A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF THE SPEECH ACT OF REFUSAL AMONG EFL SPEAKERS

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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF THE SPEECH ACT OF REFUSAL AMONG EFL SPEAKERS

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ABSTRACT

Refusal, as one of the most frequently performed speech acts in our daily lives, has recently gained increasing attention in pragmatics. In academic settings in Malaysia, for example, the opportunity for interaction frequently occurs among students from different cultural backgrounds. The purpose of this study is thus to investigate two groups of EFL speakers, namely Chinese and Iraqis, in their realization of the speech act of refusal in an academic setting. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the study seeks to explore the similarities and differences of refusal strategies employed by Chinese (mainland China) and Iraqi EFL speakers in making refusals. The participants of this study consist of 30 postgraduates (15 Chinese and 15 Iraqi Arabs) who are studying in University of Malaya. The role-play scenario used to collect data consists of eight different situations which have been designed to elicit responses of refusals from the participants in four different initiating speech acts such as: suggestions, requests, invitations, and offers. Each situation involves two social variables: social power and social distance. The data were analyzed based on classification of refusals from Beebe et al (1990). The results show that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers have different preferences in the choice of refusal strategies. The findings also reveal that there are some similarities and difference between Chinese and Iraqis in terms of frequency of semantic formula, order of semantic formula, content of semantic formula.

Key words: speech act; refusals; EFL speakers

ABSTRAK

Penolakan, salah satu perbuatan pertuturan yang paling kerap dilakukan dalam kehidupan seharian kita, telah mendapat peningkatan dalam perhatian dalam bidang pragmatik baru-baru ini.Sebagai contoh, peluang berinteraksi kerap berlaku dalam kalangan pelajar dari latar belakang budaya yang berbeza di dalam persekitaran akademik di Malaysia..Maka, tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk menyiasat dua kumpulan penutur EFL iaitu penutur Cina dari tanah besar dan Iraq dalam kesedaran mereka tentang penolakan dalam persekitaran akademik.Untuk mencapai tujuan kajian, kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka persamaan dan perbezaan strategi penolakan yang digunakan oleh penutur EFL Cina dan penutur EFL Iraq apabila membuat penolakan. Peserta kajian ini terdiri daripada 30 orang pelajar pascasiswazah (15 orang Cina dari Tanah Besar dan 15 orang Iraq Arab) yang sedang belajar di Universiti Malaya. Senario main peranan yang digunakan terdiri daripda lapan situasi berbeza yang telah direka untuk medapatkan respons daripada para peserta dalam empat perbuatan pertuturan berbeza seperti: cadangan, permintaan, jemputan dan tawaran. Setiap situasi adalah mengenai dua pembolehubah sosial: kuasa sosial dan jarak sosial. Data telah dikaji berdasarkan klasifikasi penolakan dari Beebe et al (1990). Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa penutur EFL Cina dan Iraq mempunyai pilihan yang berbeza dalam pemilihan strategi penolakan. Dapatan kajian juga mendedahkan bahawa terdapat beberapa persamaan dan perbezaan di antara orang Cina dan Iraq dari segi kekerapan formula semantik, turutan formula semantik dan kandungan formula semantik.

Kata kunci: perbuatan pertuturan; penolakan; penutur EFL

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

In daily life, people communicate with each other to convey information, share thoughts and feelings, and maintain relationships. They employ different speech acts to achieve their communicative goals (Beebe et al., 1990). Speech acts are actions performed by means of language, that is, the "function" of language. The concept of speech acts was first introduced by Austin (1962) in his book entitled *How To Do Things with Words*, and he defined speech acts as "a functional unit in communication". Speech acts capture 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 of apologies, requests, compliments, complaints and refusals have been studied by some researchers (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Henstock, 2003; Allami & Naeimi, 2011). Moreover, many researchers investigated the realization of speech acts across different languages and cultures (Beckers, 2003; Kim, 2008; Ebsworth & Kodama, 2011).

Speech acts have been investigated widely due to its central role in communication. According to Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), the empirical investigation of speech acts can provide a better understanding of how human communication is achieved through the use of linguistic behaviors. In addition, it shows the similarities and differences of interactions among people of different languages and cultures under similar circumstances. In fact, the realizations of speech acts of different communities are influenced by the social and cultural norms and beliefs of these communities (Meier, 1995, 1997; Richards & Schmidt, 1983).

According to Searle (1975), speech acts are classified into five types such as: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (See section 2.2). Speech act of refusal, the main focus of this study, falls under the category of commissives and it has been received a great attention from many researchers (Honglin, 2007; Al-Kahtani, 2006; Sadeghi & Savojbolaghchilar, 2011; Honglin, 2007; Kwon, 2004). It has been recognized as a face-threatening act that causes damage to the face of both speaker and hearer since it contradicts the expectation of the interlocutor (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is different from other speech acts in that it is not initiated by the speaker rather it is a negative response to the interlocutor (Houck &Gass, 1999). Unlike acceptance, refusal is a very complex speech act to perform due to the risk of offending the interlocutor. The inability to refuse in a proper way might pose a threat to the interpersonal relations of the speakers (Kwon, 2004). In fact, it is more complex for people of different cultural backgrounds, because different cultures have different preferences for the realization of the speech act of refusal even though the speakers use the same language (i.e. English) (Al-Kahtani, 2006; Gao, 2006).

Recently, interactions among people of different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities have increased rapidly due to globalization, the use of technology, tourism and academic exchanges. As the case in Malaysia, interactions happen frequently among foreigners who have different cultural backgrounds and hold totally different values. Such differences might affect the way they interact with each other. As a result, it might influence the way they refuse which could be interpreted as an offense by the interlocutors. In Malaysia, the academic setting is one of the places that has a great number of international students who have different cultural backgrounds and they interact with each other frequently. Due to their cultural differences, they might be perceived as rude when they make refusals. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to

investigate how international students from different cultural backgrounds realize refusals in a Malaysian academic context.

Some backgrounds about the field of pragmatics, speech acts of refusal in Malaysia, nonnative speaker's refusal in English, refusal across cultures, and Chinese and Iraqi postgraduate students in University of Malaya are necessary to be introduced to understand the complexities of refusals in relation to the culture and language. Since the speech acts studies are considered as one of the main areas of pragmatics, there is a need to explain the concept of pragmatics.

1.1.1 The Speech Act of Refusals In Malaysia

"Malaysia is a multicultural society with a colonial history. English is spoken widely in this country, as a second language, side by side with vernacular languages." (Othman. N, 2011, p.86).

In Malaysia, a collectivistic culture, Malaysians usually try their best to not make others embarrassed by performing a refusal due to the Malaysian culture where it has high possibilities to be interpreted as an offence by saying "no" (Kuang, 2009). In spite of the colony history during which Malaysians are influenced by the western cultures, such as, education, media, most of them still tend to be indirect. In fact, many Malaysians attempt to be straightforward, but their cultural upbringings still have profound influence on them.

In recent years, there are many international students from different countries come to Malaysia for the purpose of education, such as, students from Middle East,

Asia, Europe, and so on. Accordingly, it is of great importance to investigate how international students realize refusals in a Malaysian academic context.

In the current globalized world, people of different nationalities who have different native languages started to interact more frequently than before. Due to the globalization, English language became an international language which has been widely used by different people to communicate with each other (Sasaki, et. al., 2006). According to Crystal (1997, p.141) "there are probably already more L2 speakers than L1 speakers" which therefore propounds the need to pay special attention to the non-native speakers' performance on English. This fact shows that it is not sufficient to make comparison on how the speech acts are realized only between native and non-native speakers of English. But it also becomes increasingly important to study speech acts among non-native speakers.

In the field of pragmatics, the comparison of speech act performances of the native speakers and non-native speakers of English was the main focus of many researchers based on the previous studies. Although English, as a foreign language, has become the most popular language among non-native speakers of English (Otçu & Zeyrek, 2008, p.265), the number of studies dealing with the comparison of speech acts realization among non-native speakers is still limited.

In Malaysian academic setting, there are a great number of international students, mostly from Middle Eastern countries, and China (See section 1.1.5) who are non-native speakers of English. English is used as a second language in Malaysia and the majority of students are non-native speakers of English, it is important to study the realization of the speech act of refusal among non-native speakers in Malaysia.

1.1.2 Refusals across cultures

Cross-cultural communication has been the focus of many researchers. However, Pinto (2000) argued that there is no need to investigate cross-cultural communication in which no interactions occurred among people. Cross-cultural communication studies the interactions in which the speaker and hearer are from different cultural backgrounds (Gao, 2006). Understanding speech acts cross-culturally is considered as one of the challenges resulted from cross-cultural communication, especially, the speech act of refusal. Generally speaking, people need to sustain their relationships as friends, classmates, colleagues etc. They usually try to make their interlocutors feel comfortable even when they are making refusal. Therefore, some would use implicit words to soften their refusal, but they are still taking the risk of being misinterpreted by the interlocutors especially when both hearers and speakers come from different cultural backgrounds. Even if both speakers and hearers use the same language (English) in their daily communication as the case of international students at the university of Malaya, misunderstanding is always expected to occur due to their different cultural backgrounds. It, thus, becomes important to study speech act of refusal cross-culturally.

1.1.3 Chinese and Iraqi postgraduate Students in University Of Malaya

According to Shoja (2011), in the years of 2007-2009, the total number of Chinese and Arabic postgraduates enrolled in University of Malaya is 931. The statistics showed that Iraqi group has the largest number of postgraduate students among all Arabic countries for the years of 2007-2009 with 217 postgraduate students. Whereas, the number of Chinese postgraduate students for the years 2007-2009 is 137.

Based on the latest statistics from IGS (Institute of Graduate Studies), the total number of international postgraduate students from China and Iraq is still quite

distinguished. Figure 1 shows the number of international postgraduate students enrolled in 2012-2015 in the university of Malaya. In fact, there are many situations where interactions happen among international students, especially Chinese and Arabic students, in the courses that they have taken together. Although the English proficiency of both groups is good in that all postgraduates must fulfill the English language requirement (e.g. IELTS scores above 6) for postgraduate studies in University of Malaya. But misunderstanding is still expected due to the differences in their cultural backgrounds, educational backgrounds and so on.
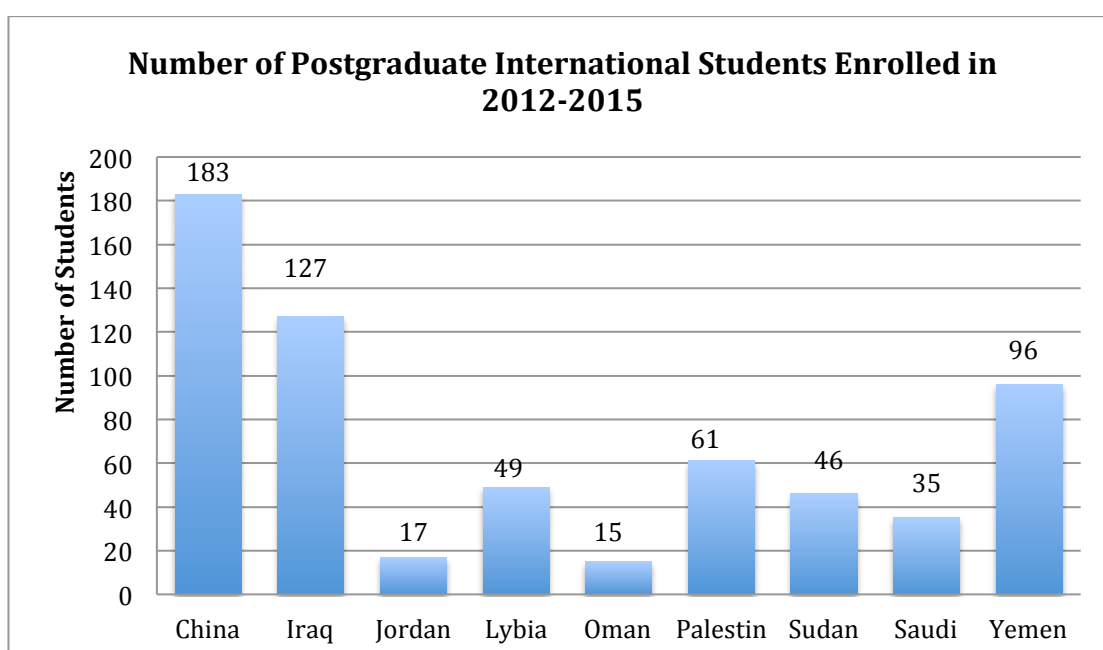
Figure 1. The Number of Postgraduate International Students Enrolled in 2012-2015

1.2 Statement of Problem

Refusal has been considered as a "major cross-cultural sticking point for many nonnative speakers" (Beebe et al., 1990, p.56). It likely affects the interpersonal relationship of the interlocutors as it is usually considered to be a face-threatening act (Chen 1996). In many cultures, "how to say 'no' sometimes is much more important than the answer itself since inability to refuse properly may result in misunderstanding, unconscious offense or breakdown in communication" (Al-Kahtani, 2006, p.36). It has

been indicated that refusals are particularly important to study since they are the source of so many cross-cultural miscommunications. Therefore, a great number of studies about refusals have been done (Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Umale, 2011; Nguyen, 2006; Brown, 2005) but there is a methodological limitation, in that the data were often collected by means of DCT, which is a written task along with a number of limitations (see Section 2.7). Few studies pay attention to oral production data. In addition, most comparative refusal studies focus on interaction between native English speakers and non-native English speakers. But only few studies have been conducted to investigate the interaction among nonnative speakers of English, especially, in a context where English is used for communication.

In a Malaysian academic setting, there are many international students who are non-native speakers of English. Therefore, it might be difficult for them to use a foreign language (English) to interact with people of different cultural backgrounds who have different understanding of refusals due to the fact that they usually tend to transfer the conversational rules of their mother tongue to their second language. In addition, when non-native speakers of English interact with each other, difficulties frequently arise and accordingly result in breakdown in the interaction because of "their lack of mastery of the conversational norms involved in the production of speech act" (Al-Eryani, 2007, p. 20). Such difficulties usually occur when people of different cultural backgrounds do not share the same knowledge.

Therefore, making a refusal among non-native speakers might cause harm and confusion to the interlocutors. According to Ramos (1991), the "inability to say 'no' clearly has led many non-native speakers to offend their interlocutors". Considering the fact that English language is a lingua franca in Malaysia and there are many foreign

students studying in Malaysian universities, it is essential to do a contrastive study to investigate the strategies used in making refusals between non-native speakers of English. This study, thus, specially look at two groups of non-native speakers of English: Chinese and Iraqis. These two groups have different cultural orientations, values, languages and religions. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to explore how Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers realize refusals in a foreign language (English) in a Malaysian academic context.

1.3 Research Objectives

The present study aims to explore how Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers realize refusals in a Malaysian academic context. More specifically, this research aims to:

1. Investigate the preferred refusal strategies employed by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in a Malaysian academic context.

2. Explore the similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in making refusals.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives, two research questions are identified in this study:

1. What are the preferred refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in Malaysian academic context?

2. What are the similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in making refusals?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is significant because it explores the preferred refusal strategies employed by non-native speakers of English like Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. In

addition, this study reveals the similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers when they make refusals and provides a clear explanation on how the social power and social distance influence their refusals. These social power and social distance are influential in the choice of refusal strategies employed by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers.

The findings of the study help both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers to have a clear idea about the preferred strategies used by both groups when they make refusals. As a result, it helps to minimize the misunderstanding between them. Moreover, the findings can be of great help for all international and local students to avoid the misunderstanding when they interact with Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers.

The findings of the study make a contribution for cross-cultural communication between Chinese students and Iraqi students in a foreign university, which may help both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers to gain communicative competence in English and predict the difficulties of learners in expressing themselves spontaneously in the situations where they are expected to refuse.

Moreover, this study contributes to the field of foreign and second language learning since it helps EFL and ESL students to gain pragmatic competence about speech acts and further improve their communicative competence.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The present study focuses only on the realization of speech act of refusal between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. More specifically, it is limited to the preferred refusal strategies, similarities and difference of the refusal strategies, and the influence of social

power and social distance, which is inadequate to provide insights into every aspect of the Chinese and Iraqi refusal strategies. Moreover, this study focuses only on the verbal elements. Therefore, non-verbal aspects are not included in this study.

The number of participants is limited to 15 Chinese and 15 Iraqi international postgraduate students only, other nationalities are not included. Moreover, all participants are male and studying at the university of Malaya.

This study is limited to the social power and social distance since they are indispensable for the realization of different types of speech acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This study includes both variables, social power and social distance, in each situation. However, it is almost impossible to determine whether social power or social distance is considered first by participants when they respond to the situation since refusals are influenced by both social distance and social power (Smith, 1998; Fraser, 1990).

Another limitation of this study is that only 10 participants out of 30 (5 Chinese and 5 Iraqis) participated in the follow-up interview session. They were selected based on their availability and willingness. Interview questions are limited to 4 leading questions. Thus, participants are led to only consider social power, social distance, culture and nationality.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief background about the study. It presents the problem statement of this study as well as the research objectives and research questions. Towards the end, the significance and the limitation of the study are also provided.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with presenting the speech act theory followed by a description of speech act of refusal. Then a discussion of the relevant concepts is provided: face-threatening act, social power and social distance, and individualism vs. collectivism. Previous and current studies on speech acts, the speech act of refusal, Chinese refusals, Arabs refusals, and some related refusal studies in the past 20 years are discussed in detail and synthesized towards the end of the chapter to highlight the gap in the existing literature. Lastly, a review of data collection methods used in the field of speech act research is presented.

2.2 The Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory was first introduced in 1962 by the British philosopher John Austin who stated that language is not only used to describe things but also used to do things, that is, to perform acts. He identified three types of speech acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act refers to the act of saying, a literal meaning of an utterance; the illocutionary act refers to an intended meaning of an utterance produced on the basis of its literal meaning; and the perlocutionary act is the effect of an utterance on the hearer, depending on specific circumstances. For example, one performs a locutionary act when he describes the thermal condition of a room by saying "it is hot here". In this description, the thermal condition of the room is given by the word hot and the room itself is referred to by the word here. However, if one says the same thing expecting some action to be taken such as opening a window or turning on an air-condition to lower the temperature of the

room, then he is performing an illocutionary act. The opening of the window or turning on the air-condition is the effect of the utterance, which is a perlocutionary act. (Moaveni, 2014)

The term "speech act" usually refers to illocutionary acts in its narrow sense (Huang, 2007). Since illocutionary acts (intended meaning of an utterance) are an important part of speech acts. Austin (1962) classified illocutionary acts into five types based on the function of the verbs used: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. But because of the ungrounded nature, unclarity, and overlap of these classes, several researchers tried to develop and strengthen Austin's taxonomy (Allan 1994; Horn and Ward, 2004;). However, the most influential one is from Searle (1975) who revised and developed Austin's classification of illocutionary acts. He classified illocutionary acts into five types: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

Representatives (assertives) are speech acts in which a speaker commits to the truth of the expressed statements (e.g., asserting, concluding, claiming, stating, and reporting). Directives refer to speech acts in which a speaker requests the hearer to perform a particular action (e.g., advice, questions, commands, orders, and requests).

Commissives refer to speech acts in which a speaker commits some future action (e.g., promises, refusals, pledges, and threats). Expressives refer to speech acts in which a speaker expresses his/her feelings (e.g., blaming, thanking, congratulating, apologizing, and praising).

Finally, declarations (or declaratives) are speech acts that change reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration (e.g., declaring, nominating, and resigning).

Hymes (1962) stated that speech acts are functional units in communication. His main contribution was to attract researchers' attention to the influence of social and cultural norms and beliefs on speakers' speech act realization and interpretation since the socio-cultural rules of communication govern speech acts in a given speech community. This was particularly important because it was a major component in the theoretical foundation on which the field of cross-cultural speech act research has been established.

Paltridge (2000, p.15) defined a speech act as "an utterance that serves a function in communication". He explained that a speech act can consist of only one word, for example, "no" to achieve the act of refusal and it can also consist of a few words or sentences. He also mentioned some variables like "authority", "social distance" and "situational setting" which influence the appropriate realization of speech acts.

In fact, one of the most complicated speech acts that must be taken into consideration is the speech act of refusal. It is evident that when people make refusals they sometimes offend their interlocutors. Therefore, it is important to explain and discuss the speech act of refusal.

2.2.1 The Speech Act of Refusal

Speech act of refusal is different from other speech acts since it is not initiated by the

speaker but it is a negative response to the interlocutor. Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p.195) described speech act of refusal as "the negative counterparts to acceptances and consentings are rejections and refusals. Just as one can accept offers, applications, and invitations, so each of these can be refused or rejected". Whereas, Tanck (2002, p.2) stated that refusal occurs "when a speaker directly or indirectly says 'no' to a request, invitation, etc.". On the other hand, Chen et al. (1995, p.121) explained that "speech act of refusal is realized when a speaker denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor".

In fact, the speech act of refusal has been described in different ways by many researchers. However, there is no clear and exact definition of refusal. In this study, the definition of the speech act of refusal from Al-Eryani (2007) is used. He defined that a refusal is a negative response to an offer, request, invitation, and suggestion.

Generally, refusals are one of the most complicated speech acts since they are influenced by many social factors such as: social distance, social power, level of education, age, and gender (Smith, 1998; Fraser, 1990). Although it exists in all languages and cultures, different languages and cultures have different ways of making refusals to minimize the risk of offending the interlocutor. In fact, it is even more difficult for non-native speakers of language to refuse suggestions, requests, and offers due to the fact that there is misunderstanding if they do not use pragmatic knowledge in a proper way. Rejecting others' requests, offers, and suggestions without offending them or hurting their feelings is of great importance since the "inability to say 'no' clearly has led many non-native speakers to offend their interlocutors" (Al-Kahtani, 2006).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) speech act of refusal is considered as a face-threatening act which usually causes damage to the face of both speaker and hearer. Therefore, it is essential to discuss the notion of face-threatening act.

2.3 Face-threatening Act

According to Yule (1996), face is "the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize" (p.60). Based on Goffman (1955), the notions of "face" refer to two basic wants of every individual: 1) to be approved by others (positive face); 2) to have his / her actions and thoughts unimpeded by others (negative face). Positive face is defined as the individual desire of a person that his/ her personality is appreciated by others. Negative face refers to the basic personal rights of an individual, including his/ her personal freedom as well as freedom of action. Brown and Levinson's (1978) face-threatening act is founded on this concept of "face" by Goffman (1972).

A face-threatening act (FTA) can lead to a certain challenge to the interlocutor by damaging his/her self-image. Face-threatening acts may threaten either the speaker's face or the hearer's face. Furthermore, it can threaten either positive face or negative face. No matter in an informal or a formal conversation, consciously or unconsciously, people may impose a threat to the persons' self-image or to the interlocutor's face which result in a "face-threatening act". The FTA can either damage the negative face by suppressing the interlocutor's freedom of action, or threaten the interlocutor's positive face by neglecting their public image, their egocentric feelings or ignoring their sense of achievement. Negative face threatening acts include directives with a manner ranging from straightforwardness to insolence, such as commands, requests, advice, invitations, or even interruptions, etc. On the other hand, positive face threatening acts

include criticisms, offensive behaviors, disagreements, disputes, and corrections.

Based on this theory, refusal should be categorized as positive face-threatening act due to what the addressee says is not favored by the hearer. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that some scholars (Kwon 2004; Aliakbari & Changizi 2012) argued that some speech acts like refusals may threaten both interlocutors' faces. In other words, refusal belongs to bilateral face-threatening acts rather than unilateral ones. In an attempt to avoid the face-threatening act, interlocutors may apply specific strategies to mitigate the threat according to a reasonable estimation of the face risk to participants.

The fact that the speech act of refusal, as a face-threatening act, is always influenced by the social power and social distance (Honglin, 2007; Kathir, 2015). It is, therefore, important to explain the factors of social power and social distance.

2.4 Social Power vs. Social Distance

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), social variables, such as social power and social distance indispensable for the realization of different types of speech acts, and they are also the factors that influence of the choices of speech acts strategies used by people from various cultures.

Social power has a great role in communication, which is defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as "the degree to which the hearer can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the speaker's plans and self-evaluation" (p. 77). It influences the way people communicate with each other. It enables the speakers to recognize the social position of each other (Holmes, 1995; Leech, 1983). For example, a lecturer is a higher status interlocutor to a student, but an equal status to

other lecturers. In fact, speakers who have high social status are usually addressed differently, in that they receive respectful behaviour, such as, negative politeness and linguistic deference (Holmes, 1995). People of lower social status tend to show respect to people of higher status and try to avoid offending them.

On the other hand, social distance denotes the concern of "the roles people are taking in relation to one another in a particular situation as well as how well they know each other" (Brown & Levinson 1987, p.126). It refers to the degree of intimacy between interlocutors. The degree of politeness increases or decreases based on the social distance of the interlocutors (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, the relationship between friends is close (low social distance), while the relationship between a student and the deputy dean is distant (high social distance). Whereas, Wolfson (1988) pointed out that just a little of solidarity-establishing speech behaviour existed between intimate and stranger people due to the relative pre-existing familiarity of their relationship, while the negotiation of relationships usually happens between friends.

2.5 Individualism vs. Collectivism

Collectivism and individualism are broadly used to illustrate cultural variability (Gudykunst et al., 1996). According to Triandis (1988), collectivism is a more common cultural pattern in Asia, South America, Africa, and the Pacific. It is "characterized by the individuals subordinating their personal goals to the goals of some collectives. The collective is often the extended family, although it can also be a work group." (p.269). Individualism, on the other hand, is a more common cultural pattern in Western Europe and the U.S. It is "characterized by the subordination of a group's goals to a person's own goals" (p.269). In individualistic cultures, the self is separate from the group, while

in collectivistic cultures, the self is part of the group.

In collectivistic cultures, people put more emphasis on group's goal, while in individualistic cultures on individual's goal (Triandis, 1988). As a consequence, members of individualistic culture are concerned more about the outcomes of their actions on the groups they belong to (Scollon & Scollon, 1995). In other words, collectivistic cultures respect the concept of *we*, while the concept of *I* is prevalent in individualistic cultures (Samovar et al, 1998). Moreover, in contrast to individualistic culture, collectivistic cultures often make a difference between members of in-groups and out-groups (Triandis, 1988).

Both Chinese and Iraqis are from collectivistic cultures. However, they have many differences such as: religion, value, language which might affect the way they perform refusals. Such differences are some of the reasons that led to the researcher choosing these two groups to participate in the study.

2.6 Approaches to Studying Speech Acts

Many studies have been conducted on the realization of speech acts from three different perspectives such as: intra-lingual studies, cross-cultural studies, and learner-centered studies. These perspectives are discussed briefly in the next paragraphs. In this section, the current and previous studies are being briefly reviewed in order to provide the reader with a general view of the whole field of speech act research.

Intra-lingual studies focus on the investigation of speech acts within a single speech community or culture. For example, Hahn (2006) examined the speech act of apologies among Koreans, and Yuan (1998) examined how compliments are realized in

Chinese. Studying the speech acts within a single culture or language gives a deep understanding of the community and its culture. Therefore, many researchers investigated the less common speech acts within a single language or culture, for instance, speech act of nagging in English (Boxer, 2002), thanking in Japanese (Ohashi, 2008), swearing in Arabic (Abdel-Jawad, 2000). Some of these studies used naturally occurring data for their investigation, but a large number of them also used other instruments like role-plays and DCT. These studies showed how speech acts are realized in a number of different languages and cultures. In fact, they provide important insights into cultural norms and beliefs and how they influence the communication styles in these different communities.

On the other hand, the cross-cultural studies examine the realization of speech acts in two or more languages or cultures. For instance, Beckers (2003) compared refusal strategies in German and American English, and Kim (2008) examined the speech act of apologizing in Korean and Australian English, and Rasekh (2004) investigated reactions to complaints in English and Persian. Some studies have also compared speech acts among three different languages such as comparing apology strategies in English, Polish and Hungarian (Suszczynska, 1999).

Generally, these studies have provided important insights into how speech acts are differentially realized by people of different languages and cultural backgrounds. The findings of these studies are important and useful, especially, for foreign language teachers and textbook writers since comparing the realization of speech acts in different languages and cultures can provide valuable information on how to perform these speech acts successfully.

Lastly, learner-centered studies concentrate on reception and production of speech act by language learners. These kinds of studies, known as "interlanguage pragmatics", have focused on the realization of speech acts between learners and native speakers of English. According to Kasper (1990), interlanguage pragmatics deals with pragmatic features of the second and foreign language learners. He classified interlanguage pragmatics into four subcategories: descriptive studies, instruction-based studies, study-abroad studies, and studies investigating the realization of speech acts online.

Descriptive studies compare the realization of speech acts produced by learners of first language to those produced by native speakers of the target language, while instruction-based studies investigate the impacts of instruction on the development of the language learner's pragmatic competence, specifically with regard to his or her ability to realize speech acts successfully.

Study-abroad studies focus on the effects of study abroad programs on the development of the foreign language learner's pragmatic competence, and are usually longitudinal. Whereas, studies investigating the realization of speech acts online investigate how language learners realize speech acts online.

