethnographic interviews with some of the participants showed that the use of street names is not a common strategy in giving directions in Arabic. Finally, length of residence, rather than length of English study, was the most important factor in the participants' ability to successfully give directions in English.

This study is particularly significant for a number of reasons. First, it made an important methodological improvement on previous studies by not using a writing-based elicitation instrument such as the DCT, and used instead a limited form of role play interaction. However, it is important to indicate that according to the researcher there was no "real" interaction taking place in the role play since the researcher, as she explained, used minimal back-channelling and cues. However, this is certainly a major improvement

over traditional cross-cultural speech act research in Arabic. The study also reveals interesting differences between Arab and British cultures with regard to the speech act of giving directions. While the findings of this study are not directly relevant to the present study, this study was found worthy of inclusion in this review since it is unique among Arabic speech act studies because of its methodological innovation. It is important, however, to indicate that although this study used a limited version of the role play method, it did not analyze the data at the level of discourse or examined how meaning was negotiated in the interaction.

Finally, another important study that looked at a speech act that is rarely investigated in speech act research is a study by Abdel Jawad (2000) who examined the speech act of swearing in Jordanian Arabic. The goal was to examine the linguistic structure of this speech act, its content, and the other speech acts that it is used with, as well as its communicative functions. Data were collected through fieldwork and through observations by the researcher and his students. The data consisted of 1000 cases of conversational swearing (CS). This mainly refers to swearing by God or people or things (e.g., by the glory of Allah, by the Holy Quran, by the life of my children, by my religion, by the soul of my mother). Findings show that speakers tended to use swearing to preface all types of speech acts, and they used a wide range of sworn-by objects. CS can also be used to soften the illocutionary force of a refusal. In addition, it can be used for assertions as a persuasion device. Findings also show that this speech act is always used when speakers offer to pay among friends.

This study is particularly significant and relevant to the present study in a number of ways. First, it is the first speech act study to investigate swearing in Arabic. Swearing

is a very common speech act that is used in Arabic in everyday conversations. This speech act was reported in numerous Arabic speech act studies, including ones reviewed above, as one of the strategies Arabic speakers use when realizing different speech acts. This study certainly highlights the frequency of use of this speech act in everyday conversation in Arabic and more importantly it explores the reasons for that. The study clearly shows that one of the common uses of this speech act in Arabic is to soften the illocutionary force of refusals. This is certainly a very relevant finding for the present study. It is also important to point out that this speech act was observed in the pilot study and was found to be one of the strategies frequently employed when refusing Arabic.

The studies reviewed above give the reader an overview of speech act research conducted in Arabic. The speech acts that have received much attention in Arabic are those of apologies and compliments, including compliment responses. Also, the Jordanian dialect is, by far, the most studied dialect in speech act research in Arabic. With regard to data collection methods, almost all Arabic cross-cultural studies, like most cross-cultural speech act studies in general, used writing-based data elicitation instruments, namely the DCT. Most of the Arabic intralingual studies, on the other hand, used naturally-occurring data. Also a small number of Arabic speech act studies examined the foreign language learner, and that was limited to Arab learners of English as a foreign or second language.

Arabic cross-cultural speech act studies suffer from a number of limitations. One important limitation is that they elicit data using a writing-based DCT, as explained above. This is particularly problematic in Arabic because of its diglossic situation. Speech acts in Arabic are realized in the dialect, which is mainly spoken; they are not

realized in the formal, written, variety of the language. Therefore, in order to elicit these speech acts more accurately it is important to elicit them orally and not in writing. The DCT also elicits a single turn, which does not represent how speech acts are realized in real-life interactions where they usually involve some kind of negotiation over a number of turns. The best elicitation method to capture this kind of interaction is the role play method, which was used in the present study. Therefore, it is important to point out that the review of Arabic speech act studies presented here also serves to illustrate the significance of the present study by showing the limitations of previous research.

Findings from Arabic speech act studies reviewed above are important because they provide useful insights into Arabic communication style, as explained above. Based on the studies reviewed in this section, the following characteristics of Arabic communication style can be stated: tendency towards verbosity; frequency of religious reference, especially invoking the name of God; particular importance of age, status and gender in the realization of speech acts; and frequency of fixed, formulaic, expressions in communication.

In the next section a more focused analysis of refusal studies in Arabic will be presented. Like the studies reviewed above, these studies also reveal important characteristics of Arabic communication style, but particularly with regard to how the speech act of refusal is realized.

#### *Arabic Refusal Studies*

A number of studies investigating the speech act of refusal in Arabic have been conducted. Some of these studies are intralingual in that they looked at this speech act in

Arabic only, and some are cross-cultural, investigating the speech act of refusal in Arabic and American English. Other studies also looked at how this speech act is realized by Arab EFL learners. Almost all of these studies used a DCT for collecting the data. Also, these studies investigated the speech act of refusal in different Arabic dialects including Egyptian, Yemeni, Jordanian, and Saudi. These studies are being reviewed here in some detail because they have informed the present study with regard to design and data analysis method. These studies are also reviewed to demonstrate how the present study made improvements on previous research and bridged some of the gaps in the literature. With regard to findings from these studies, they will be compared to findings from the present study in Chapter 5. Each study reviewed below will be followed by a paragraph explaining its significance and showing its relevance to the present study. In addition, at the end of this section a summary of these studies as well as a synthesis of their findings will be provided.

The first study to review here is by Stevens (1993) who conducted the first refusal study in Arabic. His study investigated the realization of the speech act of refusal by native speakers of American English, native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, and Egyptian learners of English as a foreign and second language. The researcher used a written DCT adopted from Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) consisting of 15 situations for eliciting three types of refusals (i.e., refusals of requests, offers and invitations). The participants in the study were 13 native speakers of American English from the US, 17 Arab ESL learners in the US, and 21 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in Egypt. In this study, the researcher also used data he had collected earlier (Stevens, 1988), which consisted of 10 native speakers of English in Egypt and 21 Egyptian EFL learners in Egypt. The

participants included both males and females and the Arabic groups actually included Egyptians and non-Egyptians. His coding scheme was created based on the data and covered the entire data. Findings from the study show that L2 learners transferred pragmatically inappropriate strategies from L1 such as chiding. Another important finding is that L2 learners did not transfer from L1 some of the strategies that would have worked in L2; these are the strategies that are consistent in L1 and L2. The researcher suggests that these common strategies need to be taught since the students did not transfer them because they probably did not know the equivalent English formulas. Another important finding is that the Arabic groups did not use softeners or hedges compared to the American group, and very few learners used this strategy. This is an important finding that was also found in other Arabic refusal studies (Al-Issa, 1998). This suggests that Arabic-speaking EFL learners tend to transfer refusal strategies from Arabic when interacting in L2. It also shows that while the use of hedges and softeners is common in English, it does not seem to be one of the strategies frequently used in Arabic.

Stevens' study is particularly important not only because it is the first refusal study in Arabic but also because of its classification scheme of refusals and its findings. For example, some of the refusal strategies that Stevens found were not reported in other Arabic refusal studies and these include, for example, Chiding, White Lie, Accept a Little, Beg Forgiveness, Frank Explanation, and Non-Committal Strategy. One of the limitations in this study, however, is that the researcher used Egyptian and non-Egyptian participants so the results should be interpreted with this in mind. This is important to point out since it is possible that the same speech act can be differentially realized in

different Arabic dialects. This study also used a written DCT for eliciting the data, which is, as explained above, problematic in Arabic because of its diglossic situation.

Another important Arabic refusal study was conducted by Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002). In this study the researchers used a modified version of a DCT used by Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz (1990) to elicit refusal data from 25 Egyptians and 30 Americans. The DCT consisted of 10 situations eliciting four types of refusals: 2 requests, 3 invitations, 3 offers, and 2 suggestions. One important improvement that this study introduced to speech act research in Arabic is that the data were elicited orally. That is the researcher read each situation to the participants and asked them to respond orally. This is particularly important in Arabic speech act research because of the diglossic situation in Arabic, as explained above. It is unrealistic to ask participants to write down how they would refuse when these speech acts are normally performed orally and performed in the local dialect, not in the written formal variety of Arabic. The researchers coded the data and analyzed them quantitatively including running inferential statistical tests to measure any statistically significant differences between the two groups. The results were analyzed according to the frequency of strategy use, the types and frequencies of indirect strategies and the effect of the interlocutor status.

Findings from the study show that both groups used similar semantic formulas to realize the speech act of refusal and also used a similar number of direct and indirect strategies. However, in some situations the order of the semantic formulas varied between the two groups. The Egyptian respondents used more direct formulas than their American counterparts in the status-equal situations. Both groups also expressed similar reasons for

their refusals, but the American participants used more expressions of gratitude. In addition, compared to the Americans, the Egyptians used fewer face-saving strategies in their refusals.

This study is important for the improvements the researchers made with regard to data collection. For example, they collected the data orally, which adds to its validity since these speech acts are performed orally in Arabic. The researchers also read the prompts to the participants in Egyptian Arabic instead of asking the participants to read them. This is important since the Egyptian dialect is mainly spoken and is not written except in very limited ways. This study is important also because of the recommendations the researchers made. For example, they argue that the DCT may not be an ideal instrument for this kind of study since it does not allow participants to opt out. This is an important point that has been frequently mentioned in the literature. The researchers also point out the importance of follow-up interviews since they would provide insights into the participants' reasons for their selection of refusal strategies. Finally and more importantly, the researchers assert the importance of studying refusals over a conversational sequence rather than over one utterance or turn. This last recommendation is particularly important and the present study is, in fact, the first study in Arabic to examine the speech act of refusal over a conversational sequence.

Another important Arabic speech act study that looked at refusals is that of Al-Issa (1998) in which he examined the realization of this speech act by Jordanian EFL learners as well as native speakers of Jordanian Arabic and native speakers of American English. The researcher was specifically investigating whether there was evidence of pragmatic transfer from Arabic and the factors causing this transfer. The researcher used

a DCT to elicit the data from three groups: 50 Jordanian advanced ESL learners, 50 Jordanian native speakers of Arabic and 50 American native speakers of English. Each group was equally divided by gender. The researcher also conducted semi-structured interviews with the Jordanian EFL learners to find out the motivating factors for pragmatic transfer from L1. Findings from the study indicate that there was evidence of pragmatic transfer specifically with regard to frequency, type, number, and content of the semantic formulas used. The researcher also found that certain semantic formulas were only used by the Arab participants and these included, for example, Return the Favor, and Request for Understanding. In addition, the Jordanian refusals were lengthy, elaborate, and less direct, compared to the American ones, especially when the interlocutor was of a higher social status. Also, the excuses the Jordanians gave were vaguer and less specific than the American excuses. Incidentally, is a finding that is true too in Japanese (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990). In addition, there was a frequent reference to God in the Arabic data. Based on the follow-up interviews, the researcher found that some of the motivating factors for pragmatic transfer included: learners' "love of and pride" in their native language, Arabs' perceptions of Westerners in general, religious beliefs and linguistic difficulties.

This study is significant in many ways. First the researcher designed his own DCT situations based on naturally occurring refusal data that he collected through observation and field work. However, this was only done in the US, and not in Jordan, but the researcher piloted the instrument in both the US and Jordan. He also used a large number of scenarios (15). In addition, he made his DCT open-ended by removing the rejoinder. He also tried to make the DCT situations more authentic for his participants by creating

situations that are more realistic for university students. These were situations that were familiar to university students. He also gave the participants the option to opt out. In addition, he conducted follow-up interviews with the participants. Finally, he also used four independent coders to code a random sample of the data and a high level of inter-rater reliability was obtained. So, Al-Issa's study is particularly important for the rigor the researcher exercised in designing the study. It is also a significant study because of its important findings about pragmatic transfer and Arabic refusal strategies. In the present study a similar level of rigor was applied, however, the data collection method was different since the present study used the role play method for collecting the data. Findings from Al-Issa's study will be compared to findings from the present study in Chapter 5.

Al-Issa's study, however, suffered from a number of limitations. The first and most obvious is that that data were collected in writing and not orally. Some researchers collecting written DCT data in Arabic sometimes write their prompts in the dialect (Nureddeen, 2008). Al-Issa, however, used prompts written in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is the formal, written variety of Arabic. This probably encouraged his participants to answer in MSA, instead of using the dialect. He also did not use a standard measure to assess the proficiency of the EFL learners. Despite these limitations, his study made important contributions to the study of refusals in Arabic as explained above.

Another Arabic refusal study was conducted by Al-Shalawi (1997) who looked at the refusal strategies used by Saudis and Americans. He used a written, open-ended DCT to elicit refusals of requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions from 50 American males and 50 Saudi males. He analyzed the data with regard to the semantic formulas used

following Beebe and Cummings' (1985) classification scheme of refusal strategies, but he also added new categories (e.g., sarcasm) to account for his data. He calculated frequency counts of all formulas, and ran a t-test to find out if there were any statistically significant differences between the two groups, and he analyzed the situations on two variables: status and social distance. Findings from his study show that Americans used fewer semantic formulas than Saudis, but both American and Saudi participants used a higher number of semantic formulas when refusing someone of a higher status. The researcher did not find any statistically significant differences between the two groups in the number and rank of semantic formulas used. Both groups also used a fewer number of semantic formulas when refusing suggestions as compared to refusing offers, requests, or invitations. Another important finding is that the choice of the semantic formula was affected by the type of refusal rather than the social status of the interlocutor. For both groups, the most frequent semantic formulas used were Explanation, Regret, and Gratitude. Also, the American participants gave more explanations than their Saudi counterparts in all situations except one. The American explanations were also more specific than the Saudi ones. This finding is similar to Al-Isaa's (1998) who also found the American explanations in his study to be more specific than the Jordanian ones. (Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) also found the American explanations in their study to be more specific than the Japanese ones. This is interesting because both the Japanese and Arab cultures have been referred to in the literature as collectivistic. So, is possible to interpret this finding in terms of communication styles in collectivistic and individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1991)). Another interesting finding in Al-Shalawi's study pertains to giving reasons and explanations: Americans talked about personal

engagements (e.g., *I have a meeting*), while Saudis talked about family engagements (e.g., *my family needs me*). Also, while the Saudi participants made frequent reference to God (e.g., *God willing*), there were no religious references in the American data. The Saudis also used more expressions of regret than their American participants. Finally, another significant finding in the study is that while the Saudi participants rarely used the direct 'no' in their refusals (and when they did only in lower and equal status situations), the American participants used direct 'no' in all situations, but they used it more frequently when interacting with an interlocutor of a lower status. Similar to Al-Issa's (1998) findings, the American participants in Al-Shalawi's study were more direct and more concerned about the clarity of their explanations as compared to the Saudi participants.

Al-Shalawi's study is particularly significant since it attempted to interpret the results within the framework of cultural differences between the two speech communities. It also reports many important findings that provide important insights into Arab culture and communication style. Al-Shalawi's study is particularly significant and relevant to the present study because it will be important to compare findings from his study to findings from the present study. Such comparison can be found in Chapter 5 of the present study.

Another refusal study was conducted by Al-Eryani (2007) who looked at the refusal strategies of Yemeni EFL learners and compared them to those by native speakers of Yemeni Arabic and native speakers of American English. Sixty respondents participated in his study: 20 English-speaking Americans, 20 native speakers of Yemeni Arabic and 20 Yemeni advanced EFL learners. All the participants were males. The

researcher used a written DCT which consisted of 6 situations in which participants refused offers, requests, invitations, and suggestions from someone higher, lower, and equal in status to them. Data analysis was based on the scheme used by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). Findings from the study show that native speakers of Yemeni Arabic tended to be less direct in their refusals when compared to their American counterparts. The order of the semantic formulas was also different between the two groups. The EFL learners showed similarities with native speakers of English in three areas: order of semantic formulas, their frequency, and their content.

Al-Eryani's study is significant in many ways. First, it is only one of three Arabic refusal studies that examined the speech act of refusal as realized by the language learner, particularly by Arab learners of English as a foreign language. Findings from this study are similar to findings from other studies (Al-Isaa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997) with regard to Arabic preference for indirect refusal strategies. It also shows that there was limited pragmatic transfer in the realization of refusals by advanced EFL learners. This study is also significant because it investigated the speech act of refusal in an Arabic dialect that is rarely examined in speech act research. It is particularly relevant to the present study because it looks at pragmatic transfer and it investigates many of the areas that the present study examines such as the frequency, type, and order of the semantic formulas.

Finally, Hussein (1995) examined a number of speech acts in Arabic that included refusals. Unlike the other studies reviewed above, his study used only naturalistic data, which he collected by observing Arabic speakers, mostly university graduates and professionals from Palestinian and Jordanian speech communities. He also examined written communication in newspapers and letters. He classifies Arabic refusals into direct

and indirect strategies. Findings from his study show that indirect refusals are used more frequently with acquaintances of equal status as well as close friends of unequal status. Comparing the findings from his study to findings from the literature on American refusals, the researcher explains that some of the indirect strategies used in Arabic are similar to strategies used in American English (e.g., expressions of positive opinion, expressions of regret, excuses, statement of alternative, statement of principle, indefinite reply). The author also points out that one major difference between native speakers of Arabic and American English is that Arabs use indirect strategies not only with acquaintances of equal status but also with acquaintances of unequal status.

This study, however, suffered from a number of serious methodological limitations. For example, the researcher does not provide any detailed information on how the data were collected or transcribed. More importantly, he does not describe any systematic approach to analyzing the data. In addition, all the examples he included come only from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which is the formal, written, variety of the language. He does not include any examples from any dialects of Arabic.

The preceding paragraphs provided an in-depth look at Arabic refusal studies and explained in some detail their significance as well as their relevance to the present study. In the next two paragraphs the findings of these studies will be synthesized. This will be followed by a table summarizing these Arabic refusal studies. The section that follows examines other refusal studies that are particularly relevant to the present study.

The studies reviewed above included the following: a) one intralingual study (Hussein, 1995) that examined the speech act of refusal in the Jordanian and Palestinian

speech communities; b) two cross-cultural speech act studies (Al-Shalawi, 1997; Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El-Bakary, 2002) that compared the realization of the speech act of refusal in Arabic and American English; and c) three interlanguage refusal studies (Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Issa, 1998; Stevens, 1993) that looked at how Arab EFL learners realize this speech act in English and compared their performance to that of native speakers of Arabic and native speakers of American English. The next paragraph presents a brief review of the data collection and data analysis methods employed in these studies, and the paragraph that follows it synthesizes findings from these studies.

The studies reviewed above (with the exception of Hussein, 1995) used a data collection instrument that elicited single-turn responses, namely the DCT. As explained earlier, such single-turn responses do not reflect real-life interactions and do not provide information on how refusals are negotiated over a number of turns. However, while all the refusal studies reviewed above used a written DCT, only one study, (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002), used an oral DCT by eliciting the data orally, and using the dialect. Also all these studies used DCT scenarios that are similar to ones used in the literature, especially by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). In addition, these studies used refusal classification schemes that are based on the schemes proposed by Beebe et al. (1990), and Beebe and Cummings (1985). Finally, some of these studies (Al-Shalawi, 1997; Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El-Bakary, 2002) used inferential statistics to find out if there were statistically significant differences between the groups in their studies.

For the most part these studies are consistent in their findings. For example, Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002) and Al-Eryani (2007) found that while

Arabs and Americans used similar semantic formulas, they ordered them differently when realizing the speech act of refusal. Also, Al-Shalawi (1997) and Al-Issa (1998) both found that Arabic explanations and excuses tended to be lengthy and more elaborate when compared to the American ones. Both of these researchers also found that Arabic explanations and excuses to be less specific than the American ones. Al-Shalawi observed that the Arabic excuses were family-related whereas the American ones were about the speaker's personal life. It is important to indicate, however, that Nelson et al. (2002) did not find differences with regard to the excuses and explanations given by their Egyptian and American participants. Both Al-Shalawi (1997) and Al-Issa (1998) observed the high frequency of religious reference in the Arabic data whereas the American data did not include such reference. However, while Al-Issa (1997) and Al-Eryani (2007) found that Arabs tended to use more indirect strategies in their refusals, Nelson et al. (2002) did not find such a difference in their data. Hussein (1995), on the other hand, found such indirect strategies to be most frequent among acquaintances of equal status and friends of unequal status. However, it is important to point out that these differences may be due to differences in data collection methods (e.g., written DCT, oral DCT, naturalistic data), and they can also be due to the different dialects investigated. With regard to studies investigating the language learner (Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Issa, 1998; Stevens, 1993), they all reported evidence of negative pragmatic transfer from L1. Stevens (1993) reported that there were many common strategies that Arabic and American English share that were not transferred. Table 2.1 below provides a summary of the studies reviewed above and their findings.

Table 2-1

*Arabic Studies Investigating the Speech Act of Refusal*

Study	Dialect	Instrument	Participants	Findings
Stevens (1993)	Egyptian	Written DCT	13 NS American English 21 NS Egyptian Arabic 17 Arab ESL learners	Evidence of negative pragmatic transfer found among Arab EFL learners Common strategies in L1 and L2 were not transferred Hedges and softeners were found in the American data only
Hussein (1995)	Palestinian & Jordanian	Observation of spoken and written language	--	Indirect refusal strategies are used frequently with acquaintances of equal status and friends of unequal status Arabic and English share many indirect refusal strategies

Table 2-1 (continued)

Study	Dialect	Instrument	Participants	Findings
Al-Shalawi (1997)	Saudi	Written DCT	50 Saudi males 50 American males	Americans used fewer semantic formulas and gave more explanations; American explanations were more specific; Frequent religious reference in Saudi data but not in American data Direct “no” was more frequent in American data, and Saudis used more expressions of regret
Al-Issa (1998)	Jordanian	Written DCT Follow-up interviews	50 Jordanian advanced EFL learners 50 Jordanian NS Arabic 50 American NS English	Evidence of pragmatic transfer Certain semantic formulas only appeared in the Arabic data Jordanian refusals were lengthy, elaborate, and indirect Arabic excuses and explanations were vague Frequent reference to God in the Arabic data

Table 2-1 (continued)

Study	Dialect	Instrument	Participants	Findings
Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El-Bakary (2002)	Egyptian	Oral DCT	25 Egyptian NS Arabic 30 American NS English	Order of semantic formulas was different for the two groups; Egyptians used more direct strategies in status-equal situations; Americans used more direct strategies in equal or lower status situations; Reasons given were similar for the two groups; Americans used more expressions of gratitude
Al-Eryani (2007)	Yemeni	Written DCT	20 male Yemeni Advanced EFL learners 20 male American NS English 20 Yemeni male NS Arabic	Yemenis used more indirect strategies; order of semantic formulas was different for the two groups; EFL learners showed similarities with native speakers of English in the frequency, order, and content of semantic formulas

Based on findings from these studies the following characteristics of Arabic refusals can be posited:

- Tendency to use indirect refusal strategies especially when refusing an interlocutor of a higher status
- Tendency to use more direct refusal strategies in equal status situations
- Frequency of religious reference, especially invoking the name of God
- Tendency towards giving vague or unspecified reasons and explanations for refusals
- Arabic refusal strategies are used in a different order from American refusal strategies

#### *Other Relevant Refusal Studies*

In this section other relevant, non-Arabic, refusal studies will be reviewed. These studies are important in informing the present study for four reasons. First, these studies elicited interactional data from participants using the role play method instead of DCT, which elicits single-turn responses. Secondly, these studies used a discourse-level analytic framework for analyzing the data, which can show how refusals are negotiated and recycled over a number of turns. Thirdly, all of these studies adopted a classification scheme for analyzing refusal strategies that have been widely used in the literature (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990). This is important because it allows for comparing these different studies. This classification scheme, which is reviewed in detail later in this Chapter as well as in Chapter 3, was adopted the present study. Fourthly, since these studies are similar to the present study with regard to the data collection

method, and their analytical framework, it will be important to review their findings to see how they compare to findings from the present study.

VonCanon (2006) examined the realization of the speech act of refusing requests by American learners of Spanish, native speakers of Spanish, and native speakers of American English in equal and unequal status situations. The researcher also looked at the effect a semester-long study in Spain on the learners' ability to realize the speech act of refusal successfully. Sixty-five participants participated in the study: 20 native speakers of American English, 20 native speakers of Spanish from Spain, and 25 American learners of Spanish. Data were elicited using open-ended role plays that consisted of six refusal situations: refusals of *requests, invitations, and offers*. In each refusal situation, the variables of social distance and power were varied. There were two variations for each refusal type: equal status and higher status. Two female native speakers of Spanish and two female native speakers of English performed the role plays in Spanish and English respectively with the participants.

Although the researcher elicited refusals of requests, invitations and offers, her analysis was limited to refusals of requests. Her quantitative analysis consisted of frequency counts of the semantic formulas used and these frequency counts were converted into percentages and analyzed using inferential statistics. The content of the semantic formulas was also analyzed as well. The researcher also conducted qualitative analysis of the data, which is typical of speech act studies eliciting interactional data. She selected three refusal interactions for a detailed qualitative analysis that included turn-by-turn examination of the interaction not only by looking at the strategies used, but also looking at how the interlocutors attended to each other's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987),

in reaching a resolution. She also made use of discourse analytic techniques that were used in other studies, especially Garcia's (1992, 1999) concept of *stages* of refusal, and Gass and Houck's (1999) concept of *episodes*. These important analytic frameworks will be explained below in some detail. VonCanon's findings show that there were no statistically significant differences between the pre-test and the post-test that measured the learner's pragmatic competence before and after their stay in Spain. An important finding of the study is that individual native speakers and learners can vary significantly in their selection of which strategies to use in performing the speech act of refusal. She also observed that learners sometimes abandon refusals and comply with their interlocutors, a finding also observed in Garcia's (1992) study.

VonCanon's (2006) study is relevant to the present study in a number of ways. First, she collected her data using the open role play method, which was used in the present study. She used quantitative as well as qualitative data analysis techniques for analyzing her data. For coding her refusal data, she used the classification scheme that has been widely used in refusal studies, namely the one proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). In addition, she uses the concept of *stages* (Garcia, 1992, 1999) for her qualitative analysis of her data. Like VonCanon's study, the present study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques and adopted Beebe et al.'s coding scheme for analyzing the data. It will also be important to compare findings from the present study to findings from VonCanon's study. For these reasons, VonCanon's study was found to be worthy of inclusion in this section.

Another important study was conducted by Felix-Brasdefer (2002) who investigated the speech act of refusal as realized by native speakers of Mexican Spanish,

native speakers of American English, and advanced American learners of Spanish. Sixty male participants participated in the study: 20 in each group. The researcher used 6 enhanced open role plays to elicit refusals (two *invitations*, two *requests*, and two *suggestions*) in equal and higher status situations. An enhanced role play is different from a regular role play in the amount of the contextualized background information it includes (e.g., gender, age, social distance, power status, length of acquaintance). These situations were based on two independent variables: power and social distance. In addition to the refusal situations, there were four additional role play situations that served as distracters. It is also important to point out that the researcher controlled for the following variables with regard to the American learners of Spanish: gender, age, L2 proficiency, L2 Spanish dialect, and experience abroad. The researcher also conducted retrospective verbal interviews with the participants.

For data analysis, the researcher used a coding scheme of semantic formulas similar to the one used by Beebe, Takahash and Uliss-Weltz (1990). For example, the researcher classified the semantic formulas into three categories: Direct Refusals, Indirect Refusals, and Adjuncts to Refusals. The researcher calculated frequency counts of the semantic formulas found in the data and used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. He also examined the data qualitatively using the organizational scheme of *sequences* which was originally proposed by Edmondson (1981) and which was applied to the speech act of refusal in previous research (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). According to this method, each refusal response was analyzed as a series of three sequences:

- 1) Pre-refusal strategies (to prepare the interlocutor for the upcoming refusal)
- 2) Head Act (to express the main refusal)
- 3) Post-refusal (to justify, emphasize, mitigate, or conclude the refusal response)

The researcher explains that analyzing this speech act in terms of refusal sequences enabled him to examine the refusal interaction at the discourse level. It is important to indicate here too that the researcher employed Garcia's (1992, 1999) analytical framework of *stages* to part of his data, specifically to interactions that involved refusal of invitations. He analyzed those refusals in terms of two stages: Stage 1 consisted of the immediate refusal sequence, and Stage 2 consisting of the refusal sequence after the first insistence or series of insistences, which was done in a similar fashion to Garcia's (1992) analysis.

Findings from Felix-Brasdefer's (2002) study show that learners differed from native speakers with regard to the frequency, content and perception of refusal strategies. Statistically significant differences were found in the following strategies: direct 'no', mitigated refusals, gratitude/appreciation and agreement. The study also found negative pragmatic transfer in the frequency, content and social perception of refusal strategies. In addition, length of stay in the target culture was a better predictor of pragmatic ability, rather than proficiency level. Also, the researcher found that difficulty of performing the speech act increased in situations with interlocutors of higher status. Finally, the researcher explains that the retrospective verbal reports he used in the study were important in providing insights into the learners' perceptions of refusals as well as their linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. Based on his findings, Felix-Brasdefer concludes that the concept of 'group face' (Nwoye, 1992) can better describe politeness phenomena

in Mexican society whereas the concept of 'individual face' as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) can better apply to American society.

Like VonCanon's (2006) study, Felix-Brasdefer's (2002) study is relevant to the present investigation. Felix-Brasdefer's data collection method is particularly important since he made use of the concept of enhanced DCT (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000) and applied it to the role play method. The present study adopts this same method of enhanced role play for data collection. Felix-Brasdefer's study is also significant because the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. For his quantitative analysis he calculated the frequency of semantic formulas used and conducted both descriptive and inferential statistics for analyzing the data. Like VonCanon (2006), he used the coding scheme proposed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) for classifying the refusal strategies in terms of direct and indirect refusals. This approach to data analysis was also used in the present study. Felix-Brasdefer's study is also significant because he utilized a number of different approaches to qualitatively analyze his data such as the concept of *sequences* (Edmondson, 1981) and *stages* (Garcia, 1992, 1999). These concepts and constructs were also utilized in the present study. For these reasons this study was deemed worthy of inclusion in this review.

Another important refusal study was conducted by Garcia (1992) who looked at the realization of the speech act of refusal by Peruvian males and females. This intra-lingual study is particularly important for two reasons: first, the researcher used the open role-play method for data collection, and second, she analyzed the data using a discourse-level analytic framework that she specifically designed for the study. The participants in her study were 10 Peruvian males and 10 Peruvian females who ranged in age between

17 and 74. They took part in a single role play with a native speaker of Peruvian Spanish in which they turned down her invitation to her birthday party. After the role play was completed the participants filled out a written questionnaire assessing their perception of the interaction as well as the interlocutor's role, and the level of politeness they perceived during the interaction.

The researcher analyzed the data using a classification scheme of refusal strategies that was first used by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989). As a conceptual and analytic framework for understanding the data, the researcher used Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of positive and negative politeness. Politeness strategies in the data were classified as deference (negative politeness) strategies and solidarity (positive politeness) strategies. Deference strategies included, for example, mitigated refusals, expressions of sorrow, reasons and explanations. Solidarity strategies, on the other hand, included direct refusal, inquiry into third party, token agreement or acceptance, and criticism.

Garcia's (1992) main contribution, however, is her discourse-level analysis of the interaction. This analysis, which is unique in refusal studies, revealed an interesting kind of interaction between the interlocutor and the participants. Although the researcher did not focus her analysis on invitations per se (but rather the refusal of an invitation), her discourse-level analysis revealed "a type of deference-solidarity politeness ballet between the invitation and the refusal" (p. 211). This involved two stages: the invitation-response and the insistence-response. In the first stage the participants used deference (i.e., negative) politeness strategies in the Head Acts of their refusals. The Head Act of a refusal, as explained earlier, refers to the words or phrases that express the main refusal.

In the second stage, however, the participants used solidarity (i.e., positive) strategies. In both stages the majority of the Supportive Moves the participants used expressed deference rather than solidarity. Garcia also found interesting differences between her male and female participants. While males tended to refuse the invitation in the second stage of the interaction, females actually tended to respond affirmatively, but vaguely. In other words, male participants tended to be more direct in their refusals than their female counterparts. One of the interesting results is that 13 (6 males and 7 females) of the 20 participants ended up accepting the invitation, though conditionally, despite the fact that they were instructed to refuse it.

The researcher explains that the findings of her study reflect what happens in Peruvian culture with regard to invitations. She explains that while insisting might threaten the negative face of the invitee (by creating an imposition), the person making the invitation will satisfy the invitee's positive face (his or her desire to be liked) by insisting. Not insisting may give the impression to the invitee that the invitation is not sincere and that he or she may not be really wanted at the party. In the same way, the person accepting the invitation is actually threatening his or her negative face (his or her desire to be free from imposition), but prefers that to refusing, which will threaten the interlocutor's positive face. Garcia's study is certainly important since by using a discourse-level analysis of the interaction she showed the potential of this kind of analysis in revealing the complexities of the negotiation that takes place in refusal interactions. This analysis also sheds light on the kind of communicative competence required to perform this complex speech act at the level of discourse.

Garcia's (1992) study is particularly important and relevant to the present study mainly because of its pioneering approach in examining refusals at the level of discourse. Her study is probably the first study that employed the role play method for eliciting refusal data, and the first to employ discourse-level analytic techniques for analyzing refusals. The study also proposed a new discourse-level method for analyzing refusal, namely the concept of *stages* as explained above. This important concept was applied in other studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; VonCanon, 2006) and was found to be a very effective analytical tool. This important analytical method was also used in the present study for analyzing part of the data. For these reasons this study was found worthy of inclusion in this review. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of this analytic framework of *stages* and shows how it was used for analyzing the data in the present study.

In another important study, Gass and Houck (1999) examined the realization of the speech act of refusal by Japanese learners of English using open role plays for eliciting the data. Three Japanese ESL learners (low to intermediate level), who had lived in the US for one month at the time of data collection, and who had been staying with American host families, participated in the study. The participants completed 8 role plays with a native speaker of American English. The role plays consisted of refusals of invitations, requests, offers, and suggestions. Two situations requiring refusal were created for each refusal type. All the interactions were video taped.

For analyzing the data, the researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative analysis focused on the number of turns and turn length. The qualitative analysis was particularly significant since it analyzed the interaction at the level of discourse to reach a better understanding of how refusals are negotiated over a

stretch of discourse. The interaction was analyzed in terms of *episodes*. They define an *episode* as follows (Gass & Houck, 1999, p. 57):

1. An episode is bounded on one side by an eliciting act and on the other by either dialogue not directly related to the eliciting act or a recycling of the eliciting act.
2. An episode must include some kind of response (e.g., in the form of a perceived refusal or acceptance) directed at or relevant to the opening eliciting act.

The episode as an organizational and analytical unit was effective in understanding how refusal sequences are structured and how refusals are recycled and negotiated throughout the interaction. A single refusal sequence can consist of up to five or six episodes. Another important contribution of this study is that the researchers proposed an analytic framework for classifying possible responses to and outcomes of the initiating acts (e.g., suggestion, offer, request, invitation). Table 2-2 below summarizes this framework, which the researchers refer to as refusal trajectories.

Table 2-2

*Possible Responses and Outcomes (Gass & Houck, 1999, p. 4)*

Initiating Act (Initiator=I)	Initial Response (Respondent=R)	Response to R's Non- Acceptance (I)	Final Outcome
		NA	Acceptance
Request	Sincere Acceptance	Acceptance of R's	Refusal
Invitation	Non-acceptance	Non-Acceptance	Postponement
Offer	--Refuse	Non-Acceptance of	Compromise
Suggestion	--Postpone (Sincere)	R's Non-acceptance	(on an Alternative
	Propose Alternative	➤ Negotiation (Abandon Process)	Action/Non-action

The researchers explain that in response to the initiating act (e.g., request, offer), the respondent can either accept sincerely or not accept. The non-acceptance can be expressed as refusal, postponement or the proposal of an alternative. In response to the respondent's non-acceptance, the initiator can accept the respondent's non-acceptance and in this case the interaction is resolved: that is the initial response will be the final outcome. However, if the initiator is not satisfied with the respondent's non-acceptance, he or she can engage in negotiation. The researchers explain that the negotiation can involve the initiator recycling the Initiating Act, reasons for acceptance, proposals of alternatives, or even suggestions of postponement. The negotiation can also include the respondent's responses and initiations. This negotiation process is recursive and different

outcomes may result from each initial response. The final outcome, however, refers to the final resolution of the interaction. This final outcome can be acceptance (complete or conditional), refusal, postponement, alternative action or compromise by the respondent.

Another contribution of this study is that the researchers analyzed the data in terms of pragmatic communication strategies used by ESL learners. They identified the following strategies that the learners used: 1) bluntness or directness, 2) indications of linguistic or sociolinguistic lack of knowledge, 3) L1 transfer, 4) sequential shifts, and 5) non-verbal expressions of affect. Finally, this study was also significant because the researchers analyzed the non-verbal communication strategies that the learners used.

Gass and Houck's (1999) study is certainly significant and relevant to the present study in many ways. To start with, it used the role play method for eliciting the refusal data, and analyzed the data at the level of discourse. It is a unique study since it analyzed the data using new qualitative analytic techniques that are designed for understanding how refusals are structured and recycled over the stretch of discourse. The researchers contributed many important ideas such as the concept of *episodes* for analyzing refusals, and proposed a classification of refusal trajectories, as explained above. They also analyzed the ESL learners' performance in terms of pragmatic communication strategies, which is considered another important contribution. Many of the ideas these researchers proposed were found to be very useful in analyzing the data in the present study.

The last study to be reviewed in this section is the influential study by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) who looked at pragmatic transfer in the realization of the speech act of refusal by Japanese learners of English. Sixty participants participated

in this study: 20 Japanese learners of English, 20 native speakers of American English and 20 native speakers of Japanese. The researchers used a written DCT that consisted of 12 refusal situations for collecting the data. Each situation was followed by a blank where participants wrote their answers and the blank was followed by a rejoinder that made it clear that a refusal was required. The DCT situations elicited four types of refusal: refusals of requests, invitations, suggestions, and offers. The situations were varied by the status relationship between the interlocutors from refusing someone of a higher status to someone of a lower status to someone of an equal status.

The researchers analyzed the data in terms of the frequency and order of the semantic formulas used in each situation. They also analyzed the content of some semantic formulas such as the kind of excuses and explanations given when refusing. They proposed a classification scheme of semantic formulas that consists of three broad categories: Direct Refusals, Indirect Refusals and Adjuncts to Refusals. Direct Refusals refers to phrases such as “No” or “I can’t” or “I refuse”. Indirect Refusals refers to statements of regret, excuses, alternatives, conditional acceptance etc. Adjuncts to Refusals, on the other hand, refers to preliminary remarks that cannot stand alone and function as refusals such as expressions of gratitude or positive opinion of the interlocutor.

Findings from their study show that there was evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1 especially with regard to the order, frequency and content of the semantic formulas used. With regard to the order, while the Japanese learners used the same range of semantic formulas used by native speakers of American English, they ordered these formulas in a way similar to that of native speakers of Japanese. The frequency of

semantic formulas used also showed evidence of pragmatic transfer specially when refusing a person of a higher status versus a person of a lower status. For example, the Japanese learners and the native speakers of Japanese used the apology formula more frequently when refusing a request from a person of a higher status. The American participants, on the other hand, did not show the same tendency. With regard to the content of the semantic formulas, the researchers looked at differences in the kind of excuses given by each group and they found that Japanese excuses were vague and less specific compared to the American ones. It is important to indicate the same finding was also reported in Arabic refusal studies where the Arabic excuses were found to be less specific than the American ones (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997).

Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) study is certainly a very significant study and relevant to the present study for a number of reasons. The main contribution of this influential study is the classification scheme of refusal strategies that it proposed. This comprehensive coding scheme was adopted by most refusal strategies that followed. This coding scheme was adopted by traditional speech act studies using a DCT for data collection as well as by studies that utilizing the role play method, like the studies reviewed in this section. This classification scheme was used in the present study. Another important contribution of this study were the scenarios the researchers designed to elicit refusals of offers, suggestions, requests, and invitations. These scenarios have been widely adapted by researchers investigating the speech act of refusal for the past 15 years. Many of these scenarios were also used in studies using the role play method, including the studies reviewed in this section. Some of these scenarios were also used in the present study. The fact that many of their scenarios have been used in many studies

before is important since this would allow for comparing the findings of these studies. Beebe et al.'s study was also the first refusal study to draw attention to the importance of examining the content of explanations and excuses speakers give when refusing since they can reveal important cultural differences. The present study, like other refusal studies, examined the content of the explanations and excuses that the participants provided when refusing.

### Data Collection Methods in Speech Act Research

A number of data collection methods have been used in the empirical investigation of speech acts. In this section some of the popular methods will be reviewed and the advantages and disadvantages of each method will be discussed. Special attention will be paid to the role play method, which is the method that was used in the present study. Wolfson (1989) explains that the methods used in data collection in speech act research fall into two broad categories: observation of authentic data and elicitation. As Kasper and Dahl (1991) observe, the most popular data elicitation method in speech act research is the DCT (Discourse Completion Task/Test). This review, however, starts by examining observation of authentic data.

#### *Observation of Authentic Speech*

Wolfson (1986) observes that this data collection method grew out of anthropological studies and is considered to be the most reliable data source in speech act research. This view is also shared by other researchers (Olshatin & Blum-Kulka, 1985). This method is highly reliable since it reflects what speakers actually say rather than what they think they say in a given speech event (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993). However,

as has also been observed by other researchers (Kasper & Dahl, 1991), one of the limitations of this method is that contextual variables (e.g., gender, age, status) cannot be controlled, which makes this method an unlikely choice for cross-cultural speech act research. That is because cross-cultural speech act research aims to investigate how speakers realize speech acts under the same contextual factors and these include the relationship between the participants, their age, gender etc. The other limitation is that the occurrence of a particular speech act cannot be predictable and therefore this method might not yield enough instances of a particular speech act. Finally, collecting and analyzing the data using this method can be a time-consuming process.

However, it is important to indicate that this method has been more popular with speech act research investigating speech acts in a single language or culture, rather than cross-culturally. Hahn (2006), for example, used naturally-occurring data to examine how apologies are realized in Korean. Nittono (2003) also examined naturally-occurring data to study the use of hedging in Japanese among status equal participants, mainly, among friends. Another variation on this method is the use of TV shows and movies as a source of authentic data. For example, Zeng (1996) used a Chinese movie to examine how interrogatives were used to realize different speech acts in Chinese. Also, Scott (1998) used an American popular TV talk show to examine the speech act of disagreement. While the use of such movies and shows can be convenient for data collection, such data may not be considered entirely authentic since it may be previously prepared and rehearsed. In this respect, it may not represent a spontaneous flow of speech that is characteristic of naturally-occurring data.

Although this method, as explained above, is popular in investigating speech acts in a single language or culture there are very few exceptions where it was used to investigate speech acts cross-culturally. A case in point is the study conducted by Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford (1991) who collected office hour data at an American university from native-speaker and non-native-speaker students in advising sessions with their academic advisors. This is an interesting study because the researchers observed naturally-occurring data but at the same time were able to compare two sets of naturally-occurring data. This is one of the rare cases where it is possible naturally-occurring data in a comparative study.

It is also important to indicate that some researchers use authentic data in creating other elicitation instruments such as the DCT (Discourse Completion Task/Test). For example, Al-Issa (1998) used naturally-occurring data in designing his DCT for examining the speech act of refusal in American English and Jordanian Arabic. He collected naturally-occurring examples of refusals by observing students as they interacted on a university campus and in classrooms. This helped him to create DCT scenarios that were similar to the real-life situations he observed, hence more realistic scenarios. Similarly, Kryston-Morales (1997) used authentic data for designing her DCT for eliciting speech act of complimenting among native speakers of American English and native speakers of Puerto Rican Spanish.

#### *Discourse Completion Task/Test (DCT)*

The DCT has been the most popular elicitation instrument in cross-cultural speech act research in the past twenty five years. It was first developed by Blum-Kulka (1982)

and it is usually a written task in which participants are required to write what they believe they would say in a particular situation. This may be a situation in which, for example, a boss is inviting the participant to a party which the participant cannot go to. The scenarios in a DCT typically each varies by the status of the interlocutors relative to each other and the social distance between them, as well as by the weight of the imposition. These variables have been identified to be particularly important in cross-cultural speech act research. The participant has to write what he or she would say in this situation. The original format of the DCT usually included a rejoinder after the description of a scenario, and in this way it looked like an incomplete dialogue that the respondent is asked to complete by providing the required speech act.

The DCT has been used in different formats. For example, as explained above some DCT's include a follow-up response, or rejoinder while others do not. If there is no rejoinder a DCT is called open-ended (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Sometime a DCT provides the respondent with a number of possible responses to choose from (Rose, 1992), or ranking of possible answers (Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki & Ogino, 1986). A DCT can also be used to elicit data orally instead of in writing (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981) and in this case is referred to as an oral DCT to distinguish it from the more traditional written DCT.

A number of advantages for using the DCT have been identified in the literature. For example, the DCT is probably the most efficient method for collecting data cross-culturally since it allows for cross-cultural comparison. In addition, it is easy and efficient to administer to a large number of respondents at once. Furthermore, it also allows the researcher to have complete control over the different contextual variables. This is

different from naturalistic data collection, which does not allow for such control of these variables.

However, a number of disadvantages of the DCT have also been observed in the literature. One of the more common criticisms is that the DCT does not provide the opportunity to the participants to opt out of responding (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). This is important since in some cultures speakers may decide to opt out of performing a particular speech act in a given situation due to certain contextual factors such as the age, gender, or status of the interlocutor. Therefore, using a DCT may not allow the researcher to capture this important cultural difference. The DCT also does not allow multiple turns, which is characteristic of negotiation in natural speech interaction. Another limitation is that it is mostly used in its written, rather than, oral format, and this can be problematic since speech acts are normally realized orally. This limitation can be even more problematic in diaglossic situations, which is the case with Arabic, where the spoken, informal language, used for realizing speech acts, is different from the written, formal language. Another disadvantage of the DCT is that the response time is almost unlimited, which allows respondents to carefully consider their responses and even make corrections to them, which, of course, does not reflect real-life interactions. Finally, the format of the DCT may encourage respondents to write more than what they would normally say in a real-life situation (Beebe & Cummings, 1996).

### *Role Plays*

Two types of the role play method have been identified in the literature: open role plays and closed role plays. A closed role play is similar to the oral version of the DCT

where the respondent is allowed to give a one-turn oral response to a prompt. This means that there is no interaction or negotiation involved in the realization of the speech act. In an open role play, on the other hand, the respondent is asked to act out the role play with the researcher or some other participant and it involves negotiation over a number of turns in a way that is similar to real-life interactions.

Kasper and Dahl (1991) and Gass and Houck (1999) argue that one of the main advantages of this method is that data are elicited orally and in a way that is similar to real-life interactions. That is why they consider data elicited with an open role play to be closest to natural speech. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985) actually refer to the open role play method as a semi-ethnographic method. It has also been argued that this method is particularly appropriate for eliciting certain speech acts such as refusals, which are normally realized over an extended negotiation between interlocutors instead of one or two utterances (Edmondson, 1981).

However, a number of disadvantages of this method have also been indicated in the literature. For example, it has been pointed out that this method is relatively more difficult to administer as compared to the DCT, and the elicited data are difficult to analyze because they involve negotiation over a number of turns (Gass & Houck, 1999). The written DCT data, on the other hand, are easier to collect and analyze since they involve only a one-turn response. Such response would be easy to analyze in terms of frequency counts of the refusal strategies, and does not involve any discourse-level analysis.

A number of studies have examined this elicitation method and compared it to other elicitation methods such as the DCT. Turnbull (1994) [cited in Gass and Houck (1999)], compared role play data to naturalistic data as well as to data elicited with a DCT in the production of the speech act of refusal. He found that the DCT data differed to a great extent from naturally occurring data and role play data with regard to the distribution of types of speech acts and their internal structure. Also, when comparing role play data to naturalistic data, he found that the role play data were similar in many ways to naturally occurring data. However, the main difference he observed was that the role play data tended to be longer and more repetitive.

Sasaki (1998) also compared written DCT data to role play data and found differences with regard to response length and the semantic formulas used. Another important study by Margalef-Boada (1993), also compared DCT and role play data in eliciting the speech act of refusal by German learners of Spanish, native speakers of German and native speakers of Spanish. Her comparison of the two elicitation methods revealed that the data elicited by role plays was richer, more complex, and more representative of natural speech as compared to DCT data. But she also did not find any major differences between the DCT and role play with regard to the frequency of semantic formulas (i.e., direct refusals, explanations, positive feelings).

Morrison and Holmes (2003) also compared three different methods of data collection in the production of the speech act of refusal, specifically refusal of offers and invitations. These methods were: observation of face-to-face interaction in a naturalistic setting, open-ended role play, and written DCT. They found that the refusals elicited using the first two methods were relatively similar in many ways, but differed from the

written DCT data. The researchers conclude that the written DCT can be useful in eliciting information about what people know about the socio-pragmatic norms and routines of realizing the speech act of refusal. The written DCT, however, does not provide information on how people actually perform the speech act of refusal.

All the studies reviewed above suggest that the open role method yields data that are very close to naturally-occurring data. They also suggest that the role play data are much closer to naturally-occurring data as compared to the DCT data. Because of the difficulty of obtaining naturalistic data under the same contextual factors, the open role play method was used in the present study because it not only elicits data that are close to naturally-occurring data, but also allows for cross-cultural comparisons.

Of particular relevance to data collection in the present study are the guidelines proposed by Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995) regarding the design of role plays. These guidelines are discussed in detail in chapter three, which describes with the design of the present study.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of speech act research. It started with a description of the main concepts and theories that form the foundation for the empirical investigation of speech acts. These included the concept of speech act itself and the other important concepts of communicative competence, pragmatic competence, pragmatic transfer as well as theories of politeness, especially Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, which is particularly important in speech act research. This is followed by a general overview of speech act studies that have been conducted over the

past 25 years, and a comprehensive classification of these studies was presented. Next, a number of important Arabic speech act studies were reviewed in some detail and their relevance to the present study was highlighted. These studies were also reviewed to show how they revealed important information about the general characteristics of the Arabic communication style. The section that follows focused on Arabic refusal studies and explained in some detail their data collection methods as well as data analysis methods. This section also pointed out the relevance of these studies to the present study. Findings from these studies were discussed in some detail and synthesized and their relevance to the present study was highlighted. Next, a number of other refusal studies that are particularly relevant to the present study were described and discussed in some detail. Their significance and relevance to the present study was also explained. This is followed by a discussion of data collection methods that have been used in speech act studies. These methods were explained in detail and their relative advantages and disadvantages were discussed. The method that was used in the present study, the role play method, was discussed in detail and its advantages were highlighted.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHOD

### Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research method in the present study. First, the participants in the study are described with regard to their age, gender, native language, foreign language proficiency, educational background, and study-abroad experience. Next, the data elicitation instrument will be described in detail and information concerning how the pilot study was used to refine this instrument will be provided. Then, the data collection procedures, including the logistical aspects of it, will be explained in detail. The role of the researcher in collecting the data will also be delineated. This will be followed by a description of the data analysis procedures. With regard to the quantitative analysis, a coding scheme of refusal strategies, which is based on both previous research and data from the present study, will be described, and examples from the data collected will be provided. The qualitative approach to analyzing the data will also be presented in detail. Finally, the pilot study will be described, and this will be followed by chapter summary.

The present study investigated the speech act of refusal as realized in Egyptian Arabic by American learners of Arabic as a foreign language, and compared their performance to that of native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, and native speakers of American English. The study also investigated evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1 as well as the relationship between the Arabic learners' language proficiency and their pragmatic competence. It also analyzed the interactions at the level of discourse for the

first time in an Arabic speech act study. The study specifically answered the following research questions:

#### Research Question One (A)

In what ways if any do intermediate American learners of Arabic differ from native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in their realizations of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

#### Research Question One (B)

In what ways if any do advanced American learners of Arabic differ from native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in their realizations of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

#### Research Question Two (A)

What is the extent of pragmatic transfer from English when intermediate American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

#### Research Question Two (B)

What is the extent of pragmatic transfer from English when advanced American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

In the Data Analysis section at the end of this chapter, the researcher will demonstrate how each of these research questions were answered using the data analysis

method described below. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were used for answering these questions as will be explained below. However, this chapter starts with describing the participants.

## Participants

The participants in the present study were divided into three groups: native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, native speakers of American English, and American learners of Arabic as a foreign language (intermediate and advanced). In the following paragraphs, detailed information about each group will be provided.

### *American Learners of Arabic*

The first group of participants consisted of 20 American learners of Arabic studying Arabic at the Arabic School of Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, in the summer of 2009. Half of these students were at the advanced level of Arabic proficiency and the other half were at the intermediate level. Levels of proficiency were based on the ACTFL scale. These participants included both males and females, and ranged in age from 20 to 32. Most of these participants were undergraduate or graduate students at major colleges and universities in the US but a few of them were professionals. All the students were familiar with the Egyptian dialect, and all of them studied Arabic in Egypt. In the following two paragraphs detailed information will be provided about each of the two learner groups.

With regard to the Intermediate students, they studied Arabic formally for at least one year (average: 1.6 years). They also spent from 5 weeks to 2 years in Egypt where they studied the Egyptian dialect formally except one student who studied it informally.

The average time these students spent in Egypt was 8.6 months. This group consisted of 6 females and 4 males. Their ages ranged between 20 and 32 years with an average of 24.4 years. All the students were native speakers of English and all of them were American except one student who was Canadian. These students had different majors and specializations but all of them were in the social sciences and humanities. All these participants took the OPI and were found to be at the Intermediate level of proficiency according the ACTFL scale. Please refer to Appendix S for detailed demographic information about the Intermediate students.

The Advanced students studied Arabic formally for at least 1 year with an average of 3 years. They also spent from 4 months to 2 years in Egypt where they studied the Egyptian dialect formally. The average time they spent in Egypt was 9.5 months. This group consisted of 7 females and 3 males. They ranged in age between 21 to 26 years, and the average age was 23.1 years. All the students were native speakers of English and all of them were American except one student who was from Scotland. These students also had different majors but mainly in the humanities and social sciences. All these participants were ranked at the advanced level when they took their OPI which is based on the ACTFL scale. Please refer to Appendix T for detailed demographic information about each of these students.

#### *Native speakers of American English*

This group of participants consisted of 10 American students studying Arabic at the Arabic School of Middlebury College at Level 1. It is important to indicate that this group of participants did not include any participants who participated in the groups

described above. These were students in beginning Arabic classes and not in intermediate or advanced classes. These students had very little or no familiarity with Arabic language and culture before their enrollment in the Summer School of Middlebury College. The decision to use students with little or no familiarity with Arabic was made to avoid the risk of reverse pragmatic transfer from Arabic into English. This group provided the baseline data in English.

The participants were undergraduate or graduate students at major US colleges and universities or recent graduates. This group included 7 females and 3 males and these participants ranged in age between 18 and 25 with an average age of 22.1 years. Four of these participants were graduate students, four were undergraduate, and two recently graduated from college. All of them were specialized in social sciences and humanities. All of them were native speakers of English and their parents too were native speakers of English. Please refer to Appendix V for detailed demographic information about these participants.

#### *Native speakers of Egyptian Arabic*

This group consisted of 10 participants who were native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. Some of these participants were instructors of Arabic at Middlebury College and some were new immigrants in Jersey City, New Jersey. These participants were Egyptian university students and professionals who have lived in Egypt all their lives and who have spent less than 3 years outside Egypt. This group of participants, like the NSE group, consisted of 7 females and 3 males. These participants ranged in age between 18 and 43 with an average age of 33.6 years. Half of these participants were Arabic

instructors at the Summer School of Middlebury College and the other half was university students or professionals. Please refer to Appendix U for detailed demographic information about these participants.

### Data Collection Instrument

The data in this study were collected using Enhanced Open-Ended Role Plays (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). This instrument is described in detail below. Before the role plays were acted out, background questionnaires were administered to all the participants to determine their eligibility for participation in the study (See Appendices A, B, C, and D). In addition, the oral proficiency of the American learners of Arabic was measured using the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), which is based on the foreign language proficiency scale and guidelines created by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). The following paragraphs provide a detailed description of the data elicitation instrument and how it was designed, in addition to how results from the pilot study helped in refining it.

