

ANALYSING THE SAUDI EFL ADVANCED LEARNERS' REFUSAL STRATEGIES: A PRAGMALINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: *The present study examines the realization of the refusal of invitations made by advanced Saudi learners in the UK in comparison with British native speakers. The refusal speech act is examined in terms of the influence of the L1 culture levels of social distance and social power. The conceptual framework is based on (1) Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness; (2) Classification of refusal speech act by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), Tseng (1999) and (3) Cai and Wang (2013). Data were collected through a 6-situation role play. The response strategies were adopted from Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and Tseng (1999) in two parts of direct and indirect responses. The data were analysed by one-way analysis of variance ANOVA. Saudi participants in the UK significantly differed from their counterparts in the KSA in using refusal strategies, and they were significantly similar to British participants in using refusal strategies.*

KEYWORDS: Politeness, pragmalinguistics, interlanguage pragmatics, cross-sectional study, L1 negative transfer, Saudi advanced learners, contextual variables.

INTRODUCTION

The present study examines realization of the speech acts of refusal invitations made by advanced Saudi EFL learners in the UK, in comparison with British native speakers. The examination of invitation refusal is based on the factors of L1 culture (including social distance and social power).

The present study handles the main question, To what extent does the realization of the refusal of invitation by Saudi EFL learners differ from that of British speakers in terms of pragmalinguistics. Thus, the present study differs from previous studies, such as those of Umar (2004) who neglected the contextual variables and Al-Khatib (2006) who did not compare the Jordanian pragmatic output to NS of English. Although there are some Arabic investigations in this field, there is a lack in such studies in Saudi Arabia especially with the large number of Saudi students who study in English speaking countries. The present study is also related to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, because it investigates the invitation refusal strategies according to Brown and Levinson's contextual variables of social distance and social power.

Thus, the present study is considered a verification of the ILP hypotheses introduced by Leech (2014, p. 281). These hypotheses are (1) negative pragmatic transfer is often visible with the L2 pragmatic output of EFL learners who have low proficiency levels, (2) negative pragmatic transfer diminishes in the cases of EFL learners who have advanced proficiency levels, and (3) EFL learners staying in an English native-speaking country are expected to accommodate their L2 pragmatic output than those staying in a L1 speaking country. With this concern, Leech (2014, p.272) points out, "Similar

differences are observed between students who stay at home and those who spend part of their study time abroad, in an English-speaking country. On the whole, the students who study abroad reach a pragmatically more advanced level than the stay-at-home students.”

Research questions

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do Saudi advanced learners of English in the UK differ from British native speakers with regard to the number of strategies used per refusal situation?
2. When L2 learners decline an invitation, are their choices of type and content of strategies conditioned by the contextual variables of social status and social distance?
3. To what extent is negative pragmatic transfer evident when the Saudi participants of English in the UK decline an invitation in English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pragmatics is the study of the relationship between the comment and its meaning (Lyons, 1981). It is the action of communicating in the social context (Mey, 2000, and Bardovi-Harlig and Shin, 2014). Huang (2014) criticizes the restriction of pragmatic definition to the use of language. Huang describes this definition of pragmatics as too general and vague due to the complexity of pragmatics. Huang’s proposed definition of pragmatics is based on studying actual meaning systematically in relation to language use. Doing certain actions with words is defined as a speech act (Austin, 1962). It is a basic and functional unit of communication (Cohen, 1996). Austin (1969) was the first to describe such utterance as having three acts: the locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act.

The term ‘interlanguage’ (IL) was first introduced by Selinker (1974). It refers to another produced version of English by its non-native speakers. This version is linguistically different from learners’ L1 and target language. Several ILP studies, such as those conducted by Bataineh and Bataineh (2006), and Nguyen (2008), are based on the comparison between how EFL learners differ from native speakers in using different speech acts. Such differences are accounted for on the basis of cultural discrepancies between L1 and L2. Therefore, the current study investigates the pragmalinguistic L1 transfer into advanced Saudi learners’ refusal and acceptance speech acts in comparison with British native speakers. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) define interlanguage pragmatics as a field whose main concern is the use of pragmatic knowledge by non-native speakers of English, instead of how they acquire that knowledge; that is, interlanguage pragmatics is not concerned with how L2 knowledge is acquired but with how it is used.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 74-5), there are three universal social variables that affect the choice of politeness strategies: (1) the social distance between the participants (that is, the degree of familiarity and solidarity), (2) the relative power between them (that is, the degree to which the speaker can impose), and (3) the degree of imposition of the face-threatening act as rated by the particular culture (that is, the right of the speaker to issue the act and the degree to which the hearer should welcome the imposition).

For Satic and Ciftic (2018), refusal is a complicated speech act for which speakers employ indirect strategies rather than direct ones in order to minimize the offence that may result from refusing the invitation. Thus, refusal can cause threats to the face of the inviter and the invitee as well. Social variables like social power and distance make invitation refusal a more difficult and complicated task. Therefore, the invitation refusal strategies made by EFL learners should be examined in the light of the sociocultural factors that affect their chosen refusal strategies. For this reason, I believe that the components of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory are adequate to investigate the refusal strategies employed by three different groups of participants in the current study.

Haugh (2013), and Kadar and Haugh (2013) explain that, although the notion of face has been associated with politeness as proposed by Brown and Levinson, there are calls to separate them as two different topics of research. Nowadays, there is wide acceptance that not all works related to face can account for politeness. Therefore, face should be 'disentangled' from politeness. In spite of the influence of Brown and Levinson's notion of face in politeness research, it falls short to answer questions on how face can be theorized and analysed.

As for invitation responses, Felix-Brasdefer (2003) examined how native Spanish speakers apply politeness in refusing an invitation in comparison to American speakers of English who were advanced learners of Spanish. Felix-Brasdefer collected data based on role plays from 30 participants divided into three groups. Findings indicate that social factors including social relation and the situation are crucial to the adoption of direct refusal strategies adopted by participants. Advanced American learners of the Spanish language indicate positive and negative types of interlanguage transfer while declining invitations in the Spanish language. This reveals that participants are not familiar with the cultural values and norms of the target language, and hence they lack the Spanish sociopragmatic competence which qualifies them to realize the Spanishnative speaker-like strategies when refusing invitations.

In a similar study, Rakowicz (2009) investigated how Polish speakers of English deal with vague ways of L2 invitation. Rakowicz analysed participants' responses to the way they do when speaking Polish and to the way American speakers of English adopt when responding to invitation. Findings indicate that Polish speakers of English tend to apply Polish strategies when responding to vague invitation, and Rakowicz emphasizes that Polish interlanguage negative transfer impedes their realization of American-like invitation strategies. Similar to Rakowicz's study, Wang (2003) reported similar results when comparing the invitation-declining strategies of both Chinese EFL learners and American speakers of English. The Chinese cultural-based responses to the English invitation scenarios show significant Chinese interlanguage transfer into the Chinese EFL learners, in a violation of the English L2 pragmatic norms spread among the American speakers of English.

Morkus (2014) compared the refusal of requests and offers among ten Egyptians and ten American native speakers of English. Egyptian participants use more refusal strategies compared with American native speakers, and Egyptian participants use more redundant refusal strategies particularly in the case of higher social power interlocutors. Instances of L1 pragmatic transfer appear in the Egyptians' refusal strategies by using L1-oriented proverbs. Both groups use different reasons to account for invitation refusal. Whereas the Egyptians use family reasons, American participants use personal

reasons. Morkus's (2014) study is useful to the current study as there will be a comparison between the present study findings and that of Morkus, particularly in the number of refusal strategy choices between Saudi advanced learners and British participants, and in the influence of social power on the choice of refusal strategies.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016) compared the refusal strategies between Jordanian EFL learners and American native speakers. Data were collected based on a completion discourse test (DCT). Al-Shboul and Huwari's (2016) study is similar to the present study in that it only collected data from male participants. Both studies are similar in comparing collectivistic culture represented in the Jordanians and Saudis to individualistic culture embodied in the Americans and the British. However, both studies differ in the method of data collection. Whereas Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016) relied on the DCT, the current study collected data based on the role play instrument. They also differ in that the present study only investigates invitation refusal, while Al-Shboul and Huwari examined refusal to requests, offers/invitations and suggestion. Al-Shboul and Huwari report that Jordanian EFL learners are similar to the American native speakers in the use of indirect strategies followed by adjunct strategies like gratitude. However, Jordanian participants outperform their American counterparts in the use of indirect strategies.