2.6.1 Studies on Chinese Refusals

A number of studies have been focused on the realization of the speech act of refusal among Chinese. Chen, Ye and Zhang (1995) carried out a study about how native speakers of Mandarin Chinese realize refusals. There were altogether 100 participants in this study, 50 males and 50 females. This study is different from other Chinese studies as it focused more on context. A questionnaire of 16 questions regarding social power

was used to collect data. The findings revealed that refusals influence the way Chinese interact with each other. It also showed making direct refusals usually affects the relationship between interlocutors. Therefore, most Chinese prefered to use indirect strategies, especially, implicit semantic formulas to make refusals in order to avoid offending interlocutor or threatening the interlocutor's face.

In another study, Chu (1995) investigated the speech act of refusals of Chinese from the perspective of social relations. By means of telephone requests, she collected the data from 20 female students studying at Columbia University, Taiwan. Based on the different social distances between the requester and the respondents, the subjects were divided into two groups, strangers and friends. The findings indicated that all participants employed both direct and indirect strategies. In addition, some semantic formulas, such as "set conditions for future/past acceptance", "criticism" and "jokes", were used by the group of friends but none of the strangers group employed these strategies. Furthermore, she found out that the subjects of both groups did not often employ the semantic formula " statement of positive opinion" to express positive responses before they come to the main refusals.

Other scholars investigated the realization of the speech act of refusal from different perspectives. For instance, Liao and Bresnahan (1996) explored the similarities and differences between Mandarin Chinese and American English in making refusals to a request. The findings revealed that American participants used more refusal strategies than their Chinese counterparts when they made refusals. The findings also showed that Chinese participants usually started their responses with a statement of regret, followed by the reason attributed to a concern for ending the refusal quickly. Americans tended to use statement of positive opinion before they came to the

main refusals, while Chinese did not apply this strategy much. Lastly, they found that there are some differences between females and males for both groups of participants.

Wang (2001) conducted a study on the speech act of refusal between Chinese and Americans in interpersonal communications. She analyzed the data in terms of words, phrases and sentence patterns based on socio-pragmatic analysis. The results revealed that social factors such as social power and social distance have influence on the speech act of refusals. She also found that the Chinese participants believed that being indirect means being polite, but actually not all indirect utterances are polite.

Similarly, Honglin (2007) conducted a comparative study on refusals produced by Chinese and Americans. In his study, he found that Chinese and Americans used different types of refusal strategies to make refusals and even the way they refuse also showed a significant difference, which are affected by the cultures and situations. Surprisingly, the findings revealed that Chinese were more direct compared to American participants. He stated that "the Chinese tend to emphasize restoring relationship between people, while Americans emphasize solving the problems in question" (p. 67).

Chang (2008) also examined refusal strategies by Chinese EFL speakers and native speakers of English. In his study, DCT was used as a tool for collecting the data, which involved 12 situations for eliciting refusals to four types of acts (i.e., requests, invitations, offers and suggestions) regarding one social variable, social status (i.e., higher, equal, lower). Two versions of a questionnaire (English and Mandarin) were used to collect data from the subjects. The participants of this study were 156 college students. The findings showed that Americans tended to be very direct and provided general reasons, while the Chinese EFL speakers frequently employed indirect refusals

strategies and gave specific reasons. The findings also showed that native speakers of English used more direct refusals than English majors and Chinese majors of the native Chinese speakers. As for the use of adjuncts to refusals, there was no significant difference between the Chinese EFL learners and the native speakers of English. The results also revealed that Chinese tried to avoid using "no" and usually gave implicit and unclear responses. By contrast, Americans showed a preference for direct refusal strategies, which were more assertive and explicit. In addition, Chang also found that the Americans preferred direct refusal strategies (e.g., more frequent use of direct formulas, providing more direct excuses), while the Chinese EFL speakers tended to use indirect refusal strategies such as "wish". Chang attributed this difference to the cultures of the two countries in that Americans tended to show a greater need for privacy than the Chinese, and Chinese tended to use excuses that they found convincing. Lastly, this study did not find a relationship between pragmatic transfer and proficiency level.

Hong (2011) studied the refusal strategies used by native speakers of Chinese and non-native Chinese learners. There were 60 participants who were required to refuse an invitation of attending a Chinese New Year party from "the professor". He found that native speakers of Chinese produced 10 strategies, while the non-native Chinese learners produced 7 strategies. Consistent with many previous studies, the most preferred two refusal strategies used by both groups of participants were "statement of regret" and "reason/explanation" but in the choice of other refusal strategies and frequency of each strategy, these two groups showed significant differences. Moreover, the findings also showed that there were more differences than similarities in the realization of refusals.

In a study conducted by Farnia and Wu (2012) in Malaysia, they investigated

how Malaysian and Chinese university students refuse an invitation with the aim to explore their perception concerning cognition and language of thought in the process of making refusals. A written DCT and an immediate structured interview were used for collecting data. The findings revealed the semantic formulas like " reason", "statement of regret", and "negative willingness ability" were frequently used by both groups of participants. The findings also showed that refusal strategies could be conditioned by the students' level of grammatical competence.

Chen et al (1995) investigated the refusals realized by only a single group, native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Chu (1995) also studied one single group, Chinese, with the aim to investigate how they refuse to a telephone request. Liao & Bresnahan (1996) investigated the differences and similarities between Chinese and Americans in making refusals through a request. Both Chu (1995) and Liao & Bresnahan (1996) only focused on the refusals to a request (without offer, suggestion, invitation). Wang (2001) conducted a contrastive study between Chinese and Americans on the realization of refusals regarding social power and social distance. Similarly, Honglin (2007), Chang (2009), Hong (2011), they all compared the refusals realized by Chinese and Americans.

Farnia and Wu (2012) investigated the refusals realized by non-native speakers of English, Malaysians and Chinese. In their studies, they only focused on the refusals to invitation and a DCT was used to collect data, which is a written task.

In the literature, the comparative studies related to Chinese that have been done are about the refusals realized by native speakers of English and Chinese. Comparative studies between Chinese and non-native speakers of English is limited. Besides, most

previous studies used DCT to collect data, which will affect the results (see section 2.7, discussion about different ways of collecting data).

2.6.2 Studies on Arabic Refusals

The first study on the speech act of refusal and Arabs was in 1993 by Stevens. In his study, he explored the speech act of refusal produced by American native speakers of English, Egyptian native speakers of Arabic, and Egyptian EFL or ESL learners. A DCT was used as a tool for collecting data. In addition, he also used the data from his previous study (Stevens, 1988), and the data were collected from 10 native speakers of English and 21 Egyptian EFL learners. The findings showed that both Arabic groups did not use hedges compared to the Americans, except very few learners.

This is similar to the findings of Al-Issa (2003) who examined the realization of speech act of refusals among 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 as a tool for data collection. He also conducted semi-structured interviews with the Jordanian EFL learners to find out the motivating factors for pragmatic transfer from L1. The Findings revealed that there was evidence of pragmatic transfer specifically with regard to frequency, type, number, and content of the semantic formulas used. The findings also showed that there were certain semantic formulas that only used by the Arabic participants such as, 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. Moreover, the reasons given by Jordanians were vague and less specific compared to Americans. 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 "love and pride" in their native language, perceptions of Westerners in general, religious beliefs, and linguistic difficulties.

Nelson et al. (2002) investigated American and Egyptian perceptions of the speech act of refusal. They focused on the effects of social status, gender and level of directness. In their study, they used a modified version of a DCT used by Beebe et al (1990). 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, in that the researcher read each situation to the participants and asked them to respond orally. The findings revealed that both groups used similar number of direct and indirect strategies. The findings also showed that the most frequent strategy used by both Egyptian and American participants was "reason/explanation". With regard to the relationship, directness, status, and gender, he found that Egyptian male respondents used more direct refusal strategies than Americans. In addition, Egyptians used fewer face-saving strategies in their refusals than their Americans counterparts. This is similar to the findings of Beebe et al (1990), who found that Americans usually utilized indirect strategies in making refusals to a request from both higher and lower status.

In another study conducted by Al-Eryani (2007) on realization of the speech act of refusal by Yemeni Arabic speakers and native speakers of English, he found that both groups of participants used similar refusal strategies when making refusals but cross-cultural variation was found in the frequency of semantic formulas and content of semantic formulas. The study showed that Yemenis were less direct in providing

"reason/explanation" compared to American participants. Despite that Yemeni learners of English showed high proficiency in English, but pragmatic transfer was found in their responses when they made refusals.

Furthermore, Morkus (2009) conducted a study on the realization of refusal produced by native speakers of Egyptian Arabic, native speakers of English, and American learners of Arabic with the aim to explore the relationship between the proficiency of target language and pragmatic competence as well as the correlation between pragmatic transfer from L1 and the L2. A six scenarios role-play was used to collect data in refusing requests and offers from different social status interlocutors. The findings revealed that differences existed between two different levels of learners groups and native speakers of Egyptian Arabic in terms of the individual strategy use and the frequency of semantic formulas. For instance, the American learners used more direct strategies and less indirect strategies to refuse a higher status interlocutor compared to native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. In addition, the two learners groups also used a higher percentage of "statement of regret" and a lower percentage of "postponement" than Egyptians. With regard to L2 proficiency, the advanced students use a lower percentage of direct strategies and a higher percentage of indirect strategies compared to their intermediate counterparts.

Abed (2011) conducted a study on refusals between American native speakers of English and Iraqi EFL learners in order to investigate the pragmatic transfer of Iraqi EFL learners. DCT was used as a tool for data collection. Data were analyzed based on the framework of Beebe et al (1990). The results showed that there are some differences and similarities between Iraqi EFL learners and American native speakers of English. The Iraqi group inclined to use more "statement of regret", "wish", and "adjuncts to refusals" compared to Americans. Moreover, Iraqis are more cautious when dealing

with lower-status interlocutor, and Americans to higher and equal status interlocutors.

Morkus (2014) investigated how native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and native speakers of American English realized the speech act of refusal in equal and unequal status situations. 10 native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and 10 native speakers of American English participated in the study. Data were elicited using context-enhanced role-plays. Results showed that Egyptians produced more words and turns than their American counterparts. Egyptians also tended to be indirect when interacting with a higher status interlocutor. Results also showed that Egyptians preferred family oriented reasons to support their refusals, while Americans tended to use personal reasons. With regard to the use of individual refusal strategies, Americans showed a preference for expressions of regret and gratitude whereas Egyptians tended to use religious expressions.

All the refusal studies reviewed above were comparative studies and all of them investigated the similarities and differences between native speakers of English and Arabic speakers (Egyptians, Jordanians, Iraqis, Yemenis) in making refusals. Only Nelson et al (2002) and Morkus (2009, 2014), made an improvement for data collection, role-play, the rest (Stevens, 1993; Al-Issa, 2003; Al-Eryani, 2007; Abed, 2011) used a DCT to collect data.

Most comparative studies on Arabic refusals explored the similarities and difference between native speakers of English and Arabic speakers. Studies investigating the realization of refusals by Arabic speakers and non-native speakers of English are limited, if any.

It is evident that many refusal studies have been done aiming to investigate the similarities and differences between native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English (eg. Chinese, Arabs). Thus, more comparative refusal studies between non-native speakers of English need to be done to fill the gap in the literature.

2.6.3 Other Studies on Refusals

The first cross-cultural study on the speech act of refusal was conducted by Beebe et al (1990), who compared the refusals produced by native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of English. The purpose of that study was to investigate the pragmatic knowledge in making refusals to interlocutors of different social status and to show their pragmatic transfer occurs in the content, regularity and organization of semantic formulas. DCT was used for data collection. In fact, this study is considered as a landmark since all the following studies on the speech act of refusal used Beebe's et al. (1990) framework. The findings revealed some differences between Japanese speakers of English and native speakers of English in terms of the frequency of semantic formula, the order of the semantic formula, and the content of semantic formulas. More specifically, the findings showed that Americans tended to provide specific reasons while Japanese usually gave "produced reason" which easily caused ambiguity. The results also indicated that "social status" influenced the choice of refusals strategies, especially for Japanese respondents. On the whole, Japanese respondents were more sensitive to "status differences" during interactions, while Americans denied such differences.

Kwon (2004) conducted a comparative study on the speech act of refusals in English and Korean. Like many previous studies mentioned before, a DCT was employed in this study to collect data. The taxonomy of Beebe et al's (1990) was used

to analyze data. The findings revealed that generally both groups of participants employed similar refusal strategies. However, the frequency and content of each strategy in those two languages were different. Besides, the findings also indicated that the social power and manner of asking (request, offer, invitation, suggestion) impacted the refusals. Another finding showed that Koreans somehow felt shy to use "direct strategies" to refuse, meanwhile, they used "statement of regret" in a high frequency. By contrast, Americans tended to use more "adjuncts to refusals", that is "appreciation" and "statement of positive opinion". "reason" was used more frequently by Koreans compared to Americans. Moreover, Americans did not care about status of the interlocutors when they made refusal while Koreans were very careful when refusing those of higher status.

Félix-Brasdefer (2008) studied the realization of refusal among learners of Spanish when they refuse invitations from different social status interlocutors (i.e., equal and higher). The participants were asked to refuse native speakers of Spanish through a role-play. The findings showed that pragmatic transfer existed among the participants and also provided some information about participants' cognition process during which they consider politeness, discourse, grammar and vocabulary.

In another study, Hassani, Mardani, and Hossein (2011) explored the differences between production of refusals by Iranian EFL learners and Persian native speakers as well as the influence of social status and gender on their responses. The study was conducted in two phases with the same participants with a break of two months in between. All students participated in both English and Persian version of the test. The data collected by DCT were analyzed to find out the frequency of direct and indirect strategy use, the types of employed strategies, and the effects of participants' social

status and gender on the refusal responses. The findings showed that participants used more indirect strategies in Persian compared to English. Also, there were no significant variances between males' and females' refusal strategies in terms of social status. The finding also showed that the Persian group used more indirect strategies with interlocutors of higher status.

Sattar et al. (2011) conducted a study in Malaysia on the speech act of refusal among the Malaysian students at university of Malaya. The purpose of this study was to find out the preferred refusal strategies used by students in making refusal in an academic context. A DCT was used for collecting data and the data were analyzed and categorized based on the taxonomy of Beebe et al. (1990). They found that participants make refusals in different ways and they preferred to use refusal strategies like " statement of regret", "reason/explanation" in making refusals to requests. Besides, the study also showed that Malay culture influenced the realization of refusals.

Kathir (2015) also conducted a study in Malaysia. He investigated the patterns of refusal in English used by academicians in public universities. The data for this study was collected by means of a DCT and interview sessions with the participants. The taxonomy of refusal by Beebe et al. (1990) was used to categorize the various responses. The findings showed that the participants differed in many ways when they refused an invitation or a request. High number of participants used indirect refusals, at the same time they provided reasons and explanations in making refusals. Some participants appeared to use polite forms, while others used more diplomatic approaches when they refused invitations and requests. The findings also showed that the members of the academic community in this study acquired a high level of pragmatic competence, cultural awareness and ethnic sensitivities in dealing with refusals.

Allami &Naeimi (2011) conducted a cross-linguistic study of refusals to investigate refusal strategies produced by Iranian EFL speakers. 30 Iranian EFL speakers and 31 native Persian speakers participated in their study. A DCT was used to collect data and all data were coded and analyzed according to the classification of refusals developed by Beebe et al (1990). The findings showed that there were differences in the frequency, shift, and content of semantic formulas used in refusals by these two groups. The findings also indicated pragmatic transfer in the realization of the speech act of refusals among Iranian EFL speakers, and that there was positive correlation between L2 proficiency and pragmatic transfer. They also found that refusing in an L2 was a complex task, as it required the acquisition of the sociocultural values of the target culture.

Sadeghi & Savojbolaghchilar (2011) compared the refusal strategies used by four groups of native and nonnative speakers of English, namely, American English speakers, Persian/Azeri speakers with little working knowledge of English, advanced Iranian learners of English, and Iranians living in the U.S. for an average of 10 years. A DCT developed by Beebe et al (1990) was used to elicit the relevant data. The results showed that generally speaking, Iranian residents and advanced learners used different strategies to refuse requests, invitations, offers and suggestion from Iranians living aboard who acted more similarly to native speakers living in the U.S.

Ebsworth & Kodama (2011) examined refusals produced by adult female native speakers of American English and Japanese. An open role-play regarding request was used to collect data, which was produced by 8 pairs of Japanese and 8 pairs of American English speakers. Semi-structured interviews were also used to collect data. The findings showed that both groups used fillers, softeners, and fragmented utterances, but

Japanese participants used them more common compared to their American counterparts. By contrast, Americans frequently offered alternative plans and commented on the importance of honesty while Japanese participants often implied refusal, using postponement. Some American refusals were experienced as impolite by Japanese informants, while Americans identified the Japanese postponement strategy as problematic.

Beebe et al (1990) conducted the first cross-cultural study on speech act of refusals between native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of English. A DCT was used to collect data. This study is considered as a landmark since all the following studies on refusals used their framework. Kwon (2004) used Beebe et al's (1990) framework to invetigate refusals in English and Korean. Both Beebe et al (1990) and Kwon (2004) focused on the realization of refusals produced by native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) invetigated the speech act of refuslas produced by one single group of participants, learners of Spanish. He made an improvement for data collection that role-play was used to collect data rather than a DCT (written task).

Both Satter et al (2011) and Kathir (2015) investigated the realization of refusals produced by Malaysian university students and a DCT was used in their studies. Hassani et al (2011), Allami &Naeimi (2011) and Sadeghi & Savojbolaghchilar (2011) exlpored the refusals realized by Iranians. Ebsworth & Kodama (2011) examined the refusals realized by Americans and Japanese. One improvement in their study was that they used role-play and semi-structured interview to collection data. However, their focus was still the comparison between non-native speakers of English and native

speakers of English. More studies exploring the differences and similarties of the realization of refusals among non-native speakers should be done in the future.

2.7 Instruments Used in Speech Act Studies

In conducting a study on speech acts, there are three main instruments that are commonly used for data collection: Discourse Completion Test (DCT), oral role-play, and observation of authentic conversation.

Discourse Completion Test (DCT) is a popular instrument for data collection and has been used widely by many researchers. Despite the fact that it is the most common instrument, it is a controversial instrument for eliciting linguistic data. A DCT is a written questionnaire in which a situation is, first, briefly present and then a subject is asked to write her or his response in a blank space that is provided on the questionnaire. Levinson and Blum (1978) developed this format to investigate lexical simplification, and Blum-Kulka (1982) adapted this format to study the realization of speech act between native and non-native Hebrew speakers. The major advantages of using a DCT are its efficiency and consistency. A DCT allows for collecting the data in a short period of time and from a large number of participants. It also allows analyzing responses in a consistent manner because different variables are controlled (Houck & Gass, 1999). Despite these advantages, some researchers have questioned the validity of the data collected by a DCT. For example, Sasaki (1998) and Turnbell (1994) compared DCT data to role-plays data. They found that those two instruments showed different results. Furthermore, they suggested that the DCT data might differ from naturally occurring speech.

The second instrument used to collect speech act data is an oral role-play, the situation is, first, shown to the participants then the researcher initiates a conversation, after this s/he asks the participants to respond by giving the real answer in such situation. An oral role-play is considered to be a good instrument for collecting relatively "natural" data from participants. Admittedly, it is not authentic conversation, but it requires the participants to respond spontaneously and to interact with the interlocutor, as it is happening in real-life in order to reach their communicative goals. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991), a role-play allows the researcher to observe how speech act performance is sequentially organized. Moreover, it allows the researcher to control the participants and elicit their responses by using some specific strategic choices.

The third instrument for collecting linguistic data is an observation of authentic conversation. But as Wolfson (1986,1989) and Olshtain and Cohen (1983) stated it is not easy to collect natural speech act data, because some speech acts occur less frequently and some are situation-dependent. Therefore, collecting authentic speech data in a natural context is very time-consuming. Besides, speech behaviors differ from people to people, and depend on the situation and the interlocutor. For instance, the speech act data might be affected by the interlocutor's age, gender and appearance. Generally speaking, the findings are difficult to generalize (Wolfson, 1989). But not only the observation of authentic conversation but also the DCT and oral role-play encounter the same problem.

Each of these three methods has its own advantages and disadvantages. Many scholars have agreed that DCT can be used to collect a lot of situation-specific data within a short period of time (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Beebe & Cummings, 1985;

Wolfson, 1989; Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Since the speech act is a spontaneous interaction so the data collected from DCT is not enough to provide valid information (Wolfson, 1989). However, in a natural conversation, the subjects have less time to consider how they should respond compared to a DCT response. In addition, an authentic interaction allows subjects to negotiate, while negotiation does not exist in a DCT for subjects to achieve their communication goal. Moreover, there is a clear difference between oral and written responses since the conventional rules of speech and written language are so different. According to Beebe and Cummings (1985) DCT data do not reflect the actual wording used in real situations. It is usually characterized by less talk, less variety, less evaluation, and less hedging because the nature of the written data is totally different from the spoken data in which participants can achieve their communication goals without any interaction and negotiation. As a result, written data are shorter and less complex compared to oral data.

On the other hand, there are also some advantages and disadvantages to oral role-play. In an oral role-play, the situation is artificial and not authentic, so the quality of data will be different from that collected in a natural conversation. However, compared to DCT, the oral role-play data are somehow considered to be closer to natural data since participants interact with an interlocutor in a given situation.

There is no doubt that natural occurring data is the best but it is very difficult to collect data in a natural conversation. However, role-paly is a relatively easier way to collect data even though there are some problems regarding the validity of the data. Collecting natural data takes a great deal of time and some speech acts are situation-dependent and occur less frequently. Therefore, it is difficult to collect spoken speech acts data in a natural setting.

Different methods of collecting data are used in previous studies and some researchers made some comparison among these three major methods. Rintell and Mitchell (1987) conducted a study to compare the differences between speech act data collected from DCT and closed-oral role-play. The finding showed that oral responses were more lengthy than written responses for non-native speakers. But there was no significant difference in the speech act data collected from native speakers. The findings also showed that the participants used more direct strategies when they provided the written responses compared to oral ones. They also concluded that both closed role-play and DCT can be used to collect very similar data.

Bodman and Eisenstein (1986) compared the quality of data collected from those three methods. The findings revealed that the data collected form a DCT had the shortest responses and were less complex compared to others. On the other hand, the authentic data had the longest responses and it was the most complicated instrument, while the role-play data was somewhere in between. The findings showed that naturally authentic interaction can provide the richest data.

Beebe and Takahashi (1989) used observation of authentic data and a DCT to collect data. They found out that the researcher's bias might have an influence on the interpretation of authentic data. They also found that authentic data provided many different examples, but it was not easy to compare the data in terms of speakers, hearers, and social situations.

The usage of naturally occurring data is favored by many researchers due to its advantage in obtaining the actual speech act performance instead of a simple imagined speech act performance based on context. Naturally occurring data is suitable in the

investigation of monolingual/monocultural speech act. However, this approach can not fit the comparative speech act study due to the difficulty in controlling avariables. Consequently, an alternative data collection approach should be adopted so as to emancipate from the constraints of DCT and at meantime enable the cross-cultural contrast study. In this regard, the role-play approach is the best option. It requires participants to respond spontaneously as well as interact with an interlocutor, in this way, a real-life scenario can be established.

2.8 Conclusion

Previous studies on Chinese refusals, Arabs refusals, and cross-cultural refusals have provided some insights into the speech act of refusal. However, it is evident that previous studies do not put much emphasis on comparing speech act of refusal between non-native speakers of English language, especially, between Chinese and Iraqis. Therefore this study would like to fill this gap and investigate how international students (Chinese and Iraqis EFL speakers) from different cultural backgrounds realize refusals in an academic context.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is mainly concerned with the research method used in this present study. It specifically describes the research design, methodological framework, the instruments used for data collection, the procedures of data collection, the ethical issues, and the procedures of data analysis. This chapter provides a detailed discussion on how the study was conducted.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach, more specifically a comparative research design since this study compares two different groups of postgraduate students in one particular university in Malaysia. To have a better understanding about the concept of this study, the speech act theory (Austin, 1962) and the classification of refusals (Beebe et al., 1990) are used as theoretical frameworks.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The study uses Speech Act Theory as its theoretical framework since refusal is one of the types of the speech acts. The theory states that an occurrence of a speech event involves three acts such as: locutionary act which is considered as the basic act of producing a meaningful utterance, illocutionary act which is an expression that has produced to achieve specific intentions, and perlocutionary act which refers to the impact of the utterance on the listener.

The speech act of refusal falls under the commissive category which is one of types of illocutionary act (see Section 2.1). The speech act of refusal has been described in different ways by many researchers. However, there is no clear and exact definition of refusal. In this study, the definition of the speech act of refusal from Al-Eryani (2007) is used. He defined that a refusal is a negative response to an offer, request, invitation, and suggestion. In order to understand comprehensively the concept of the speech act of refusal, the analytical framework of Beebe et al. (1990) is provided to explain the classification of refusal strategies. Beebe's et al. (1990) classification is the most influential taxonomy of refusal strategies used by many researchers to investigate refusal strategies across different cultures and languages (Morkus, 2014, Aliakbari & Changizi, 2012; Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Al-Eryani, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2006; Nelson et al., 2002; Ramos, 1991). In this study, the analytical framework of Beebe et al. (1990) was modified because this study only focuses on the verbal aspects. Therefore, non-verbal refusal strategies are not included in this study: silence, hesitation, do nothing, and physical departure. The modified classification of refusal strategies were adapted from Beebe et al. (1990) can be illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Classification of Refusal Strategies Adapted from Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990)

Strategies	Semantic Formulas	Examples
Direct	Performative	*I refuse*
	Direct 'no'	*No*
	Negative willingness ability	*I can't, I won't I don't think so*
Indirect	Statement of regret	*I'm sorry.*
	Wish	*I wish I could help it.*
	Reason/explanation	*I have a headache*
	Statement of alternative	*Why don't you ask someone else*
	Set condition for future or past acceptance	*If you had asked me earlier, I would have*
	Promise of future acceptance	*I'll do it next time*
	Statement of principle	*I never do business with friends*
	Statement of philosophy	*One can't be too careful*
	Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester	*I won't be any fun tonight*
	Guilt trip	*I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.*
	Criticize the interlocutor	*That's a terrible idea*
	Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping of holding the request	-
	Let the interlocutor off the hook	*Don't worry about it*
	Self-defence	*I'm trying my best*
	Unspecific/indefinite reply	-
	Lack of enthusiasm	-
	Topic switch	-
	Joke	-
	Repetition	*Monday ?*
	Postponement	*I will think about it*
Adjuncts	Statement of positive opinion	*That is a good idea*
	Statement of empathy	*I realize you are in a difficult situation*
	Appreciation	*Thanks for your invitation.*
	Pause filler	*Er, oh, well, umm, uhh…*

To get a better understanding of this taxonomy, it is essential to explain the concept of semantic formula.

3.3.1 Semantic formula

Semantic formula represents "the means by which a particular speech act is accomplished, in terms of the primary content of an utterance" (Bardovi-Harlig &

41

Hartford, 1991, p.48). A semantic formula refers to "a word, phrase, or sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question" (Cohen, 1996, p.265). For instance: "*I am so sorry that I cannot make it, because I have an appointment with my wife. Thanks for your invitation*". This example includes four semantic formulas: "statement of regret" (*I am so sorry*), "negative willingness ability" (*I cannot make it*), "reason" (*because I have an appointment with my wife*) and "appreciation" (*Thanks for your invitation*).

3.3.2 Explanations for Coding Semantic Formula (Beebe et al, 1990)

This classification of refusal consists of three categories: Direct refusal strategies, Indirect refusal strategies, and Adjuncts to refusals.

I. Direct refusal strategies

This category consists of three semantic formulas:

Performative

Performatives are "self-naming utterances, in which the performative verb usually refers to the act in which the speaker is involved at the moment of speech." based on Leech (1983, p.215).

For example: *I refuse to attend this workshop*.

Direct "No"

In this formula, people perform refusal by using a flat "No" without using any internal modification. In fact, "no" is a very direct and straightforward way of making refusal. It is considered as an FTA (see Section 2.3). When people employ this formula, they usually use some language softeners to smoothen their refusal, except in some cases, when people are very direct.

For instance: *No, I cannot make it*.

Negative willingness ability

In this formula, the speaker uses expressions that contain negations to make refusal. Generally negation can be either expressed by the negative particle "not" or by using any word that semantically negates a proposition.

For instance: *I cannot make it.*

II. Indirect refusal strategies

Indirect refusal strategies refer to "verbal messages that camouflage and conceal speakers' true intentions in terms of their wants, needs, and goals in the discourse situation" (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988, p.100). This category is consisted of the following semantic formulas:

Statement of regret

An expression used by the speaker when he did a mistake and felt bad about it like "sorry" "regret" etc. Therefore, any statement that has these expressions is classified as regret/apology. Leech (1983, p.124) stated that "apologies express regret for some offence committed by speaker against to hearer - and there is no implication that speaker has benefited from the offence."