#### *Enhanced Open-Ended Role Plays*

Billmyer and Varghese (2000) explain that the use of DCT prompts that are rich in contextual information (content-enriched DCT prompts) elicit more elaborate and rich data that resemble natural data. Felix-Brasdefer (2002) was able to successfully apply this concept to his role play scenarios. He provided his participants with content-enriched role play scenarios that included detailed information about the interlocutor in each scenario such as his or her gender, age, educational background, social status etc. The present study also used enhanced open role plays for data collection.

The role plays in the present study consist of six situations and include two types of stimuli to refusal (i.e. requests and offers). These situations also vary with regard to the setting, the status of the interlocutors relative to each other, as well as the object of the refusal. These role plays were piloted in the spring 2009, and were found to be effective in eliciting the data. Only one situation (number 6) was modified, as will be explained below. The last section of this chapter includes a description of the pilot study.

### *Design of the Role Plays*

The role plays in the present study were created based on previous research because similar scenarios have been used in several previous refusal studies investigating learners of English, Spanish, Japanese, Korean, and German. The researcher modified these situations and changed them in some ways, as will be explained below, in order to meet the needs and the context of the present study. The researcher also created a number of new scenarios. These scenarios will be explained below.

It is important to indicate here that previous research studies that elicited refusals using open role plays (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Gass & Houck, 1999; VonCanon, 2006) followed the guidelines for designing role plays proposed by Hudson, Detmer, and Brown (1995, p. 59-60), and these are the following:

1. A person in addition to the researcher should be used to avoid the overlap of researcher and role play roles.
2. A situation should not place too much burden in terms of conceptualization and actualization.

3. Action should be kept to a minimum and should not involve drama to a large extent.
4. Action scenarios at the expense of scenarios requiring language should be avoided.
5. Props may be helpful.

These guidelines, except one, were followed in the present study. The first guideline was not followed for three reasons. First, because these role plays are used to *compare* the realization of refusal in two cultures, it is particularly important to maintain a high level of consistency in the way the interaction is conducted. This can be achieved when the researcher is involved in this interaction in order to maintain a high level of consistency with regard to initiating the requests or offers, reaction to participant's refusals, level of insistence, and in general by conveying a consistent tone and attitude in the interaction. This researcher's participation in the pilot study also helped prepare him for this role since he became familiar with students' responses and the nature and pace of the interaction.

The second reason to note here is that the researcher believes that his role in enacting the role plays with the participants did not affect the validity of the study in any particular way. In other words, it did not bias the study in any major way since the study is descriptive, not confirmatory. The third reason is that other researchers were successful in participating in the role plays they conducted with respondents in their studies. Tamanaha (2003), for example, took part in the role plays she enacted with her participants for eliciting the speech acts of apology and complaint in Japanese. Tamanaha

explains that she was careful to let the participants talk as much as possible and she was consistent in her reactions to each situation and each participant.

For these reasons the present researcher administered the role plays himself with the participants. However, it is important to indicate that the researcher only participated in the role plays eliciting the Egyptian Arabic data from the American learners of Arabic and the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. The English data from the native speakers of American English were collected by a native speaker of American English whom the researcher trained to collect the data in a consistent way. The reason why the researcher, who is a native speaker of Egyptian Arabic, decided not to collect this English data can be explained as follows: the researcher felt that the fact that he is a non-native speaker of American English could affect the data elicited. For example, the native speakers of English who participated in the study may have had to consciously or unconsciously modify their responses due to the fact that they were interacting with a non-native speaker of English. One other reason is that elicitation of the American English data aimed to find out how native speakers of English realized the speech act of refusal when interacting with other native speakers of English and not with non-native speakers.

In the following paragraphs a description of each role play situation will be provided. In addition, information about how each role play was designed will be explained. The first three role plays presented here elicit refusals of requests and the following three elicit refusals of offers. These two types of refusal were selected because they represent two distinct types of stimuli to refusal. Traditionally, refusals of offers, suggestions, invitations, and requests have been investigated in speech act research. The present researcher believes that suggestions and invitations can be considered as some

type of offers in a sense, hence they can be included under the category of offers.

Requests, on the other hand, represent a different category of stimuli to refusals: In a request, an interlocutor puts himself or herself in a position where he or she is in need of some help or assistance from the speaker, which is inherently different from a situation where he or she is making an offer to the speaker. Therefore, it was believed to be more consistent to focus on these two types of distinct stimuli to refusal: requests and offers.

The table below shows the six role play situations that are used in the present study, and how they vary by refusal stimulus, status of interlocutors relative to each other, object of refusal, and setting. This table is followed by a detailed description of each refusal situation and how it was designed.

Table 3-1

*Refusal Role Play Situations*

Role Play	Setting	Stimulus	Object of Refusal	Status
Role Play 1	College campus	Request	Lecture notes	Equal status
Role Play 2	Bookstore	Request	Working extra hours	Low to high
Role Play 3	Friend's house	Request	Interview	High to low
Role Play 4	Workplace	Offer	Promotion & relocation	Low to high
Role Play 5	Friend's house	Offer	More dessert	Equal status
Role Play 6	Workplace	Offer	Money for broken item	High to low

Role Play 1 – Request: Equal Status

This first role play is considered one of the classic scenarios for eliciting refusals in the literature on cross-cultural speech act research. It was first used by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and was adopted in numerous speech act studies eliciting refusals in Arabic (Al-Issa, 1998; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary, 2002), in Korean (Kwon, 2003), in German (Beckers, 1999), and in Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer,

2002; VonCanon, 2006). In each of these studies some of the subtle details in the scenario were modified to suit the context in which the refusal is elicited. In the present study this scenario was also slightly modified to suit the context of the study. These minor modifications include, for example, changing the name of the class from history of Latin America to history of the Middle East. This role play situation represents a refusal of a request from someone who is equal in status to the participant: a classmate.

*You are taking a class on the history of the Middle East and you are one of the best students in class. You are also known among your classmates for taking very good notes during the lectures. Yesterday the professor just announced that there would be an exam next week. One of your classmates, who you don't interact with outside of class, and who misses class frequently and comes late to class, wants to borrow your lecture notes for the exam. You have previously helped this student several times, but this time you just feel that you cannot give him the lecture notes again.*

#### Role Play 2 – Request: Low to High

This role play also represents one of the classic scenarios that have been used in previous research on refusals. This scenario was first used by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and appeared in different variations in other refusal studies (Al-Issa, 1998; Beckers, 1999; Kwon, 2003; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary, 2002; Ramos, 1991). However, the one used in the present study is more similar to scenarios used by Felix-Brasdefer (2002) and VonCanon (2006) than to those used in the other studies. For example, like the scenario in these two studies, this scenario takes place in a bookstore, and not, for example, in a major accounting firm. The role play represents someone lower

in status, a part-time employee, refusing a request from someone higher in status, a manager.

*You have been working part-time at a bookstore for the past 7 months, and you have a good relationship with your 45-year-old boss who is pleased with your work. The bookstore opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 9:00 p.m. and your work shift is Monday through Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This week is a very busy one for the bookstore since it is the first week of the semester and many students come to buy their textbooks. On Friday night your boss asks you to stay for three more hours, until 9:00 p.m., to work on a new shipment of books that just arrived. But you cannot work these extra hours.*

### Role Play 3 – Request: High to Low

This scenario was created by the present researcher but some of the ideas were borrowed from scenarios that were used in other refusal studies: one in Arabic (Al-Issa, 1998) and one in German (Beckers, 1999). Al-Issa (1998) used a similar scenario in which a friend wanted to interview the participant for a college class. This role play presents someone relatively higher in status, a college student, refusing a request from someone relatively lower in status, a high school student.

*You stop by your friend's house to pick him up to go to a concert where you will meet other friends. Your friend still lives with his parents and has one younger brother in high school. Your friend is running a little bit late and still needs about 10 minutes to get ready. In the meantime his parents are entertaining you while you are waiting for him in the living room. While you are chatting with his parents, his younger brother, whom you*

*met a couple of times before, comes by to say hi, and to ask for your help with something. He is working on a school project and needs to interview you for this project. You cannot, however, help him at this time.*

#### Role Play 4 – Offer: Low to High

This role play was first used by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and was also adopted by Nelson, Carson, Al Batal and El Bakary (2002), and Kwon (2003). It is used here with some modification, which include, for example, changing the name of the company and the cities. This role play represents someone of a lower status, an employee, refusing an offer from someone higher in status, a boss.

*You have been working for IBM for almost 3 years now and you have a good relationship with your boss. Your boss has been very pleased with your work and creativity and has decided to offer you a promotion and a pay raise. However, this promotion involves relocating to Austin, Texas, from your hometown of Burlington, Vermont. Although you like the offer, you cannot accept it.*

#### Role Play 5 – Offer: Equal Status

This role play scenario was first used by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), and was also adopted (with some variations) in other studies eliciting refusals in Arabic (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary, 2002), Korean (Kwon, 2003), and Japanese (Henstock, 2003). This scenario may be especially appropriate for collectivistic cultures and the Arab culture in particular since there is a major emphasis on hospitality in the Arab culture. It was slightly modified here by

referring to an Egyptian friend and Egyptian food. It represents a refusal of an offer from someone who is equal in status to the participant: a friend.

*You are visiting a friend of yours who you have not seen for almost a year. Your friend is originally from Egypt and is so delighted that you are visiting. He prepared a big meal for you with traditional Egyptian food as well as some nice Egyptian dessert. At the end of the meal you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert and insists that you should eat it. But you actually cannot.*

#### Role Play 6 – Offer: High to Low

This scenario was created by the researcher. However, a similar scenario was first used by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) in which a cleaning lady broke a vase in the participant's house. Beebe et al.'s scenario was used in other studies (Al-Shalawi, 1997; Kwon, 2003; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary, 2002). However, in the present study the researcher felt that the scenario presented here may be more appropriate since it is in a setting that is familiar to college students (i.e., college campus). This role play represents someone higher in status, a teaching assistant at a college, refusing an offer from someone lower in status, a janitor.

*You are a teaching assistant at a major university in the US. You usually like to stay late in your office on campus. Sometimes you stay as late as 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. and that's usually the time when janitors come to clean offices. They are usually hesitant to clean your office when they see that you are still working. However, you usually just tell them to go ahead and clean the office any way. One night while you're still working in your office one of the janitors comes in and starts cleaning. You have already seen this janitor*

*several times before and exchanged greetings with him. While he is cleaning your office he accidentally knocks down a small china figurine and breaks it into pieces. The janitor apologizes and insists that he should pay for it. However, for you it's not a big deal, and you refuse to accept money from him.*

### *Role Plays and the Pilot Study*

The first five refusal situations were not changed based on results from the pilot study since the participants in the pilot study were able to produce the refusals as required for the purposes of this study, and the interactions proceeded as expected. In addition, an examination of the Role Play Evaluation form (See Appendix G) that the participants in the pilot study completed after acting out the role plays with the researcher, showed that all the participants considered the role play scenarios to be realistic and that a refusal was possible in each situation. The participants in the pilot study also stated that the role plays took them a reasonable amount of time to complete. However, a minor change was made to the sixth role play scenario in the following way: in the original scenario the participant was asked to pretend that he or she was a college professor staying late in his or her office. In the modified version above, the participant is pretending to be a teaching assistant at a college or a university. The researcher felt that the modified version presents a more realistic role for the participant to play: a teaching assistant. Please refer to the last section of this chapter for a detailed description of the pilot study.

### *Translating the Role Plays*

The instructions for the role plays as well as the six role play scenarios were translated into Egyptian Arabic (See Appendix E for the English version and Appendix F

for the Arabic version). The translation was revised by another native speaker of Egyptian Arabic who is also fluent in English. It is important to indicate that the English version was given to both the native speakers of American English and the American learners of Arabic. The Egyptian Arabic version was given to the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. Minor modifications were made to the Arabic version to make the role plays more culturally appropriate. For example, in Role Play 4 the American cities and the American company were replaced by Egyptian ones. Also, in Role Play 6 the American university was replaced by Alexandria University in Alexandria, Egypt, in the Arabic version.

### *Background Questionnaires*

In order to find students who met the requirements for participation in the present study, three background questionnaires were created and were piloted. (Please refer to the description of the pilot study at the end of this chapter.) The first questionnaire, Background Questionnaire A, was designed for American learners of Arabic (See Appendix A) and it elicited demographic information about the learner, including his or her native language, and his or her familiarity with Arabic language and culture as well as familiarity with the Egyptian dialect. This questionnaire also elicited data about whether the American learners spent time in Egypt and the length of their stay. It also elicited information about how long the participant studied Arabic.

The second questionnaire, Background Questionnaire B, was designed for native speakers of American English (See Appendix B). It also elicited demographic information (e.g., gender, age, education) in addition to information about the students'

native language and their parents' native language, as well as whether they spent any extended period of time outside the US. The third questionnaire, Background Questionnaire C, was designed for native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and it also elicited demographic information in addition to information about the participants' native language and dialect, length of stay in the US, and proficiency level in English and the language they spoke at home (See Appendix C for the English version and Appendix D for the Arabic version).

### *Equipment, Props and Space*

Data collection took place at two locations: the first was the researcher's office on the campus of Mills College, Oakland, California. The second was in Jersey City, New Jersey, as will be explained in detail below. A digital voice recorder was used for audio-taping the role play interactions. With regard to props, the researcher used a small piece of cake for role play 5, and a small figurine was used for role play 6.

### Data Collection Procedures

In this section detailed information is provided regarding how the participants were located and contacted. This section also includes a detailed description of how the data were collected. Before the data collection proceeded, the researcher contacted the Office of Institutional Review Board at Middlebury College and obtained approval for conducting the study. Consent forms were prepared and were signed by all participants prior to their participation in the study.

The data were collected at the Arabic School of Middlebury College in the summer of 2009. The Arabic School is located at Middlebury College in Middlebury,

Vermont. However, in the summer of 2009 it was hosted on the campus of Mills College, Oakland, California. Data collection took place at Mills College in California. Part of the data was collected in Jersey City, New Jersey, as will be explained below.

The Arabic data were collected from American learners of Arabic as well as native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and the English data were collected from native speakers of American English. The Americans who participated in the study were Arabic students at Middlebury College, and the Egyptian participants included instructors of Arabic at the College as well as some of their family members. However, because the pool of Egyptian instructors at the College and their family members, was not large enough for the purposes of the present study, another location for data collection was used. This was Jersey City, New Jersey, where it a large community of recent Egyptian immigrants resides.

The Arabic program at the Arabic School of Middlebury College is a nine-week immersion program where students live with their Arabic instructors in the same dormitories and eat with them in the same dining halls on a daily basis. Students spend about 6 hours in class daily, and outside the class they engage in various sports, cultural, academic, religious, and artistic activities with other students as well as with their instructors. In all these activities students use only Arabic as the language of communication. At the beginning of the program, all students are required to sign a written statement whereby they pledge not speak any language other than Arabic during the length of their study in the program.

The total number of American and international students who were studying Arabic at the Arabic School of Middlebury College in the summer of 2009 was 165 (communication with Dr. Mahmoud Abdellah, Director of the Arabic School of Middlebury College). The overwhelming majority of these students were American. The researcher was able to find a sufficient number of participants from this pool of American students to participate in the study. The researcher also found sufficient students at both the intermediate and the advanced levels of proficiency in Arabic. The researcher selected 20 of these students for participation in the study: 10 at the Intermediate level and 10 at the Advanced level.

At the beginning of the program, students took a placement test by which they were placed in different classes depending on their proficiency level. However, to ascertain the proficiency level of these students using a nationally-recognized standard measure, the researcher administered the ACTFL-based Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to each participant prior to data collection to assess his or her level of Arabic proficiency. The researcher is an ACTFL-certified OPI tester of the Arabic language. Finally, it is important to indicate that all the participants in this study were volunteers and did not receive any kind of compensation for their participation.

The American students at Middlebury College were contacted directly by the researcher. The researcher contacted the Arabic instructors at the Arabic School and asked for their help in distributing Background Questionnaire A (see Appendix A) in order to locate the students who were eligible for participation in the study. All the instructors who were contacted agreed to distribute the questionnaire to their students. The questionnaire was distributed to 13 classes, at the beginning, intermediate and

advanced levels. A total of 117 students filled out Background Questionnaire A. After collecting the questionnaire the researcher was able to identify 26 students who were familiar with Egyptian Arabic. Out of these 26 students, 20 participated in the study. Six students were excluded because they did not meet the other participation requirements (e.g., did not spend time in Egypt, were not native speakers of English). The researcher met these students, through the help of their instructors, during lunch time in the dining hall of Mills College, and arranged appointments to meet with them in his office for data collection.

With regard to the American students who provided the English data, the researcher selected these students from beginning Arabic classes at the Arabic School of Middlebury College. The researcher also asked the instructors of these beginning classes to distribute Background Questionnaire B (See Appendix B) to these students. All the instructors who were contacted agreed to distribute the questionnaire to their students. Background Questionnaire B was distributed in the three Level 1 classes at the Arabic School to a total of 27 students. After collecting the questionnaire the researcher was able to locate 10 students who met the requirements for participation. These were students who were native speakers of English and who did not spend more than 3 years outside the US and whose parents' native language was also English.

The Arabic instructors at Middlebury College who were native speakers of Egyptian Arabic as well as some of their family members were contacted directly by the researcher to gauge their interest in participating in the study. All the instructors and their family members who were contacted (12) expressed their interest in participating in the study. These instructors and their family members filled out Background Questionnaire C

(See Appendix C for the English version and Appendix D for the Arabic version) in order to find out if they met the requirements for participation. Five of these instructors, and 3 family members were found to be eligible for participation in the study. Those individuals who were eligible for participation were contacted directly by the researcher and appointments were set up with them to meet the researcher individually in his office for data collection.

With regard to data collection at the second location, Jersey City, New Jersey, the researcher contacted a number of native speakers of Egyptian Arabic who resided in this area through the help of a cousin who lived in Jersey City. Those who were interested in participating in the study were asked to take Background Questionnaire C to find out if they met the requirements for participation. Two of the individuals who were contacted were found eligible for participation in the study and appointments were set up with them to meet the researcher in their places of residence for data collection.

#### *Determining the Arabic Proficiency of the American Learners*

As explained above, prior to data collection, the researcher administered the OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) to the American students who were selected to participate in the study, and who provided the Arabic learner data. While it was possible for the researcher to predict the proficiency level of these participants based on their placement in the different intermediate and advanced classes at the Arabic School of Middlebury College, it was important to use a standardized proficiency test to measure their proficiency. The researcher was able to identify 10 students at the intermediate level and 10 at the advanced level who were eligible for participation in the study.

### *Conducting the Role Plays*

The role plays were conducted with the three groups of participants: American learners of Arabic (Egyptian Arabic data), native speakers of American English (English data), and native speakers of Egyptian Arabic (Egyptian Arabic data) in Oakland, CA, and Jersey City, NJ. The procedures followed in conducting the role plays with each group of participants are explained below.

#### *American Learners of Arabic*

The researcher met individually with each participant in his office on the campus of Mills College, Oakland, California. Each data collection session took approximately 45 minutes. The researcher welcomed each participant at the beginning of the session and thanked him or her for participating in the study. Then, the researcher gave the participant the Consent Form to sign. Next, the researcher administered the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), which took between 20 to 30 minutes. After that, the participant was given about a five-minute break before proceeding with the role plays.

The researcher briefly explained the nature of the role plays and how they would proceed. The researcher also gave each participant written instructions in English about how the role plays were going to be conducted. When the participant was ready, the researcher proceeded with the role plays. For each role play, the researcher gave the participant a written description in English of the scenario that the participant was going to enact with the researcher. The participant was given sufficient time to read the scenario and ask any questions before proceeding with role play. When the participant was ready,

the researcher and participant acted out the role play. This procedure was followed for each of the six role plays. The role plays were audio recorded.

### *Native Speakers of American English*

The role plays with the native speakers of American English were also conducted on the campus of Mills College, Oakland, California, in the researcher's office. However, it is important to point out that the researcher did not enact these role plays with this group of participants. Instead, a trained native speaker of English, who was a teaching assistant (TA) at the Arabic School, acted the role plays out with the participants. The TA was trained by the researcher prior to data collection. The training consisted of the following: first, the researcher explained the role plays to the TA and explained that the TA should be insistent, that is insisting for at least two or three times. As part of the training, too, the TA conducted the role plays with another American TA as well as another American student in the researcher's presence. It is important to point out, however, that the researcher did not instruct the TA with regard to how to insist or what to say to insist; rather the researcher asked the TA to insist in a way that is culturally appropriate in an American context. When each participant arrived at the researcher's office, both the researcher and the TA were waiting for him or her. The participant was warmly greeted and thanked for participating in the study. Then, the participant was provided with the Consent Form to sign. After that the TA briefly explained the nature of the role plays and gave the participant written instructions. When the participant was ready, the TA gave him or her a written description of each role before they acted it out together. All the interactions were audio recorded.

### *Native Speakers of Egyptian Arabic*

Eight of the role plays with the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic were conducted in the researcher's office at Mills College and two in New Jersey were conducted in Jersey City, NJ. The researcher received the Arabic instructors, and the family members participating in the study individually in his office. After greeting and thanking each participant, the researcher gave each one the Consent Form to sign. After that, the researcher briefly explained to each participant the nature of the role plays and read the general instructions to him or her in Egyptian Arabic. The researcher then read a description of each role play in Egyptian Arabic before acting it out with the participant. So, instead of giving the participants a description of each scenario in writing, the researcher read out the descriptions in Egyptian Arabic. The researcher felt that it was more appropriate to read the descriptions of the scenarios in Egyptian Arabic than asking the participants to read them in Egyptian Arabic. The reason for this is that the Egyptian dialect is a spoken variety of the language and is not normally written, and is mainly used for everyday oral communication. Data collection in Jersey City proceeded in a similar fashion in the place of residence of each of the two participants in from NJ. All the role plays were audio taped. Table 3.2 below summarizes the data collection procedures for each group of participants.

Table 3-2

*Summary of Data Collection Process*

Participants	Location	Data Collection
American learners of Arabic (20)	Mills College	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Background Questionnaire A</li> <li>2) Consent Form</li> <li>3) Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)</li> <li>4) Role Plays</li> </ol>
Native Speakers of American English (10)	Mills College	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Background Questionnaire B</li> <li>2) Consent Form</li> <li>3) Role Plays</li> </ol>
Native Speakers of Egyptian Arabic (10)	Mills College & Jersey City	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Background Questionnaire C</li> <li>2) Consent Form</li> <li>3) Role Plays</li> </ol>

## Data Analysis

### *Introduction*

Data analysis in the present study proceeded in a similar way to studies that looked at refusals elicited exclusively through the role play method. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used for analyzing the data. These are explained below.

### *Quantitative Analysis*

The quantitative analysis in the present study consists of frequency counts of the refusal strategies used by the participants. These were calculated for each participant, each group, each situation and each refusal type, as well as with regard to Direct and Indirect refusals as will be explained below. Also, the rankings of these strategies or semantic formulas in terms of frequency of use were identified. In addition, because the data in the present study are interactional, a frequency count of the total number of words, number of turns as well as turn length per situation, per participant and per group were calculated. It is important to indicate that grammatical accuracy or pronunciation was not examined or analyzed in the present study.

Descriptive statistics were used to present a detailed description of the results in terms of percentages. However, inferential statistics were not used for two reasons. First, there are only a small number of participants in the present study and the use of inferential statistical techniques may not be the best means for understanding the data. The second reason is that the present study differs from the majority of speech act studies in the literature in that it is not limited to analyzing the data quantitatively in terms of frequency counts of semantic formulas, but it also extends the examination of refusal to

include qualitative, discourse-level, analysis of the interactions. This qualitative analysis provided very important insights into how refusals are negotiated and recycled over a number of turns in the two cultures under investigation. The qualitative analysis in this study was more informative than any type of inferential statistical analysis.

### *Qualitative Analysis*

As explained by Gass and Houck (1999, p. 37), role play data differ from data elicited by the DCT because it captures the dynamic interaction in which interlocutors negotiate semantic, pragmatic and social meaning. Therefore, it is important to analyze refusals elicited by the role play method at the level of discourse. This is the approach that previous studies employing the role-play method for data collection adopted. For example, Felix-Brasdefer (2002) used the framework of *sequences* to organize and analyze his data at the discourse level. Garcia (1992, 1999), on the other hand, used the concept of *stages*, and Gass and Houck (1999) analyzed their data within the framework of *episodes*. Please refer to chapter two for a detailed discussion of these analytic frameworks. However, it is important to point out that some of these researchers used more than one qualitative framework for analyzing their data. For example, while Felix-Brasdefer (2002) mainly organized his data in terms of *sequences* he also made use of Garcia's (1992, 1999) analytic framework of *stages* to analyze part of his data. In the same way, while Gass and Houck (1999) mainly used the framework of *episodes*, they also made use of the concept of *sequences* as an organizational unit in their analysis. VonCanon (2006) also utilized more than one analytic framework for qualitatively analyzing her refusal data.

In the present study the main analytic framework that was used was that of *Stages* (Garcia, 1992, 1999). The researcher believes that this framework was appropriate for analyzing the data in the present study since it was specifically designed to analyze interactional refusal data. This framework was described in detail in Chapter Two. It will be further demonstrated below by illustrating it with data from the pilot study. As part of the qualitative analysis also, the content of some of the semantic formulas used, specifically, the reasons and excuses given by the participants for their refusals were examined. Finally, samples of the interactions from both the native-speaker and the learner data were qualitatively analyzed and compared. The focus of the analysis was on the content and organization of the interactions, which can lead to a better understanding of the structure of refusals at the level of discourse as well as the kind of negotiation involved in realizing this speech act. The section below demonstrates how the framework of *stages* was applied using data from the pilot study. This will be followed by a description of how the data analysis method described above was used to answer each of the research questions in the present study.

The framework of *stages* was originally used by Garcia (1992) to analyze refusals of invitations and it describes two stages of the refusal interaction: invitation-response and insistence-response. In her more recent study (1999), Garcia adds another category: wrap-up. However, for the purposes of the present study the analysis was limited to the two stages mentioned above. The invitation-response stage refers to the invitation and the initial response to it, and the insistence-response refers to the negotiation stage between inviter and invitee which is triggered by the inviter's insistence. The same approach was followed in the present study, but the reference was to offer/request-response and

insistence-response. An example of such interaction from the pilot study is shown below from Role Play 5 in which the speaker offers a guest more dessert after dinner.

- 1 S: طيب اتفضللي شوية أم علي ما كلتيش منها  
OK, here you are some “um Ali” you haven’t eaten it
- 2 P: والله مش قادرة مش قادرة شبعت شبعت  
I swear to God I can’t I can’t I am full I am full
- 3 S: عاملها مخصوص عشانك  
I made it specially for you
- 4 P: شبعت يعني يعني ممكن تحفظها على . . . والله شبعت  
I am full I mean I mean you can keep it on . . . I swear to God I am full
- 5 S: طب حنة صغيرة حنة صغيرة كمان  
OK, just a little piece just one more little piece
- 6 P: شبعت يعني والله مفيش مكان  
I am full I mean I swear to God I have no room
- 7 S: بجد؟  
Really?
- 8 P: والله والله  
I swear to God I swear to God
- 9 S: طيب  
OK

In this interaction, the first stage of offer-response consists of the eliciting act and the initial refusal: lines 1 and 2. The second stage of insistence-response stretches over lines 3 to 8. In the first stage, there are three strategies used: 1) Excuse/Reason *I am full*, 2) Adjuncts to Refusal (i.e., Invoking the Name of God) *I swear to God*, and 3) Direct Refusal *I can’t*. In the second stage, insistence-response, the participants used different strategies including: Excuse/Reason, Statement of Alternative, and Invoking the Name of God. It is interesting here to notice that the participant did not use any Direct strategies in Stage II and only used Indirect ones. It is particularly important to examine the participant’s initial response to the offer (line 2), which sets the tone for the rest of the interaction. In the same way it is important to examine the participant’s initial response to the first instance of insistence in Stage II since this too sets the tone for Stage II. It is

important to find out if there are certain patterns that are characteristic of a certain group of participants or certain refusal situations. In fact, significant differences were found among the participants and these will be described in Chapter Four and discussed in Chapter Five. The following section presents a description of how the data analysis method described above was used to answer each of the research questions in the present study.

### *Answering the Research Questions*

#### Research Question One (A)

In what ways if any do intermediate American learners of Arabic differ from native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in their realizations of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

In order to answer this research question, frequency counts of all refusal strategies used by intermediate American learners of Arabic and by native speakers of Egyptian Arabic were calculated per participant, per group and per situation. The rankings of these semantic formulas were identified. The frequency of direct and indirect refusal strategies (see below) were also compared across the two groups and across the six refusal situations. In addition, the total number of words and turns as well as turn-length per participant, per refusal situation and per group was calculated. Qualitative analysis was used in order to answer this research question, and included an examination of the contextual factors that affect strategy use in each situation and for each group. In addition, the content of excuses and explanations given by the participants in each group and in each refusal situations was examined and compared across the two groups. Also,

the framework of *stages* described above was applied to the data in order to reach a better understanding of how refusals are structured and organized. Finally, samples of the Arabic and American interactions were selected for further qualitative analysis in order to reach a better understanding of how refusals were negotiated and recycled at the level of discourse in the two cultures.

#### Research Question One (B)

In what ways if any do advanced American learners of Arabic differ from native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in their realizations of the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

In order to answer this research question, the analysis proceeded in a similar way to Research Question One (A) above. However, the focus of analysis here was on the advanced American learners of Arabic and the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. In answering this question, it was important to find out how the two learner groups compared.

#### Research Question Two (A)

What is the extent of pragmatic transfer from English when intermediate American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

In order to answer this question, the same type of analysis described under Research Question One (A) above was applied. However, the analysis here compared the

Egyptian Arabic refusals produced by the intermediate American learners to those produced in English by the native speakers of American English.

#### Research Question Two (B)

What is the extent of pragmatic transfer from English when advanced American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal in Egyptian Arabic in equal and unequal status situations?

In order to answer this research question, the type of analysis described above (under Research Question One (A)) was used, but the two groups that were compared were the advanced American learners of Arabic and the native speakers of American English. It was important here to compare the intermediate and advanced groups of American learners in order to find out if there was a relationship between the degree of pragmatic transfer and the level of language proficiency.

#### *Data Transcription and Coding*

All 240 role plays were audio recorded and were transcribed. Before coding the data the classification scheme of strategies (see below) was examined by an Arabic linguist who held a Ph.D. in linguistics, and who was a native speaker of Arabic and fluent in English. All the classification categories were discussed by the researcher and the Arabic linguist in detail. The researcher found these discussions to be exceptionally useful in refining the categories. The researcher and the Arabic linguist coded 140 lines of the data and inter-rater reliability was calculated and was found to be 93% agreement. All differences were resolved and agreement was reached on all categories. The researcher then proceeded to code the rest of the data. In coding the data, the researcher

created a table with three categories in a word processing program for each of the 240 interactions, and these categories were: Direct strategies, Indirect strategies, and Adjuncts to Refusal. The researcher color coded each occurrence of these strategies in the transcribed interactions in the following way: Direct: red, Indirect: yellow, and Adjuncts: green. The benefit of this color coding was that it made the process of coding the data and the process of calculating the frequencies of the different strategies used more efficient. The final classification scheme of all refusal strategies is described below.

### *Classification Scheme of Refusal Strategies*

The classification scheme that was used for coding the data in the present study is based on Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) pioneering work on refusal. In addition, some categories from the coding schemes used in some Arabic refusal studies as well as in other refusal studies, especially those that used the role play method for data collection (Felix-Brasdfere, 2002; Garcia, 1992, 1999; Gass & Houck, 1999; VonCanon, 2006) were also used. Moreover, new strategies that were not previously reported in the literature, were found. In the following paragraphs, the refusal strategies found in the data will be described and compared to other ones found in the literature. Examples of each strategy will be provided from the data.

Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) classify refusal strategies into Direct Refusals, Indirect Refusals and Adjuncts to Refusal. Each of the strategies that were found in the data and which fall under these broad categories is explained in detail below and examples from the data are provided. However, this section starts with Table 3-3 below which summarizes the refusal strategies found in the data.

Table 3-3

*Refusal Strategies Found in the Data*

Direct Refusals	Indirect Refusals	Adjuncts to Refusals
Flat No	Statement of Regret	Gratitude/Appreciation
Negating a Proposition	Request for Information/Clarification	Statement of Positive Opinion, Feeling or Agreement
Performative (“I refuse”)	Let Interlocutor off the Hook	Statement of Empathy/Concern
	Criticism/Reprimand	Getting Interlocutor’s Attention
	Postponement	Invoking the Name of God
	Wish	
	Request for Consideration or Understanding	
	Repetition of Part of the Request	
	Self-Defense	
	Negative Consequences to Requester	
	Statement of Alternative	
	Excuse/Reason/Explanation	
	Promise of Future Acceptance	
	Setting Conditions for Acceptance	
	Lack of Empathy	
	Proverb/Common Saying	

Table 3-3 (continued)

Direct Refusals	Indirect Refusals	Adjuncts to Refusals
	Hedging	
	Statement of Principle or Philosophy	
	Topic/Focus Switch	
	Unspecified or Indefinite Reply	
	Joke	
	Giving Advice/Lecturing	
	Appeal to a Third Party	

*Direct Refusals*

These are divided into two types “Performative” and “Non-performative” The Performative direct refusal refers to the use of the actual refusal expression (e.g., *I refuse*). The non-performatives are divided into two types: Flat “No” and Negative Willingness or Ability (e.g., *I can’t, I won’t*). The second type Negative Willingness or Ability will be referred to here as Negating a Proposition, which is a broader category that was used in other refusal studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). Examples of Flat No, Negating a Proposition, and the Performative “I refuse” are provided below.

*Flat No*

∪ ∪ ∪  
No, no, no

### *Negating a Proposition*

مش قادرة

I can't

مش هينفع

It won't work

مش ممكن

Impossible

أنا مش ممكن اشتغل في تكساس

It's impossible for me to work in Texas

مش ممكن انت تاخذ نوتسي

It's impossible for you to take my notes

مش عايزة فلوس منك

I don't want money from you

ما أعتقدش

I don't think so

Not today

Not right now

### *Performative "I refuse"*

I refuse

I decline

I am pretty insistent on rejecting

### *Indirect Refusals*

Indirect refusals refer to strategies speakers use to soften the illocutionary force of their refusals in order to minimize the offense to the interlocutor's positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In fact, these indirect strategies have been found to be used more frequently than the direct ones (Al-Issa, 1998; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal & El Bakary,

2002; Stevens, 1993). These strategies are explained in detail below and examples from the pilot study are provided.

### *Statement of Regret*

This is one of the common strategies and has been found in most refusal studies including the ones investigating Arabic (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997). In this strategy the speaker expresses regret for his or her inability to grant the interlocutor's request or accept his or her offer.

معلىش

Sorry

أنا آسفة

I am sorry

يا خسارة

Unfortunately

### *Request for Information/Clarification*

This strategy is particularly significant since it is only found in refusal studies that used the role play method to elicit the data (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Gass & Houck, 1999; VonCanon, 2006). This is not surprising since in the DCT there is no interaction and the interlocutor does not have the option of asking for or receiving information. This strategy was not included in the classification scheme proposed by Beebe, et al. (1990) and that is because their classification scheme was based on data elicited through a DCT. It is also important to point out that Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) explain that interlocutors use this strategy in a refusal sequence as an avoidance strategy, that is as a way of delaying the refusal in the interaction in order to have enough time to plan for the refusal.

لماذا انت مش في المحاضرة امبارح؟

Why weren't you in the lecture yesterday?  
أيوه امتي؟  
Yes, when?

أنت عايز ايه؟  
What do you want?

أي حلويات؟  
Which dessert?

انت محتاجها مدة قد ايه؟  
How long do you need it for?

### *Let Interlocutor off the Hook*

Beebe et al. (1990) include this strategy under the category: Attempts to Dissuade the Interlocutor. This strategy was also found in other refusal studies. However, it is important to indicate that this strategy seems to be linked to a particular refusal situation that Beebe et al. used in their DCT (the cleaning lady situation), where part of the speech act is actually an apology. In refusal studies that did not use this role play or a similar one this strategy was not found (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; VonCanon, 2006). This strategy was found in the pilot study since the present researcher used a situation (Role Play 6), which is similar to the one used by Beebe et al. (1990).

لأ دي بسيطة يعني مش مهمة أوي  
No, this is a minor issue, I mean it's not important at all

معلش  
It's OK

مش حاجة كبيرة أوي  
It's not a big deal at all

لا لا مفيش مشكلة  
No, no, not a problem

لا ده مش غالي  
No, this is not expensive

أسف على ايه؟

Sorry for what?

ولا يهكم خالص دي ولا حاجة

Don't worry about it at all, this is nothing

### *Criticism/Reprimand*

Beebe et al. (1990) used this strategy under the broader category of Attempts to Dissuade the Interlocutor. This strategy has also been found in most refusal studies. In this category participants criticize the requester for making the request and usually imply that the request is not fair. It is also possible to divide this category into direct and indirect criticism but for the purposes of the present study this distinction will not be made. Both direct and indirect criticisms fall under this general category of Criticism/Reprimand.

ما كنتش في الصف أبدا

You were never in class

يعني انت دائما غايب

You are always absent

You really haven't been to class

But you don't seem to be, you know, pulling your own weight

You are a klutz

### *Postponement*

This strategy is classified by Beebe et al. (1990) and Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1990) as an avoidance strategy that speakers use to distract their interlocutors' attention from the illocutionary force of their refusals. This is another strategy that aims to minimize the threat to the interlocutor's positive face. However, it is important to point

out that this strategy is similar to but also different from the strategy Promise of Future Acceptance. In Postponement the participant puts off his or her decision to comply with the request or accept the offer to some point in the future. In the Promise of Future Acceptance, on the other hand, the participant, having refused the offer or the request, expresses his or her willingness to comply with a similar request or accept a similar offer in the future. The following are examples from the data.

ممکن أتناقش مع أختي ومامتي وأرد على حضرتك؟  
Can I talk with my mom and sister and get back to you?

فسيبيني أستشيرها الأول وأشوف رأيها إيه وأرد على حضرتك  
Let me check with her first and see what she thinks and get back to you

لازم أفكر  
I have to think [about it]

أنا من اللازم أتكلم مع زوجتي  
I have to talk with my wife

أنا أرد عليك بعد يومين  
I'll get back to you in two days

مش ممكن تسييلي مهلة للتفكير؟  
Could you give me time to think [about it]?

ولكن لازم أشوف، مش ممكن أديني جواب لهذا الآن  
But, I have to see, I can't give you an answer about this now

I'll consider it

I'll talk it over with my family and my fiancé

Let's think about it, maybe we can do it another time - I could do it, um, another time

### *Giving Advice/Lecturing*

This strategy is interesting because it is one of the new strategies that were found in the present study and was not reported in other studies. In this strategy the participant

is either giving advice or lecturing the interlocutor about something that is related to his request or offer. In this situation the participant is assuming a position of someone who feels that he has the right to give the participant advice or lecture him about something related to the request or offer. Similar strategies were found in other refusal studies and were referred to as *Chiding* (Stevens, 1993), and *Reprimand* (Al-Issa, 1998). However, because it is not possible to know the participant's intent and whether he or she is giving the interlocutor a sincere advice or reprimanding or chiding him, this category was created. The following examples from the data will clarify these points.

فلازم تحضر عشان تبقى انسان مجتهد في حياتك

You have to attend [classes] so that you would be a good diligent person in your life

تحاول يعني تذهب تروح للصف يعني كل يوم

I mean, you should try to go to class everyday

الوقت في الجامعة يعني مهم آه إذا ليس موجود كل يوم يعني ليس جيد

I mean, time [spent] at the university is important, yes, if you are not there everyday, that's not good

انت لازم روح للمحاضرة

You have to go to class [lecture]

وممكن للامتحان لازم تعمل أكثر وتدرس أكثر من الماضي

And for the exam you have to work harder and study more, more than in the past

At some point, you gotta start coming to class and doing it for yourself

We're in a university and there's – there's standards to uphold

I think the results of the class are – are, uh, a good indication of the work that's been put into it, you know

### *Wish*

This is also a common strategy that has been found in most refusal studies and it is one of the strategies listed in Beebe et al.'s classification scheme. It expresses the speaker's desire to help his or her interlocutor but at the same time his or her inability to do so. This strategy also aims to minimize the threat to the interlocutor's positive face by expressing the speaker's desire to help.

بجد نفسي اقول اه بس ما اقدرش  
Honestly, I wish I could say "yes" but I can't

ياريت كان ممكن  
I wish that was possible

كنت أتمنى  
I wish I could

وكنت أتمنى ان أكون يعني أقدر أقبل العرض  
I wish I could, I mean, accept the offer

كنت أتمنى إننا آخذ المنصب  
I wish I could take this position

Ah, I wish I could

If I could I would

### *Request for Consideration or Understanding*

In this strategy, the participant requests the interlocutor's consideration and understanding of the participant's dilemma and his or her inability to comply with the request or accept the offer. It is used to distract the interlocutor from the illocutionary force of the refusal.

أرجو يعني تكون متفهم الوضع بتاعي  
I hope you understand my position

إن شاء الله تفهم

God willing, you will understand

حضرتك، منتهيًا لي عندك أسرة و عارف و تقدر تقدر يعني إيه نغير حياة كل العيلة يعني

I think you have a family and you know, and can understand, I mean, what it means to change the life of a whole family

بس حضرتك متفهم الوضع؟

But, you understand the situation?

I hope you understand

### *Repetition of Part of the Request*

This is another avoidance strategy that aims to give the interlocutor time to prepare his or her refusal. It also seems to serve as a distraction to the interlocutor from the refusal itself. It is used by Beebe et al. under the verbal avoidance strategies.

آه كمان شهرين؟

Ah, after two months?

في تكساس؟

In Texas?

للساعة تسعة؟

Until 9 o'clock?

في أوستن؟

In Austin?

ثلاث ساعات إضافي؟

Three extra hours?

So it would involve relocating to Austin?

### *Self-Defense*

This is categorized by Beebe et al. under Attempts to Dissuade Interlocutor, and it is used to remind the interlocutor that the speaker is doing his or her best and the refusal

should not detract from that. As VonCanon (2006) also explains this strategy is used by the speaker to imply the unfairness of the request.

انت عارف، انا ما بتأخرش في الشغل  
You know I am never late to work

حضرتك شفت شغلي  
You have seen my work [how good it is]

يعني مش حاجة مني أنا أكثر من ما هي ترتبط ببقية عيلتي يعني، الولاد وجوزي يعني  
It is not something that has to do with me as much as it as to do with the rest of my family, I mean my kids and husband

أنا ساعدتك في الماضي  
I helped you in the past

I've helped you out a few times already

#### *Negative Consequences to Requester*

This strategy is mentioned by Beebe et al. under Attempts to Dissuade Interlocutor, and was also found in some of the Arabic studies (Al-Issa, 1998). In this strategy the speaker tries to dissuade the interlocutor from pursuing an acceptance since an acceptance could lead to negative consequences to the interlocutor. This strategy also serves to distract the interlocutor from the illocutionary force of the refusal by warning the interlocutor about those negative consequences.

يعني مش باين اوي للناس الثانية، تقريبا مش مفيدة بالنسبة لك  
I mean it is not clear to other people. It will not probably be useful to you [lecture notes]

لأن كده هنلعبكو بقى وانت أكيد عايز شغل كويس  
Because this way we'll cut corners it, and I am sure you want it done right

افكر ان ورقتي يعني ليس تكون جيد ليك  
I think my paper, I mean, will not be useful to you

لكن دلوقتي ممكن أبقى مستعجلة، ممكن أدبلك رد مش كويس  
But now I may be in a hurry and I may give you the wrong answers

### *Statement of Alternative*

This seems to be one of the most commonly used strategies in realizing the speech act of refusal. This strategy represents the speaker's attempt at negotiating the request or offer in order to minimize the threat to the interlocutor's positive face. The speaker's goal here is to soften the illocutionary force of the refusal by offering the interlocutor other options. Beebe et al. (1990) proposes two types of this strategy: 1) *I can do X instead of Y*, and 2) *Why don't you do X instead of Y?* However, in the present study this distinction will not be made.

مفيش حد تاني ممكن تاخذ النوتس منه

Isn't there someone else that you can take the notes from?

ممكن تقرا الكتاب بتاع الصف

You can read the textbook of the class

يعني انا ممكن اقعد يعني ممكن ساعة

I mean I can stay for about one hour

أكلمك بكرة ونعمله على التليفون؟

Can I call you tomorrow and we can do it over the phone?

بعد صلاة الجمعة ممكن نتقابل

After the Friday prayers we can meet

ممكن تتكلم مع ناس آخر

Can you talk with [interview] other people?

How about I ca- give you a call, and we can do a telephone interview?

You could put some in a plastic bag, and I could take it with me

I'd be willing to work an extra three hours on a different day

### *Excuse/Reason/ Explanation*

This is probably the most common strategy for expressing refusal. This strategy is used to reduce the illocutionary force of the refusal by communicating to the interlocutor

that the speaker would accept if it was not for some reason or excuse. Some reasons can be given in detail and some can be general. This is particularly important since in some cultures such as Japanese (Beebe et al., 1990) and Arabic (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997), speakers tend to give vague reasons and excuses when refusing whereas in the American culture speakers tend to be more specific.

بس المشكلة إن عندي معاد الساعة تمانية  
But the problem is that I have an appointment at 8

يعني بس انا مستنيه اخوك عشان نروح حفلة موسيقية  
I mean, it's just that I am waiting for your brother to go to a concert

أنا نسيت النوتس في البيت  
I forgot the notes at home

مامتي عيانة أوي وفي المستشفى  
My mom is very sick and is in hospital

علشان جوزي هو بيشتغل في بيرلنغتون  
Because my husband, he works in Burlington

I'm really busy studying for this test

I really have to be somewhere after work

My fiancé has a job here and my family is here

#### *Promise of Future Acceptance*

In this strategy the speaker makes a promise to accept a similar request or offer at some point in the future. This is another strategy to soften the illocutionary force of the refusal and minimize the impact on the interlocutor's positive face. However, this strategy does not seem to be very common. For example, it was not found in two of the refusal studies that used the role play method for data collection (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; VonCanon, 2006). However, it was found in two of the Arabic refusal studies (Al-Issa,

1998; Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). This is also one of the strategies listed by Beebe et al. (1990). The following are some examples from the data.

ممکن مرة ثانية في بروجکت تاني  
Maybe next time, with the next [school] project

ممکن مرة ثانية  
Maybe next time

ممکن في المستقبل، ممکن في المستقبل  
Maybe in the future, maybe in the future

Maybe next time, though

### *Setting Conditions for Acceptance*

In this strategy the speaker sets conditions for accepting the request or offer. It serves as a strategy to show the speaker would be willing to comply if the situation was different. This strategy also distracts the interlocutor from the impact of the refusal and serves to minimize the threat to the interlocutor's face. Beebe et al. distinguish between setting conditions for past or future acceptance. However, this distinction will not be made in the present study.

لو كنت قلتلي قبل كده كان ممکن  
If you had told me before it would be possible

لو كنت أعرف كنت كلتها الأول  
If I knew I would have eaten it first

لو كان إمبارح ممکن  
If it was yesterday that would have been possible

If I wasn't meeting people there, maybe

I really, I mean, maybe if you had let me know beforehand, I could have done something

### *Lack of Empathy*

This is another new strategy that was found in the present study and that was not reported before in the literature. This study is interesting because participants used it to show that they do not care about the interlocutor's problem and do not empathize with him. This strategy aggravates rather than mitigates the illocutionary of the refusal and threatens the interlocutor's positive face since it shows that the participant does not express solidarity with the interlocutor and does not show that his needs and desires are also the participant's. The following are some examples from the data.

عندي مشكلة كمان

I have a problem too

مش مشكلتي

That's not my problem

بس انا عندي جير فريند كمان و عندي مشاكل معها كمان، طبعا كلنا عندنا بنات وكلنا عندنا مشاكل مع الجير فريند بس انا ما كنتش غايب

But I have a girlfriend too and I have problems with her too, of course, we all have girlfriends, and we all have problems with [our] girlfriends but I was not absent

كلنا عندنا دائما عندنا مشاكل

We all, always, have problems

مش ذنبي

That's not my fault [my problem]

وهذا ليست مشكلتي

And this is not my problem

Just because you missed class because you slept late

### *Proverb/Common Saying*

This strategy was reported in other refusal studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) and it was found to be used more frequently in Mexican Spanish than in American English. In the present study it was also found to be used more frequently by the Egyptian

participants. It was not included in Beebe et al.'s coding scheme. This strategy seems to be used more frequently in collectivistic cultures. This is considered a positive (solidarity) politeness strategy. The following examples were found in the data.

خدت الشر وراحت  
Good riddance

خيرها في غيرها  
Next time it will be even better

تأتي الرياح بما لا تشتهي السفن  
Wind sometimes blows in the wrong direction for the ships

الجايات أكثر من الرايات  
There will be more opportunities in the future

لأجل الورد ينسقي العليق  
For the sake of flowers, weed is watered too

في المشمش  
When pigs fly

There's no use crying over spilled milk

Dime a dozen

### *Hedging*

This strategy is described by Beebe et al. as a verbal avoidance strategy that is used by the speaker to avoid giving an answer right away to the interlocutor. The speaker expresses hesitation and gives the impression that he or she is not sure what to say. The speaker can also say something to the effect that it is difficult to accept the offer or comply with the request, but maybe not impossible. In other words he leaves room for negotiation. This strategy allows the speaker to buy time and prepare for the refusal, and it is also prepares the interlocutor for the upcoming refusal. The following examples were found in the data.

مش عارفة إذا كنت هأقدر حقيقي ولا لأ  
I don't know if I will be able to or not

أنا مش عارفة، هل في البيت هيوافقوا، هل في البيت مش هيوافقوا  
I don't if the folks at home will agree or not

مش عارفة، صعب شوية  
I don't know, a little difficult

هيبقى صعب  
This will be tough

I don't know if I can, uh, lend you the notes

I don't know if I can do it right now

That's a pretty big move

I really don't know if I want to lend you my notes again

#### *Statement of Principle or Philosophy*

This strategy was also reported by Beebe et al. and it is used to mitigate the illocutionary force of the refusal by explaining to the interlocutor that the speaker's refusal stems from certain beliefs or principles, and not because he or she does not want to help. The following examples were found in the data.

كلنا بنغلط  
We all make mistakes

بس فيه أولويات وأولياتي دلوقتي الولاد والبيت  
But there are priorities and my priorities now are my children and my family

لازم الفصول الأول حاجة في حياتي، الشغل بعد الواجبات  
Classes are my first priority in my life and work comes after homework

Some things like my family are a little bit more important than a promotion in my job

### *Topic/Focus Switch*

This strategy was also included in Beebe et al.'s coding scheme and it a verbal avoidance strategy that speakers use to avoid responding to the request or offer. The speaker uses this strategy to change the topic or focus of the discussion to avoid responding to the interlocutor's request or offer. In the present study, participants used it to avoid responding to the interlocutor's recycling of the request or offer in the insistence stage. It is also used to distract the interlocutor from the pursuing the request or offer any further. The following examples were found in the data.

إعلمي بس فنجان شاي  
Just make me a cup of tea

لأ بجد، انت الي بتطبخ مش كده؟  
No, really, you are the one who cooks, right?

أنا ممكن أشرب شاي  
I can drink tea

عايز ساندويتش، أنا نازل الآن دلوقتي اشترى ساندويتش لي وكنت عايز أسألك تريد ساندويتش  
Do you want a sandwich, I am going now to buy a sandwich for myself and I wanted to ask you if you want a sandwich

ولكن كيف الدراسة في المدرسة؟  
But how is study at school?

ممكن ستعيرني الخلطة للحلويات؟  
Could you lend me [give me] the recipe for the dessert?

### *Unspecified or Indefinite Reply*

This category was also reported by Beebe et al. and it was listed under the category of Acceptance that Functions as a Refusal. This strategy is interesting because it used by the speaker to express his or her willingness to accept the offer or comply with the request but he or she may not be able to do so due to circumstances that are out of

their control. The speaker usually gives an unenthusiastic reply and refuses to commit himself or herself to a certain date or time. The speaker usually tells his or her interlocutor it all depends on other factors that are out of his or her control. The following examples were found in the data.

مش عارف ظروفي هتكون إيه  
I don't know what my circumstances will be like

يعني ربنا يسهل، هنشوف  
I mean, God willing, we'll see

خلينا نشوف لما نتقابل ابقى فكرني  
Let's see, when we meet you can remind me

ماشني، ماشني، يعني خليه لظروفها  
OK, OK, I mean let's leave it to the circumstances

فيعني، يعني سبيني أخلصها واشوف، لو قدرت ها يعني، هقولك  
I mean, let me finish it and I will, if I can, I will let you know

ولكن هنشوف، هنشوف إذا ممكن أنا حطيتلك النوتس  
But we'll, we'll see if I can give you the notes

هاحاول، لو خلصت أو عدك، لو خلصت بدري ممكن أرجع  
I will try, if I got done, I promise you, If I got done early, maybe I will come back

### *Joke*

This strategy was also reported by Beebe et al. and it is considered as a verbal avoidance strategy that is used to distract the interlocutor from pursuing the request or offer any further. It is also a positive politeness strategy since it expresses solidarity with the interlocutor. The following examples were found in the data.

لا أم علي ولا أبو علي  
Not Um Ali nor Abu Ali  
[this is play on words: the dessert is called Um Ali, and it literally means *Ali's mother*. The speaker here expresses his refusal by saying that he cannot eat Um Ali nor Abu Ali, which literally means *Ali's father*]

ولكن أعتقد يعني أنا حامل بأكل الآن  
But I think I am pregnant with the food now

شكرا لأنك كسرتها  
Thank you for breaking it

مش هناكل يومين  
We will not [be able to] eat for two days

You have no idea what I'm paying for this, uh, I'll just add it to my student loans

### *Appeal to a Third Party*

This was another new strategy that was found in the present study, and it used by the speaker to mitigate the illocutionary force of the refusal. In this strategy the speaker expresses willingness to accept the offer or comply with the request but cannot do that because of some other person, usually a family member, who would not let him or her do that. This is a positive refusal strategy that expresses solidarity with the speaker. The following examples were found in the data.

لكن مررتي قالتلي لا ماينفعش  
But my wife said no, it won't work

لازم أتكلم مع العيلة، بس أظن أن لا يبحبو الحياة في أوستن  
I have to talk with the family but I think they don't like life in Austin

أعتقد زوجتي مش سيكون جيد لهذا الأخبار  
I think my wife will not be good [happy] with this news

هي مش عايزة تروح بسبب هي بتشتغل هنا في نفس المدينة  
She doesn't want to go because she works here in the same city

ولكن أنا أعرف هي لا تحب هذا الفكرة  
But I know she does not like this idea

وهو مش عايز بروح إلى ولاية تانية  
And he [my husband] does not want us to go to another state

### *Adjuncts to Refusal*

Adjuncts to refusal do not form part of the refusal itself but they are external modifications to the main refusal and they serve as strategies used to attend to the needs of the interlocutor's positive face by expressing solidarity with the interlocutors (Beebe et al., 1990). Some of the strategies used to achieve this type of solidarity with the interlocutor include expressions of gratitude, expressions of positive opinion of the interlocutor, and showing consideration to the interlocutor's feelings. These strategies were identified by Beebe et al. (1990) and were found in many other refusal studies including those investigating Arabic (Al-Issa, 1998; Nelson, et al., 2002). Some examples of these strategies were also found in the pilot study.