Wannaruk (2008) explains some of the reasons of why EFL learners find it difficult to express invitation refusal, because they have to choose between direct and indirect refusal strategies. Farnia and Wu (2012) compare the refusal strategies used by two different background EFL/ESL learners: Chinese and Malaysian. Such strategies include expression of regret followed by an addressing title, and pause fillers followed by explanation or willingness. Thus, there is a need to examine Saudi participants' familiarity with native-like indirect refusal strategies and to analyse the semantic formulas which they use in expressing refusal. Taghizadeh (2017) examined the pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners. He finds that the DCT falls short in measuring NNS learners' pragmatic competence. Instead, he designed a questionnaire of conversation implicatures. He reports that Iranian EFL learners most frequently use regret as a strategy for refusing an offer. He explains that participants' pragmatic failure is based on their low linguistic knowledge. Iranian EFL learners are usually taught English through their L1 language, Farsi.

As for pragmatic transfer, Haugh and Kadar (2017) explain that pragmatic transfer may be unintended. It may occur when lexical items or semantic structures belonging to one language are used when communicating in another language. In other words, trouble because of interactions and unintentional offences occurs due to different expectations of practising the speech acts. These cases can be analysed as failure of politeness or "unintended impoliteness". These divergences of expectations and speech act practice can be classified as one of the functions of pragmatic transfer.

Alhadidi (2017) examined the pragmatic transfer of 42 Saudi EFL learners' pragmatic output. The participants were divided into two groups based on their English proficiency level. One group comprised the beginners while the other comprised the advanced learners. It is noticeable here that there was an absence of comparing the participants' pragmatic choices with those of English native speakers. Alhadidi tried to compensate for this foible by seeking the help of some English native speakers staying in the KSA, to detect instances of negative transfer in the participants' choices (A,

B or C). In this regard, I believe that the ILP studies conducted in the KSA like Alhadidi's (2017) and Hamouda's (2014) did not compare their Saudi participants' pragmatic output with that of English native speakers. This foible is treated in the present study. Alhadidi collected through a multiple-choice questionnaire where the participants chose one of three possible responses to the situation. Indeed, this method of data collection cannot yield reliable results because participants may incidentally choose the correct response which is free of L1 pragmatic transfer. Furthermore, participants are more likely to try to avoid any possible response which contains any Arabic words. These two reasons affect the reliability of Alhadidi's (2017) data collection instrument. In addition, Alhadidi (2017) concludes that L1 pragmatic transfer only occurs among Saudi beginners while it does not occur at all among Saudi advanced learners. This finding will be verified in the present study because L1 transfer may diminish among EFL advanced learners but not totally vanish.

Al-Eryani (2007) report similar results of negative pragmatic transfer in the L2 pragmatic output of Yemeni EFL learners in contrast to that of American NS: Yemenis express inability followed by regret while Americans use 'no' before expressing regret. For the current study, early predictions show that both Saudi and British participants use different refusal strategies. Saudi participants tend to use religious expressions while British participants use pause fillers more frequently. It will be useful to compare the semantic formulas used by Saudi participants in the present study with those used by Yemeni EFL learners in Al-Eryani's (2007) study to compare types of pragmalinguistic transfer in both studies.

Hamouda (2014) discusses the refusal strategies which Saudi EFL learners opt to use in a response to suggestion, invitation and offer. The study is considered a pragmalinguistic examination of such refusal strategies with the perspective of social factors that could determine variation in adopting refusal strategies on the one hand. On the other hand, Hamouda also examines the impact of pragmatic instruction on developing the ability of Saudi EFL to use the speech act of refusal. The study also seeks to identify the views of Saudi EFL learners regarding the use of explicit instruction, as a means of teaching the English speech act of refusal. Hamouda justifies the reasons for choosing the speech act of refusal instead of other speech acts, as it is the speech act in which an interruption occurs in communication. Hamouda also explains that it could be difficult for non-native speakers of English to refuse, because refusal is a face-threatening act.

Participants

Data was collected from 60 participants divided into three groups with 20 participants each. Group 1 comprised Saudi EFL learners studying at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), whereas group 2 comprised Saudi EFL learners who were studying at home. Group 3 comprised British undergraduates at ARU. The rationale of the theoretical and conceptual framework adopted in the present study is of threefold. It is based on (1) Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness; (2) Classification of refusal and acceptance speech acts by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), Tseng (1999) and (3) Cai and Wang (2013).

Pilot study and reliability:

The pilot study was conducted twice using two different data collection instruments, such as my travelling twice to the KSA for collecting data from group 2 participants during the first and second pilot studies. Initially in the first pilot study, I collected written data through a free discourse completion task (FDCT). The free DCT consists of 9 situations which are adopted and adapted from several ILP studies. After the instructions were given, all participants were asked to complete the dialogues below each of the following 9 described situations. They were also asked to pay attention to the description of each situation, how speakers are socially related to each other and how they are higher, lower or of equal in their social status. They were instructed to note also to fill in both what they and their interlocutor were supposed to say in such a situation. They were instructed to write whatever they felt necessary for these situations. As the written collected data did not indicate certain strategies like Hesitation and Pause filler, I decided to change the data collection instrument to role play which helped to indicate other new strategies in Saudis in KSA that weren't seen with FDCT like religious expressions. These expressions were divided later to three categories prayers, swears and washings.

The second pilot study was conducted with nine participants: three native speakers of English, three Saudi EFL learners studying in the UK and three Saudi EFL learners studying at home. The pilot study aimed to verify the background questionnaire and role play scenarios, and also the wording of items within the role play in order to refine ambiguous items and ensure their clarity and understanding by the participants. Furthermore, the number of items included in both the role play and background questionnaire was revised as well. For example, the role play scenarios were reduced from 9 situations to only 6 because of the amount of time the participants consumed. As a result of the second pilot study also, the role play and background questionnaire were introduced in two versions to the participants: English and English–Arabic versions. The English version was mainly given to the NS participants, whereas the English–Arabic-translated version was given to the Saudi participants in the KSA. The second pilot study also helped to give codes for the participants. The pilot study was conducted twice: in the UK and in the KSA. In the UK in early July 2016, the NS and the Saudi EFL learners staying in the UK were asked to respond to the role play and background questionnaire, whereas the Saudi EFL participants studying at home were piloted in the KSA in mid-July 2016. In both cases, I administered the second pilot study as I had to travel to the KSA partially to conduct the pilot study. One of the main intentions or intended outcomes of the second pilot study was to judge the reliability of the role play and background questionnaire whose Cronbach Alpha Coefficients were .94 and .90, suggesting high levels of reliability for both instruments.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a 12-situation role play. Situations were designed to equally require responses of refusal by the participants; that is, six situations required refusal responses and six situations required acceptance responses to the speech act of inviting.

Procedures of data collection

Recorded data were collected in different individual sessions with each session lasting 60 minutes were allocated for the role play. Data were collected separately as I met each participant individually. There were separate sessions for data collection from the three groups of participants. In all sessions, participants were briefed on the role play, as they were orally informed about the instructions for each questionnaire. All data were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of data analysis.