For instance: *I am so sorry, I have another appointment with my family.*

Wish

It is indirect refusal strategy in which the respondent refuses the invitation, request, offer or suggestion indirectly by indicating a wish.

For instance: *I wish I could help.*

Reason/explanation

The respondent performs refusal indirectly by providing some reasons, which may be general or specific.

For example: *I have an exam in next week.*

Statement of alternative

In this formula, the respondent suggests an alternative in which the offer, request, suggestion or invitation can be fulfilled to indicate his/her refusal. According to Chen and Zhang (1995, p 133) alternatives are usually used to "soften the threatening power of refusals".

For example: *Why not ask other friends to help you?*

Set condition for future or past acceptance

It is a hypothetical condition used by the respondents as a reason to make refusals. In this formula, the respondent aims to soften his/her refusal by directing the refusal to a situation where it is more suitable if the speaker has asked in advance.

For instance: *If you asked me earlier, I might join you.*

Promise of future acceptance

In this formula, the respondent uses some expressions contain a promise that s/he will accomplish the request, offer, invitation or suggestion another time, when there are favorable conditions for its completion.

For instance: *l will join you next time.*

Statement of principle

In this formula, the respondent uses a statement that s/he has followed for a long time. Therefore, if s/he complies with the offer, suggestion, request or invitation at that time, s/he will violate his/her principle.

For instance: *I will never do business with friends.*

Statement of Philosophy

The respondent indicates a refusal by stating something which is the truth.

For example: *One cannot be too careful.*

Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester

In this formula, respondent makes refusals by threating or having negative response to the interlocutor.

For example: *I won't be any fun tonight.*

Guilt trip

Respondents respond to the interlocutor with strong feelings of guilt to indicate a refusal.

For example: *I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.*

Criticize the interlocutor

In this formula, respondents express disapproval of a suggestion, request, invitation, or offer to make refusals.

For example: *That's a terrible idea.*

Request for help, empathy

Respondents impose on their interlocutor for help, empathy and assistance to indicate a refusal.

For example: *Would you please record this lecture for me?*

Let the interlocutor off the hook

An expression used by a respondent to imply that there is no need for the interlocutor to get involved in the respondent's own matter.

For example: *Don't worry*

Self-defense

In this formula, respondents make a refusal by defending themselves.

For example: *I'm doing my best.*

Unspecific reply

In this formula, the respondent is trying to give unclear, vague or uncertain responses.

For instance, *I'm not sure whether I can make it or not.*

Lack of enthusiasm

The speaker shows no interest in complying the act.

For instance: *I'm not interested in parties.*

Topic switch

In this formula, respondents respond to interlocutor by switching the topic to indicate a refusal.

Joke

In this formula, respondents refuse their interlocutor indirectly by saying jokes.

Repetition

It is usually used by respondents at the beginning of the refusal responses in which the respondents repeat the interlocutor's suggestion, request, invitation or offer.

For example: *A New Year party?*

Postponement

The respondent wishes to postpone what is requested to a later time, but without giving a specific time.

For example: *I will think about it later*.

III. Adjuncts to Refusals

This category consist of three semantic formulas that function as "extra modifications" to save the positive face of interlocutor. They may appear before or after the main refusal, and do not count as refusals if they appear without a reason, they sound like acceptance. These include as follows:

Statement of positive opinion

In this adjunct, the respondent expresses positive opinion before come to the main refusal.

For instance, *I would like to go.*

Statement of empathy

In this adjunct, respondents show that they understand the feeling of their interlocutor.

For example: *I realize that you are in a difficult situation.*

Appreciation

This adjunct shows the respondent appreciate the offer, suggestion, invitation or offer.

For example: *Thanks so much for your invitation.*

Pause filler

In this adjunct, it shows that the respondent usually employ "er", "well, or "oh" before come to the main refusal.

For example: *Er, dear professor.*

3.4 Participants

The sample of this present study consists of 30 male participants, which includes 15 Chinese EFL speakers and 15 Iraqi EFL speakers. All of them are studying at University of Malaya as postgraduate students in different faculties for at least one year. Their age range from 24 to 30 years old. Due to the fact that the majority of Iraqi postgraduate students studying at the University of Malaya are males, this study specially looks at male postgraduate students. The reason of selecting postgraduates is that they are able to respond to the role-play in English due to the English requirements (IELTS 6.0) for postgraduate candidates at the University of Malaya. For those who does not have an IELTS or TOEFL scores or their scores are lower than the language requirement, they are required to attend the English course provided by the Language center of University of Malaya, Umcced and reach level 6 (ELPP). The detailed information of the participants is provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Demographic Information of Chinese Participants

Subject	Age Range	Degree	Major	English Proficiency	Years studying in UM
1	21-25	MA.	Public policy	IELTS 6.5	1~2
2	21~25	MA.	Computer science	IELTS 5.5	1~2
3	26~30	MA.	Economics	ELPP level 6	1~2
4	26~30	MA.	Economics	N/A	1~2
5	26~30	MA.	Linguistics	IELTS 6.5	1~2
6	26~30	MA.	Business administration	IELTS 6.5	3~4
7	31~35	PhD.	Economics	IELTS 6.0	3~4
8	21~25	MA.	Linguistics	IELTS 6.0	1~2
9	21~25	MA.	IT	IELTS 6.0	1~2
10	26~30	MA.	Engineering	ELPP level 6	1~2
11	26~30	MA.	Visual art	ELPP level 6	1~2
12	21~25	MA.	Public policy	ELPP level 6	1~2
13	26~30	MA.	Business administration	IELTS 6.5	1~2
14	31~35	MA.	MESL	IELTS 7.0	3~4
15	26~30	MA.	Project management	IELTS 6.0	1~2

Table 3.3 Demographic Information of Iraqi Participants

Subject	Age Range	Degree	Major	English Proficiency	Years studying in UM
1	26~30	MA.	Publishing studies	ELPP level 6	3~4
2	26~30	MA.	Physical education	ELPP level 6	1~2
3	26~30	MA.	MESL	TOEFL 600 (ITP)	1~2
4	31~35	PhD.	Dentistry	TOEFL 83 (IBT)	Above 5
5	26~30	MA.	Dentistry	ELPP level 6	1~2
6	26~30	MA.	Dentistry	TOEFL 96 (IBT)	1~2
7	31~35	MA.	Islamic studies	ELPP level 6	1~2
8	36~40	PhD.	Computer science	N/A	Above 5
9	21~25	MA.	English literature	ELPP level 6	3~4
10	26~30	MA.	Physical education	ELPP level 6	1~2
11	21~25	MA.	Public policy	IELTS 7	1~2
12	26~30	MA.	Engineering	ELPP level 6	3~4
13	31~35	MA.	Linguistics	TOEFL 70 (IBT)	1~2
14	26~30	PhD.	Computer science	N/A	1~2
15	26~30	PhD.	Engineering	IELTS 6	1~2

IELTS means International English Language Testing System. It is a test of English language proficiency. The test is designed to assess the language ability of non-native speakers of English who intend to study or work where English is the language of communication. IELTS is scored on a nine-band scale, with each band corresponding to a specified competence in English. The nine bands are descibed as follows:

Scores	Competence
9	Expert user
8	Very good user
7	Good user
6	Competent user
5	Modest user
4	Limited user
3	Extremly limited user
2	Intermittent
1	Non user
0	Did not attempt the test

TOEFL means Test of English as a Foreign Language. It is a standardized test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers wishing to enroll in English-speaking universities. According to Linking TOEFL iBT TM Scores to IELTS® Scores-A Research Report (2010), the TOEFL scores are equalized to IELTS scores.

IELTS Scores	TOEFL Scores
9	118-120
8	110-114
7	94-101
6	60-78
5	34-45
0-4	0-31

ELPP means The English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP). It was built in response to the English language needs of adults in both academic and non-academic sectors. Levels of ELPP are shown below.

Level	Programme
1	Beginner
2	Elementary
3	Lower Intermediate
4	Intermediate
5	Upper Intermediate
6	Advanced

3.5 Instruments

Two instruments have been used for data collection in this study, that is, a closed oral role-play, and a retrospective interview.

3.5.1 Description of the Oral Role-Play

The oral role-play is the main instrument used for data collection in this study (Appendix B), which has been adapted from Discourse completion tasks/tests (Beebe et al, 1990). Some changes have been made for the role-play scenario to suit the Malaysian academic context. Prior instructions are given to the participants about the scenario and how it works before starting the role-play. Then the participants are asked to perform or play the role of a responder in all situations.

The oral role-play in this study consists of eight different situations which have been designed to elicit responses of refusals from the participants in four different initiating acts: suggestions, requests, invitations, and offers. Each situation involves two social variables: social power (high <; equal =) and social distance (not close + ; close). The eight role-play scenarios are shown in table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Eight Situations Related to Social power and Social distance

Situation	Manner of asking	Social power	Social Distance	Scenarios
1	Suggestion	Higher <	Close +	In a meeting with your professor to plan for the next semester's course, the professor suggests a course that you should enroll.
2	Suggestion	Equal =	Not close -	Your close Malaysian friend suggests that you should enroll research method course for next semester.
3	Request	Higher <	Not close -	You are a postgraduate student in UM. Your supervisor (who is close to you) asks you to attend a research workshop this Saturday.
4	Request	Equal =	Close +	Your Malaysian classmate (whom you are not close to) asks you to attend a research workshop with him/her this Saturday.
5	Invitation	Higher <	Close +	Your professor invites you to go for a party this Sunday to celebrate New Year this Sunday.
6	Invitation	Equal =	Not close -	One of your close Malaysian friends invites you to go for a New Year Party.
7	Offer	Higher <	Not close -	Your lecturer (whom you are close to) offers you a chance to work with him/her. But you need to work with him/her for at least a year.
8	Offer	Equal =	Close +	Your Malaysian friend (whom you are not close to) offers you a chance to work in Malaysia after you have graduated from University of Malaya.

For example:

Situation 1: A suggestion from a higher status with high social distance (not close) interlocutor:

> In a meeting with your professor to plan for the next semester's course, the professor suggests a course that you should enroll.

In this situation, the role-play conductor plays the role of professor (higher status), and initiate "It seems to me that you need to take a course in research method. So I would strongly suggest that you take this course before you start writing your thesis", and the participant, a postgraduate student (lower status), has to refuse the suggestion (taking

the research method course) of the professor (higher status). They are not close to each other.

The detail of how the researcher collected data through role-play is discussed in Section 3.7.1.

3.5.2 Retrospective Interview

A retrospective interview wass used to get feedback from participants based on the role-play session. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991), there is a need to consult the participants via retrospective interview to get their feedback on the given context and their interaction with the interlocutors, otherwise the researchers will not be able to verify the intention of the participants behind their speech production and be able to accurately interpret them. In fact, retrospective interviews help and enable the researcher to interpret and analyze data from the role-play without the researcher's interference.

According to Robinson (1991) and Ericsson and Simon (1984), a retrospective interview has three problems: the elapsed time between task performance and the comment, the participant's knowledge about the retrospective interview before the task performance, and the researcher's bias during the retrospective interview. Despite the problems with retrospective data, Ericsson and Simon (1984) suggested some specific ways and procedures to collect retrospective data that make it more reliable:

1. A retrospective interview should be held immediately after the task performance when the subject's memory is still fresh.

2. The questions in the retrospective interview should be related to specific problems or a specific situation.

3. The subjects should not be informed of the retrospective interview until the time of the task performance.

Taking the above suggestions into consideration, four retrospective interview questions were formed as follows (Table 3.5):

Table 3.5: The interview questions

	Interview questions
1.	Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you responded to the role-play in each situation?
2.	Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you responded to the role-play situations?
3.	Did you consider your own culture and religion when you needed to refuse your interlocutor in a Malaysian context?
4.	Would you refuse differently when your interlocutor has the same nationality as you?

Out of the 30 respondents, the researcher selected 5 Chinese postgraduate students and 5 Iraqi postgraduate students (see Table 3.6) for the follow-up interviews. The reason why the researcher only selected 10 participants: firstly, the follow-up interview data is not used for answering research questions, but to get feedback of the role-play session; secondly, these 10 participants were selected based on their availability of time and their willingness to participate in the interview session after the role-play.

Table 3.6: Demographic Information of 10 Follow-up Interview Respondents

	Chinese					Iraqis				
Name	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	I1	I2	I3	L4	L5
Age Group	26~30	21~25	21~25	26~30	26~30	26~30	21~25	26~30	26~30	26~30
Programme	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA
Years in UM	1~2	1~2	1~2	3~4	1~2	1~2	3~4	1~2	1~2	1~2

3.6 Pilot Study

Prior to the administration of the instrument to the participants, a pilot study was conducted in order to determine the subjects' reaction and participation, the time needed

to complete the role-play, and see if there was any problems or confusion regarding the clarity of the items and language of the role-play. Therefore, six students, three Chinese and three Iraqis, were chosen as a sample for the pilot study. The data for pilot study were collected in the main library of the University of Malaya. Hunt et al (1982) listed the benefits of conducting a pilot study. They stated that the pilot study pretests the length and layout of the questionnaire, as well as its format and sequence. It also pretests some individual questions that may be seen as misleading questions. Lastly, it pretests the procedures for data analysis such as coding and tabulating processes.

3.6.1 Results of the Pilot Study

The pilot study achieved its goal. It helped the researcher to test the instrument used in this study. It led to important improvements and indicated the need for some modifications in the early version of the role-play. For example, some situations were modified or changed to measure the effect of the social power and distance on the refusal responses. For instance, in ask requests, situations 1 and 2 that used in the pilot study were not related to the same context. For example:

Situation 1 and 2 from the pilot study

| Situation 1 | You are a postgraduate student in UM. Your supervisor (who is close to you) asks you to attend a research workshop this Saturday. |
| Situation 2 | You just bought a brand new car two weeks ago. Your Malaysian classmate (whom you are not very close to) asks to borrow your car in order to drive to the airport to pick up his/her relatives. |

Therefore, in the actual study, situation 2 was changed to make the two situations more related in order to enable the researcher to measure the influence of social power and distance in making refusal. For instance:

Situation 2 from the actual study

Situation 2	Your close Malaysian friend suggests that you should enroll research method course next semester.

Moreover, some respondents requested more explanations for some situations and this was done in the final version. The time needed to complete the role-play ranged from 10 to 15 minutes. In general, it gave the researcher a good insight and good training on how to conduct the role-play.

3.7 Procedures

The oral role-play and the retrospective interview were conducted in the discussion room of the main library at the University of Malaya. The discussion room is a small room where students usually discuss their assignments. The discussion room was chosen because it is more convenient for participants to come to the library. Besides, it is quiet which makes it suitable for recording the data. Moreover, it is a suitable place where students can discuss so they will not disturb other students.

3.7.1 Data Collection

Based on the responses from the pilot study, the questionnaire for Role-play Scenarios had been modified. Accordingly, the researcher administered the formal study. The data collection was conducted from June 2015 to August 2015.

First of all, the researcher went to IGS (Institute of Graduate Studies) to get a list of Chinese and Iraqi postgraduate students at the University of Malaya. Then the participants were contacted through mobile phone and email. They were asked to take part in the study. The participants were given a very brief introduction over the phone and through the email about the study and they were asked to choose the suitable time

for conducting the Role-Play and interview if they agreed to participate in the study.

Prior to the recording of the role-play, all the participants were given a letter of consent for their willingness to participate in this study. A brief description about the study and the role-play was given to those who agreed to take part in the study. Before the role-play began, the participants were required to provide some basic information in order to collect authentic and valid responses. Then detailed instructions on how the Role-Play scenario works were provided to each participant by the researcher. A role-play conductor, a 27-year old Malay girl, a classmate and friend of the researcher, was invited to participate in this present study as an interlocutor to conduct the Role-Play with the participants since this study is conducted in a Malaysian academic context. Before the role-play session, every participant was given a slip of paper with the situation that requires a refusal response. The situation was given one at a time. The list of situations are provided in Appendix D. After that, the role-play conductor initiated a speech related to the situation. Then the participant responded orally to the situation by giving a refusal response. After the role-play, 5 participants from each group were selected based on their availability of their time and their willingness to participate in the interview session. They were interviewed immediately after the Role-Play by the researcher. The researcher conducted interviews based on the Role-Play Scenarios and participants as responders responded to the interviewer.

All the role-play scenarios and interviews were recorded in the discussion room of the main library at the university of Malaya using a mobile phone. The average time taken to conduct the role-play was around 15 minutes per participant and 6-10 minutes for the interview. The names and the personal information of the participants were deleted for ethical considerations (see 3.8). All data were collected with utmost

confidentiality. Therefore, the participants were coded as participant 1, 2, etc.

To express gratitude to participants, RM30 (Malaysian currency) were given to each participant. The procedures of data collection are summarized in Figure 3.1.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Contacting the participants through e-mail or mobile   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Giving participants a consent form              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Giving instructions to participants            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Recording the Role-Play                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Recording the interview                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Transcribing the data                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
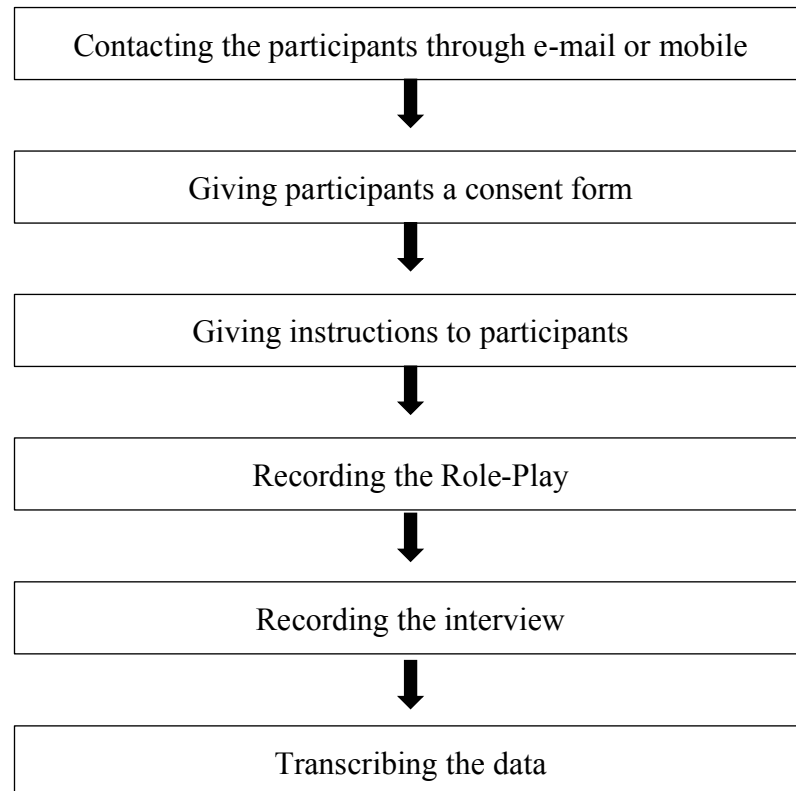
Figure 3.1. The procedures of data collection

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) pointed out that the ethical issues raised when doing observation and interview are closely related to the research methodology. Since the present study conducted a role-play and a follow-up interview with subjects, the following ethical issues were considered during the whole process of doing the research:

1. Subjects' willingness to participate in the study: they were given a consent form to prove their willingness of participation.

2. Subjects' privacy: the names, ages, education background, test scores and question answers were kept confidential.

3. Flexibility: subjects were allowed to discontinue the role-play and interviews at any time.

3.9 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively by investigating the refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers based on the framework of refusal strategies (Beebe et al., 1990). There were five stages of analyzing data.

The first phase focuses on identifying and coding of refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqis EFL speakers.

The second phase involves categorizing the refusal responses into "direct refusals", "indirect refusals" or "adjuncts to refusals".

This is followed by calculating the total number of refusal strategies used by both groups of participants.

The fourth phase of the analysis examines the preferred refusal strategies used by both groups when they make refusals. In this phase, each semantic formula in each response in all role-play scenarios is identified and the frequency of each type of semantic formula in every situation is counted, tallied and the percentage of occurrence is calculated. For example, in situation 5, the respondent had to refuse an invitation to a New Year party from a professor.

A response from Chinese 1 in this situation:

Um, thanks for your inviting professor, but this Sunday I cannot join you. Because I have something else to do, which is important to me. If you told me earlier, I might attend. I'm so sorry.

The above response was analyzed and coded as consisting of semantic formulas as shown below:

1. Um, [pause filler]

2. Thanks for your inviting [appreciation/gratitude]

3. But this Saturday I cannot join you. [negative willingness ability]

4. Because I have something else to do, which is important to me. [reason/explanation]

5. I'm so sorry. [statement of regret]

The last phase of data analysis involves comparing the similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in making refusals. The similarities and differences of refusal strategies used by both groups are examined in each situation by, first, comparing the frequency of semantic formulas, second, comparing the order of semantic formulas used by both groups in each situation, and lastly, examining the content of semantic formulas used in each situation. Figure (3.2) is provided to show how the data analysis was done.
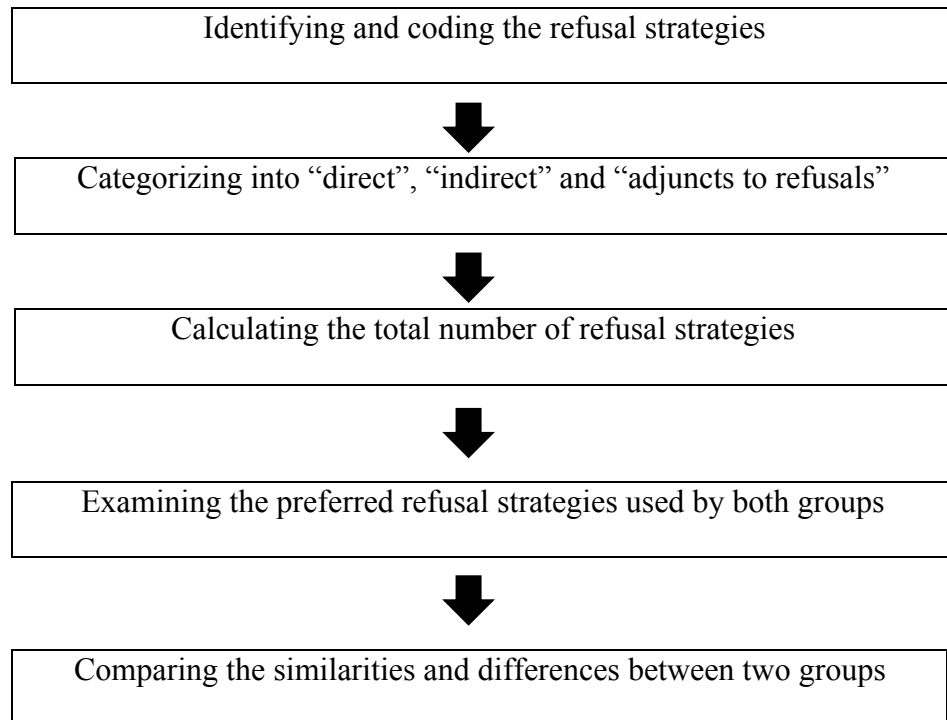
Figure 3.2: Procedures of Data Analysis.

3.10 Conclusion

The discussion of the methodological and theoretical frameworks provides understanding on how the study should be conducted, especially, in linking the theory to the data collection and data analysis. The research approach used in this study guided the researcher in conducting the role-play, interviews and recording them. Moreover, in the data analysis the framework of the study explains how the refusal strategies could be analyzed by classifying the types of refusal strategies. Generally, this chapter serves as the methodological framework which discusses the entire research.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction:

The first three chapters have contextualized the study and introduced its background, objectives, related literature and methodology. This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the research based on the order of its research questions regarding how Chinese and Iraqi postgraduates realize refusals in a Malaysian academic context. This chapter will discuss the preferred refusal strategies used by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in Malaysian context. Then similarities and differences of refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers.

In this chapter, the framework of Beebe et al (1990) is used to analyse the refusal strategies used by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in analysing the Role-play data. Such analysis is supported by the analysis of the interviews to illustrate the preferences of the use of refusal strategies between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers.

4.2 Preferred refusal strategies

The findings show that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in the Role-play employed different types of refusal strategies in different situations. The data show that direct strategies, indirect strategies, and adjuncts to refusals were used by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers.

In this section, the refusal strategies used by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers were identified based on the frequency of occurrences in all situations for each group. The role-play scenarios consist of 8 situations and each group (Chinese and

Iraqis) has 15 participants, so there were altogether 120 refusal responses which were produced by each group. These refusals were classified into three categories "direct", "indirect" and "adjuncts to refusals" based on the framework of Beebe et al (1990). The refusal responses were varied in terms of length and the number of sematic formulas. For example:

A response from Chinese 3 in Situation 2

Oh, [pause filler] *no* [direct 'no'] *my friend. Next semester is so busy for another courses* [reason] *so I cannot follow you advice.* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of 4 semantic formulas, which are pause filler, direct 'no', reason, and negative willingness ability, and among them, direct 'no' and negative willingness ability are direct refusal strategies, reason is an indirect strategy, and pause filler is an adjunct to refusals. (2 direct, 1 indirect, and 1 adjunct)

Another response from Iraqi 8 in situation 1

No, [direct 'no'] *I don't need to take this course next semester.* [negative willingness ability] *I can postpone it to another semester, to the semester after next semester.* [postponement] *Because I have few courses in next semester, English course and Bahasa Malaysia, so I would be busy.* [reason]

This example from Iraqi 8 consists of 4 semantic formulas, which are direct 'no', negative willingness ability, postponement, and reason, and among them, direct 'no' and negative willingness ability are direct refusal strategies, while postponement and reason are indirect refusal strategies. (2 direct, 2 indirect)

Those two examples above show how the data is classified and calculated. And those two refusal responses contain 4 semantic formulas. In fact, some refusal responses contain more than 4 semantic formulas and some consist of less than 4 semantic formulas.

4.2.1 Preferred Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese EFL speakers

As mentioned above, 120 refusal responses were produced by 15 Chinese EFL speakers in eight situations. After calculating the semantic formulas, the findings show that 465 semantic formulas were used by Chinese EFL speakers. Moreover, all of the refusal responses contain more than one semantic formula. Among 465 semantic formulas, 64 semantic formulas were identified as "direct", 257 semantic formulas were coded as "indirect" and 144 semantic formulas were categorized as "adjuncts to refusals". As the following Table 4.1 shows, the most preferred strategies utilized by Chinese group are indirect refusal strategies with 257 occurrences and a percentage of 55.3, followed by adjuncts to refusals with 144 occurrences, and direct refusal strategies with 64 occurrences.

Table 4.1 Number of Refusal Strategies Produced by Chinese EFL Speakers

Strategies	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S5	S6	S 7	S 8	Total	Percentage
Direct	6	7	11	7	9	7	7	10	64	13.8%
Indirect	36	28	42	24	38	25	41	22	256	55.3%
Adjuncts	17	8	24	10	24	15	29	17	144	31.0%
Total	59	43	77	42	71	47	77	49	465	100%

S = Situation (i.e. S1 = Situation 1)

4.2.1.1 Direct Refusal Strategies

The data show that in the first category "direct refusal strategies", it consists of 64 semantic formulas which took up 13.8%, as shown in the above table 4.1. According to Beebe et al (1990) framework, direct strategies consist of three semantic formulas: performative, direct 'no', and negative willingness ability (see Chapter 3). In this section, the use of "negative willingness ability" is prominent compared to the "performative" and "direct 'no'". The semantic formula "negative willingness ability"

had 49 occurrences (76.6%) followed by "direct 'no'" strategies with 14 occurrences (21.9%) then "performative" strategies with only 1 occurrence (1.6%). The following table 4.2 illustrated the frequency of occurrences of direct strategy used by Chinese EFL speakers.

Table 4.2: Frequency of Direct Strategies by Chinese EFL Speakers

Direct strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Negative willingness ability	49	76.6%
Direct "no"	14	21.9%
Performative	1	1.6%
Total	64	100%

Table 4.2 shows that Chinese EFL speakers preferred to use negative willingness ability to make direct refusals rather than using direct 'no' and performative strategies, For instance:

A response from C15 in S4

My friend invites me to go for a movie [reason/explanation] *so I cannot go with you.*[negative willingness ability] *Sorry.*[statement of regret]

A response from C1 in S6

Umm, [pause filler] *my dear friend I guess I cannot join you in this coming new year* [negative willingness ability] *because I'm already invited by other Chinese friends to attend the new year party so the time is conflicting.* [reason/explanation] *So thank you so much for the invitation.*[appreciation] *I hope you guys have a very good time.* [Does not belong to any strategy]

In the above example, *"I hope you guys have a very good time"* was not coded because it does not fall under any classification of refusals of Beebe et al's (1990) framework.

An example from C13 in S2

Sorry [statement of regret]*, but I don't have time* [negative willingness ability].