### *Gratitude/Appreciation*

ألف شكر

A thousand thanks

متشكرة أوي

Thank you very much

شكرا

Thank you

أنا أشكر حضرتك

I thank you

مرسي جدا

Thanks a lot

### *Statement of Positive Opinion, Feeling or Agreement*

حلو اوي، الأكل المصري وحشني

Very delicious, I missed Egyptian food

الترقية مفاجأة حلوة

[this] promotion is a nice surprise

هي فرصة كويسة فعلا

This is a very good opportunity indeed

أنا بحب بورسعيد

I love Port Said

انت صاحبي، وانت، انا أحبك وأنت تحبني

You are my friend and you, I love you and you love me

أنا أحب بأشتغل معك

I love to work with you

Oh, that's great news

It sounds like a great opportunity

They look excellent

It's delicious, absolutely delicious

Well, good luck on your project

#### *Invoking the name of God*

In a study investigating the speech act of swearing in Arabic, Abdel-Jawad (2000) found that swearing is used in Arabic to preface almost all types of speech acts. He also found that it is a common strategy used in Arabic to mitigate the illocutionary force of the speech act of refusal. Swearing is generally used to confirm the truth value of the speaker's proposition (Saleh & Abdul-Fattah, 1998). Although it was observed in other Arabic refusal studies (Al-Issa, 1998), it is not usually identified as a separate strategy in Arabic speech act studies. However, in the present study it is classified as a separate category because it is an important strategy that is frequently used in Arabic. Other researchers also classify it as a separate strategy in the realization of other speech acts in Arabic, such as apology (Bataineh, 2004).

والله مشغولة

I swear to God, I am busy

لا والله معنديش وقت  
No, I swear to God, I don't have time

أنا شبعانة والله  
I am full, I swear to God

أنا والله ما قادر  
I swear to God, I can't

### *Getting Interlocutor's Attention*

This is a new strategy that was not reported in any previous refusal study, but was found in the pilot data. In this strategy, the speaker tries to get the interlocutor's attention using words such as "look!" or "listen!" This seems to be a solidarity strategy used to attend to the interlocutor's positive face. It seems to appeal to the interlocutor's understanding and consideration.

بص! ماما . . . مامتي عيانة أوي وفي المستشفى  
Look! Mom . . . my mom is very sick and is in the hospital

لأ بص! انا مستتية أخوك  
No, look! I am waiting for your brother

بُص هاقولك على حاجة  
Look! I'll tell you something

### *Statement of Empathy/Concern*

This strategy was also included as an Adjunct to refusal in Beebe et al.'s classification scheme. This is a positive strategy that expresses concern for the interlocutor and aims to convey a positive attitude toward him or her. This strategy mitigates the illocutionary force for the refusal through expressing concern for the interlocutor and empathizing with him or her. It is the opposite of the Lack of Empathy

strategy, which aggravates the illocutionary force of the refusal by not showing concern for the interlocutor. The following examples were found in the data.

أنا عارفة طبعا إن البروجكت مهم  
I know of course that the project is important

بس ما تزعلش  
But don't be upset

انت شكلك متوتر ومتعصب، فيه إيه؟  
You look upset and agitated, what's wrong?

محتاج فلوس؟  
Do you need money?

بس انت سليم؟  
Are you OK?

You shouldn't feel terrible

I'm sorry you're having problems

I understand that it's important

### Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted in January 2009 at the campus of Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. The goal of the pilot study was to test the data elicitation instrument since the present study is the first speech act study to elicit learner data in Egyptian Arabic. The pilot study also aimed at examining how much time the role plays would take and the nature of the interactional data elicited. In addition, the pilot study aimed at eliciting participants' evaluations of the role plays. Findings from the pilot study helped improve the role plays as well as other instruments used in conjunction with the role plays such as the background questionnaires. In the following paragraphs the pilot study will be described.

### *Participants*

Six students participated in the pilot study. These were four American learners of Arabic and two native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. First, the researcher obtained a list of Middlebury College students who recently came back from Alexandria, Egypt, after they spent at least one semester studying Arabic at Alexandria University. They studied at the Arabic program there, which is sponsored and supervised by Middlebury College. These students typically studied both Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and the Egyptian dialect while they were in Egypt. These students were chosen for the pilot study because of their familiarity with the Egyptian dialect. The researcher contacted all the students (a total of 12) and heard back from 5 of them. The researcher scheduled appointments with those interested to meet with him individually in his office on campus. Due to scheduling conflicts and students being busy in the finals week, only 4 students showed up for their appointments.

All 4 American learners of Arabic who participated in the pilot study were females and they were all 21 years old. They spent between 4 and 9 months in Alexandria, Egypt studying Arabic. They have also been studying Arabic for 2 to 4 years in the US. Three of these students were native speakers of American English and one was a native speaker of Spanish. These students majored in: International Studies, History, Theater, and Middle Eastern Studies.

With regard to the two native speakers of Egyptian Arabic who participated in the study, one of them was a male undergraduate student from Egypt studying at Middlebury College and the other was a female teaching assistant from Egypt who worked at the

Arabic program at Middlebury College. Both participants have lived in the US for less than three years.

### *Elicitation Instrument*

The elicitation instruments consisted of 6 role play situations that elicited refusals in different situations. These situations varied by the status of the interlocutors relative to each other as well as by the type of refusal stimulus used. The situations in the role plays included scenarios that are similar to those used in previous studies as well as new situations that were created by the researcher. Please refer to chapter 3 for a detailed description of the elicitation instrument. Also see Appendix E for the English version of the role plays and Appendix F for the Arabic version.

The participants also completed the Role Play Evaluation form, which elicited information about whether the participants found the situations to be realistic and whether a refusal was possible in each situation. The form also elicited information about whether the role plays took a reasonable amount of time. In addition, the form elicited participants' comments on any other aspect of the role plays.

### *Data Collection Procedures*

When each participant came to the researcher's office, the researcher greeted him or her and proceeded with Background Questionnaire A for the American learners and Background Questionnaire D (See Appendix A and Appendix D). After the participant filled out the questionnaire, the researcher proceeded with the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to assess the participant's proficiency level in Arabic. The OPI took between 15 and 30 minutes to complete. The OPI was only administered to the American learners of Arabic. After the OPI the researcher gave the participant a break of about 5 minutes to

relax and get ready for the role plays. The researcher first explained to the participants that the role plays would be conducted in Egyptian Arabic and that the participants had to refuse whatever offer or request that the researcher would make in the role plays. The researcher also explained that the role plays would be audio-taped. In addition, the researcher gave written instructions about the role plays to each participant and asked if the participant had any questions. If the participant did not have any questions, the researcher proceeded with the role plays and the whole interaction was audio-taped.

After the role plays were completed, the researcher gave each participant the Role Play Evaluation form (See Appendix G) to complete. After that the researcher thanked the participant again for his or her participation in the study. It is important to point out that each role play took about one to two minutes to complete.

#### *Data Analysis Procedures*

The researcher examined the data and found it to be very similar to data elicited in other studies using the role play method for data elicitation. The researcher used the classification scheme proposed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) for coding the data and it was found to be effective in covering most of the strategies found in the data. New strategies were also found and for those new categories were created. Please refer to the data analysis section in this chapter for a detailed description of this classification scheme.

#### Chapter summary

This chapter provided a detailed description of the design of the present study. It started with the research questions and this was followed by detailed information about the three groups of participants. Next the data collection instrument was described, and

this included information on how each of the role play scenarios was designed. The guidelines that were followed in the design of role plays were also described. In addition, information on how the pilot study contributed to the design of the role plays was included. Information on the equipment, space and props required for data collection was also provided. Next, the data collection procedures were described in detail including information on how the participants were initially located and contacted, and how the role plays were conducted with each group of participants. This is followed by a detailed description of the data analysis method including a description of both the quantitative and qualitative techniques for analyzing the data. The coding scheme used for classifying refusal strategies in the present study was also described in detail and examples from the pilot study were provided. Information on how each of the research questions was answered using the analytic framework described was also provided. This chapter ends with a description of the pilot study.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In this chapter the results of the study are provided in detail and are organized by the type of analysis. The quantitative results are provided first and are followed by the qualitative analysis. All four groups will be compared side by side. After presenting the quantitative findings their significance for answering the research questions will be presented. This is believed to be a more parsimonious way of representing the data. In this chapter there will be extensive use of graphs for displaying the data. Therefore, numerical data in many of the tables will be presented by graphs. This visual representation of the data is both an effective and an efficient way of presenting the findings, as well as for comparing and contrasting the four groups of participants.

### Quantitative Findings

The quantitative results in this chapter are represented by frequency counts of number of words produced by each participant in each group and in each situation as well as by each refusal type. Then the results for the number of turns produced and the average turn length will be presented. This is followed by the results of the frequency counts of refusal strategies used in each situation by each group and how they varied with regard to Direct, Indirect, and Adjuncts to refusal. The analysis will also present rankings of refusals with regard to the overall most frequently preferred strategies by group as well as for each Role Play. Then the effect of the contextual factor of status on the frequency and distribution of refusal strategies will be examined. This section will also look at how

the refusal strategies vary with regard to the type of refusal (i.e., refusal of requests vs. refusal of offers).

### *Total Number of Words*

In this section the total number of words produced by the participants in each of the four groups and in each of the six refusal situations will be presented. Findings about the effect of the contextual factor of status on the total number of words will be presented. Finally, the total number of words produced in relation to the refusal type will be provided.

The total number of words produced by the native speakers in all six situations exceeded the total number of words produced by the learners. The Egyptians (NSA) also produced more words than the native-speaker American participants (NSE). With regard to the learner groups, the Advanced students (NNSA) produced more words than the Intermediate students (NNSI). In all six refusal situations, the total number of words produced by the Egyptian native speakers was 8090 words, and by the American native speakers was 6581. The Advanced students produced a total of 4842 words and the Intermediate students a total of 3780 words. Table 4-1 below provides a summary of these findings as well as of individual variation among participants.

Table 4-1

*Total Number of Words and Individual Variation*

Group	Total number of words produced	Highest number by a single participant	Lowest number by a single participant
Intermediate Learners	3780	732	235
Advanced Learners	4842	718	347
Native Arabic Speakers	8090	1610	445
Native English Speakers	6581	1087	358

There were also important individual differences among the participants in each group, as shown by Table 4-1 above. A few of the participants in each of the four groups tended to produce a significantly larger number of words compared to the other participants in their groups. For example, the highest number of words produced by a single participant in all six situations in the Intermediate group was 732 words, and the lowest was 235 words. In the Advanced group, the highest was 718 words and the lowest was 347. Such individual differences were even more pronounced in the two native speaker (NS) groups. For example, the largest number of words produced by a single participants in all six situations in the Egyptian group was 1610 words and the lowest by a single participant was 445 words. For the native NSE group, the largest number was 1087 words and the lowest was 358 words. The possible reasons of such differences will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4.2 below illustrates the total number of words by group broken down by each Role Play situation. Participants in the Egyptian group and the two learner groups produced the largest number of words in Role Play 4 (RP4) in which an offer from a boss of promotion and relocation was turned down. For the NNSE group the RP that produced largest number of words was RP6 although RP4 was almost equal.

Table 4-2

*Total Number of Words by Group*

Order	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	RP	Words	RP	Words	RP	Words	RP	Words
First	RP 4	852	RP 4	1100	RP 4	2008	RP 6	1391
Second	RP 2	678	RP 2	934	RP 3	1412	RP 4	1328
Third	RP 3	674	RP 1	845	RP 6	1331	RP 1	1072
Fourth	RP 1	599	RP 3	798	RP 2	1257	RP 3	1024
Fifth	RP 5	516	RP 6	589	RP 5	1093	RP 2	910
Sixth	RP 6	461	RP 5	575	RP 1	989	RP 5	856

The reader is reminded that in RP6 participants were asked to refuse an offer of money from a janitor in an office for breaking the participant's china figurine while cleaning. The RP that produced second largest number of words in the Egyptian group was RP3 in which an offer was turned down from a friend's younger brother for an interview for a school project. The RP that produced the second highest number of words for the two

learner groups was the same (RP 2) for the two groups, and it is a Role Play in which participants were asked to turn down a request from a supervisor at work for staying extra hours. The possible reasons for such differences will be discussed in Chapter 5. Table 4-2 above ranks the Role Plays for each group according to the total number of words produced in each of them.

It is interesting to note that the learners were consistent in that the two RP's in which they produced the largest number of words were situations where they had to turn down an offer or a request from someone higher in status to them. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, it will be very important to exercise caution when interpreting these results since the total number of words produced in each RP depends on three different factors: 1) the role of the researcher or his assistant in elicitation, 2) individual differences among the participants, and 3) how the participants' replies affected the kind of negotiation that took place and the length of the interaction.

In this section we look at the total number of words produced with regard to refusal type. Figure 4-1 below shows that the two groups of learners were similar in producing a slightly larger number of words when refusing a request than when refusing an offer. The two NS groups, on the other hand, produced a markedly larger number of words when refusing offers than when refusing requests. Again these findings should be interpreted with caution as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

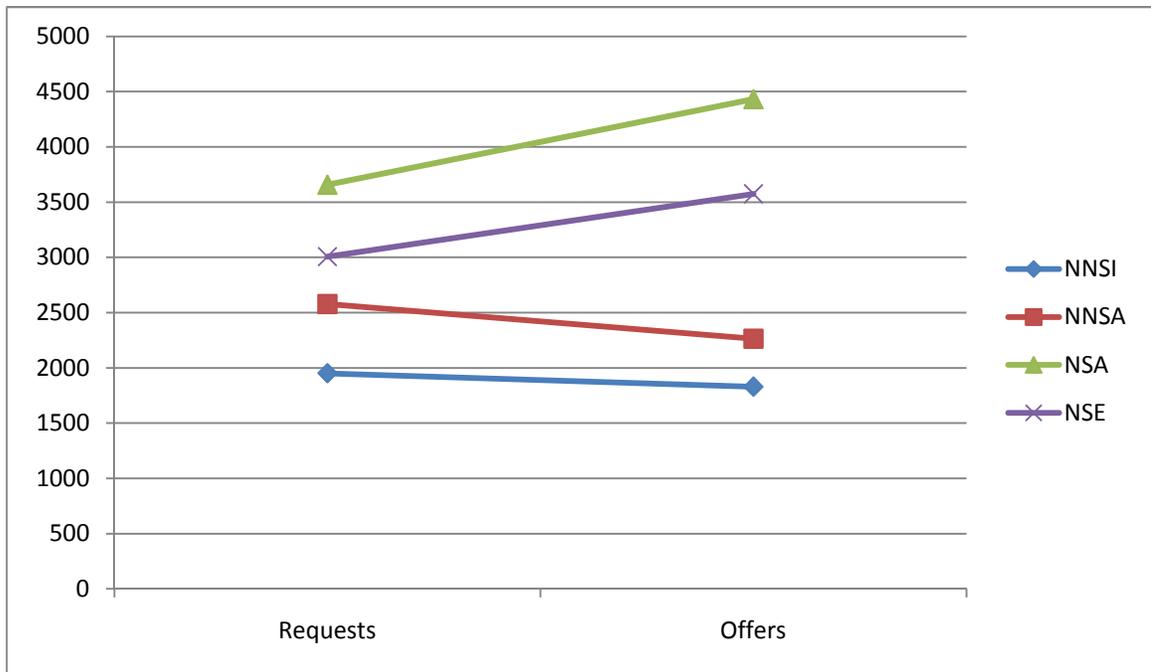


Figure 4-1. Total Number of Words by Refusal Type

Figure 4-2 below shows the total number of words produced in relation to status relationships. The two groups of learners and the Egyptian group produced the largest number of words when refusing an offer or a request from someone higher in status. The NSE group, on the other hand, produced the largest number of words when refusing an offer or a request from someone lower in status. With regard to the Equal status situations the two NS groups produced the lowest number of words in these situations. The two learner groups, on the other hand, produced almost the same number of words in the Equal and Lower status situations. Again, as explained above these results should be interpreted with caution.

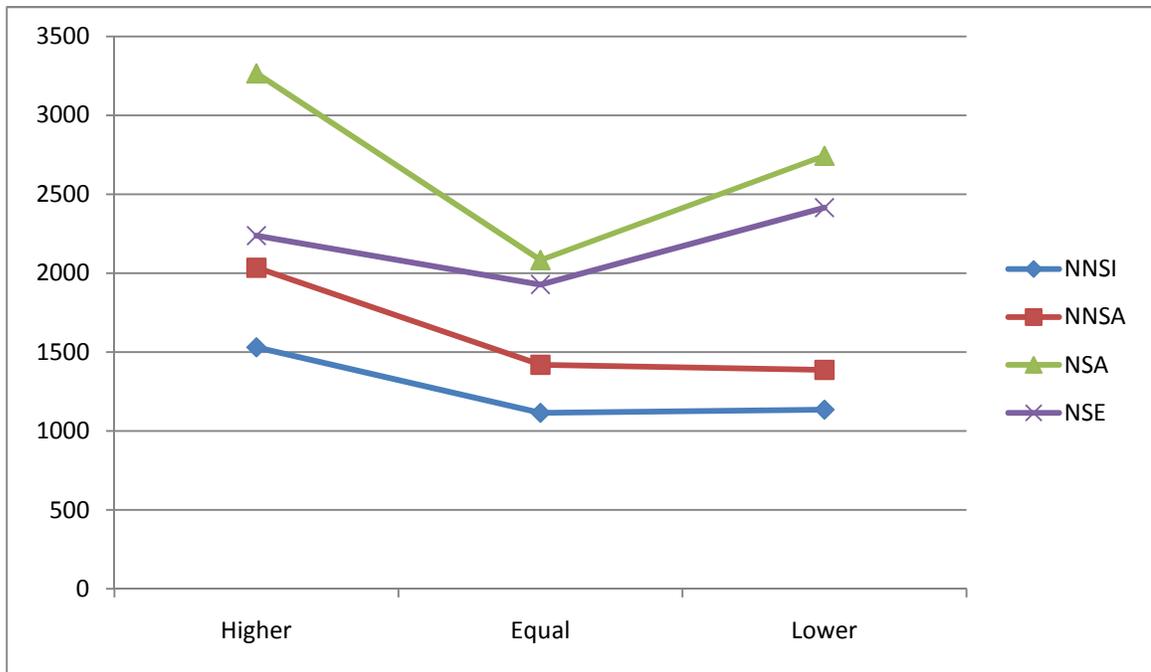


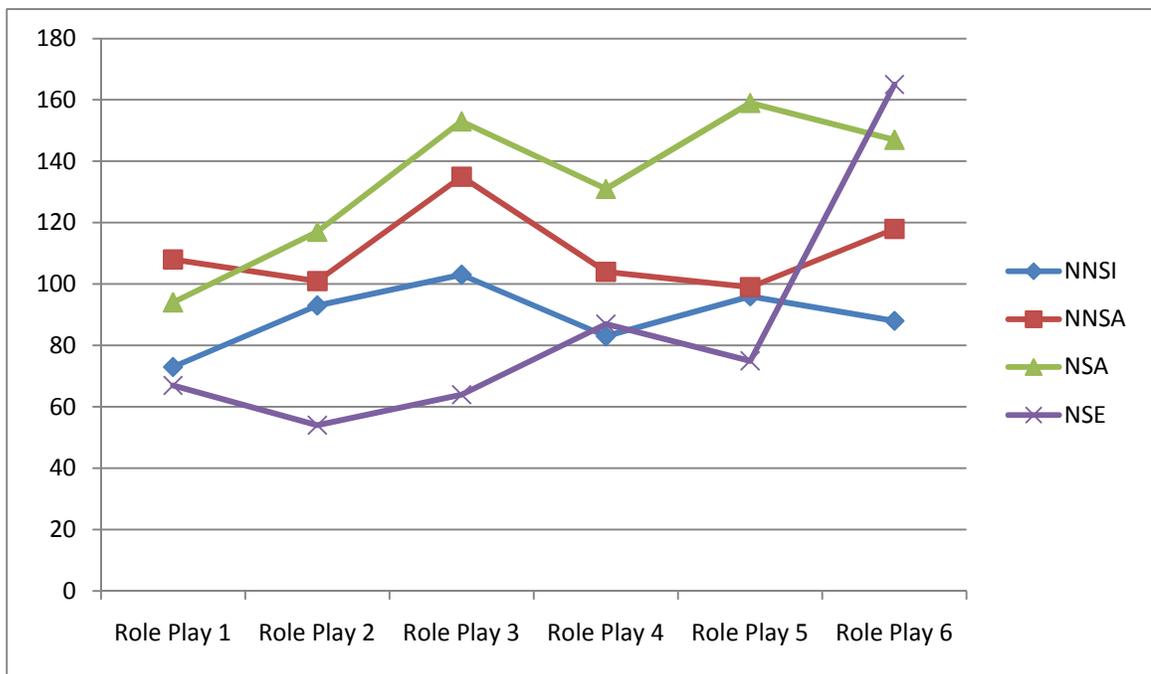
Figure 4-2. Total Number of Words by Status

#### *Number of Turns and Turn Length*

In this section a detailed description of the number of turns and average turn length for each group, each RP, as well as in each status relationship and refusal type will be presented. Here again the Egyptian participants produced the largest number of turns, 801. They were followed by the Advanced learners with a total of 665 turns, and the Intermediate learners 536 turns; the NSE group produced the smallest number of turns 512 turns. However, it is important to remember that the number of turns produced depended on the responses of the researcher and his assistant as well as on the responses provided by the learners. It is also important to keep in mind that the researcher and his

assistant tried to maintain a consistent level of insistence in all the situations with all the participants.

Figure 4-3 below provides a visual representation of the total number of turns produced by each group per situation. For the two groups of learners, RP3 generated the largest number of turns, with a total of 103 turns for the Intermediate students and 135 turns for the Advanced students.



*Figure 4-3.* Total Number of Turns by Role Play

The NSA group produced the highest number of turns in RP5 with a total of 159 turns and the NSE group produced the highest number of turns in RP6 with a total of 165 turns. The lowest number of turns produced was different for the four groups. For example, it was RP1 for the Intermediate students with 73 turns, RP5 for the Advanced students with

99 turns, RP1 for the NSA group with 94 turns, and RP2 for the NSE group with 54 turns. What is interesting here is that there is a large variation in the number of turns produced within each group and across the four groups. While the two NS groups exhibited more within-group variation more than the two learner groups, the NSE group showed the highest level of variation. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5. It is important to point out that there were individual differences among the participants with regard to the number of turns produced by each participant. For example, in the Intermediate group one participant produced a total of 75 turns and another produced only 42. In the Advanced group one participant produced 102 turns and another produced only 50. Similar patterns were also observed in the two NS groups.

Regarding turn length, the average turn length for the two learner groups was shorter than that of the two NS groups. The Intermediate learners produced turns with an average length of 7 words, and the Advanced learners' turns had an average length of 7.3 words. The NSA group produced turns with an average length of 10.1 words and the NSE group produced the longest turns with an average of 12.9 words. It is interesting to note here that the difference between the Advanced and Intermediate learners with regard to length does not seem significant. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

With regard to the Role Plays which generated the largest number of turns there were both similarities and differences among the four groups as shown by Figure 4-4 below. For example, the two learner groups and the NSA groups produced their longest turns in RP4 where the average length for the Intermediate group was 10.3 words, and for the Advanced learners 10.6 words, and for the NSA group 15.3 words. It is interesting to note that RP4 is a situation where participants were asked to refuse an offer from

someone higher in status. The longest turns produced by the NSE group were not in RP4 but RP2, which is also another situation where the participants were asked to refuse a request from someone higher in status.

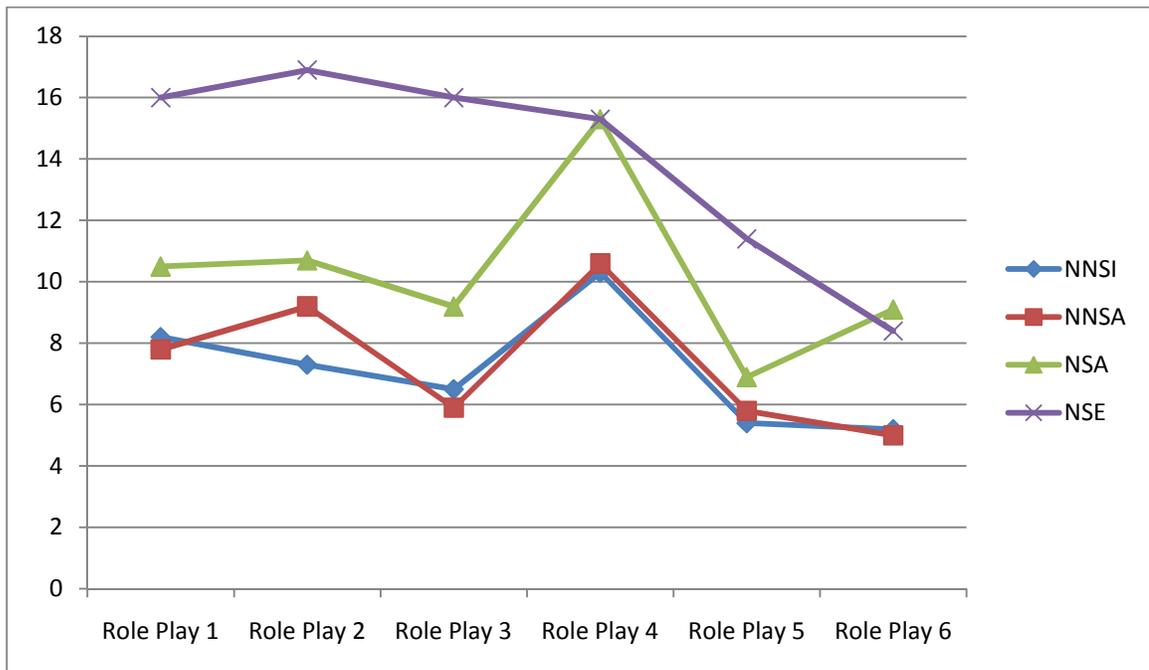


Figure 4-4. Average Turn Length by Role Play

With regard to Role Plays producing the second and third longest turns, there were more similarities between the two learner groups and the NSA group. For example, the Intermediate students produced their second and third longest turns in RP1 (8.2 words) and RP 2 (7.3 words); for the Advanced students, it was RP2 (9.2 words), and RP1 (7.8 words); for the NSA group it was RP2 (10.7 words), and RP1 (10.5 words). So, for all these three groups, the second and third longest turns were either RP 1 or RP2. For the NSE, on the other hand, the second longest turns appeared in both RP1 and RP3, with

each generating turns with an average length of 16 words, and the third longest turns were in RP 4 averaging 15.3 words per turn. It is also important to notice here that RP1 produced one of the longest turns for all the groups. This is a situation where participants were asked refuse a request from someone equal in status.

As Figure 4-4 above shows, the NSE group produced longer turns than any other group in almost all six refusal situations. This is interesting and is consistent with the previous finding about the number of turns. The NSE group produced a smaller number of turns more than any other group, but they also produced the longest turns. It seems that there is an inverse relationship between the number of turns produced and turn length. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5. With regard to the two learner groups, we notice that the Advanced students produced longer turns than the Intermediate students in only 3 Role Plays, namely RP2, RP4, and RP5. Table 4-3 below summarizes the findings presented above by providing the number of turns as well as the average turn length in words per group per Role Play.

Table 4-3

*Total Number of Turns and Average Turn Length by Role Play*

RP	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	Turns	Length	Turns	Length	Turns	Length	Turns	Length
RP 1	73	8.2	108	7.8	94	10.5	67	16.0
RP 2	93	7.3	101	9.2	117	10.7	54	16.9
RP 3	103	6.5	135	5.9	153	9.2	64	16.0
RP 4	83	10.3	104	10.6	131	15.3	87	15.3
RP 5	96	5.4	99	5.8	159	6.9	75	11.4
RP 6	88	5.2	118	5.0	147	9.1	165	8.4
T/A	536	7.0	665	7.3	801	10.1	512	12.9

This section looks at differences among the four groups with regard to the number of turns and average turn length for each group in the two refusal types: requests and offers. There were both similarities and differences among the four groups. As Figure 4-5 below illustrates, for the Intermediate learners the number of turns was divided almost evenly between requests and offers. The advanced learners produced a slightly larger number of turns when refusing requests than when refusing offers. The two NS groups showed the opposite pattern producing a higher number of turns when refusing offers than when refusing requests.

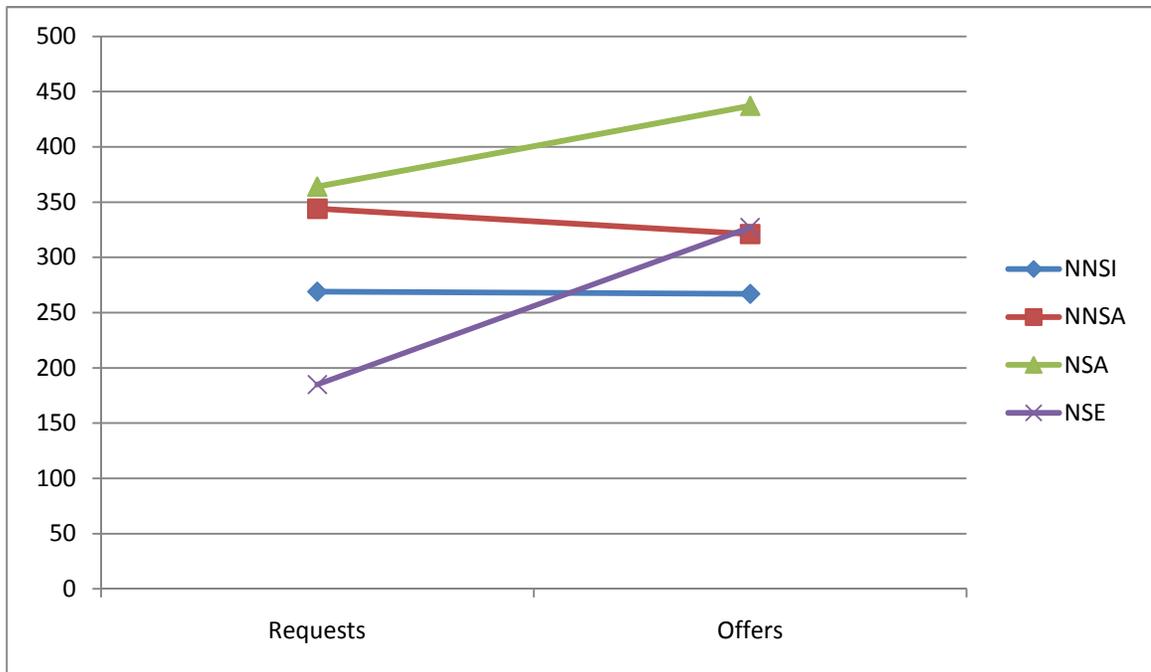
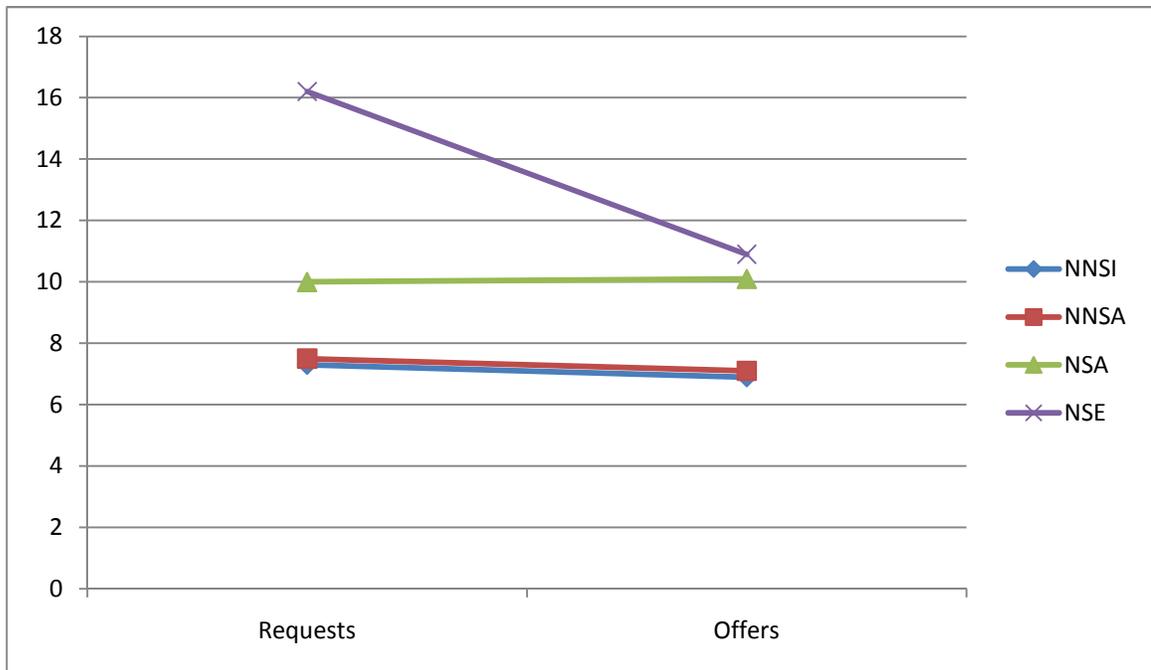


Figure 4-5. Number of Turns by Refusal Type

With regard to turn length, as Figure 4-6 below illustrates, both learner groups produced slightly longer turns when refusing requests than when refusing offers. The average turn length of the Intermediate students when refusing requests was 7.3 words and when refusing offers was 6.9 words. For the Advanced students it was 7.5 words for requests 7.1 words for offers. There was no difference with regard to turn length in the two NS speakers groups which produced turns with the same length (about 10 words per turn) for both requests and offers.



*Figure 4-6. Average Turn Length by Refusal Type*

It is also important to find out if the status of the interlocutor relative to the participant affected the number of turns and turn length for each of the four groups. As Figure 4-7 below illustrates, the NSA group produced more turns in the Lower, Equal, and Higher status relationships than any other group. It was followed by the Advanced students, then the Intermediate students and finally the NSE group. What is interesting here is that all the four groups produced a considerably larger number of turns in the Lower status situations than either the Higher or Equal status situations.

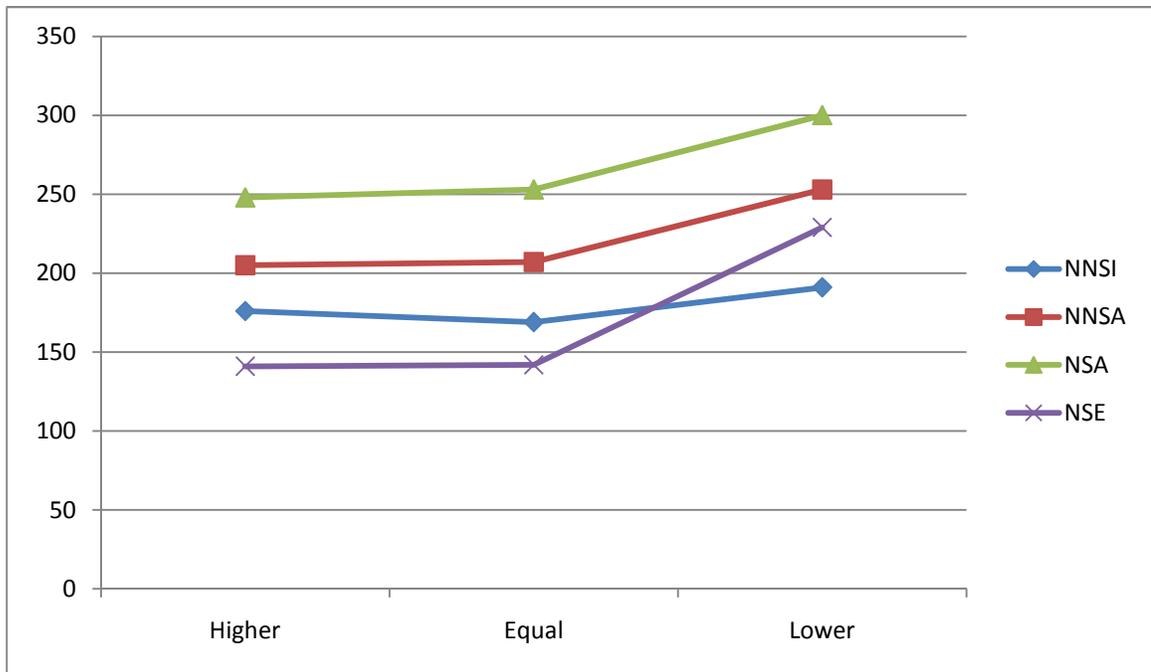
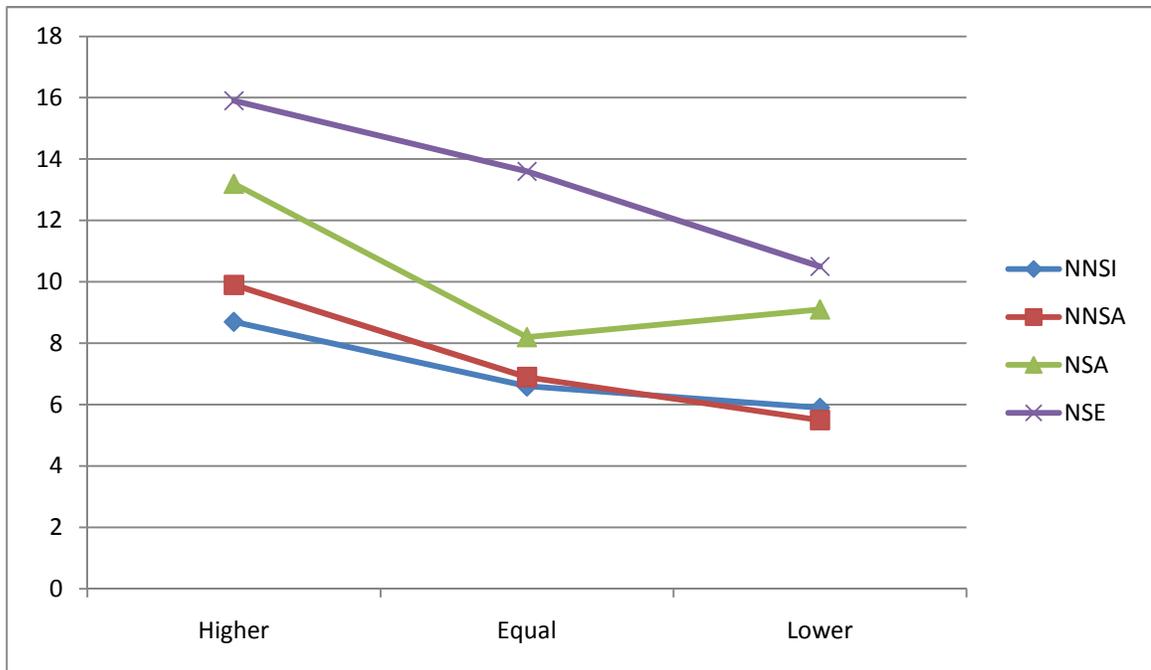


Figure 4-7. Number of Turns by Status

With regard to turn length, Figure 4-8 below shows that all three groups produced longer turns when interacting with someone Higher in status than with someone Equal or Lower in status. The average turn length for the Intermediate students in the Higher status situations was 8.7 words, and for the Advanced students 9.9 words. With regard to the NS groups, it was 13.2 words for the NSA group and 15.9 words for the NSE group. Both groups of learners produced shorter turns in the Equal Status category averaging 6.6 words for the Intermediate students and 6.9 words for the Advanced students. These two groups also produced their shortest turns when refusing an offer or a request from someone Lower in status with the Intermediate students averaging 5.9 words per turn and the Advanced students averaging 5.5 words per turn.



*Figure 4-8. Average Turn Length by Status*

The same pattern was exhibited by the NSE participants who used shorter turns in the Equal status situations and reserved their shortest turns for the Lower status situations. The participants in the NSA group, on the other hand, demonstrated a different pattern by producing longer turns in the Lower Status situations (9.1 words per turn) than in the Equal Status situations (8.2 words per turn). For comprehensive counts of words, turns, and average turn length per participant, per group, and per Role Play, please refer to Appendix I for the Intermediate students, Appendix J for the Advanced students, Appendix K for the NSA group and Appendix L for the NSE group.

### *Strategy Use by Role Play*

In this section the overall count of strategies used in the six refusal situations by all four groups is presented. First, a description of the differences among the four groups with regard to their strategy selection in each Role Play is provided. This is followed by a description of the most frequently used Indirect and Direct strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal used by each group in the six Role Plays.

A total of 31 strategies were found in the data: 3 Direct strategies, 23 Indirect strategies, and 5 Adjuncts to refusal. Please refer to Chapter 3 for a detailed description of these strategies. The majority of these strategies were used by participants in each of the four groups. However, there were some exceptions: the Indirect strategy of Proverbs/Common Sayings was used by the two NS groups and appeared a single time in the NNSI data but not in the NNSA data. The Indirect refusal strategy of Statement of Principle/Philosophy was used by the two NS groups and the Intermediate learner group only. In addition, the Indirect strategy Negative Consequences to Requester was not used by the Intermediate learner group while it was used by participants in the other three groups. Two other Indirect strategies that were not used by the Intermediate students were: Unspecified or Indefinite Reply and Setting Conditions for Acceptance. The strategy of Appeal to a Third Party was used by all the groups except the NSA group. With regard to Adjuncts to refusal, two strategies did not appear in the NSE data and these were: Invoking the Name of God, and Getting the Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter).

As Figure 4-9 and Table 4-4 below show, Direct refusal strategies accounted for 33% of all strategies used by the Intermediate students, 28.5% of the Advanced students, 25.7% of the NSE group, and 19.3% of the NSA group. So, among the four groups, the NSA group used the lowest percentage of Direct strategies.

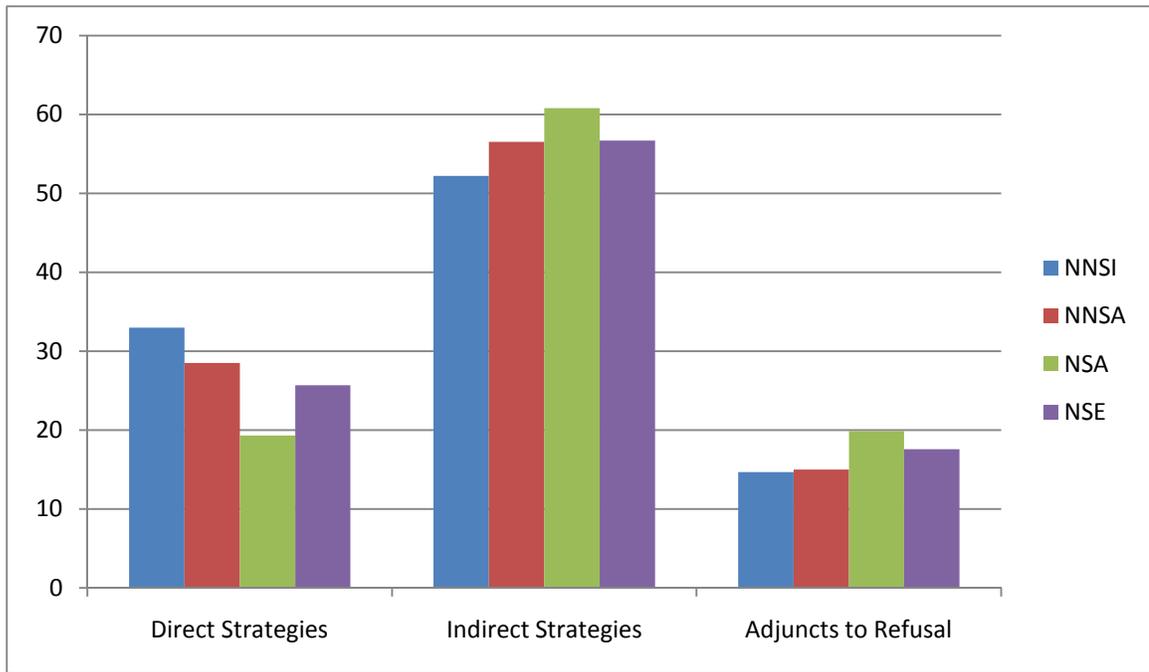


Figure 4-9. Overall Use of Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group

Indirect strategies accounted for the majority of strategies used by the participants in all the four groups and in all six refusal situations. Indirect strategies accounted for 52.2% of all the strategies used by the Intermediate students, 56.5% of all the strategies used by the Advanced students, 60.8% of all strategies used by the Egyptian group, and 56.7% of all strategies used by NSE group. With the Indirect strategies we see the reverse pattern observed with the Direct strategies: here the NSA group used a higher percentage of

Indirect strategies than the three other groups. Finally, with regard to Adjuncts to refusal, the NSA group also used the highest percentage of Adjuncts to refusal (19.9%), and it was followed by the NSE group at 17.6%, then the NNSA group at 15% and finally the NNSI group at 14.7%.

With regard to Direct refusal strategies, as Table 4-4 below shows, the Flat No strategy was the most frequently used strategy by NSA and NNSA groups. It accounted for 11.6% of all strategy use by the NSA group and 16.3% of all strategy use by the NNSA group. The Flat No strategy was the second most frequently used strategy by the NSE group, accounting for 10.4% of all strategy use by this group. This strategy was also the second most frequently used strategy by the NNSI group accounting for 16.6% of all their strategy use. The Negating a Proposition strategy was the second most frequently used strategy by the NSA and NNSA group and the second most frequently used strategy by the NSE and the NNSI group. It is interesting to note here that there are more similarities between the Advanced students and NSA group with regard to the frequency of use of the Flat No and Negating a Proposition strategies. These findings also show that while the native speakers of Arabic used the Flat No strategy more frequently than the Negating a Proposition strategy, native speakers of English prefer the reverse pattern. The Performative “I refuse” strategy was the least frequently used strategy, appearing only in the NS data and occurring only once in the Egyptian data and four times in the NSE data. Table 4-4 below provides a comprehensive frequency count and percentages of the overall strategy use by group in the six refusal situations.

Table 4-4

*Overall Strategy Use by Group*

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)					1	0.07	4	0.5
Flat No	147	16.4	162	16.3	156	11.6	87	10.4
Negating a Proposition	150	16.6	121	12.2	103	7.7	124	14.8
Total	297	33.0	283	28.5	260	19.3	215	25.7
Indirect Strategies								
Alternative	32	3.6	60	6.0	49	3.6	33	3.9
Statement of Regret	66	7.3	82	8.3	27	2.0	34	4.1
Excuse/Reason	172	19.1	200	20.1	258	19.2	181	21.7
Repetition of P. of Req.	13	1.4	10	1.0	11	1.1	5	0.6
Request for Info	27	3.0	32	3.2	35	2.6	17	2.0
Lack of Empathy	4	0.4	8	0.8	1	0.07	1	0.1
Postponement	15	1.7	8	0.8	45	3.3	5	0.6
Promise of Acceptance	7	0.7	4	0.4	5	0.4	2	0.2
Let off the Hook	86	9.6	86	8.7	144	10.7	126	15.0
Proverb	1	0.1			42	3.1	3	0.4
Hedging	15	1.7	11	1.1	41	3.0	18	2.2
Wish					17	1.3	6	0.7

Table 4-4 (continued)

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Indirect Strategies								
Self-Defense	5	0.6	6	0.6	8	0.6	10	1.2
Statement of Principle	2	0.2			9	0.7	4	0.5
Negative Consequences			2	0.2	12	0.9	1	0.1
Req. for Understanding	1	0.1	5	0.5	3	0.2	1	0.1
Topic/Focus Switch	3	0.3	10	1.0	25	1.9	1	0.1
Criticism/Reprimand	9	1.0	14	1.4	31	2.3	13	1.6
Unspecified Reply			1	0.1	24	1.8	1	0.1
Setting Conditions			4	0.4	12	0.9	2	0.2
Joke	3	0.3	10	1.0	6	0.4	5	0.6
Giving Advice	6	0.7	5	0.5	13	1.00	4	0.5
Appeal to a Third Party	4	0.4	3	0.3			1	0.1
Total	470	52.2	561	56.5	818	60.8	474	56.7
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation	49	5.4	39	3.9	44	3.3	46	5.5
Positive Opinion	75	8.3	68	6.8	144	10.7	94	11.2
Invoking Name of God	6	0.7	37	3.7	50	3.7		
Statement of Empathy	1	0.1	4	0.4	25	1.9	7	0.8
Interlocutor's Attention	1	0.1	1	0.1	4	0.3		
Total	132	14.7	149	15.0	267	19.9	147	17.6

As shown by Table 4-4 above, the most frequently used Indirect refusal strategy in all four groups was Excuse/Reason, accounting for roughly 20% of all strategies used by each group in the six refusal situations. The second most frequently used Indirect strategy for all the four groups was Letting Interlocutor off the Hook. It was most frequently used by the NSE group (15%) and least frequently used by the NNSA group (8.7%). It also accounted for 9.6% and 10.7% of all strategies used by NNSI and NSA groups respectively. However, it is important to point out that this is a special type of refusal strategy that seems to be situation dependent. It only occurred in RP 6 where participants were asked to refuse an offer of money from janitor who just broke the participant's china figurine while cleaning his or her office. This strategy will be discussed when describing findings from RP6. Table 4-5 below provides a list of the ten most frequently used Indirect strategies by the four groups in order of frequency.

Table 4-5

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason
Second	Let off Hook	Let off Hook	Let off Hook	Let off Hook
Third	Regret	Regret	Alternative	Regret
Fourth	Alternative	Alternative	Postponement	Alternative
Fifth	Request for Info	Request for Info	Request for Info	Hedging
Sixth	Postponement & Hedging	Criticism	Hedging	Request for Info
Seventh	Repetition of Part of Request	Hedging	Request for Information	Criticism
Eighth	Criticism	Repetition & Topic Switch & Joke	Criticism	Self-Defense
Ninth	Promise of Acceptance	Lack of Empathy & Postponement	Regret	Wish
Tenth	Giving Advice / Lecturing	Self-Defense	Unspecified or Indefinite Reply	Repetition & Postponement

It is important to point out that the third and fourth most frequently used Indirect strategies were the same for the two learner groups and the NSE group but were different for the NSA group. These strategies were: Statement of Regret, and Statement of Alternative. The fifth most popular strategy for the two learner groups was Request for Information/Clarification. This strategy was the sixth most frequently used strategy by the NSE group, with the fifth being Hedging for that group. However, Request for Information/Clarification came very close to Hedging since it occurred 17 times in the data and Hedging occurred 18 times. This shows that the patterns displayed by the two learner groups are very similar to those used by the NSE group with regard to strategy preference. The NSA participants, on the other hand, used the Statement of Alternative and Postponement as their third and fourth most frequently used strategies. The Statement of Regret strategy, which was the third most frequently used Indirect strategy by all three American groups was found to be the ninth most frequently used strategy by the Egyptian group. The fifth most frequently used Indirect strategy by the Egyptian group was Proverb/Common saying. This strategy, however, occurred only once in the NNSI data, and only 3 times in the NSE data, and it did not appear in the NNSA data. Hedging was found to be the sixth most frequently used Indirect strategy by the Egyptians but it was also preferred by the other three groups as explained above. The less popular strategies were different for the different groups. It is also important to point out that Postponement was less popular for the two learner groups and the NSE group when compared to the NSA group. For example, while Postponement was the fourth most popular Indirect strategy for the Egyptians, it was the six, ninth, and tenth for the NNSI, NNSA, and NSE groups respectively. One last point here is that the two learner groups

used the Statement of Regret and the Request for Information/Clarification strategies more frequently than the two NS groups. This is an interesting finding that was reported in other refusal studies, and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

With regard to Adjuncts to refusal, Table 4-6 below provides a ranking of the four most popular Adjuncts to refusals used by each of the four groups. The most frequently used strategy by all four groups was that of Statement of Positive Opinion, Feeling or Agreement. This strategy was used more frequently by the two NS groups than the two learner groups. It accounted for 8.3% of all strategies used by the NNSI group, 6.8% of all strategies used by the NNSA group, 10.7% of all strategies used by the NSA group and 11.2% of all strategies used by the NSE group.

Table 4-6

*Most Frequently Used Adjuncts by Group*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Positive Opinion	Positive Opinion	Positive Opinion	Positive Opinion
Second	Gratitude	Gratitude	Invoking God	Gratitude
Third	Invoking God	Invoking God	Gratitude	Empathy
Fourth	Empathy & Alerter	Empathy	Empathy	

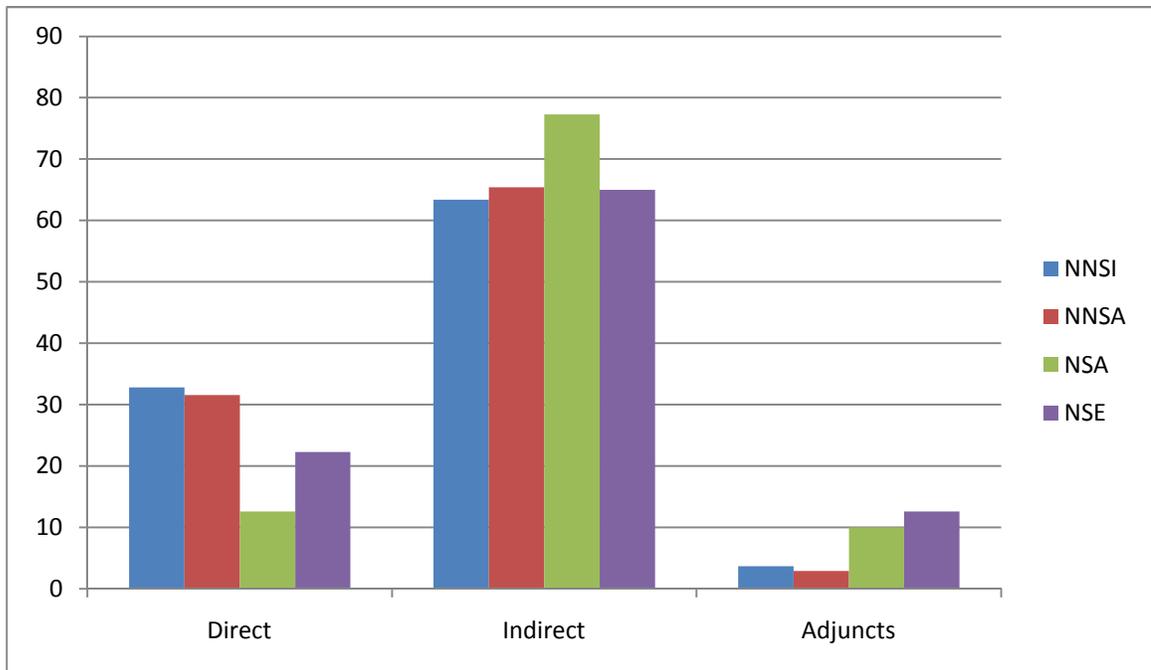
The second most frequently used strategy by the two learner groups and the NSE group was Gratitude/Appreciation whereas for the Egyptian group, it was Invoking the Name of

God. This last strategy did not appear in the NSE data and was used by the two learner groups as their third most frequently used strategy, accounting for 3.7% of all strategies used by the NNSA group and 0.7% of all strategies used by the NNSI group. The strategy Statement of Empathy/Concern occurred only once in the NNSI data and 4 times in the NNSA data. However, it was used more frequently by the Egyptian participants, occurring 25 times in the NSA data; it occurred only 7 times in the NSE data. This strategy and the strategy Gratitude/Appreciation are occurred in a similar pattern in the two learner groups and the NSE group.

In the following section a detailed description of the refusal strategies used by each group in each of the six Role Plays will be presented. In each Role Play an examination of the overall strategy use by each group will be presented. This will be followed by a detailed description of the most frequently used Direct and Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal. Rankings of the most frequently used strategies by each group will also be provided. Tables and graphic displays will be used to present the data.

### *Role Play 1*

In this Role Play the participants were asked to turn down a classmate's request to borrow the participant's lecture notes. So, this is a situation where the participant is asked to refuse a request from someone equal in status to the participant. Figure 4-10 below provides a visual representation of the overall use of Direct and Indirect strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal by the four groups in this Role Play.



*Figure 4-10.* Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group in Role Play 1

In this Role Play the two learner groups used a higher percentage of Direct refusal strategies than the two NS groups. The Egyptian participants used the lowest percentage of Direct strategies compared to the other three groups. Also, both learner groups and the NSE group used a similar number of Indirect strategies in this situation and these were: 63.4% for NNSI, 65.4% for NNSA, and 65% for NSE. The Egyptian group, on the other hand, used a considerably higher percentage of Indirect strategies (77.3%). This important difference will be discussed in Chapter 5. With regard to Adjuncts to refusal, the two NS groups used a markedly higher number of Adjuncts to refusal when compared to the two learner groups. Figure 4-10 above clearly shows the similarities between the NSE group and the two learner groups especially with regard the frequency of use of

Direct and Indirect strategies. The following paragraphs examine the individual strategies used by each group and their frequency in this Role Play.