Data analysis

Statistically, the quantitative approach of data analysis includes the computation of the frequency, mean scores and percentages of refusal and acceptance strategies used by the three groups of participants. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to determine significant differences within and among the three groups of participants in relation to the independent variables of L1 culture and L1 (including social distance and social power). Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) test was be used to verify significant differences among the mean scores In addition, percentage scores are computed for the items included in the background questionnaire. Results of the second pilot study are introduced as well. Furthermore, preliminary results of the collected data for the main study are introduced. The analysis of data is based on the number of strategies which participants employed in their responses, the frequencies of strategies used to decline or accept an invitation, and the contents of these strategies. Analysis of data relies also on the investigation and elaboration of the L1 pragmatic transfer into L2 pragmatic competence, in relation to L2 proficiency levels and the length of stay in the UK for the Saudi participants.

Analysis of the strategies used per refusal response

Regarding the overall number of refusal strategies (tokens), Table 1 shows the mean scores of all adopted refusal strategies among the three groups of participants. The Saudi UK participants obtain the highest mean score of using refusal strategies (3.19) compared with the other two groups. Where the Saudi KSA participants have the second highest mean score (2.58), the British participants obtain the lowest mean score of using refusal strategies among all groups (2.56). These results indicate that the Saudi UK participants use a number of refusal strategies which exceed that used by the other two groups of participants.

Table 1 Average number of refusal strategies used in each scenario by all groups

| Group | Mean | Std. deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|-----------|------|----------------|---------|---------|
| Saudi KSA | 2.58 | 1.13 | 1 | 6 |
| Saudi UK | 3.19 | 1.03 | 1 | 6 |
| British | 2.55 | 0.87 | 1 | 5 |

Table 2 Number of refusal strategies by social power

| | Saudi KSA | Saudi UK | British |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| S>H | 2.72 | 3.57 | 2.85 |
| S=H | 2.47 | 3.15 | 2.45 |
| S<H | 2.55 | 2.85 | 2.37 |
| F- ANOVA (P) | F=0.507 (p=0.603) | F=5.355 (p=0.006**) | F= 3.533 (p=0.032*) |

**indicates statistically significant difference at 0.01 level

* indicates statistically significant difference at 0.05 level

Table 2 discusses the number of refusal strategies according to differences in social power. It shows that the Saudi UK participants, compared with the other two groups, have the highest mean scores of using refusal strategies (3.57, 3.15 and 2.85) at the three different levels of social power (S>H, S=H and S<H) respectively. The mean scores of using refusal strategies by Saudi UK participants (2.47 and 2.55), compared with the British participants' mean scores (2.45 and 2.37), occur at the two levels of social power (S=H and S<H). Meanwhile, the British participants have a higher mean score for refusal strategies (2.85) than Saudi KSA at the S>H power level; that is, the British invitee who has higher social power than the inviter is more willing to refuse invitation politely compared with the same situations for Saudi KSA participants. The British participants are keener to observe politeness rules than their Saudi KSA counterparts, regardless of having high social power. Statistically significant differences in terms of the three levels of social power (H>S, S=H and S<H) are found successively in the number of refusal strategies adopted by the Saudi UK and British participants, where $F=5.355$, $P<0.01$ for the Saudi UK and $F=3.53$, $P<0.05$ for the British. However, the number of refusal strategies adopted by the Saudi KSA participants does not statistically differ according to the three different levels of social power where $F=0.507$, $P>0.05$. The results indicate that the three levels of social power (high, equal and low) have significant influence on the variance of using of refusal strategies among the Saudi UK and British participants. However, these three levels of social power are not significantly influential in the case of the number of refusal strategies adopted by the Saudi KAS participants.

Examples of Saudi UK participants' refusal responses to different social power situations are as follows. Most of the Saudi UK participants in replying to situation 1 S>H thanked the boss for the invitation to the house-warming party, using the title 'sir' as a sign of respect, expressed their pleasure at being invited to the party and then apologized for being unable to come to the party because of family plans. For example, Saudi UK participant 3 said, "Ah, thank you sir for your invitation. I'd be

happy to come but I'm sorry, I've got plans with my family." On the other hand, most of the British participants replied to the same situation and intensified their apology using an adverbial intensification "really", gave vague explanations and expressed their inability to go to the party. For instance, British participant 3 said, "I, hmm, am really sorry, but I've got other plans tonight and I can't come." As for the types of refusal strategies, both Saudi and British participants, in refusing the invitation from a higher power inviter, tried to prevent the loss of face for the inviter but in different ways which stem from different L1 cultural norms. These two different responses indicate that Saudis have to thank their inviters, expressing their gratitude for being invited. They also tend to show respect to the higher power inviter. These strategies are affected by Arab cultural norms which emphasize the importance of pleasing the inviter, and showing care for him in order for him not to lose face. In the Saudi culture, Gratitude is usually practiced to those of high social power because of the hierarchical nature of the Saudi society. The Saudi KSA participants replaced the use of religious expressions to that of Gratitude. Based on their semantic formulas of refusal employed, the British had the same aim but realized it in different ways. For instance, they used intensified apology while the Saudis used just an apology form of "sorry". Both of them gave an explanation about being busy with other things to do. However, the Saudis gave explicit reasons such as having family plans, in order to express that they were truly sincere about having things prevent them from accepting the invitation. On the contrary, the British gave vague explanations without specifying the kind of things that made them unable to accept the invitation. The use of explicit and vague explanation reflects the natures of both Saudi and British cultures. For the British, it was enough to mention that they had other things to do. As for the Arabs, specifying the exact reasons can be seen by the inviter as a sign of sincerity.

In equal power situations such as situation 2, most of the Saudi participants sounded friendly and talked informally to their interlocutors. In such situations, Saudis started with greeting the inviter and asking about his affairs according to Arab cultural norms. Even though there was equal social power, Saudi participants were still keen on expressing their gratitude to their friends when refusing the invitation. This practice stems from Arab culture which emphasizes the importance of intimacy among friends. This importance is also evident as Saudis tend to use the title "my friend". Some of the Saudi participants in such situations may also make jokes in order to lessen the impact of FTA of refusal to their friends. For instance, a Saudi participant said in refusing his friend's invitation, "Hello how are you, my friend? Thank you for the invitation. I think it's going to be windy these days and my family comes from a hot country and they will be affected by the wind (laughs)". Similarly, most of the British participants replied in ways to save the inviter's face. They expressed positive opinions about the friend's invitation and gave explanations for being unable to accept the invitation. The British explanations were general and vague compared with the Saudis' detailed and specified explanations. The difference between Saudi and British explanations is attributed to the nature of the collectivist society to which Saudis belong and the individualist society to which the British belong. In contrast to the collectivist Saudi society which gives explicit explanation, the individualist British society emphasizes its individuals' privacy. For instance, a British participant said, "I'd really like to come but, mmm, I've got things to do."

Examples of the Saudi and British responses to S<H power situations can be found in situation 3. Most of the Saudi participants had to thank their S<H power interlocutors and express appreciation

for the invitation, as an Arab cultural way to prevent their interlocutor from losing face. Most of Saudis were also keen on providing an explicit and specified explanation; for instance, a Saudi participant said, “Ah, thank you so much. I appreciate your invitation, but you know, our college is always teaching arts, so I’d like to have a rest this weekend and spend the weekend away from arts with my family”. Most of the British participants may not find it hard to tell their S<H power interlocutors, “Ah, as a member of staff I shouldn’t come”.