An example from C9 in S5

Wow, I like party [statement of positive opinion], *but so sorry* [statement of regret]*, I can't come that day* [negative willingness ability], *my girl friend will come up from Johor to see me, so I have duty* [reason/explanation],, *really hope I can be there* [wish]

The data also show some interesting findings that when Chinese EFL speakers used the semantic formula direct "no", it was followed by an indirect strategy such as "reason" rather than accompanied by other direct strategies. In employing the semantic formula direct 'no' to make direct refusals, interlocutors used direct "no" followed by "negative willingness ability" for example "*no, I cannot*" (Sattar et al, 2010).

The following examples show the use of direct 'no' employed by Chinese EFL speakers, and it shows that Chinese participants use "reason" after the use of direct 'no'. For example:

A response from C12 in S3

No, [direct 'no'] *because I don't have a lot of time for this and I have a lot of assignments, a lot of study recently.* [reason] *So maybe next time.* [unspecific reply] *I'm so sorry for that.* [statement of regret]

Another response from C9 in S4

No la, [direct "no"] *man, my supervisor also asks me to join, but you know that day I'm not free.* [reason]

Another response from C11 in S8

No, [direct "no"] *I would like to go back to my country. I've been here for five years already.* [reason]

The semantic formula "performative", was seldom used by interlocutors due to the fact that in making refusals, it is considered as a rude way of responding interlocutors by employing "performative" (Guo, 2012). In this study, it only shows 1 occurrence among Chinese group, which cannot represent all Chinese participants.

A response from C6 in S4

> *Umm,* [pause filler] *I have to reject it about this workshop* [performative] *because I don't go out on Saturday and I need rest after a week's study.*[reason] *So maybe another time.*[unspecific reply]

The above example shows the application of "performative" to make direct refusals by one Chinese participant. From this example, it is obvious that when the participant used "performative", he also used "pause filler", "reason" and "unspecific reply" to lessen the refusal.

4.2.1.2 Indirect Refusal Strategies

As shown in table 4.1 (see section 4.2.1), there were 256 occurrences (55.3%) of indirect strategies. This means that indirect strategies were the dominant refusal strategies used by Chinese EFL speakers. In this section, the data were coded and classified into different semantic formulas based on the framework of Beebe et al (1990): statement of regret, wish, reason/explanation, statement of alternative, set condition for future/past acceptance, promise of future acceptance, statement of principle, statement of philosophy, criticize the interlocutor, let the interlocutor off the hook, self-defence, unspecific/indefinite reply, lack of enthusiasm, silence, repetition of the request, postponement.

The findings reveal that "reason/explanation" had the highest frequency of occurrences (114) and accordingly the highest percentage (44.5%), followed by "statement of regret" with 47 occurrences (18.4%), "unspecific/indefinite reply" with 25 occurrences (9.8%), "set condition for future/past acceptance", which had 16 occurrences (6.3%), "statement of alternative" with 14 occurrences (5.4%), "postponement" with 9 occurrences (3.5%), "repetition of the request" with 7 occurrences (2.7%), "wish" with 6 occurrences (2.3%), then "let the interlocutor off the hook" with 5 occurrences (1.9%), followed by "promise of future acceptance" with 4 occurrences (1.6%), "statement of principle" and "lack of enthusiasm" which had 3 occurrences (1.2%) for each, and lastly "criticize the interlocutor" with 1 occurrence (0.4%). Table 4.3 shows the frequency of indirect refusal strategies used by Chinese EFL speakers.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Indirect Strategies of Chinese EFL Speakers

Indirect Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Reason/explanation	114	44.5%
Statement of regret	47	18.4%
Unspecific/indefinite reply	25	9.8%
Set condition for future/past acceptance	16	6.3%
Statement of alternative	14	5.4%
Postponement	9	3.5%
Repetition of the request	7	2.7%
Wish	6	2.3%
Let the interlocutor off the hook	5	1.9%
Promise of future acceptance	4	1.6%
Lack of enthusiasm	3	1.2%
Statement of principle	3	1.2%
Criticize the interlocutor	1	0.4%
Total	256	100%

The table 4.1 shows clearly that the indirect refusal strategies are the most preferred refusal strategies among the Chinese EFL speakers. Table 4.3 shows that semantic

formula "reason/ explanation" with 144 occurrences (44.5%) is the most preferred indirect strategy. This means that when Chinese EFL speakers make refusals, they tend to give reasons and explanations to explain why they have to refuse in the given situations. For instance:

A response from C3 in S3

> *Thank you professor for your information.*[appreciation] *I wish I could attend it*[wish] *but unfortunately, I'm sorry* [statement of regret] *I cannot attend this meeting* [negative willingness ability] <u>*because I'm busy with my assignments.*</u> [reason/explanation] *Maybe you can inform other classmates.* [statement of alternative]

A response from C4 in S6

> *It sounds nice,* [statement of positive opinion] <u>*but I think my final exam is just after New Year so I need to take time because I'm afraid of my marks.*</u> [reason/explanation]

The second frequently used semantic formula among indirect strategies was "statement of regret" (18.4%) According to Olshtain (1985), an apology is a speech act which is intended to provide support for the hearer. In this study, apologizing or expressing regret is functioned as an indirect refusal strategy which can help to mitigate the refusal. For example:

A response from C4 in S5

> *Er,* [pause filler] *thanks for you invitation prof,* [appreciation] <u>*but I'm sorry*</u> <u>[statement of regret]</u> *because I need to go back home to celebrate Chinese new year with my family and my flight is on Sunday.* [reason/explanation]

A response from C8 in S6

> *You know we are good friends, but you know I don't like to go out with people I don't know well because I will behave very very strange.so your friends I don't know them.* [reason/explanation] <u>*so sorry.*</u>[statement of regret]

The third frequently used semantic formula was "unspecific/indefinite reply" (9.7%) which might indicate that Chinese EFL speakers tend to give implicit responses when they make refusals in order to not offend the interlocutors and also to soften their refusals. However, this also might cause some misunderstanding since the response is unspecific, indefinite and unclear. For example:

A response from C5 in S4

> *Er* [pause filler]*, I appreciate it very much. I think this kind of workshop will be helpful* [statement of positive opinion]. *How I wish I could attend it* [wish]*, but this Saturday I'm not sure I can make it because I already has an appointment with my friend but the time is not certain so I don't know if I can make it. Of course I will try my best* [unspecific reply].

The semantic formula of "Set condition for future/past acceptance" with 16 occurrences (6.3%) was employed less frequently, followed by "Statement of alternative" with 14 occurrences (5.4%). For example:

A response from Chinese 15 in S3

> *Er,* [pause filler] *I have a plan to go to Thailand this Saturday and I already booked the ticket.* [reason] *If you tell me earlier, I can postpone the trip and attend it.* [set condition for past acceptance] *So I cannot make it.* [negative willingness ability]

A response from Chinese 6 in S1

> *Er,* [pause filler] *I should say no* [direct no] *because I'm fresh and I need to prepare for this course. This course is for senior students so I think I should take some more fundamental courses first.* [reason] *Later I will choose this one.* [postponement] *And I think it will be great to suggest senior students to take this course.* [statement of alternative]

It is evident in the data that there were very few instances of semantic formulas: "Postponement" (3.5%) and "Repetition of the request" with 7 occurrences (2.7%) used by Chinese EFL speakers. For example:

Chinese 12 in S3

> *No,*[direct no] *because I don't have a lot of time for this and I have a lot of assignments, a lot of study recently.* [reason] <u>*So maybe next time.*</u> [postponement]*I'm so sorry for that.* [statement of regret]

A response from Chinese 14 in S1

> <u>*Umm,*</u>[pause filler] <u>*this course?*</u> [repetition] *but actually this course is not the field of my study. My study is coursework but not in academic world* [reason] *so you can suggest this course to some research students.* [Statement of alternative]

This is followed by semantic formula of "wish" with 6 occurrences (2.3%), "let the interlocutor off the hook" (1.9%), and "promise of future acceptance" (1.6%) which were seldom used by Chinese EFL speakers. For example:

A response from C3 in S3

> *Thank you professor for your information.*[appreciation] <u>*I wish I could attend it*</u>[wish] *but unfortunately, I'm sorry* [statement of regret] *I cannot attend this meeting* [negative willingness ability] *because I'm busy with my assignments.* [reason/explanation] *Maybe you can inform other classmates.* [statement of alternative]

A response Chinese 2 in S2

> *Er,* [pause filler] *but for me because I have a, still have some core courses left so I want to finish that first.* [reason] <u>*So don't worry, I have my own plan.*</u> [let the interlocutor off the hook]

A response from Chinese 7 in S1

> *Um,* [pause filler] *but I think I should prepare first then I attend the course.*
> [reason] *I will prepare first then I will attend it after next semester.* [promise of
> future acceptance]

The rest of the semantic formulas "Lack of enthusiasm" and "Statement of principle" with 3 occurrences each (1.2%), and "Criticize the interlocutor" and "Silence" with 1 occurrence each (0.4%) were used limitedly.

It is worth mentioning that none of the Chinese EFL speakers used the following refusal strategies: "statement of philosophy", "threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester", "guilt trip", "request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping of holding the request", "self-defense", "topic switch", and "joke".

4.2.1.3 Adjuncts to refusals

The occurrence of adjuncts to the refusals is the second frequently used strategies with 144 occurrences (31.0%) (see table 4.1). The adjuncts to refusals consist of four semantic formulas such as: "statement of positive opinion", "appreciation", "pause filler" and "statement of empathy" (see chapter 3).

The findings of the study show that pause fillers are used more frequently as compared to the other semantic formulas of adjuncts to refusals. "Pause filler" had 57 occurrences, which is equivalent to (39.6%), followed by "statement of the positive opinion" with 46 occurrences (31.9%), and lastly "appreciation" which had 41 occurrences (28.5%). None of the Chinese EFL speakers used the adjunct of "statement of empathy". The following table illustrates the frequency of adjuncts to refusals used by the Chinese EFL speakers.

Table 4.4: Frequency of Adjuncts to Refusals of Chinese EFL Speakers

Adjuncts to refusals	Frequency	Percentage
Pause filler	57	39.6%
Statement of positive opinion	46	31.9%
Appreciation	41	28.5%
Total	144	100%

The semantic formula "pause filler" is the most frequently used strategy by Chinese group compared to the other two semantic formulas. In linguistics, pause filler has different meanings in different fields of study. According to Clark and Fox Tree (2002, p.97), "fillers served a communicative function, having a place in the speaker's vocabulary. Nonetheless, they are not for primary message in a communication" Nevertheless, according to Corley and Stewart (2008, p.592), "fillers in the sense of communication function is not that certain. Fillers are used when the speaker is uncertain about his next utterance or he has choices to make in his utterance, but this does not prove that the speaker signals there will be a delay in his speech due to an uncertainity." However, in this study, pause filler refers to an adjunct to refusals according to the classification of refusal strategies (Beebe et al, 1990).

The findings also revealed that Chinese EFL speakers like to use "pause filler" before they start their main responses. For instance:

A response from C2 in S5

> *Umm.*[pause filler] *thanks for your inviting professor,* [appreciation] *but this Sunday I cannot join you* [negative willingness ability] *because I have an appointment with my friend, which is important to me.* [reason/explanation] *If you told me earlier, I might attend.* [set condition for past acceptance] *I'm so sorry.* [statement of regret]

The findings further show that "statement of positive opinion" is the second preferred sematic formula used by Chinese EFL speakers. They usually state their positive opinion about the suggestions, requests, invitations and offers before the main refusals. For example:

A response from C5 in S6

> *I'd like to* [statement of positive opinion] *but you know I live quite far from here. If I attend this party, it will take quite a long time and it will become depressed. It will be very inconvenient for me to go back home.*[reason/explanation]

Another response from C3 in S2

> *I would like to enroll research method course* [statement of positive opinion] *but actually I did that last semester.* [reason]

Meanwhile, the use of "appreciation" was also considerable with 41 occurrences (28.5%). Chinese EFL speakers also tended to express their gratitude towards the interlocutor when they were making refusals, which might make interlocutor feel comfortable and save the positive face of interlocutor. For example:

A response from C3 in S5

> *Er,* [pause filler] *thank you for your inviting professor.* [appreciation] *But you know Chinese culture, we celebrate Chinese New Year.* [reason/explanation] *So I'm so sorry.* [statement of regret]

Another response from C9 in S3

> *Thanks for telling me this workshop,* [appreciation] *but this Saturday I need go back my country, it is independence day, you know country for me very important,* [reason] *sorry* [statement of regret] *for can't join the workshop,* [negative willingness ability] *so sorry.* [statement of regret]

4.2.2 Preferred Refusal Strategies Used by Iraqi EFL speakers

120 refusal responses were produced by 15 Iraqi participants in 8 situations. All the 120 refusals were analysed and categorized into three categories "direct", "indirect", and "adjunct to the refusals" based on the framework of Beebe et al (1990). The number of semantic formulas and the length of refusals varied from one response to another. 387 semantic formulas were produced by the Iraqi EFL speakers in the 8 given situations. More specifically, 98 semantic formulas were categorized as "direct" strategies, 203 semantic formulas were coded as "indirect" strategies, and 86 semantic formulas were categorized as "adjuncts to refusals". The following table illustrates the frequency of refusal strategies produced by Iraqi EFL speakers.

Table 4.5 Frequency of Refusals Strategies Produced by Iraqi EFL Speakers

Strategies	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S5	S6	S 7	S 8	Total	Percentage
Direct	13	11	12	14	13	11	15	9	98	25.3%
Indirect	29	22	28	21	31	25	26	21	203	52.5%
Adjuncts	5	10	8	12	14	14	9	14	86	22.2%
Total	47	43	48	47	58	50	50	44	387	100%

S = Situation (i.e. S1 = Situation 1)

4.2.2.1 Direct Strategies

For the Iraqi EFL speakers, 98 semantic formulas were categorized as direct strategies which is equivalent to 25.3% as shown in the above table (see table 4.5). These direct strategies consisted of three semantic formulas: "direct 'no'", "negative willingness ability", and "performative" based on Beebe et al (1990) (see chapter 3). "negative willingness ability" is the most frequently used semantic formula among direct strategies with 88 occurrences (89.8%), followed by "direct 'no'" with 10 occurrences (10.2%). None of the Iraqi EFL speakers employed "performative" semantic formula to

make direct refusals. The frequency of direct refusal strategies occurrences is illustrated in the following table.

Table 4.6: Frequency of Direct Strategies Used by Iraqi EFL Speakers

Direct	Frequency	Percentage
Negative willingness ability	88	89.8%
Direct "no"	10	10.2%
Total	98	100%

The above table clearly shows that "negative willingness ability" is the most frequently used semantic formula among direct refusal strategies for Iraqi EFL speakers which somehow indicates that Iraqi participants tended to make their refusal clear, at the same time, less offensive by avoiding the use of "performative" in making direct refusals, For instance:

A response from Iraqi 1 in S1

> *Er,* [pause filler] *Prof, but I think for me, I'm so sorry* [statement of regret] *I cannot take this course next semester,* [negative willingness ability] *because I have other courses to do it and surely I cannot all these courses together,* [reason/explanation] *Surely I will do it after next semester.* [promise of future acceptance]

Another response from Iraqi 9 in S4
> *Well,* [pause filler] *I'm sorry.* [statement of regret] *I don't think I can make it on Saturday* [negative willingness ability] *because I'm living far.* [reason]

4.2.2.2 Indirect Strategies

The findings reveal that Iraqi EFL speakers employed a high number of indirect refusal strategies with 203 occurrences (52.5 %). The indirect strategies consist of 14 semantic formulas such as: statement of regret, wish, reason/explanation, statement of alternative, set condition for future/past acceptance, promise of future acceptance, statement of principle, statement of philosophy, criticize the interlocutor, let the interlocutor off the

hook, self-defence, unspecific/indefinite reply, lack of enthusiasm, postponement (see chapter 3).

The findings show that "reason/explanation" is frequently used by Iraqi EFL speakers with 115 occurrences (56.7%), followed by "statement of regret" with 57 occurrences (28.1%), "unspecific/indefinite" reply with 14 occurrences (6.9%), "promise of future acceptance" with 4 occurrences (2.0%), "wish" and "criticize the interlocutor" with 2 occurrences (1.0%) each, and lastly "set condition for future/past acceptance", "let interlocutor off the hook" and "postponement" with 1 occurrence (0.5%) each. The following table illustrates the frequency of indirect refusal strategies occurrences produced by Iraqi EFL speakers.

Table 4.7 Frequency of Indirect Strategies by Iraqi EFL Speakers

Indirect Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Reason/explanation	115	56.7%
Statement of regret	57	28.1%
Unspecific/indefinite reply	14	6.9%
Lack of enthusiasm	6	3.0%
Promise of future acceptance	4	2.0%
Criticize the interlocutor	2	1.0%
Wish	2	1.0%
Set condition for future/past acceptance	1	0.5%
Let the interlocutor off the hook	1	0.5%
Postponement	1	0.5%
Total	203	100%

The findings of the present study show that "reason/explanation" is the most frequently used semantic formula for Iraqi EFL speakers among indirect refusal strategies. The prominent use of this semantic formula could be considered as a reflection of the Iraqi culture to some extent. This means, it might be interpreted as a rude behaviour to refuse without providing reasons or explanations. The use of

"reason/explanation" might also help in maintaining the social relationship among the interlocutors. For instance:

A response from Iraqi 13 in S6

> *Thanks for you invitation* [appreciation] *but I really I have to do my assignments.* [reason]

A response from Iraqi 12 in S1

> *Sorry professor.*[statement of regret] *You know, in my master I already attended this course.* [reason]

The second frequently used indirect refusal strategy as shown in the above table is "statement of regret". The findings show that Iraqi EFL speakers use words like "sorry" or other expressions of apologizing so as to save the face of interlocutors and try to show consolation to them. The findings also reveal that Iraqi EFL speakers used "statement of regret" before they made direct refusals. For example:

A response from Iraqi 13 in S7

> *Actually I have a lot of assignments to do because I want to get high marks.* [reason/explanation] *So sorry* [statement of regret] *I cannot go.* [negative willingness ability]

Another response from Iraqi 4 in S3

> *Sorry Dr.* [statement of regret] *I have to pick my wife to the hospital so at that time I think it's not suitable for me to attend this workshop for this Saturday.* [reason] *So in the future, there are the same workshop, I will attend it.*[set condition for future acceptance]

The third frequently used semantic formula is "unspecific/indefinite reply" with 14 occurrences (6.9%). Though it is the third frequently used semantic formula but it is evident that is has very less frequency in comparison with the "reason/explanation" and "statement of regret". For example:

A response from Iraqi 15 in S7

> *I cannot take it.* [negative willingness ability] *I might graduate this year and I might not be in Malaysia.* [indefinite reply] *Sorry.*[statement of regret]

The semantic formulas of "Lack of enthusiasm" with 6 occurrences (3.0%) and "Promise of future acceptance" with 4 occurrences (2.0%) were also less frequently used by the Iraqi EFL speakers, for example:

A response from Iraqi 3 in S1

> *Well*[pause filler] *I guess I'm not so interested in this one,*[lack of enthusiasm] *because I have no idea about it and I've already take my BA.*[reason]

A response from Iraqi 3 in S5

> *I'm so sorry* [statement of regret] *that I can't make it this time* [negative willingness ability] *because I'm going to the airport for getting my parents from airport.* [reason/explanation] *So next time I promise.*[promise of future acceptance]

It is evident in the data that semantic formulas of "Criticize the interlocutor" and "Wish" with 2 occurrences each (1.0) and "Set condition for future/past acceptance", "Let the interlocutor off the hook" and "Postponement" with 1 occurrence each (0.5%) had a very limited frequency. In fact, their usage is unremarkable in the data.

The findings revealed that none of the Iraqi EFL speakers used the following refusal strategies: "Statement of philosophy", "Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester", "Guilt trip", "Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping of holding the request", "Self-defense", "Topic switch", and "Joke".

4.2.2.3 Adjuncts to refusals

The refusal responses produced by Iraqi EFL speakers showed that "adjuncts to refusal" has 86 occurrences which occupied 22.2 % of the total refusal strategies (see Table 4.5). The adjuncts to refusals divided into four semantic formulas such as: "statement of positive opinion", "statement of empathy", "appreciation", and "pause filler".

There was no significant difference between the frequency of "statement of positive opinion" and "appreciation" in that "statement of positive opinion" had 32 occurrences and "appreciation" had 30 occurrences, followed by "pause filler" with 24 occurrences. None of the Iraqi EFL speakers has been use the "statement of empathy". The frequency of adjuncts to refusal occurrences is illustrated in the following table.

Table 4.8: Frequency of Adjuncts to Refusals by Iraqi EFL Speakers

Adjuncts to refusals	Frequency	Percentage
Statement of positive opinion	32	37.2%
Appreciation	30	34.9%
Pause filler	24	27.9%
Total	86	100%

The findings show that "statement of positive opinion" and "appreciation" were preferred by the Iraqi EFL speakers, however, "pause filler" was also frequently used by Iraqi group. For example:

A response from Iraqi 13 in S2

> *Er.* [pause filler] *I have to finish all other courses so I will leave it to last semester.* [reason/explanation] *Sorry.* [statement of regret]

A response from Iraqi 14 in S4

> *I think this workshop is very important and related to my research.* [statement of positive opinion] *But I have to attend another workshop, and I already gave my promise* [reason/explanation] *so I cannot make it.* [negative willingness ability]

A response from Iraqi 13 in S6

> *Thanks for you invitation* [appreciation] *but I really I have to do my assignments.*[reason/explanation]

4.3 The Similarities and Differences of Refusal Strategies Between Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers

This section examines the refusal responses of the Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers with regard to the eliciting speech acts (i.e., suggestions, requests, invitations and offers) and social variables including social power, the status of interlocutor (i.e., higher, equal) and social distance, relationship between the speaker and hearer (i.e., not close; close). In this section, the semantic formulas employed by Chinese and Iraqis EFL speakers in making refusals were, firstly, coded and classified as "direct refusals", "indirect refusals" and "adjuncts to refusals" based on the taxonomy from Beebe et al. (1990). Secondly, the refusal responses were examined in terms of those three general categories, and lastly, the semantic formulas under each category were further analysed to compare the similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers.

4.3.1 Suggestions

In this section, two situations (situation 1 and 2) were analysed. The eliciting speech acts of these two situations are suggestions but with different "social power" and "social distance". The differences and similarities between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers were compared in terms of frequency of semantic formulas, order of semantic formulas and content of semantic formulas.

4.3.1.1 Analysis of Situation 1

Situation1: A suggestion from a higher status with high social distance interlocutor

In situation 1, a postgraduate student (lower status), has to refuse the suggestion (taking the research method course) of the professor (higher status). Indeed there's a high social distance between student and professor.

Both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers employed direct, indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals to realize their refusals. The total number of strategies used by Chinese and Iraqis EFL speakers with 59 and 47 occurrences. It is evident that Chinese group employed more adjuncts to refusals while Iraqi group used more direct strategies compared to Chinese group. The following table 4.9 illustrates the refusal strategies employed by both groups.

Table 4.9: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in Situation1

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	6 (10%)	36 (61%)	17 (29%)	59 (100%)
Iraqis	13 (27.7%)	29 (61.7%)	5 (10%)	47 (100%)

4.3.1.1.1 Frequency of Semantic Formulas

In this situation, similar semantic formulas were used by both groups, especially, direct strategy. Both Chinese and Iraqis EFL speakers employed only "direct no" and "negative willingness ability" to make direct refusals. The findings show that both group use the same frequency of direct "no" with 2 occurrences. However, Iraqis are more direct than Chinese due to the high percentage of "negative willingness ability" used in making refusal. It means that Iraqis usually use direct strategies to make explicit refusals. It's worth noting that both groups of participants use "non-performative" (direct "no", negative willingness ability) by saying "*I cannot make it*" instead of

"performative" by saying "*I refuse…*", which can help mitigate the straightforwardness of their refusals.

Table 4.10: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in   Situation 1

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	4	6.8%	11	24.3%
	Direct "no"	2	3.4%	2	4.3%
Indirect	Reason/explanation	13	22%	13	27.7%
	St. alternative	5	8.5%	-	-
	St. of regret	4	6.8%	7	14.9%
	Set condition for future/past acceptance	4	6.8%	-	-
	Indefinite reply	3	5.1%	3	6.4%
	Postponement	3	5.1%	-	-
	Promise of future acceptance	2	3.4%	2	4.3%
	Lack of enthusiasm	1	1.7%	2	4.3%
	Repetition	1	1.7%	-	-
	Criticize the interlocutor	-	-	1	2.1%
	Let the interlocutor off the hook	-	-	1	2.1%
Adjuncts	Pause filler	13	22%	3	6.4%
	St. of positive opinion	3	5.1%	1	2.1%
	Appreciation	1	1.7%	1	2.1%
Total		59	100%	47	100%

As for the indirect strategies, "reason/explanation" is the most frequent semantic formula used by both Chinese (22%) and Iraqis (22.7%) EFL speakers. It means both groups tend to provide reasons to explain why they have to refuse the suggestion in order to make the interlocutor feel comfortable. The findings reveal that Iraqis use more "statement of regret" when they perform refusals compared to their Chinese counterparts (14.9%, 6.8%), which indicate that Iraqi group attached great importance to maintain harmony in human relationships because in their culture making a refusal without expressing regret is considered impolite (Sattar et al, 2010). One the other hand,

Chinese group frequently use "statement of alternative", which is not found in Iraqi group. It indicates that Chinese participants are inclined to suggest alternatives or any other possibilities to maintain the positive face of the interlocutor (Chen et al, 1995).

Apart from these indirect strategies mentioned above, Chinese group also utilize "set condition for future acceptance", and "postponement" whereas none of Iraqi EFL speakers employ these two formulas in making refusal.

The data show that both Chinese and Iraqis EFL speakers use adjuncts to refusals. Both groups of participants employ "statement of positive opinion", "appreciation" and "pause filler". Although they use the same types of semantic formulas, some similarities and differences between these two groups are also found with regard to the frequency and percentage of each semantic formula. The findings show that "pause filler" is used most frequently (22%) by Chinese respondents under adjuncts to refusals, which is evident since Chinese group usually start their response with "pause filler" by saying like "er, um". To some extent, it indicates their efforts to devise their responses before coming to the main refusal part, for example *"er, dear professor, I would like to…"*. In addition, only few occurrences of "statement of positive opinion" (3, 5.1%) and "appreciation" (1, 1.7%) are used by Chinese group. Whereas, Iraqi respondents use these three formulas less frequently compared to Chinese respondents. The frequency of semantic formulas used by both groups is illustrated in the table 4.10.

The data show that Chinese tend to be less direct in refusing a interlocutor with higher status and high social distance, meanwhile, they are unconsciously start with "pause filler". Besides, a wider variety of indirect refusal strategies are employed by

Chinese group in this situation compared to Iraqi group and the most two prominent semantic formulas are "reason/explanation" and "statement of alternative". Iraqi group are inclined to be direct due to the high percentage use of direct strategies. Moreover, they use less indirect strategies compared to their Chinese counterparts, and the semantic formulas of "reason/explanation" (27.7%) and "statement of regret" (14.9%) have been used frequently.

4.3.1.1.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

The order of semantic formulas was explained by Beebe et al (1990, p.57):

"If a respondent refused an invitation to a friend's house for dinner, saying "I'm sorry, I already have plans. Maybe next time," this was coded as: [statement of regret] [reason] [postponement]. Then the order of semantic formulas used in each refusals can be coded: [statement of regret] was first, [reason] second, and [postponement] third." In this study, the analysis of the order of semantic formula was based on Al-Eryani (2007). The total number of each semantic formula used in every position for each of the two groups of participants was counted. Then, they were presented based on the occurrences of semantic formulas in every position. For example, pause filler was used by 13 Chinese participants, statement of positive opinion was used by 1 Chinese and direct "no" was used by 1 Chinese in the first position.

Table 4.11 illustrates the order of semantic formulas used by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. The findings show that the length of each response is varied so some of the responses are lengthier, in that they contain more than three semantic formulas, and some responses are briefer with two or three semantic formulas. In this study, only the first five orders of semantic formulas are listed since most of the refusal responses have less than five semantic formulas. Although few responses contain more

than five semantic formulas but there were not listed because they do not represent the

majority of the participants.