The Direct strategy that was most frequently used by the Advanced students was the Flat No strategy, accounting for 19.9% of all strategies used by this group, and it was followed by the Negating a Proposition strategy, which accounted for 11.8% of all their strategies. The Intermediate students showed the reverse pattern as they used the Negating a Proposition strategy more frequently (19.4%) than the Flat No strategy (13.4%). Both learner groups, however, used the Flat No strategy much more frequently than the two NS groups. In fact the Flat No strategy appeared only 3 times in the NSA data and 4 times in the NSE data in this Role Play. The Egyptian group also used a lower percentage of the Negating a Proposition strategy than the NSE group.

The Indirect strategies used by the participants showed interesting differences. First, the most frequently used strategy by the two learner groups was Statement of Regret, accounting for 20.9% of all strategy use by the Intermediate students, and 14.7% of all strategy use by the Advanced students. Statement of Regret was also the second most frequently used strategy by the NSE group in addition to another strategy, Criticism/Reprimand and each accounted for 11.7% of all strategy use by this group. However, for the Egyptian group, the most frequently used strategy was Excuse/Reason accounting for 24.4% of all strategy use by this group. This strategy was the second most frequently used strategy by both the two learner groups and the NSE group. The second most frequently used strategy in the Egyptian data was the Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy. This strategy did not, in fact, appear in the NSE or the NNSI data and appeared

only once in the NNSA data. Table 4-7 below presents rankings of the five most frequently used strategies by each group in Role Play 1.

Table 4-7

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group in Role Play 1*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Regret	Regret	Excuse/Reason	Regret & Criticism
Second	Excuse/Reason	Excuse / Reason	Unspecified Reply	Excuse / Reason
Third	Criticism	Criticism	Regret & Advice	Hedging
Fourth	Alternative	Request for Info	Hedging	Alterative & Self-Defense
Fifth	Request for Info & Advice	Alternative & Lack of Empathy	Alternative & Request for Info & Criticism	Advice

Some of the Indirect strategies in this Role Play were only used by one or two groups. For example, the strategy Postponement and Setting Conditions for Acceptance appeared only in the Egyptian data. Also, the strategy Wish appeared only in the NSE and NSA data. The strategy Joke appeared only in the NNSA data and the strategy Negative Consequences to Requester appeared only in the NNSA and NSE data. Finally,

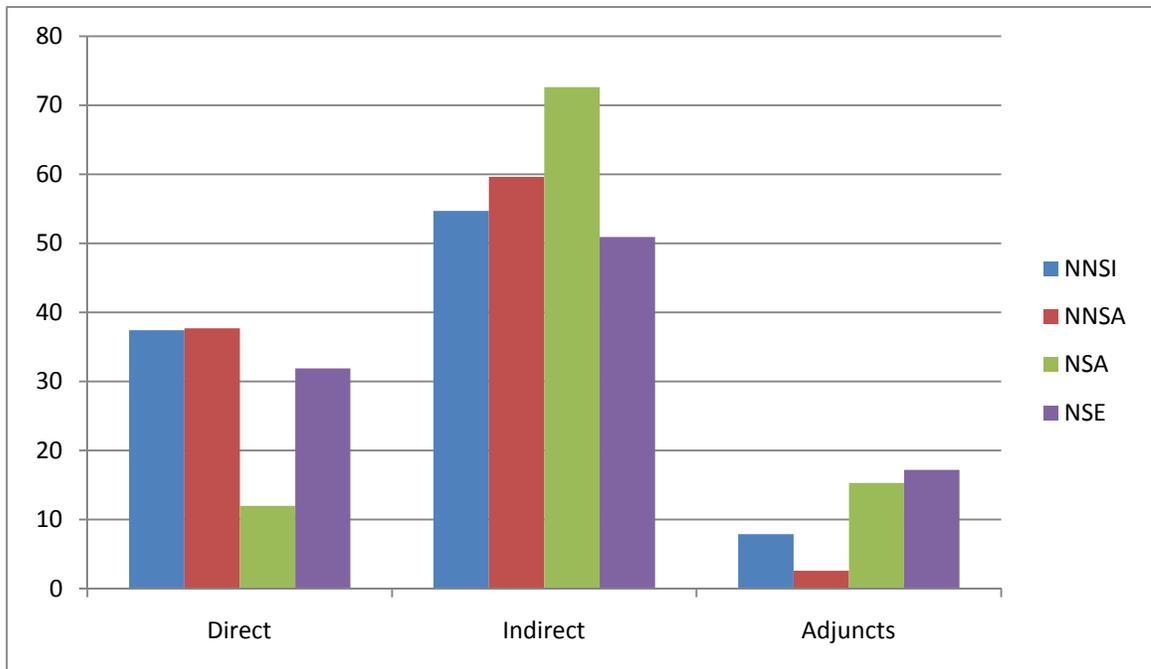
while the strategy Lack of Empathy appeared at least once in the two learner groups and the NSE group, it did not appear in the NSA data. The strategy Repetition of Part of the Request appeared only in the NNSI data and did not appear in data from the three other groups. Please refer to Appendix M for an overall strategy use by group in Role Play 1.

Finally, the two learner groups used a significantly lower percentage of Adjuncts to refusal as compared to the two NS groups. Adjuncts to refusal accounted for 3.7% of all strategies used by the Intermediate students and 3.9% of all strategies used by the Advanced students. However, for the two NS groups, it accounted for 10% of all strategies used by the NSA group and 12.6% of all strategies used by the NSE group. Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling or Agreement was the Adjuncts most frequently used by all the four groups. The second most frequently used Adjunct by the NSE group was Statement Empathy/Concern, accounting for 3.9% of all their strategy use, and for the NSA group it was Invoking the Name of God (2.5%). For the learner groups the second most frequently used Adjunct was Invoking the Name of God for the NNSA group and Getting Interlocutor's Attention for the NNSI group.

### *Role Play 2*

In Role Play 2 the participants were required to refuse a request from a supervisor at work to work 3 extra hours on Friday night. This RP is different from the first RP in that the interlocutor is interacting with someone higher in status. Figure 4-11 below provides visual display of the frequency of the Direct and Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal used by each group in this Role Play. In this Role Play, like in the previous one,

the two learner groups used a considerably higher percentage of Direct strategies than the two NS groups.



*Figure 4-11. Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group in Role Play 2*

The two learner groups also produced a similar percentage of Direct strategies: 37.4% for the NNSI group and 37.7% for the NNSA group. In a similar pattern to RP1, the NSA group produced the lowest percentage of Direct strategies (12%) and the NSE group produced more than double that percentage at 31.9%. In this RP, like in RP1, the learner groups produced patterns that were similar to those produced by the NSE group. With regard to Indirect strategies, the two learner groups produced more Indirect strategies than the NSE group but fewer than those produced by the NSA group. The NSA group produced a markedly higher percentage of Indirect strategies, which accounted for 72.6%

of all strategies used by this group in this RP. For the learner groups, these Indirect strategies accounted for 54.7% of all strategies used by the NNSI group and 59.6% of all strategies produced by the NNSA group. The NSE group produced the lowest percentage of Indirect strategies among the four groups (50.9%). With regard to Adjuncts to refusal, the highest percentage was produced by the NSE group (17.2%) and this was followed by the NSA group (15.3%). The two learner groups produced a considerably lower percentage of Adjuncts, which accounted for 7.9% of all strategies used by the NNSI group and 2.6% of all strategies used by the NNSA group.

The Direct refusal strategies used by the learner groups were divided almost equally between the two categories of Flat No and Negating a Proposition. For the NNSI group the Flat No strategy accounted for 18% of all the strategies used and for the NNSA group it accounted for 20.5% of all their strategy use. The Negating a Proposition strategy accounted for 19.4% of all strategies used by the NNSI group and 17.2% of all strategies used by the NNSA group. The two NS groups showed a different pattern as they both produced a notably lower percentage of the Flat No strategy, which accounted for 3.3% of the strategies used by the NSA group and 4.3% of all strategies used by the NSE group. However, the NSE group used a markedly higher percentage of the Negating a Proposition strategy at 27.6% as compared to the NSA group at 8.7%.

With regard to Indirect strategies used by each of the groups, the most frequently used strategy was Excuse/Reason accounting for at least 25% of all the strategies used by each of the four groups. Statement of Regret was the second most frequently used Indirect strategy by the two learner groups accounting for 10.1% and 15.9% of all strategies used by the NNSI and NNSA groups respectively. It was also the second most

frequently used strategy by the NSE group (10.3%). It is interesting to note here that the Statement of Regret was the first most frequently used strategy by the three American groups in RP1, and the second most frequently used strategy by all three groups in RP2. For the NSA group, the second most frequently used Indirect strategy in RP 2 was Hedging (7.3%). The third most frequently used Indirect strategy by all the four groups was Statement of Alternative. Table 4-8 below for rankings of the most frequently used strategies by the four groups in RP2.

Table 4-8

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group in Role Play 2*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason
Second	Regret	Regret	Hedging	Regret
Third	Alternative	Alternative	Alternative	Alternative
Fourth	Request for Info	Self-Defense	Request for Info	Self-Defense
Fifth	Hedging, Self-Defense & Principle	Request for Info & Hedging	Repetition & Unspecified Reply	Wish

It is important to point out that certain Indirect strategies were only used by some of the groups but not all of them. For example, the Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy appeared only in the NSA data. Another strategy that appeared only in the NSA data was

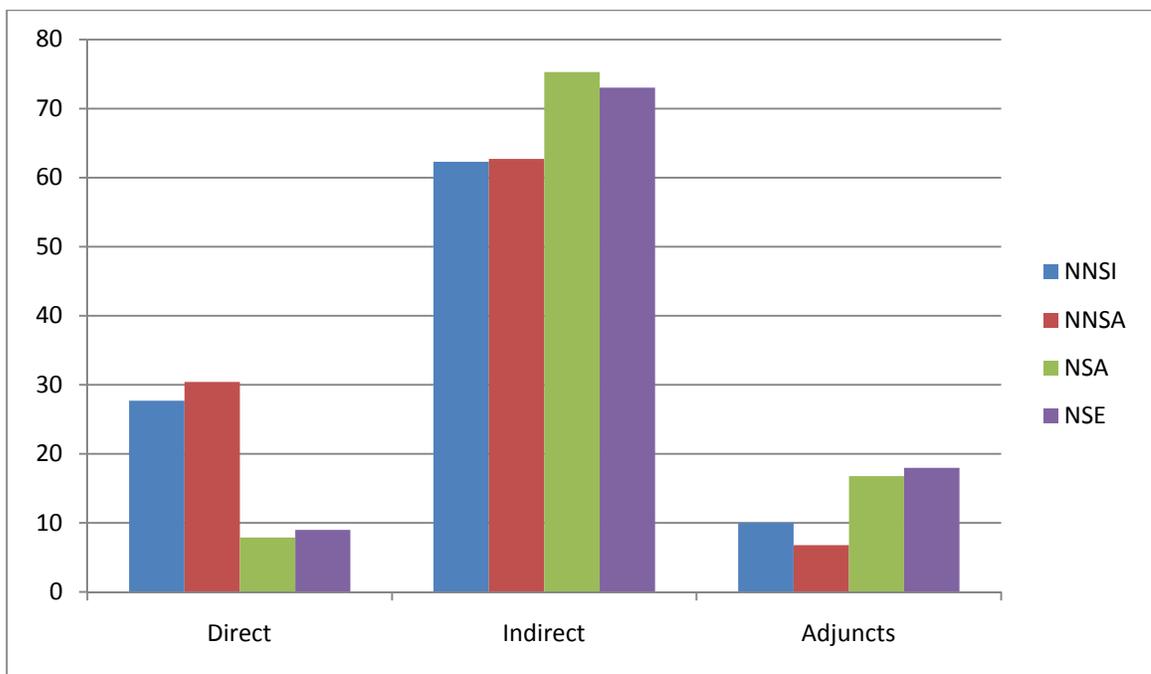
Promise of Future Acceptance and it occurred once. One Indirect strategy that appeared in data from the two NS groups but did not occur in data from either learner group was the Wish strategy and it occurred twice in the NSA data and 3 times in the NSE data. It is also interesting to notice that there were 3 strategies that only appeared in the NNSI data and were not found in data from the three other groups and these were: Statement of Principle, Topic/Focus Switch, and Joke. The first one occurred twice and the other two occurred once each. Finally, the Indirect strategy of Setting Conditions for Acceptance was used by the two NS groups and the NNSA group but not by the NNSI group. This is an important finding and will be further discussed in Chapter 5. Please refer to Appendix N for overall strategy use by group in Role Play 2

Finally, the Adjuncts to refusal used by the participants in this Role Play showed patterns similar to those from Role Play 1. In a similar pattern to RP1, the NSE group used the highest percentage of Adjuncts (17.2%) and the NNSA group used the lowest percentage (2.6%). Also, in a similar pattern to Role Play 1, both NS groups used a higher percentage of these Adjuncts than the two learner groups. Here again the most frequently used Adjunct was the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling. The second most frequently strategy used by the NSE group was Gratitude/Appreciation and by the NSA group was both Gratitude/Appreciation and Invoking the Name of God. The second most frequently used Adjunct by the NNSI group was also Gratitude/Appreciation but for the NNSA group it was Statement of Empathy/Concern. In fact the strategy Statement of Empathy/Concern was only used by the NNSA group in this Role Play. It is important to point out here that neither learner group used the strategy Invoking the Name of God, which appeared 6 times in the NSA data and was used by 3 participants. Finally, the

strategy Getting Interlocutor's Attention was not used by any participants in the four groups.

*Role Play 3*

This Role Play is similar to the previous two in that it is a refusal of a request but it is different from them in that the interlocutor is of a relatively lower status to the participant. In this situation the participant is asked to refuse a request for an interview for a school project from a friend's younger brother. Figure 4-12 below presents a visual display of the overall frequency of Direct and Indirect strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal used by each group in this Role Play.



*Figure 4-12. Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group in Role Play 3*

In a similar pattern to that observed in RP1 and RP2, the two learner groups used a higher percentage of Direct strategies than the two NS groups, with NNSI group at 27.7% and the NNSA group at 30.4%. However, unlike RP1 and RP2, the percentage of Direct strategies used by the two NS groups was similar: 7.9% for the NSA group and 9% for the NSE group. The reader is reminded that in both RP1 and RP2 the NSE group used a markedly higher percentage of Direct strategies than the NSA group. With regard to Indirect strategies, the two NS groups used a similar percentage of strategies which accounted for 75.3% of all strategies used by the NSA group and 73% of all strategies used by the NSE group. These percentages were also higher than the percentages used by the two learner groups which were 62.3% for the NNSI group and 62.7 for the NNSA group. The two NS groups also used a higher percentage of Adjuncts to refusal than the two learner groups: 16.8% for the NSA group and 18% for the NSE group. In a pattern consistent with that observed in RP1 and RP2, the NSE group also used a higher percentage of Adjuncts than the NSA group. This is an important finding that will be discussed in Chapter 5. In this RP, the Intermediate students used a higher percentage of Adjuncts than the Advanced students. This is also interesting because the Intermediate students in RP1 and RP2 also used a higher percentage of these Adjuncts than the Advanced students.

The Direct refusal strategies used in this Role Play display patterns that are both similar and different from the patterns used in RP1 and RP2. For example, while the two NS groups used a lower percentage of Direct strategies than the two learner groups in a manner consistent with RP1 and RP2, these Direct strategies were used differently. In RP 3 the Egyptian group used for the first time a higher percentage of the Flat No strategy

than the NSE group. Also, while the Flat No strategy occurred only once in the NSE data, it occurred 10 times in the NSA data. However, with regard to the Negation of a Proposition strategy the NSE group continued to use a higher frequency of this strategy (8%) than the Egyptians (2.6%) in a similar manner to RP1 and RP2. Also, in a similar pattern to RP1 and RP2, the NNSA group continued to use a higher percentage of the Flat No strategy than the NNSI group. Also, consistent with RP1 and RP2, the NNSI group continued to use a higher percentage of the Negating a Proposition strategy than their Advanced counterparts. The Strategy Performative was not used by any of the groups in this Role Play.

With regard to the Indirect refusals used by the participants, the strategy Excuse/Reason was the most frequently used strategy by the following three groups: NNSI, NSA, and NSE. The most frequently used strategy by the NNSA group, on the other hand, was Statement of Alternative occurring 29 times. However, it is important to point out that the Excuse/Reason strategy came as a close second, occurring 28 times. It is important to point out here that the NSE group used a markedly higher percentage of the Excuse/Reason strategy (41%) than the NSA group (25.7%), the NNSI group (23.1%) and the NNSA group (17.4%). This is in fact different from the trend observed in RP1 and RP2 where the Egyptian participants used the highest percentage of this strategy. The second most frequently used strategy by the two NS groups was Statement of Alternative and it was also the second most frequently used strategy by the NNSI group, along with the Statement of Regret and Request for Information / Clarification strategy. Finally, it is important to point out that the strategy Statement of Regret continued to be one of the most frequently used strategies by the two learner groups as well as the NSE group. It

was the second most frequently used strategy in RP1 and RP2 for the three American groups and in RP 3 it was either the second or third most frequently used strategy for each of these groups. Also, in a consistent pattern with RP1 and RP2, it was one of the least frequently used strategies by the Egyptian group. Table 4-9 below provides rankings of the five most frequently used strategies by each group in RP3

Table 4-9

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group in Role Play 3*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Excuse/Reason	Alternative	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason
Second	Regret, Alternative & Request for Info	Excuse/Reason	Alternative	Alternative
Third	Repetition	Regret	Request for Info	Regret
Fourth	Hedging	Request for Info	Negative Consequences	Request for Info
Fifth	Postponement & Promise of Acceptance	Repetition	Postponement	Postponement, Hedging, Unspecified & Setting Conditions

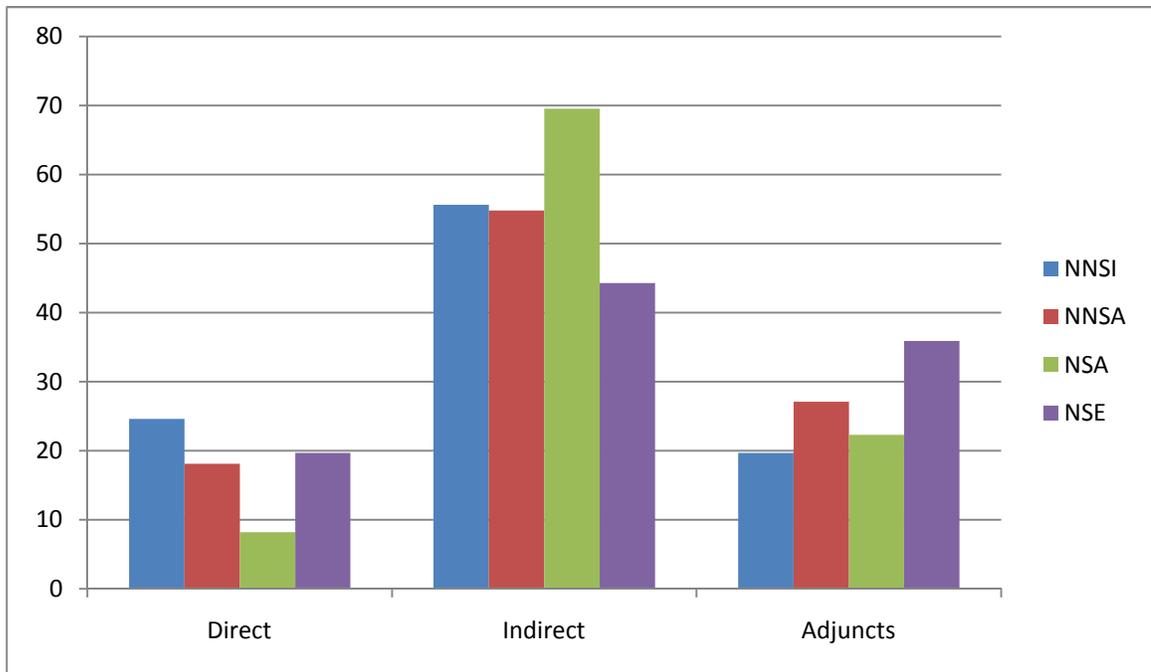
In RP3, like in RP1 and RP2, a number of Indirect strategies were not used by some of the groups. For example, the strategy Repetition of Part of the Request was used by all the groups except the NSE group. Another strategy, Postponement, was used by all the groups except the NNSA group. More importantly, the strategy Setting Conditions for Acceptance was used by all the groups except the NNSI group. This pattern is similar to the pattern observed in RP2 where this particular strategy was used by the two NS groups and the Advanced students but not by the Intermediate students. This will be discussed in the Chapter 5 in some detail. It is also important to examine those strategies that were used by only one group. For example, the strategy Proverb/Common Saying only appeared in the NSA data. It occurred 5 times and it was used by 3 participants. Another strategy that only appeared in the NSA data was Negative Consequences to Requester, which occurred 12 times and was used by 3 participants too. Two other strategies that appeared only in the NSA data were Lack of Empathy, occurring only once, and Giving Advice/Lecturing, occurring twice. The strategy Topic/Focus Switch appeared only in the NNSI data and it occurred once. Finally, the strategy Criticism/Reprimand only appeared in the NNSA and NSA data. Please refer to Appendix O for overall strategy use by group in Role Play 3.

The Adjuncts to refusal used in this RP3 are similar to those used in RP1 and RP2 in that the most frequently used strategy was Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. However, the second most frequently used strategy was not the same for all the groups. For example, for the two NS groups it was Statement of Empathy or Concern. It occurred in the NSA data 5 times and only once in the NSE data. The second most frequently used strategy for the NNSI group was Gratitude/Appreciation and for the

NNSA group it was Invoking the Name of God. The only other group that used the Invoking the Name of God strategy was the NSA group. The NSA group was also the only other group that used the Gratitude/Appreciation strategy. In fact, the NSA group used five different strategies in the Adjuncts category whereas each of the other three groups used either two or three.

#### *Role Play 4*

This role play is similar to RP2 in that the participant is interacting with someone higher in status. However, it differs from RP2 in that the participant is turning down an offer rather than refusing a request. As Figure 4-13 below shows, this Role Play displays patterns similar to those observed in RP2. In this Role Play, like in RP2, the NSA group used a considerably lower percentage of Direct strategies (8.2%) than the three American groups. The three American groups used a similar percentage of Direct strategies although the NNSI group used a higher percentage of these strategies (24.6%) than either the NNSA group (18%) or the NSE group (19.7%).



*Figure 4-13.* Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group in Role Play 4

It is also important to notice here the large difference between the two learner groups in their use of the Direct strategies. It is a larger difference than that observed in the previous three Role Plays. With regard to Indirect strategies, in a pattern similar to RP 2, the NSE group used a lower percentage of Indirect strategies (44.3%) than either the NNSI group (55.6%) or the NNSA group (54.8%). Also, in a similar pattern to RP2, the NSA group used the highest percentage of Indirect strategies, which accounted for 69.5% of all the strategies used by this group. Finally, with regard to Adjuncts to refusal, there were both similarities and differences in how they were used as compared to the previous Role Plays. For example, in a similar pattern to the previous Role Plays, the NSE group used the highest percentage of Adjuncts (35.9%) and the Intermediate students used the lowest (19.7%). However, the Advanced students, for the first time, used a higher percentage of

Adjuncts (27.1%) than the NSA group (22.3). This is another important finding and it will be discussed in Chapter 5

The distribution of the Direct refusal strategies used in this Role Play is different from what was observed in the previous Role Plays. The most striking difference is that the two learner groups used the lowest percentages of the Flat No strategy, which accounted for only 2.1% of all the strategies used by the NNSI group and 3.4% of all the strategies used by the NNSA group. The Flat No strategy also appeared only twice in the NSA data and did not appear in the NSE data. What is interesting here is that the two learner groups maintained the same pattern that they displayed in the previous three Role Plays, with Intermediate students using the Negating a Proposition strategy more frequently than the Flat No strategy and the Advanced students displaying the reverse pattern. Also, in a similar pattern to that observed in the previous Role Plays, the NSE group used a higher percentage of Negating a Proposition strategy (17.6%) than the NSA group (6.9%). Finally, it is important to note the difference between the two learner groups in their use of the Negating a Proposition strategy with the NNSI using it 22.5% of the time and the NNSA using it 14.7% of the time. This is a considerably larger difference than what was observed in the previous Role Plays. Finally, the strategy Performative was used only once by the NSA group and 3 times by the NSE group, but was not used by either learner group.

With regard to the Indirect strategies, the most frequently used Indirect strategy by all four groups in this Role Play was the Excuse/Reason strategy, and this is consistent with the pattern observed in the previous Role Plays. This strategy accounted for 31% of all the strategies used by the NNSI group, 34.5% of all strategies used by NNSA, 33.9%

of all strategies used by the NSA group, and finally 27.5% of all strategies used by the NSE group. The second and third most frequently used strategies were different for the different groups although there were more similarities among the two learner groups. For example, the second and third most frequently used strategies for the Intermediate students were Postponement and Regret, and for the Advanced students were Regret and Postponement, in addition to Request for Information/Clarification. For the two NS groups the second most frequently used strategy was Hedging. Hedging was also found to be the fourth most frequently used strategy by the two learner groups. Table 4-10 below provides rankings of the five most frequently used strategies by each group in this Role Play.

Table 4-10

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group in Role Play 4*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason
Second	Postponement	Regret	Hedging	Hedging & Request for Info
Third	Regret	Postponement & Request for Info	Postponement	Repetition of Part of the Request
Fourth	Hedging	Hedging	Wish	Regret & Postponement
Fifth	Request for Info & Appeal to Third Party	Request for Understanding	Alternative	Alternative & Principle

A number of strategies were only used by one group in this Role Play. For example, two strategies appeared only in the learner data: Promise of Future Acceptance appeared only in the NNSI data and Topic/Focus Switch appeared only in the NNSA data. There were also four strategies that only appeared in the NSA data and these were: Wish, Self-Defense, Setting Conditions for Acceptance, and Proverb/Common Saying. The strategy of Statement of Principle or Philosophy also only appeared in the two NS groups. In addition, the strategy Request for Understanding/Consideration was used by

the two learner groups and the NSA group but not the NSE group. Finally, the strategy Appeal to a Third Party was only used by the two learner groups. Please refer to Appendix P for overall strategy use by group in Role Play 4.

The Adjuncts to the refusal that the participants used in this Role Play were similar to those observed in the previous three Role Plays in that the most frequently used strategy was Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. While the two NS groups and the NNSA group used almost the same percentage of this strategy (approximately 16%), the NNSI group used a lower percentage (10.6%). The second most frequently used strategy by all the groups was Gratitude/Appreciation. The two learner groups and the NSE group used this strategy more frequently than the NSA group. In fact the NSE group used this strategy almost four times more than the NSA group. Finally, the strategy Invoking the Name of God was used by the two learner groups and the NSA group. What is interesting here is that this strategy occurred more frequently in the NNSA data (3.9%) than in the NSA data (1.3%). This was not the case in the previous three Role Plays.

#### *Role Play 5*

In this Role Play the participants were asked to refuse an offer of a dessert from a host at the end of a meal. This Role Play is similar to RP 1 in that the participant is interacting with someone equal in status, but is different from that RP in that the participant here is turning down an offer rather than refusing a request. With regard to the strategies used, this RP is different from the previous four in that all four groups of participants used a higher percentage of Direct strategies, as show by Figure 4-14 below.

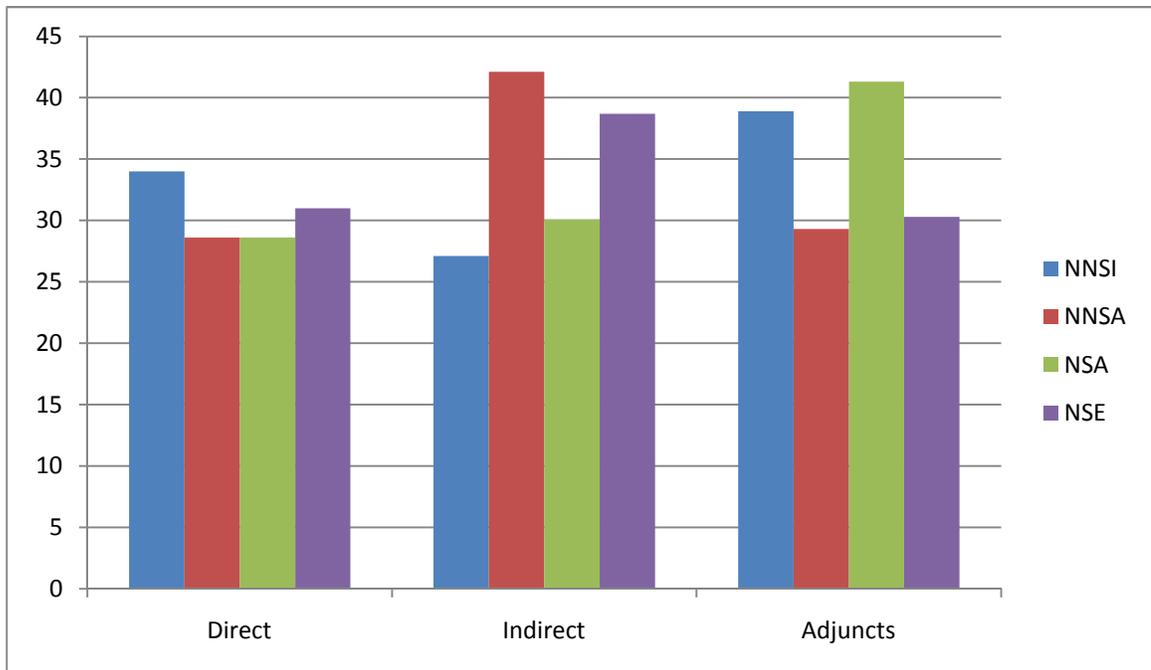


Figure 4-14. Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group in Role Play 5

The NNSI group used the highest percentage of Direct strategies (34%) and it was followed closely by the NSE group (31%). Direct strategies also accounted for 28.6% of all strategies used by the NNSA group and all strategies used by the NSA group. In a pattern different from that observed in the previous four Role Plays, the NSA group did not use a lower percentage of Direct strategies than the other groups. This Role Play is also different from the previous ones in that the NSA group did not use the highest percentage of Indirect strategies compared to the other groups. In fact the highest percentage of Indirect strategies was produced by the NNSA group (42.1%) and the second highest was produced by the NSE group (38.7%). The Indirect strategies accounted for 30.1% of all the strategies used by the NSA group and 27.1% of all the strategies used by the NNSI group. Another observation that makes this Role Play

different from the previous ones has to do with the frequency of Adjuncts. Unlike the previous four Role Plays in which the NSE group consistently used the highest percentage of Adjuncts, in this Role Play the NSA group used the highest percentage (41.3%) and it was followed closely by the NNSI group at 38.9%. The NSE and NNSA groups used almost the same percentage of Adjuncts: 30.3% and 29.3% respectively. This is another important finding that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The Direct strategies used in this Role Play are also different from the ones used in the previous four. One important observation is the higher frequency of the Flat No strategy used by all four groups. Also, the NSA group used, for the first time, a markedly higher percentage of both the Flat No strategy (10.4%) and the Negating a Proposition strategy (18.1%) as compared to the previous four Role Plays. However, in a manner consistent with that observed in the previous Role Plays, the NSE group used a higher percentage of Negating a Proposition strategy than the NSA group. In this Role Play the NNSI group used a higher percentage of the Flat No strategy (16%) than the NNSA group (11.4%), for the first time. Both groups also used almost the same percentage of Negating a Proposition strategy.

The most frequently used Indirect refusal strategy in this RP, as in the previous ones, was Excuse/Reason, accounting for 17.3% of all the strategies used by the NNSI group, 23.6% of all strategies used by the NNSA group, 16.2% of all strategies used by the NSA group and 27.7% of the strategies used by the NSE group. The second most frequently used strategy was different for the four groups. However, in a similar pattern to what was observed in the previous RP's, the strategy Statement of Regret continued to be one of the most frequently used strategies by the two learner groups as well as the

NSE group. This strategy was used by these three groups in RP 4 as either the second or third most frequently used strategy. The second most frequently used strategy by the NSA group, on the other hand, was Postponement, which accounted for 6.6% of all strategies used by this group. The NNSI group also used this strategy more frequently than the NNSA group or the NSE groups. Another strategy that was consistently used by the two learner groups and the NSE group was Statement of Alternative, appearing at least 4 times in the data from each of these groups. Table 4-11 below provides a list of the five most frequently used Indirect strategies by each of the four groups in RP 5.

Table 4-11

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group in Role Play 5*

Ranking	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason
Second	Regret	Alternative	Postponement	Alternative
Third	Postponement	Regret	Joke	Regret, Postponement & Future Acceptance
Fourth	Alternative	Repetition	Topic Switch	Hedging & Wish & Req. for Info
Fifth	Future Acceptance	Postponement	Regret & Principle	

In a similar pattern to that observed in the previous Role Plays, a number of Indirect strategies were exclusively used by some of the groups. For example, the following three strategies were only used by the NSA group: Proverb/Common Saying, Statement of Principle/Philosophy, and Setting Conditions for Acceptance. This is interesting because these three strategies were also exclusively used by this group in RP4 as explained above. The strategy Proverb/Common Saying was also exclusively used by the NSA group in RP3 as mentioned above. The strategy Hedging was used by all the groups except the NNSI group. The strategy Joke appeared in the NNSA and NSA data but it was used more frequently by the NSA group (6 times) as compared to the NNSA group (only once). Another strategy that was exclusively used by the Advanced students and the NSA group was Topic/Focus Switch. Finally, one strategy that was only used by the two NS groups was Wish. This is also significant because this strategy was never used by the learner groups. Please refer to Appendix Q for overall strategy use by group in Role Play 5.

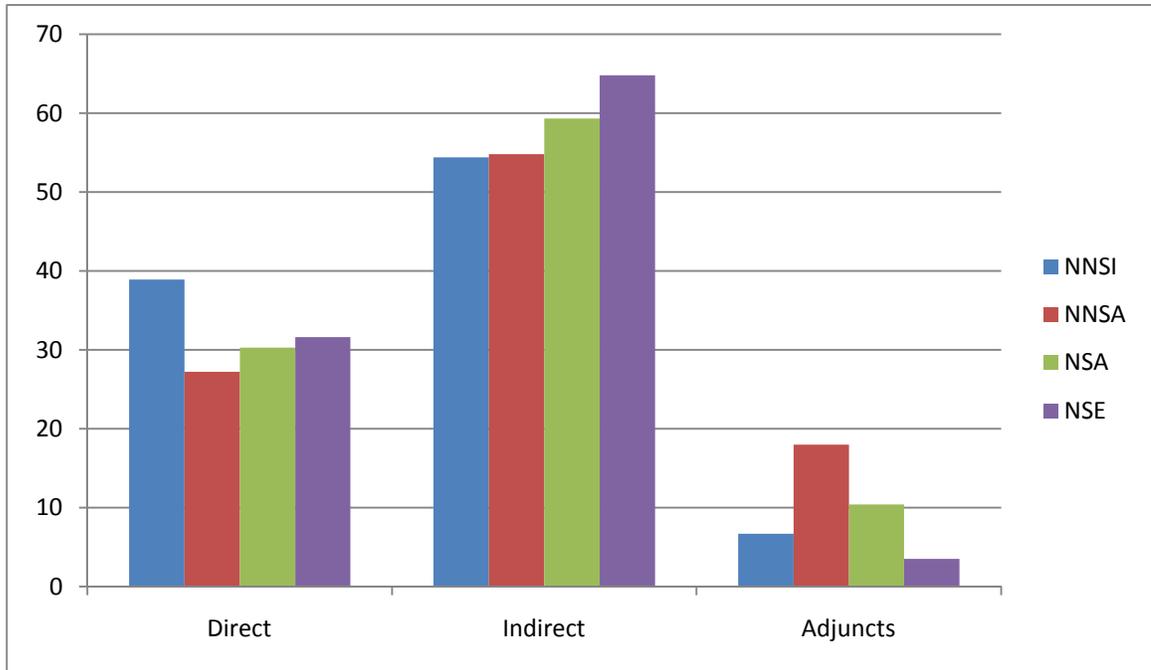
The Adjuncts used in this Role Play are similar in some ways to those used in the previous four Role Plays but they are also different in some respects. One similarity is that the most frequently used Adjunct was Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. The NSA group also used the highest percentage of this strategy as compared to the other groups. It is also important to mention that this strategy was used more frequently by all the groups in RP5 and in RP4. The reader is reminded that both Role Plays involve refusal of an offer. It is important to take notice also of the frequent use of the strategy Gratitude/Appreciation, which was used frequently in RP4 as well. However, in a pattern different from that observed in RP4, where the NSE group used the highest

percentage of this strategy, in RP5 the NNSI group used the highest percentage (17.3%) and it was followed by NNSA group (10%), the NSE group (9.2%), and finally the NSA group (7.7%). The strategy Invoking the Name of God was used by the two learner groups, and consistent with the pattern observed in the previous Role Plays the Advanced students used it more frequently than the Intermediate students. The NSA group used this strategy more frequently than the NNSA group. In fact it occurred 24 times in the NSA data and only 7 times in the NNSA data. The strategy Getting Interlocutor's Attention was only used by the NNSA and NSA groups. Finally, the strategy Statement of Empathy/Concern only appeared in the NSA data.

#### *Role Play 6*

Role Play 6 is similar to Role Plays 4 and 5 in that the participant were asked to turn down an offer. However, it is different from these two Role Plays in that the offer was made by someone lower in status to the participant. In this situation the participant is required to turn down an offer of money from a Janitor who just broke a china figurine that was on the participant's desk, while cleaning. Figure 4-15 below provides a visual representation of the findings. With regard to the Direct strategies used, RP6 is similar to RP5 in that the participants used a higher percentage of Direct strategies in these two Role Plays than in the previous four. Consistent with patterns observed in the previous Role Plays, the NNSI group used the highest percentage of Direct strategies at 38.9%. The second highest percentage of Direct strategies was used by the NSE group (31.6%), the third by the NSA group (30.3%), and the least by the NNSA group (27.2%). In this Role Play 6, like in RP4 and RP5, the Intermediate students used a considerably higher percentage of Direct strategies than the Advanced students. With regard to Indirect

strategies, the NSE group used the highest percentage (64.8%), and the NSA group used the second highest percentage (59.3%).



*Figure 4-15.* Direct and Indirect Strategies and Adjuncts by Group in Role Play 6

The two learner groups used almost the same percentage of Indirect strategies, with the NNSI group using them 54.4% of the time and the NNSA 54.8% of the time. It is important to note also that while the NSA group used the highest percentage of Indirect strategies in the first four Role Plays, in Role Play 6, as in RP5, the Egyptian participants used Indirect strategies less frequently when compared to the other three groups. Finally, the Adjuncts to refusal were used most frequently by the NNSA group (18%), followed by the NSA group (10.4%), then the NNSI group (6.7%), and finally the NSE group (3.5%). It is important to point out here that this pattern is markedly different from the

pattern observed in RP4 and RP5 in which a considerably higher percentage of Adjuncts were used by all four groups. The pattern seen here is similar to the one observed in RP1 where a lower percentage of Adjuncts was used. The following paragraphs present a closer look at the individual strategies that the participants used under the categories of Direct and Indirect strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal.

First, the Direct refusal strategies used by the participants in Role Play 6 are markedly different from the ones observed in the previous Role Plays. In this Role Play the participants in the four groups used a markedly higher percentage of the Flat No strategy than in any other previous Role Play. The highest percentage (31.1%) was used by the NNSI group and the lowest (24.1%) by the NNSA group. It is important to point out here that in this Role Play, as in Role Play 5, the NNSI group used a higher percentage of the Flat No strategy than the NNSA group. In the first four Role Plays, however, this pattern was reversed. This Role Play is also different from the previous five in that all the four groups used a very low percentage of the Negating a Proposition strategy. The highest percentage of Negating a Proposition strategy (7.8%) was used by the NNSI group and the lowest (2.5%) by the NSA group. The use of Direct strategies in this Role Play will be further discussed Chapter 5.

With regard to Indirect strategies, the most frequently used strategy for all the groups was Let Interlocutor off the Hook. As mentioned previously, this strategy seems to be situation-specific rather than a general refusal strategy since it was only used in Role Play 6. In this RP the participant turns down an offer of money from a janitor who is trying to pay for a china figurine that he broke while cleaning the participant's desk. The participant refuses to take the money and explains to the janitor that this "was not a big

deal” and that the janitor “should not worry about it.” Such expressions are examples of Let Interlocutor off the Hook strategy. This strategy was most frequently used by the NSE group and it accounted for 49.2% of all their strategy use. The NNSI group also used it very frequently (44.6%). The NNSA and NSA groups used this strategy relatively less frequently than the other two groups and it accounted for 37.7% and 36.6% of all their strategy use respectively. It is important to point out here that with the exception of RP1, RP6 was the only Role Play in which the Excuse/Reason strategy was not the most frequently used strategy by all four groups. The second most frequently used strategy in RP6 was not the same for the four groups. However, here again we can identify a pattern that was observed in the previous Role Plays where the two learner groups showed the same tendencies exhibited by the NSE group with regard to their strategy preference. The second and third most frequently used strategies for the two learner groups as well as for the NSE group were: Excuse/Reason and Joke. The second and third most frequently used strategy by the NSA group, on the other hand, were Proverb/Common Saying and Criticism/Reprimand. Table 4-12 below provides rankings of the most frequently used strategies by the four groups in this Role Play.

Table 4-12

*Most Frequently Used Indirect Strategies by Group in Role Play 6*

Rankings	NNSI	NNSA	NSA	NSE
First	Let Interlocutor Off the Hook			
Second	Excuse/Reason	Excuse/Reason	Proverbs	Excuse/Reason
Third	Joke	Joke	Criticism	Joke
Fourth	Topic Switch	Topic Switch	Topic Switch	Proverbs & Principle
Fifth		Request for Info	Principle	Criticism, Topic Switch & Alternative

Some of the Indirect strategies were exclusively used by some of the groups. One strategy that only appeared in the NSA data was Hedging and another one that appeared exclusively in the NNSA data was Request for Information/Clarification. It is also important to point out that the strategy Joke appeared only in the learner and the NSE data. Another important point here is that while the strategy Excuse/Reason was the second most frequently used strategy by the two learner groups as well as the NSE group, it accounted for only 0.5% of all strategies used by the NSA group. Also, while the Proverb/Common Saying strategy was only used by the two NS groups, there was a

marked difference in the frequency of use of this strategy between the two groups. While it appeared only 3 times in the NSE data it appeared 35 times in the NSA data, and it accounted for almost 9% of all the strategies used by the Egyptians. It is also important to point out that this strategy was used by 8 out of the 10 Egyptian participants, and it was used by only 2 out of the 10 American participants in the NSE group. Another strategy that was also used by these two NS groups was Criticism/Reprimand and it was used in a similar pattern to that of the Proverb/Common Saying strategy: while it appeared only once in the NSE data, it appeared 26 times in the NSA data. This strategy was also used by 4 participants in the NSA group. Please refer to Appendix R for overall strategy use by group in Role Play 6.

With regard to Adjuncts to refusal, they were used in Role Play 6 in a different pattern from that observed in previous Role Plays. The first difference to notice is that Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement was the most frequently used strategy for only two of the four groups, and these were the NNSI group (3.6%) and the NSE group (2%). The most frequently used strategy for the NSA group was Statement of Empathy (4.1%). This strategy was also used by the three other groups but it accounted for less than 1% of their total strategy use. The most frequently used strategy by the NNSA group was Invoking the Name of God (9.2%). This strategy was also the second most frequently used strategy by the Egyptian group and the third most frequently used strategy used for the NNSI group. The strategy Gratitude/Appreciation was also used by all four groups but it was most frequently used by the NNSA group, accounting for 5.3% of all their strategy use. Finally, the strategy Getting Interlocutor's Attention was only used by the NSA group and it appeared twice in the NSA data.

In the following section we look at the distribution of Direct and Indirect strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal across the six Role Plays and across the three status relationships as well as with regard to the type of refusal. This section pays a closer look at the three major categories of refusal, Direct, Indirect, and Adjuncts and how they were distributed over the six role plays as well as looking at how they were affected by change in the status of the interlocutor relative to the participant. The goal here is to find out if the frequency of use of these strategies would be affected by contextual factors such as status. The first section looks at the Direct refusal strategy, including the Flat No strategy. The Flat No strategy was selected for further since it seems to represent the strongest way to express refusal in both Arabic and English. This section also looks at the type of refusal (refusal of requests vs. offers) affected strategy use.

### *Direct Strategies*

#### *Direct Strategies by Role Play*

The first observation to be made when examining Table 4-13 and Figure 4-16 below is that the Intermediate students used the highest percentage of Direct strategies in every Role Play except two: Role Play 2 (Bookstore) and Role Play 3 (Interview) where the Advanced students used a slightly higher percentage of these strategies. Another observation is that the Intermediate and Advanced students exhibit patterns similar to those displayed by the NSE group. In fact, the only time when the two learner groups exhibited a different pattern from the NSE group was in Role Play 3 (Interview) where they both used a markedly higher percentage of Direct strategies than the NSE

participants. In general, it seems that there is some evidence of transfer. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4-13

*Direct Strategies by Role Play*

Role Play	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Role Play 1	44	32.8	43	31.6	15	12.6	23	22.3
Role Play 2	52	37.4	57	37.7	18	12.0	37	31.9
Role Play 3	36	27.7	49	30.4	15	7.9	9	9.0
Role Play 4	35	24.6	32	18.0	19	8.2	28	19.7
Role Play 5	55	34.0	40	28.6	74	28.6	37	31.0
Role Play 6	75	38.9	62	27.2	119	30.3	81	31.6

With regard to the NSA group, the graph below shows that that they exhibit patterns that are markedly different from the three other groups especially with regard to the first four Role Plays. The only exception is Role Play 3 (Interview) where the NSE group used almost the same percentage of Direct strategies as the NSA group. Another important observation is that in Role Plays 5 and 6 (Dessert & Custodian) the two NS groups and the Advanced learner group used a similar percentage of Direct strategies. The Intermediate students used a higher percentage of those direct strategies, especially in Role Play 6.

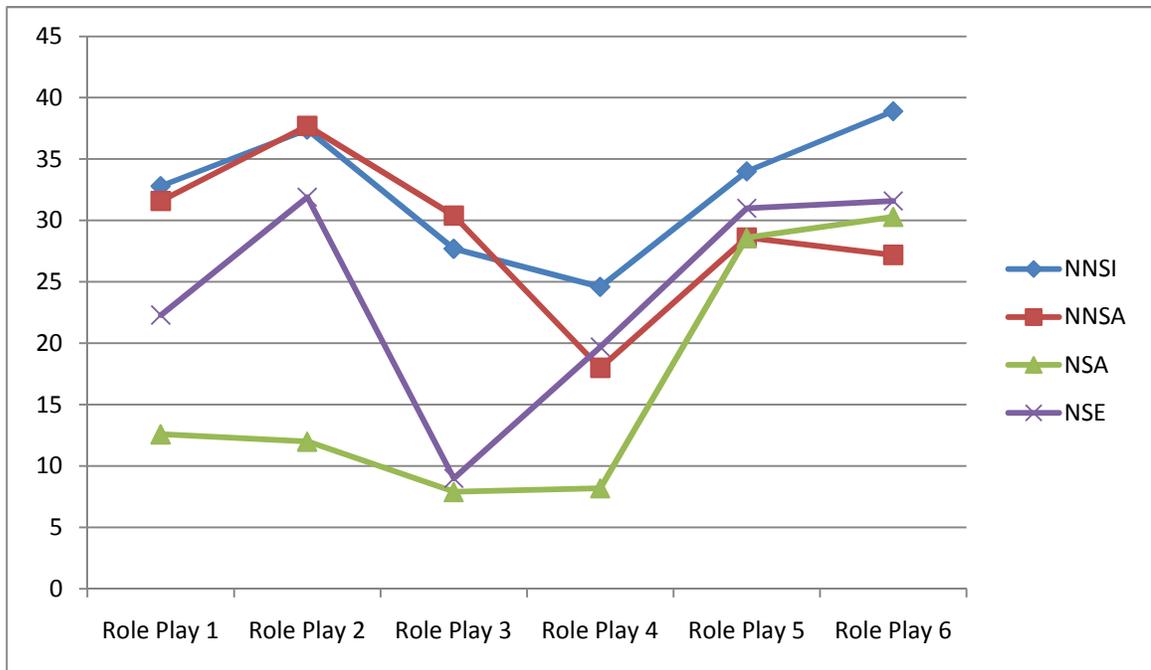


Figure 4-16. Direct Strategies by Role Play

#### *Direct Strategies by Status*

This section looks at the effect of the contextual factor of status on the use of Direct refusal strategies by the four groups. RP2 (Bookstore) and RP4 (Promotion) are the two Higher Status situations where participants were asked to refuse a request or an offer from someone higher in status. In RP2 it was a supervisor at work and in RP4 it was a boss in an office. RP1 and RP5 represent the Equal Status relationship where participants were asked to refuse an offer or a request from someone equal in status to them (i.e., a classmate in RP1 and a friend in RP2). The Lower Status relationship was represented by RP3 and RP6 where participants were asked to refuse an offer or a request from someone lower in status to them (i.e., a friend's younger brother and a janitor).

Figure 4-17 below clearly shows that there are more similarities between the two learner groups on the one hand the NSE group on the other, and it also shows that there are fewer similarities between the three American groups and the Egyptian group.

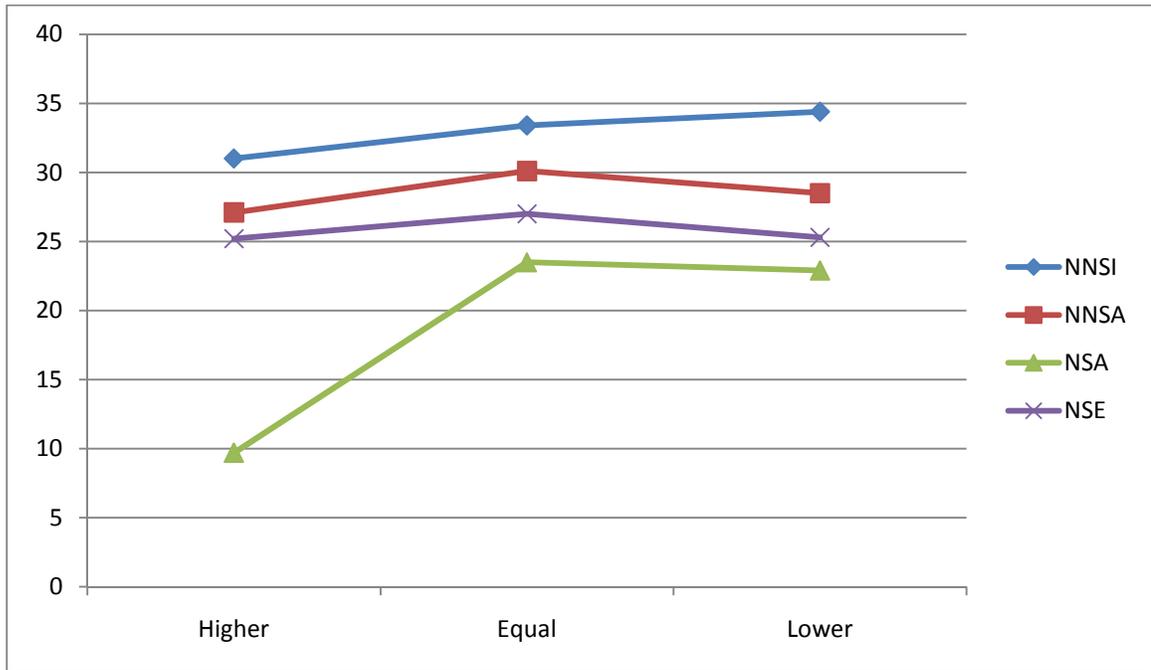


Figure 4-17. Direct Strategies by Status

With regard to frequency of Direct strategies in the Lower and Equal status situations, the two learner groups are closer to the NSE group than to the NSA group. The Egyptian participants consistently used a lower percentage of Direct strategies when interacting with someone lower, equal or higher in status. The NSE group used a higher percentage of Direct strategies in each of these three status relationships than the Egyptian group. The Advanced students also used a higher percentage of these strategies in each of the three status relationships, while the Intermediate students used the highest

percentage of these strategies in each of the three status relationships. It is also important to notice that the Advanced students, and not the Intermediate students, exhibited patterns that are more similar to the NSE group, specifically with regard to using a higher percentage of Direct strategies when interacting with someone equal in status than when interacting with someone either lower or higher in status. The Intermediate students used a higher percentage of Direct strategies when interacting with someone lower in status than when interacting with someone higher in status.

So, to sum up this graph provides support for the claim of pragmatic transfer from L1. It also shows that there is a higher percentage of pragmatic transfer with the Advanced students than with the Intermediate students. This claim can be made because the Advanced (rather than Intermediate) students seem to exhibit patterns that are closer to the patterns exhibited by the native speakers of English. The Intermediate students do not seem to exhibit these patterns as clearly as the Advanced students.

### *Flat No*

#### *Flat No by Role Play*

This section examines the use of the Flat No strategy, which is one of the Direct refusal strategies. This strategy was selected for further examination here because it represents the most direct of the refusal strategies and can reveal important differences among the groups. Table 4-14 and Figure 4-18 below present the findings. The first observation about the graph and the table is that for the first three Role Plays both learner groups used a significantly higher percentage of the Flat No strategy than the two NS

groups. What is important here is that for these first three Role Plays the Advanced students used a higher percentage of this strategy than the Intermediate students.

Table 4-14

*Flat No by Role Play*

Role Play	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Role Play 1	18	13.4	27	19.9	3	2.5	4	3.9
Role Play 2	25	18.0	31	20.5	5	3.3	5	4.3
Role Play 3	15	11.5	27	16.8	10	5.2	1	1.0
Role Play 4	3	2.1	6	3.4	2	0.9	0	0
Role Play 5	26	16.0	16	11.4	27	10.4	7	5.9
Role Play 6	60	31.1	55	24.1	109	27.7	70	27.3

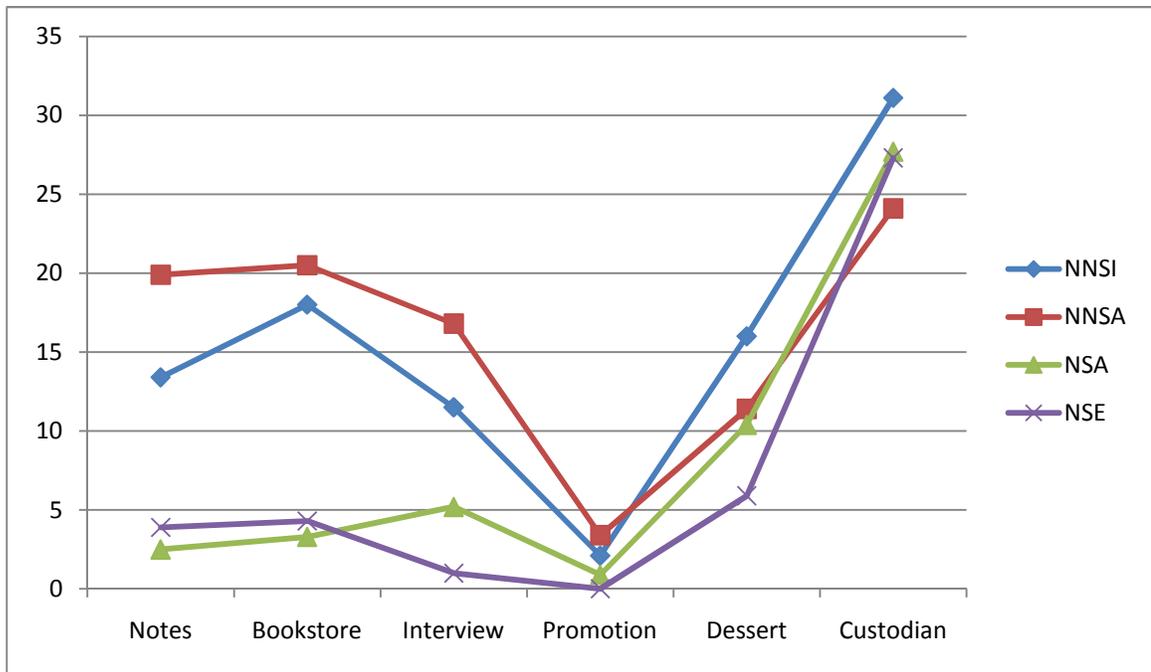


Figure 4-18. Flat No by Role Play

The picture is different, however, for the following three Role Plays (4, 5, and 6) where the two learner groups exhibit patterns that are similar to those exhibited by the two NS groups. The only difference between the first three Role Plays and the following three is that the first three require a refusal of a request and the following three a refusal of an offer. What is important about this graph is that it shows that all four groups of participants used the lowest percentage of the Flat No strategy in RP4, when refusing an offer from someone higher in status. In RP5 and RP6 the two learner groups used the Flat No strategy in a similar way to the two NS groups, using a higher percentage of these strategies in RP6 than in RP5. In these two Role Plays, too, the Intermediate students used the Flat No strategy more frequently than the Advanced students.