Table 3 Number of refusal strategies by social distance

| | Saudi KSA | Saudi UK | British |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| +D | 2.58 | 3.18 | 2.51 |
| -D | 2.58 | 3.20 | 2.60 |
| F-ANOVA (P) | F=0.000 (p= 1.00) | F=0.008 (p=0.930) | F=0.269 (p=0.605) |

Table 3 shows the number of refusal strategies by the social distance. It indicates that the Saudi UK participants, in comparison to their Saudi KSA and British counterparts, obtained the highest mean scores (3.18 and 3.20) of using refusal strategies at different social levels (that is, when they socially know or do not know their interlocutors). Saudi KSA have a higher mean score of refusal strategies adopted (2.85) compared with 2.51 for their British counterparts at the social distance +D; the mean score of the British refusal strategies used (2.60) was roughly higher than that of Saudi KSA strategies of refusal adopted (2.58) at the social distance of -D. However, the number of refusal strategies did not statistically differ among the three groups of participants in terms of the two social distance levels (+D and -D) where $P > 0.05$. This indicates that social distance did not significantly influence the use of refusal strategies from all participants. This finding was not expected because of the different social nature of collectivistic Saudi society and individualistic British society.

As for the contextual variables of social power and distance, there were indications of irregular and complex use of refusal strategies. This is indicated by the variance of their responses to refusal scenarios. Such complexity indicates how the Saudi advanced participants provided refusal responses to various situations of different social power and distance levels. At all three levels of social power, the Saudi advanced participants had the highest mean score of using refusal strategies among all groups. They were statistically significantly different from the British participants when they have equal or low-high power with their interlocutors. The highest use of refusal strategies by the Saudi UK participants can be explained in terms of Edmondson and House's (1991) 'Waffle phenomenon' where the Saudi UK participants wanted to prove that their ability of using English by using more expressions. In addition, the two levels of social distance did not have statistically significant differences in the three groups of participants. These findings in part support the claims of Wolfson's (1989) bulge theory. In other words, the provision of longer refusal responses is associated with non-intimacy, acquaintances, friends, equal social power and co-workers, while shorter responses usually

prevail with strangers and unequal social power. All participants of the present study used more refusal strategies in the equal and low–high scenarios.

Table 6 Five most frequently adopted refusal strategies by group

| Ranking | Saudi KSA % | Saudi UK % | British % |
|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1st | Explanation (30) | Pause filler (25.13) | Explanation (26.06) |
| 2nd | Negative ability (17.74) | Explanation (20.05) | Pause filler (17.59) |
| 3rd | Religious swears (12.90) | Regret (16.84) | Regret (15.31) |
| 4th | Regret (8.39) | Gratitude (12.57) | Negative ability (13.36) |
| 5th | Religious prayers (7.42) | Negative ability (8.56) | Promise of future acceptance (10.42) |

The Saudi UK and British participants frequently adopted four strategies, namely Pause filler, Explanation, Regret and Negative ability. They only differ in one adopted strategy for each of them. Gratitude is the fifth most frequently used refusal strategy by Saudi UK participants versus Promise of future acceptance for the British participants. The similarity indicates that Saudi UK participants start to adopt NS-like refusal strategies because of their stay in the UK. However, the adoption of both Gratitude and Promise of future acceptance strategies is culturally oriented. Saudis, like all Arabs, are keen to thank their interlocutors when turning down their invitation because the Arab culture reflects positive face politeness. On the contrary, the British NSs are used to giving a Promise of future acceptance when refusing an invitation as the British culture reflects negative face politeness. In addition, the five highest refusal strategies adopted by the Saudi UK participants do not include any of the two religious expressions adopted by their KSA counterparts, namely Religious swears and Religious prayer. This is attributed in part to the impact of the NS environment on their adopted refusal strategies. This also reveals positive pragmatic transfer in their L2 refusal production.

Examples of the five most frequently used refusal strategies by Saudi and British participants can be found in their different responses to the six refusal situations. For instance, in refusing situation 11, most of the Saudi participants used the Pause fillers, gave Explanation, expressed Regret and thanked their interlocutors. Responding to situation 11, a Saudi participant said, “Oh, thank you, I’m sorry, I’ve got a lot things to do.” Responding to the same situation, some of the British participants used

short semantic formulas consisting of two refusal strategies such as intensified Regret and Inability, such as “I’m really sorry but I can’t go!” Others used Explanation and Promise of future acceptance strategies as in “Sorry sir, unfortunately I already have plans that day. If you have another barbeque party, I’d love to accept and see your home!” The two different strategies for the Saudi UK and British participants (that is, Gratitude and Promise of future acceptance) are culturally oriented. Gratitude is a polite norm in Saudi culture, which is commonly practised for various purposes by Saudis in accordance with Arab culture to which Saudi culture is affiliated. In the case of Invitation refusal, Arabs tend to thank the inviter, more than the British do, for his invitation in a bid to please him and prevent his loss of face. For the same purposes of face-saving and pleasing the inviter, the British tend to give a Promise of future acceptance, based on their culture.

Although Saudi UK participants showed similarity with the British participants in using the similar refusal four strategies, they used Gratitude as a widely used strategy in Arabic, an indication of a critical difference between the Saudi UK and the British participants. Gratitude is widely used in Arabic; it is also a common strategy in British culture as well. It may not be as widely used as in Arabic, but it is a universal polite principle whose effect is meaningful in various cultures. Although Saudi KSA participants had not equally used Gratitude like their counterparts in the UK, Gratitude is viewed as a Saudi cultural norm. Instead, the Saudi KSA used religious expression as a replacement for Gratitude. However, the Saudi UK participants had not used religious expressions as the practice of their Saudi culture, but they used Gratitude. The Saudi UK participants, in refusing invitations, abandoned one of the most commonly and widely used refusal strategies in the Arab and Saudi communities: religious expression. This finding comes in contrast to the refusal strategies adopted by their Saudi KSA counterparts. This finding reveals that Saudi UK participants may have integrative motivation towards the L2 community, and they want to use Ns-like refusal strategies; that is why they abandoned the use of any religious expression when refusing invitations.

Therefore, this finding could lead to carrying out more research on the types of motivation which Saudi students staying abroad may have, in contrast to those motivation types which Saudi students at home may have. This finding can also be explained in light of the influence of the L2 environment that affects the Saudi UK participants’ acquisition of other refusal strategies, replacing some of the L1-cultural oriented strategies such as religious expression. Examples of the Saudi UK refusal responses which are free of using religious expression, in contrast to those of Saudi KSA participants, are: (1) “I wish I could come but I’ve got another arrangement. If I finish earlier, I’ll come, God willing (Inshallah)”, (2) “I apologise, I swear to God (Wallah) I will travel”, and (3) “I swear to God (Wallah) my mother won’t let me go”. Whereas in the second and third examples, Religious swears expressions were used, the first example used a Religious wishing expression. As seen in the refusal examples introduced earlier, the Saudi UK participants did not use any of the religious expressions.

Analysis of the type and frequency of direct and indirect refusal strategies

With reference to the direct refusal strategies, there are two strategies, namely Negative ability and Mitigated refusal. In Negative ability, there are no mitigation qualifiers (that is, internal modification). Meanwhile, Mitigated refusal contains softeners like “maybe”, “likely”, or “possibly”. Figure 1 indicates that indirect and not direct refusal strategies are favoured by all participants, whereas

indirect refusal strategies account for 85.37% of overall refusal strategies adopted by all participants, and direct refusal strategies represent only 14.63% of these adopted strategies.

It is plausible that the use of direct refusal strategies should be less than that of the indirect strategies, because, taking the adopted classification of Beebe et al. (1990), there are only two direct refusal strategies. Here are examples of the use of direct refusal strategies by all three groups of participants. Saudi KSA, Saudi UK and British participants used direct refusal strategies such as the Negative ability expressions “I can’t” and mitigated refusal expressions like “I’m afraid I can’t”.

Here are examples of the use of indirect refusal strategies by all three groups of participants. Saudi KSA participants used indirect refusal strategies: (1) Religious swears + Explanation + Regret + Promise of future acceptance + Religious wishing, in “Frankly, by God, I’ve got something on that day, sorry, but maybe another time, inshallah!”, (2) Religious prayer + Explanation + Religious swears + Regret in “May Allah bless you, honestly I’ve got other plans with my family by God on that day, so I’m sorry”, and (3) Religious swears + Explanation + Wish + Regret in “By God, I’ve got to look after my kids that day, I wish I could come but I’m sorry.”