Table 4.11: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 1

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (13) St.positive opinion (1) Direct no (1)	Reason (6) St.regret (2) St.postive opinion (2) Direct no (1) Appreciation (1) Repetition (1) Postponement (1) NWA (1)	Reason(6) Set condition (1) Promise (1) Indefinite reply(1) NWA (1) Lack of enthusiasm (1)	NWA (2) St.alternative (2) Promise (1) Reason (1) Postponement (1) Set condition (1)	St. alternative(2) Set condtion (2) St.regret(1) Indefinite reply (1)
Iraqis (n=15)	NWA (4) PF (3) St.regret (2) Reason (2) Direct no (2) St.postive opinion (1) Lack of enthusiasm (1)	Reason (5) St. regret (3) NWA (2) Indefinite reply(2) Appreciation (1) Lack of enthusiasm (1) Criticize (1)	NWA (4) Reason (3) Promise (1) St.regret (1)	Reason (3) Let the interlocutor off the hook (1)	Promise(1) St.regret(1)

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

In this situation, some similarities and differences are found between these two

groups in terms of the order of semantic formulas. For the first position, 13 Chinese

participants out of 15 use "pause filler", but there is diversity of semantic formulas used

by Iraqi group where 4 of them use "negative willingness ability" and 3 of them place

"pause filler" in the first position. For example:

A response from Chinese 2

Er, [pause filler] *actually this semester my plan already settled.* [reason] *If you suggested me earlier, I will follow it.* [set condition for past acceptance] *So I cannot be enrolled in this course* [Negative Willingness Ability] *so I feel very sorry.* [Statement of regret]

The above example from Chinese 2 consists of 5 semantic formulas and the order of

semantic formulas is as follows:

| **pause filler** ➡ | reason ➡ | set condition ➡ | NWA ➡ | St. regret |
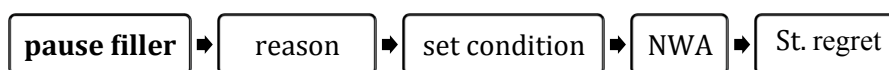
A response from Iraqi 13

I'm not going for register this course. [NWA] *I'm sorry.* [St.regret]

This example from Iraqi group includes two semantic formulas and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| **NWA** ➡ | St.regret |

Another response from Iraqi 3

Well, [pause filler] *I guess I'm not so interested in this one,* [lack of enthusiasm] *because I have no idea about it and I've already take my BA, so I will go for another subject.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| **pause filler** ➡ | lack of enthusiasm ➡ | Reason |
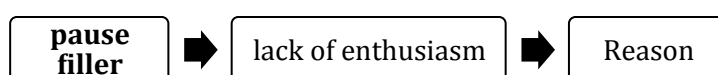
Regarding the second position, the majority of Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers tend to use "reason". In addition, other semantic formulas are also employed by some of the participants in the second position (see table 4.11). For example:

A response from Chinese 7

Um, [pause filler] *but I think I should prepare first then I attend the course.* [reason] *I will prepare first then I will attend it after next semester.* [promise of future acceptance]

This example contains three semantic formulas and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| pause filler ➡ | **reason** ➡ | promise of future acceptance |

A response from Iraqi 11

I don't think I need to take it. [NWA] *I already took it twice before so I think I'm ok with research methodology,* [reason] *I don't think I need to take it anymore.* [NWA]

This example includes three semantic formulas and it's interesting that the first and the third position of this refusal response are the same, that is, negative willingness ability. The order of semantic formulas is shown below:

NWA ➡ **reason** ➡ NWA
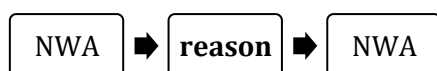
Most Chinese place "reason" in the third position, which is the same to the second position. However, most of Iraqis use "negative willingness ability" in the third position, which is the same as the first position. As it is shown in table 4.11, some of the participants use other semantic formulas in the third position. For example:

A response from Chinese 14

Umm,[pause filler] *this course?* [repetition] *but actually this course is not the field of my study. My study is coursework but not in academic world* [reason] *so you can suggest this course to some research students.* [St.alternative]

This refusal response contains four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas are shown as follows:

Pause filler ➡ repetition ➡ **reason** ➡ St.alternatve

An response from Iraqi 5

Well, [pause filler] *prof. I really appreciate your suggestion* [appreciation] *but I need to tell you that I won't be able to take it next semester* [negative willingness ability] *because I have to go back to visit my family.* [reason] *I think the other semester I can maybe enroll to, I can take this course, the research methodology course.* [indefinite reply]

This example consists of four semantic formulas and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

pause filler ➡ appreciation ➡ **negative willingness ability** ➡ reason ➡ indefinite reply
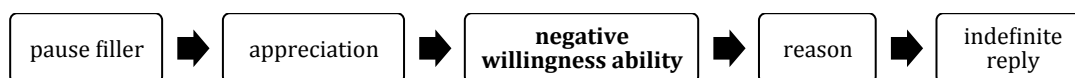
In the fourth and fifth position, the findings show that there is no majority use of any semantic formula in these two positions for Chinese, in that various semantic formulas are applied in the fourth and fifth positions and accordingly none of the

semantic formula can be representative of all Chinese participants. Most of the Iraqi responses are briefer than Chinese, which mostly consists of three semantic formulas. Few of the refusal responses from Iraqis reach to four or five semantic formulas. The details of order of semantic formulas from both groups are shown in Table 4.11.

The findings reveal that in refusing an interlocutor with higher status and high social distance, Chinese group usually place "pause filler" in the first position, followed by "reason" in both second and third position, in that some of the participants use reason in the second position while others in the third position. Moreover, the refusal responses from Chinese group are lengthier than Iraqi group. Most Chinese refusal responses contain more than three semantic formulas. As for the Iraqi group, most of the refusal responses are briefer, which consists of three semantic formulas. They employ "negative willingness ability" in the first and third position, and "reason" in the second position.

One interesting finding is that both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers like to make direct refusals, followed by "statement of regret" and vice versa, which indicates that both groups of participants attempt to express their regrets before or after they make direct refusals to save the face of interlocutor and to further maintain their relationship.

4.3.1.1.3. Content of Semantic Formulas

Many semantic formulas are used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. However, only the frequently used semantic formulas are analyzed since some of them have very limited use and they do not represent all participants. The findings reveal that both groups of participants use terms of address (professor, doctor) when they refuse an interlocutor with higher status and high social distance (situation1), which to some

extent indicates that both groups of participants are sensitive with social power and social distance so they try to use terms of address to show their respect and politeness. Satter et al (2010) also found that a speaker normally uses a title, when s/he is aware of the social status of the addressee, and a name (title) when s/he knows the addressee personally. For example:

A response from Chinese 1

Er, dear professor, I would like to follow your suggestion, but currently, I'm taking too many courses I have different subjects so it's really difficult to take research methodology course this semester. So I would like to select it after next semester. Maybe you can suggest my other coursemates to take this course.

A response from Iraqi 4

Sorry prof, I cannot attend this course because I already took it my master. I took so many research courses and research method courses

Both groups of participants used "reason" most frequently, and both groups provided personal reasons when they made refusal but the content of "reason" is different. More specifically, most Chinese respondents gave the reason like "already took other courses" while most Iraqis provided the reason like "I took this course before". For example:

A response from Chinese 8

Oh dear professor, I think it's a good idea but you know for next semester I have chosen some my favorite courses so I don't have so much time. [reason] If you informed me earlier about this course information, I would like to choose this course. Maybe I think I will take this course after next semester.

A response from Iraqi 15

No, I don't need it because I took it in my master degree [reason] so I don't have to repeat it here.

In the above examples, Chinese 8 provided the reason that he has chosen some of his favorite courses so he does not have much time, while Iraqi 15 gave the reason thathe took research method course in his master degree.

In addition, Chinese participants gave alternatives to mitigate their refusals by saying like "suggest this course to other classmates or course mates". According to Chen et al (1995, p.133) alternatives are usually used to "soften the threatening power of refusals". For example:

A response from Chinese 4

Er, I'm sorry. But I think my course schedule is too full so I'm afraid I'm not able to take this course, so next time, we can discuss before I make my plans and some of my other classmates might need your suggestion.

Another response from Chinese 6

Er, I should say no because I'm fresh and I need to prepare for this course. This course is for senior students so I think I should take some more fundamental courses first. Later I will choose this one. And I think it will be great to suggest senior students to take this course.

In the above two examples, Chinese 4 suggested an alternative by saying "*some of my other classmates might need your suggestion*" and Chinese 6 suggested an alternative by saying "*I think it will be great to suggest senior students to take this course*". It showed Chinese made refusals in a very indirect and polite way.

On the other hand, Iraqi group used "statement of regret" frequently. According to Olshtain & Blum (1985), expressing regret function as an indirect refusal which politely mitigates the refusal to accept the suggestion, invitation, offer or request. Iraqi participants expressed their regret and feelings of sorry for making indirect refusals by saying "I'm so sorry". For example:

A response from Iraqi 7

I'm not going for register this course. I'm sorry.

Another response from Iraqi 12

Sorry professor. You know, in my master I already attended this course. So sorry.

4.3.1.2 Analysis of Situation 2

Situation 2: A suggestion from an Equal status with Low social distance interlocutor

In situation 2, the participant and his Malaysian classmate have equal status and they are close to each other. The responder has to refuse the suggestion (taking the research method course instead of the other one) of Malaysian classmate.

The findings of the study reveal that both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use direct, indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals to refuse their interlocutor. The total number of refusal strategies applied by both groups of respondents is the same (43). However, Chinese group (65.1%) use indirect refusal strategies more frequently compared to their Iraqi counterparts (51.2%), while Iraqi group employ direct refusal strategies more frequently. Surprisingly, Iraqis (23.3%) also apply "adjuncts to refusals" more frequently than Chinese (18.6%). The following table illustrates the number of refusal strategies employed by both groups.

Table 4.12: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 2

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	7 (16.3%)	28 (65.1%)	8 (18.6%)	43 (100%)
Iraqis	11 (21.5%)	22 (51.2%)	10 (23.3%)	43 (100%)

The findings reveal that Chinese participants are more sensitive with social power, because in refusing suggestion (situation 1 and 2), Chinese group use more adjuncts to refusal in the first situation to refuse a higher status interlocutor than to refuse an interlocutor with equal status as in situation two. It also might result from the social distance, in that in situation 2, the Chinese respondents are closer to the interlocutor and accordingly they refuse in a casual way without making as much efforts as refusing a distant interlocutor, which is evident in their interview responses. For example:

Interview question 2: Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?

An interview response from C1

> *Yes, it's a habit for me to behave more polite to people not close to me and behave straightforward to familiar ones.*

Another interview response from C2

> *Yes, if somebody you are not familiar with, you don't know him well, so you must be careful when you refuse.*

The total number of refusal strategies employed by Iraqis shows that social power or social distance has no obvious impact on how they perform refusals in this situation, since the total number refusal strategies used by Iraqis in situation 1 and 2 is 47 and 43 (see table 4.9 and table 4.12). The data from both groups of participants are analyzed in detail in the coming section in terms of frequency of semantic formula, order of semantic formula and content of semantic formula.

4.3.1.2.1 Frequency of Semantic Formulas

In this situation, the total number of semantic formulas used by Chinese and Iraqis is the same (see Table 4.13). Meanwhile, Chinese employ less semantic formulas compared to situation 1 (S1, 59; S2, 43). The findings show that in refusing suggestion, Chinese group are inclined to utilize more semantic formulas to refuse a higher status and high social distance (situation 1) compared to refusing an interlocutor with equal status and low social distance (situation 2).

Table 4.13: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 2

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	5	11.6%	10	23.3%
	Direct "no"	2	4.7%	1	2.3%
Indirect	Reason/explanation	15	34.9%	15	34.9%
	Let the interlocutor off the hook	5	11.6%	-	-
	Indefinite reply	3	7.0%	2	4.7%
	St. of regret	2	4.7%	2	4.7%
	Repetition	2	4.7%	-	-
	Postponement	1	2.3%	-	-
	Lack of enthusiasm	-	-	1	2.3%
	Promise of future acceptance	-	-	1	2.3%
	Wish	-	-	1	2.3%
Adjuncts	Pause filler	5	11.6%	5	11.6%
	St. of positive opinion	3	7.0%	3	7.0%
	Appreciation	-	-	2	4.7%
Total		43	100%	43	100%

Both groups employ "direct no" and " negative willingness ability" to make direct refusals, but Iraqis (23.3%) use "negative willingness ability" more frequently than their Chinese counterparts (11.6%). It seems that Iraqi group is more direct than Chinese group in refusing a suggestion (both situation 1 and 2). Still, both groups of respondents avoid using "performative" to make direct refusals.

For the indirect refusals strategies, "reason/explanation" is used most frequently by both groups of respondents (34.9%). Both groups usually provide reason when they make refusals to a suggestion regardless of the social power and social distance. According to Sattar et al (2010), for Iraqis, it's not easy to make a refusal towards a suggestion by only making direct refusals, so they usually come up with convincing reasons to mitigate their refusals. Except "reason/explanation", the rest semantic formulas are not used in a high frequency by Iraqi group, while for Chinese group, the

second frequently used semantic formulas is "let the interlocutor off the hook". For example:

A response Chinese 2

Er, [pause filler] *but for me because I have a, still have some core courses left so I want to finish that first.* [reason] <u>*So don't worry, I have my own plan.*</u> <u>[let the interlocutor off the hook]</u>

This semantic formula "let the interlocutor off the hook" is used by Chinese only with an equal status and low social distance interlocutor. They didn't apply this semantic formula in situation 1. To some extent, it might indicate that Chinese participants are in full awareness of social power and social distance.

As for adjuncts to refusals, both Chinese (11.6%) and Iraqis (11.6%) use "pause filler" most frequently. Iraqi group also use " appreciation" (4.7%) and "statement of positive opinion" (7.0%) with low occurrences, while Chinese group did not use "appreciation" at all. The frequency of semantic formulas used by both groups is shown in table 4.13.

The data reveal that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use less indirect strategies in refusing a suggestion in this situation (equal status, low social distance) compared to situation 1 (higher status, high social distance). There is a low frequency in the use of "statement of regret" by Iraqi group, which, in reverse, is applied substantially in situation 1. Whereas, Chinese did not employ "statement of alternative" to refuse their interlocutor in this situation but they use it frequently in situation 1 (8.5%, see table 4.10)). It indicates that social power and social distance affects the refusal responses produced by both groups of respondents which is evident in their interview response. All of interview respondents (5 Chinese and 5 Iraqis) mentioned that they consider the

social status and distance in making refusal. Their refusal is different when the social status and distance of interlocutor changes. For example:

A response from Chinese 4 and Iraqis 1 in Q1:

Q: Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role- play in each situation?

Chinese 4: Yes, when the status of interlocutor changes, my way of response also changes in correspondence. For example, if the interlocutor has a higher ranking than me, my responses may be more cautious and polite. Vice versa.

Iraqi 1: Yes, I consider the social status, if the interlocutor is higher status than me, my answer is as careful as I can and I did my best to be polite.

A response from Chinese 5 and Iraqis 4 in Q2:

Q: Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role- play situations?

Chinese 5: Yes, the social distance is very important, because I will use different words to refuse with different social distance.

Iraqi 4: Yes, close friend are easy to refuse, but supervisor or lecturers are so difficult to refuse.

4.3.1.2.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

As it is shown in Table 4.14, there are some similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in terms of the order of semantic formulas.

Table 4.14: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 2

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (5) Reason (5) St.regret (2) Repetition (2) St.psotive opinion (1)	Reason/ex (7) Let the interlocutor off the hook (3) St.postive opinion (2) Direct no (2) Postponement (1)	Reason (4) Indefinite reply (2) NWA (2) Let the interlocutor off the hook (1)	NWA (2)	Let the interlocutor off the hook (1)
Iraqis (n=15)	PF (5) St.postive opinion (3) Reason (2) St.regret (1) Direct no (1) NWA (1) Wish (1) Indefinite reply (1)	Reason (6) NWA (6) Indefinite reply (1) Appreciation (1) Lack of enthusiasm (1)	Reason (6) NWA (2) Promise (1) St.regret (1) Appreciation (1)	Reason (1) NWA (1)	

Note : PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

The results also show that, in the second position, 7 out of 15 Chinese respondents use "reason". By contrast, Iraqi group place both "reason" and "negative willingness ability" in the second position. (see Table 4.14) For example:

A response from Chinese 14

I would like to enroll research method course [statement of positive opinion] *but actually I did that last semester.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

statement of positive opinion ➡ **reason**
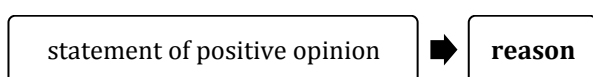
A response from Iraqi 13

Er, [pause filler] *I have to finish all other courses so I will leave it to last semester.* [reason] *Sorry.* [statement of regret]

The above example has three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

```
┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ pause filler │  ➡  │    reason    │  ➡  │ statement of regret │
└──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
```

Another response from Iraqi 15

I'm sorry [statement of regret] *I will not take it* [NWA] *because I took it in my master degree so no need to do it again.* [reason]

This example is made up of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

```
┌────────────────────┐      ┌────────┐      ┌────────┐
│ statement of regret │  ➡  │  NWA   │  ➡  │ reason │
└────────────────────┘      └────────┘      └────────┘
```

However, for the third position of semantic formulas, both Chinese and Iraqis use "reason", which is the same to the second position. The findings show that most Iraqis use "reason" in the third position. Admittedly, there are some other semantic formulas used by both groups of participants in the third position. For example:

A response from Chinese 6

Research method course? [repetition] *It's very useful,* [statement of positive opinion] *but I've already taken this course last semester and I still remember what I learnt at that time. So I better save this time for other workshops or courses.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

```
┌────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────────┐      ┌────────┐
│ repetition │  ➡  │ statement of positive opinion │  ➡  │ reason │
└────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────┘      └────────┘
```
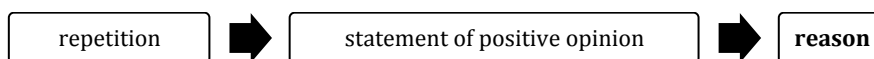
A response from Iraqi 8

No [direct "no"] *I don't need such course* [NWA] *because it is not necessary to my study.* [reason]

This example are made up of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

```
┌────────────┐      ┌───────┐      ┌────────┐
│ Direct 'no' │  ➡  │  NWA  │  ➡  │ Reason │
└────────────┘      └───────┘      └────────┘
```
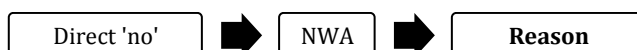
Whereas in the fourth and fifth position, only few refusal responses from both Chinese (3) and Iraqi (2) EFL speakers contain more than three semantic formulas. The refusal responses in this situation is usually brief. The details are shown in table 4.14.

The findings further show that Chinese group usually employ "reason" and "pause filler" in the first position, followed by "reason" in both second and third position. As for Iraqi group, they used to place "pause filler" in the first position, also followed by 'reason" in both second and third position in that some of participants employ this formula in second position while others in the third position. Besides, it's noteworthy that Chinese group provide "reason" first, then make direct refusals by employing "negative willingness ability"(reason+NWA). Iraqi group make direct refusals first by using "negative willingness ability", then add the "reason" for further explaination (NWA+reason). Interestingly, in situation 2, only very few Chinese and Iraqi respondents use "statement of regret" after or before they make direct refusals by utilizing "negative willingness ability" which is totally different from situation 1 where many respondents used it (NWA+St.regret). Such findings indicate that social power and social distance have influence on the order of semantic formulas which is evident in the interview responses of both group. For example:

Interview question 1: *Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role- play in each situation?*

A response from Chinese 4

Yes, when the status of interlocutor changes, my way of response also changes in correspondence. For example, if the interlocutor has a higher ranking than me, my responses may be more cautious and polite. Vice versa.

A response from Iraqi 11

Yes, I consider the social status, if the interlocutor is higher status than me, my answer is as careful as I can and I did my best to be polite.

Interview question 2: *Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?*

A response from Chinese 5

Yes, the social distance is very important, because I will use different words to refuse with different social distance.

A response from Iraqi 13

Yes, my reply towards close friend is different from others.

4.3.1.2.3 Content of Semantic Formulas

In situation 2, "reason" was the most used semantic formula by Chinese (34.9%) and Iraqi (34.9%) EFL speakers. Both groups of participants gave personal reasons to make refusals to a suggestion, and the content of reason provided by these two groups are similar. For example:

A response from Chinese 2

Er, for me because I have a, still have some core courses left so I want to finish that first. [reason] *So don't worry, I have my own plan.*

Another response from Chinese 7

Research method course? I've already taken this research method course for my master. [reason] So right now I think no need to take it anymore.

A response from Iraqi 3

Well, I already had taken two courses [reason] *so I guess I'm gonna delay it to next semester.*

Another response from Iraqi 8

No, I don't need such course because I already took it before. [reason]

In the above examples, Chinese 2 gave the reason that he still has some core course left so he want to finish first. And Iraqi 3 provided the reason that he already took two courses. Both Chinese 7 and Iraqi 8 stated the reason that he already took this course.

A different result is found in refusing a suggestion from an equal status and low social distance interlocutor in which none of the Iraqi respondents use terms of address (dear professor) Meanwhile, only 1 Chinese respondents use terms of address by saying "my friend". It indicates the influence of social power on their refusal responses. For example:

A response from Chinese 3

Oh, no my friend. Next semester is so busy for another courses [reason] *so I cannot follow you advice.*

Chinese participants use "let the interlocutor off the hook" with 11.6% in this situation by saying like "don't worry" or "I can manage it", which is not found in Iraqi data. For example:

A response from Chinese 8

You know I've heard it's very difficult so I think I should be prepared very well. Don't worry I know it's very important for my dissertation but next semester I won't take it.

Another response from Chinese 15

I think this course is not so hard maybe I can just borrow one book and then I study it alone. I think I can manage it.

4.3.2 Requests

In this section, two situations (situation 3 and 4) were analysed. The eliciting speech acts of these two situations are requests but with different "social status" and "social distance". The differences and similarities were compared between Chinese and Iraqi

EFL speakers in terms of frequency of semantic formulas, order of semantic formulas and content of semantic formulas.

4.3.2.1 Analysis of Situation 3

Situation 3: A request from a Higher status with Low social distance interlocutor

In situation 3, the responder (lower status) has to refuse a request from his supervisor (higher status). They are close to each other, which indicate there is low social distance between interlocutors.

The findings reveal that both Chinese and Iraqis employ direct, indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals in refusing a request. Chinese group (77) use more refusal strategies than their Iraqi counterparts (48) in terms of the application of total number of refusal strategies. However, Iraqi group use more direct strategies (25%,) than Chinese group (14.3%). By contrast, Chinese use more adjuncts to refusals (31.2%) than Iraqis (16.7%). For indirect strategies, there is a slight difference between these Chinese and Iraqis in terms of frequency (54.5%, 58.3%). The following table illustrates the number of refusal strategies used by both groups.

Table 4.15: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 3

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	11 (14.3%)	42 (54.5%)	24 (31.2%)	77 (100%)
Iraqis	12 (25%)	28 (58.3%)	8 (16.7%)	48 (100%)

4.3.2.1.1 Frequency of Semantic Formulas

As shown in table 4.16, both Chinese and Iraqi employ direct "no" and "negative willingness ability" to make direct refusals in refusing a request from higher status and low social distance interlocutor. However, Iraqis tend to be more direct than Chinese

due to the high percentage (22.9%) use of "negative willingness ability". It's worth noting that Chinese are also direct to perform refusals in this situation compared to refusing a suggestion as explained in the previous situations.

Table 4.16: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in Situation 3

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	9	11.7%	11	22.9%
	Direct "no"	2	2.6%	1	2.1%
Indirect	Reason/explanation	14	18.2%	15	31.3%
	St. of regret	10	13%	10	20.8%
	Indefinite reply	6	7.8%	2	4.2%
	Set condition for future/past acceptance	5	6.5%	-	-
	St. alternative	3	3.9%	1	2.1%
	Wish	2	2.6%	-	-
	St. principle	1	1.3%	-	-
	Repetition	1	1.3%	-	-
Adjuncts	St. of positive opinion	10	13%	3	6.3%
	Pause filler	9	11.7%	3	6.3%
	Appreciation	5	6.5%	2	4.2%
Total		77	100%	48	100%

In terms of using indirect refusal strategies, Chinese use a wider variety of indirect strategies compared to the Iraqi group (see Table 4.16). The findings reveal that "reason/explanation" is used most frequently by both Chinese (18.2%) and Iraqi (31.3%) EFL speakers, followed by "statement of regret" (13%, 20.8%) which might indicate that the participants take the interlocutor's positive face into great consideration when they refuse an interlocutor with higher status. Such findings are evident in the interview responses of Chinese and Iraqi groups, for example:

Interview question 1: *Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role- play in each situation?*

A response from Iraqi 14

Yes, when my supervisor asks me to do something, for sure, I need to consider it well and be polite.

A response from Chinese 1

Yes, I tend to be more causal with friends or peels but more polite to people who are senior than me.

Aside from the semantic formulas mentioned above, the refusal responses of Chinese feature in diversified strategies which, though, account for a relatively low percentage (see Table 4.16).

In addition, "statement of positive opinion", "appreciation" and "pause filler" are used by both groups of participants. However, compared to Iraqis, Chinese used to protect the positive face of a higher status interlocutor by frequently employing adjuncts to refusals, in that adjuncts to refusals function as "extra modifications" to save the positive face of interlocutor (Nguyen, 2006)

4.3.2.1.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

In this section, the Chinese refusal responses tend to be lengthier than their Iraqi counterparts in that most Chinese (10) refusal responses contain five semantic formulas whereas Iraqi refusal responses usually consist of three semantic formulas. Admittedly, only few (5) Iraqi responses contain more than three semantic formulas. (see Table 4.17)

Table 4.17: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 3

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (9) Direct no (2) St.psotive opinion (1) Repetition (1) Appreciation (1)	St.postive opinion (7) Reason/ex (4) Appreciation (2) NWA (1) Wish (1)	Reason(4) St.regret (4) St.positive opinion (2) Set condition (2) Indefinite reply (1) St.principle (1) Appreciation (1)	NWA (5) Reason (3) St. regret (3) St. alternative (1)	Indefinite reply (3) Reason (2) Set condtion (2) St.alternative (1) St.regret (1) NWA (1)
Iraqis (n=15)	St.regret (6) PF (3) St.postive opinion (2) NWA (4)	Reason (7) NWA (4) Direct no (1) St. positive opinion (1)	Reason (5) NWA (3) Indefinite reply (2) Set condition (1) St.regret (1)	Reason (2) St.reget (1) NWA (1)	NWA (1)

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

Some similarities and differences are found between these two groups regarding the order of semantic formulas. For the first position, the majority of Chinese places "pause filler", while most Iraqis use "statement of regret"(see table 4.17). For example:

A response from Chinese 11

Umm, [pause filler] *I knew this workshop, it's really good.* [statement of positive opinion] *But I have attended it before* [reason] *so maybe you can ask other students to attend this workshop since it's very useful.* [statement of alternative] *But for me, I think I don't need to attend it again.* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

pause filler ➡ St. positive opinion ➡ reason ➡ St. alternative ➡ NWA

A response from Iraqi 4

Sorry Dr. [statement of regret] *I have to pick my wife to the hospital so at that time I think it's not suitable for me to attend this workshop for this Saturday.* [reason] *So in the future, there are the same workshop, I will attend it.*[set condition for future acceptance]

This example contains three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| statement of regret | → | reason | → | set condition for future acceptance |

Whereas for the second position, most Chinese use "statement of positive opinion", while Iraqis place "reason" but still there are some respondents place other semantic formulas in the second position. For example:

A response from Chinese 5

Umm, [pause filler] *I'm really very into that workshop* [statement of positive opinion] *but I'm sorry* [statement of regret] *because you know on I live in Puchong. As we all know puchong is quite far from here. So it's not possible for me to come here to attend this workshop.* [reason] *You can ask others who is into this area to come and attend this worshop.* [statement of alternative]

This example has five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:
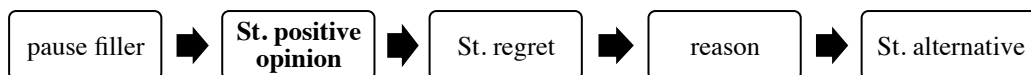
| pause filler | → | St. positive opinion | → | St. regret | → | reason | → | St. alternative |

A response from Iraqi 14

I would like to attend this workshop [statement of positive opinion] *but I really busy with my research and I have many assignments. That's why.* [reason] *I'm sorry* [statement of regret] *that I cannot attend this workshop.* [negative willingness ability]

This example includes four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| St.positive opinion | → | reason | → | St. regret | → | NWA |

Regarding the third position, there is diversity for Chinese group, because 4 of them use"reason" and another 4 use "statement of regret", while the rest use different semantic formulas. However, most Iraqis use " reason" in the third position. For example:

A response from Chinese 10

Um, [pause filler] *I'd like to* [statement of positive opinion] *but you know I'm a full research student. I don't have holiday and I'm in a hurry to submit my proposal and my proposal defence will be very hard for me.* [reason] *So I cannot go for this workshop on Saturday.* [negative willingness ability] *Maybe another time.* [postponement]

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| pause filler | ➡ | St. positive opinion | ➡ | **reason** | ➡ | NWA | ➡ | postponement |

Another response from Chinese 9

Thanks for telling me this workshop, [appreciation] *but this Saturday I need go back my country, it is independence day, you know country for me very important,* [reason] *sorry* [statement of regret] *for can't join the workshop,* [negative willingness ability] *so sorry.* [statement of regret]

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| appreciation | ➡ | reason | ➡ | **St.reget** | ➡ | NWA | ➡ | St.regret |

A response from Iraqi 10

Thank you [appreciation] *but I think I don't want that course.* [negative willingness ability] *I already know how to do research.* [reason]

This example contains three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| appreciation | ➡ | NWA | ➡ | **reason** |

When it comes to the fourth and fifth position, Chinese usually place "negative willingness ability" in the fourth position, while there is no dominant use for any semantic formula in the fifth position. Meanwhile, the Iraqi refusal responses are briefer, and there is only one participant reach the fifth position. The order of semantic formulas used by both groups is illustrated in table 4.17.