Comparing the four groups with regard to their use of the Flat No strategy shows that language learners can sometimes exhibit patterns that are different from either NS group. Looking at this graph and especially looking at RP4, RP5, and RP6 it is easy to see that Advanced students, rather than the Intermediate students, used patterns that are more similar to those used by the NSE group. Looking at RP1, RP2, and RP3, however, we can see that both learner groups followed a pattern that is different from that exhibited by either NS group. What is interesting about this graph is that it shows that positive pragmatic transfer would have worked in the use of the Flat No strategy since both the NSA and NSE groups seem to be using this strategy in a similar pattern.

#### *Flat No by Status*

This section examines how the interlocutor's status affected the use of the Flat No strategy. All four groups used the highest percentage of the Flat No strategy when refusing an offer or a request from someone lower in status, and the lowest percentage when refusing an offer or a request from someone higher in status. Figure 4-19 below presents these findings.

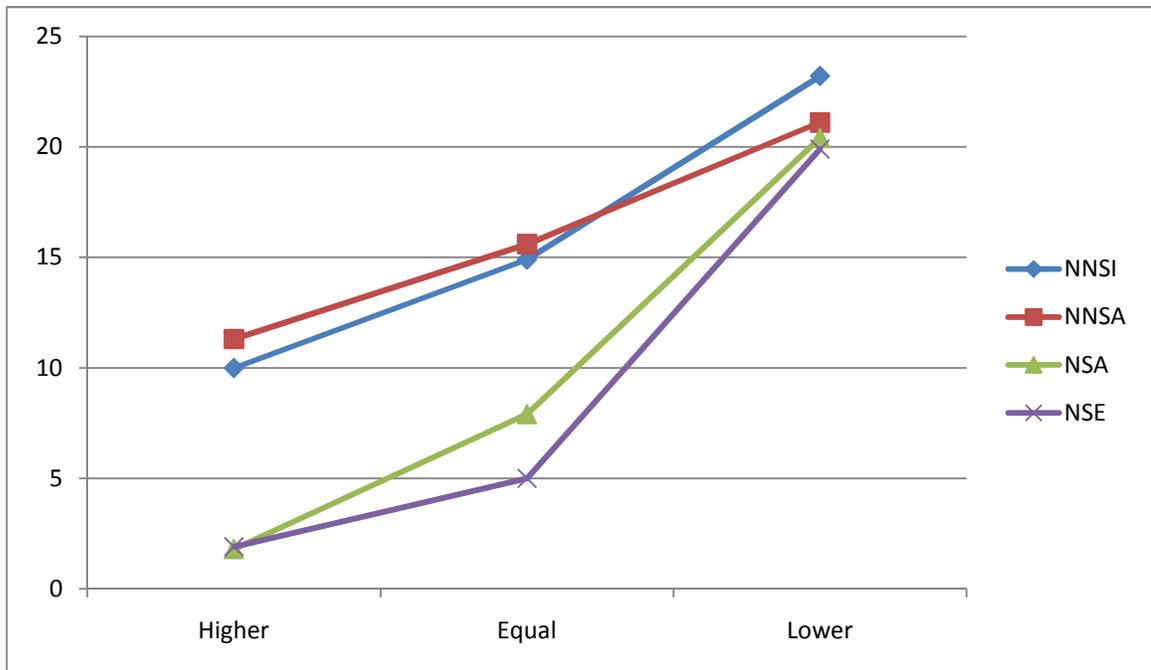


Figure 4-19. Flat No by Status

What is interesting about this graph is that the two NS groups exhibited similar patterns in how they used the Flat No strategy, especially in the Higher and Lower status situations. In the Equal status situations the NSA group used a higher percentage of the Flat No strategy than the NSE group. The most important observation is that the two learner groups used a markedly higher percentage of the Flat No strategy than the two NS groups especially in the Higher and Equal status situations. All four groups used the Flat No strategy in a similar way when refusing an offer or a request from someone lower in status.

*Indirect Strategies*

*Indirect Strategies by Role Play*

Indirect refusal strategies were the most frequently used strategies by all the participants. A total of 23 categories of Indirect refusals were found in the data. The most frequent Indirect refusal used by all the participants was Excuse/Reason. In this section we look at the distribution of the Indirect refusals by Role Play for each of the four groups. Table 4-15 and Figure 4-20 below summarize the results, showing the frequency of Indirect strategies by Role Play for each of the four groups.

Table 4-15

*Indirect Strategies by Role Play*

Role Play	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Role Play 1	85	63.4	89	65.4	92	77.3	67	65.0
Role Play 2	76	54.7	90	59.6	109	72.6	59	50.9
Role Play 3	81	62.3	101	62.7	144	75.3	73	73.0
Role Play 4	79	55.6	97	54.8	162	69.5	63	44.3
Role Play 5	44	27.1	59	42.1	78	30.1	46	38.7
Role Play 6	105	54.4	125	54.8	233	59.3	166	64.8

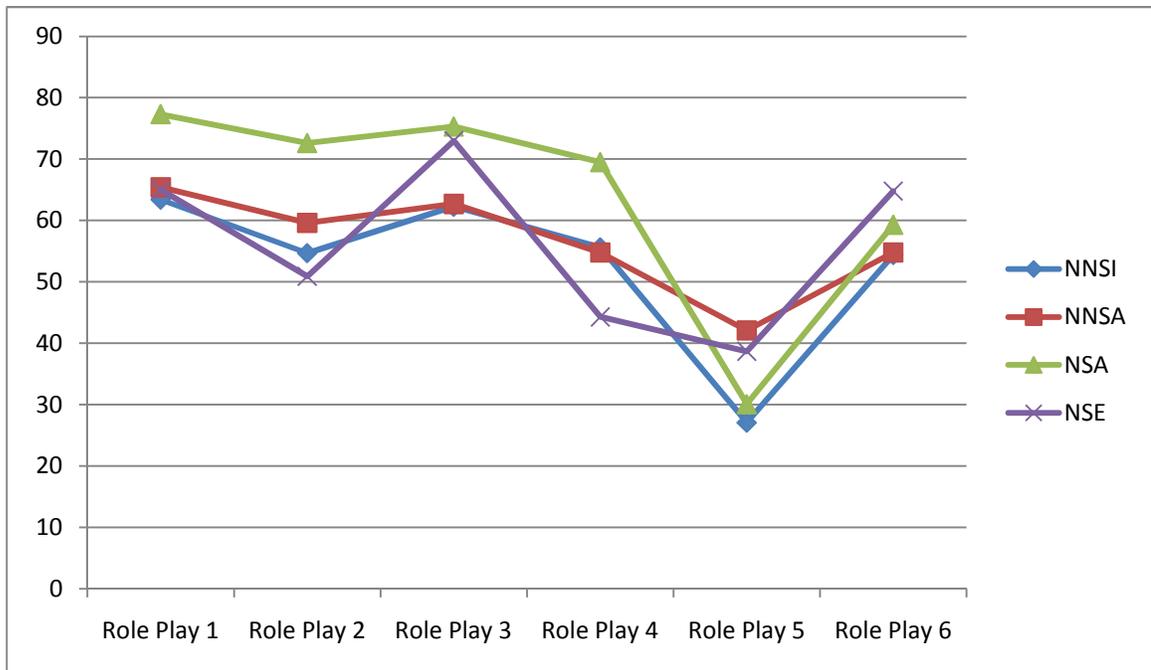


Figure 4-20. Indirect Strategies by Role Play

What is interesting here is that all four groups seem to follow the same general pattern with regard to the frequency of use of these strategies in the different situations. For example, all four groups used the highest percentage of Indirect refusals in RP1 (Notes), and they all used the lowest percentage of these strategies in RP5 (Dessert). What is interesting about this is that these two situations involved refusing an offer or a request from someone equal in status to the participant. Similar to what was observed in the Direct strategies above, the two learner groups exhibit patterns that are more similar to those exhibited by the NSE group than to those exhibited by the NSA group, especially in RP1 and RP2. This can be seen as another evidence of pragmatic transfer.

As was observed with the Direct strategies, more similarities were found among the four groups in RP5 and RP6. Another observation is that the differences between the NSA group and the three other groups were more pronounced in RP1, RP2, and RP4. In these three Role Plays the NSA group used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies than any other group. This is also consistent with the use of Direct strategies by the NSA group (Figure 4-16 above) where the NSA group used the lowest percentage of Direct strategies in these three Role Plays. With regard to RP3 (Interview) the two NS groups are consistent in that they used almost the same frequency of Direct and Indirect strategies in this Role Play (See Figure 4-16 above for Direct strategies). The most pronounced difference between the two NS group is in RP4 (Promotion) where the NSA group used a considerably higher percentage of Indirect strategies than the NSE group. What is interesting here too is that the two learner groups exhibit very similar patterns in their use of Indirect strategies. In fact, they used almost the same percentage of Indirect strategies in all the Role Plays except RP5 (Dessert) where the Advanced students used a higher percentage of these strategies than the Intermediate students.

#### *Indirect Strategies by Status*

In this section we look at the frequency of Indirect refusals in relation to the status of the interlocutor. Figure 4-21 below summarizes the findings. There were interesting findings here that were to some extent different from the patterns observed previously. First, the two learner groups were consistent in using almost the same percentage of Indirect strategies when refusing a request or an offer from someone higher or lower in status. They both used a lower percentage of Indirect strategies when refusing an offer or a request from someone equal in status. The Intermediate learners were, however,

different from their Advanced counterparts in that they used a markedly lower percentage of Indirect strategies than the Advanced students when refusing an offer or a request from someone equal in status.

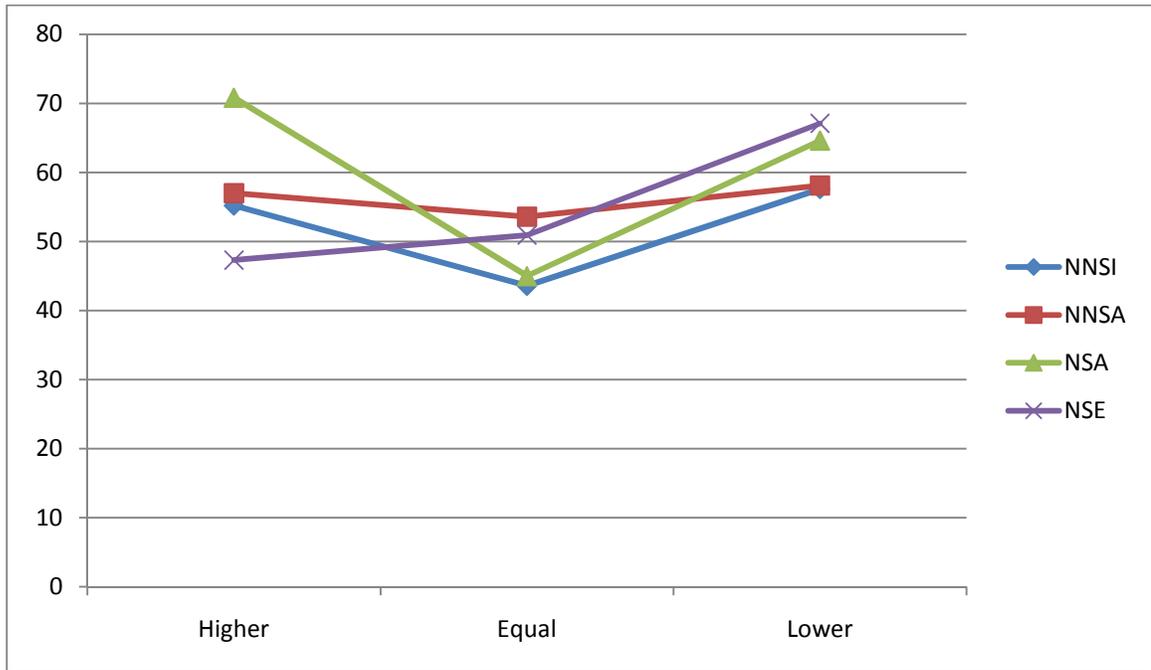


Figure 4-21. Indirect Strategies by Status

Similar to the pattern observed in the two learner groups, the NSA group used a lower percentage of Indirect strategies when refusing an offer or a request from someone equal in status than from someone either higher or lower in status. However, the NSA group differed from the two learner groups in that it used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies when interacting with someone higher in status than when interacting with someone lower in status.

With regard to the NSE group, it was consistent with the other three groups in using a higher percentage of Indirect strategies when interacting with someone lower in status than when interacting with someone equal in status. However, there was one important difference between this group and the three other groups. The NSE group was the only group that used the lowest percentage of Indirect strategies when interacting with someone higher in status. This way the pattern displayed by the NSE group contrasts sharply with that exhibited by the NSA group in that while the NSE group used the lowest percentage of Indirect strategies in the Higher status situations, the NSA group used the highest percentage of Indirect strategies in these situations. However, as will be explained later, the NSE group compensated for this by using a considerably higher percentage of Adjuncts to refusal than any other group in the two higher status situations.

#### *Selected Indirect Strategies by Status*

In this section we look at two of the most frequently used Indirect strategies and their distribution in relation to status relationships. These are the strategies of Excuse/Reason and Statement of Regret. Figure 4-22 below shows the findings for the Excuse/Reason strategy and Figure 4-23 displays the findings for the Statement of Regret.

With regard to the Excuse/Reason strategy, the reader is reminded that this was the most frequently used strategy by all the participants in 5 out of the 6 Role Plays. Figure 4-22 below shows that this strategy was more frequently used by the four groups in the Higher status situations than in either the Equal or Lower situations.

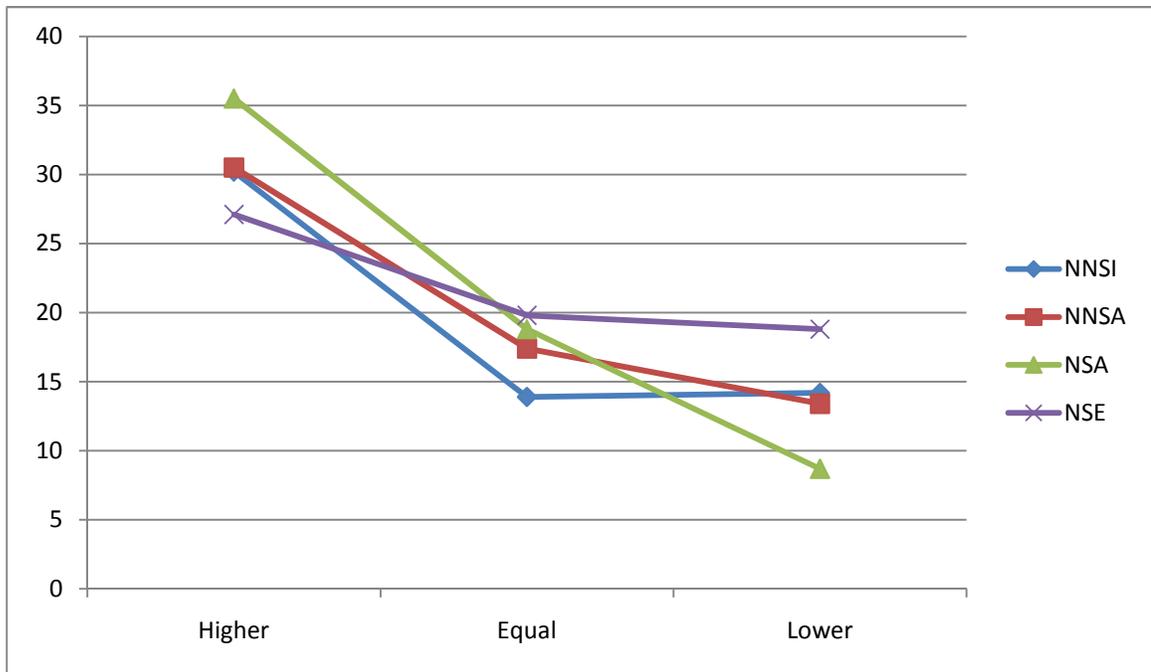


Figure 4-22. Excuse/Reason by Status

What is interesting about this graph is that, like previous ones, it shows that there were more similarities between the learners and the NSE group. For example, the two learner groups were more similar to the NSE group than to the NSA group in their use of the Excuse/Reason strategy. However, it is important to point out that the Advanced students used a higher percentage of the Excuse/Reason strategy in the Equal status situations than in the Lower status situations, and in this way they were slightly different from the Intermediate students who used almost the same percentage of these strategies in the Equal and Lower status situations. Finally, it is interesting to note how the Egyptian participants used a very high percentage of the Excuse/Reason strategy in the Higher status situations and a very low percentage of this strategy in the Lower status situation. This is a pattern that was not exhibited by any of the three other groups.

With regard to the Statement of Regret strategy, it is important to remind the reader that this strategy was used more frequently by the American participants than by the Egyptian participants. Figure 4-23 below clearly shows that a markedly higher percentage of this strategy was used by the Americans than by the Egyptians.

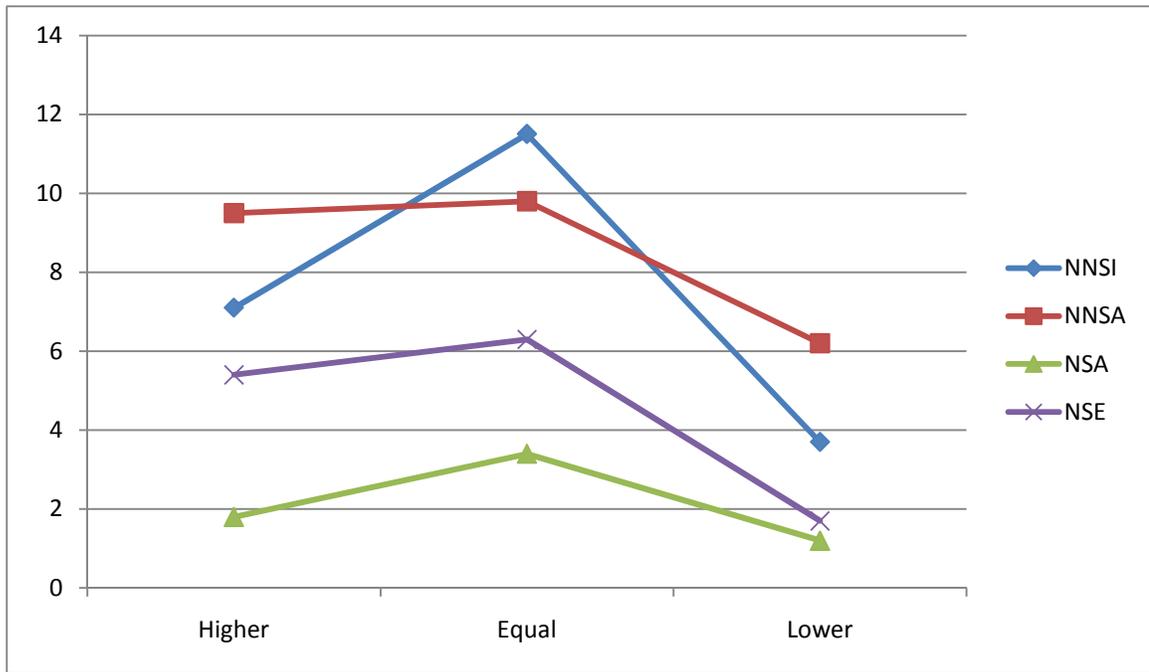


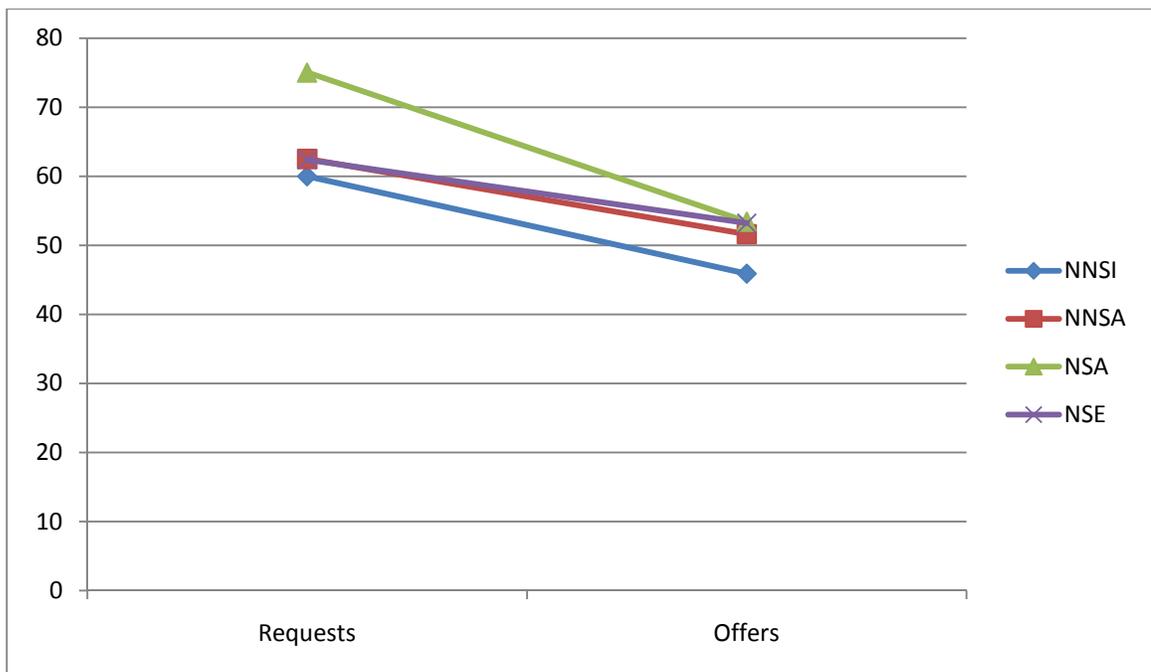
Figure 4-23. Statement of Regret by Status

The Statement of Regret strategy was also more frequently used by the two learner groups than by the NSE group. It is also interesting to note that all four groups used this strategy relatively more frequently in the Equal status situations than in either the Higher or Lower status situations. This strategy was also used least frequently by all four groups in the Lower status situations. Finally, it is important to note that while the Intermediate students used it more frequently than their Advanced counterparts in the Equal status

situations, the Advanced students used it more frequently than the Intermediate students in both the Higher and Lower status situations.

### *Indirect Strategies by Refusal Type*

This section looks at the relationship between the frequency of Indirect strategies and refusal type (i.e., offers or requests). Figure 4-24 below presents the findings. The four groups of participants were similar in that they used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies when refusing requests than when refusing offers.



*Figure 4-24. Indirect Strategies by Refusal Type*

The two learner groups were slightly different from each other in that the Intermediate students used a lower percentage of Indirect strategies than their Advanced counterparts when refusing both requests and offers. In fact, the Intermediate students used a lower

percentage of Indirect strategies when refusing both offers and requests than any other group. Also, the NSA group used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies when refusing requests more than any other group. It is also important to point out that there are more similarities between the learner groups and the NSE group. In addition, and maybe more importantly, the NNSA and the NSE exhibited very similar patterns, which can be viewed as another example of pragmatic transfer. This shows that the Advanced students often exhibit patterns that align them more closely to the NSE group.

### *Adjuncts to Refusal*

In this section Adjuncts to refusal are examined with regard to how the contextual factor of status affected their use. They are also examined with regard to refusal type.

#### *Adjuncts to Refusal by Status*

In this section we look at differences in the frequency of use of Adjuncts in relation to changes in the status of the interlocutor. As shown by Figure 4-25 below, the Intermediate students used a lower percentage of Adjuncts than the Advanced students when interacting with someone either higher or lower in status. They, however, used a higher percentage of Adjuncts than the Advanced students when interacting with someone equal in status.

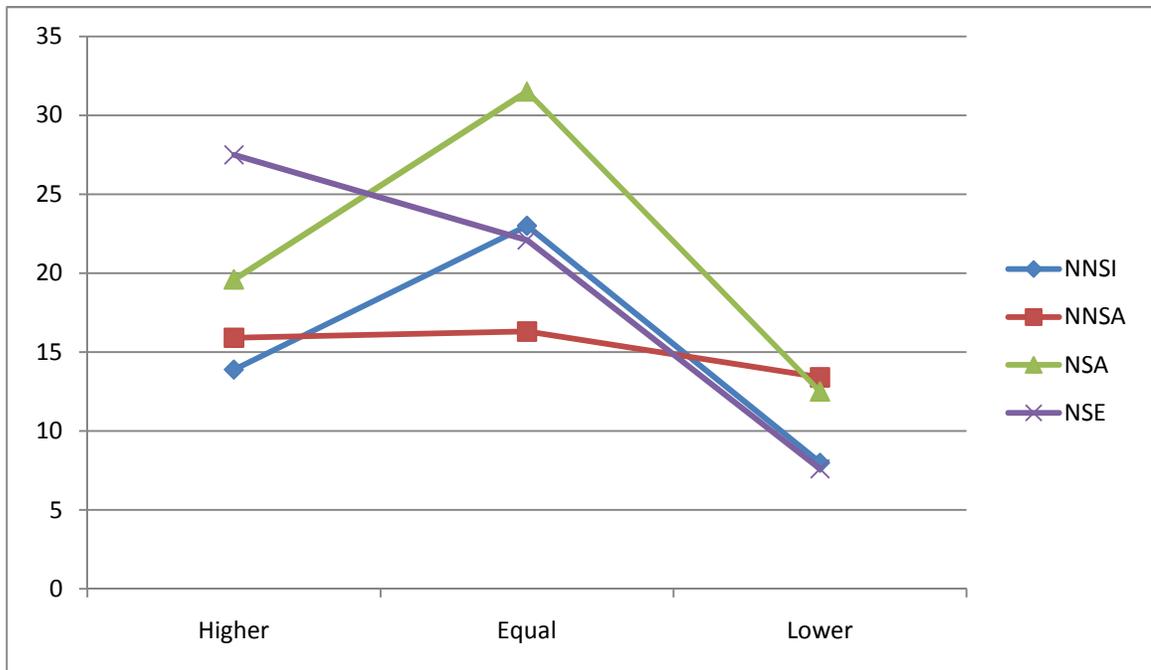


Figure 4-25. Adjuncts to Refusal by Status

Both groups of learners were consistent in using a relatively higher percentage of Adjuncts when interacting with someone higher in status than with someone lower in status. One last difference between the two groups is that while the Advanced students exhibited a slight shift in style with regard to the frequency of Adjuncts they used in the three status relationships, the Intermediate students exhibited a major shift in style. For example, while the difference in the frequency of Adjuncts used in the Lower and Equal status situations for the Advanced students was about 3%, it was about 15% for the Intermediate students.

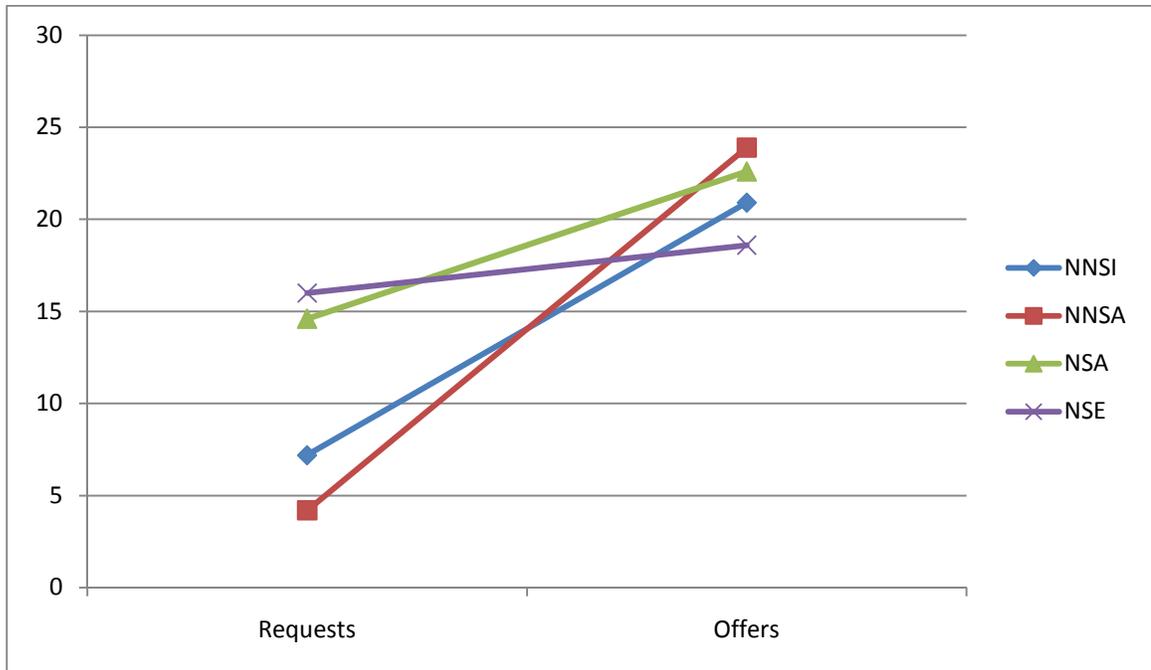
When comparing the NSA group to the two learner groups, we find that the Intermediate students exhibit a pattern that is similar to that of the NSA group. They both

used a markedly higher percentage of Adjuncts when interacting with someone equal in status than when interacting with someone either lower or higher in status. They also used a higher percentage of Adjuncts when interacting with someone higher in status than when interacting with someone lower in status. The pattern displayed by the Advanced students is different from that displayed by the NSA group. The most pronounced difference between these two groups is that the NNSA group did not exhibit a major shift in style between the three status relationships as exhibited by the NSA group.

Comparing the two learner groups with the NSE group also reveals interesting differences. While the two learner groups as well as the NSA group used a lower percentage of Adjuncts in the Higher status situations than in the Equal status situations, the NSE group used its highest percentage of Adjuncts in the Higher status situations. The NSE group also used a similar percentage of Adjuncts like the NNSI group in the Equal and Lower status situations. Finally, the NSE group used a markedly lower percentage of Adjuncts in the Lower and Equal status situations than the Egyptian group. It seems that the NSE group used a combination of Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal to reduce the illocutionary force of refusal when interacting with someone higher in status. The reader is reminded that the NSE group used a very low percentage of Indirect refusals when interacting with someone higher in status (See Figure 4-21 above). The three other groups, however, mainly used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies and a lower percentages of Adjuncts to achieve this goal. This point will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

### *Adjuncts to Refusal by Refusal Type*

In this section, the use of Adjuncts is examined in relation to the type of refusal. As shown by Figure 4-26 below, all four groups used a higher percentage of Adjuncts when refusing an offer than when refusing a request.



*Figure 4-26. Adjuncts to Refusal by Refusal Type*

The two learner groups were different from the two NS groups, however, in that they used a markedly higher percentage of Adjuncts in the offer situations than in the request situations. The NSE group was the group that showed the smallest shift in style with regard to the frequency of Adjuncts in the offer and request situations. One more observation to make here is that the two NS groups used a considerably higher percentage of Adjuncts in the request situations than the two learner groups. This shows that the two

learner groups exhibit patterns that are different from those displayed by the two NS groups. With regard to differences between the two learner groups, the Intermediate students used a higher percentage of Adjuncts when refusing requests than the Advanced students. The Advanced students, on the other hand, used a higher percentage of Adjuncts when refusing offers than the Intermediate students.

### Qualitative Findings

This section presents the Qualitative findings, and it consists of three parts: the first part looks at the content of the excuses and reasons provided by the participants in their refusals. As explained in Chapter 3, this is particularly important and can reveal interesting differences among the groups and can shed light on the extent of pragmatic transfer. The second part deals with analyzing the interactions using the framework of Stages in order to reach a better understanding of how the refusal strategies are strategically used at different stages of the discourse. The last part of this section focuses on analyzing selected interactions from the four groups in order to reach a better understanding of how the refusal discourse is structured and how refusals are recycled over a number of turns.

#### *Content of Excuses and Reasons*

This section deals with the content of the excuses and reasons the participants provided in support of their refusals. The Excuse/Reason strategy was the most frequently used strategy by all the participants in all situations, except RP6.

### *Role Play 1*

In this Role Play the participants were asked to refuse a request from a classmate for the lecture notes. It is important first to point out that some of the participants in this Role Play actually ended up agreeing to give the notes to the interlocutor despite the fact that the instructions for the Role Play asked them to refuse. This, in fact, is not usual and was reported in previous refusal studies employing the role play method for data collection (Garcia, 1992, 1999; Gass & Houck, 1999). In the present study one participant in the NNSA group ended up agreeing to lend the notes to the interlocutor. In the Egyptian group, on the other hand, there were, in fact, four participants who agreed to either give the notes to the interlocutor or let him photocopy them. None of the participants in the NSE and NNSI groups agreed to give the notes to the interlocutor. It is also important to point out that two of the participants from the NNSA group, and one from the NSE group agreed to let the interlocutor study with them and look at the notes but not borrow them.

The most frequently used strategy by the NSA group in this Role Play was Excuse/Reason. For the other three groups, however, the most frequently used strategy was Statement of Regret and the second most frequently used strategy was Excuse/Reason. It is also important to know the number of participants who used the Excuses/Reason strategy in each group: NNSI: 6, NNSA: 5, NSA: 9, and NSE: 4. With regard to the two learner groups, the two most frequently used excuses by the Intermediate students were: *I need the notes to study for the exam* and *I don't have the notes right now*. These excuses were also frequently used by the Advanced students. However, the Advanced students elaborated on such excuses by saying for, example: *the*

*notes are in my dad's house and I can't get them right now because I have to go to work;* or *I don't have the notes right now and I don't know where they are;* Or *the notes are at home but my home is messy and it will take me a long time to find them.* Such elaboration was not found in the NNSI data.

The same two excuses: *I need the notes to study for the exam* and *I don't have the notes with me right now* were also the most frequently used by the Egyptian participants. However, the Egyptian participants elaborated on these excuses when the interlocutor persisted by saying, for example, that they had to rewrite the notes or complete them because the notes were not ready yet. One participant also expressed fear that the notes might get lost if she lent them to the interlocutor. What distinguishes the Egyptian responses, however, from the responses of the other two learner groups is that when the interlocutor persisted, the Egyptian excuses became more and more open-ended and turned into Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy, which is one of the most frequent Indirect refusal strategies used by the Egyptians in this Role Play. This strategy is used to give the impression to the interlocutor that it is possible to give him or her the notes at some point in the future but it all depends on circumstances. The Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy will be discussed further later in this chapter. The two learner groups, on the other hand, did not use this Unspecified/Indefinite Reply when their interlocutor persisted with the request. They, instead, opted for Direct refusal strategies or other Indirect strategies such Statement of Regret or Criticism/Reprimand.

The most frequently used excuse by the NSE group was: *I really need my notes to study.* One important difference, however, between this group and the three other groups is that in this group the participants did not “invent” reasons or excuses like the ones

made in the three other groups. For example, the participants did not say “I don’t have the notes with me right now”. They also did not elaborate in a way similar to that observed in the three other groups, such as “the notes are in my dad’s house” etc. Most of the reasons the NSE participants mentioned were related to study and school, and they included, for example: *I have a bunch of study groups; I am really crammed; I am really bus studying for this test* etc. This is an important observation and will be discussed further in Chapter 5. It is also important to mention that the participants in the NSE group, like the participants in the two learner groups, preferred to use the Statement of Regret strategy when their interlocutor persisted with the request or they opted for other Indirect strategies such as Criticism/Reprimand and Giving Advice/Lecturing.

In summary, the two learner groups and the NSA group, despite their differences, seemed to use similar excuses and reasons in their refusals. However, when their interlocutor persisted with the request, they used the Statement of Regret or Criticism strategies in a similar pattern to that observed in the NSE group. The NSA group, on the other hand, used the Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy. Finally, the Advanced students’ reasons were more elaborate than those produced by the Intermediate students.

### *Role Play 2*

In this Role Play the participants were asked by a supervisor at a bookstore where they worked to stay for three extra hours. There were interesting differences among the four groups with regard to the kind of excuses given. Only one participant in the Egyptian group agreed to stay for some of the time; that is to stay for one and a half hours instead of three. The participants in all the other groups insisted on the refusal. The most

frequently used strategy by the participants in all four groups in this Role Play was the Excuse/Reason strategy. Only one participant in the NSE group did not provide any reasons and used instead Direct refusal strategies and the Statement of Regret in addition to frequent use of Adjuncts to refusal.

In the following paragraphs a description of the kind of excuses given by each group will be provided. However, it is important to point out that the reasons given by the participants in this Role Play fell into three broad categories: 1) Family, 2) Friends, and 3) Personal. In addition to these three categories there is also the category Health, which was used in combination with one or more of these categories. The category of Family refers family-related engagements (e.g., dinner with family, brother's birthday, sister's wedding). The Friends category refers to activities or engagements that involved friends (e.g., friend's birthday, meeting with a friend). The Personal category refers to reasons related to the participant himself or herself and not involving other people (e.g., homework to do; study for an exam; an appointment, needing a break). Finally, the category Health refers to health related reasons and it could be used in combination with the other excuses as mentioned above. For example, if the participant has to take a family member to the doctor, then this would be an example of Family + Health reason. In the following paragraphs the excuses used by each group will be described.

The Intermediate students used a combination of Family reasons (5 times) and Personal reasons (5 times). The Family reasons involved father's birthday, mother's birthday, dinner with family, going to the movies with mom, and sister's wedding. The Personal reasons included: needing a break, doing homework, things to do after work, studying, and needing to sleep to get ready for an exam the following day. It is also

important to point out that some of the reasons were not detailed. Finally, this group did not use any excuses in the Friends or Health categories.

The excuses provided by the Advanced students were similar to but also different from the ones given by their Intermediate counterparts. The Advanced students used all three categories: Family, Friends, Personal, and they also used a combination of Health + Family. This group used the Family category 4 times, Family + Health 2 times, Personal 3 times, and Friends one time. This means that the highest number of excuses (6) fell in either the Family or Family + Health categories. Some of the reasons this group used in the Family category included, for example, mother's birthday, and sister's wedding party, and in the Family + Health category: sick mother or sick grandmother; in the Personal category: studying for an exam, and getting tired or wanting to go home, and in the Friends category: wanting to see friends.

The NSA group was in fact similar to the NNSA group in the type of excuses the participants provided. This group used the following types of excuses: Personal (2), Personal + Health (1), Family (4), and Family + Health (3). Examples of the Personal excuses included: doing something with the family, giving sister a ride, spending time with children, and mom visiting. Examples of Family + Health category included: taking mom to the doctor (twice); giving mom medicine; finally, examples of the Personal category included: taking an exam, and an appointment. The category Family or Family + Health accounted for the highest number of excuses used by the NSA group. In fact, 7 out of the 10 participants used this type of excuse. This makes the NSA group similar to the NNSA, in which 6 out of the 10 participants used this type of excuse.

The NSE group was very interestingly different from the three other groups and especially from the NNSA and NSA groups. In the NSE group, the most frequently used type of excuse fell into the Personal category. In fact, 7 out of the 9 participants who used the Excuse/Reason strategy used reasons from the Personal category only. The other type of excuse that was used by this group was Friends and it was used by two of the participants. None of the participants in this group used the Family or Health categories. The Personal excuses used included examples such as: preparing for classes, going to study sessions, doing homework, being busy, or feeling overwhelmed. It is also important to notice that most of the Personal reasons were related to school. The Friends category included: a friend's birthday and meeting an old friend.

To sum up, while the NNSA and NSA groups mostly used family-related reasons, and the NNSI group used both family-related reasons and personal reasons, the NSE group mostly used personal reasons.

### *Role Play 3*

For Role Play 3 the excuse was already provided for the participants and therefore it will not be discussed here. However, it is important to point out that some participants elaborated on the excuse and made it sound compelling. A very small number of participants ignored the excuse that was provided in the instructions and made up their own excuses.

### *Role Play 4*

In this Role Play the participant were asked to turn down an offer of a promotion and relocation. For the American students the relocation was from Burlington, Vermont,

to Austin, Texas. In the case of the Egyptian participants the move was from Cairo to the city of Port Said (about 135 miles north east of Cairo). None of the participants in all the groups ended up agreeing to this offer. Some of the participants, however, postponed making a decision until they had enough time to consult with their family members. All the participants in this Role Play mainly used the Excuse/Reason strategy to express their refusal. In the fact, this was the Role Play that generated the highest frequency of the Excuse/Reason strategy.

Before discussing the type of excuses used by each group, it is important to point out the general classification of the types of excuses used by the four groups in this Role Play. The reasons provided here were similar to those observed in Role Play 2 and they also fell into the three categories of Family, Friends, and Personal, in addition to the category of Health. However, it is important to point out here that the Personal category was also used to refer to the personal preference of the participant as well as to reasons that were related to him or her directly, and these included, for example: *I just bought a house* or *I've got my heart set on Burlington* or *I don't like Texas, I like Vermont*. In the following paragraphs the excuses used by each group will be presented in some detail.

The majority of the excuses used by the NNSI group were related to Family and they were used by 7 out of the 10 participants in that group. One participant also mentioned both Family and Friends. The category Friends was used by only one participant. The category Personal was used twice. Some of the examples in the Family category included: *My family lives here, my parents and grandparents; my children go to school here*. Examples of the category Personal included: *I don't like Austin*. This shows that this group used more family-related excuses (7) to turn down the offer.

The NNSA group used similar excuses to those used by the NNSI group. Seven of the participants used excuses that fell into the Family category. One of the participants who used the Family excuse also used the Friends excuse. Another participant who used the Family category also used the Personal category. Only two participants exclusively used the Personal category. Also only one participant used the Friends category exclusively. Three of the participants who used the Family category also used the Health category, explaining that their family members were sick. Examples of the Family + Health excuses included: *my mom lives here and she is sick; my family lives in Vermont and my mom is sick*. Examples of the Personal reasons included: *I like living in Burlington; My life is good here; I don't like Texas*.

For the NSA group the Family excuses was the most frequently used type of excuse by all the participants. In fact, 9 out of the 10 participants used this excuse. One participant also used the Family + Health excuse. Only one participant exclusively used the Personal excuse. Examples of the Family excuses included: *My parents are old and they live here; I take care of my mom; My children go to school here; My wife is pregnant; My husband works here*. The only example of Family + Health was about a participant's mom being sick. The only Personal excuse that was used was *I have commitments here in Cairo*. The excuses the NSA group used here are consistent with those they used by this group in Role Play 2, where 7 out of the 10 participants used the Family excuse.

The NSE group used excuses that are similar to those used by the three other groups. Eight out of the 10 participants in this group used the Family excuse to turn down the offer. Four of these participants also used the Friends excuse. Only two participants

exclusively used the Personal excuse. Examples of the Family excuses included: *my family is here in Vermont; my fiancé has a job here; I just had my parents move here so I could, I could be closer to them.* Examples of the Personal reasons included: *I just bought a house; I've got my heart set on Burlington.* The excuses used by the NSE group in this Role Play were different from the ones they used in Role Play 2, where they mostly used Personal excuses.

In summary, all four groups were similar with regard to the type of excuses they used to turn down the offer in Role Play 4. The majority of the participants (at least 7 out of 10) in each of the four groups used Family excuses to refuse the offer in this Role Play. This kind of uniformity is different from the pattern observed in RP2 where the NSE group used a higher percentage of the Personal excuses than any other group. Finally, it is important to point out that while a majority of participants in each of the four groups used the Family excuse, the NSA group used the highest percentage of this excuses. This important finding will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

#### *Role Play 5*

In this Role Play the participants were asked to turn down an offer of dessert from a host, who was also an old friend, at the end of a meal. Only one participant in the NNSA group ended up actually agreeing to taste the food. Also two participants in the NSA group ended up eating a small piece of the dessert. All the other participants in the other groups insisted on refusing the offer. All the participants in all the groups used the Excuse/Reason as one of the strategies for refusing the offer.

Before discussing the type of excuses each group used, it is important to present the types of excuses found in the data. There were three types found: 1) Full 2) Negative Consequences, and 3) Diet. Examples of the Full category included: *I am so full; I don't have any room; I ate a lot*. Examples of the Negative Consequences included: *If I eat any more I'll explode; I am probably gonna get sick; my cholesterol level is high*. Examples of Diet included: *I am trying to lose weight; I am trying to keep on a diet here; I am on a diet*. Only one participant used a different excuse, which is that he actually already tasted the dessert when he saw it in the kitchen before dinner.

The most frequently used excuse by the NNSI group fell in the Full category, accounting for 70% of all the excuses used by this group. The other excuses were in the category Negative Consequences. The Diet excuse was never used by the participants in this group. However, it is possible that when one participant in this group said that she would be *fat* if she ate any more, she probably meant that she was on a diet. As for the NNSA group, the most frequently used excuse was also in the Full category, accounting for about 65% of all the excuses used. The other excuses used were in the category Negative Consequences and examples included: *I will get sick; I will die*. Like the NNSI group, no participants in the NNSA group used the Diet excuse.

For the NSA group, the Full category accounted for about 60% of their excuses and the remaining 40% were roughly divided between the Negative Consequences and the Diet excuses. One of the Egyptian participants mentioned a cholesterol problem he had and that eating dessert would make it worse. For the NSE group, the most frequently used excuse was the Full excuse, accounting for 65% of all strategies used by the participants; the second excuse was Negative Consequences, and the third was Diet.

In summary, it seems that all four groups were more or less similar in their preference for the Full excuse. This type of excuse accounted for 60% to 70% of excuses used by all the groups. Also, only the two NS groups used the Diet excuse. While the two NS groups used similar excuses in the Negative Consequences category such as “getting sick” or “exploding,” the Egyptian participants used other expressions to signify that they were so full such as *I am out of breath*. The NSA group was also the only group that used a health-related excuse *cholesterol level*. This way, it seems that the Egyptian excuses were more varied than the excuses provided by the three other groups.

#### *Role Play 6*

In this Role Play the participants were asked to refuse an offer from a janitor who was trying to pay for a china figurine that he broke while cleaning the participant’s desk. The most important point about this Role Play is that there was a marked difference between the American participants and the Egyptian participants with regard to the strategies used. While at least 50% of the participants in each of the three American groups used the Excuse/Reason strategy to turn down the janitor’s offer, only two of the participants in the Egyptian group used this strategy. Also while the Excuse/Reason strategy accounted for 8% to 10% of overall strategy use by the three American groups in this Role Play, it accounted for less than 1% of the strategies used by the Egyptian group in this Role Play. The NSA group compensated for this by using other strategies such the Proverb/Common Saying, Topic Switch, and Criticism/Reprimand. However, for all the groups, the most frequently used strategy in this Role Play was Let Interlocutor Off the Hook. In the following paragraphs we examine the differences with regard to the types of excuses provided by each group.

The types of excuses used can be divided into two broad categories: Monetary Value and Sentimental Value. The Monetary Value is used to refer to the figurine as something of no real monetary value, as a reason for refusing the offer of money. Examples of this type of reason included: *It was not expensive; It was cheap; I have a lot at home; it was bought at cheap gift store; It was probably a couple of dollars.* The Sentimental Value refers to the emotional attachment between the participant and the figurine. It was also used to explain that the figurine did not have any sentimental value for the participants and because of this there was no need for compensation. Examples of the Sentimental Value reasons included: *I didn't like it; It was a present from an old boyfriend; It was not something special from my family or anything; I don't miss it; It was a present from someone I don't remember their name.* In the following paragraphs we look at how each group used these excuses.

The NNSI group used only excuses from the Monetary Value category and did not include any examples from the Sentimental Value category. It is also important to mention here that only 5 out of the 10 participants in the NNSI group used the Excuse/Reason strategy in their refusal. The participants in the NNSA group used a combination of Monetary Value and Sentimental Value reasons. They also used the Sentimental Value reasons more frequently, about 65% of the time. As for the participants in the NSE group, like those in NNSA group, they used the Sentimental Value excuses about 65% of the time and used the Monetary Value excuses about 35% of the time. In the NSA group, as mentioned above, the Excuse/Reason strategy was only used twice. Both of these times the excuses fell into the Sentimental Value category.

### *Refusal Stages I & II*

In this section the six Role Plays will be examined with regard to the type of strategies used in Stage I and Stage II of the interaction. While the framework of Stages will also be used later in analyzing the interactions, it will be used here in a modified way from that originally proposed by Garcia (1992). Here the analysis will make use of the framework of Stages with regard to analyzing the interaction into two stages. However, the analysis will not examine all the stages (this will be conducted later in the discourse analysis section), but rather, it will examine the participant's initial response to the request or offer in Stage I as well the participant's initial response to the first instance of insistence in Stage II. It is important to examine the interaction at these two particularly important points for the following reasons. The participant's initial response to the request or offer in Stage I is particularly important since it conveys the participant's attitude towards the request or offer and conveys how much negotiation the participant is willing to engage in. In fact, it sets the tone for the rest of the interaction. In a similar way, the participant's initial response to the first instance of insistence on the part of the interlocutor in Stage II also provides insights into how willing the participant is in engaging in more negotiation and it sets the tone for the rest of Stage II. It would be important to find out if certain differences can be identified among the four groups with regard to the use of Direct and Indirect strategies at these two important points in the interaction.

In the following paragraphs reference will be made to Stage I and Stage II, but the reader is reminded again that Stage I and II in this section refer to the participant's initial response to the request or offer in Stage I and his or her initial response to the first

instance of insistence in Stage II. Also, while we looked at frequency counts and percentages of strategies in the quantitative analysis section of Chapter 4, in this section we look at the number of participants; the analysis will focus on the number of participants in each group who used Direct and Indirect strategies in Stage I and Stage II. This section also examines the type of Indirect strategies used by the participants in each of the two stages. It will be particularly important to examine the distribution of these strategies in Stages I and II to find out how they were strategically used in the interaction to mitigate or aggravate the illocutionary force of the refusal.

### *Role Play 1*

With regard to the initial response to the request in RP1, the Intermediate students were different from the three other groups in the number of participants who used Direct strategies in Stage I. For example, while 40% to 50% of the participants in the NSA, NSE, and NNSA groups used at least one Direct strategy in their initial response to the refusal (Stage I), 80% of the Intermediate students used Direct strategies in Stage I. In Stage II all the groups were similar in that 40% to 50% of the participants in each group used at least one Direct strategy in their initial response to the insistence. It is important to point out here that Indirect strategies were used frequently by all groups in both Stages. It was rare to find a participant who exclusively used Direct refusal strategies in either Stage in any of the four groups.

With regard to the most frequently used Indirect strategies Stage I, there were differences among the groups. For example, the Intermediate students used the strategies of Excuse/Reason and Statement of Regret, and the Advanced students used the Request

for Information/Clarification and Excuse/Reason. The Egyptian participants predominantly used the Excuse/Reason strategy. In the NSE group, on the other hand, no specific Indirect strategies seemed to be particularly preferred. As for Stage II, all three American groups used different strategies. However, the Egyptian participants seemed to prefer the Excuse/Reason strategy in Stage II as well.

To sum up, the Intermediate students used more Direct strategies in Stage I than any other group. Also, while the American groups used various Indirect strategies in Stages I and II, the Egyptians preferred the Excuse/Reason strategy in both Stages.

### *Role Play 2*

RP2 is different from RP1 in that it involves a refusal of a request from someone higher in status, a supervisor at work. With regard to the number of participants who used Direct strategies in Stage I, there were more participants in both the Intermediate and NSE groups (7 in each) who used Direct strategies in Stage I; Fewer participants in the NNSA and NSA group used those Direct strategies (4 in each). However, in Stage II the pattern was different: whereas 5 to 7 participants in each of the three American groups used Direct strategies in Stage II, only one participant in the Egyptian group used them.

The most frequently used Indirect strategies in Stage I for the two learner groups were the Excuse/Reason and Statement of Regret. In the NSE group, it was predominantly the Excuse/Reason strategy. The participants in the Egyptian group did not seem to have a particular preference since they used a variety of strategies. In Stage II, there was more uniformity among the four groups as most of the participants in all the

groups used the Excuse/Reason strategy, and in the NNSA group showed particular preference for both the Excuse/Reason and Statement of Regret.

To sum up, in Stage I the Advanced students and the Egyptians used fewer Direct strategies. In Stage II, the majority of the American participants used Direct strategies while only one Egyptian participant used those strategies.

### *Role Play 3*

This RP involves refusal of a request from someone lower in status, a friend's younger brother. With regard to the number of participants who used Direct strategies in Stage I, it was found that more participants (5) in the NNSI group used Direct strategies than any other group. In fact, in the three other groups, only one or two participants used Direct strategies in Stage I. So, here the Intermediate students followed the same pattern they used in RP1 with regard to their use of Direct strategies. In Stage II there were more similarities between the two NS groups than the two learner groups. For example, while 7 participants in each of the two learner groups used Direct refusal strategies in Stage II, only 2 participants in each of the NS groups used such Direct strategies in Stage II.

In terms of individual Indirect strategies used in Stage I, more participants in all four groups used the Excuse/Reason and Request for Information/Clarification strategies in Stage I more than any other strategies. It is important to point out that more participants in the Egyptian group (7) and the NNSA group (6) used the Request for Information/Clarification strategy than in any other group. In Stage II more participants in the two NS groups and the NNSA group used the Excuse/Reason strategy than any other strategy. No specific preference was detected for the NNSI group.

To sum up, more participants in the NNSI group used Direct strategies in Stage I than in any other group. In Stage II more Intermediate and Advanced students used Direct strategies than participants in the two NS groups. All the groups generally preferred the Excuse/Reason and the Request for Information/Clarification strategy.

#### *Role Play 4*

This Role Play involves a refusal of an offer from someone higher in status. An examination of the Direct strategies used in Stage I showed that while 40% to 60% of the participants in the three American groups used Direct strategies in Stage I, only 10% of the Egyptian participants used these Direct strategies. In Stage II a similar pattern was observed: while 60% of the participants in the two learner groups, and 90% of the participants in the NSE group used Direct strategies in Stage II, only 10% of the Egyptian participants used these Direct strategies. The reader is reminded that the same pattern was observed in Stage II of RP2 above. Please refer to the Quantitative Analysis section above for more quantitative differences between the groups in this Role Play.

The Indirect strategies preferred in Stage I also showed similarities among the three American groups. For example, one clear pattern that was detected in Stage I was that the majority of participants in the three American groups (70% to 90%) used the strategy Excuse/Reason, which was often used along with an Adjunct to refusal, namely, Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. In the Egyptian group, however, no clear pattern was detected. In Stage II, no clear preference was observed in the Egyptian group. Similarly, no clear preference was observed in the two learner groups. The NSE group, on the other hand, followed the same pattern it used in Stage I, where most of the

participants (90%) used either the Excuse/Reason strategy or the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement strategy, or a combination of the two.

To sum up, while 40% to 60% of the participants in the three American groups used Direct strategies in Stage I, only 10% of the Egyptians used this strategy in Stage I. The same pattern was also observed in Stage II. The Indirect refusal strategies preferred by the Americans in the two Stages of interaction were the Excuse/Reason strategy in addition to the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement strategy. No specific pattern was observed in the Egyptian data.

#### *Role Play 5*

In Role Play 5 the participants were asked to refuse an offer of dessert from a host, who is also an old friend, at the end of a meal. With regard to Direct strategies used in Stage I, a majority of the participants in the NSE group (80%), the NSA group (90%), and the Intermediate group (70%) used Direct strategies in this Stage. Fewer participants in the NNSA group (50%) used them. In Stage II 60% to 80% of the participants in all four groups used Direct strategies. This Role Play is different from the previous ones in that Direct strategies were frequently used by participants in all the groups in both Stages.