Saudi UK participants used indirect refusal strategies such as (1) Pause filler + Gratitude + Explanation in “Ah, thank you for your invitation but I’ve got a meeting with someone else on that day”, (2) Pause filler + Explanation in “Oh, I really have something else to do”, and (3) Regret + Pause filler + Explanation + Gratitude in “I’m sorry, hmm I have something else to do. Thank you for your invitation.”

British participants used Indirect refusal strategies such as (1) Pause filler + Explanation in “I, hmm, have plans already”, (2) Pause filler + Hedging as in “Umm, I’m not sure.”

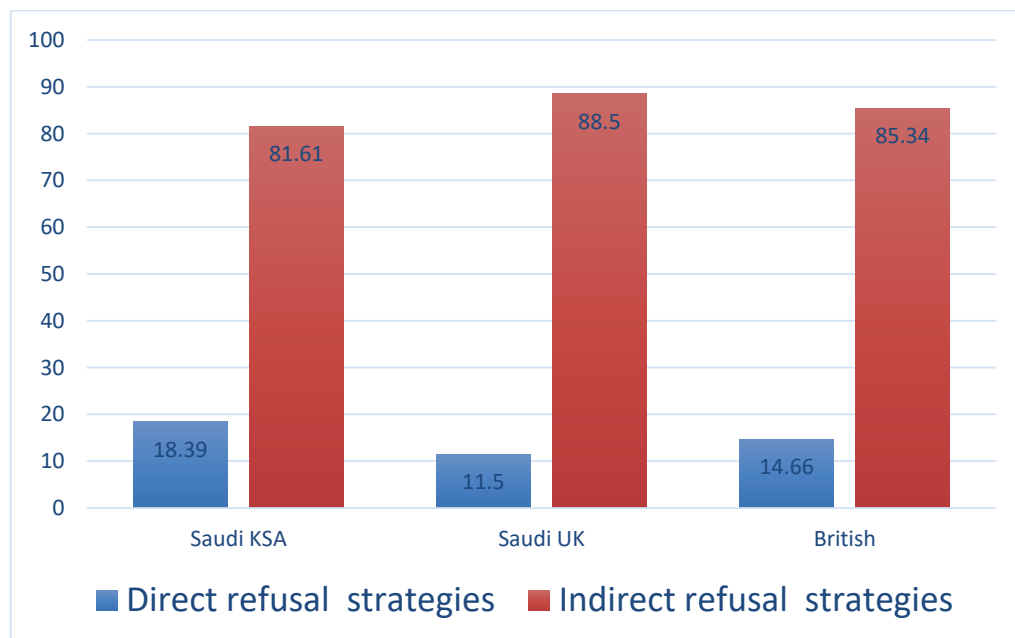


Figure 1 Number and percentage of direct and indirect strategies by group

Table 7 Frequency of direct refusal strategies by group

| | Saudi KSA | Saudi UK | British | Saudi KSA – Saudi UK | Saudi KSA – British | British – Saudi UK |
|---|-----------|----------|---------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| N | 57 | 43 | 45 | 0.1166 | 0.1000 | 0.0166 |
| | | | | P=0.066 | P=0.115 | P=0.792 |

As for the overall use of direct refusal, Table 7 shows overall direct refusal strategies used by all participants and the ANOVA results which indicate no statistically significant differences between all participants in using direct refusal strategies ($P > 0.05$). In other words, the use of Negative ability and Mitigated refusal does not significantly differ between the Saudi UK, the Saudi KSA and the British participants. This is attributed to the fact that it is a universally common feature in any language to say “No, I can’t make it” or “I’m afraid I can’t”. However, data examination shows there are different degrees of using direct refusal for the Saudi KSA participants compared with the Saudi UK and British participants. Saudi KSA participants have the highest frequency of using direct refusal strategies compared with the Saudi UK and British groups. In Arab culture, the use of direct refusal is a norm but in a combination of other strategies that soften its impact on the inviter. These strategies include Expression of gratitude, Religious prayer “May Allah prolong your life”, Religious swears “by God”, or Religious prayer “inshallah”. All these strategies with the exception of Gratitude were not used by the Saudi UK participants when refusing invitations. This also explains why the Saudi UK participants had higher use of Gratitude compared with the British participants in expressing refusal. In addition, the use of direct refusal depends on social distance and power as discussed below.

With reference to direct refusal by situation, Table 8 shows that Saudi KSA and Saudi UK participants used a similar frequency of direct refusal strategies particularly in ‘the new neighbour’s invitation’ situation where power is equal and the social distance is +D. Compared with the Saudi UK group, the Saudi KSA and British participants used a higher frequency of direct refusal strategies in the ‘boss’s invitation in the car park’ situation of high–low power and –D. The Saudi UK group and British participants adopted a lower frequency of direct refusal compared with the Saudi KSA group in ‘a friend’s invitation to the beach’ situation of equal power and +D. In the situation of ‘a student’s invitation to his newly appointed teacher’, the Saudi KSA group used a higher frequency of direct refusal compared with the other two groups of participants.

Saudi KSA participants have the highest frequency (47) of Negative ability and the least frequency (10) of Mitigated refusal. Saudi UK participants come second to their Saudi KSA counterparts in the use of Negative ability (32) whereas the British come third in the use of Negative ability (28). The British have the highest frequency of using Mitigated refusal (15) while the Saudi UK participants are second to the British in using Mitigated refusal (12). The fact that Arab participants prefer the use of Negative ability is related to their L1 culture in which they do not use Negative ability in isolation but in combination with other indirect strategies that soften the force of saying “I can’t” for the

hearer's face. In the case of the Saudi UK participants, such softened strategies include Expression of gratitude, Appreciation, Praise of the inviter, offering help, and using Titles when addressing the inviters like "sir" or "my friend". In the case of the Saudi KSA participants, such softened strategies include Gratitude and various religious expressions as these expressions often please the inviter and help prevent loss of face.

The type of direct strategy depends also on the social distance and social power. In the equal power situations $S=H$ and $-D$ (a friend's invitation to the beach), all three groups of participants used more Negative ability expressions than Mitigated refusal. In the equal power situations $S=H$ and $+D$ (the new neighbour's invitation), all participants also used more Negative ability expressions than Mitigated refusal. In the $S>H$, $-D$ (a boss's invitation in the car park), both Saudi groups used more Negative ability expressions than Mitigated refusal, whereas the British participants used more Mitigated refusal than Negative ability expressions. In the $S>H$, $+D$ (the new boss's invitation), all participants used more Negative ability expressions than Mitigated refusal, but both Saudi UK and British groups' use of Mitigated refusal was higher than that of Saudi KSA participants. In $S<H$, $-D$ (a student's invitation to his senior lecturer), all three groups used more Negative ability than Mitigated refusal, where the Saudi UK used higher Mitigated refusal than other two groups. In the $S<H$, $+D$ (a student's invitation to his newly appointed teacher), all participants made more use of Negative ability expressions than Mitigated refusal.