Table 4.17 clearly shows that in refusing a request from a higher status and low social distance, Chinese group start with "pause filler", that is, place "pause filler" in the first position, followed by " statement of positive opinion", then "reason"/"statement of regret" and "negative willingness ability". On the other hand, Iraqi group tend to use " statement of regret" in the first position, followed by "reason" in both second and third position.

It's worth noting that Chinese group usually provide "reason" first, then make direct refusals by employing "negative willingness ability"(reason+NWA), while Iraqis are inclined to express their regret or give reasons before or after they make direct refusals, which indicates both group attempted to save the face of interlocutor and sound polite by employing "reason" and "statement of regret" to soften the direct refusals. In fact, when the interlocutor is of a high status, both groups pay more effort to save the face of other interlocutors which is evident in their interview responses, in that they try to be polite in refusing interlocutors with higher status. For example:

A response from Chinese 3 and Iraqi 5 in Q1:

Chinese 3: Yes, I considered their social status when I though they are in higher rank, I answered in a very polite manner.

Iraqi 5: Yes, must be polite to refuse a higher rank people.

4.3.2.1.3 Content of Semantic Formulas

It is evident that in refusing a request from a higher status with low social distance interlocutor both groups of respondents use "reason" most frequently. However, the content of reason used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers are different. To be more specific, Chinese usually give reasons like "have another appointment with friend" or "busy with study", while most Iraqi respondents provide reasons that are related to their families, but also some of them give reasons like" busy with study". For example:

A response from Chinese 4

Er, dear Dr. It's a helpful workshop, and I know you consider that it will be good for my study but I'm sorry I will let you down, <u>because I have an appointment this Sunday with my friend</u> [reason]. If you inform earlier, I will not promise my friend. So maybe next time.

Another response from Chinese 12

No, <u>because I don't have a lot of time for this and I have a lot of assignments, a lot of study recently.</u> [reason] So maybe next time. I'm so sorry for that.

A response from Iraqi 3

I'm so sorry <u>because this Saturday processingly I'm going to go to get my parents from airport, they are coming here to Malaysia.</u> [reason] So maybe another time.

Another response from Iraqi 4

Sorry Dr. <u>I have to pick my wife to the hospital so at that time I think it's not suitable for me to attend this workshop for this Saturday.</u>[reason] So in the future, there are the same workshop, I will attend it.

Another response from Iraqi 14

I would like to attend this workshop <u>but I really busy with my research and I have many assignments.</u> [reason] That's why. I'm sorry that I cannot attend this workshop.

In the above examples, Chinese 4 provided a reason that he has an appointment with his friend and Chinese 12 gave a reason that he does not have time and a lot of assignment and study. While Iraqis 3 and 14 stated the reasons related to their family in that Iraqi 3 gave a reason that he needs to go to airport to pick up his parents and Iraqi14 gave a reason that he has to pick up his wife and send her to hospital.

The findings further reveal that only 2 Chinese respondents and 2 Iraqi respondents use terms of address which indicate social distance has an influence on refusal responses of both group, in that there is a low social distance between respondents and their supervisor. For example:

A response from Chinese 3

Thank you professor[use term of address] *for your information. I wish I could attend it but unfortunately, I' m sorry I cannot attend this meeting because I'm busy with my assignments. Maybe you can inform other classmates.*

Another response from Chinese 4

Er, dear Dr,[use term of address] *It's a helpful workshop, and I know you consider that it will be good for my study but I'm sorry I will let you down, because I have an appointment this Sunday with my friend. If you inform earlier, I will not promise my friend. So maybe next time.*

A response from Iraqi 4

Sorry Dr.[use term of address] *I have to pick my wife to the hospital so at that time I think it's not suitable for me to attend this workshop for this Saturday. So in the future, there are same workshop, I will attend it.*

Another response from Iraqi 5

Ok, prof.[use term of address] *to be honest with you, this Saturday I'm really really involved. And I cannot really promise to go and attend this workshop because I have to go to the airport in the morning and pick up one of my family is coming to Malaysia. So it will be difficult for me to attend this workshop.*

In addition, Chinese respondents like to express their positive opinion before they came to the direct refusals to refuse a request, which is seldom found in refusing a suggestion. For example:

A response from Chinese 7

Er.. yes, thanks so much for letting me know about this workshop. I think it's a good idea and also I would like to attend this workshop [statement of positive opinion] *but the thing is so next week my friend will come to visit me. I already fixed an appointment with him so I don't want to give my words. I'm afraid I cannot attend this workshop. So sorry.*

By contrast, Iraqi group like to express their regret (20.8%) and the feeling of being sorry to making refusals by saying like "I am so sorry". For example:

A response from Iraqi 6

I am sorry [statement of regret] *I think it's important for me to attend this workshop but I don't think I can make it this Sunday because I'm busy. Hope you understand.*

Another response from Iraqi 12
So sorry so sorry.[statement of regret] *Saturday I do have an appointment about family issues so I would like to ask your permission to not attend this workshop.*

4.3.2.2 Analysis of Situation 4

Situation 4: A request from an Equal status with High social distance interlocutor

In situation 4, the responder has to refuse a request of attending a workshop from a Malaysian classmate whom the responder is not close to.

As shown in the following Table 4.18, both Chinese and Iraqis employ direct, indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals to refuse their interlocutor in situation 4. The total number of refusal strategies used by both groups is almost the same. However, Chinese use more indirect strategies compared to Iraqi group, while Iraqis employ direct strategies more than their Chinese counterparts. In addition, there is a slight difference in the application of adjuncts to refusals.

Table 4.18: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 4

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	7 (17.5%)	23 (57.5%)	10 (25%)	40 (100%)
Iraqis	14 (29.8%)	21 (44.7%)	12 (25.5%)	47 (100%)

The findings of the study reveal that in refusing a request, Chinese EFL speakers take social status into consideration when they refuse a request, in that Chinese employ great number of refusal strategies in situation 3 (77 occurrences) when they refuse interlocutor with higher status, while in this situation the total number of refusal

strategies with only 40 occurrences are employed in refusing an interlocutor of equal status.

4.3.2.2.1 Frequency of Semantic Formulas

The findings show that both Chinese and Iraqi respondents utilized "direct no" and "negative willingness ability" to make a direct refusal to a request. But Iraqi group were more direct compared to their Chinese counterparts, and both group avoided using "performative" to make direct refusals.

Table 4.19: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 4

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	4	10%	12	25.5%
	Direct "no"	2	5%	2	4.3%
	Performative	1	2.5%	-	
Indirect	Reason/explanation	13	32.5%	13	27.7%
	St. of regret	2	5%	5	10.6%
	Indefinite reply	2	5%	2	4.3%
	Lack of enthusiasm	2	5%	1	2.1%
	Postponement	2	5%	-	
	St. principle	1	2.5%	-	-
	Criticize the interlocutor	1	2.5%	-	-
Adjuncts	Appreciation	4	10%	4	8.5%
	Pause filler	4	10%	2	4.3%
	St. of positive opinion	2	5%	6	12.8%
Total		40	100%	47	100%

Regarding the use of indirect strategies, Chinese use a wider variety of indirect strategies than Iraqi groups who did not employ "statement of principle", "criticize their interlocutor". Still, "reason" is used most frequently by both Chinese (32.5%) and Iraqi (27.7%) respondents, which indicates that all the participants are inclined to explain the reason to not only protect their own face but also to save the positive face of their interlocutor regardless of social power and social distance. Meanwhile, the second

frequent semantic formula employed by Iraqis is "statement of regret" (10.6%).They use a higher percentage of this formula in refusing a higher status and low social distance interlocutor (situation 3) than refusing an interlocutor with equal status and high social distance (situation 4). It indicates that social power and social distance influence how Iraqis perform refusals. For Chinese, similarly, they use "statement of regret" less frequently in this situation as compared to situation 3. This also indicates that social power and social distance have an influence on Chinese group as well. On the other hand, there is no remarkable semantic formula that employed by Chinese group as a second frequently used semantic formula, in that, they used different semantic formulas equally "indefinite/unspecific reply" (5%), "statement of regret" (5%), "postponement" (5%), and "lack of enthusiasm" (5%). Except the first semantic formula mentioned above, the rest were not utilized frequently by participants. (see Table 4.19)

For the use of adjunct to refusals, both groups of respondents employ "statement of positive opinion", "appreciation" and "pause filler". The findings reveal that Chinese (10%) use "pause filler" more frequently than Iraqis (4.3%), while Iraqis utilize "statement of positive opinion" more frequently than Chinese. As for the use of "appreciation", Chinese use this formula slightly more frequently than Iraqis. The findings also reveal that Chinese are more sensitive to social power and social distance due to the differences in the use of "statement of positive opinion" and "pause filler". That is, in refusing a request, Chinese employ these two semantic formulas more frequently to make refusals to an interlocutor with high status and low social distance (situation 3) compared to refusing an equal status and high social distance interlocutor (situation 4). It indicates that social power and social distance have a great influence on Chinese EFL speakers. On the other hand, Iraqi EFL speakers are not as sensitive as

Chinese to social power and social distance in terms of the use of adjuncts to refusals. The frequency of semantic formulas used by both groups is illustrated bellow.

It is evident that both groups of participants are aware of the social power and social distance, because in refusing a request, they use different semantic formulas or same formulas with different occurrences based on the difference of social power and social distance.

4.3.2.2.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

Table 4.20: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 4

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	2	3	4	5
Chinese (n=15)	PF (4) Reason (3) St.psotive opinion (2) Appreciation (2) Direct no (1) St.regret (1) Criticize (1)	Reason/ex (5) NWA (3) St.regret (2) Lack of enthusiasm (2) Direct no (1) Appreciation (1) Indefinite reply (1) Postponement (1)	Reason(5) Promise (1) Indefinite reply (1) NWA (1) St.regret (1)	Indefinite reply (2) St.principle (1) Appreciation (1)	
Iraqis (n=15)	St.postive opinion (4) Reason (3) Appreciation (3) PF (2) St.regret (1) Direct no (1) NWA (1)	Reason (5) NWA (4) St. regret (2) St.positive opinion (2) Indefinite reply (1) Lack of enthusiasm (1)	NWA (4) Reason (3) St.regret (1) Indefinite reply (1)	NWA (3) Reason (2) Appreciation (1)	Direct no (1) St. regret (1)

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

In this situation, the refusal responses from both groups of participants in refusing a request are briefer compared to situation 3. More specially, the majority of Chinese (11) refusal responses consist of three semantic formulas, and only few reach the fourth

position. Similarly, only few (4) Iraqi refusal responses reach the fourth and fifth position, the rest contains two or three semantic formulas.

Some similarities and differences are also found between these two groups regarding the order of semantic formula. For the first position, Chinese place various semantic formulas. But only two semantic formulas ("pause filler" with 4 occurrences and "reason" with 3 occurrences) are used frequently. Similarly, Iraqi EFL speakers also use various semantic formulas in the first position, in that 4 of them use "statement of positive opinion", 3 use "reason" and 3 employ "appreciation". For example:

A response from Chinese 1

Hum, [pause filler] *for me I don't really like workshop* [lack of enthusiasm] *why I because sometimes the workshop is very I mean time-consuming and also costing so I prefer to study the relevant topic by myself from other sources.* [reason] *But still thank you.* [appreciation]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| **pause filler** | ➡ | lack of enthusiasm | ➡ | reason | ➡ | appreciation |

Another response from Chinese 4

I think this Saturday I'm not free because I have made an appointment with another friend. [reason] *So maybe another time.* [postponement]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| **reason** | ➡ | postponement |

A response from Iraqi 15

I'd love to [statement of positive opinion] *but the problem is that I got an appointment with another lab brother on Saturday so I will spend my weekends in lab.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

Another response from Iraqi 13

I'm busy this Saturday ［reason］ *so I cannot go.*[negative willingness ability]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:
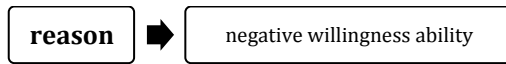
Another response from Iraqi 1

Thank you very much, [appreciation] *my friend, I think I have another appointment with my other friends this Saturday.* [reason] *I'm afraid I cannot make it.* [negative willingness ability] *Thanks very much.* [appreciation]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

For the second position of semantic formula, Chinese used "reason" most frequently, while some other semantic formulas were also used. By contrast, five Iraqis employ "reason" and four use "negative willingness ability" in the second position. For example:

A response from Chinese 14

This is really good [statement of positive opinion] *but I have another appointment.* [reason]
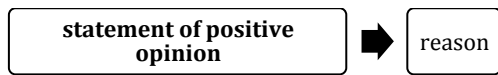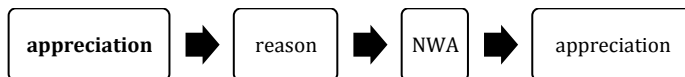
This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:
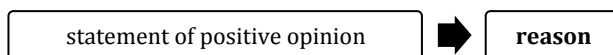
A response from Iraqi 3

I'm so sorry [statement of regret] *but this Saturday, only these two days that I have rests so I'm gonna spend them with my family.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

statement of regret	➡	**reason**
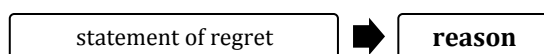
Another response from Iraqi 6

Thank you very much for informing that workshop [appreciation] *but I don't think I can make it.* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

appreciation	➡	**negative willingness ability**
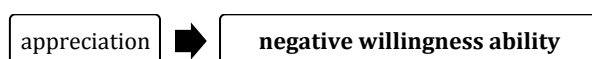
In the third position of semantic formula, Chinese used "reason" most frequently, while Iraqis used "negative willingness ability" and "reason" most frequently. For example:

A response from Chinese 10

Um, [pause filler] *thank you so much for inviting me to attend the workshop* [appreciation] *but right now, I'm very busy to do my own research. I don't think this workshop has a very close relation with my area. So this Saturday I will still stay in my lab and continue doing my research.* [reason] *Maybe next time I will go with you.* [indefinite reply]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

pause filler	➡	appreciation	➡	**reason**	➡	indefinite reply

A response from Iraqi 8

No, [direct no] *I don't want to attend this workshop.* [negative willingness ability] *I'm busy and I prefer to study at apartment.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

direct no	➡	negative willingness ability	➡	**reason**
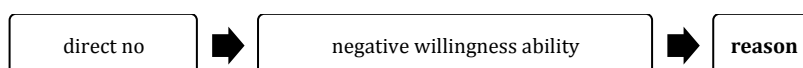
Another response from Iraqi 9

Well, [pause filler] *I'm sorry.* [statement of regret] *I don't think I can make it on Saturday* [negative willingness ability] *because I'm living far.* [reason]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| pause filler | ➡ | statment of regret | ➡ | **negative willingness ability** | ➡ | reason |

Whereas in the fourth and fifth position, there is no dominant use of any semantic formulas by both groups of respondents. Besides, none of the Chinese refusal responses reach the fifth position. The detailed information about the order of semantic formulas is shown in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20 shows that social power and social distance have influence on the order of semantic formula in that both groups of respondents are apt to place different semantic formulas in the same order in refusing a request from interlocutors with different social power and social distance. Such different use of semantic formulas reflects the great influence of social power and distance on both groups which is clear in their interview responses. For example:

A response from Chinese 5 and Iraqi 2 in Q1:

Chinese 5: Yes, I have to consider the social status because behave differently with different social status.

Iraqi 2: Yes, I will be different to refuse different social status people.

A response from Chinese 2 and Iraqi 3 in Q2:

Chinese: Yes, if somebody you are not familiar with, you don't know him well, so you must be careful when you refuse.

Iraqi 3: Yes, my replies towards close friend is different from others.

One more interesting finding is that Iraqi EFL speakers use "negative willingness ability" very frequently which is a direct way of making refusals that usually disappoint the interlocutors, thus, they attempt to lessen the threat of their refusals by using some indirect strategies, such as, "statement of regret", "reason".

4.3.2.2.3 Content of Semantic Formulas

In situation 4, both Chinese (9.7%) and Iraqi (25.5%) EFL speakers used "negative willingness ability" frequently to make direct refusals. For example:

A response from Chinese 2
I'm so sorry because I've already had an appointment with my friend this Saturday. So I cannot attend it.

A response from Iraqi 8
No, I don't want to attend this workshop. I'm busy and I prefer to study at apartment.

In the above examples, Chinese 2 expressed their negative willingness by saying "*I cannot attend it*", while Iraqi 8 expressed his negative willingness by saying "*I don't want to attend this workshop*"

Both two groups of participants used the semantic formula of "reason" most frequently. However, the content of reason from these two groups were different. The findings show that Chinese tended to provide reasons like " have another appointment" or " I don't like workshop", while Iraqis gave reasons such as "I'm busy", "I want to rest" or " have another appointment". For example:

A response from Chinese 4

I'm so sorry because I've already had an appointment with my friend this Saturday [reason]. *So I cannot attend it.*

Another response from Chinese 8

Ok thank you for your information but I'm not very interested in research. I don't like it. I'm not that kind of person [reason] *but thank you anyway.*

A response from Iraqi 2

I know it will help me a lot *but Saturday, it's weekend I think I need some time to myself. I want to rest* [reason]. Sorry for reject, but I don't think I will be able to attend it. No.

Another response from Iraqi 5

In fact I think it will be very helpful if I attend this workshop but I'm not really sure that I can attend it on Saturday because I have an appointment with my friends to go and visit our friend who just came to Malaysia [reason]. *I think I won't be able to attend this. I'm so sorry.*

Another response from Iraqi 8

No, I don't want to attend this workshop. I'm busy and I prefer to study at apartment. [reason]

In the above examples, Chinese 4 and Iraqi 5 gave a similar reason that he has an appointment with his friend, while Chinese 8 provided a reason that he does not like work shop and he is not that kind of person attending workshops. Iraqi 2 gave a reason that he wants to rest and Iraqi 8 stated a reason that he is busy.

In addition, it's noteworthy that Iraqis gave reasons related to their families to make refusals in situation 3, while they did not use reasons related to their families, which also can reflect the influence of social power on Iraqi group.

Iraqi participants also used "statement of regret" frequently (10.6%) compared to other semantic formulas under indirect strategies, but Chinese only had two occurrences of "statement of regret" (5%). Iraqi participants expressed their regret by saying "*I'm sorry*". For example:

A response from Iraqi 9

Well, I'm sorry. I don't think I can make it on Saturday because I'm living far.

4.3.3 Invitations

In this section, two situations (situation 5 and 6) were analysed. The eliciting speech acts of these two situations are invitations but with different "social power" and "social distance". The differences and similarities were compared between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in terms of frequency of semantic formulas, order of semantic formulas and content of semantic formulas.

4.3.3.1 Analysis of Situation 5

Situation 5: An Invitation from a high status with high social distance interlocutor

In situation 5, the responder has to refuse an invitation of celebrating New Year from a professor. Indeed, there is a high social distance between professor and student.

As shown in the Table 4.21 below, Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers employed direct, indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals to refuse an invitation. In this situation, the total number of refusal strategies used by Chinese EFL speakers were more their Iraqi counterpart in refusing an invitation. Moreover, Chinese utilized "adjuncts to refusals" more frequently than Iraqis, while Iraqis used "direct strategies" more frequently than Chinese. There was a slight difference in the application of indirect strategies between these two groups.

Table 4.21: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 5

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	9 (12.7%)	38 (53.5%)	24 (33.8%)	71 (100%)
Iraqis	13 (22.4%)	31 (53.4%)	14 (24.1%)	58 (100%)

4.3.3.1.1 Frequency of Semantic Formula

In this situation, both groups of respondents avoid using direct "no". Using "no" to refuse an invitation can be interpreted as an insult to the interlocutor (Sattar et al, 2011),

which accordingly make these two groups of participants use "negative willingness ability" to make direct refusals. Besides, Chinese use a wider variety of indirect strategies than their Iraqi counterparts. In addition, both Chinese (19.7%) and Iraqi (25.9%) respondents use "reason" as equivalently frequent as "statement of regret", which indicates both groups tend to express their regret for turning down the invitation from a professor and further explain their reasons. As for adjuncts to refusals, Chinese, started their refusal responses with "pause filler" accompanied with 11.3% used of "statement of positive opinion". On the contrary, Iraqis employ "appreciation" with 15.5%. The table 4.22 shows the frequency of semantic formulas used by both groups.

Table 4.22: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 5

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
	Negative willingness ability	9	12.7%	13	22.4%
Indirect	St. of regret	14	19.7%	15	25.9%
	Reason/explanation	14	19.7%	15	25.9%
	Set condition for future/past acceptance	3	4.2%	-	-
	Indefinite reply	3	4.2%	-	-
	St. principle	2	2.8%	-	-
	Postponement	1	1.4%	-	-
	Wish	1	1.4%	-	-
	Promise of future acceptance	-	-	1	1.7%
Adjuncts	Pause filler	9	12.7%	1	1.7%
	St. of positive opinion	8	11.3%	4	6.9%
	Appreciation	7	9.9%	9	15.5%
Total		71	100%	58	100%

4.3.3.1.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

Table 4.23: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 5

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (9) St.psotive opinion (3) St.regret (3)	Reason/ex (4) St.postive opinion (4) Appreciation (4) NWA (2) St.regret (1)	Reason(5) NWA (3) St.regret (2) Indefinite reply (1) St.positive opinion (1) Appreciation (1) St.principle (1)	Reason (4) St.reget (3) NWA (2) St.alternative (2) Set condition (1) Indefinite reply (1) St.principle (1)	Appreciation (2) St.regret (2) NWA (2) Reason (1) postponment (1)
Iraqis (n=15)	Appreciation (6) St.regret (5) St.postive opinion (3) PF (1)	Reason (7) NWA (4) St.regret (3) St.postive opinion (1)	Reason (7) NWA (5) St.regret (2) Appreciation (1)	St.regret (4) NWA (2) Reason (1) Appreciation (1) Promise (1)	NWA(2) St.regret (1) Appreciation (1)

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

The refusal responses from all participants in this situation were lengthier, because most responses contain more than three semantic formulas. The findings reveal that there are some similarities and differences between these two groups in terms of the order of semantic formula. Regarding the first position, Chinese use "pause filler" most frequently, while six Iraqis use "appreciation" and five use "statement of regret". For example:

A response from Chinese 4

Er, [pause filler] *thanks for you invitation prof,* [appreciation] *but I'm sorry* [statement of regret] *because I need to go back home to celebrate Chinese new year with my family and my flight is on Sunday.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

pause filler ➡ statement of regret ➡ reason
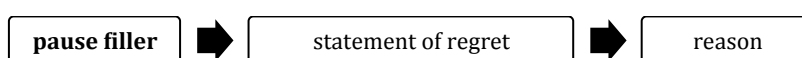
A response from Iraqi 5

Thank you so much for invitation, prof. It's very kind of you [appreciation] *but I'm so sorry* [statement of regret] *I have already promised my friends we are going to*

celebrate in my friend's apartment. [reason] *I'm so sorry* [statement of regret] *but I'm really appreciating thank you so much.* [appreciation] *I hope you forgive me.*

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

appreciation → statment of regret → reason → statement of regret → appreciation
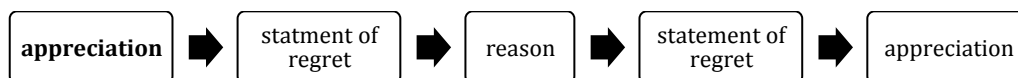
In the above example, *"I hope you forgive me"* was not coded because it does not fall under the classification of refusals of Beebe et al's (1990) framework.

Another response from Iraqi 3

I'm so sorry [statement of regret] *that I can't make it this time* [negative willingness ability] *because I'm going to the airport for getting my parents from airport.* [reason] *So next time I promise.* [promise of future acceptance]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

statement of regret → negative willingness ability → reason → promise of future acceptance

In the second position of semantic formulas, there is a variety of semantic formulas used by Chinese, in that four of them used " reason", four used "statement of regret", and four employed "appreciation". By contrast, Iraqis used "reason" most frequently in the second position. For example:

A response from Chinese 12

I'm sorry, prof. [statement of regret] *Usually we don't celebrate New Year. We celebrate Chinese New Year only,* [reason] *but still than you so much for the invitation.* [appreciation]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

statement of regret → **reason** → appreciation
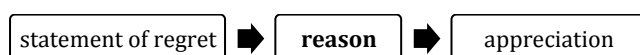
Another response from Chinese 5

Oh, [pause filler] *that sounds quite great. I would like to join you* [statement of positive opinion] *but I've already made an appointment with my friend on Sunday.* [reason] *Maybe how about maybe next time when we find an opportunity we can gather together, celebrate other event together.*[postponement]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| pause filler | → | **statement of regret** | → | reason | → | postponement |

Another response from Chinese 3

Er, [pause filler] *thank you for your inviting professor.* [appreciation] *Buy you know Chinese culture, we celebrate Chinese New Year.* [reason] *So I'm so sorry.* [statement of regret]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| pause filler | → | **appreciation** | → | reason | → | statement of regret |

A response from Iraqi 5

I would like [statement of positive opinion] *but you know prof. this Sunday I keep with my family and pick them all for shopping and to have fun.* [reason] *so I'm so sorry* [statement of regret] *I cannot attend this party.*[negative willingness ability]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| statement of positive opinion | → | **reason** | → | statement of rgret | → | negative willingness ability |
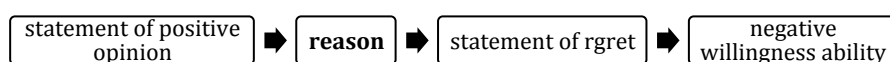
Whereas, in the third position, the Chinese used the semantic formula of "reason" most frequently. Iraqis, on the other hand, 7 of them use " reason" and 5 of them use "negative willingness ability" in the third position. For example:

A response from Chinese 14

I'm sorry, prof. [statement of regret] *I would like to go* [statement of positive opinion] *but you know what this Sunday because you know yesterday my grandmother just broke her arms and right now she is in hospital so this Sunday I will go to hospital to see her.* [reason] *Sorry.* [statement of regret] *Maybe next time.* [postponement]

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| statement of regret | → | statement of positive opinion | → | **reason** | → | statement of regret | → | postponement |

A response from Iraqi 12

Well,[pause filler] *I'm so sorry.*[statement of regret] *I've already give appointment with my parents. We will have dinner together.* [reason] *So I'm sorry.* [statement of regret]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| pause filler | ➡ | statement of regret | ➡ | **reason** | ➡ | statement of regret |

Another response from Iraqi 14

I would like to [statement of positive opinion] *but there are so many things I need to do weekends, because of my work and because of my family.* [reason] *so I cannot* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| statement of positive opinion | ➡ | reason | ➡ | **negative willingness ability** |
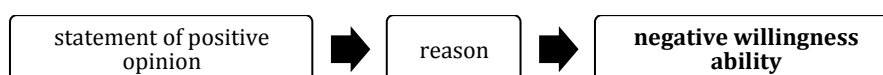
As for the fourth and fifth position, a variety of semantic formulas are used by both groups. The details are shown in Table 4.23.

4.3.3.1.3 Content of Semantic Formulas

The findings show that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers liked to start their responses by defining the social status of the interlocutor, that is, use titles by saying "I am so sorry, dear prof…", which demonstrates that both groups of respondents are rank-conscious, and they use terms of address to show their respect and politeness. For example:

A response from Chinese 2

Umm, thanks for your inviting <u>professor</u>, but this Sunday I cannot join you because I have an appointment with my friend, which is important to me. If you told me earlier, I might attend. I'm so sorry.

A response from Iraqi 2

Thank you so much for invitation, <u>prof.</u> It's very kind of you but I'm so sorry I have already promised my friends we are going to celebrate in my friend's apartment. I'm so sorry but I'm really appreciate thank you so much. I hope you forgive me.

The findings also revealed that the reason provided by Chinese and Iraqis are of great difference. To be more specific, Chinese gave reasons like " busy with study", "have an appointment with friend", while Iraqis gave reasons related to their families.

For example:

A response from Chinese 7

I think it's good to celebrate this New Year <u>but I am quite busy with my study</u>. I'm afraid I will not attend.

Another response from Chinese 5

Oh, that sounds quite great. I would like to join you <u>but I've already made an appointment with my friend on Sunday.</u> If I knew it earlier, I will not promise my friend. Maybe how about maybe next time when we find an opportunity we can gather together, celebrate other event together.

A response from Iraqi 3

I'm so sorry Prof. I can't make it this time <u>because I'm going to the airport for getting my parents from airport.</u> So next time I promise.

Another response from Iraqi 4

I would like but you know prof. <u>this Sunday I keep with my family and pick them all for shopping and to have fun</u> so I'm so sorry I cannot attend this party.

In addition, some Iraqis provided reasons related to their beliefs and religion. By contrast, some Chinese gave some reason closely related to Chinese traditional cultures.