With regard to the use of Indirect strategies in Stage I, 80% of the participants in the NNSA and NSE groups used the Excuse/Reason strategy and only 30% of the participants in the NNSI and NSA groups used this strategy. In Stage II, no specific preferences were identified in the two learner groups nor in the NSA group; in the NSE group, however, a majority of the participants (60%) used the Excuse/Reason strategy in Stage II. This is similar to the pattern observed in Stage I.

To sum up, at least 50% of the participants in all four groups used Direct refusal strategies in Stage I, and at least 60% of the participants in all the group also used Direct strategies in Stage II. While 80% of the NNSA and NSE participants used the Excuse/Reason strategy in Stage I, only 30% of the participants in the NNSI and NSA groups used this strategy in Stage I.

### *Role Play 6*

In Role Play 6 the participants were asked to refuse an offer of money from a janitor as a compensation for breaking up a china figurine that was on the participant's desk. In this RP there were more similarities among the participants in both Stages. The majority of the participants (80% to 100%) in all four groups used Direct Strategies in Stage I of the interaction. It is also important to point out that the majority of these participants used the Flat No strategy as their preferred Direct refusal strategy. In Stage II, a similar pattern was observed: 80% to 100% of the participants in the two learner groups and the NSA group, and 60% of the participants in the NSE group used Direct strategies in Stage II.

With regard to participants' preference for Indirect strategies. In Stage I, a majority of participants (60%) in the NSE group used the Let Interlocutor Off the Hook strategy, but no clear patterns were detected for the three other groups. In Stage II, 40% to 60% of the participants in all the groups used the Let Interlocutor Off the Hook strategy. As explained earlier in this chapter, this strategy was only used in RP6. It is interesting to note that there is more uniformity among the participants in RP5 and RP6.

To sum up, at least 80% of the participants used Direct refusals in Stage I, and the majority of these participants used the Flat No strategy. In Stage II at least 60% of the participants used Direct strategies in all four groups. The NNSI group was the only group where 100% of the participants used Direct strategies in Stage I and Stage II of the interaction. The most preferred Indirect strategy for all the participants was Let Interlocutor Off the Hook.

### *Discourse Analysis of Selected Interactions*

This section presents an in-depth discourse analysis of selected interactions. The discourse analysis goes beyond the frequency counts of strategies presented in the quantitative analysis section to analyze the interaction at the level of discourse and examine how refusals are structured, and how they are recycled over a number of turns. The analysis also aims to examine how native speakers and learners attend to their interlocutor's face through the use of various direct and indirect strategies. This section complements the quantitative analysis section in answering the research questions by looking at characteristic differences among the four groups of participants. The analysis also focuses on differences between the learner groups and the Egyptian group (Research Questions 1). It also examines patterns used by the learner groups and the NSE group to explore common discourse-level characteristics of refusal that could be due to transfer from L1 (Research Question 2). This section also looks at differences between the Intermediate and Advanced students to find out if pragmatic competence could be attributed in part to language proficiency (Research Question 1). The concept of Stages (Garcia, 1992, 1999) is used as a general framework for the analysis. It is also used for

organizing the data in analyzable chunks and for providing a systematic way of comparing and contrasting the interactions.

This section consists of four subsections. The first subsection deals with strategy section and it examines the use of two strategies: Unspecified/Indefinite Reply and Criticism/Reprimand in RP1 and how the learners and native speakers strategically used these strategies in their interactions. This subsection focuses on pragmatic transfer by providing examples of discourse-level pragmatic transfer from L1. The following subsection examines individual differences among the participants by providing an in-depth discourse analysis of the interactions of two Intermediate students. This analysis aims to show how individual differences and pragmatic transfer from L1 can affect how American students realize the speech act of refusal in Arabic. The third subsection examines the relationship between pragmatic competence and language proficiency by comparing the interactions of two learners, one at Intermediate level and one at the Advanced level. The last subsection looks at the use of Direct and Indirect strategies by comparing the interactions of two participants, one from the NSE group and one from the NSA group. Since there were significant differences between the American and Egyptian participants with regard to the use of Direct and Indirect strategies, especially in the Higher status situations, and since there was evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1, it is important to examine American and Egyptian refusals are differentially realized, especially in the Higher status situations. The goal here is to see how the Direct and Indirect refusals are strategically used by the participants to perform the speech act of refusal and to minimize the illocutionary force of this face-threatening speech act.

### *Strategy Selection*

The interactions selected for analysis in this section come from RP1 in which participants were asked to refuse a classmate's request to borrow the participant's lecture notes. The quantitative analysis showed that the Intermediate students produced the highest percentage of Direct strategies as well as a high percentage of the strategy Criticism/Reprimand. Participants from the NSE group also produced a high percentage of Direct strategies and frequently used the Criticism/Reprimand strategy. The NSA group, on the other hand, frequently used the Unspecified/Indefinite Reply and rarely used the Criticism/Reprimand strategy. In this section an in-depth analysis of how these strategies were strategically used by participants from each of these three groups in their interactions. This section provides examples of discourse-level pragmatic transfer and it also reveals interesting cultural differences that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

This section starts with the following interaction from RP1 by one of the Intermediate students, Tony. This Role Play starts with a brief greeting which is followed by the request (lines 3 and 4), and Tony's response (line 5).

- |   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | R: | توني، إزيك عامل إيه؟ تمام؟<br>Tony, how are you? good?   |
| 2 | T: | تمام<br>good   |
| 3 | R: | الحمد لله، طب توني، كنت محتاج منك مساعدة، كنت عايز<br>That's good, OK, Tony, I need your help with something. I wanted |
| 4 |    | النوتس من المحاضرة من إمبراح علشان كنت غايب<br>the lecture notes from yesterday because I was absent                   |
| 5 | T: | ليه؟<br>why?   |
| 6 | R: | كنت عندي مشكلة مع الجيرفريند شوية  |

- 7 T: I kind of had a problem with my girl friend  
لأ، مش ممكن آسف  
no, not possible , sorry
- 8 R: ليه توني، انت عارف عندنا امتحان  
why, Tony, you know we have an exam
- 9 T: لأ، يعني أنا درست كثير وانت مش درست  
no, I mean, I studied a lot and you did not study
- 10 R: انت عارف كان عندي مشكلة يعني، انت عارف ظروف  
you know I had a problem, I mean you know, circumstances
- 11 T: مشكلة إيه؟ مع الجيرل فريند؟  
What problem, with your girlfriend?
- 12 R: آه الجيرل فريند يعني، يعني العلاقة هتنتهي علشان هي  
yes with the girlfriend, I mean, I mean, we are breaking up because she
- 13 بتحب واحد تاني  
likes somebody else
- 14 T: يعني مش ممكن، آسف آسف  
I mean this is not possible, sorry, sorry
- 15 R: طيب مش ممكن مثلا طيب يوم واحد؟  
is it possible for example for one day?
- 16 T: آه، لأ، لأ لأ لأ  
ah, no, no, no, no
- 17 R: ولا ساعة واحدة؟  
not even one hour?
- 18 T: معلىش، مش ممكن  
sorry, not possible
- 19 R: طيب، أوكى توماس، مفيش مشكلة، ممكن أسأل مايكل أو جنيفر  
OK, Tony, no problem, I can ask Michael or Jennifer
- 20 T: ماشي، ماشي  
OK, OK
- 21 R: شكرا توني  
Thanks, Tony
- 22 T: ماشي  
OK

The response is a Request for Information/Clarification, which is considered to be an avoidance strategy used to delay the refusal in the interaction so that the participant would have enough time to plan for the refusal. However, when the interlocutor provided the information (line 6), Tony responded with two direct refusals, Flat No, and Negating

a Proposition (line 7), and these strategies were followed by a Statement of Regret to mitigate the illocutionary force of the Direct Refusal. The Statement of Regret was actually one of the most frequently used strategies by the three American groups. When a second attempt was made at the request (line 8), Tony responded with a the Indirect refusal strategy of Criticism/Reprimand (line 9). This strategy was, in fact, frequently used by the three American groups in this situation. Tony makes use of the Indirect strategy of Request for Information/Clarification strategy a second time (line 11) by asking about the nature of the problem and confirming that it had to do with the interlocutor's girlfriend. He is still, however, insistent on the refusal and he responds by using Direct refusal strategies in the following three turns, and rejecting any compromises (lines 14, 16, and 18). Tony, however, uses the Indirect strategy of Statement of Regret again in lines 14 and 18 as he did in Stage I in his initial refusal (line 7). In line 16, however, Tony expresses his strongest refusal by using the Flat No strategy four times without any mitigation. In fact, the Flat No strategy was used more frequently by the two learner groups than by the two NS groups in this RP.

It is interesting here to notice that this Intermediate student started Stage I (line 5) by using an Indirect strategy, Request for Information/Clarification. However, he repeatedly used and recycled Direct refusal strategies over a number of turns in Stage I and Stage II. It is also important to notice that he did not give the interlocutor any opportunities for negotiation by using alternatives, for example. It will be interesting to compare this interaction to an interaction from the NSE data and see if some of these discourse-level patterns can be found in the NSE data as well.

Drawing a comparison between Tony's interaction, above, and the interaction below from the NSE data, would reveal interesting similarities between the two participants. In this interaction, we see that Linda's initial response to her interlocutor's request is a Direct refusal strategy: Negating a Proposition (line 4).

- 1 R: So, again, I really appreciate all the help you've given me in the past. Um,  
2 I was hoping I could get your lecture notes from this – these past couple of  
3 weeks.
- 4 L: Um, yeah, I don't – I don't think so, at this time. Um –
- 5 R: I mean, obviously, I'm not going to be copying anything verbatim. I won't  
6 – I won't photocopy your notes. I just would really like them to fill in the  
7 pieces of
- 8 L: Yeah, I know, you really haven't been to class, and I put a lot of time in  
9 taking down the notes and
- 10 R: Well, I've been – I've had a lot – I've kind of been a mess lately. Uh, my  
11 girlfriend broke up with me, so I've really, um, I've been late; I've been  
12 sleeping late. It's really just messed up my schedule. Um, so maybe, this  
13 one time, uh, you've helped me in the past and your notes are incredible.  
14 They're always really great. Um, really kind of supplement all of; you  
15 know, the notes that I have taken, so –
- 16 L: Yeah, I know. I – I feel bad saying no, but it's – I don't really feel like I  
17 should this time.
- 18 R: Is there any way you can help me out, just this one time?
- 19 L: No. No.
- 20 R: This will be the last.
- 21 L: I'm really sorry.
- 22 R: Okay.
- 23 L: But, no.
- 24 R: Okay. Thanks. Thank you very much anyways. Good luck on the exam.
- 25 L: Thanks. You too.

When the interlocutor assures her that he will not copy anything verbatim or photocopy her notes but just use them to fill in the missing pieces (lines 5 and 7), Linda uses the strategy of Criticism/Reprimand (lines 8 and 9) reminding the interlocutor that he does not come to class regularly and implying that his request is not fair since she puts a lot of time in taking the notes. Again this strategy was used by 8 out of 10 American participants in the NSE group in this Role Play. Although Linda uses a Statement of Empathy “I feel bad” to mitigate the illocutionary force of her refusal, she still asserts her refusal in the same turn by using two Direct refusal strategies (lines 16 and 17). When the interlocutor makes two more attempts at recycling his request (lines 18 and 20), Linda responds with the most direct of the Direct refusal strategies: Flat No (lines 19 and 23) and she does not use any mitigation strategies in those turns. However, she uses a Statement of Regret (line 21), and as mentioned above this strategy was frequently used by the American participants and it was often used either before or after a Direct refusal.

It is important to notice the similarities between this Linda’s interaction and Tony’s interaction above. It seems that for both participants persistence on the part of the requester triggers the use of more Direct refusal strategies. While the two participants used Indirect strategies and Adjuncts they tended to assert their refusals using Direct strategies rather than Indirect ones. This was in fact characteristic of Stage II of the interaction for the two participants.

However, it is important to point out that while some Americans used Indirect strategies, the majority preferred Direct strategies, especially in Stage II of the interaction. While this interaction above does not represent the strategies used by all the American participants, it still shows many of the patterns preferred by the American

participants such as the use of Direct strategies in both Stages of refusal as well as the preference of Direct strategies in the face of insistence on the part of the interlocutor.

The patterns exhibited by the Egyptian participants in this Role Play were different from those followed by their American counterparts in a number of respects. First, it is important to point out that while only one participant in all three American groups agreed to give the interlocutors her notes, 4 out the 10 Egyptian participants actually agreed to either lend the notes to the interlocutor or let him photocopy them. The Egyptian participants also used the lowest percentage of Direct strategies and the highest percentage of Indirect strategies in this Role Play. With regard to aggravating strategies such as Criticism/Reprimand, they were used by two participants only in the Egyptian group and it is interesting to note that these two participants ended up, in fact, agreeing to give the interlocutor their lecture notes. What is interesting also is that the Egyptians frequently used the strategy Unspecified/Indirect Reply, which was the second most frequently used Indirect strategy by the Egyptians in this Role Play (with the first being Excuse/Reason). This strategy was also used by 50% of the Egyptian participants. However, it was used by only one participant in the three American groups in this Role Play. In the Unspecified/Indirect Reply strategy the speaker attempts to avoid the refusal by providing vague and open-ended replies, and by conveying to the interlocutor an attitude of someone who is very willing to help but might not be able to due to circumstances that are out of his or her control.

The following interaction from the Egyptian data illustrates how the Unspecified or Indefinite Reply strategy was used by the Egyptian participants. It also shows how Indirect refusals were preferred and how they were used and recycled in both Stages of

the interaction. After greeting this participant, Nahed, the interlocutor makes the request of borrowing her lecture notes (lines 3 to 5) and the participant replies with an excuse that she does not have the notes in her possession at this very moment, and that she left them at home (line 6).

- 1 R: أهلا ناهد، أخبارك إيه ؟  
hi Nahed, how are you?
- 2 N: الحمد لله ازيك انت؟  
good, how are you?
- 3 R: الله يخليكي الحمد لله، ناهد كنت عايز منك مساعدة، انت عارفة الدكتور قال  
thanks, good. Nahed, I wanted your help, you know, the professor said
- 4 إن فيه امتحان الأسبوع الي جاي، وكنت عايز استلف منك النوتس  
there will be an exam next week and I wanted to borrow your notes
- 5 بس يعني يوم ولا حاجة  
just for a day or so
- 6 N: أه مع الأسف، أنا كراسة النوتس بتاعتي في البيت نسيتها،  
Oh, unfortunately, my notes notebook is at home, I forgot to bring it
- 7 R: أووه، طيب، طيب، أخذها منك بكرة مثلا ولا حاجة تكوني جبتيها ولا إيه؟  
Oh, OK, can I get it from you tomorrow, maybe, you would have it, or?
- 8 N: لأ هو بكرة الحقيقة، مضطرية أسافر اسكندرية فمش  
No, tomorrow, actually, I have to travel to Alexandria so I will not
- 9 جاية الجامعة  
be coming to the university
- 10 R: أووه، طيب ممكن لما ترجعي ولا إيه؟ يعني مثلا، يعني لو كان  
Oh, OK, maybe when you get back or? I mean, like, I mean if it would be
- 11 قبل الامتحان  
before the exam
- 12 N: أه بس أنا هكون محتاجاها، معلش متر علش مني  
but I will be needing them, sorry, don't be upset with me
- 13 R: لا لا مفيش حاجة  
no, no, no problem
- 14 N: مش هاقدر أستغنى عنها قبل الامتحان، هأكون  
I will not be able to part with them before the exam, I will be
- 15 R: طيب  
OK
- 16 N: يعني بذاكر فيها، فمش  
I will be studying them, so I will not
- 17 R: طبعا طبعا، طب مثلا لو خدتها ساعتين ثلاثة  
Of course, of course, OK, so if I took them for two or three hours
- 18 ولا حاجة بس علشان أبص عليها بس، انت عارفة  
or something, just so that I would just have a look at them, you know,
- 19 الامتحان الي جاي ده

- 20 N: this upcoming exam  
يعني ربنا يسهل، هنشوف  
I mean, hopefully [God willing], we'll see
- 21 R: يعني أكلمك تاني مثلا لما ترجعي من اسكندرية ولا إيه؟  
So, shall I talk to you again, like, when you get back from Alexandria, or?
- 22 N: يعني خاينا نشوف لما نتقابل ابقى فكرني،  
I mean, we'll see, when we meet you can remind me
- 23 R: خلاص، لما نتقابل المرة الجاية أفكرك؟  
OK, when we meet next time I will remind you?
- 24 N: إن شاء الله  
God willing
- 25 R: طيب خلاص، تشوفي وقتك كده، يعني لما نتقابل المرة الجاية  
Sure, OK, you can see what time, I mean, when we meet next time
- 26 تشوفي إذ كان ينفع ولا لا  
you will see if this will work or not
- 27 N: ماشي، ماشي، يعني خايتها لظروفها  
OK, OK, I mean, let's leave it to the circumstances
- 28 R: خايتها لظروفها، طيب، طيب، خلاص ناهد مش عايز  
Leave it to the circumstances, sure, sure, OK, Nahed, I don't want to
- 29 أتقل عليك، انت ساعدتيني قبل كده وأنت، بس انت ممتازة  
trouble you, you helped me before and you, just, you are excellent,
- 30 طبعا وبتكتبي نوتس كويس، عشان كده الواحد يعني بيحب  
of course, and you write good notes, because of that I, I mean, one likes
- 31 يستلف منك النوتس، بس  
to borrow the notes form you, but
- 32 N: طبعا آه يعني تحت أمرك بس يعني اليومين دول أنا  
sure, yes, I mean, I'd love to help you, but these couple of days I am
- 33 مشغولة شوية فمش هينفع ان استغنى عن النوتس بتاعتي  
a little busy so I will not be able to give away my notes
- 34 R: آه الله يخليكي مفيش مشكلة، خالص، مفيش مشكلة، لو في فرصة  
Oh, thanks, no problem at all, no problem, if I got a chance
- 35 أكلمك بعد ما ترجعي إن شاء الله  
I will talk to you when you get back, God willing
- 36 N: إن شاء الله  
God willing
- 37 R: وإن شاء الله تقضي وقت حلو في اسكندرية، فسحة  
God willing, you will have a good time in Alexandria, is it like a vacation
- 38 ولا إيه؟  
or what?
- 39 N: لا أكلة سمك  
no, going to eat fish
- 40 R: أكلة سمك، حلو، ميه ميه، تبقى حاجة حلوة، شكرا ناهد  
fish, cool, that's excellent, thanks, Nahed
- 41 N: شكرا  
Thanks

When the interlocutor suggests that he could get the notes from her the following day, the participant uses another excuse that she would be traveling to Alexandria the following day (lines 8 and 9). It is important to remind the reader that the Excuse/Reason strategy was the most frequently used strategy by the Egyptians in this RP, whereas for the three American groups the Statement of Regret was the most frequently used strategy. The participant's second reason was also interesting in that she used the expression "have to" to signify that it is something important that she has to do (i.e., traveling to Alexandria). When the interlocutor persists again, recycling his request for the third time (lines 10 and 11) suggesting that she could give him the notes after she returns from Alexandria, the participant expresses refusal using another Excuse/Reason and using two other Indirect strategies: Statement of Regret and Self-Defense (line 12). She also followed this with further explanation of her reasons that she would need to study the notes before the exam.

The interlocutor has not yet given up at this time and recycles his request for the fourth time suggesting that he would take the notes from her for a couple of hours or so (lines 17 to 19). In a situation like this, where the request is recycled for the third or fourth time in Stage II, an American participant would normally respond by asserting his or her refusal using a Direct refusal (c.f. Tony's interaction, lines 14 and 16, and Linda's interaction, lines 19 and 23). The Egyptian participant, however, in response to persistence on the part of her interlocutor, uses the Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy as a face-saving move in order to help the interlocutor save face and avoid embarrassment. She responds by saying *we'll see* and making reference to God using an expression similar to *God willing* (line 18). However, the participant is still not satisfied with the answer because he wants a specific date and time or a more serious commitment

from the participant. So, he checks with the participant again if he can contact her after she comes back from Alexandria (line 21). The participant yet again uses another Unspecified/Indefinite Reply strategy and tries to be non-committal: *we'll see, when we meet you can remind me* (line 22). In the following turns the interlocutor repeats confirmation checks to make sure that the participant was serious about helping him and the participant responds to both of them with Unspecified/Indefinite Reply, again using expressions such as *God willing* and *let's leave it to the circumstances* (lines 24 and 27).

However, in his attempt to get a more serious commitment from Nahed, the interlocutor says that he is counting on her for the lecture notes, and reminds her that she helped him in the past and that he appreciates her help, and that she writes good notes etc. At this point the participant finally decides to use a Direct refusal strategy, she prefaces it, however, with Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement *I'd love to help you*, and Excuse/Reason *I am a little busy* and then the Direct refusal *I will not be able to give away my notes* (lines 32 and 33). At this point it becomes clear to the interlocutor that the participant is not willing to help him and expresses understanding of her position (line 34). However, the interesting point here is that when the interlocutor says he may give her a call when she gets back from Alexandria (line 35), the participant responds by saying *God willing* implying that the participant may do so. She did not assert her refusal again at this time. It seems that she already feels that her interlocutor “got the message” and he understands that she will not be able to help but she is just trying to save his face.

As can be observed from this interaction and the previous two, there are differences between the American and Egyptian participants with regard to how they realize their refusals in these interactions. While the American participants are more

concerned with getting their message across the Egyptian participants are more concerned with saving their interlocutor's face at the expense of the clarity of their message. These issues will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

### *Individual Differences*

Individual differences among the participants are being examined since, as explained above, they seem to be particularly important in accounting for differences in how the speech act of refusal is realized. The relationship between pragmatic transfer and individual differences will also be investigated. In this section individual differences between two Intermediate students in how they realize the speech act of refusal in RP2 are examined. The reader is reminded that in RP2 participants were asked to refuse a request from a supervisor at work to stay for 3 extra hours. In this section we examine how Evan and Jack, two Intermediate students, realized their refusals in this Role Play.

We start here by examining Evan's interaction below. It is quite interesting that Evan did not immediately address the interlocutor's request in lines 1 and 2. Instead, he responds by greeting his interlocutor and addressing him as *sir* (line 3). Then he continues greeting him over two turns (lines 5 and 7), and finally he attends to his supervisor's request (lines 9 to 12).

- 1 R: إيفان كنا عايزين مساعدة منك، كنا عايزينك تشتغل 3 ساعات إضافية النهاردة، من الساعة 6  
Evan, we want your help, we want you to work 3 extra hours today from 6  
2 للساعة 9  
to 9  
3 E: الله يخليك يا أستاذ، أهلا وسهلا  
Thank you, Sir, nice to see you  
4 R: أهلا بيبك  
Nice to see you too  
5 E: أخبارك إيه؟

- 6 R: How are you?  
الحمد لله، كويس  
Thank God, good
- 7 E: كله تمام؟  
All is well?
- 8 R: كله تمام  
All is well
- 9 E: أنا طالب دلوقتي فأنا بأدرس كل اليوم، هذا الأول أسبوع  
I am a student now and I study every day, this is the first week  
10 في الشهر  
in the month
- 11 وأنا بعد إنك مش ممكن أشتغل في هذا الساعة بسبب، أنا  
and I, with your permission, will not be able to work at this hour because  
12 من اللازم بأدرس في هذا الوقت، ممكن أساعدك في وقت آخر؟  
of I have to study at that time. Can I help you at some other time?
- 13 R: في وقت آخر؟ انت عارف الكتب وصلت النهاردة، شحنة  
At some other time? You know, the books arrived today, a big shipment  
14 كتب كثيرة وكنا محتاجين مساعدة النهاردة عشان عايزين نوزعها وتكون  
of books and we need help today, we need to shelve them and get them  
15 جاهزة بكرة إن شاء الله، يعني انت مش ممكن تشتغل النهاردة وتذاكر  
ready for tomorrow, God willing, I mean, can't you work today and study  
16 بكرة ولا؟  
tomorrow, or?
- 17 E: ما عنديش وقت، هذا مشكلة، أنا، أنا أحب بأشتغل معك، لكن هذا  
I don't have time, this is a problem, I, I love working with you, but this  
18 الأسبوع مهم جدا بالنسبة لي بسبب أنا عايز بيبدأ الفصل كويس  
week is very important for me because of I want the semester to start well
- 19 R: طبعاً، طبعاً، طبعاً، ممكن تقعد ساعة واحدة أو ساعتين؟  
Of course, of course, of course, OK, can you stay for one hour or two?
- 20 E: أعتقد ليس مناسب لي، هذا ليس لا بسبب لا أحبك،  
I think this is not suitable for me, this is not because of I don't love you,  
21 أنت صاحبي وأنا أحب بأشتغل معك ولكن ما عنديش الوقت  
you are my friend, and I love to work with you but I don't have the time
- 22 R: تمام إيفان، مفيش مشكلة، ممكن وقت تاني، انت قللتني وقت تاني،  
OK, Evan, no problem, maybe some other time, you said some other time,  
23 ممكن بكرة مثلاً  
maybe tomorrow, for example
- 24 E: ممكن، ممكن  
That's possible, possible
- 25 R: ممكن بكرة  
Possible tomorrow
- 26 E: إن شاء الله  
God willing

- 27 R: مفيش مشكلة، تمام شكرا إيفان  
No problem, good, thanks, Evan
- 28 E: شكرا  
Thanks

It seems that through the use of these greetings, which are examples of Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement, Evan attempts to convey his respect for his supervisor and creates a friendly atmosphere in order to soften the illocutionary force of his upcoming refusal. When Evan finally expresses his refusal of his interlocutor's request he prefaces it with three Indirect strategies (i.e., Excuse/Reason): that he is a student, that he has to study every day, and that this is the first week of the month. For the last excuse it is likely he intended that this was the first week of the semester. By presenting these excuses he seems to be requesting his supervisor's understanding and consideration. When Evan finally expresses his refusal in this turn he also prefaces it with *with your permission* (line 11) to soften its illocutionary force, and he immediately follows his Direct refusal with another excuse *I have to study at that time*, and then another Indirect strategy, Statement of Alternative, *Can I help you at some other time?* (line 12).

When the supervisor explains that the book shipment just arrived and they have to put the books on the shelves right away, Evan responds by using another Excuse/Reason strategy *I don't have time* rather than using a Direct strategy. This is followed by a Statement of Empathy *this is a problem* (line 17) which shows that Evan understands' the supervisor's dilemma and empathizes with him. This strategy is followed in turn by a Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement in the same turn (line 17) *I love working with you*. Evan again requests the supervisor's understanding by explaining that

this week is very important for him because he wants the semester to *start well* (line 18). The supervisor, however, wants to see if it is possible for him to stay for one or two hours (line 19). Evan explains that this will not work for him by saying it will not be *suitable* for him, then to soften his refusal he immediately uses three Statements of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement in the same turn (lines 20 and 21). First he explains that the fact that he will not be able to help should not be interpreted that he does not *love* the supervisor. He actually *loves* the supervisor because the supervisor is his *friend* and he *loves* to work with the supervisor. Evan ends this turn by using another Indirect strategy, Excuse/Reason, asserting that he does not have the time; at the same time avoiding to use another Direct refusal strategy. At this time the supervisor accepts Evan's refusal and agrees to schedule some other time for him to work the extra hours.

Evan's interaction is interesting in many ways. First, unlike most of the American interactions in which a high percentage of Direct strategies was used, Evan's managed to use these strategies minimally. He used his limited linguistic resources to convey an attitude of someone who is very friendly and very willing to help. However, the fact that Evan used a high frequency of Adjuncts to refusal and in particular Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement indicates a high degree of pragmatic transfer from L1. In fact, in this RP the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement was frequently used by the NSE group (14.3%) as compared to the NSA group (7.3%). It will be interesting to compare Evan to another Intermediate student, Jack, and find out how they differ in realizing their refusals.

In this section we examine the interaction below, which is with Jack, another Intermediate student performing RP2. Unlike Evan who started the interaction by

greeting his supervisor and prefacing his refusal by three Excuses and one Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement, Jack used a Direct refusal strategy that was prefaced by one Statement of Regret, and he did not provide any excuses or reason for his refusal (line 3).

- 1 R: جاك كنت محتاج منك مساعدة، كنا عابزينك تشتغل 3 ساعات إضافية النهاردة، من الساعة 6 لـ  
Jack, I need your help, we want you to work 3 extra hours today from 6 to  
2 9 إن شاء الله  
9 God willing  
3 J: عفوا، ولكن مش ممكن  
Sorry, but this is not possible  
4 R: ليه مش ممكن؟  
Why not possible?  
5 J: عندي، مشغول كثيرا والآن أحتاج، أحتاج استراحة  
I have, I am busy a lot and now I need, I need a break  
6 R: طيب ممكن تاخذ استراحة بكرة  
You can take a break tomorrow  
7 J: لأ، في مشمش  
No, when pigs fly!  
8 R: في المشمش!  
When pigs fly!  
9 J: أحتاج استراحة الآن  
I need a break now  
10 R: طيب، يعني ممكن ساعتين بس؟  
OK, I mean, is two hours only possible?  
11 J: لأ، باشتغل كثيرا وأنا تعبان جدا وعندي واجب كثيرا أيضا  
No, I work a lot and I am very tired and I have a lot of homework too  
12 وهذا مهم في حياتي، عفوا  
and this is important in my life, sorry  
13 R: طيب يعني مش ممكن خالص؟  
So, I mean this is not possible at all?  
14 J: لأ مش ممكن  
No, not possible  
15 R: خلاص جاك مفيش مشكلة ممكن أتكلم مع مايكل  
OK, Jack, no problem, I can talk with Michael  
16 J: أيوه ممكن هو ستساعدك  
Yes, maybe he will help you  
17 R: سأتكلم مع مايكل، مفيش مشكلة، شكرا جاك  
I will talk with Michael, no problem, thanks Jack

When the supervisor enquires about the reason, Jack explains that he is busy and he needs a break (line 5). When the supervisor suggests that Jack could take a break the following day, Jack responds with a Flat No (line 7), which was followed by a very strong assertion of his refusal of the supervisor's suggestion *when pigs fly* (line 7). The literal meaning of this expression is "in the apricots" and the closest translation is "when the pigs fly" implying that the interlocutor would never comply with what is being proposed and completely rejects it. This is interesting because Jack may not have been aware of how culturally inappropriate such idiomatic expression is when used to address a supervisor or someone higher in status to the interlocutor. In fact, in a casual conversation after the role play with this participant, Jack told the researcher that he had learned this expression while he was in Egypt and had been fond of using it since then. It seems that Jack wanted to show off his knowledge of such idiomatic expressions but he did not know how to use them in a culturally appropriate way.

The supervisor is surprised by Jack's response and he repeats it. Jack seems to be aware of this and gives the supervisor a more specific, but a blunt and unmitigated refusal of the supervisor's suggestion that he would take a break tomorrow by saying that *I need a break now* (line 9). When the supervisor makes the suggestion that Jack could work for only two extra hours, instead of three (line 10), Jack responds again with a Flat No, which is followed by one statement of Self-Defense and two Excuse/Reason strategies (line 11): *I work a lot, I am tired, and I have a lot of homework*. Then he explains that this is important in his life, and he ends his turn with a Statement of a Regret. The supervisor makes one last attempt at asking Jack to do the extra hours (line 13) and Jack responds by another Flat No and a Direct refusal *not possible*.

These two interactions of Evan and Jack highlight the important fact that individual differences can play a major role in how refusals are realized. Here we have two participants at the same level of proficiency (i.e., Intermediate) but who realized the speech act of refusal in different ways. Evan used the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement strategies frequently to reduce the illocutionary force of the refusal. By doing so he actually used a strategy that is preferred by native speakers of English. In fact, in this Role Play, the NSE group used the highest percentage of the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement than any other group, and two times more than the Egyptian group. Also, like most of the participants in the NSA group, Evan used a lower percentage of Direct refusal strategies. This is interesting because most of the participants in the NSE group used a high percentage of Direct strategies. Also, following a pattern that was observed in the Egyptian data, Evan used a high percentage of Indirect strategies, and like many of the participants in the NSE and NSA groups he also used the Statement of Alternative strategy. It is also very interesting to notice that Evan did not use the strategy sequence that was most frequently used by the American participants, which is a combination of Direct Refusal and a Statement of Regret. This strategy sequence was used by Jack, for example, twice (lines 3 & 12). Jack, on the other hand, used strategies that were very similar to those used by the NSE group and although he could have used Adjuncts to refusal, especially Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement, which was used frequently by the American participants, he chose not to. When compared to Egyptian refusals, Evan's performance seems to be more successful than Jack's. However, it is also important to point out that gaps in Evan's sociopragmatic knowledge about Egyptian culture led to inappropriate use of the Statement of Positive

Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. For example, it was not culturally appropriate for Evan to refer to his supervisor as his *friend* (line 18). Also, it did not seem appropriate to ignore the supervisor's request in line 1 and engage in exchange of greetings over three turns before attending to the request in line 8. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

### *Language Proficiency and Pragmatic Competence*

After examining individual differences between two participants at the same proficiency level, it will be important to look at the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence. In this section we examine the interactions of two participants: Kim at the Intermediate level and Kristen at the Advanced level. Both participants were able to perform realize the speech act of refusal successfully. The Intermediate student, however, despite her limited language proficiency, was able to engage in more negotiation and convey a more positive attitude toward her interlocutor. We first start with Kristen, the Advanced student.

- 1 R: كريستن كنت محتاج منك مساعدة، انت عارفة عندي بروجكت بعلمه مع  
Kristen, I need your help, you know, I have a project I am working on for  
2 المدرسة وكنت محتاج أعمل معاك إنترفيو  
school and I wanted to do an interview with you  
3 KN: لأ مش ممكن أنا أسفة جدا بس أخوك وأنا هنروح إلى  
No, not possible. I am so sorry but your brother and I are going to  
4 حفلة موسيقية بعد شوية  
a concert in a little bit  
5 R: بعد شوية؟ بس ده يعني ده إنترفيو صغير ياخذ نص ساعة بس  
In a little bit? But this is a short interview, it will only take half an hour  
6 KN: نص ساعة وقت طويل، بس ممكن مرة ثانية، ممكن بكرة  
Half an hour is a long time, but maybe another time, maybe tomorrow  
7 هاساعدك مع مقابلة  
I will help you with the interview  
8 R: مش ممكن النهاردة؟  
Not possible today?  
9 KN: أه مش ممكن عشان اسأل أخوك

- 10 R: Yes, not possible today, because, ask your brother  
انتو هتروحوا الحفلة دلوقتي؟  
You are going to the concert now?
- 11 KN: آه دلوقتي، أنا أسفة  
Yes, now, I am sorry
- 12 R: مش ممكن ربع ساعة؟  
Is quarter of an hour possible?
- 13 KN: لا، مش ممكن ربع ساعة  
No, quarter of an hour not possible
- 14 R: مش ممكن خالص؟  
No possible at all?
- 15 KN: مش ممكن النهاردة  
Not possible today
- 16 R: مش ممكن النهاردة خالص؟  
Not possible at all today?
- 17 KN: خالص  
At all
- 18 R: طيب، ممكن وقت تاني؟  
OK, maybe another time?
- 19 KN: وقت؟  
Time?
- 20 R: ممكن مرة تانية؟  
Maybe some other time?
- 21 KN: مرة تانية، طبعاً، ممكن بكرة  
Some other time, of course, maybe tomorrow
- 22 R: ممكن بكرة؟  
Tomorrow is possible?
- 23 KN: ممكن بكرة  
Tomorrow is possible
- 24 R: خلاص، بكرة إن شاء الله، بعد الظهر؟  
OK, tomorrow, God willing, in the afternoon
- 25 KN: آه ممكن بعد الظهر  
Yes, possible in the afternoon
- 26 R: بعد الظهر، تمام، تمام، شكرا كريستن  
In the afternoon, good, good, thanks, Kristen
- 27 KN: عفوا  
You are welcome

As shown in the interaction above, Kristen's first response to the request is a Flat No that was followed by a Negation of a Proposition *I can't* (line 3). However, this is followed by two Indirect strategies: Statement of Regret and Excuse/Reason. When the interlocutor explains that it is a short interview and that it will only take half an hour,

Kristen contradicts by saying that half an hour is actually a long time, but she also uses the Indirect strategy of Statement of Alternative: *maybe tomorrow* (line 6). When the interlocutor recycles his request again (line 8), Kristen asserts her refusal by using a Direct strategy *not possible* (line 9) but she also uses an Indirect strategy, by appealing to the interlocutor's brother. In line 10 the Interlocutor seems to be trying to confirm with the participant that she was going to the concert immediately in the hope that this could lead to more negotiation or maybe could encourage the participant to propose a second alternative. Kristen, however, does not propose an alternative and instead asserts her refusal, using one of the most frequently used American strategies: Statement of Regret. In fact, American participants used this strategy at least three times as frequently as the Egyptian participants in this Role Play. When the interlocutor did not get the alternative or negotiation he was hoping for, he proposes an alternative, which is that they could spend only 15 minutes on the interview, instead of the originally requested 30 minutes (line 12). Kristen here appears not to be interested in reaching a compromise, or providing further explanation, or use any other Indirect strategies such as Hedging, or Adjuncts to refusal to soften illocutionary force of her refusal. Instead, she uses two Direct strategies: Flat No and Negating a Proposition *not possible* in response to her interlocutor's suggestion (line 13). Again in lines 15 and 17 she asserts her refusal using Direct strategies, giving her Interlocutor no other option but to settle for doing the interview the following day.

It is important, however, to point out that in this Role Play the majority of the participants in all four groups did not use Direct refusal strategies in Stage I of the interaction, specifically in the initial response to the request. In fact, Kristen was the only

participant in her group to use a Direct refusal strategy in Stage I in this Role Play. The important point here, however, is that Kristen is an Advanced student, who has the linguistic resources for engaging in more negotiation with her interlocutor. She has the linguistic ability to use a wide variety of Indirect refusal strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal. Her linguistic ability would have allowed her to transfer from her L1 some of the strategies that would have also worked in Arabic (e.g., Request for Information/Clarification, Hedging, Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement). This is a very important point because it shows that the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence is not linear but rather complex. It depends on a host of different factors and language proficiency is just only one of those factors. In fact, it seems that individual differences among participants play a more important role in pragmatic competence than language proficiency. This point was made clearly in the previous section when comparing the two Intermediate students: Evan and Jack.

In this section the interaction with Kim, who is an Intermediate student, will be presented and differences between her and Kristen will be highlighted. The following is the complete interaction with Kim.

- |   |     |   |
|---|-----|---|
| 1 | R:  | كيم كنت محتاج منك مساعدة، كنت باعمل بروجكت مع المدرسة وكنت عايز أعمل<br>Kim, I need your help, I am doing a project for school and I wanted to do |
| 2 |     | معاكي إنترفيو بشأن البروجكت<br>an interview with you for this project   |
| 3 | KM: | ها! ماشي، ما هذا البروجكت؟<br>Ah, OK, what is this project?   |
| 4 | R:  | البروجكت عن، يعني بنعمل إنترفيو مع طلاب الجامعة<br>The project is about, I mean we do interviews with university students                         |
| 5 |     | ونتكلم عن المشاكل في الجامعة في الدراسة في حاجات زي كده<br>and talk about problems at the university, in study, in things like that               |
| 6 | KM: | آه، حاجات زي كده، نعم، أنا مستنيه أخوك، وهنروح إلى  |

- 7 Ah, things like that, yes, I am waiting for your brother and we're going to  
الكونسيرت، ولكن ممكن، متى هذا البروجكت؟ يعني
- 8 R: a concert but maybe, when is this project? I mean  
في المدرسة؟  
At school?
- 9 KM: يعني يريدون البروجكت في أي يوم؟  
I mean, they want the project on which day?
- 10 R: البروجكت محتاجينه يوم الأربعاء  
The project, they want it on Wednesday
- 11 KM: يوم الأربعاء، واليوم؟  
Wednesday, and today?
- 12 R: اليوم أظن الاثنين  
Today, I think Monday
- 13 KM: يوم الاثنين، ماشي، وممكن يوم الثلاثاء؟ يوم الثالث؟  
Monday, OK, and is it possible [to do it] on Tuesday? Tuesday?
- 14 R: التلات ممكن، بس يوم التلات هاعمل إنترفيو مع طلاب تانيين  
Tuesday is possible, but on Tuesday I will interview other students
- 15 KM: آه  
Ah
- 16 R: صحاب أختي  
My sister's friends
- 17 KM: آه، ماشي، ماشي، ولكن دلوقتي يعني هذا مش وقت جيد  
Ah, OK, OK, but now, I mean this is not a good time
- 18 R: أممم، طب ده هياخد نص ساعة بس  
Hmmm, but this will take only half an hour
- 19 KM: نعم ولكن الكونسرت، الكونسرت هذا في 10 دقائق  
Yes, but the concert, the concert is in 10 minutes
- 20 R: عشر دقائق، عشرة! طيب، مش ممكن تتأخري؟  
Ten minutes, ten! OK, is it possible to be late?
- 21 KM: لأ، لأ، مش عايزة، مش عايزة، نعم، هو، هو أخوك هو مش  
No, No, I don't want to, I don't want to, yes, he, he, your brother doesn't  
عايز س، س، هاروح إلى الكونسرت متأخرة، هذا مش تمام  
want to go to the concert late, this is not OK
- 23 R: صح صح، عندك حق، يعني مش ممكن دلوقتي؟  
Right, right, you are right, so not possible now?
- 24 KM: نعم، مش ممكن دلوقتي  
Yes, not possible now
- 25 R: هممممم  
hmmmmm
- 26 KM: أسفة، ولكن كيف الدراسة في المدرسة؟  
I am sorry, but how's study at school?
- 27 R: الحمد لله كويسة جدا،  
Thank God, very good
- 28 KM: كويسة جدا؟ آه الحمد لله  
Very good? Yes, Thank God
- 29 R: الحمد لله

- 30      KM: Thank God  
مبارك
- 31      R: Congratulations  
الله يخليكي، أنا طالب ممتاز  
Thanks, I am an excellent student!
- 32      KM: جميل، جميل  
Beautiful, beautiful
- 33      R: الله يخليكي، يعني مش ممكن دلوقتي، طيب، خلاص، أوكي، مش مشكلة، تمام شكرا كيم  
Thanks, so not possible now, OK, sure, OK, no problem, thanks, Kim
- 34      KM: شكرا  
Thanks

Kim's initial response to the request in Stage I is interesting. She first expresses a positive attitude toward her Interlocutor by using an Adjunct to Refusal: Statement of Agreement *OK*, then she enquires about the nature of this project, which is another Indirect refusal strategy: Request for Information/Clarification (line 3). This indicates that she is showing interest in the project. In lines 6 and 7 she uses two more Indirect strategies: first, she explains that she is going to a concert with the interlocutor's brother (Excuse/Reason) and instead of expressing her refusal at this point, she engages in negotiation with the interlocutor by asking about the due date of the project (Request for Information/Clarification). Although her initial attempt (line 7) was not successful due to her limited linguistic ability she attempts her question again in line 9. When the interlocutor answers her question she uses another Indirect strategy: Statement of Alternative by proposing that she could do the interview on Tuesday. However, when the interlocutor explains that this will not work, she finally uses a Direct refusal strategy: Negation of a Proposition (line 17) explaining that this is not a good time for her. When the interlocutor mentions that the interview would take only 30 minutes, Kim responds by using another Indirect strategy, Excuse/Reason, to assert her refusal. When her

interlocutor asks if it would be OK to go a bit late to the concert, she explains that this would not be possible, adding that the interlocutor's brother would not want this to happen. By doing this she softens the illocutionary force of her refusal through the use of the Indirect strategy of Appealing to a Third Party. Another very interesting thing that Kim does is in line 26, when she uses two Indirect strategies to reduce the illocutionary force of her refusal: Statement of Regret and Topic/Focus Switch (i.e., *how's study at school?*). The second strategy seems to be effective in deflecting the attention from the refusal and helping her interlocutor save face and avoid embarrassment. Her question about school is successful and leads to an amicable exchange in which she has a chance to use a series of Adjuncts to refusal (i.e., Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement and Gratitude/Appreciation) in lines 28, 30, 32, and 34. This way she makes it easier for her interlocutor to accept her refusal, which he finally acknowledges in line 33.

So, despite Kim's limited language proficiency compared Kristen's, she is able to perform this speech act relatively more successfully. Like the majority of the participants in the NSA and NSE groups, Kim uses a very high percentage of Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal and a lower percentage of Direct strategies. However, it is very important to point out that this is not necessarily due to her high level of pragmatic competence in Arabic. In fact, it could simply be the result of positive pragmatic transfer from English. This is interesting because, in fact, the two native speaker groups were very similar in their use of strategies in this Role Play: they both used almost the same percentage of Direct and Indirect strategies as well as Adjuncts to refusal. So, this would be the ideal situation for positive pragmatic transfer. It is very likely this is the result of positive pragmatic, since Kim did not use any of the strategies that appeared exclusively

in the NSA data in this Role Play (e.g., Postponement, Proverb/Common Saying, Negative Consequences to Requester). This suggests that Kim was relying on her L1 pragmatic knowledge in performing the refusal in this role play and she was successful because of the similarities between the NSE and NSA groups in performing this speech act. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

#### *Direct and Indirect Strategies in Higher Status Situations*

In this subsection we look at the use of Direct and Indirect especially in Higher status situation. There were important differences between the American groups on the one hand and the Egyptian group on the other, with regard to their use of Direct and Indirect strategies especially in the Higher status situations. All three American groups used a markedly higher percentage of Direct strategies and markedly lower percentage of Indirect strategies when compared to the Egyptian group in the Higher status situations. In order to reach a better understanding of the differences between the American and Egyptian participants in their realizations of refusal in higher status situations it will be important to closely examine representative interactions from the NSE and NSA groups. Because the two learner groups exhibited patterns that were similar to those used by the NSE group, it will be illuminating to compare the two native speaker groups.

Role Play 4 was chosen for comparing the NSE and NSA groups because of the striking differences that were observed between these two groups. In this Role Play participants were asked to turn down an offer from a boss of a promotion and relocation. In this Role Play the American participants used a substantially higher percentage of Direct strategies (19.7%) than the Egyptians (8.2%). They also used a substantially lower

percentage of Indirect strategies than the Egyptians. However, they compensated for their lower percentage of Indirect strategies by using a higher percentage of Adjuncts to refusal, especially the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. In the following paragraphs we first examine how Mary, from the NSE group, performed her refusal in this Role Play. Then we look at Rania, from the NSA group and examine how she realized her refusal. The analysis will focus on the use of Direct and Indirect strategies.

- 1 R: Wow! Mary, first, thanks a lot for meeting with me today.
- 2 M [inaudible]
- 3 R: I, uh, I really appreciate it. Um, and I actually – I just got off the phone  
4 with corporate and, uh, I got some really good news. Uh, they want to o  
5 offer you a promotion –
- 6 M: That’s awesome! Great!
- 7 R: Yeah! I mean, it is – and it’s a fantastic opportunity. It comes with –  
8 comes with a pay raise –
- 9 M: Wow!
- 10 R: um, you’ll be in Austin. It’s a fantastic city, um, I mean, you’re really  
11 gonna love it.
- 12 M: I – I’m really flattered that you’d offer me the – the raise and the  
13 promotion, but I can’t move. I can’t relocate.
- 14 R: Really? Uh, I mean, I think – I think you should really consider this.  
15 You’ve been here for three years and your star has been on the rise and  
16 it’s just been, uh, I mean, it’s been great having you here. But you know,  
17 in Austin, you’ll have a position comparable to mine and you’ll be able  
18 to, uh, you know, you’ll really be able to excel and I think, um, I – I can  
19 imagine more promotions in your future, but here, I don’t know. I – I’m  
20 not sure when this opportunity might come back around.
- 21 M: I know and I’m flattered, but I – I just can’t. I just bought a house, uh, I  
22 can’t leave Vermont right now.

- 23 R: Okay. Well, I – you know, I would really, strongly, uh, urge you to – to  
24 really consider this. I mean, it’s such a – it’s a great opportunity and I’m  
25 sure, I – I know like, for a fact – that you would do really well there.
- 26 M: I – I know it’s a great opportunity and it’s not lightly that I turn it down,  
27 but I really can’t move right now. I’m sorry.
- 28 R: No, it’s – it’s okay. I – I – I understand you got prior obligations and –  
29 but thank you. I’ll – I’ll hold on –
- 30 M: Well, thank you for the –
- 31 R: – no, I’ll have to – I’ll have to find someone else. Okay.

In Mary’s interaction above, the interlocutor breaks the news gradually to her, but he gives her all the details in lines 10 and 11, where he explains that she will have to relocate to Austin, Texas. The participant’s initial response, which is typical of all the groups, but especially of the NSE group, is to use the strategies of Gratitude/Appreciation as well as Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement (line 12). However, in the same turn Mary uses two Direct refusal strategies: two statements of Negating a Proposition and both are unmitigated: *I can’t move, I can’t relocate*. She also does not use any Indirect strategies such as Excuse/Reason or Hedging (which were used by some participants in the NSA and NSE groups). It is interesting also to note that by using a Direct refusal strategy in Stage I of the interaction, Mary is following a pattern that was used by 60% of the participants in the NSE group. Mary’s refusal prompts her interlocutor to provide her with different reasons why she should consider this offer. In her response (lines 21 & 22) Mary uses the same pattern she used in the Stage I, which is Gratitude/Appreciation, followed by a Direct refusal *I just can’t*. However, this time she uses the Indirect strategy of Reason/Excuse: *I just bought a house*, and she ends the turn

with another Direct refusal *I can't leave Vermont*. Here again, by using a Direct refusal strategy in Stage II of the interaction (specifically in her initial response to her interlocutor's first insistence) Mary is following a pattern that was used by 90% of the participants in her group. Also by using Adjuncts to Refusal (e.g., Gratitude/Appreciation) in both Stages I and II, she is following the same pattern used by 90% of the participants in her group who used these Adjuncts in either Stage or in both. Margret's Direct refusal in Stage II prompts her interlocutor to insist for a second time, urging her to reconsider. Now for the third time Mary uses a combination of Direct and Indirect strategies as well as Adjuncts in her attempt at refusal (lines 26 & 27). She also follows the same pattern she followed in her last two turns. She starts with an Adjunct to refusal, which was a Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement *it's a great opportunity* and this is followed by a Direct refusal *I turn it down* although this refusal was mitigated by *it's not lightly that* (line 26). This is followed by another Direct strategy *I really can't move right now* and she ends her turn with an Indirect strategy, a Statement of Regret *I'm sorry*.

While Mary used more Direct strategies and fewer Indirect strategies than most of the participants in the NSE group, her refusal pattern has the characteristics that are shared by most of the participants in the NSE group as well as the two learner groups. For example, most of the participants in the NSE group (80% to 90%) used Direct refusal strategies in Stage I of their refusal. The same pattern was observed in the two learner groups as well. However, the opposite pattern was observed in the NSA group where only one participant used a Direct refusal strategy in Stage I. Mary's interaction is a good example for showing how the American participants in this Role Play used a high

percentage of Direct strategies and a high percentage of Adjuncts to refusal, which were mostly Gratitude/Appreciation and Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. The distribution of the Direct refusal strategies in this interaction shows that they were used in both Stages, as explained above. This interaction also shows that the excuses that were given were brief and not elaborate, as was the case in the NSA data as will be explained below. Finally, this interaction shows a distinctive American pattern of refusal, which is that in response to an increased level of insistence on the part of the interlocutor, Americans assert their refusals by using more Direct refusal strategies in Stage II of the interaction. The Egyptians, on the other hand, (as was observed in Nahed's interaction above and as will be illustrated with Rania's interaction below), tend to use Indirect strategies more frequently when interacting with an insistent interlocutor.

The following interaction with Rania is included here in its entirety to provide the reader with a sense of how the majority of the Egyptian participants performed their refusals in this Higher status Role Play. First, it is important to point out that the Egyptian participants used a very high percentage of Indirect strategies and a very low percentage of Direct strategies in this RP as compared to the three American groups. Also, the Egyptians produced the largest number of words in this RP (2008 words) as compared to their second highest RP, which was RP3 (1412 words). The Egyptians produced more words and longer turns in this RP than their counterparts in the three other groups. Also, 40% of the Egyptian participants decided to postpone making a decision until they had time to consult with their families. This information can give the reader a sense of how the Egyptians differentially approached this Role Play as compared to the other groups.

The interaction above was selected because it represents a pattern that was characteristic of many of the Egyptian refusals in this Role Play. As will be discussed below this pattern involves the production of long turns in which a number of Indirect strategies were used, particularly Excuse/Reason, Hedging, Self-Defense, Statement of Principle, and Request for Understanding/Consideration. The interaction will also show the relative infrequency of Direct strategies and how they were prefaced by numerous Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal, especially the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. This interaction will also show that the Egyptians did not use Direct strategies in Stage I, but rather, towards the middle or end of Stage II. It will be important to see that in Stage II when the offer is recycled (i.e., insistence stage), the Egyptian participants did not use Direct strategies to assert their refusal like their American counterparts in the three other groups did. Instead, they used a high percentage of Indirect strategies that aim to persuade the interlocutor that the participant cannot accept the offer, not because he or she does not want to, but because of reasons that are out of his or her control. While most American and Egyptian participants cited family-related reasons for not accepting the job offer in this Role Play, the majority of Egyptian participants' reasons seemed more compelling because they were more elaborate and involved scenarios of the participants taking care of old or sick family members.

The interaction below starts with the interlocutor breaking the news to the participant that she is offered a job promotion and pay raise. The full news is presented in line 10 where the boss explains that Rania will have to move to Port Said (about 135 miles north east of Cairo). Rania's first reaction (lines 11 and 12) is to convey her surprise and maybe lack of excitement about this *faraway place*. However, she refrains

from expressing any refusal of the offer at this time and she uses an Indirect refusal strategy of Request for Information/Clarification, enquiring about the means of transportation to Port Said. The boss explains that she will have to move to Port Said and the company will provide housing for her; he also points out the other advantages of this job, which includes a position comparable to that of his (line 15). What is interesting here is Rania's long turn, which starts at line 16 and extends over 9 lines.