Table 8 Frequency of direct refusals by situation

| | A boss's invitation in the car park $S>H$, $-D$ | | A friend's invitation to the beach $S=H$, $-D$ | | A student's invitation to his senior lecturer $S<H$, $-D$ | | A student's invitation to his newly appointed teacher $S<H$, $+D$ | | The new neighbour's invitation $S=H$, $+D$ | | The new boss's invitation $S>H$, $+D$ | |
|------------------------|---|----|--|----|---|----|---|----|--|----|---|----|
| Type of direct refusal | NG | MR | NG | MR | NG | MR | NG | MR | NG | MR | NG | MR |
| S-KSA | 8 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| S-UK | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| British | 2 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 3 |

Where NG = negative ability, MR= mitigated refusal

Table 9 reports the five most frequently used indirect strategies by all participants. Explanation is the most frequently used indirect strategy by the Saudi KSA and British groups, 36.76% and 30.53% respectively. Pause Filler is the most frequently used indirect refusal strategy by the Saudi UK group

with 28.40%. Religious swears is the second most frequently used indirect strategy by the Saudi KSA group (15.81%) whereas Explanation is the second most frequently used indirect strategy by the Saudi UK group (22.66%). Regret is the third most frequently used strategy among all participants. Religious prayer and Promise of future acceptance are the fourth and fifth most frequently used indirect strategies by the Saudi KSA participants with 9.09% and 7.11 respectively. Gratitude and Promise of future acceptance are the fourth and fifth most frequently used indirect refusal strategies by the Saudi UK group with 14.20% and 3.32% respectively. However, for the British participants, Promise of future acceptance and Gratitude are the fourth and fifth most frequently used indirect refusal strategies with 12.21% and 5.73% respectively.

Participants of the three groups used more indirect refusal strategies while they tended to adopt more direct acceptance strategies than the indirect ones. Regarding the adoption of more indirect refusal strategies, refusal is considered a face-threatening act. Therefore, all participants in the present study tended to use face-saving strategies instead of the explicit and strong intentions of refusing invitations. The tendency to favour indirect refusal strategies among the Saudi UK, Saudi KSA, and British participants affirms the universality of the concept of face implied in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987) in Saudi and British cultures. The influence of the universal politeness principle is also affirmed by the high percentage of uses of the indirect Explanation refusal strategy among the three groups of participants. In this regard, Brown and Levinson (1987) view Explanation as a type of cooperation among the interlocutors. This finding comes in line with results reported by Felix-Brasdefer (2003), Yang (2008), Morkus (2014), Lin (2014) and Eshreth (2015). Felix-Brasdefer (2003:233) finds that Explanation as a refusal strategy is the second highest used strategy among the three examined groups Spanish (12.7%), Americans speaking Spanish (11.6%) and Americans speaking English (11.9%). Yang (2008) explains that Chinese speakers give Explanation and excuses to refuse a real invitation indicating politeness. Morkus (2009) shows that 70 to 90 per cent of Americans and Egyptians tend to give reasons for their refusals. Lin (2014) reports that for Chinese and Americans speakers, Explanation is the most favoured refusal strategy. Lin differentiates between two types of Explanation: specified and unspecified. In the former, the invitee gives details of their excuse or explanation for the refusal. In the latter, they give no specific details in the explanation. El-Shreth (2015:4) classifies the reasons Palestinians give to deny an invitation into psychological (for example, "we don't want to bother you") or practical (for example, "we'd planned to go elsewhere"). In spite of the similar adoption of indirect refusal strategies, the three groups of participants significantly differ in the distribution and ranking of these indirect refusal strategies. For instance, the Saudi advanced participants used a higher percentage of Pause filler than that of the British participants, an indication of the L2 environment's influence on improving L2 learners' pragmatic output. This finding is affirmed because of the lower percentage of the use of Pause filler among the Saudi KSA participants. Furthermore, the notion of negative pragmatic transfer in the Saudi advanced participants' refusal strategies is evident as well in the lower adoption of the Promise of future acceptance strategy by the Saudi UK participants compared with that of the British group. This finding indicates the existence of L1 negative transfer in the use of Promise of future acceptance. On the other hand, the absence of using religious expression by the Saudi advanced participants is attributed to the influence of staying in the UK as a sign of relinquishing some of their L1's culture-based pragmatic tools of refusing an invitation.

An indication of the similarity between the Saudi UK participants and their British counterparts exists in the adoption of similar top five indirect refusal strategies (Explanation, Pause filler, Regret, Gratitude and Promise of future acceptance). On the other hand, the Saudi KSA participants only share three of these indirect refusal strategies, and mainly rely on other L1-oriented refusal strategies, particularly religious expressions. This similarity is considered as evidence of the change in the Saudi UK participants' sociocultural competence. The sociocultural change is illustrated in the adoption by Saudi UK participants of native-like refusal strategies such as Pause fillers and Promise of future acceptance. The sociocultural change of Saudi UK participants can also be seen in their negligence of using L1-oriented religious expressions, in an obvious indication of the influence of L2 cultural values and norms on the Saudi UK participants' L2 refusal pragmatic output.

Table 9 Top five most frequently used indirect refusal strategies by group

| Ranking | Saudi KSA | Saudi UK | British |
|---------|---|---|--|
| 1st | Explanation (36.76%) | Pause filler (28.40%) | Explanation (30.53%) |
| 2nd | Religious swears (15.81%) | Explanation (22.66%) | Pause filler (20.61%) |
| 3rd | Regret (10.28%) | Regret (19.03%) | Regret (17.94%) |
| 4th | Religious prayer (9.09%) | Gratitude (14.20%) | Promise of future acceptance (12.21%) |
| 5th | Promise of future acceptance (7.11%) | Promise of future acceptance (3.32%) | Gratitude (5.73) |

Table 9 indicates that there is L1 negative pragmatic transfer in the lower use of Promise of future acceptance by the Saudi UK participants compared with their British counterparts. It shows that the Saudi UK participants were keen not to use the religious expressions that mark the refusal pragmatic output of their Saudi KSA participants.

As for the existence of L1 negative transfer, it can be traced in terms of length of response according to the minimum and maximum values of the two Saudi groups (Table 1). In other words, the Saudi UK participants used longer refusal responses compared with that of the British participants. This is attributed to the effect of the elaborate Arabic language style of communication on the Saudi UK participants' L2 pragmatic output. However, as their refusal frequency is slightly higher than that of the British participants, there is indication of the improvement of their L2 pragmatic output. This type

of improvement is related to their stay in the UK which gives them an opportunity to acquire and practise some native-like refusal strategies. This finding raises a question about the possibility of having further development and change in the Saudi UK participants, should they have a longer stay in the UK. Therefore, the development of Saudi UK participants' English pragmatic competence needs further investigation.

There are statistically significant differences in using Regret between the Saudi UK and Saudi KSA groups as $P > 0.001$. The differences are in favour of the Saudi UK group. One-way ANOVA also indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the three groups in using ten indirect refusal strategies. These strategies are Regret, Explanation, Promise of future acceptance, Pause filler, Gratitude, Well-wishing, Religious wishing, Religious prayer, Religious swears and Offer. On the other hand, ANOVA indicates no statistically significant differences between the three groups in the following indirect refusal strategies: Wish, Alternative, Set condition, Positive opinion, Willingness to try, Joke, Checking accuracy and Hedging. This means that there is similarity between the Saudi UK participants and British participants in the use of four indirect strategies of Regret, Explanation, Pause filler and Hedging; that is, Saudi UK participants are adopting some native-like indirect refusal strategies. This adoption results from their stay in an English native speaking country. Therefore, being in the UK has had an influence on most of the refusal strategies used by the Saudi UK participants. These strategies differ from the strategies adopted by the Saudi KSA participants. The use of indirect refusal strategies free from religious expressions with exception of two cases only of religious swears by the Saudi UK participants in contrast to their Saudi KSA counterparts provides evidence of (1) the similarity between Saudi UK and British participants' adopted refusal strategies, (2) the influence of environment on the change of Saudi UK adopted refusal strategy, and (3) the different refusal strategies adopted by both Saudi groups of participants.