For example:

A response from Chinese 3

Er, thank you for your inviting professor. <u>But you know Chinese culture, we celebrate Chinese New Year</u>. So I'm so sorry.

Another response from Chinese 12

I'm sorry, prof. <u>Usually we don't celebrate New Year. We will really a celebration during Chinese New Year only</u>, but still thank you so much for the invitation.

A response from Iraqi 6

Thank you very much but I'm so sorry, <u>as a Muslim, New Year is not important</u>. But still thank you.

Another response from Iraqi 7

Thanks for your invitation but I'm so sorry to tell you <u>that as a Muslim, we don't celebrate New Year</u>. so so sorry I cannot attend this party.

Meanwhile, this finding is evident in their interview responses. For example:

A response from Chinese 3 and Iraqis 3 in Q3:

Q: Did you consider your own culture and religion when you need to refuse your interlocutor in a Malaysian context?
Chinese 3: Yes, everyone should show their respect to refuse the interlocutor. So I have to consider my own culture and religion. Is it acceptable by interlocutor?
Iraqi 3: Yes, my replies were part of my personality which is under influence of my religion.

In addition, the semantic formula " statement of regret" also favored by Chinese (19.7%) and Iraqi (25.9%) participants. Both groups of participants expressed their regret by saying "sorry". For example:

A response from Chinese 15

Um, <u>sorry prof.</u> as a Chinese, I don't celebrate New Year so I already made an appointment with my friends so maybe I cannot go there. But thanks for you invitation.

A response from Iraqi 12

Well <u>I'm so sorry.</u> I've already give appointment with my parents. We will have dinner together. So I'm sorry.

4.3.3.2 Analysis of Situation 6

Situation 6: An invitation from an Equal status with low social distance interlocutor

In situation 6, the responder has to refuse an invitation from a close Malaysian friend

for celebrating New Year.

The findings of the study show that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers employ

direct, indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals. Iraqis (22%), as usual, use

direct strategies more frequently than Chinese (14.9%), while Chinese (53.2%, 31.9%)

use indirect and adjuncts to refusals strategies more frequently than Iraqis. The total

number of strategies used by Iraqis is more than their Chinese counterparts as it is

shown in the table below.

Table 4.24: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 6.

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	7 (14.9%)	25 (53.2%)	15 (31.9%)	47 (100%)
Iraqis	11 (22%)	25 (50%)	14 (28%)	50 (100%)

The findings also reveal that in refusing an invitation the social status and social

distance have a great influence on Chinese EFL speakers, in that Chinese group use

more refusals strategies (71 occurrences) in situation 5 compared to this situation (47

occurrences). By contrast, Iraqis didn't show a significant difference in terms of the

total number of refusal strategies (s5, 58; s 7, 50).

4.3.2.2.1 Frequency of Semantic Formulas

Generally speaking, Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers utilize similar semantic

formulas to realize their refusals to an invitation. To be more specific, most Chinese use

"negative willingness ability" (6 occurrences) instead of using "direct no"(1 occurrence)

to perform direct refusals. Iraqis also prefer to use "negative willingness ability" (10

occurrences) rather than "direct no" (1 occurrence) among direct refusal strategies. In

terms of indirect refusal strategies, the most frequent semantic formula employed by

both groups of respondents is "reason", followed by "statement of regret". The rest are

shown in table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 6

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	6	12.8%	10	20%
	Direct "no"	1	2.1%	1	2%
Indirect	Reason/explanation	15	31.9%	15	30%
	St. of regret	5	10.6%	7	14%
	Repetition	3	6.4%	-	-
	Promise of future acceptance	1	2.1%	-	-
	Indefinite reply	1	2.1%	1	2%
	Lack of enthusiasm	-	-	1	2%
	Criticize the interlocutor	-	-	1	2%
Adjuncts	St. of positive opinion	7	14.9%	5	10%
	Appreciation	4	8.5%	6	12%
	Pause filler	4	8.5%	3	6%
Total		47	100%	50	100%

Regarding adjuncts to refusals, both groups of respondents use "statement of positive opinion", "appreciation" and "pause filler", and among them, Chinese show preferences for "statement of positive opinion" in refusing an invitation. However, Iraqis use both "statement of positive opinion" (10%) and "appreciation"(12%) more frequently compared to "pause filler" (6%). The details are shown in table 4.25.

It is evident that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers avoid using "direct no" in turning down an invitation whether the interlocutor has higher status or an equal status, which is different from refusing a suggestion or request. Meanwhile, the two dominant semantic formulas under indirect strategies used by both groups of participants in refusing an invitation are "reason" and "statement of regret" (in both situation 5 and 6). However, the use of "statement of regret" for Chinese and Iraqis is more frequently in situation 5 (19.7%, 25.9%) compared to situation 6 (10.6%, 14%). It indicates the impact of social power and social distance on refusals responses from both groups of

participants, which is evident in their interview responses. For example:

Interview question 1: *Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role- play in each situation?*

A response from Chinese 5

Yes, I have to consider the social status because behave differently with different social status.

A response from Iraqi 13

Yes, I am quite straightforward to my friends, but very polite to lecturers.

Interview question 2: *Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?*

A response from Chinese 4

Yes, I guess that is always part of my concern when I am responding. E.g., if someone is very close to me, then my way of refusing may be more direct.

A response from Iraqi 15

Yes, straightforward to close people, but very polite to not close people.

4.3.2.2.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

In this situation, the refusal responses were briefer compared to situation 5 since most responses (12 Chinese responses and 11 Iraqi responses) consist of three semantic formulas. Some similarities and differences are found between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers with regard to order of semantic formulas.

Table 4.26: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 6

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (4) St.psotive opinion (4) Reason (3) Appreciation (2) Repetition (2)	Reason/ex (6) St.regret (2) St.postive opinion (2) NWA (2) Direct no (1) Repetition (1)	St.regret (3) Reason (2) NWA (2) Appreciation (1) Indefinite reply (1) St.positive (1)	Reason (3) Appreciation (1) Promise (1)	NWA (2)
Iraqis (n=15)	PF (3) St.postive opinion (3) St.regret (2) Appreciation (2) NWA (1) Reason (1) Direct no (1) criticize (1) lack of enthusiasm (1)	Reason (10) NWA (2) St.positive opinion (2) Appreciation (1)	NWA (4) St.regret (2) Reason (2) appreciation (1) indefinite reply (1)	NWA (2) Reason (3) St. regret (1)	St.regret (1) Reason (1)

In the first position of semantic formula, "pause filler" and "statement of positive opinion" is used more frequently than other semantic formulas (see table 4.26). For example:

A response from Chinese 12

Er, [pause filler] *no,*[direct no] *because I'm a Chinese so we follow our own calendar and celebrate Chinese New Year which is considered as real New Year.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

pause filler ➡ direct no ➡ reason
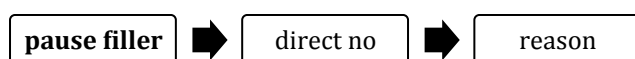
Another response from Chinese 4

It sounds nice, [statement of positive opinion] *but I think my final exam is just after New Year so I need to take time because I'm afraid of my marks.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

statement of positive opinion ➡ reason
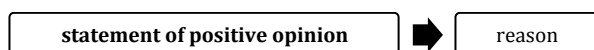
A response from Iraqi 5

Well, [pause filler] *actually the New Year, I'm not in Malaysia because I will go back to my country before New Year.* [reason] *So I won't be able to attend this New Year party.* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| pause filler | ➡ | reason | ➡ | negative willingness ability |

Another response from Iraqi 12

Actually I'd like to go [statement of positive opinion] *but some other friends have invited me as well. I gave them appointment.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| statement of positive opinion | ➡ | reason |

In the second position of semantic formulas, the data show that semantic formula of "reason" is used most frequently by both groups. For example:

A response from Chinese 6

I'd like to [statement of positive opinion] *but you know I live quite far from here. If I attend this party, it will take quite a long time and it will become depressed. It will be very inconvenient for me to go back home.* [reason]
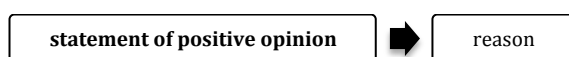
This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown as below:

| statement of positive opinion | ➡ | reason |
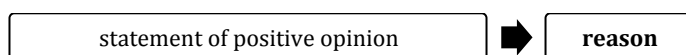
A response from Iraqi 14

I would like to [statement of positive opinion] *but it will be very difficult to me because I have meeting with my brother. And I have already discussed this meeting with my brother.* [reason] *So it's important so I cannot attend it.*[negative willingness ability] *I'm so sorry.* [statement of regret]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| statement of positive opinion | ➡ | reason | ➡ | negative willingness ability | ➡ | statement of regret |

However, the data show that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use different semantic formulas in the third position of semantic formulas. In the third position, Chinese place "statement of regret" most frequently, while Iraqis use "negative willingness ability" most frequently . For example:

A response from Chinese 14

But actually, for New Year party.[repetition] *I just promised another friend to attend his indian party* [reason] *so sorry.* [statement of regret]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas are below:

```
repetition  ➡  reason  ➡  statement of regret
```

A response from Iraqi 4

I don't like parties [lack of enthusiasm] *because I only focus on Phd.*[reason] *So any party I don't like to go*[negative willingness ability]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas are below:

```
lack of enthusiasm  ➡  reason  ➡  negative willingess ability
```
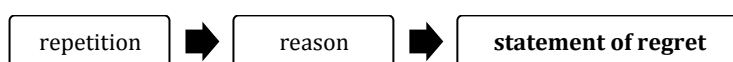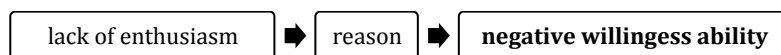
In addition, only few participants from both Chinese (3) and Iraqi (4) group reach the fourth and fifth position, the details are shown in table 4.26.

4.3.2.2.3 Content of Semantic formulas

The findings reveal that both groups of participants use semantic formula "reason" most frequently. However, there are some similarities and differences with regard to the content of their reasons. Both Chinese and Iraqis provide reasons, such as, "have another appointment with friends" or "busy with study". For example:

A response from Chinese 3

Thank you my friend. Thank you for your inviting. <u>*Unfortunately I have another party with my other friends.*</u> [reason] *Thank you. Maybe next time.*

Another response from Chinese 6

It sounds nice, <u>but I think my final exam is just after New Year so I need to take time because I'm afraid of my marks.</u> [reason]

A response from Iraqi 1

Oh, that's a very good news from you. But I have to say so sorry <u>because I've already promised other's friends New Year party</u> [reason]*. I'm so sorry that I cannot make it. Sorry for that but thank you so much for your invitation.*

Another response from Iraqi 6

Thank you very much <u>but I already had plan for New Year party with other friends</u> [reason]*.*

I   n addition, it's worth noting that some Iraqis also like to give reasons related to their families like "be with family/wife/brother". For example:

A response from Iraqi 8

No, because at that day <u>I will be busy with my family. I told them I will take them for dinner so I don't want to disappoint them.</u> [reason]

Another response from Iraqi 7

<u>Actually I have a meeting with my wife, and we will go out together</u>[reason] *so I don't think I can come this party. Sorry.*

The findings also reveal that only 2 Chinese respondents use terms of address by saying "my friend" and none of Iraqi respondents use it. For example:

A response from Chinese 1

Umm, <u>my dear friend</u> [address] *I guess I cannot join you in this coming new year because I'm already invited by other Chinese friends to attend the new year party so the time is conflicting. So thank you so much for the invitation. I hope you guys have a very good time.*

Another response from Chinese 3

<u>Thank you my friend.</u>[address] *Thank you for your inviting. Unfortunately I have another party with my other friends. Thank you. Maybe next time.*

Both groups of respondents use terms of address so frequently in situation 5, by saying "dear prof/Dr.", which indicates that in refusing people of different status, the social power has great influence on participants' refusal responses as it is clear in the interview responses of the participants. For example:

Interview question 1: *Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role- play in each situation?*
A response from Chinese 3
Yes, I considered their social status when I though they are in higher rank, I answered in a very polite manner.

A response from Iraqi 15
Yes, must be polite to refuse a higher rank people.

Besides, both Chinese (10.6%) and Iraqi (14%) participants used "statement of regret" very frequently. Both groups of participants expressed their regret by saying "sorry". For example:

A response from Chinese 14
But actually, for New Year party. I just promised another friend to attend his Indian party <u>so sorry.</u>

A response from Iraqi 9
<u>I'm sorry.</u> I cannot make it. Actually I don't really celebrate New Year.

4.3.4 Offers

In this section, two situations (situation 7 and 8) were analysed. The eliciting speech acts of these two situations are offers but with different "social power" and "social distance". The differences and similarities were compared between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in terms of frequency of semantic formulas, order of semantic formulas and content of semantic formulas.

4.3.4.1 Analysis of Situation 7

Situation 7: An offer from a higher status with low social distance interlocutor

In situation 7, the responder has to refuse a job offer of working with his lecturer for one year. The lecturer is close to the responder.

Table 4.27 illustrates the number of refusal strategies utilized by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. Generally, Chinese use more refusal strategies than their Iraqi counterparts. Chinese, as usual, employ more "indirect strategies" and "adjuncts to refusals" compared to Iraqis, while Iraqis use more " direct strategies" than Chinese.

Table 4.27: Number of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 7.

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	7 (9.1%)	41 (53.2%)	29 (37.7%)	77 (100%)
Iraqis	15 (30%)	26 (52%)	9 (18%)	50 (100%)

4.3.4.1.1 Frequency of Semantic Formula

In this situation, both groups of respondents utilize "negative willingness ability" to make direct refusals. Interestingly, Chinese also employ "direct no", which they seldom use in other situations. Iraqis, still, tend to be more direct than Chinese due to the high occurrences of "negative willingness ability", which indicates Iraqis refusal responses are quite explicit.

Moreover, Chinese employ a wider variety of indirect strategies than Iraqis who did not use "wish", "statement of alternative", "set condition for future/past acceptance", and "postponement". Among the indirect strategies, "reason" is used by both groups of respondents most frequently. "statement of regret" (14%) is also frequently used by Iraqi group. Whereas, for Chinese, their refusal responses are realized by using reason with other indirect strategies to make their refusals more

convincing. In addition, Chinese show their preferences for employing adjuncts to refusals in refusing an interlocutor with higher status. Unlike refusing an invitation, "appreciation" is used most frequently by Chinese in refusing an offer. By contrast, Iraqis use adjuncts to refusals with low occurrences. The detailed information of frequency of each semantic formula produced by both groups is shown in table 4.28.

Table 4.28: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 7

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	4	5.2%	15	30%
	Direct "no"	3	3.9%	-	-
Indirect	Reason/explanation	15	19.5%	15	30%
	St. of regret	7	9.1%	7	14%
	St. alternative	6	7.8%	-	-
	Set condition for future/past acceptance	4	5.2%	-	-
	Indefinite reply	4	5.2%	3	6%
	Wish	3	3.9%	-	-
	Postponement	2	2.6%	-	-
	Lack of enthusiasm	-	-	1	2%
Adjuncts	Appreciation	12	15.6%	4	8%
	St. of positive opinion	9	11.7%	3	6%
	Pause filler	8	10.4%	2	4%
Total		77	100%	50	100%

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

4.3.4.1.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

In this situation, the refusal responses from Chinese are lengthier than Iraqis, in that most (13) Chinese refusal responses contain more than three semantic formulas, while most Iraqis responses consist of three semantic formulas and only few (4) reach the fourth and fifth.

Table 4.29: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 7

Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (8) Appreciation (5) St.psotive opinion (2)	St.postive opinion (6) Reason/ex (3) Appreciation (2) St.regret (1) Direct no (1) NWA (1) Wish (1)	Reason(8) Set condition (1) Appreciation (1) Wish (1) St.alternative (1) NWA (1) Direct no (1) Indefinite reply (1)	St.alternative (3) Reason (3) St.regret (2) Set condition (2) NWA (1) Appreciation (1) Indefinite reply (1)	St.alternative (3) St.regret (2) Postponement (2) Appreciation (1) Direct no (1) Reason (1) Indefinite reply (1)
Iraqis (n=15)	Appreciation (3) Reason (3) NWA (3) PF (2) St.postive opinion (2) St.regret (1) Lack of enthusiasm (1)	Reason (6) St. regret (4) NWA (4) St.positive opinion (1)	NWA (5) Reason (4) St.regret (2) Indefinite reply (1)	NWA (3) Indefinite reply (2) St.regret (1)	Reason (1) Appreciation (1)

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

For the first position, Chinese use "pause filler" most frequently , while Iraqis use various semantic formulas in the first position, such as "reason", "appreciation" and "negative willingness ability". For example:

A response from Chinese 4

Er,[pause filler] *it sounds a really great opportunity for me* [statement of positive opinion] *but you see I'm afraid one year is too long for me because I'm gonna graduate this year.* [reason] *Thank you so much for this.* [appreciation] *But I know it's a good opportunity, so you can give this offer to other classmate who needs a job.* [statement of alternative]

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| pause filler | ➡ | statement of positive opinion | ➡ | reason | ➡ | appreciation | ➡ | statement of alternative |
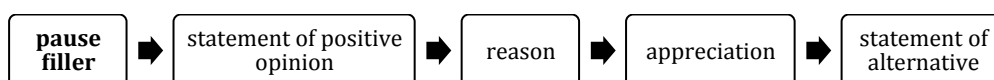
A response from Iraqi 1

Thank you very much for this offer. [appreciation] *But I think I cannot make it* negative willingness ability] *because I have another job to do because I have part-time job* [reason] *so I cannot make it* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of four semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

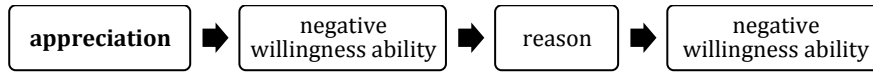| appreciation | ➡ | negative willingness ability | ➡ | reason | ➡ | negative willingness ability |

Another response from Iraqi 9

I don't think I can make it.[negative willingness ability] *I need to go back because I have my family.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| negative willingness ability | ➡ | reason |

Whereas, in the second position of semantic formulas, Chinese use "statement of positive opinion" most frequently in refusing an offer from a higher status with low social distance interlocutor, while Iraqis use "reason". Meanwhile, some respondents use other semantic formulas in this position. For example:

A response from Chinese 1

Err, [pause filler] *it's a good chance. It's really a good chance.* [statement of positive opinion] *I will definitely accept it if I knew this job opportunity earlier* [set condition for past acceptance] *but now I already had a part-time job* [reason] *so I need to discuss with my boss for a while then I can answer you.* [postponement]*Thanks so much for you offer.* [appreciation]

This example consists of six semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| pause filler | ➡ | statement of positive opinion | ➡ | set condition for past acceptance | ➡ | reason | ➡ | postponement | ➡ | appreciation |
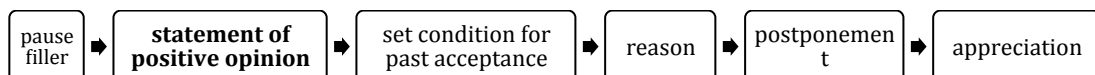
A response from Iraqi 15

I cannot take it [negative willingness ability] *because I might graduate this year. I might not be in Malaysia.* [reason] *Sorry.* [statement of regret]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

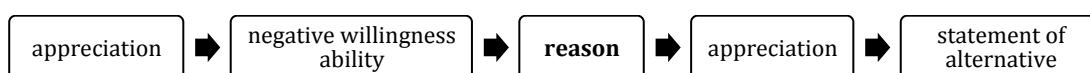| negative willingness ability | ➡ | **reason** | ➡ | statement of regret |

When it comes to the third position, Chinese use "reason" most frequently, while Iraqis use "negative willingness ability" more frequently. For example:

A response from Chinese 3

Thank you for your offers. [appreciation] *I think I cannot stay here one year.*[negative willingness ability] *I need to go to other place after my postgraduate, my master.* [reason] *Thank you, thank you for your offers.* [appreciation] *But many students they are looking for a job now, so you can kindly give this offer to others.* [statement of alternative]

This example consists of five semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| appreciation | ➡ | negative willingness ability | ➡ | **reason** | ➡ | appreciation | ➡ | statement of alternative |

A response from Iraqi 7

Actually I will leave this country maybe around 2 or 3 months [reason] *so I'm sorry to tell you* [statement of regret] *that I cannot join this program for one year.* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is as follows:

| reason | ➡ | statement of regret | ➡ | **negative willingness ability** |
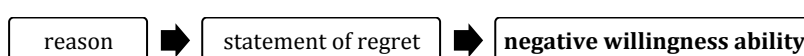
As for the fourth and fifth position, there are various semantic formulas used by Chinese group, but none of them are used in a high frequency. On the other hand, Iraqi refusal responses tend to be briefer, only few (4) reach the fourth and fifth position. The detail about the order of semantic formulas is shown in table 4.29.

4.3.4.1.3 Content of Semantic Formulas

In this situation, the majority of Chinese and Iraqi respondents did not use any terms of address in their refusal responses even though the interlocutor's status is higher (lecturer). It might result from the close relationship between the respondents and the lecturer.

On the other hand, "reason" was still the favored semantic formula by all participants in all situations. But in different situations, the content of reason are different. In this situation, Chinese give various reasons, such as "have another job", "not qualified", "focus on study" and "go back to China". For example:

A response from Chinese 9

Thanks for the offer, but <u>I already did a part-time job. Because I don't think I have enough time to take a second job.</u> So maybe you can give this offer to other. I'm so sorry and thank you so much.

Another response from Chinese 7

Oh, that's really good, prof. Thanks so much for this kind offer. <u>But I think one year is too long for me.</u> Maybe I need some time to consider then I will decide to do it or not. So right now I I'm not sure.

By contrast, Iraqis usually give reasons like "have another job", "busy with study" and reasons related to their families. For example:

A response from Iraqi 6

I am very sorry to decline your offer <u>because I have another job offer at the moment.</u>

Another response from Iraqi 10

Thanks for your offer <u>but I have a lot of responsibilities to take care of my family</u> so I'm sorry I cannot do this job.

Both Chinese and Iraqi participants also use "statement of regret" frequently when they made refusals to a higher status. Both groups of participants expressed their regret by saying "sorry". For example:

A response from Chinese 13

Actually I really want to accept but <u>I'm sorry</u> I've got no time.

A response from Iraqi 10

Thanks for your offer but I have a lot of responsibilities to take care of my family so <u>I'm sorry</u> I cannot do this job.

In addition, Chinese group used "statement of alternative" to suggest alternatives to interlocutor to mitigate refusals, which was not found in Iraqi group. For example:

A response from Chinese 11

Thanks for you offering this job. But, I've already got a job outside and this job is related to my project so I cannot work with you <u>maybe you can offer this job to others</u>. I'm sorry.

In the above example, Chinese 11 suggested an alternative to his interlocutor by saying "*maybe you can offer this job to others*"

4.3.4.2 Analysis of Situation 8

Situation 8: An offer from an Equal status with High social distance interlocutor

In situation 8, the responder has to refuse an offer of working in Malaysia for one year from a Malaysian classmate whom the responder is not close to.

The total number of refusal strategies employed by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers are almost the same. There's only slight difference in the application of direct, indirect strategies and adjuncts to refusals. (see Table 4.30)

Table 4.30: Number Of Refusal Strategies Used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 8

Group	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total
Chinese	10 (20.4%)	22 (44.9%)	17 (34.7%)	49 (100%)
Iraqis	9 (20.5%)	21 (47.7%)	14 (31.8%)	44 (100%)

4.3.4.2.1 Frequency of Semantic Formulas

The findings show that Chinese and Iraqi participants employ similar semantic formulas in this situation. Chinese group use "direct no" (4.1%) and "negative willingness ability" (16.3%), which indicates that Chinese tend to be direct and give clear refusals to an offer from an equal status. For Iraqis, "direct strategies" is always used very frequently. But Iraqis employ a wider variety of indirect strategies than Chinese, who did not use "wish" and "postponement". Among indirect strategies, "reason" is used most frequently by both groups of participants. In addition, Iraqi group also use "statement of regret" frequently. Chinese, however, do not use any semantic formulas in a high frequency apart from "reason". As for adjuncts to refusals, Chinese use "appreciation" in a high frequency, followed by "pause filler". On the other hand, Iraqis tend to employ "statement of positive opinion" most frequently, followed by "pause filler" as well. The following table illustrates the frequency of semantic formulas used by both groups.

Table 4.31: Frequency of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 8

Strategy	Semantic formulas	Chinese		Iraqis	
		F	P	F	P
Direct	Negative willingness ability	8	16.3%	6	13.6%
	Direct "no"	2	4.1%	3	6.8%
Indirect	Reason/explanation	15	30.6%	14	31.8%
	Indefinite reply	4	8.2%	1	2.3%
	St. of regret	3	6.1%	4	9.1%
	Wish	-	-	1	2.3%
	Postponement	-	-	1	2.3%
Adjuncts	Appreciation	8	16.3%	2	4.5%
	Pause filler	5	10.2%	5	11.4%
	St. of positive opinion	4	8.2%	7	15.9%
Total		49	100%	44	100%

The findings show that Chinese and Iraqi participants employ similar semantic formulas in this situation. Chinese group use "direct no" (4.1%) and "negative

willingness ability" (16.3%), which indicates that Chinese tend to be direct and give clear refusals to an offer from an equal status. For Iraqis, "direct strategies" is always used very frequently. But Iraqis employ a wider variety of indirect strategies than Chinese, who did not use "wish" and "postponement". Among indirect strategies, "reason" is used most frequently by both groups of participants. In addition, Iraqi group also use "statement of regret" frequently. Chinese, however, do not use any semantic formulas in a high frequency apart from "reason". As for adjuncts to refusals, Chinese use "appreciation" in a high frequency, followed by "pause filler". On the other hand, Iraqis tend to employ "statement of positive opinion" most frequently, followed by "pause filler" as well. The following table illustrates the frequency of semantic formulas used by both groups.

The findings reveal that the total number of refusal strategies used by Chinese in this situation is less compared to situation 7. Meanwhile, in situation 7, Chinese employ a much wider variety of indirect strategies than in this situation. This somehow indicates the impact of social power and social distance on Chinese group. On the contrary, a slight difference (S7, 50; S8, 44) of the number of refusal strategies used was found between these two situations for Iraqi group, which reflect Iraqis are not as sensitive as Chinese with social power and social distance in refusing an offer.

4.3.4.2.2 Order of Semantic Formulas

Generally speaking, the refusal responses are brief in this situation, and most responses from both Chinese (13) and Iraqis (9) contain three semantic formulas except few lengthier responses. For the first position, both groups of respondents use "pause filler" most frequently. For example:

A response from Chinese 5

Er, [pause filler] *I think I'm already familiar with the environment of Malaysia. I would like to experience a new life in another country* [reason] *so I think I won't stay here to work.* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

pause filler ➡ reason ➡ negative willingness ability
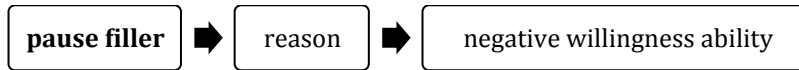
A response from Iraqi 5

Well, [pause filler] *I have a dream to work in UM* [statement of positive opinion] *but I have a contract with my previous university after I finish my masters I have to go back and work there because there is a contract there.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

pause filler ➡ statement of positive opinion ➡ reason
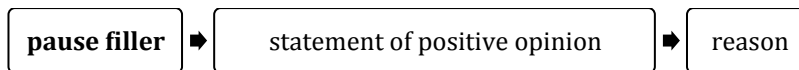
Table 4.32: Order of Semantic Formulas by Chinese and Iraqi EFL Speakers in Situation 8

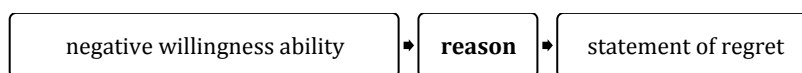| Group	Order of Semantic formulas				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Chinese (n=15)	PF (5) St.psotive opinion (2) Appreciation (2) Reason (2) Direct no (1) St.regret (1) Indefinite reply (1) NWA (1)	Reason/ex (10) St.postive opinion (1) Direct no (1) Indefinite reply (1)	NWA (6) Reason (3) Appreciation (2) St.regret (1) Indefinite reply (1)	Appreciation (3) St.regret (1)	Appreciation (1) NWA (1) Indefinite reply (1)
Iraqis (n=15)	PF (5) St.postive opinion (4) Direct no (2) St.regret (1) Reason (1) Wish (1)	Reason (7) St.positive opinion (2) NWA (2) Appreciation (1) Indefinite reply (1)	Reason (5) NWA (1) St.regret (1) Postponement (1) St.positive opinion (1)	Reason (1) NWA (1) St.reget (1)	Appreciation (1) St.regret (1)

Note: PF=Pause filler, NWA=Negative Willingness ability, St.=Statement

Interestingly, both groups of respondents also use "reason" most frequently in the second position. For example:

A response from Chinese 15

Actually I don't want to work in Malaysia [negative willingness ability] *because I want to work in Singapore.* [reason] *so, sorry sorry.* [statement of regret]
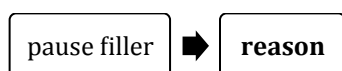
This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| negative willingness ability | ➡ | **reason** | ➡ | statement of regret |

A response from Iraqi 10

Umm, [pause filler] *actually the life standard, I'm not comfortable to live in Malaysia so I prefer to go back and work in my country.* [reason]

This example consists of two semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| pause filler | ➡ | **reason** |

However, for the third position, Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use different semantic formulas, in that Chinese use "negative willingness ability" most frequently, while Iraqis still employ "reason" most frequently in the third position, which is the same as the second position. For example:

A response from Chinese 9

Sorry my friend, [statement of regret] *I will go back my country after I graduate from UM,* [reason] *I can't work with you* [negative willingness ability]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

| statement of regret | ➡ | reason | ➡ | **negative willingness ability** |
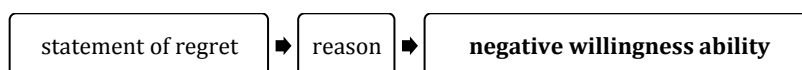
A response from Iraqi 12

Well, [pause filler] *I would like to* [statement of positive opinion] *but you know I've spent few years in Malaysia so I have enough experience here. So it's time to move on another place.* [reason]

This example consists of three semantic formulas, and the order of semantic formulas is shown below:

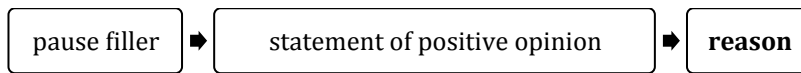| pause filler | ➡ | statement of positive opinion | ➡ | **reason** |

Whereas, the fourth and fifth position, only few responses from Chinese (4) and Iraqi (3) group reach the fourth or fifth position. The detail is shown in table 4.32.