- 1 R: رنبا، أنا عندي ليكي خبر ممتاز  
Rania, I have excellent news for you
- 2 RB: خير إن شاء الله؟  
What?
- 3 R: خبر لسه طازه ممتاز، ممتاز، الحقيقة طبعا عارفينك  
This is just new news, excellent, excellent, actually, of course, we know
- 4 يعني من أحسن وأكفأ الناس إلي عندنا في الشركة  
you, I mean, are one of the best and most efficient people in the company
- 5 RB: مرسي يا فندم  
Thank you, Sir
- 6 R: فالحقيقة كنت بتكلم مع المدير العام النهاردة  
Actually I was talking with the general manager today
- 7 وقررنا نديكي ترقية وزيادة كبيرة جدا في المرتب  
and we have decided to give you a promotion and a very big pay raise
- 8 RB: مرسي جدا لثقة حضرتك فيا  
Thank you very much for your faith in me
- 9 R: الله يخليكي، انت أهل للثقة طبعا، بس الفكرة إن انت  
You're welcome, you deserve this faith, of course, but the idea is that you
- 10 هتنتقلي لمكتب الشركة في بورسعيد  
will move to the company's office in Port Said
- 11 RB: ليه كده، ليه كده بقى المكان البعيد ده، يتري هيبقى فيه  
Why is that? Why this faraway place, so I wonder if the company will
- 12 وسيلة مواصلات تبع الشركة توصل لهنالك؟  
provide a means of transportation to get [me] there
- 13 R: هو طبعا، يعني يفضل طبعا لو تقدرني تنقلي هناك مع الأسرة، طبعا  
Of course, it is preferred that if you move there with the family, of course,
- 14 الشركة هتوفرلك سكن، وطبعا هتخدي  
the company will provide housing for you and you will, of course, get
- 15 مركز أكبر يعني تقريبا زي المركز بتاعي  
a bigger position, I mean almost like my position
- 16 RB: يعني حضرتك عارف طبعا إن أنا عندي بيتي وجوزي وهو  
I mean, Sir, you know, of course, that I have a family and my husband, he
- 17 شغله كله هنا ومدرستهم هنا، يعني حياتي كلها مرتبطة

- works here and the kids' school is here, I mean all my life is linked  
 18 بالقاهرة يعني، فهيبقى صعب جدا إن أنا أنقل كده فجأة هناك  
 to Cairo, I mean, it will be very difficult to move suddenly there this way,  
 19 يعني، أنا كنت متخيلة ممكن مثلا عربية الشغل  
 I mean, I was picturing, maybe, for example, I would get a ride in the  
 20 توصلني وترجعني في نفس اليوم، بس لو حضرتك بتتكلم  
 corporate car to and from there in the same day, but if you're talking  
 21 على استقرار كامل في بورسعيد هيبقى صعب جدا، يعني  
 about settling down in Port Said, this would be very difficult, I mean,  
 22 مش حاجة مني أنا أكثر من ما هي ترتبط ببقية  
 it is not that this has to do with me as much as it has to do with the rest of  
 23 عيلتي يعني، الولاد وجوزي يعني مش هينفع  
 my family, I mean the kids, and my husband, I mean I will not be able  
 24 أقولهم نغير حياتنا إحنا كلنا عشاني أنا بس يعني  
 to ask them to change our life, all of us, just for my sake, I mean,  
 25 R: هي الفكرة طبعا هتبقى مسؤولة عن المكتب،  
 The idea, of course, is that you will be in charge of the office,  
 26 وهنتأخري في الشغل وهيبقى صعب إنك ترجعي كل يوم  
 and you'll be late at work and it will be difficult to return everyday  
 27 RB: حضرتك عندك حق، وهي هتبقى طبعا هتأخذ كثير أوي من الوقت يعني، هيبقى  
 You are right, and this would take too much time, I mean, it would be  
 28 صعب جدا، يعني أنا كنت أتمنى طبعا وخبر جميل  
 very difficult, I mean I wish I could, of course, and this is great news  
 29 وأشكر حضرتك عليه، بس يعني أنا باعتذر بشدة وأسفة  
 and I thank you for it, but I mean I sincerely apologize and I am sorry,  
 30 يعني إن أنا مش هاقدر أسافر  
 I mean, that I will not be able to go  
 31 R: يعني مش عابزة تفكري، يعني انت عارفة الفرص الي زي  
 So, you don't want to think about it, I mean you know opportunities like  
 32 كده يعني بتبقى قليلة جدا، نادرة يعني إنها تيجي، خاصة انت شغالة معنا بقالك 3 سنين  
 this I mean, are very rare, especially you have worked with us for 3 years  
 33 ويعني من الناس المتميزين جدا وفرصة زي كده يعني  
 I mean, you are one of the best people and I mean an opportunity like this  
 34 الحقيقة ما تتسبش أنا من رأي بس طبعا أنا عارف  
 should not really be skipped, I believe, but of course I know  
 35 ظروفك يعني  
 your circumstances, I mean  
 36 RB: يعني حضرتك عارف طبعا إن الواحد مش بياخد كل حاجة وفيه أولويات،  
 You know of course, one can't have everything and there are priorities,  
 37 وأنا حاطة البيت والولاد وجوزي قبل الشغل، مش من ناحية  
 my children and my husband come before work, not with regard to  
 38 الكواليتي بس يعني أن أي مكان هاشتغل فيه، حضرتك شفت شغلي، بس إننا أنقل  
 quality but I mean anywhere I work, you have seen my work but to move  
 39 دي يعني هي أكبر من الشغل، يعني أنا بافكر دلوقتي هل  
 I mean, is bigger than just work, I mean I am thinking now whether to  
 40 أنتهز الفرصة دي لنفسني أنا بس ولا أفضل هنا ويبقى كلنا

- 41 take this opportunity for myself alone or stay here and all of us  
مرتاحين، فيعني، حضرتك، متهيألي عندك أسرة و عارف
- 42 be comfortable, I mean, you, I believe have a family and you know,  
وتقدر تقدر يعني إيه نغير حياة كل العيلة
- 43 you can see what it means to change the life of a whole family,  
يعني فأنا طبعا ما حدش بيكره الترقية بس فيه
- 44 I mean, I, of course, no one would not like a promotion but there are  
أولويات وأولياتي دلوقتي الولاد والبيت يعني
- 45 R: priorities and my priorities now are the children and the family, I mean  
طبعا، طبعا، مفيش شك، على أي حال يعني انت طبعا يعني واحدة من
- 46 Of course, of course, no doubt, anyway, I mean you are of course one of  
أكفأ الناس الي عندنا في الشركة و إحنا معتزين بيكي كتير
- 47 RB: the most efficient people in the company and we appreciate you  
أنا أشكر حضرتك
- 48 R: I thank you  
الله يخليكي، في الحالة دي ممكن نشوف أحد الزملاء نعرض عليه
- 49 RB: You're welcome and in this case we can offer it to one of the colleagues  
إحنا عندنا كتير جدا هنا، طبعا حضرتك تلاقيهم كويسين برضه
- 50 We have many here, of course, who you will find good too  
في الشغل وأكفاء يعني
- 51 R: at work and more efficient, I mean  
مفيش مشكلة، شكرا رانيا
- 52 RB: No problem, thank you Rania  
وشكرا ليك
- 53 R: Thank you  
الله يخليكي
- You're welcome

Rania's first long turn (lines 16 to 24) consists of a series of Indirect strategies.

She starts with the Excuse/Reason strategy, explaining that her husband works in Cairo and her children go to school there too, and that all her life is connected to Cairo (lines 16 and 18). Instead of using a Direct strategy after providing these reasons (as Mary did above) Rania uses the Indirect strategy of Hedging, which is one of the preferred strategies used by Egyptians in this Role Play. She explains that it will be *difficult to move suddenly* (line 18). In lines 19 and 20, she alludes to the possibility of accepting the offer if she could go there and come back every day. This is in fact another Indirect strategy: Setting Conditions for Accepting. Rania uses again another Hedging strategy

(line 21) explaining that it would be *very difficult* to move. After presenting her excuses and reasons, and setting conditions for acceptance and using hedging twice, Rania uses another Indirect strategy: Self-Defense explaining that she is trying to do her best, but going to Port Said is out of her control as she explains that *it is not that this has to do with me as much as it has to do with the rest of my family* (lines 22 & 23). This is, in fact, one of the good examples of the Self-Defense strategy, where the participant is saying that she is doing her utmost best here, but it is out of her control. In lines 23 and 24 she portrays herself as someone who is self-sacrificing for the welfare of her family, explaining that she cannot be selfish and ask her family to change their life *just for my sake* (line 24). This, in fact, is the most important point in Rania's argument and it will occur again later in her second long turn, which starts at line 36. This turn can also be seen as a good example of verbosity in Egyptian refusals especially when interacting with someone higher in status.

Rania's boss responds by clarifying the terms of the offer, which can be seen as another attempt at recycling his offer since Rania is already aware of these terms from earlier in the interaction, lines (13 to 15). So, facing this persistence on the part of her boss, and finding that her first attempt at refusal was not successful, Rania finally resorts to using a Direct refusal strategy. However, she prefaces her Direct refusal with a series of Adjuncts and Indirect refusals. She starts this turn with a Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement *you are right, and it would take too much time*. (line 27). This is followed, in the same line, by another Indirect strategy: Hedging *it will be very difficult* and Wish *I wish I could* (line 28). These are followed in turn by two Adjuncts to refusal: Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement, *this is great news* (line 28),

and Gratitude/Appreciation *I thank you for it* (line 29). Then she uses the Statement of Regret strategy twice: *sincerely apologize* and *I am sorry*, before she finally makes her Direct refusal *I will not be able to go* (line 30).

However, Rania's interlocutor has not given up yet and he recycles his offer (lines 31 to 35), explaining that Rania should consider this rare opportunity since it might not come her way again. However, towards the end of his turn he expresses sympathy towards her situation. Rania reacts by producing another long turn extending over 9 lines in which she recycles some of the argument she made in her previous long turn, and using numerous Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal as will be explained below.

She starts this turn with a Statement of Principle/Philosophy explaining that her interlocutor knows that *one can't have everything* and that *there are priorities* in life (line 36). By doing this, she is trying to establish some common ground and shared understanding between her and her boss in her attempt to convince him of her position and her reasons for refusing the offer. Then, she moves from this general Statement of Principle/Philosophy to her individual situation where she explains that her children and husband are her first priority in life, and they come before her job (line 37). However, finding that this might be misinterpreted by her boss, she immediately points out that the fact that her family is her first priority in life does not mean that it would affect the quality of her work. To further emphasize this point, Rania uses another Indirect strategy that she used in her previous long turn, as explained above, which is Self-Defense, explaining that she works really hard and the quality of her work has always been outstanding (line 38). Now Rania moves back to address the main point explaining that moving to Port Said is more than just a work-related issue. Then she does something

interesting: she engages in “thinking aloud” in an attempt to involve her boss in her decision-making process by weighing up the pros and cons of the move (lines 39 to 41). She thinks “to herself” whether to *take the opportunity for myself alone* (being selfish) or stay in Cairo and everyone in her family would be happy. This can be seen as another Self-Defense strategy where she is trying to do her best but she cannot accept the offer due to circumstances that are out of her control. Rania then moves on to use another Indirect strategy, which is Request for Understanding/Consideration (lines 41 & 42) where she appeals to her boss as someone who has a family of his own and who understands what it means to *change the life of a whole family* (line 42). This is followed by another Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling of Agreement (line 43) *no one would not like a promotion*. Rania ends this turn by using another Indirect strategy, stating again the reason for her refusal, which is that her priorities at this time are her family and children (line 44). What is interesting about this long turn is that Rania managed to express her refusal without using a single Direct refusal strategy.

It is important to point out that Rania’s interaction, like that of Mary, does not represent all her fellow participants in her group. However, Rania’s interaction here represents the most salient features of Egyptian refusals in this Higher status Role Play at explained above.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings of the study from Chapter 4 will be discussed in detail. Discussion of the findings will be presented in the same order the findings were presented in Chapter 4. The first section presents discussion of the quantitative results and the second section presents discussion of the qualitative results. Next, a summary of the discussion as it pertains to each research question will be presented. Since the present study is the first to elicit interactional speech act data in Arabic, a discussion of how the findings compare to findings from previous Arabic speech act studies will be presented. The section that follows discusses the pedagogical implications of the findings of the study, and the last section provides suggestions for future research.

### Discussion of Quantitative Findings

#### *Total Number of Words*

First, with regard to the total number of words produced, the reader is reminded that the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic produced more words than any other group, and the Advanced students produced more words than the Intermediate students. Before discussing the significance of this finding, it is important to emphasize the importance of individual differences with regard to the total number of words produced by the participants. For example, some participants produced two or three times or even four times more words than fellow participants in their groups. In addition to individual differences, it is also important to remember that the number of words produced by a

participant also depended on the kind of negotiation that took place in the interaction, and more importantly on the role of the interlocutor, as was observed in previous similar studies (Gass & Houck, 1999).

With this precaution in mind, it is important to note that language proficiency seems to play a role with regard to the number of words produced by the participants. The Advanced students, in fact, produced over 1000 more words than the Intermediate students. It is possible to argue that the Advanced students have a pragmatic advantage over the Intermediate students in that they have access to more linguistic resources and are capable of engaging in more negotiation and using more strategies in a way similar to that observed in the two NS groups. However, this does not mean that they will necessarily engage in more negotiation or use the appropriate refusal strategies. With regard to the finding that the Egyptian participants produced more words than the American participants in the NSE group (almost 1500 words more), it is possible to argue that it supports findings from the literature that Arabic communication style tends towards verbosity (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Nelson, Al-Batal & Echols, 1996; Nelson, El-Bakary & Al Batal, 1993).

It is also important to examine the similarities among the four groups. The four groups were similar in that the contextual factor of status seemed to affect them in the same way. For example, the participants in the four groups produced more words as well as more refusal strategies when interacting with someone higher in status than with someone equal in status. This observation was also made in other refusal studies using the role play method for data collection and comparing native speakers of English and native speakers of Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; VonCanon, 2006).

### *Number of Turns and Turn Length*

With regard to the number of turns and turn length, it is interesting to observe that the Advanced students produced more turns than the Intermediate students in each of the six Role Plays. The reader is reminded that the average number of turns produced by an Advanced student was 66.5 turns and by an Intermediate student was 53.6 turns. Again, it is likely that the Advanced learners' language proficiency allowed them to engage in more negotiation, resulting in the production of more turns.

The Advanced students' turns were not, however, significantly longer than those by the Intermediate students. But it is important to point out that more participants in the Advanced group produced longer turns than participants in the Intermediate group. For example, while 4 participants in the Advanced group produced turns with a length of at least 8 words, only 2 participants in the Intermediate group produced turns with this length. So, it is possible to argue again here that the Advanced students' language proficiency allowed them to produce longer turns, hence producing more strategies per turn, in a pattern that is similar to that exhibited by the two NS groups. However, this does not necessarily mean that they produced the pragmatically appropriate strategies as will be discussed later.

It is interesting to point out some of the similarities here among the four groups. All four groups produced more turns when interacting with someone lower in status than with someone either equal or higher in status. All four groups also used shorter turns when interacting with someone lower in status than when interacting with someone higher in status. This may be a tendency that both cultures share in that refusing an offer

or a request from someone higher status requires more elaboration and explanation of the reasons for the refusal, and in general more negotiation, hence the longer turns. On the other hand, it seems that refusing an offer or a request from someone lower in status does not require the same level of elaboration and explanation but rather a higher level of insistence in asserting the refusal, hence the use of shorter turns and employing more direct strategies. This, in fact, was the pattern that the participants followed: shorter turns with a higher frequency of Direct strategies in the lower status situations, and longer turns with a higher frequency of Indirect strategies in the higher status situations.

One last observation to make here is that the participants in the two learner groups as well as in the NSE group used longer turns in the equal status situations than in the lower status situations. The Egyptians, on the other hand, used the reverse pattern. For the two learner groups, this can be interpreted as an example of negative pragmatic transfer from L1

### *Strategy Use*

In this section the strategies used by the participants as well as the contextual factors affecting their use will be discussed. Differences in the use of Direct and Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal will also be discussed. However, before examining the general tendencies in strategy use, this section starts with discussing how individual strategies were used by the participants.

### *Strategy Use and Language Proficiency*

First, it is important to remind the reader that while the Intermediate and Advanced students used most of the strategies found in the data, a number of strategies appeared in the Intermediate students' data but not in the Advanced students' data and vice versa. For example, the following strategies were used by the Advanced students but not the Intermediate students: Negative Consequences to Requester, Unspecified or Indefinite Reply, and Setting Conditions for Acceptance. Also, the following two strategies were used by the Intermediate students but not by the Advanced students: Statement of Principle/Philosophy and Proverb/Common Saying. Of particular interest here is the strategy of Setting Conditions for Acceptance. While the other strategies (e.g., Proverb/Common Saying or Statement of Principle/Philosophy) may simply require memorization of certain phrases or the use of the present tense, the strategy of Setting Conditions for Acceptance involves the use of the conditional in Arabic, which means that it requires knowledge of complex syntactic structures to be performed successfully. It is possible to argue here that because this strategy requires an advanced level of language proficiency, it was only used by the Advanced students, and not by the Intermediate students who lacked this advanced linguistic knowledge. Here again it can be argued that the Advanced students have another pragmatic advantage over the Intermediate students in that they have access to more linguistic resources that would allow them to use a wider range of strategies if they choose to do so.

### *Frequency of Strategies and Strategy Selection*

In this section we look at a number of strategies that were used by the American and Egyptian participants and these include: Excuse/Reason, Statement of Regret, Proverb/Common Saying, Postponement. The most frequently used strategy by all the groups was the Excuse/Reason strategy. In fact, almost all refusal studies in the literature, including those that used the role play method for data collection, have found the Excuse/Reason strategy to be the most frequently used strategy in the realization of refusal (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Beckers, 1999; Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Henstock, 2003; Kwon, 2003; VonCanon, 2006). Because this is the case for several languages, this could be a universal tendency.

There were differences, however, between the American and Egyptian participants with regard to their use of the Statement of Regret, Proverb/Common Saying, and Postponement. The Statement of Regret strategy is particularly important because while it was the third most frequently used strategy by the two learner groups and the NSE group, it was the ninth most frequently used strategy by the Egyptians. This is a good example of negative pragmatic transfer where the participants relied on pragmatic knowledge from their L1 in realizing the speech act of refusal in Arabic. Other studies have also found expressions of regret to be frequently used in American refusals (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; VonCanon, 2006).

The Proverb/Common Saying strategy was also used in different ways by the American and Egyptian participants. While it was the fifth most frequently used strategy by the Egyptians, occurring 43 times in the Egyptian data, it occurred only 3 times in the

NSE data and only once in the learner data. It is interesting to note that this strategy was also found to be one of the frequently used strategies in realizing refusals in Mexican Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). This strategy seems to be frequently used in collectivistic cultures such as Egyptian and Mexican cultures. Nwoye (1989) [cited in Felix-Brasdefer, 2002] explains that proverbs are used to mitigate the harshness related to unpleasant events and commonly used in collectivistic cultures. It is interesting that the Proverb/Common Saying strategy rarely appeared in the NSE data. This shows that this strategy is not commonly used for refusal in American culture and indeed proverbs do not seem to be commonly used in everyday conversation in English. It is curious that this strategy appeared only once in the learner data, and it is interesting to know that it was not used appropriately. The reader is reminded that one Intermediate student used this strategy and he used it inappropriately in Role Play 2. In fact the proverb the learner used, which could be roughly translated as “when pigs fly,” was used in his response to his boss’s request. This proverb actually aggravated the participant’s refusal instead of mitigating it. The Egyptians, on the other hand, used proverbs to mitigate rather than aggravate their refusals. This example shows that such proverbs and idiomatic expressions are not necessarily easy to use appropriately and require a high level of sociopragmatic competence.

The Postponement strategy was frequently used by the Egyptian participants, and it was, in fact, the fourth most frequently used strategy by the Egyptian group. It was not frequently used by the two learner groups nor by the NSE group. This can also be seen as another example of pragmatic transfer from English.

With regard to Adjuncts to refusal, all four groups made use of these strategies and they accounted for 14% to 19% of their overall strategy use. This shows that such Adjuncts play an important role in refusal discourse in both cultures. All the groups were also similar in using the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement more frequently than any other Adjunct. Learners' use of this strategy will be discussed later in this chapter.

One important Adjunct to refusal that was commonly used by the Egyptians was Invoking the Name of God. As was mentioned in Chapter 2, this strategy is commonly used in Arabic to mitigate the illocutionary force of the speech act of refusal (e.g., Abdel-Jawad, 2000). The use of this strategy also confirms what has been reported in the literature about the frequency of formulas containing religious reference in Arabic (Bentahila & Davis, 1989). This strategy was used more frequently by the Advanced students than by the Intermediate students, and more Advanced students (6) used it than the Intermediate students (4). It is possible to argue that the Advanced students' linguistic knowledge allowed them to be more aware of such words and expressions and how they are used in everyday communication in Arabic. However, the use of this strategy, which literally means "I swear to God" may not be as straightforward as it seems. This expression is not usually used by Christian Egyptians because of their religious beliefs as they consider it inappropriate. This seems to be true from the data collected in the present study. In fact, two of the three participants in the Egyptian group who did not use this strategy in any Role Play happened to be Christian, and these were the only two Christians in the Egyptian group. It is possible to argue that some learners may refrain from using this strategy for religious reasons. However, as will be argued later in the

chapter, it will be important to teach learners these strategies and it will be up to the learners whether or not to use them.

Another important difference between the American and Egyptian participants with regard to strategy use was in their use of the Criticism/Reprimand strategy. This strategy is unique among Indirect refusal strategies in that it aims to aggravate rather than mitigate the illocutionary force of the refusal. Like Direct strategies, it is considered to be a positive (Brown & Levinson, 1987) or solidarity strategy (Scollon & Scollon, 1983). Although this strategy appeared in both the Egyptian and American data, it was used differently by the two groups, and this can reveal interesting cultural differences. The American participants in all three groups used it almost exclusively in Role Play 1 when they refused to give their lecture notes to a classmate. They criticized the classmate for not coming to class regularly and for not doing the work required for the class and explained that it was not fair for them to give him the notes. However, the important point here is that the Americans used this strategy in an equal status situation. The Egyptians, on the other hand, used it most frequently in Role Play 6 when they refused to accept money from a janitor who just broke their china figurine. So, while the Americans used this strategy when interacting with someone equal in status, the Egyptians used it when interacting with someone lower in status. The Egyptian participants' use of fewer Indirect strategies and more Direct strategies, including aggravating strategies such as Criticism/Reprimand, when interacting with someone lower in status reflects the hierarchical structure of the Egyptian society (Begley, 2000). The Americans, on the other hand, used a very high percentage of Indirect strategies, and almost no aggravating strategies, when interacting with someone lower in status. This could also be interpreted

in terms of Americans' belief in equality and how they view themselves as members of an egalitarian middle class (Stewart & Bennett, 1991, p. 89). Finally, the fact that both the Intermediate and Advanced participants used this strategy in a pattern consistent with that exhibited by the NSE group, provides another example of negative pragmatic transfer from L1.

The last strategy that will be discussed in this section is the Giving Advice/Lecturing strategy. This strategy was only used in RP1 and it was used in a combination with the Criticism/Reprimand strategy. In RP1 when the participants refused to give the lecture notes to a classmate and criticized him for not coming to class regularly, some of them went on to lecture the classmate about the importance of attending class regularly and doing homework etc. It is important to remind the reader that this strategy, like the Criticism/Reprimand strategy, was used by the American participants in all three groups more frequently than the Egyptian participants. This is also another example of negative pragmatic transfer from L1.

### *Direct Strategies*

The most important finding about Direct refusal strategies is that the two learner groups used a higher percentage of Direct strategies than the two NS groups. This, in fact, was expected, since it was reported in similar refusal studies (Gass & Houck, 1999; VonCanon, 2006). Another important finding about the use of Direct strategies is that the Intermediate students consistently used them more frequently than the Advanced students. It is possible to argue that the Advanced students' language proficiency allowed them to engage in more negotiation through the use of a higher percentage of Indirect

strategies and a lower percentage of Direct strategies in a pattern similar to that observed in the NS groups. It is also possible to argue that because of their higher level of language proficiency the Advanced students were able to transfer more of their pragmatic knowledge from L1. As a result, they were able to use the Indirect and Direct strategies in a manner similar to that exhibited by the NSE group.

With regard to how the contextual factor of status affected the use of Direct strategies, again the Advanced students used a lower percentage of Direct strategies than the Intermediate students in all three status relationships: Lower, Equal, and Higher. In this way they were closer to the patterns exhibited by the NSE group. Again, it is possible to argue that their language proficiency allowed them to transfer more of their pragmatic knowledge from L1. In fact, research on refusal in Korean has shown that advanced students use more patterns that are similar to those used in their native language (Kwon, 2003). This seems to support the Positive Correlation Hypothesis (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), which posits that there is a positive correlation between the level of language proficiency and the extent of pragmatic transfer from L1. It is important to point out that in the case of the Advanced students in the present study their transfer of their pragmatic knowledge from L1 was in many cases beneficial because the two NS groups used many strategies in similar ways. This, therefore, was an example of positive pragmatic transfer.

### *Indirect Strategies*

What is interesting about the use of Indirect strategies is that they exhibited the reverse pattern to what was observed with the Direct strategies described above. The Intermediate students used a lower percentage of these strategies than any other group.

The Advanced students used a markedly overall higher percentage of Indirect strategies that was almost identical to the percentage used by the NSE group. Here again we observe that the Advanced students are using patterns that are very similar to those used by the NSE group. It is possible to argue that the Advanced students' language proficiency allowed them to transfer more of their pragmatic knowledge from L1. However, in this case, as in the case of Direct strategies, such pragmatic transfer was beneficial, or positive, since it allowed the Advanced students to use a higher percentage of Indirect strategies in a similar way to the NSE group but also similar to the NSA group.

With regard to how the contextual factor of status affected the use of Indirect strategies, we find that there appears to be evidence of pragmatic transfer in the two learner groups, especially with regard to the use of Indirect strategies in the Lower and Equal status situations. In the Higher status situations the two learner groups used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies than the NSE group. However, the two learner groups also used a considerably lower percentage of these strategies than the NSA group. This way, the two learner groups were, in fact, more similar to the NSE group than to the NSA group. Therefore, the patterns used by the two learner groups can be viewed as another example of pragmatic transfer from L1. However, the differences between the Intermediate and Advanced students with regard to how the contextual factor of status affected their strategy use are not as pronounced as in the case of their overall use of Indirect strategies, which was described above.

### *Adjuncts to Refusal*

Adjuncts to refusal are important external modifiers to the speech act of refusal and they aim to minimize the illocutionary force of refusal, hence helping interlocutor save face. The most frequently used Adjunct by all the groups was the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement, which is considered a positive or solidarity (Scollon & Scollon, 1983) politeness strategy. The use of the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement represents another example of positive pragmatic transfer since this strategy was frequently used by both the NSE and NSA groups. Previous research (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) also found statements of agreement to be frequently used by Americans in the realization of the speech act of refusal. What is interesting here is that the Intermediate students used the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement more frequently than the Advanced students. One possible explanation is that this strategy does not require a higher level of linguistic competence to use and does not involve any negotiation like Indirect refusal strategies. In other words, it is not a linguistically demanding strategy and this could be the reason why it was favored by the Intermediate students.

When we look at how the contextual factor of status affected the use of Adjuncts to refusal we find that there is support for pragmatic transfer from L1, especially in the Lower status situations. What is interesting here is that the Intermediate students used a higher percentage of these Adjuncts in the Equal status situations than the Advanced students. Again, as explained above it is possible to argue that because these Adjuncts do not require a high level of language proficiency they were used more frequently by the Intermediate students. It is also possible to argue that the Intermediate students used them

more frequently to compensate for the low percentage of Indirect strategies they used. The Advanced students, on the other hand, did not use these strategies as frequently because they used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies.

One final point to make about Adjuncts to refusal is that it was found that all the groups used a higher percentage of these strategies when refusing offers than when refusing requests. This seems to be in line with common sense since when turning down offers, speakers tend to express their appreciation, gratitude, and positive feelings towards the person making the offer in order to mitigate the illocutionary force for their upcoming refusal. This seems to be characteristic of the Egyptian and American cultures and may also be a universal tendency.

### Discussion of Qualitative Findings

First, the excuses and reasons given by the participants in support of their refusals will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the Stages of refusal and finally a discussion of the findings from the discourse analysis of the selected interactions.

#### *Types of Excuses*

A number of Role Plays are selected for discussion here, and the first one to be discussed is Role Play 1. In this Role Play participants were asked to refuse a classmate's request for the lecture notes. It is interesting to note that more participants in the NNSI and NSE groups explained that they could not give the notes to the classmate because they had to study them for the exam. However, in the NNSA and NSA groups more

participants explained that they could not give the notes to the classmate because they did not have the notes in their possession. It seems that the reasons given by the NSA group, and to some extent, the NNSA group were more in the category of “it is out of my control.” For example, some of these reasons included *I left the notes in my dad’s house*, or *I will not be coming to school tomorrow*, or *I can’t get the notes right now because I have to go to work*. Such excuses were referred to in some studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Stevens, 1993) as ‘white lie.’ Such reasons are interesting because the kind of reason a participant gives can either mitigate or aggravate the refusal. For example, when participants say that the notes are not in their possession they are, in effect, implying that if they had the notes they would give them to the interlocutor. This kind of reason seems to save the interlocutor’s face more than the other type of reason, which basically says that “I have the notes but I will not give them to you because I need them.” Most of the reasons given by the Intermediate and NSE group were of the second type.

It is possible to argue that the Advanced students may have a better grasp of this cultural difference and may be aware that in Egyptian culture social relationships have to be maintained and direct refusals are not preferred. This kind of ‘invented’ reasons given by the Advanced students and the Egyptians reminds us of the concept of low-context/high-context communication style (Hall, 1976). In a low-context communication style most of the message is encoded in the actual verbal interaction and there is a preference for the use of direct strategies. This style is characteristic of individualistic cultures, like the US. In a high-context communication style, on the other hand, most of the message is not encoded verbally and interlocutors depend on the context for interpreting the message. Context can include, for example, the status of the interlocutors

relative to each other, the topic of the conversation, the setting, etc. There is a preference for indirect strategies in this communication style and interlocutors are expected to understand not only what is being said but also what is not. The high-context communication style is characteristic of collectivistic cultures such as the Egyptian culture. When the Advanced students in this study used reasons such as “I don’t have the notes on me,” they basically adopted a high-context communication style in their refusals.

Another possible interpretation of why the Advanced students used this type of ‘invented’ excuse, or what others have also called ‘white lie’ (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) more frequently than the Intermediate students is that this type of excuse seems to require a higher level of language proficiency since it requires elaborate responses and explanations. For example, one Advanced student said that she did not have the notes with her and explained that she left them in her house, and that her house was messy, and that it would take her a long time in order to find them. It seems that for the Intermediate students it was easier to simply use a Direct refusal strategy and then state that they needed the notes to study.

Another important Role Play that is worthy of discussion here is RP2 where the participants were asked to turn down a request from a supervisor at work to stay for extra hours. While the Intermediate and Advanced students used a combination of Personal and Family reasons, the NSE group used mostly Personal reasons, and the NSA group used mostly Family reasons. What is interesting here is that the distinction between the NSE and NSA groups is clear and is in line with the literature on individualistic and collectivistic cultures with regard to the role of family in one’s life. It is also important to

point out that other refusal studies of Arabic found that the excuses given by Arabs (i.e., Saudis) were more family-oriented as compared to those excuses given by Americans (Al-Shalawi, 1997). It is interesting to see that the reasons given by the learners, especially the Advanced students, reflect their awareness of the role of family in the Egyptian culture. All the participants in the present study spent time in Egypt and some of them lived with Egyptian families. So, it is possible that they are more conscious of the role of family, especially when interacting in Arabic. However, this interpretation should be made with caution because of the small sample size (each group consisted of 10 participants). It is important to remind the reader, however, that in RP4 when the participants were asked to turn down an offer of job promotion and relocation, the majority of the participants in all the groups used family-related excuses. But, just as in RP2, in RP4 more participants in the NSA group used family-related excuses when compared to participants in the three other groups.

The last Role Play to be discussed in this section is RP6 in which the participants were asked to turn down an offer of a monetary compensation from a janitor who just broke their china figurine while cleaning their office. What is interesting here is that while the Advanced students and the participants in the NSE group used two types of excuses: Monetary Value and Sentimental Value, the Intermediate students used only the Monetary Value excuses. It is possible to argue that the Intermediate students did not use the Sentimental Value argument because it requires a higher level of linguistic competence, whereas the Monetary Value would simply require the participants to say “it was cheap.” However, this interpretation should be made with caution due to the small sample size. It is also interesting that the Advanced students followed the same pattern

used by the NSE group: using the Sentimental Value category 65% of the time and the Monetary Value category 35% of the time. This can also be seen as another example of pragmatic transfer from L1 especially because the Excuse/Reason strategy was rarely used by the Egyptian participants in this Role Play; it was used by a single Egyptian participant whereas it was by 80% to 90% of the American participants in all three groups.

### *Stages of Refusal*

In this section the Stages of refusal I and II will be discussed in the light of the findings reported in Chapter 4. The most important point to make here is that an examination of these Stages and the frequency of the Direct and Indirect refusals used in Stages I and II provides further support for pragmatic transfer from L1. This examination also reveals interesting differences between the Intermediate and Advanced students.

With regard to evidence of negative pragmatic transfer from L1, it was most apparent in the Higher status situations, which were Role Plays 2 and 4. The reader is reminded that in State II of RP2 a majority of participants in all three American groups used Direct strategies whereas only one participant in the Egyptian group used those strategies. Also in RP4 while 40% to 60% of the participants in each of the three American groups used Direct strategies in Stage I and 60% to 90% used those strategies in Stage II, only 10% of the Egyptians used those strategies in both Stages. These findings are interesting because they show that while the Egyptians tried to avoid using Direct strategies when interacting with someone higher in status, the Americans used those strategies more frequently especially in the insistence stage, Stage II. Again, the

fact that the two learner groups followed the same pattern exhibited by the NSE is another evidence of negative pragmatic transfer from L1. In these interactions the American learners probably sounded more direct (and maybe even less ‘respectful’ of their boss) than their Egyptian counterparts.

Pragmatic transfer was also observed in strategy selection in Stages I and II. For example, for the two learner groups and the NSE group there was a clear preference for the use of the Excuse/Reason strategy and the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement strategy in both Stages of RP4. No distinct preference was observed in the Egyptian group since the participants in this group used a combination of different strategies including Hedging, Wish, Postponement, and Repetition of Part of the Request. The Egyptians also used Excuse/Reason and Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement but not as frequently as the American participants. The fact that the American participants preferred the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement (especially Statement of Agreement) when interacting with someone higher in status was also reported in other refusal studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). Again, these findings reported here provide another example of pragmatic transfer from L1.

With regard to differences between the two learner groups, there is evidence that there is a higher degree of pragmatic transfer with the Advanced students. For example, in RP5 while 80% of the participants in both the NNSA group and the NSE group used the Excuse/Reason strategy in Stage I, only 30% of the participants in the NNSI group used this strategy. What is interesting here is that it was found that also 30% of the NSA group participants used this strategy in Stage I. This is interesting because it shows that the Intermediate students did not follow a specific pattern. In some cases they followed

patterns that were similar to those used by the NSE group and in some other cases their patterns were more similar to those used by the NSA or the NNSA groups. Also, sometimes their patterns were different from the patterns observed in any of the other groups. For example, in RP1 and RP2 the Intermediate students used more Direct strategies than any other group. This can, however, be interpreted in terms of *bluntness* (Gass & Houck, 1999; Kasper, 1997), which is characteristic of language learners. This important phenomenon will be discussed later in this chapter.

One more evidence of negative pragmatic transfer from L1 was that in response to increased insistence on the part of the interlocutor (Stage II) the American learners tended to confirm their refusals by using higher percentage of Direct strategies in a pattern similar to that used by the NSE group. The Egyptians, on the other hand, tended to engage in more negotiation through the use of a higher percentage of Indirect strategies.

Finally, it is also important to highlight the similarities between the Egyptian and American participants since pragmatic transfer in these cases would be beneficial or positive. In RP 5 in which participants interacted with someone equal in status and who was also a close friend, the majority of the participants in all the groups used Direct strategies in Stages I and II. So, it seems that in both cultures refusing an offer from a friend would require the use of Direct strategies. However, these Direct strategies were used in combination with a high percentage of Adjuncts to refusal, especially Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. There was also a preference for Direct strategies in RP6 in which the interaction took place with someone relatively lower in status to that of the participant (i.e., a janitor in an office). In this Role Play, as in Role

Play 5, a majority of the participants in all four groups used Direct strategies in the two Stages of the interaction. This shows that there is a tendency in the two cultures to use a higher percentage of Direct strategies when interacting with someone lower in status (especially in a work setting) and someone equal in status (especially a close friend).

### *Discussion of Findings from the Selected Interactions*

#### *Strategy Selection*

This section presents a discussion of the qualitative findings of the analysis of the selected interactions described in Chapter 4. The discussion is presented in the same order the findings were reported in Chapter 4: strategy selection, individual differences, language proficiency and pragmatic competence, and finally the use of Direct and Indirect strategies in Higher status situations. In the following paragraphs each of these topics will be discussed, and the analysis will focus on discourse-level patterns.

After examining and comparing the interactions in RP1 from the NNSI, NSE, and NSA groups in Chapter 4, it was clear that the pragmatic transfer that was observed was not limited to strategy selection but also included similar distribution of strategies over the stretch of discourse. In other words, there was evidence of discourse-level pragmatic transfer. It was apparent that the majority of the American participants in the NSE and the two learner groups used Direct strategies to assert their refusals when the interlocutor insisted on his request. The Egyptians, on the other hand, as was clearly illustrated by Nahed's interaction, used a higher percentage of Indirect strategies in response to increased insistence on the part of the interlocutor.

Role Play 1, in fact, is unique because of the major differences between the American and Egyptian participants. As was reported in Chapter 4, while the Americans frequently used Direct strategies including aggravating strategies such as Criticism/Reprimand, the Egyptians used a high percentage of Indirect strategies, and actually 40% of them agreed to give the notes to the interlocutor. In order to understand the learner behavior in this Role Play it will be important to speculate about the motivations behind it.

It is possible to argue that in an Individualistic society like in the US, there is a high level of appreciation for hard work and self-reliance and there is a strong sense of disapproval for people who try to get what they do not deserve. This was, in fact, observed in the study: the researcher observed that some of the American participants felt indignant by their classmate's request of the lecture notes. The reason was that this classmate was always absent and always came to class late and he in fact borrowed the notes before from the participants. Many of the American participants criticized the interlocutor for not working hard enough and for not coming to class and implied that it was not fair for them to give him their notes when they worked very hard on them. The Egyptian participants, on the other hand, did not seem to be concerned with whether the classmate's request was fair or not as much as they were concerned with minimizing the offense to his face and helping him avoid embarrassment. As characteristic of collectivistic cultures with a high-context communication style they were trying to convey their refusal in the most indirect way by using the Unspecified or Indefinite Reply strategy. In this strategy the participant expresses willingness and desire to help but implies that he or she might not be able to do so due to circumstances that are out of his

or her control. In other words the participant gives a vague, open-ended reply. The Egyptians seemed more empathetic than the Americans because their goal was maintaining a good, harmonious relationship with their interlocutor at the expense of the clarity of their message. This is typical of collectivistic, group-oriented, cultures with a high-context communication style, like the Egyptian. The Americans, on the other hand, were more concerned with getting their message across as clearly as possible, and that seemed to be more important than attending to the face needs of their interlocutor, which is typical of individualistic cultures with a low-context communication style, like the American culture. The important question here is: what does this mean to the language learner? This will be discussed later in this chapter.

### *Individual Differences*

One of the important qualitative findings reported in Chapter 4 was the individual differences among the participants. It was interesting to compare Evan and Jack and to see how significant the individual differences could be. In this comparison, we have two students at the Intermediate level, and presumably have access to the same level of linguistic knowledge. However, one of them performed the refusal in a way that was markedly different from the other. It is important, here, to note that there is evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1 in both learners. For example, in the case of Jack there is evidence of pragmatic transfer of Direct strategies from L1, and in the case of Evan transfer is evidence of pragmatic transfer of the Adjuncts to refusal strategies, and especially the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. This strategy was used very frequently by the NSE group in this Role Play.

It is very important to point out that while Evan's interaction in Chapter 4 seemed on the surface to be 'courteous' and 'polite' it did not actually conform to the Egyptians' use of strategies in this Role Play. The Egyptians, for example, did not use a high percentage of the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement strategy. In this Role Play most of the Egyptians used a very high percentage of Indirect strategies, specifically the Excuse/Reason and Hedging strategies and a markedly lower percentage of Adjuncts to refusal. Some of the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement strategies that Evan used were not, actually, appropriate to use in this Role Play in the Egyptian culture. In fact, what Evan said about his relationship to his boss, specifically that he "loves" his boss and that he and his boss were "friends," was not appropriate in the Egyptian culture. These were solidarity strategies (Scollon & Scollon, 1983), and the Egyptians would prefer deference strategies in this situation. The Egyptian society is hierarchical and distinctions are recognized among people with regard to age, social status, and education (Begley, 2000). For an employee to refer to his or her boss as a friend is not appropriate in the Egyptian culture since it shows that the employee does not recognize the social distinction between him or her and the boss. In fact, a number of proverbs in Egyptian Arabic refer to the idea of this hierarchical structure. One such proverb can be translated as "the eye cannot rise above the eyebrow" (my translation).

Jack's performance of the refusal in Chapter 4 was not appropriate either for a number of reasons. Jack frequently used Direct strategies including the Flat No strategy, used culturally inappropriate excuses (i.e., *I am tired*), and inappropriately used the Proverb/Common Saying strategy (i.e., *When pigs fly*). He also used the American

strategy sequence of Direct refusal and Statement of Regret instead of the Egyptian one: Direct refusal and Excuse/Reason. These strategies will be briefly discussed below.

In Egyptian Arabic, the use of Direct strategies when refusing a request from a boss can be viewed as disrespectful. The reader is reminded that in this Role Play the Egyptian participants used a very low percentage of Direct strategies and a very high percentage of Indirect strategies. Jack's excuses were also similar to the excuses used by participants in the NSE group in that they were in the Personal category and were not as compelling as the Egyptian reasons, which were mainly in the Family or Health categories. As mentioned previously, the kind of reason an interlocutor uses can either aggravate or mitigate the illocutionary force of the refusal. The Egyptians used more compelling reasons in this Role Play in order to minimize the illocutionary force of their refusals. The American excuses, on the other hand, were not as compelling. Jack's attempt at using the Indirect strategy of Proverb/Common Saying was also unsuccessful. First, it is important to point out that the Egyptian participants did not use the Proverb/Common Saying strategy in this Role Play. This strategy was used more frequently in the Equal and Lower status situations. So, the use of this strategy when refusing a request from someone higher in status does not seem appropriate based on the Egyptian data. The proverb that Jack used when refusing his boss's request (i.e., "when pigs fly") was also not appropriate since it aggravated rather than mitigated the illocutionary force of his refusal.

In conclusion, it is important to point out that individual differences among learners can be similar to the individual differences among native speakers. It is possible to argue here that the individual differences that were observed in this study do not seem

to be the result of differences in pragmatic competence, but could simply be the result of differences in personal communication style. While there is evidence that both learners, Evan and Jack, transferred their pragmatic knowledge from L1, the difference between them seems to lie in their selection of which strategies to transfer. For example, as discussed above whereas Jack transferred a high percentage of Direct strategies, Evan transferred a high percentage of Adjuncts to refusal, especially the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. This issue of individual differences was highlighted in the literature, especially in other refusal studies eliciting interactional data (VonCanon, 2006).

#### *Language Proficiency and Pragmatic Competence*

With regard to the qualitative results concerning the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence, the findings that were reported in Chapter 4 were revealing. These findings show that the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence is not linear but rather complex. While the Advanced students had access to more linguistic resources than the Intermediate students, this does not necessarily mean that they were able to successfully use these resources, or produce target language-like pragmatic patterns. As was observed in the qualitative findings in Chapter 4, the student with the lower language proficiency, Kim, seemed to be more successful than her Advanced counterpart, Kristen, in performing the refusal. Despite her limited language proficiency, Kim was able to negotiate the refusal using a high percentage of Indirect strategies and Adjuncts to refusal; she was also able to convey a positive attitude toward her interlocutor and help him save face and avoid

embarrassment. The Advanced student, Kristen, on the other hand, used a high percentage of Direct strategies including the Flat No strategy in Stage I and Sage II of the interaction. In general, she did not engage in negotiation or convey an attitude of someone who was willing to help. In fact, she used more Direct strategies, fewer Indirect strategies and fewer Adjuncts to refusal than most participants in the two NS groups. So, it seems that individual differences or personal communication style can play an equally important role to language proficiency in the realization of the speech act of refusal.

However, it is important to remind the reader that the Advanced students were, in many cases, more successful in performing the speech act of refusal than the Intermediate students. They were successful in the sense that they engaged in more negotiation and produced a lower percentage of Direct strategies and a higher percentage of Indirect strategies when compared to the Intermediate students. This way the patterns they followed were more similar to those used by the NSA group. However, it is important to point out that these Advanced students may have been more successful than the Intermediate students not necessarily because they had a higher level of pragmatic competence, but simply because their language proficiency allowed them to transfer more of the strategies that English and Arabic shared (i.e., positive pragmatic transfer). Their language proficiency also allowed them to transfer strategies from L1 that were not appropriate in Arabic (i.e., negative pragmatic transfer).

#### *Direct and Indirect Strategies in Higher Status Situations*

The findings of the qualitative analysis of the interactions of Mary and Rania were interesting since they show very clearly how the Egyptian and American

participants differed in the way they turned down an offer from someone higher in status. These findings also shed light on very important cultural differences between Egyptians and Americans. These qualitative findings have revealed two different approaches to refusal when interacting with someone higher in status. The American approach can be characterized by the following: use of Direct strategies in Stages I of the interaction; recycling of Direct refusals when faced with insistence on the part of the interlocutor (Stage II); preference for the Indirect strategy of Excuse/Reason, use of personal or family-related reasons, preference for Adjuncts to refusal, especially the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. The Egyptian approach, on the other hand, can be characterized by the following: verbosity; avoidance of Direct strategies in Stages I and II; if used, Direct strategies are almost always used in Stage II rather than Stage I of the interaction; when faced with insistence on the part of the interlocutor the Egyptians tended to engage in more negotiation through the use of a high percentage of Indirect strategies, use of a wide range of Indirect strategies including Excuse/Reason, Request for Understanding/Consideration, Wish, Postponement, and Self Defense; excuses given are always family-oriented and always compelling (e.g., taking care of aging parents or grandparents, taking care of sick family members).

These findings are important since they reveal interesting cultural differences between Egypt and the US, and they help us better understand the learner behavior in these higher status interactions. As already mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Egyptian society has been described in the literature as collectivistic (Hofstede, 1991) with a high-context communication style (Hall, 1976). It is a society where “hierarchies according to age, gender, and experience are crucial” (Begley, 2000, p. 102). The American society,

on the other hand has been described as individualistic with a low-context communication style. It is a society where most people believe in equality and view themselves as members of an egalitarian middle class (Stewart & Bennett, 1991). However, the important question here is: what does this mean to American learners of Arabic? This important question will be discussed later in the chapter.

### Research Question I: Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1 looks at the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic competence. In order to answer this question the performance of the Intermediate and Advanced students will be compared to that of native speakers of Arabic. In the following paragraphs a summary of the discussion related to answering this question will be presented. The first section deals with discussion of the quantitative findings and the second discusses the qualitative findings.

#### *Discussion of Quantitative Findings*

The first important finding with regard to differences between the Intermediate and Advanced students is that the Advanced students produced more words than the Intermediate students. This can be seen as a potentially pragmatic advantage that the Advanced students have in that because they have access to more linguistic resources, and they are capable of engaging in more negotiation and using more strategies in a way similar to that of native speakers of Arabic. However, this does not necessarily mean that they all chose to engage in extended negotiation or use refusal strategies similar to those used by native speakers of Egyptian Arabic.

The fact that the Advanced students produced more turns and longer turns than the Intermediate students can also be seen as the result of their higher level of language proficiency, which allowed them to engage in more negotiation than the Intermediate students. These longer turns allowed them to produce more strategies per turn in a way similar to that of native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. But again, this does not mean that they produced the pragmatically appropriate strategies or that they distributed their strategies in a way similar to that of native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. So, the point here is that the Advanced students' superior language skills provides them with a pragmatic advantage over the Intermediate students.

With regard to the use of individual strategies, it was interesting to find that the Advanced students were able to use the refusal strategy of Setting Conditions for Acceptance whereas the Intermediate students never used it. Again, this finding shows that the language proficiency of the Advanced students allowed them to use refusal strategies that required knowledge of complex syntactic structures, whereas such strategies were not available to the Intermediate students due to their limited linguistic knowledge. So, here again we see that the higher language proficiency of the Advanced students giving them a pragmatic advantage over the Intermediate students.

One of the interesting findings of the present study was that the Advanced students used a higher frequency of the Adjunct to refusal: Invoking the Name of God than the Intermediate students. It is possible to argue that the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the Advanced students allowed them to be more aware of such words and expressions that are commonly used in everyday communication in Egyptian Arabic. However, as explained above, the use of such expression, which literally means "I swear

to God,” could be problematic since some students may refrain from using it due to their religious beliefs. In fact, most Christian Egyptians refrain from using this expression in their everyday interactions.

However, one of the more important findings of the present study, and which is directly relevant to answering Research Question 1 was the finding that the Advanced students consistently used a lower percentage of Direct strategies and a higher percentage of Indirect strategies than the Intermediate students, thus following a pattern that is closer to that exhibited by the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, and in fact by the native speakers of American English as well. It is possible to argue here that the Advanced students’ language proficiency allowed them to engage in more negotiation, hence the use of a higher percentage of Indirect strategies and a lower percentage of Direct strategies. The Intermediate students, on the other hand, favored the linguistically less demanding Direct strategies over the Indirect strategies, which were linguistically more difficult for them to use.

With regard to the contextual factor of status and how it affected the use of Direct and Indirect strategies for the two learner groups, findings show that the Advanced students used a lower percentage of Direct strategies and a higher percentage of Indirect strategies in each of the three status relationships than their Intermediate counterparts. This way the Advanced students followed patterns that were closer to those used by two NS groups. So, again it seems that the language proficiency of the Advanced students allowed them to use patterns that were similar to those used by native speakers of Arabic as well as those used by native speakers of American English. It seems that it allowed

them to transfer patterns from American English that both American English and Arabic shared (i.e., positive pragmatic transfer).

It is important to remind the reader that the tendency of learners to use a higher frequency of direct strategies was reported in the literature on interlanguage pragmatics and was referred to as *bluntness* (Gass & Houck, 1999; Kasper, 1997). Kasper (1997) explains that *bluntness* occurs when learners use inappropriate direct strategies, or socially, or culturally inappropriate reasons. In the present study the Intermediate students were found to consistently use a higher percentage of direct refusal strategies than the Advanced students, as explained above. In other words, the Intermediate students were found to be more inclined toward *bluntness* than the Advanced students. One of the important findings of the present study, then, is that there seems to be an inverse relationship between *bluntness* and language proficiency.

#### *Discussion of Qualitative Findings*

One of the interesting qualitative findings with regard to differences between the two learner groups was in RP1 where more Advanced students used excuses of the type that is referred to in this study as “invented” and which was culturally appropriate to use in Arabic in that Role Play. Other researchers have referred to this type of excuse as ‘white lie’ (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). However, it is not clear why this type of reason was preferred by the Advanced students. One possible explanation is that such reasons seemed to lead to more negotiation involving elaborate responses and explanations. It is possible that the Intermediate students avoided such reasons because of their limited

language proficiency. Please refer to the Discussion of Qualitative Findings above for a detailed discussion of this point.

Another interesting finding with regard to the kind of excuses given by the learners was in RP2 where it was found that both the Intermediate and Advanced students used a combination of Personal and Family reasons to refuse a request from a boss to stay extra hours at work. The NSE group, on the other hand, used mostly Personal reasons, and the NSA group used mostly Family reasons. It is interesting to see that the reasons given by both groups of learners show their awareness of the role of family in the Egyptian culture. All the participants in the present study spent time in Egypt and some of them lived with Egyptian families. So, it is possible that they were more aware of the role of family, especially when interacting in Arabic. In this case a higher level of language proficiency did not seem to affect the use of such excuses.

However, it seems that the learner's language proficiency affected their selection of strategies in RP6. For example, while the Advanced students, like participants in the NSE group, used a combination of two types of excuses: Monetary Value and Sentimental Value, to refuse a janitor's offer of money in compensation for breaking the a china figurine, the Intermediate students used only the Monetary Value type of excuses. It is possible to argue that the Intermediate students did not use the Sentimental Value excuses because it required a higher level of language proficiency, whereas a Monetary Value excuse can be as simple as "it was cheap."

In conclusion, the findings from the present study show that the Advanced students were, in many cases, more successful in performing the speech act of refusal

than the Intermediate students. They were successful in the sense that they engaged in more negotiation and produced an overall lower percentage of Direct strategies and an overall higher percentage of Indirect strategies when compared to the Intermediate students. This way the patterns they used were closer to those exhibited by the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. However, it is important to point out that these Advanced students were more successful than the Intermediate students, not because they necessarily had a higher level of pragmatic competence, but because their language proficiency allowed them to transfer more of the strategies that English and Arabic shared (i.e., positive pragmatic transfer). But their language proficiency also allowed them to transfer strategies from L1 that were not appropriate in Arabic (i.e., negative pragmatic transfer).

#### Research Question II: Discussion of Findings

Research Question 2 looks at the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic transfer. In order to answer this question the performance of the Intermediate and Advanced students is compared to that of native speakers of American English. In the following paragraphs a summary of the relevant discussion points is presented.

##### *Discussion of Quantitative Findings*

Extensive evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1 was found in the two groups of learners with regard to their strategy selection. For example, the Indirect strategy of Statement of Regret was used by the two learner groups in a pattern similar to that of the NSE group but different from that of the NSA group. For the two learner groups and the

NSE group, the Statement of Regret strategy was the third most frequently used strategy, but for the Egyptian group it was the ninth most frequently used strategy. This is a good example of negative pragmatic transfer where the participants relied on their pragmatic knowledge from L1 in realizing the speech act of refusal in Arabic. However, it is important to point out that the two learner groups used an overall higher frequency of the Statement of Regret strategy than the NSE group, which is a finding that was reported also in other refusal studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002).

A number of other strategies also provide evidence of pragmatic transfer from English. For example, the Indirect strategy of Proverb/Common Saying was the fifth most frequently used strategy by the Egyptians, occurring 43 times, but it occurred only 3 times in the NSE data and only once in the learner data. The strategy of Postponement is another good example since it was frequently used by the Egyptian participants but not by the American participants. Also, the strategy of Criticism/Reprimand was frequently used by the three American groups in RP1 but appeared only once in the Egyptian data in this Role Play. It is important to note that there were no differences between the Intermediate and Advanced students with regard to the use of these three strategies. These examples provide evidence of negative pragmatic transfer from English.

There is also evidence of pragmatic transfer with regard to the use of Direct and Indirect strategies. As explained above, the Advanced students used a lower percentage of Direct strategies and a higher percentage of Indirect strategies than the Intermediate students. This way, the Advanced students used patterns that are closer to those used by the NSE group. It is possible to argue here that due to their higher level of language proficiency the Advanced students were able to transfer more of their pragmatic

knowledge from L1. With regard to the contextual factor of status, the Advanced students used Direct strategies in a pattern that was also similar to that used by the NSE group in all three status relationships. These findings provide support for the Positive Correlation Hypothesis (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987) which posits that there is a positive correlation between the degree of pragmatic transfer and proficiency level. These findings have also been corroborated in the literature by other refusal studies (Kwon, 2003). Finally, it is important to point out that the use of a high percentage of Indirect strategies and a low percentage of Direct strategies by the Advanced students is an example of beneficial or positive pragmatic transfer since the two NS groups followed this pattern as well.

#### *Discussion of Qualitative Findings*

There is also evidence of discourse-level pragmatic transfer from L1. For example, in Stage II of the interaction in the two higher status situations (RP2 and RP4), a majority of participants in all three American groups used Direct strategies whereas only one participant in the Egyptian group used those strategies. Also, in RP4 while at least 40% of the American participants in all 3 groups used Direct strategies in Stage I and at least 60% of them used Direct strategies in Stage II, only 10% of the Egyptian participants used these strategies in either Stages. So, this is a good example of negative pragmatic transfer at the discourse level since it shows that while the Egyptians avoided Direct strategies in the two Stages of interaction, the Americans used them frequently especially in Stage II. One more finding that shows discourse-level pragmatic transfer is the following: in response to increased insistence on the part of the interlocutor the American learners tended to assert their refusal by using a higher percentage of Direct

strategies in a pattern similar to that used by the NSE group. The Egyptians, on the other hand, tended to engage in more negotiation through the use of a higher percentage of Indirect strategies.

With regard to differences between the two learner groups, a higher degree of pragmatic transfer at the discourse level was observed in the Advanced students. For example, in RP5 while 80% of the participants in the NNSA and the NSE groups used the Excuse/Reason strategy in Stage I, only 30% of the participants in the NNSI group used this strategy.

Finally, it is also important to highlight the similarities between the Egyptian and American participants since pragmatic transfer in these cases was beneficial or positive. First, with regard to overall strategy use, a number of strategies were used consistently by the American and Egyptian participants, and these include: Excuse/Reason, Statement of Alternative, Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement. Also, it is important to point out that in RP 5, which is an Equal status interaction, the majority of participants in all the groups used Direct strategies as well as the Statement of Positive Opinion/Feeling or Agreement in Stages I and II. All four groups also used Direct strategies frequently in both Stages of the interaction in RP6, which is a Lower status interaction.