CONCLUSION

As for the first question, Saudi UK and British participants' use of the Explanation strategy vary according to the type of social power and social distance. Both groups share higher use of Explanation in the cases of $S < H$ and $S = H$ as evident in the situations of 'a student's invitation to his newly appointed teacher $S < H$, +D' and 'the new neighbour's invitation $S = H$, +D' (in the case of the British participant), 'a friend's invitation to the beach $S = H$, -D' and 'a student's invitation to his senior lecturer $S < H$, -D' (in the case of the Saudi UK participant). These examples indicate that it was the type of social distance -D or +D which affected the use of Explanation strategy. British participants were keener to provide explanations when they did not know their interlocutors. On the contrary, Saudi UK participants were keener to provide explanations to those with whom they had close social distance. This finding is attributed to the different politeness classification of both British and Saudi cultures based on Brown and Levinson's (1978) positive and negative politeness. Whereas Saudis are keen to protect the positive face of their interlocutors, the British prefer to protect the negative face of their interlocutors. Saudis have more tendencies to explain the reasons behind their refusals to their friends in order to maintain the social intimacy as a common practice in the Saudi collectivistic community. Meanwhile, the British seek to save the face of their interlocutors whom they do not know, in accordance with the cultural values and norms of their individualistic community.

The three groups of participants vary in their overall use of refusal strategies. The highest frequency of Saudi UK in using refusal strategies compared with the British group refers to the effect of the 'Waffle phenomenon'. This indicates a better change in the use of refusal strategies by the Saudi UK participants.

This change is mainly attributed to their stay in the UK where they acquire the use of similar native-like strategies. The L2 pragmatic competence of Saudi UK participants was changed, raising the question of the possibility of further development if they stayed there for a longer period of time. Thus, there is a need for further research on the possibility of developing the use of refusal strategies by Saudi students in terms of their stay in the UK over different periods of time.

As for the second question, the adopted refusal strategies by both Saudi UK and British differ significantly according to the three levels of social power (high–low, equal and low–high). Meanwhile for declining the invitation of the same equal power situation, Saudi UK participants used various semantic formulas to decline the invitation, such as Pause filler, Regret, Explanation and Promise of future acceptance. They also used semantic formulas consisting of Regret, Pause filler, Explanation and Promise of future acceptance, or Pause filler, Regret and Explanation. In the S<H situations such as 'a students' invitation to his senior lecturer', the British participants used Pause filler, Gratitude and Explanation, inability, or Pause filler, Regret and Explanation. However, for the same S<H situation, the Saudi UK participants used Regret, Inability, Pause filler and Explanation. The Saudi UK participants also adopted semantic formulas which include Regret+ Pause filler+ Explanation+ Gratitude or they used wish and Explanation. This shows that Saudi UK participants employed a higher number of strategies within the refusal response than their British counterparts. These strategies are commonly used by the British participants, but in lower numbers compared with the Saudi UK. This indicates that the Saudi UK participants gave evidence that they acquired the sociocultural strategies used by native speakers when refusing invitations in accordance with the 'waffle phenomenon' (Edmondson and House, 1991).

The number of refusal strategies does not statistically differ between the three groups of participants in terms of the two social distance levels +D and –D where $p > 0.05$. This finding confirms the universality of Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness rules on the one hand as the Saudi KSA participants also used Positive opinion, Checking, Regret and Explanation strategies. The Saudi KSA responses confirm the abandon by their Saudi UK counterparts of the use of religious expressions. The refusal responses of Saudi KSA participants include Religious wishing+ Religious swears+ Inability+ Explanation, Regret+ Inability+ Religious swears+ Explanation+ Promise of future acceptance + Religious wishing and Religious prayer+ religious swears+ Explanation. Responding to the other example in this paragraph, the Saudi KSA participants used religious prayer+ Explanation in "May Allah make you happy (Allah Yeas'edk), I'm busy", Checking+ Religious swears+ Set condition+ Religious prayer, and Positive opinion+ Regret+ Inability+ Religious swears+ Explanation+ Religious wishing+ Promise of future acceptance. The Saudi UK and British participants share the top five most frequently used indirect refusal strategies in a different order. The Saudi KSA participants share three of these indirect strategies in addition to Religious swears and Religious prayer. This finding reflects a similarity between Saudi UK and their British counterparts in using refusal strategies.

They also neglected the use of L1 cultural religious expression in a reflection of changing their L2 refusal pragmatic output in line with the L2 cultural values and norms.

As for the third question, a remarkable indication of L1 negative transfer into the Saudi UK participants' refusal responses is embodied in the length of refusal responses and elaboration of such responses. The L1 negative transfer was also based the statistically insignificant differences between the two Saudi groups of participants. Instances of L1 transfer occurred in the Saudi advanced learners' use of the refusal strategies of 'Promise of future acceptance and Well-wishing'. Indeed, elaboration and a rich expressive style of communication are the most distinctive features of the Arabic language. Generally, Arabs rely on exaggeration and over-emphasis in communication as means of delivering clear and convincing messages (Feghali, 1997). The elaborated refusal responses to invitation adopted by the Saudi UK participants are similar to Nelson et al.'s (1993) findings on Jordanians' elaborated compliments compared with those adopted by American native speakers. The present study's findings conform to those of Al-Khatib (2006) on the Jordanians' adopted acceptance strategies which reflect expressions of Gratitude and Appreciation. Jordanians used to adopt elaborate acceptance responses. Those responses similarly emphasize the social relationships and express gladness, compliments and well-wishing to the inviter.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Background questionnaire (five minutes)

Instructions:

Please respond orally to the following information to help evaluate your responses to the role play scenarios you are about to respond to. Duration is fifteen minutes.

Venue:

Code:

(for example, NNSG1/1, NNSG2/1, NSG3/1)

Name (if you wish):

Age:

Email address:

University:

Programme:

IELTS Score:

Nationality:

Part One

Please, respond orally to the following questions:

Do you speak any foreign languages? yes/no

If yes, are you familiar with its/their culture(s)? yes/no

Do you spend time speaking to native speakers of that foreign language? yes/no

Do you watch or listen to TV or radio programmes in that foreign language? yes/no

Do you watch films produced in that foreign language? yes/no

How long you have been studying a foreign language? years...months...

Have you lived in any foreign countries? yes/no

If yes, state the length of your stay years...months...

Appendix B

An Arabic-translated version of the background questionnaire (five minutes)

تعليمات

من فضلك أجب شفهيًا على المعلومات التالية من أجل تقييم ردودك على السيناريوهات التي أنت بصدد الرد عليها (خمس دقائق) :

المكان :

الرمز الكودي:

الاسم (حسب الرغبة):

العمر:

البريد الإلكتروني:

الجامعة:

البرنامج الدراسي:

درجة الأيلتس:

الجنسية:

الجزء الأول

من فضلك أجب شفهيًا على الأسئلة التالية:

هل تتحدث أي لغات أجنبية؟

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، هل أنت على دراية بهذه الثقافات؟ نعم/ لا

هل تقضى وقتًا في التحدث للنطاقين الأصليين بهذه اللغة الأجنبية؟ نعم/ لا

هل تشاهد أو تستمع لبرامج التلفاز أو المذياع بلغة أجنبية؟

هل تشاهد أفلامًا منتجة بهذه اللغة الأجنبية؟ نعم/ لا

كم صار لك في دراسة هذه اللغة الأجنبية؟

هل أقمت فى أى من الدول الأجنبية؟

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، حدد مدة الإقامة

السنة الشهر

Appendix C

Role play scenarios for the refusal and acceptance speech acts to invitation (fifty-five minutes)

Venue:

Code:

(For example NNSG1/1, NNSG2/1, NSG3/1)

Instructions to all participants

Kindly respond orally to the following 12 described scenarios. Please pay attention to the description of each scenario, how speakers are socially related to each other and how they are higher, lower or equal in their social status. Kindly also note that you will respond to both what you and your interlocutor are supposed to say in such a described scenario. Please say whatever you feel is necessary in such scenarios. Your time, participation and efforts are much appreciated.

Below is an illustrative example:

While working in the office, one of your office mates invites you to go to the cinema next weekend with him to watch a new film. You and that officemate have known each other for a long time as you have been working for that company for fifteen years. However, you refuse the invitation of your officemate.

Officemate: Hey, some other office mates and I are going to watch *The Godfather* at the weekend. I think it would be great fun if you could join us. Would you like to join us?

You: Well, that would be really great! I want to come with you. But I've got to take my son to the clinic at the weekend.

Officemate: Ok, well, if you finish early and want to join us, let me know.

You: Certainly, I'll call you if I finish early.

1. You are about to leave your office. On the way to car park, your boss stops you and invites you to go to his house-warming party. As you cannot go, you decline his invitation.

Your boss: "*Oh incidentally, we're going to have a house-warming party next Saturday. I'd be very pleased if you could come.*"

You:

Your boss:

You:

2. It is Friday afternoon. You meet your close friend in the front of the library. He says that he is going to the beach next Sunday and invites you to join him, but you cannot go.

Your friend: *"Hey, I'm going to the beach next Sunday, do you want to come along?"*

You:

3. You are a senior lecturer at the School of Arts and Literature. In your break time, you happen to have a short chat with a graduate student representative at a café on campus. He is organizing some courses for freshers week orientation. He says that at the end of the fresher orientation days, there will be a party. He invites you to go to the party, but you cannot go.

Student: *"We're going to have a party next Saturday night. We'd be very pleased if you could come."*

You:

Student:

You:

4. A student invites his newly appointed teacher to a picnic.

You are a secondary school teacher who starts work at a new school. On the first day, one of your students invites you to join a school picnic. You decline the invitation.

Student: *"My classmates and I would like you to join the school picnic."*

You:

5. A neighbour's invitation.

Your newly moved-in neighbours invite you to have a drink at their house. They want to make friends with you and your family. However, you are quite shy and you prefer not to mix with others. You decline the invitation.

Your neighbours: *"We've newly moved in and we'd like to invite you and your family to have a drink and chat at our house."*

You:

6. Your newly appointed boss, on his first day in office, invites you to a barbeque party.

Your boss is newly appointed, and it is his first day in office. He/she is going to hold a barbeque party next Saturday as he/she and his/her family have recently moved to a new house. He/she calls you to his office to discuss a file on one of the clients. Before you leave, he/she mentions the party to you. You decline the invitation.

Your boss: *"Can you drop by next Saturday? My family and I are having a barbeque party. We'll be waiting for you then."*

You:

Appendix D

An Arabic version of the role plays (fifty-five minutes)

This Arabic-translated version of the role play is mainly intended for the Saudi participants in the KSA to ensure their full understanding of the role play scenarios.

المكان:

العينة: الطلاب السعوديون في السعودية من تخصصات غير تخصص اللغة.

الزمن: ٥٥ دقيقة.

النسخة مترجمة من النسخة الأصلية باللغة الإنجليزية

التعليمات للمشاركين:

فضلاً أجب شفهيًا على المحادثات الموجودة في الاثني عشر حالة الموجودة أسفل كما أرجو من التركيز جيداً لكل حالة وكيف أن في كل حالة يكون المتحدث له وضع اجتماعي مختلف عن المستمع ففي بعض الحالات يكون المتحدث في وضع أعلى وبعضها مساوي وبعضها أقل وكيف أن كل حالة لها ظروفها.

الحالات عبارة عن دعوات بين طرفين وأن مهمتك هي قبول الدعوة أو رفضها بحسب تعليمات كل حالة لذلك قم بالإجابة بما تعتقد أنه صحيح أو مناسب لكل حالة واضعاً نفسك مكان المستمع.

وقتك وجهدك محل تقدير لهذه الدراسة التي تهدف لمعرفة الفروق اللغوية والاجتماعية بين السعوديين ممن لا يمارسون اللغة والسعوديون الذين يقيمون في بريطانيا والبريطانيون الذين لا يعرفون لغة أخرى.

مثال:

بينما أنت تعمل في المكتب قام زميلك بدعوتك للذهاب إلى السينما ومشاهدة فيلمًا جديدًا في عطلة نهاية الأسبوع. أنت وهذا الزميل تعرفون بعضكم جيدًا لأنكم عملتم سوياً لأكثر من خمسة عشر عاماً ولكن مع ذلك ستقوم برفض هذه الدعوة.

زميلك:

أهلاً أنا وبعض من زملاءي سنذهب في عطلة نهاية الأسبوع لمشاهدة فيلم "الأب الروحي"، وسوف نقضى وقتاً ممتعاً وننتشر بحضورك معنا. هل من الممكن حضورك؟

أنت:

في الحقيقة، يشرفني كثيراً وأتمنى الحضور ولكنني سأخذ ابني للعيادة لأن لديه موعد.

الزميل: حسناً إذا أنهيت مبكراً وأردت الانضمام إلينا أخبرني

أنت: بالتأكيد سوف أتصل بك إذا أنهيت مبكرا

1- أنت على وشك مغادرة المكتب وفي طريقك لموقف السيارة قام رئيسك في العمل بإيقافك ودعوتك للعشاء بسبب انتقاله لمنزل جديد وبسبب عدم مقدرتك ستقوم برفض الدعوة.

رئيسك:

لدينا حفل عشاء في منزلي الجديد يوم السبت القادم. سيشرفني كثيرا حضورك إذا أمكنك.

أنت:

2- اليوم هو الجمعة بعد الظهر وقابلت صديقك المقرب لك أمام المكتبة وأخبرك أنه سيسافر لمدينة شاطئية يوم الأحد القادم وقام بدعوتك ولكنك لا تستطيع.

صديقك:

أهلاً! أنا ذاهب يوم الأحد القادم إلى الشاطئ هل ترغب بالذهاب معي؟

أنت:

3- أنت محاضر في كلية الآداب وفي وقت الغداء في الدوام كنت تتحدث في المقهى مع طالب تقوم بتدريسه وهذا الطالب يقوم بتنظيم لقاء للطلاب الجدد في الجامعة وأخبرك أنه في نهاية اللقاء سيقومون بعمل حفل وقام بدعوتك ولكنك لا تستطيع الحضور.

الطالب:

لدينا حفل يوم السبت القادم للطلاب الجدد وسيشرفنا كثيرا حضورك!

أنت:

4- أنت معلم للمرحلة الثانوية للتو تم تعيينك وفي أول يوم لك في المدرسة قام أحد الطلاب بدعوتك لنزهة في حديقة ولكنك ستقوم برفض الدعوة.

الطالب:

أنا وبعض زملائي في الفصل سنذهب للحديقة في نزهة تنظمها المدرسة هل ترغب بالمجيء؟

أنت:

5- أنتقل إلى حيكم جيران جدد وقاموا بدعوتك لتناول القهوة في منزلهم للتعرف عليك وعلى ذويك ولكنك متحفظ وهاديء ولا ترغب كثيرا بالتعرف على الناس.

جارك:

لقد انتقلنا حديثاً لهذا الحي ونرغب في دعوتك أنت وعائلتك لتناول القهوة والتعرف عليكم في منزلنا.

أنت:

6- رئيسك في العمل جديد وفي أول يوم له في العمل قام بدعوة جميع من في المكتب لحضور حفل عشاء في منزله الجديد الذي انتقل له للتو وأثناء نقاشك معه بخصوص أحد العملاء قام بدعوتك ولكنك سترفض الدعوة

رئيسك:

لدينا حفل عشاء يوم السبت القادم أنا والأهل ننتظر حضوركم.

أنت:

Appendix E

Consent form for participants in the present study

Title of the present study: "Interlanguage Pragmatics: Invitation Responses by Advanced Saudi Learners of English"

Supervisors:

Investigator: Meshari Alsairi

Contacts: 07481519883

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1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the participants' instructions in Appendix B for the study. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, without giving a reason.
3. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
4. I understand what will happen to the data collected from me for the research.
5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the participants' instructions.
6. I understand that quotes from me will be used in the dissemination of the research.
7. I understand that my responses will be recorded.

Data Protection: I agree to the University¹ processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....

Signed.....Date.....