In conclusion, it is important to point out that the relationship between language proficiency and pragmatic transfer is a complex one. As mentioned above, findings from the present study support the Positive Correlation Hypothesis (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987), which posits that the degree of language transfer correlates positively with language proficiency. In other words, the more linguistic resources students have access

to in L2, the more pragmatic knowledge from L1 they can transfer. However, this does not mean that the limited language proficiency of the intermediate students would allow them to have a higher level of pragmatic competence than the advanced students. Such claim is false because it ignores the fact that the higher language proficiency of the advanced students would also allow them to transfer many of the strategies that L1 and L2 share. In the present study the Advanced students were generally more successful than the Intermediate students in performing their refusals mainly because they were able to transfer many of the strategies that American English and Egyptian Arabic shared (i.e., positive pragmatic transfer). However, when these strategies were inconsistent in English and Arabic, the Advanced students were also more successful than the Intermediate students in transferring those strategies as well (i.e., negative pragmatic transfer).

However, it is important to remind the reader that the American learners of Arabic who participated in this study were a unique group of learners for a number of reasons. First, these students were highly motivated and dedicated to learning Arabic. All of them studied Arabic in Egypt and all of them were students at the full-immersion program at the Arabic School of Middlebury College. It is important to keep this in mind when interpreting the findings since it is possible that the findings may not necessarily be readily applicable to other groups of students.

#### Comparing the Findings of the Study to Other Refusal Studies

Since this was the first study to look at the pragmatic competence of American learners of Arabic and the first speech act study in Arabic to elicit interactional data, it is important to compare the findings from the present study to findings from other refusal

studies. The first part of this section compares the findings from this study to findings from other refusal studies, and the second part compares the findings to those of other Arabic refusal studies.

A number of the findings from the present study were similar to findings from other refusal studies. For example, Excuse/Reason was found to be the most frequently used strategy of refusal in studies using the role play method for data collection (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Margalef-Boada, 1993; VonCanon, 2006) as well as studies that used other more traditional methods such as the DCT (Beckers, 1999; Henstock, 2003; Kwon, 2003). The findings of the present study were also similar to findings from other studies with regard to the frequent use of the Statement of Regret by the learners as compared to native speakers (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Margalef-Boada, 1993; VonCanon, 2006).

The strategy of Proverb/Common saying, which was frequently used by the Egyptian participants in the present study and rarely used by the American participants, was also found to be frequently used in Mexican Spanish (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). Another interesting finding from this study, which is also similar to findings from Felix-Brasdefer's study, is the use of the strategy Unspecified/Indefinite reply. This strategy was found to be used more frequently by Egyptians in the present study and by Mexicans in Felix-Brasdefer's study than by native speakers of American English. A third finding that showed more similarities between Egyptians and Mexicans is that both Egyptians and Mexicans tend to use family-related excuses in their refusals more frequently than their American counterparts. This is again interesting because it shows that there are more similarities between the Egyptian and Mexican cultures: both of which have been

described in the literature as collectivistic cultures with a high-context communication style.

In this study, as in other refusal studies (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1993; Gass & Houck, 1999; Margalef-Boada, 1993) the learners used, in general, a higher percentage of the Request for Information/Clarification strategy. This strategy has been referred to as a verbal avoidance strategy that is used by learners to buy time before having to produce the refusal (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1990, 1993; VonCanon, 2006). In a similar finding to that of the present study, Felix-Brasdefer's (2002) found the American participants in his study to prefer the use of Statement of Agreement especially in higher status situations.

One of the important findings of the present study that was also corroborated with findings from similar studies was the higher frequency of direct strategies used by the learners as compared to native speakers. Two of the refusal studies that used the same data collection method used in the present study (Gass & Hock, 1999; VonCanon, 2006) also found learners to use a higher frequency of direct strategies. Other studies, however, found native speakers of Mexican Spanish to use a higher frequency of direct strategies than the learners (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). The tendency of learners to use a higher frequency of direct strategies was reported in the literature on interlanguage pragmatics and was referred to as *bluntness* (Gass & Houck, 1999; Kasper, 1997). Kasper (1997) explains that *bluntness* occurs when learners use inappropriate direct strategies or socially or culturally inappropriate reasons. Kasper further explains that this reflects the NNS's concern for being clear or effective in performing the speech act of refusal (cited in Gass & Hock, 1999, p. 144). What is interesting about the findings from the present study is

that the Intermediate students were found to be more inclined toward *bluntness* than the Advanced students. The Intermediate students consistently used a higher percentage of direct refusal strategies than the Advanced students. One of the important findings of this study is that there seems to be an inverse relationship between *bluntness* and language proficiency level.

Individual variation among participants in the realization of the speech act of refusal was also reported in the other refusal studies (Beebe & Cummings, 1996; Gass & Houck, 1999; VonCanon, 1999). Gass and Houck (1999) explain that one possible reason for this variation is that refusal is different from other speech acts in that it is not an initiating act in itself but a response to another's initiating act (e.g., request, offer), which results in this kind of variation. Another phenomenon that is linked to individual differences in refusal is verbosity. Learners' verbosity was reported in the literature on interlanguage pragmatic (Edmondson & House, 1991) as well as in other refusal studies (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002). In the present study considerable variation in the degree of verbosity was found among the learners. For example, some learners produced two or three times more words than fellow learners in their groups. Considerable variation in verbosity was also found among the two groups of native speakers.

Findings from the present study are consistent with findings from the overwhelming majority of speech act studies in general and refusal studies in particular with regard to pragmatic transfer. Like the majority of those studies, the present study has found evidence of both negative and positive pragmatic transfer from L1. Pragmatic transfer was found in refusal studies using the role play method for data collection (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) as well as in studies using traditional methods of data collection such as

the DCT (Henstock, 2003). In addition, findings from the present study are also consistent with findings that looked the relationship between language proficiency and degree of pragmatic transfer. In Henstock's study, as in the present study, evidence of an inverse relationship between language proficiency and the degree of pragmatic transfer was found. Both studies provide support for the Positive Correlation Hypothesis (Takahashi and Beebe, 1987).

### *Comparing the Findings of the Study to Arabic Refusal Studies*

Before comparing the findings from the present study to specific Arabic refusal studies, it is important to compare them first to general findings from Arabic speech act research. The results reported in the present study corroborate findings from previous research on Arabic speech acts. The findings are consistent with the general characteristics of Arabic communication style reported in the literature. For example, this study shows that there is a tendency towards verbosity especially when interacting with someone higher in status. The findings also show the prevalence of religious reference in Arabic communication. In addition, they show the particular importance of the contextual factor of status in the realization of speech acts in Arabic. Finally, the findings show that formulaic expressions and proverbs are frequently used in realizing speech acts in Arabic.

It is important to remind the reader that findings from the present study will be compared to findings from studies that examined similarities and differences between Arabs and Americans in their realization of the speech act of refusal. In addition, the findings will be compared to other Arabic refusal studies that looked at the pragmatic

competence of Arabic-speaking learners of English. No studies were found in the literature that looked at the pragmatic competence of American learners of Arabic.

Findings from the present study were consistent with those reported by Stevens (1993) with regard to the similarities between the refusal strategies used in Egyptian Arabic and those used in American English. In the present study, as in that of Stevens, it seems that there are missed opportunities for positive pragmatic transfer. This will be further discussed in the Pedagogical Implications section below.

Some of the findings from the present study were not consistent with those reported by Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002). For example, while the American and Egyptian participants in Nelson et al.'s study used a similar number of direct and indirect strategies, the American participants in the present study consistently used a higher percentage of direct strategies than the Egyptian participants. Also, one of the findings in Nelson et al.'s study was that the Egyptians used a higher percentage of direct strategies in equal status situations than the Americans. In the present study, however, such a difference was not observed. In addition, while the Egyptian and American participants were found in Nelson et al.'s study to use similar reasons in their refusals, the Egyptian participants in the present study were found to use more family-related reasons than their American counterparts. One consistent finding, however, in the two studies is that the American participants were found in the two studies to use a higher percentage of the Gratitude/Appreciation strategy than their Egyptian counterparts. It is important to remind the reader that such differences could partially be due to differences in data collection methods. While the role play method was used for data collection in the present study, an oral DCT was used in Nelson et al.'s study.

In his study, Al-Issa (1998) was looking at the pragmatic competence of Jordanian learners of English as a foreign language and found that there was evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1, specifically with regard to the type, number, and content of semantic formulas/strategies used. His findings are consistent with findings from the present study. However, while the strategy of Request for Understanding/Consideration was only used by the Jordanian participants in his study, it was used by both the American and Egyptian participants in the present study. Another interesting observation here is that the characteristics of the Jordanian communication style seem to be similar to those of the Egyptian style with regard to how refusals are realized. For example, Al-Issa found the Jordanian refusals to be lengthy, elaborate and less direct especially when interacting with someone higher in status. These were also the characteristics of the Egyptian refusals found in the present study. Al-Issa also found evidence of frequent reference to God in the realization of refusals, which is consistent with findings from the present study. However, while in Al-Issa's study the Jordanian excuses were vaguer and less specific, the Egyptian excuses as specific as the American ones. But such a difference could be due to differences in data collection between the two studies.

Some of the findings from the present study are not consistent with those reported by Al-Shalawi (1997) with regard to the use of Statement of Regret. While in his study the Saudi participants used more expressions of regret than the American participants, in the present study the American participants were found to use this strategy more frequently than the Egyptians. In fact, the reader is reminded that while the Statement of Regret was the third most frequently used Indirect strategy by the three American groups, it was the ninth most frequently used Indirect strategy by the Egyptian participants.

However, this difference could be due to differences in data collection since Al-Shalawi used a written DCT whereas in the present study open-ended role plays were used. The difference could also be explained in terms of differences in communication style between Saudis and Egyptians. While Al-Shalawi also found the Saudi explanations to be vague and less specific than the American ones, the Egyptian and American excuses were found to be equally specific in the present study. Again, this could be due to the differences in data collection method, or to the fact that all participants in his study were males. The content of the Egyptian excuses in the present study, however, was found to be similar to the content of the Saudi excuses in Al-Shalawi's study; in both studies the Egyptian and Saudi excuses were found to be more family-oriented than the American excuses. In the present study as well as in Al-Shalawi's, Al-Issa's (1998), and Al-Eryani's (2007) studies, the American participants used more direct refusal strategies than their Arab counterparts. Finally, while the American participants in Al-Shalawi's study used the Flat No strategy more frequently than the Saudis, in the present study, the Egyptians generally used the Flat No strategy in a similar way to that of the Americans; the Americans, however, used this strategy to some extent less frequently than the Egyptians in the Equal status situations.

### Pedagogical Implications

There are a number of pedagogical implications based on the findings from the present study. Numerous examples from the present study show that American learners of Arabic have gaps in both their pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic knowledge of Arabic. Consequently, it is very important to target both types of knowledge when

teaching Arabic to Americans. With regard to the socio-pragmatic competence, it is important to teach learners this type of information and show them how it affects communication. For example, it is important for American learners of Arabic to learn about the hierarchical structure of the Arab society and how variables such as gender, age and, more importantly, status are particularly important contextual factors in communication. The variable of status, as was clearly shown by the findings from the present study, was crucial in how refusals were differentially realized in English and Arabic (e.g., Role Plays 2 and 4). Students need to learn in a more explicit way, not only how, family, or religion, for example, plays an important role in Arab culture, but also how such variables affect communication and strategy selection in speech act realization.

With regard to pragma-linguistic competence, it is important, as was observed in this study, to teach learners how speech act strategies are differentially used in English and Arabic. The study showed that American English and Egyptian Arabic share many refusal strategies, but these strategies are sometimes used and distributed differently. As was reported in the present study such strategies include, for example, Statement of Regret, Criticism/Reprimand, Excuse/Reason, Wish, Postponement, and Hedging. As the present study has shown, it is also important for American learners of Arabic to learn about the pragmatic functions of certain syntactic structures in Arabic (e.g., conditionals). In addition, fixed expressions such as proverbs and common sayings, which are very commonly used in everyday interactions in Egyptian Arabic and in other dialects of Arabic, should be taught explicitly to students. Students should also be taught how to use these expressions appropriately taking into account all relevant contextual factors.

Perhaps the best way to teach students this type of pragmatic information is through awareness raising, which is an approach that has been advocated in the literature by a number of researchers (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Rose, 1999). According to this approach, students are not taught this pragmatic information explicitly, but instead they are encouraged to discover this information on their own. This is done through paying close attention to context, and examining how different contextual factors affect communication. Learners can be provided with opportunities to listen to native speakers and interpret and respond to a variety of speech acts, and to engage in pragmatic analysis by comparing and contrasting interactions in American English and Egyptian Arabic. Kramsch (1993) suggests a number of activities that aim to raise learners' socio-cultural awareness. These include discussing judgments of appropriateness in a particular context in both the native and target cultures, incorporating learners' observations in classroom activities, comparing successful and unsuccessful dialogues, and enacting role-plays to increase learners' awareness of socio-cultural factors. Other techniques include those suggested by Rose (1994), who advocates the use of videos for teaching pragmatic knowledge. He explains that video represents an ideal medium for introducing pragmatic issues in the classroom. This is probably because it allows language learners to examine not only the verbal but also the non-verbal communication strategies.

Finally, it is very important to point out that teachers of Arabic need to be particularly sensitive when teaching socio-pragmatic information to their students. Thomas (1983) explains that "sociopragmatic decisions are social before they are linguistic, and while foreign learners are fairly amenable to corrections which they regard as linguistic, they are justifiably sensitive about having their social . . . judgment called

into question” (p. 104). Therefore, teachers should provide sociopragmatic information to learners and let them choose how to express themselves in the target language (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Thomas, 1983). It should be up to the learner whether or not to adopt the communication style of the target language, since adopting it would partially entail adopting the socio-cultural norms and beliefs of the target culture.

### Directions for Future Research

Since the present study was the first in to elicit interactional speech act data in Arabic, there is certainly a need for more studies that use this data collection method. Findings of such studies would provide very useful insights into Arabic communication style and how Arabic speech acts are realized at the discourse level. Findings from such studies can certainly provide an invaluable resource for Arabic teachers, Arabic textbook writers, and curriculum designers.

With regard to research studies investigating how American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal or other speech acts in Arabic, there is certainly an urgent need for such research. It will be important for future research to elicit interactional data in order to reach a better understanding of how speech acts are realized in Arabic by American learners of Arabic as a foreign language. Future research can also control for a number of variables that have been found to be important in speech act research such as gender. It will be important to find out in what ways the variable of gender affects the realization of speech acts Arabic. Also, controlling for the variable of study abroad will be important. All the participants in the present study studied Modern Standard Arabic

(MSA) as well as the Egyptian dialect in Egypt, so it will be important in future studies to find out to what extent this variable can affect the learners' pragmatic competence.

Another area of research that is important is the examination of non-verbal behavior in the realization of the speech act of refusal by both the learners and native speakers. The research conducted by Gass and Houck (1999) has highlighted the importance of non-verbal communication strategies in the realization of the speech act of refusal. Another area of research that is also very promising is that of judgments of appropriateness. That is, to have learner's interactions judged for appropriateness by native speakers of Arabic. This can provide very useful insights into the criteria native speakers of Arabic use in judging the appropriateness of learners' performance.

Finally, there is a need for research that examines how American learners of Arabic realize the speech act of refusal or other speech acts in other dialects of Arabic using the role play method for data collection. Also, it will be important to interview learners after conducting the role plays in order to reach a better understanding of their decision making process with regard to which strategies they used and why. Such interviews or verbal reports have been found to provide very useful insights into learners' perceptions of refusals and their linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002).

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Background Questionnaire A

This information is being collected for research purposes: in order to locate participants for a research study. The research study, which has been approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB) office of Middlebury College, will be conducted by Nader Morkus, Arabic Instructor at Middlebury College, for his Ph.D. dissertation. If you are selected for participation in the study, the researcher will assess your oral proficiency in Arabic by conducting an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). In addition, you will complete six role plays in Arabic with the researcher. The time needed for completing the OPI and the role plays will not exceed 40 minutes. Participation in the study is voluntary. You are not required to participate as part of your enrollment in the Summer School. Your participation will have no effect on your grade. If you have any questions, please contact me at nmorkus@middlebury.edu, Office: Olney 133, Cell: 802-349-0336. All personally identifying information will be destroyed once the pool of participants has been identified. By providing this information you are permitting the researcher to use non-identifying information from you in his research study.

### Contact Information

Name: ..... Gender: M F  
Age: ..... E-mail: .....  
Home state/country: ..... Phone (optional): .....

### Education and Languages

College or university currently attending (if applicable):  
.....

Level: undergraduate graduate

If undergraduate: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

If graduate, what is the degree you are currently pursuing? .....

Major/Specialization: .....

If not a student, what is your current occupation? .....

Native language: .....

Other languages you know: .....

Any language other than English you speak at home: .....

Father's native language: .....

Appendix A: Background Questionnaire A (Continued)

Mother's native language: .....

**Arabic Proficiency**

How do you rate your current proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)?

Beginning    Intermediate    Advanced    Superior

How many years have you studied Arabic? .....

Have you spent time in any Arabic-speaking countries?    YES    NO

If YES, which country(s)? .....

How long did you stay in each country? .....

Did you study Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) during your stay in any of these countries?    YES    NO

If YES, in which country(s) did you study MSA? .....

Did you study the local dialect during your stay in any of these countries?    YES    NO

If YES, in which country(s) did you study the local dialect? .....

Which Arabic dialects are you currently familiar with? .....

How do you rate your proficiency level in each dialect? (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior)

.....

How do you rate your familiarity with Arab culture?

Not very familiar    Somewhat familiar    Very familiar

What are your main reasons for studying Arabic?

.....

## Appendix B: Background Questionnaire B

This information is being collected for research purposes: in order to locate participants for a research study. The research study, which has been approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB) office of Middlebury College, will be conducted by Nader Morkus, Arabic Instructor at Middlebury College, for his Ph.D. dissertation. If you are selected for participation in the study, you will be asked to complete six role plays in English with a native speaker of American English. The time needed for completing the role plays will not exceed 20 minutes. Participation in the study is voluntary. You are not required to participate as part of your enrollment in the Summer School. Your participation will have no effect on your grade. If you have any questions, please contact me at nmorkus@middlebury.edu, Office: Olney 133, Cell: 802-349-0336. All personally identifying information will be destroyed once the pool of participants has been identified. By providing this information you are permitting the researcher to use non-identifying information from you in his research study.

### Contact Information

Name: ..... Gender: M F  
Age: ..... E-mail: .....  
Home state/country: ..... Phone (optional): .....

### Education and Languages

College or university currently attended (if applicable):  
.....

Level: undergraduate graduate n/a

If undergraduate: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

If graduate, what is the degree you are currently pursuing? .....

Major/Specialization: .....

If not a student, what is your current occupation? .....

Native language: .....

Other languages you know: .....

Appendix B: Background Questionnaire B (Continued)

What is your proficiency level in each of these languages? (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior)

.....  
.....  
.....

Any language other than English you speak at home: .....

Father's native language: .....

Mother's native language: .....

Have you spent any extended periods of time (more than one year) outside the US?  
Which countries and for how long?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix C: Background Questionnaire C

This information is being collected for research purposes: in order to locate participants for a research study. All personally-identifying information will be destroyed once the pool of participants has been identified. By providing this information you are permitting the researcher to use non-identifying information from you in his research study.

### **Personal information**

Name: .....

Gender:        M        F

Age: .....

Place of birth: .....

Nationality: .....

Country you grew up in: .....

Country you currently live in: .....

How long have you lived in this country? .....

Have you lived in other countries for extended periods of time (more than one year)?  
Which countries and for how long?

.....  
.....

E-mail: .....

Phone (optional): .....

### **Education and Occupation**

Last degree earned: .....

Specialization: .....

Current job: .....

### **Languages**

Native language: .....

Appendix C: Background Questionnaire C (Continued)

Arabic dialect you speak: .....

Language you speak at home: .....

Father's native language: .....

Father's native dialect: .....

Mother's native language: .....

Mother's native dialect: .....

How do you rate your English proficiency?

Beginning      Intermediate      Advanced      Superior

Other languages you know:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What is your proficiency level in each of these languages (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Superior)?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix D: Background Questionnaire C (Arabic Version)

هذه البيانات يتم جمعها لأغراض بحثية فقط حيث إنها تهدف إلى تحديد الأشخاص الذين تنطبق عليهم شروط المشاركة في الدراسة. لن تستخدم هذه الاستبانة وما تحتوي عليه من معلومات أو بيانات شخصية بما يمكن من التعرف على هوية الأشخاص الذين شاركوا في هذه الدراسة.

### بيانات شخصية

الاسم: .....

الجنس: ذكر أنثى

العمر: .....

محل الميلاد: .....

الجنسية: .....

البلد الذي نشأت فيه: .....

البلد الذي تعيش فيه الآن: .....

منذ كم سنة تعيش في هذا البلد؟ .....

هل أقمت في بلاد أخرى لفترات طويلة (أكثر من سنة)؟ في أي البلاد أقمت وما مدة الإقامة في كل بلد؟

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

البريد الإلكتروني: .....

رقم التليفون (اختياري): .....

### الدرجة العلمية والوظيفة

آخر درجة علمية حصلت عليها:

.....

التخصص: .....

Appendix D: Background Questionnaire C (Arabic Version) (Continued)

..... العمل الحالي:

**اللغات**

..... لغتك الأم:

..... اللهجة العربية التي تتحدث بها:

..... اللغة التي تتكلم بها في البيت:

..... اللغة التي يتحدث بها الأب:

..... اللهجة التي يتحدث بها الأب:

..... اللغة التي تتحدث بها الأم:

..... اللهجة التي تتحدث بها الأم:

ما هو مستوى معرفتك باللغة الانجليزية؟

مبتدئ      متوسط      متقدم      متفوق

هل تعرف لغات أخرى؟ ما هي؟

.....  
.....

ما هو مستوى معرفتك بكل من هذه اللغات؟ (مبتدئ – متوسط – متقدم – متفوق)

.....  
.....

## Appendix E: Enhanced Open-Ended Role Plays

### Instructions

The following are 6 role-plays that you will act out with me in Egyptian Arabic. In each of these situations you are required to refuse the offer or request that will be made. The role plays will be audio-taped. You will be given a description of each role play in English.

### Role Play 1

You are taking a class on the history of the Middle East and you are one of the best students in class. You are also known among your classmates for taking very good notes during the lectures. Yesterday the professor just announced that there would be an exam next week. One of your classmates, who you don't interact with outside of class, and who misses class frequently and comes late to class, wants to borrow your lecture notes for the exam. You have previously helped this student several times, but this time you just feel that you cannot give him the lecture notes again.

### Role Play 2

You have been working part-time at a bookstore for the past 7 months, and you have a good relationship with your 45-year-old boss who is pleased with your work. The bookstore opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 9:00 p.m. and your work shift is Monday through Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This week is a very busy one for the bookstore since it is the first week of the semester and many students come to buy their textbooks. On Friday night your boss asks you to stay for three more hours, until 9:00 p.m., to work on a new shipment of books that just arrived. But you cannot work these extra hours.

### Role Play 3

You stop by your friend's house to pick him up to go to a concert where you will meet other friends. Your friend still lives with his parents and has one younger brother in high school. Your friend is running a little bit late and still needs about 10 minutes to get ready. In the meantime his parents are entertaining you while you are waiting for him in the living room. While you are chatting with his parents his younger brother, whom you met a couple of times before, comes by to say hi, and to ask for your help with something. He is working on a school project and needs to interview you for this project. You cannot, however, help him at this time.

## Appendix E: Enhanced Open-Ended Role Plays (Continued)

### Role Play 4

You have been working for IBM for almost 3 years now and you have a good relationship with your boss. Your boss has been very pleased with your work and creativity and has decided to offer you a promotion and a pay raise. However, this promotion involves relocating to Austin, Texas, from your hometown of Burlington, Vermont. Although you like the offer, you cannot accept it.

### Role Play 5

You are visiting a friend of yours who you have not seen for almost a year. Your friend is originally from Egypt and is so delighted that you are visiting. He prepared a big meal for you with traditional Egyptian food as well as some nice Egyptian dessert. At the end of the meal you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert and insists that you should eat it. But you actually cannot.

### Role Play 6

You are a teaching assistant at a major university in the US. You usually like to stay late in your office on campus. Sometimes you stay as late as 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. and that's usually the time when janitors come to clean offices. They are usually hesitant to clean your office when they see that you are still working. However, you usually just tell them to go ahead and clean the office any way. One night while you're still working in your office one of the janitors comes in and starts cleaning. You have already seen this janitor several times before and exchanged greetings with him. While he is cleaning your office he accidentally knocks down a small china figurine and breaks it into pieces. The janitor apologizes and insists that he should pay for it. However, for you it's not a big deal, and you refuse to accept money from him.

## Appendix F: Enhanced Open-Ended Role Plays (Arabic Version)

### تعليمات

هنعمل 6 مشاهد تمثيلية صغيرة بالعامية المصرية مع بعض. في كل مشهد من المشاهد دي عايزك ترفض الطلب الي هطلبه منك أو العرض إلي هعرضه عليك. المشاهد دي هتتسجل على الكاسيت (الفويس ريكورد). وأنا هأقرالك وصف لكل مشهد قبل ما نمثله مع بعض.

### المشهد الأول

انت طالب في الجامعة وبتأخذ محاضرة عن تاريخ الشرق الأوسط، انت واحد من احسن الطلاب في الدفعة. وانت معروف بين الطلبة بانك بتكتب نوتس كويس. امبارح الدكتور قال ان فيه امتحان الاسبوع الي جاي. فيه واحد من زميلك في الدفعة جاه يطلب منك النوتس علشان الامتحان، الطالب ده انت ما تعرفهوش كويس وما بتتكلمش معاه بره المحاضرة وهو دايمًا بيغييب عن المحاضرة ولما بيجي بيجي متأخر، وانت في الحقيقة ساعدته اكثر من مرة قبل كده، بس المرة دي انت مش هاتقدر تساعده.

### المشهد الثاني

انت بتشتغل "بارت تايم" في مكتبة لبيع الكتب بقالك حوالي 7 شهور، وعلاقتك بمديرك في المكتبة كويسة، وهو مبسوط من شغلك، هو عنده حوالي 45 سنة. المكتبة بتفتح الساعة 7 الصبح وبتقفل الساعة 9 بالليل وانت ورديتك من السبت للخميس من الساعة 2 بعد الظهر للساعة 6 مساءً، الاسبوع ده فيه شغل كثير في المكتبة علشان ده اول اسبوع في الترم وطلاب كثير بيجوا المكتبة علشان يشتروا الكتب الدراسية بتاعتهم، في يوم الخميس كان فيه طلبية كتب جديدة لسه واصله والمدير طلب منك انك تشتغل ثلاث ساعات اضافية... يعني لحد الساعة 9 بالليل، بس انت ما تقدرش تشتغل الوقت الاضافي ده.

### المشهد الثالث

انت رحنت لواحد صاحبك علشان تخده وتروحو حفلة موسيقية وهاتقابلوا هناك صحاب تانيين. صاحبك ده عايش مع ابوه وامه وعنده اخ صغير في الثانوي، صاحبك لسه مش جاهز وقدامه حوالي 10 دقائق على بل ما يجهز، انت قاعد مستنيه في الصالون وقاعد بتتكلّم مع أبوه وامه، وشويه واخوه الصغير جاه يسلم عليك، ويطلب منك خدمة، انت كنت قابلته قبل كده ممكن مرتين ثلاثة، أخوه عنده بروجكت في المدرسة بتاعته وعايز يعمل معاك انترفيو علشان البروجكت ده. بس انت ما تقدرش تعمل معاه الانترفيو دلوقتي.

## Appendix F: Enhanced Open-Ended Role Plays (Arabic Version) (Continued)

### المشهد الرابع

انت شغال في شركة فودافون بقالك 3 سنين وعلاقتك كويسة برئيسك في العمل، رئيسك في العمل مبسوط اوي منك ومن شغلك وتفوقك وقرر انه يعرض عليك ترقية وزيادة في المرتب، بس عشان تاخذ الترقية دي والزيادة في المرتب لازم تنقل من القاهرة لمكتب الشركة في بورسعيد. رغم ان العرض عاجبك الا انك ما تقدرش تقبله.

### المشهد الخامس

انت رحنت تزور واحد صاحبك ما شفتوش من حوالي سنة، صاحبك ده كان مبسوط اوي انك جيت تزوره، وعملك عزومة كبيرة وحضرلك أكل كتير يعني كذا صنف وحلويات كمان. في آخر الاكل انت كنت شبعان على الآخر، بس صاحبك بيعزم عليك بحلويات ومُصرّ انك لازم تاكلها، بس انت مش قادر.

### المشهد السادس

انت معيد في جامعة اسكندرية ودايما تحب تشتغل في مكتبك لوقت متأخر، يعني ممكن تقعد في المكتب لحد الساعة 3 او 4 بعد الظهر وفي الوقت ده الفراشين بيحجوا وينضفوا المكاتب، همّ عامةً بيبقوا مترددين انهم ينضفوا لما يلاقوك قاعد في المكتب، بس انت دايما تقولهم انه مغيث مشكله وممكن ينضفوا، في المرة دي وانت لسه قاعد في مكتبك الفراش جه وبدأ ينضف، الفراش ده انت كنت تعرفه من قبل كده، وهو بينضف المكتب خبط تحفة صيني صغيرة ووقعها على الارض وكسرها، الفراش قعد يعتذر وأصر انه يدفع تمن التحفة دي، بس بالنسبة لك الموضوع بسيط وانت مش عايز تاخذ فلوس منه.

## Appendix G: Role Play Evaluation

Please fill out this evaluation sheet to help me improve the role play situations. Your answers and comments will be very effective in increasing the validity of this elicitation instrument.

I. Are the role plays you just performed realistic? Would they normally happen in the U.S.? Could a refusal be given in each of these situations? Please provide your answers below.

Role Play	Realistic/ Unrealistic	Refusal possible?	Comments
1. Classmate requesting lecture notes			
2. Boss asking employee to work extra hours			
3. Friend's younger brother asking for help with a school project			
4. Boss offering employee promotion and relocation			
5. Friend offering more dessert at dinner			
6. Janitor offering to pay for figurine he broke while cleaning			

Appendix G: Role Play Evaluation (Continued)

II. Do you think these six role plays are too many? Do you think they took too much time to complete?

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III. Any other comments?

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## Appendix H: Consent Form

### Middlebury College

#### The Realization of the Speech Act of Refusal in Egyptian Arabic by American Learners of Arabic as a Foreign Language

##### **Purpose and Benefits**

This is a research study that aims to investigate certain aspects of the oral proficiency of American learners of Arabic as a foreign. Participants will be asked to interact with native speakers of Arabic or native speakers of English in role play situations. These situations will represent various social interactions that the participants may be familiar with.

There are three benefits of this research study: first the American learners of Arabic will receive an evaluation of their oral proficiency in Arabic by a certified Arabic proficiency tester. Secondly, participants will have the opportunity to practice speaking Egyptian Arabic in various situations. Thirdly, findings from this research will make a valuable contribution to the field to teaching Arabic as a foreign language (TAFL), specifically with regard to teaching the pragmatic aspects of Arabic.

##### **Procedures**

Participants in this study will take part in six role play interactions either in English or Arabic. Those participants who will take part in the Arabic role plays will also take a proficiency test to measure their oral proficiency in Arabic. The oral proficiency test will not take more than 25 minutes, and the six role plays will not take more than 12 minutes to complete. The role play interactions will be audio-taped.

##### **Risks, Stress, or Discomfort**

There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

##### **Confidentiality**

All the records from this study will be kept confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the data. In the writing of the dissertation, no information will be provided that will make it possible to identify any of the participants in the study.

##### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in the study is voluntary. You are not required to participate as part of your enrollment in the summer school. Your participation will have no effect on your grade in

Appendix H: Consent Form (Continued)

the summer school. Also, no compensation will be provided to the participants. Participants will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Contact Information and Questions**

Please feel free to contact the investigator/researcher if you have any questions about the study. You can also contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at Middlebury College directly if you would like to receive more information about your rights. The following is the contact information you will need.

Investigator	Chair of the Institutional Review Board
Nader Morkus Farrell House 103 Middlebury College Middlebury, VT 05753 Office: 802-443-5556 Cell: 802-349-0336	James C. Davis MBH 412, McCardell Bicentennial Hall Middlebury College Middlebury, VT 05753 Office: 802-443-3221

**Participant's Statement**

I have read and understood the above. I understand that I can request a copy of this form.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

**Investigator's Statement**

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedures in which the participant has agreed to participate, and have offered the participant a copy of this informed consent form.

_____	_____
Investigator's Signature	Date

Nader Morkus  
Investigator's Printed Name

Appendix I: Number of Words, Turns, and Turn Length: NNSI Group

Participant		RP 1	RP 2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	Total
AC	Words	36	44	29	52	51	44	256
	Turns	7	6	6	6	10	10	45
	T Length	5.1	7.3	4.8	8.7	5.1	4.4	5.7
BB	Words	43	61	35	53	32	27	251
	Turns	7	8	7	11	9	8	50
	T Length	6.1	7.6	5.0	4.8	3.6	3.4	5.0
CM	Words	41	115	76	107	56	56	451
	Turns	6	15	13	6	9	10	59
	T Length	6.3	7.7	5.8	17.8	6.2	5.6	7.6
EF	Words	110	96	150	202	91	83	732
	Turns	10	9	22	15	11	8	75
	T Length	11.0	10.7	6.8	13.5	8.3	10.4	9.8
JC	Words	100	55	56	98	62	55	426
	Turns	5	7	7	10	12	11	52
	T Length	20.0	7.9	8.0	9.8	5.2	5.0	8.2
JM	Words	33	44	53	69	48	47	294
	Turns	5	7	8	7	7	8	42
	T Length	6.6	6.3	6.6	9.9	6.9	5.9	7.0
KL	Words	37	40	51	61	39	26	254
	Turns	5	8	9	6	9	9	46
	T Length	7.4	5.0	5.7	10.2	4.3	2.9	5.5
KG	Words	84	92	106	92	51	46	471
	Turns	7	11	15	8	10	10	61
	T Length	12.0	8.4	7.1	11.5	5.1	4.6	7.7
TA	Words	35	53	32	38	46	31	235
	Turns	10	11	6	8	11	7	53
	T Length	3.5	4.8	5.3	4.8	4.2	4.4	4.4
WD	Words	80	78	86	80	40	46	410
	Turns	11	11	10	6	8	7	53
	T Length	7.3	7.1	8.6	13.3	5.0	6.6	7.7
Total	Words	599	678	674	852	516	461	3780
	Turns	73	93	103	83	96	88	536
	T Length	8.2	7.3	6.5	10.3	5.4	5.2	7.0

Appendix J: Number of Words, Turns, and Turn Length: NNSA Group

Participant		RP 1	RP 2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	Total
AN	Words	50	64	58	76	61	38	347
	Turns	7	9	12	7	6	9	50
	T Length	7.1	7.1	4.8	10.9	10.2	4.2	6.9
CB	Words	132	118	84	143	54	55	586
	Turns	7	6	12	8	6	12	51
	T Length	18.9	19.7	7.0	17.9	9.0	4.6	11.5
CS	Words	61	63	76	122	39	45	406
	Turns	7	10	10	8	6	9	50
	T Length	8.7	6.3	7.6	15.3	6.5	5.0	8.1
IS	Words	125	133	95	155	65	95	669
	Turns	22	17	17	15	15	16	102
	T Length	5.7	7.8	5.6	10.3	4.3	5.9	6.5
KE	Words	93	152	61	89	94	84	573
	Turns	8	8	12	7	7	14	56
	T Length	11.6	19.0	5.1	12.7	13.4	6.0	10.2
LM	Words	26	62	83	113	69	70	423
	Turns	7	9	14	18	10	14	72
	T Length	3.7	6.9	5.9	6.3	6.9	5.0	5.9
RM	Words	60	59	48	65	30	28	290
	Turns	13	11	14	11	11	9	69
	T Length	4.6	5.4	3.4	5.9	2.7	3.1	4.2
SA	Words	61	68	77	71	46	60	383
	Turns	10	11	15	14	13	16	79
	T Length	6.1	6.2	5.1	5.1	3.5	3.8	4.8
TI	Words	128	122	145	182	66	75	718
	Turns	18	11	17	10	13	10	79
	T Length	7.1	11.1	8.5	18.2	5.1	7.5	9.1
TR	Words	109	93	71	84	51	39	447
	Turns	9	9	12	6	12	9	57
	T Length	12.1	10.3	5.9	14.0	4.3	4.3	7.8
Total	Words	845	934	798	1100	575	589	4842
	Turns	108	101	135	104	99	118	665
	T Length	7.8	9.2	5.9	10.6	5.8	5.0	7.3

Appendix K: Number of Words, Turns, and Turn Length: NSA Group

Participant		RP 1	RP 2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	Total
BR	Words	43	70	90	93	64	85	445
	Turns	10	16	18	18	18	18	98
	T Length	4.3	4.4	5.0	5.2	3.6	4.7	4.5
BK	Words	173	241	273	335	223	365	1610
	Turns	6	15	13	20	23	21	98
	T Length	28.9	16.1	21.0	16.8	9.7	17.4	16.4
HM	Words	102	114	215	201	113	158	903
	Turns	7	6	19	8	13	15	68
	T Length	14.6	19.0	11.3	25.1	8.7	10.5	13.3
JM	Words	73	100	128	163	117	78	659
	Turns	8	9	14	9	12	8	60
	T Length	9.1	11.1	9.1	18.1	9.8	9.8	11.0
MS	Words	78	69	89	151	69	70	526
	Turns	11	13	16	15	12	13	80
	T Length	7.1	5.3	5.6	10.1	5.8	5.4	6.6
NN	Words	163	161	169	253	99	165	1010
	Turns	7	11	7	8	12	14	59
	T Length	23.3	14.6	24.1	31.6	8.3	11.8	17.1
NW	Words	90	108	113	212	96	110	729
	Turns	14	10	14	9	15	14	76
	T Length	6.4	10.8	8.1	23.6	6.4	7.9	9.6
RR	Words	32	73	80	118	75	100	478
	Turns	9	17	17	21	17	20	101
	T Length	3.6	4.3	4.7	5.6	4.4	5.0	4.7
RD	Words	138	167	132	273	117	90	917
	Turns	11	11	19	10	18	11	80
	T Length	12.5	15.2	6.9	27.3	6.5	8.2	11.5
TH	Words	97	154	123	209	120	110	813
	Turns	11	9	16	13	19	13	81
	T Length	8.8	17.1	7.7	16.1	6.3	8.5	10.0
Total	Words	989	1257	1412	2008	1093	1331	8090
	Turns	94	117	153	131	159	147	801
	T Length	10.5	10.7	9.2	15.3	6.9	9.1	10.1

Appendix L: Number of Words, Turns, and Turn Length: NSE Group

Participant		RP 1	RP 2	RP3	RP4	RP5	RP6	Total
AB	Words	91	67	99	135	72	93	557
	Turns	5	6	6	9	8	16	50
	T Length	18.2	11.2	16.5	15.0	9.0	5.8	11.1
CP	Words	101	88	99	127	53	159	627
	Turns	7	6	8	12	6	21	60
	T Length	14.4	14.7	12.4	10.6	8.8	7.6	10.5
EL	Words	178	117	100	166	100	129	790
	Turns	5	3	4	8	6	13	39
	T Length	35.6	39.0	25.0	20.8	16.7	9.9	20.3
GC	Words	79	77	114	119	67	144	600
	Turns	7	5	5	8	6	11	42
	T Length	11.3	15.4	22.8	14.9	11.2	13.1	14.3
LG	Words	62	80	130	120	136	117	645
	Turns	7	4	10	11	14	16	62
	T Length	8.9	20.0	13.0	10.9	9.7	7.3	10.4
MP	Words	52	63	68	76	53	98	410
	Turns	5	7	6	6	7	20	51
	T Length	10.4	9.0	11.3	12.7	7.6	4.9	8.0
MK	Words	113	92	105	111	72	135	628
	Turns	9	7	5	10	9	17	57
	T Length	12.6	13.1	21.0	11.1	8.0	7.9	11.0
OD	Words	223	169	159	224	127	185	1087
	Turns	7	7	9	6	6	17	52
	T Length	31.9	24.1	17.7	37.3	21.2	10.9	20.9
SP	Words	125	107	108	177	133	229	879
	Turns	9	6	6	11	8	14	54
	T Length	13.9	17.8	18.0	16.1	16.6	16.4	16.3
TB	Words	48	50	42	73	43	102	358
	Turns	6	3	5	6	5	20	45
	T Length	8.0	16.7	8.4	12.2	8.6	5.1	8.0
Total	Words	1072	910	1024	1328	856	1391	6581
	Turns	67	54	64	87	75	165	512
	T Length	16.0	16.9	16.0	15.3	11.4	8.4	12.9

Appendix M: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 1

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)							1	
Flat No	18	13.4	27	19.9	3	2.5	4	3.9
Negating a Proposition	26	19.4	16	11.8	12	10.1	18	17.5
Total	44	32.8	43	31.6	15	12.6	23	22.3
Indirect Strategies								
Statement of Alternative	7	5.2	8	5.9	4	3.4	6	5.8
Statement of Regret	28	20.9	20	14.7	11	9.2	12	11.7
Excuse/Reason	13	9.7	15	11.0	29	24.4	11	10.7
Repetition of Part of the Request	2	1.5						
Request for Information / Clarification	6	4.5	9	6.6	4	3.4	3	2.9
Lack of Empathy	4	3.0	8	5.9			1	1.0
Postponement					2	1.7		
Promise of Future Acceptance	2	1.5	4	2.9	1	0.8		
Let Interlocutor off the Hook								
Proverb / Common Saying								
Hedging	5	3.7	1	0.7	5	4.2	9	8.7
Wish					2	1.7	2	1.9
Self-Defense	3	2.2	2	1.5	1	0.8	6	5.8
Statement of Principle / Philosophy								
Negative Consequences to Requester			2	1.5			1	1.0
Request for Understanding/Consideration								
Topic/Focus Switch								
Criticism/Reprimand	9	6.7	12	8.8	4	3.4	12	11.7
Unspecified/Indefinite Reply			1	0.7	17	14.3		
Setting conditions for Acceptance					1	0.8		
Joke			2	1.5				
Giving Advice / Lecturing	6	4.5	5	3.7	11	9.2	4	3.9
Appeal to a Third Party								

Appendix M: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 1 (Continued)

Total	85	63.4	89	65.4	92	77.3	67	65.0
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation							2	1.9
Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling	4	3.0	2	1.5	8	6.7	7	6.8
Invoking the Name of God			1	0.7	3	2.5		
Statement of Empathy / Concern			1	0.7	1	0.8	4	3.9
Getting Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter)	1	0.7						
Total	5	3.7	4	2.9	12	10.0	13	12.6

Appendix N: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 2

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)								
Flat No	25	18.0	31	20.5	5	3.3	5	4.3
Negating a Proposition	27	19.4	26	17.2	13	8.7	32	27.6
Total	52	37.4	57	37.7	18	12.0	37	31.9
Indirect Strategies								
Statement of Alternative	8	5.8	12	7.9	8	5.3	5	4.3
Statement of Regret	14	10.1	24	15.9	5	3.3	12	10.3
Excuse/Reason	40	28.8	39	25.8	57	38.0	31	26.7
Repetition of Part of the Request	1	0.7	2	1.3	5	3.3	1	0.9
Request for Information / Clarification	5	3.6	3	2.0	7	4.7	1	0.9
Lack of Empathy								
Postponement								
Promise of Future Acceptance					1	0.7		
Let Interlocutor off the Hook								
Proverb / Common Saying								
Hedging	2	1.4	3	2.0	11	7.3		
Wish					2	1.3	3	2.6
Self-Defense	2	1.4	4	2.6	4	2.7	4	3.4
Statement of Principle / Philosophy	2	1.4						
Negative Consequences to Requester								
Request for Understanding/Consideration			1	0.7			1	0.9
Topic/Focus Switch	1	0.7						
Criticism/Reprimand								
Unspecified/Indefinite Reply					5	3.3		
Setting conditions for Acceptance			2	1.3	4	2.7	1	0.9
Joke	1	0.7						
Giving Advice / Lecturing								
Appeal to a Third Party								

Appendix N: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 2 (Continued)

Total	76	54.7	90	59.6	109	72.6	59	50.9
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation	4	2.9			6	4.0	2	1.7
Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling	7	5.0	3	2.0	11	7.3	17	14.7
Invoking the Name of God					6	4.0		
Statement of Empathy / Concern			1	0.7			1	0.9
Getting Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter)								
Total	11	7.9	4	2.6	23	15.3	20	17.2

Appendix O: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 3

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)								
Flat No	15	11.5	27	16.8	10	5.2	1	1.0
Negating a Proposition	21	16.2	22	13.7	5	2.6	8	8.0
Total	36	27.7	49	30.4	15	7.9	9	9.0
Indirect Strategies								
Statement of Alternative	12	9.2	29	18.0	28	14.7	16	16.0
Statement of Regret	12	9.2	24	14.9	7	3.7	6	6.0
Excuse/Reason	30	23.1	28	17.4	49	25.7	41	41.0
Repetition of Part of the Request	7	5.4	4	2.5	3	1.6		
Request for Information / Clarification	12	9.2	11	6.8	16	8.4	5	5.0
Lack of Empathy					1	0.5		
Postponement	2	1.5			8	4.2	1	1.0
Promise of Future Acceptance	2	1.5			3	1.6		
Let Interlocutor off the Hook								
Proverb / Common Saying					5	2.6		
Hedging	3	2.3	1	0.6	3	1.6	1	1.0
Wish								
Self-Defense								
Statement of Principle / Philosophy								
Negative Consequences to Requester					12	6.3		
Request for Understanding/Consideration								
Topic/Focus Switch	1	0.8						
Criticism/Reprimand			2	1.2	1	0.5		
Unspecified/Indefinite Reply					2	1.0	1	1.0
Setting conditions for Acceptance			2	1.2	4	2.1	1	1.0
Joke								
Giving Advice / Lecturing					2	1.0		

Appendix O: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 3 (Continued)

Appeal to a Third Party							1	1.0
Total	81	62.3	101	62.7	144	75.3	73	73.0
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation	2	1.5			4	2.1		
Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling	10	7.7	10	6.2	21	11.0	17	17.0
Invoking the Name of God			1	0.6	1	0.5		
Statement of Empathy / Concern					5	2.6	1	1.0
Getting Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter)	1	0.8			1	0.5		
Total	13	10.0	11	6.8	32	16.8	18	18.0

Appendix P: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 4

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)					1	0.4	3	2.1
Flat No	3	2.1	6	3.4	2	0.9	0	0.0
Negating a Proposition	32	22.5	26	14.7	16	6.9	25	17.6
Total	35	24.6	32	18.0	19	8.2	28	19.7
Indirect Strategies								
Statement of Alternative	1	0.7	2	1.1	9	3.7	1	0.7
Statement of Regret	6	4.2	7	3.9	2	0.9	2	1.4
Excuse/Reason	45	31.7	61	34.5	79	33.9	39	27.5
Repetition of Part of the Request	3	2.1	1	0.6	3	1.3	4	2.8
Request for Information / Clarification	4	2.8	6	3.4	7	3.0	7	4.9
Lack of Empathy								
Postponement	8	5.6	6	3.4	18	7.7	2	1.4
Promise of Future Acceptance	2	1.4						
Let Interlocutor off the Hook								
Proverb / Common Saying					1	0.4		
Hedging	5	3.5	5	2.8	20	8.6	7	4.9
Wish					12	5.2		
Self-Defense					3	1.3		
Statement of Principle / Philosophy					3	1.3	1	0.7
Negative Consequences to Requester								
Request for Understanding/Consideration	1	0.7	4	2.3	3	1.3		
Topic/Focus Switch			2	1.1				
Criticism/Reprimand								
Unspecified/Indefinite Reply								
Setting Conditions for Acceptance					2	0.9		
Joke								
Giving Advice / Lecturing								

Appendix P: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 4 (Continued)

Appeal to a Third Party	4	2.8	3	1.7				
Total	79	55.6	97	54.8	162	69.5	63	44.3
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation	12	8.5	13	7.3	12	5.2	28	19.7
Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling	15	10.6	28	15.8	37	15.9	23	16.2
Invoking the Name of God	1	0.7	7	3.9	3	1.3		
Statement of Empathy / Concern								
Getting Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter)								
Total	28	19.7	48	27.1	52	22.3	51	35.9

Appendix Q: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 5

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)								
Flat No	26	16.0	16	11.4	27	10.4	7	5.9
Negating a Proposition	29	17.9	24	17.1	47	18.1	30	25.2
Total	55	34.0	40	28.6	74	28.6	37	31.0
Indirect Strategies								
Statement of Alternative	4	2.5	9	6.4			4	3.4
Statement of Regret	6	3.7	7	5.0	2	0.8	2	1.7
Excuse/Reason	28	17.3	33	23.6	42	16.2	33	27.7
Repetition of Part of the Request			3	2.1				
Request for Information / Clarification			1	0.7	1	0.4	1	0.8
Lack of Empathy								
Postponement	5	3.1	2	1.4	17	6.6	2	1.7
Promise of Future Acceptance	1	0.6					2	1.7
Let Interlocutor off the Hook								
Proverb / Common Saying					1	0.4		
Hedging			1	0.7	1	0.4	1	0.8
Wish					1	0.4	1	0.8
Self-Defense								
Statement of Principle / Philosophy					2	0.8		
Negative Consequences to Requester								
Request for Understanding/Consideration								
Topic/Focus Switch			2	1.4	4	1.5		
Criticism/Reprimand								
Unspecified/Indefinite Reply								
Setting conditions for Acceptance					1	0.4		
Joke			1	0.7	6	2.3		
Giving Advice / Lecturing								
Appeal to a Third Party								

Appendix Q: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 5 (Continued)

Total	44	27.1	59	42.1	78	30.1	46	38.7
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation	28	17.3	14	10.0	20	7.7	11	9.2
Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling	32	19.8	19	13.6	59	22.8	25	21.0
Invoking the Name of God	3	1.9	7	5.0	24	9.3		
Statement of Empathy / Concern					3	1.2		
Getting Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter)			1	0.7	1	0.4		
Total	63	38.9	41	29.3	107	41.3	36	30.3

Appendix R: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 6

Categories	NNSI		NNSA		NSA		NSE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Direct Strategies								
Performative (I refuse)								
Flat No	60	31.1	55	24.1	109	27.7	70	27.3
Negating a Proposition	15	7.8	7	3.1	10	2.5	11	4.3
Total	75	38.9	62	27.2	119	30.3	81	31.6
Indirect Strategies								
Statement of Alternative							1	0.4
Statement of Regret								
Excuse/Reason	16	8.3	24	10.5	2	0.5	26	10.2
Repetition of Part of the Request								
Request for Information / Clarification			2	0.9				
Lack of Empathy								
Postponement								
Promise of Future Acceptance								
Let Interlocutor off the Hook	86	44.6	86	37.7	144	36.6	126	49.2
Proverb / Common Saying					35	8.9	3	1.2
Hedging					1	0.3		
Wish								
Self-Defense								
Statement of Principle / Philosophy					4	1.0	3	1.2
Negative Consequences to Requester								
Request for Understanding/Consideration								
Topic/Focus Switch	1	0.5	6	2.6	21	5.3	1	0.4
Criticism/Reprimand					26	6.6	1	0.4
Unspecified/Indefinite Reply								
Setting conditions for Acceptance								
Joke	2	1.0	7	3.1			5	2.0
Giving Advice / Lecturing								

Appendix R: Overall Strategy Use by Group: Role Play 6 (Continued)

Appeal to a Third Party								
Total	105	54.4	125	54.8	233	59.3	166	64.8
Adjuncts to Refusal								
Gratitude/ Appreciation	3	1.6	12	5.3	2	0.5	3	1.2
Statement of Positive Opinion / Feeling	7	3.6	6	2.6	8	2.0	5	2.0
Invoking the Name of God	2	1.0	21	9.2	13	3.3		
Statement of Empathy / Concern	1	0.5	2	0.9	16	4.1	1	0.4
Getting Interlocutor's Attention (Alerter)					2	0.5		
Total	13	6.7	41	18.0	41	10.4	9	3.5

Appendix S: Participants' Demographic Information: NNSI Group

Participant	Gender	Age	State / Country	Academic Degree	Major/Specialization	Years Studying Arabic	Time in Egypt (months)	Class level at Middlebury College	OPI Rating
KG	F	22	CA	M.A.	Literary Translation	1	5	2.5	IM
WD	F	32	NJ	Ph.D.	History	2	12	2.5	IH
CM	F	27	IL	M.A.	Middle East Studies	2	24	2	IM
JC	M	22	IL	M.A.	Middle East Studies	1	10	2.5	IH
TA	M	20	CA	Senior	German Studies	1	2	2	IM
EF	M	28	CA	M.A.	Economics	2	12	2.5	IM
JM	M	30	Canada	B.A.	Eastern Religions	2	2	2.5	IL
AC	F	22	VA	B.A.	International Studies	2	6	2.5	IL
BB	F	21	FL	Senior	International Relations	1.5	12	2.5	IL
KL	F	20	NC	Junior	MES & Criminology	2	1.2	2.5	IL

Appendix T: Participants' Demographic Information: NNSA Group

Participant	Gender	Age	State / Country	Academic Degree	Major/Specialization	Years Studying Arabic	Time in Egypt (months)	Class level at Middlebury College	OPI Rating
CS	F	23	PA	Post-BA Diploma	Music Performance	1	9	4	AM
TI	M	25	KS	B.A.	Management Consultant	4	12	4	AM
CB	F	21	CA	Senior	Religion & Arabic	3	4	3.5	AM
TR	F	22	NJ	B.A.	Near Eastern Studies	3.5	12	3.5	AM
AN	F	23	MI	B.A.	MES Studies	4	5	3.5	AM
KE	F	21	NY	B.A.	Government & MES	3	12	3	AL
SA	M	23	Scotland	B.A.	MES Studies	4	4	3	AL
LM	F	22	MO	B.A.	Arabic & Peace Studies	3	4	3	AL
IS	M	25	OH	B.A.	Communication Studies	1.5	9	3	AL
RM	F	26	CA	M.A.	MES Studies	3	24	3	AL

Appendix U: Participants' Demographic Information: NSA Group

Participant	M/F	Age	Degree	Specialization	Job/Profession
BR	F	18	Undergraduate	--	Student
BK	F	35	Ph.D.	English Literature	Visiting Instructor of Arabic
HM	F	43	M.A.	TAFL	Arabic Instructor
JM	M	33	B.A.	Engineering	Surveyor
MS	M	43	B.A.	Tourism	Tour Guide
NN	F	22	B.A.	Archaeology	House wife
NW	F	48	M.A.	TAFL	Arabic Instructor
RR	F	21	Undergraduate	Fine Arts	Student
RD	F	37	B.A.	Tourism	Arabic Instructor
TH	M	36	M.A.	TAFL	Arabic Instructor

Appendix V: Participants' Demographic Information: NSE Group

Participant	M/F	Age	Home State	Undergraduate/ Graduate	Major/Specialization
AB	M	24	NJ	Graduate (MA)	International Relations
CP	F	23	CA	B.A.	International Relations & Spanish
EL	F	23	SC	Graduate (MA)	Religion
GC	M	21	PA	Undergraduate	Political Science
LG	F	18	MI	Undergraduate	International Relations & History
MP	F	23	VT	Undergraduate	Economics
MK	F	22	WI	B.A.	Literary Studies
OD	M	20	WA	Undergraduate	International Studies
SP	F	25	CA	Graduate – MA	Public Administration
TB	F	22	CA	Graduate – MPA	International Management

### About the Author

Nader Morkus received his B.A. in English Language and Literature from Alexandria University, Alexandria, Egypt in 1995. In 2001 he received his Master's degree in TESOL from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, where he also received the Outstanding Master's Thesis Award (3<sup>rd</sup> place). While in the Ph.D. program in Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology at the University of South Florida, Nader taught ESL as well as AFL (Arabic as foreign language). Between 2005 and 2008 he worked as a full-time lecturer of Arabic at The University of Texas at Austin. In the fall of 2008 he moved to Middlebury, Vermont, where he currently works as a visiting instructor of Arabic at Middlebury College. His research interests include cross-cultural pragmatics, discourse analysis, and politeness theory.