4.3.4.2.3 Content of Semantic Formulas

In this situation, the content of the reason from Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers are almost similar to make refusals to an offer from an equal status interlocutor. Both groups of respondents provided the similar reason, such as "go back to their own country", "prefer to work in another country". For example:

A response from Chinese 3
Er, I want to work here my friend <u>but I have to go back to my country. My parents ask me to go back.</u> Thank you.

Another response from Chinese 14
Actually, Malaysia is a very good country for me <u>but I still prefer New Zealand. Thank you.</u>

A response from Iraqi 7
Actually I like but I cannot <u>I have a job in my country and I must go back to my country.</u> I'm sorry.

Another response from Iraqi 15
I'm sorry to say but I have <u>to because I got another chance in Dubai</u> so I will not work here.

Chinese participants used "indefinite reply" with 8.3%. Chinese participants refused in an unclear way. For example:

A response from Chinese 2
Thanks for your offering, so actually I prefer to work in china. So maybe I cannot stay here to go for this job but thanks very much again, you know, for your good offer.

In the above example, Chinese 2 stated that maybe he cannot stay here (Malaysia) to go fro this job, but he was not sure whether he would stay by using "maybe".

4.4 Analysis of Interview Responses

In this section, the interview responses from 10 participants were analyzed.

Interview question 1: Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond

to the role-play in each situation?

Responses from Chinese	Responses from Iraqis
1. Yes, I tend to be more causal with friends or peels but more polite to people who are senior than me.	1. Yes, I consider the social status, if the interlocutor is higher status than me, my answer is as careful as I can and I did my best to be polite.
2. Yes, the social status is significant factor in my social intercourse.	2. Yes, I will be different to refuse different social status people.
3. Yes, I considered their social status when I though they are in higher rank, I answered in a very polite manner.	3. Yes, I am quite straightforward to my friends, but very polite to lecturers.
4. Yes, when the status of interlocutor changes, my way of response also changes in correspondence. For example, if the interlocutor has a higher ranking than me, my responses may be more cautious and polite. Vice versa.	4. Yes, when my supervisor asks me to do something, for sure, I need to consider it well and be polite.
5. Yes, I have to consider the social status because behave differently with different social status.	5. Yes, must be polite to refuse a higher rank people.

The data clearly showed that participants' interview responses were influenced by social

status, that was observed in different refusal strategies when they needed to interact

with interlocutor of different social status. More specially, Chinese considered social

status as an important factor when they were making refusals. They refused in a more

polite way to a higher status interlocutor while more casual to an equal status

interlocutor. Similarly, Iraqi participants refused differently when the social status of

interlocutor were different. They were more polite in refusing an interlocutor of higher

status, but more straightforward in refusing an interlocutor of equal status.

Interview question 2: Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?

Responses from Chinese	Responses from Iraqis
1. Yes, it's a habit for me to behave more polite to people not close to me and behave straightforward to familiar ones.	1. Yes, I have to be more careful with unfamiliar person.
2. Yes, if somebody you are not familiar with, you don't know him well, so you must be careful when you refuse.	2. Yes, the relationship between us affect my response.
3. Yes, I am more euphemistic when I refuse someone who is not close to me.	3. Yes, my replies towards close friend is different from others.
4. Yes, I guess that is always part of my concern when I am responding. E.g., if someone is very close to me, then my way of refusing may be more direct.	4. Yes, close friend are easy to refuse, but supervisor or lecturers are so difficult to refuse.
5. Yes, the social distance is very important, because I will use different words to refuse with different social distance.	5. Yes, straightforward to close people, but very polite to not close people.

It is evident in the data that the participants were fully aware of social distance. The interview response above from Chinese 1 (C1) claimed that he behaved more polite to interlocutor with high social distance and more straightforward to familiar interlocutor. C5 stated that social distance is very important, because he refused differently to different social distance. C2, C3, and C4 were also taking social distance into consideration before made refusals. Chinese EFL speakers were careful to refuse an interlocutor with high social distance, while more direct or straightforward to a close interlocutor. Similarly, the interview responses from Iraqi participants showed that relationship affected their responses and they behaved differently in refusing close friends and unfamiliar interlocutor which is evident in the responses of Iraqi 1, Iraqi 3 and Iraqi 4. The interview response from the Iraqi 5 showed that he responded politely to unfamiliar interlocutor and straightforward to close interlocutor. Similarly, Iraqi 1 also stated that he was more careful to unfamiliar person which indicated that he behaved more polite in dealing with not close person. It is evident that both Chinese and

Iraqi participants refused differently when social distance between participants and interlocutor changed.

Interview question 3: Did you consider your own culture and religion when you need to refuse your interlocutor in a Malaysian context?

Responses from Chinese	Responses from Iraqis
1. Yes, everyone has own culture, so it is very important to consider them before you make the response.	1. Yes, I did, not only my own culture, and also Malaysian culture.
2. Yes, all the time	2. Yes, culture and religion are main factors of my responses.
3. Yes, everyone should show their respect to refuse the interlocutor. So I have to consider my own culture and religion. Is it acceptable by interlocutor?	3. Yes, my replies were part of my personality which is under influence of my religion.
4. Yes, before I respond to the interlocutor, I may take into account the culture and religion factors in order to come up with a more appropriate way to answer.	4. Yes, but I consider Malaysian cultures more than my own.
5. Yes, different cultures use different ways to refuse.	5. Yes, I consider my own culture and try to be polite to meet the Malaysian culture.

Culture and religoin were another factors that affected the refusal responses from participants. As shown in the responses above, Chinese paid attention to culture and religoin before they made refusal. They did not only consider their culture and religoin but also consider the culture of their interlouctors, which is evident in the responses of C1, C2, C4 and C5. For Iraqis, as shown above, culture and relgion had influence on their refusal. They took their culture and relgion into consideration before they refused their interlouctors. Moreover, the majority of Iraqi participants considered both their own culture and Malaysian culture to make a polite refusal which is evident in the responses of Iraqi 1, Iraqi 4 and Iraqi 5.

Interview question 4: Would you refuse differently when your interlocutor has the same nationality as you?

Responses from Chinese	Responses from Iraqis
1. Yes, nationality is an influential element in communication.	1. Yes, if the interlocutor from different countries, I should be more careful.
2. Yes, same for me	2. Yes, different individuals, different response based on the nationality. If the interlocutor from my country, I will be more straightforward.
3. Yes, people from different countries have different cultural backgrounds. So I need to consider their preferences.	3. Yes, nationality does have an influence on my answers.
4. Yes, if the interlocutor has the same nationality with me, it is easier for me to respond since we share the same culture or probably the same religion. Thus I tend to be more direct.	4. Yes, since culture or language have a huge effect on refusals.
5. Yes, Chinese culture has its features, at the same time, other cultures have other characteristics.	5. Yes, Arabic language is different from other languages, so when I refuse people from my country, I will use Arabic, so it will be different from using English.

It can be observed from the data that the refusal responses were also influenced by nationality. For Chinese, the majority refused differently when they refused interlocutors of the same culture which is evident in their responses by saying "yes" then stating the influence of the nationality on their refusals. Except one Chinese particpants (C2) whose response was confusing by saying "yes, same for me" which indicated that by saying "yes" he refused differently with interlouctor of the same nationality, then he stated that there was no difference for him to refuse interlouctors of other nationalities by saying "same for me". Interview responses from Iraqi participants showed that they refuse differently with interlocutors of different nationalites as it is shown in their responses above by saying "yes" then give more explaination on how the refusal responses were influenced by nationality. For example, Iraqi 5 stated that he will use arabic language to refuse an interlocutor of the same nationality and he will refuse

differently in English. While Iraqi 1 and Iraqi 2 stated that they will be more straightforward to a same nationality interloctor.

The majority of Chinese and Iraqi participants consider the nationality of their interlouctors before they make refusal.

4.6 Statement of Conclusion

Based on the classification from Beebe et al (1990), the strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi group were analysed. Apart from the mentioned strategies, this present study found a new semantic formula which was not found in previous studies. This semantic formula was used by only one Chinese participant and one Iraqi participant at the end of their response. By using this semantic formula, participants were able to end their talk in a polite way. For example:

A response from C1 in S6

> *Umm, my dear friend I guess I cannot join you in this coming new year because I'm already invited by other Chinese friends to attend the new year party so the time is conflicting. So thank you so much for the invitation.* **_I hope you guys have a very good time._**

In the above example, C1 ended his reply by saying "I hope you guys have a very good time", which did not fall under any semantic formula of Beebe et al's (1990) taxonomy. It clearly showed that the participant tried to end his reply in a positive and polite way to sustain the relationship with his interlocutor. Such ending was also found in one Iraqi participant. For example:

A response from Iraqi 5 in S5

> *Thank you so much for invitation, prof. It's very kind of you but I'm so sorry I have already promised my friends we are going to celebrate in my friend's apartment. I'm so sorry* [statement of regret] *but I'm really appreciating thank you so much.* **_I hope you forgive me._**

In the example mentioned above, Iraqi 5 also ended his response in a very polite way by saying " I hope you forgive me" to ask forgiveness from his interlocutor and further make his interlocutor feel comfortable and show understanding to the participant.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings show that in making refusals, Chinese and Iraqi EFL speaker use specific semantic formulas. The study reveal that Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use certain preferred refusal strategies in making refusal. The findings show that indirect strategy is the most preferred strategy for both groups. However, for Chinese, the indirect strategy of "reason/explanation" is the most preferred semantic formula followed by "statement of regret" then adjuncts to refusal strategy of "pause filler", while for Iraqis, indirect strategy of "reason/explanation" is the most preferred strategy followed by direct refusal strategy of "negative willingness ability".

The findings also reveal that some differences and similarities are found in each situation. The findings show that both groups use "reason" in all situations. Chinese use more refusal strategies in refusing interlocutor with higher status, while Iraqis use almost the same number of strategies in all situations. Both groups use "addressee" in refusing an interlocutor with higher status and high social distance, while very few use "addressee" in refusing an interlocutor with higher status but low social distance. A detailed summary of the findings of the study, conclusion, and recommendations are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of this study are summarized and discussed in relation to previous studies reviewed in Chapter Two. This chapter concludes with implication and the recommendations for future research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The results of two research questions are discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Discussion: Research Question One

What are the preferred refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in Malaysian academic context?

The findings of the present study reveal that the indirect refusal strategy is the preferred refusal strategy among Chinese EFL speakers. For Chinese participants, they believe that indirect strategies are more polite than direct ones. This finding is consistent with Wang (2001)'s study. In her study, she found that Chinese participants believe that being indirect mean being polite. Indirect refusal strategy has the highest number of occurrences (257) compared to other two categories (direct, 64; adjuncts, 144). The dominant use of this strategy can soften the refusal responses and it helps to maintain the social relationship among interlocutors. This is similar to the findings of Chen et al (1995), in that they found out that Chinese prefer to employ indirect refusal strategies in order to soften their refusal and avoid offending their interlocutors.

The findings of this study also show that "reason/explanation" is the preferred semantic formula among indirect refusal strategies, which shows the reasons and explanations are commonly (44.4%) used after direct refusal to minimize the negative feelings and avoid being rude to the interlocutors. Moreover, semantic formulas like "statement of regret" and " postponement" are also the preferred semantic formulas used by Chinese. While the other semantic formulas under indirect strategies have a very low frequency compared to these three commonly used ones. Therefore, it can be concluded that giving reason/explanation, expressing statement of regret, and postponement are the preferred semantic formulas among indirect strategies realized by Chinese EFL speakers. These findings are consistent with the findings of Hong (2011) in which he found that "reason/explanation" and "statement of regret" are the most preferred strategies used by Chinese.

Besides, it is also evident that "negative willingness ability" is the most preferred semantic formula among direct refusal strategies. It reflects that Chinese prefer to use "negative willingness ability" to make direct refusals rather than "direct no" or "performative".

Lastly, among adjuncts to refusal, "pause filler" is used most frequently by Chinese EFL speakers. The frequent use of "pause filler" reveals that Chinese EFL speakers take a bit of time to think about what is the most appropriate way to make refusals in order to reduce the harm feelings towards their interlocutors. In addition, "statement of positive opinion" and "appreciation" are also used frequently by Chinese EFL speakers, which is contradicted to Chu (1995)'s study. In his study, he found out that Chinese did not often use the semantic formula " statement of positive opinion". (see table 5.1)

On the other hand, the findings show that indirect refusal strategies are the most preferred strategies among Iraqi EFL speakers. Such prominent use of indirect refusal strategies might minimize the face threat and soften the refusal answers. Moreover, it might help in maintaining good relationships between interlocutors. To be more specific, it is evident that "reason/explanation" is the most preferred semantic formula among the indirect refusal strategies. This finding is similar to Nelson et al (2002)'s finding, in which, they found that "reason" is the most frequently used strategy by Egyptian Arabic speakers. In addition, it is conspicuous that "statement of regret" is also preferred by Iraqi EFL speakers, which is consistent with Abed (2011)'s findings. In his findings, he found that Iraqis use "statement of regret" frequently, which is more frequently than their American counterparts. As for the rest of indirect strategies, they are not used frequently compared to the first two indirect strategies.

The findings of the study also show that among direct refusal strategies, "negative willingness ability" is the preferred one among Iraqi EFL speakers. The frequent use of "negative willingness ability" indicates the Iraqi participants avoid using "direct no" and "performative" to make direct refusals.

Among "adjuncts to refusal", the Iraqi group use "statement of positive opinion" with 32 occurrences, "appreciation" with 30 occurrences and "pause filler" with 24 occurrences. The following table 5.1 illustrates the total number refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in 8 situations.

Table 5.1: the total number of refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in 8 situations

Refusal Strategies	Chinese group	Iraqi group
Direct Strategies	*Frequency*	*Frequency*
Negative willingness ability	49	88
Direct "no"	14	10
Performative	1	-
Total	*64*	*98*
Indirect Strategies	*Frequency*	*Frequency*
Reason/explanation	114	115
Statement of regret	47	57
Unspecific/indefinite reply	25	14
Set condition for future/past acceptance	16	1
Statement of alternative	14	-
Postponement	9	1
Repetition of the request	7	
Wish	6	2
Let the interlocutor off the hook	5	1
Promise of future acceptance	4	4
Lack of enthusiasm	3	6
Statement of principle	3	-
Criticize the interlocutor	1	2
Total	*257*	*203*
Adjuncts to refusals	*Frequency*	*Frequency*
Pause filler	57	24
Statement of positive opinion	46	32
Appreciation	41	30
Total	*144*	*86*

5.2.2 Discussion: Research Question Two

What are the similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in making refusals?

The findings of this study reveal that there are some similarities and differences between Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in performing their refusals in a Malaysian academic context in terms of frequency of semantic formulas, order of semantic formulas and content of semantic formulas.

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Firstly, Chinese EFL speakers usually employ more refusal strategies in situations 1, 3, 5, and 7 when they refuse a higher status interlocutor, while the total number of refusal strategies used by Iraqi group is almost same in all situations. Chinese EFL speakers also use "adjuncts to refusals" more frequently in refusing a higher status interlocutor than an equal status interlocutor, while such difference is not found in Iraqi data. Meanwhile, Iraqis use "statement of regret" more frequently in refusing a higher status and high social distance interlocutors. It indicates that both groups of participants are sensitive to social power and social distance. This is evident in their interview responses, in that all of interview respondents (five Chinese and five Iraqis) said that they consider the social status and distance before they make refusals. Furthermore, they also mentioned that they change their way of making refusals when the social power and social distance of interlocutor changes. These findings are similar to the findings of Wang (2001) in that he found out that Chinese considered the social power and social distance of their interlocutors when they make refusals.

Moreover, the findings of the study also show that both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use the semantic formula "reason/explanation" most frequently in all situations when they make refusals. However, Iraqi EFL speakers employ the semantic formula "negative willingness ability" with a higher frequency compared to their Chinese counterparts. Such findings indicate that Iraqi EFL speakers are more direct than Chinese EFL speakers due to the higher use of direct refusal strategy of "negative willingness ability"

Thirdly, the order of semantic formulas used by both groups varies from one situation to another, in that they the order of semantic formulas is different in different situations.

Lastly, the findings show that both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers use terms of address when they refuse an interlocutor with higher status and high social distance (situaion1, 5), while they seldom use terms of address when they make refusals to an interlocutor with higher status but low social distance (situation 3, 7). It is also worth noting that only few Chinese participants use terms of address in refusing an equal status interlocutor, while Iraqis did not use it at all. It indicates that both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers are fully aware of the social power and social distance, which is consistent with the data from the follow-up interview. In their interview responses, they stated that they tend to be polite to interlocutor whom they are not close to, while they are more straightforward to a close interlocutor. In addition, both groups of participants provide reasons in all situations. It is very interesting that Iraqi EFL speakers usually provide reasons related to their families to a higher status interlocutor. The following table illustrates the refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in different situations.

Table 5.2. Refusal strategies used by Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers in 8 situations.

Refusal Strategies	Frequency															
	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6		S7		S8	
	C	IQ	C	IQ	C	IQ	C	IQ	C	IQ	C	IQ	C	IQ	C	IQ
Direct Strategies																
Direct "no"	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2			1	1	3	-	2	3
Negative willingness ability	4	11	5	10	9	11	4	12	9	13	6	10	4	15	8	6
Performative							1	-								
Indirect																
St. of regret	4	7	2	2	10	10	2	5	14	15	5	7	7	7	3	4
Reason/explanation	13	13	15	15	14	15	13	13	14	15	15	15	15	15	15	14
St. alternative	5	-			3	1							6	-		
Set condition for future/past acceptance	4	-			5	-			3	-			4	-		
Promise of future acceptance	2	2	-	1					-	1	1	-				
Let the interlocutor off the hook	-	1	5	-												
Criticize the interlocutor	-	1					1	-			-	1				
Indefinite reply	3	3	3	2	6	2	2	2	3	-	1	1	4	3	4	1
Lack of enthusiasm	1	2	-	1			2	1			-	1	-	1		
Repetition	1	-	2	-	1	-					3	-				
Postponement	3	-	1	-			2	-	1	-			2	-	-	1
Wish			-	1	2	-			1	-			3	-	-	1
St. principle					1	-	1	-	2	-						
Adjuncts to refusals																
St. of positive opinion	3	1	3	3	10	3	2	6	8	4	7	5	9	3	4	7
Appreciation	1	1	-	2	5	2	4	4	7	9	4	6	12	4	8	2
Pause filler	13	3	5	5	9	3	4	2	9	1	4	3	8	2	5	5
Total	**59**	**47**	**43**	**43**	**77**	**48**	**40**	**47**	**71**	**58**	**47**	**50**	**77**	**50**	**49**	**44**

S = Situation, C = Chinese, IQ = Iraqi

5.3 Conclusion

This study investigates how Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers realize refusals in refusing interlocutors with different social status and social distance in a Malaysian academic context. The findings of this study show the preferred refusal strategies used by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. The findings also reveal the similarities and differences between these two groups of participants in realizing refusals in terms of frequency of semantic formulas, order of semantic formulas, and content of semantic formulas.

In making refusals, the indirect refusal category is the most preferred one by both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers, followed by adjuncts to refusal, then direct refusal strategies. The findings also show that "reason/explanation" and "statements of regret" are the preferred indirect strategies among Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers. Whereas, "negative willingness ability" is the preferred direct strategy used both group of participants. As for adjuncts to refusal, "pause filler" is the most preferred strategy among Chinese group, while Iraqis did not show any preferences to adjuncts to refusal.

Findings also show that both Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers are fully aware of social power and social distance, they tend to be more polite and employ more refusal strategies to an interlocutor either with high social status or with high social distance. Moreover, Chinese also employ more "adjuncts to refusal" in refusing a higher status interlocutor compared to refusing an equal status interlocutor. By contrast, Iraqis use "statement of regret" more frequent in refusing a higher status and high social distance interlocutors. The findings show that both groups use "reason" most frequently in all situations. However, the content of reasons given by Chinese and Iraqis are different, in

that Iraqi sometimes provide reasons related to their religion or about their family, while Chinese usually provide personal reasons.

In addition, this study has made an improvement on the methodology of comparative studies in that the instrument of collecting data is oral role-play instead of DCT, a written task. This attempt not only ensure that the data is oral but also allow researcher to control the variables.

The findings of this study will make a contribution to cross-cultural understanding between Chinese and Iraqi postgraduate students in University of Malaya. It is still important to point out that this study does not advocate a specific view of culture and does not attempt to present China and Iraq as monolithic cultural entities, even though there are some reflections of cultures in the results of the findings. This study does not look at the entire cultural diversity but only compare the refusal strategies employed by Chinese and Iraqi postgraduate students.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This study investigates how Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers realize refusals in a Malaysian academic context, which highly rely on the refusals responses collected from postgraduate students in only one university, that is, University of Malaya. Therefore, further studies can look at more than one university in order to generalize the findings. According to Paltridge (2000), some variables such as, gender, authority also affects the realization of speech act. However, this study mainly focuses on social power and social distance.

In addition, there are a great number of international students studying in Malaysian universities. Thus, more nonnative speakers of English can also be included to examine the refusal response realized by nonnative speakers of English other than Chinese and Iraqis.

Lastly, future studies could also compare the similarities and differences in different languages by considering data in English, Chinese and Arabic. Chinese and Iraqi participants using their own native languages might help us gain more insights into Chinese and Iraqi EFL speakers' perception of rules of appropriateness and politeness in Malaysian academic setting.

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APPENDECIS

APPENDIX A

Classification of Refusals
(Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990)

I. Direct refusal strategies

    Performative (e.g., I refuse…)

    "No"

    Negative willingness ability (e.g., I cannot make it.)

II. Indirect refusal strategies

    Statement of regret (e.g., I am so sorry)

    Wish (e.g., I wish I could help)

    Reason/explanation (e.g., I am busy with my study)

    Statement of alternative (e.g., why not ask someone else to do it?)

    Set condition for future or past acceptance (e.g., If you told me earlier, I will go with you.)

    Promise of future acceptance (e.g., I will do it next time.)

    Statement of principle (e.g., I've never do business with friends.)

    Statement of philosophy (e.g., One cannot be too careful)

    Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester

    Guilt trip (e.g., I cannot make a living off people who just order coffee)

    Criticize the interlocutor (e.g., That's a terrible idea)

    Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping of holding the request

    Let the interlocutor off the hook (e.g., Don't worry)

    Self-defence (e.g., I'm trying my best)

    Unspecific reply (e.g., I not sure whether I can make it.)

    Lack of enthusiasm (e.g., I am not interested in…)

    Topic switch

    Joke

    Repetition (e.g., A New Year party?)

    Postponement (e.g., I will think about it later.)

III. Adjuncts to Refusals

    Statement of positive opinion (e.g., I would like to…)

    Statement of empathy

    Appreciation (e.g., Thanks for your invitation)

    Pause filler (e.g., well, er, hum…)

CONSENT FORM

Dear participants:

The main purpose of this research is to explore how Chinese and Arabic EFL (English as a Foreign Language) speakers realize refusals in a Malaysian context. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. You will play the role of responder to refuse your interlocutor in the 8 situations given, which will take approximately 15 minutes. Your responses will be recorded and only be used anonymously in my research on speech acts of refusal.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Researcher

ZHAO CHUNLI (TGB130023)

Any more information you want to know about this study, feel free to contact me.

HP:012-916-3621

Email address:virginia007@siswa.um.edu.my

I agree to participate in this study:

Name: _____

Contact No.:_____

Email address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

ROLE-PLAY INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Participant:

Thank you for your willingness to answer this questionnaire.

Please read the following instructions:

1. Please fill in the demographic information in part 1.

2. In Part II, you will play the role of responder to refuse your interlocutor in each situation given. There are altogether 8 situations.

3. This role-play will take approximately 15 minutes.

4. Your responses will be recorded and only be used anonymously in my research.

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Part I: Demographic information

Race: □ Arab   □ Chinese

Age: □ 21~25   □ 26~30   □ 31~35   □ 36~40

Native language: _____

Second/Foreign language: _____

Religion: _____

Years of Studying in UM: □ 1~2   □ 3~4   □ above 5

Major: _____

IELTS/TOFEL scores: _____

Or any other English language test, please specify: _____

SITUATIONS

Situation 1

In a meeting with your professor to plan for the next semester's course, the professor suggests a course that you should enroll.

Situation 2

Your close Malaysian friend suggests that you should enroll research method course for next semester.

Situation 3

You are a postgraduate student in UM. Your supervisor (who is close to you) asks you to attend a research workshop this Saturday.

Situation 4

Your Malaysian classmate (whom you are not close to) asks you to attend a research workshop with him/her this Saturday.

Situation 5

Your professor invites you to go for a party this Sunday to celebrate New Year this Sunday.

Situation 6

One of your close Malaysian friends invites you to go for a New Year Party.

Situation 7

Your lecturer (whom you are close to) offers you a chance to work with him/her. But you need to work with him/her for at least a year.

Situation 8

Your Malaysian friend (whom you are not close to) offers you a chance to work in Malaysia after you have graduated from University of Malaya.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role-play in each situation?

2. Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?

3. Did you consider your own culture and religion when you need to refuse your interlocutor in a Malaysian context?

4. Would you refuse differently when your interlocutor has the same nationality as you?

CHINESE DATA TRANSCRIPTIONS

Situation 1: Suggestion (+P, +D)

1. Er, dear professor, I would like to follow your suggestion, but currently, I'm taking too many courses I have different subjects so it's really difficult to take research methodology course this semester. So I would like to select it after next semester. Maybe you can suggest my other coursemates to take this course.

2. Er, actually this semester my plan already settled. If you suggested me earlier, I will follow it. So I cannot be enrolled in this course so I feel very sorry.

3. Er, sorry professor, I think I can enroll this course maybe after next semester because I already made my plan. If I knew you would suggest a next semester course for me, I will consider it then make plan.

4. Er, I'm sorry but I think my course schedule is too full so I'm afraid I'm not able to take this course, so next time, we can discuss before I make my plans, and some of my other classmates might need you suggestion.

5. Um, yes but I think I'm in a hurry to finish, I want to finish my thesis earlier so if I take a course, it may take a whole semester for me. It will be too late for me to start my thesis.

6. Er, I should say no because I'm fresh and I need to prepare for this course. This course is for senior students so I think I should take some more fundamental courses first. Later I will choose this one. And I think it will be great to suggest senior students to take this course.

7. Um, but I think I should prepare first then I attend the course. I will prepare first then I will attend it after next semester.

8. Oh dear professor, I think it's a good idea but you know for next semester I have chosen some my favorite courses so I don't have so much time. If you informed me earlier about this course information, I would like to choose this course. Maybe I think I will take this course after next semester.

9. Well, maybe you don't know that last semester I already took a course for writing thesis. So I know how to write thesis. So I don't think I will take this course again. But as far as I know, many fresh students, they don't know hoe to select course, they do need your suggestion, prof.

10. I think so but I already have my own opinion to choose every course. I have my own plan. So this course maybe not necessary for me in next semester. But I think later I may plan a suitable time to choose this course but not next semester. So is it ok?

11. Er, thanks for you suggestion, professor. But I don't have enough time to take course foe next semester, because I've got a job outside I just can chose one day for my course every semester so maybe next time.

12. Oh, prof, I think I already finished the research method course and maybe next semester I have another course.

13. No, I won't, I don't like it

14. Umm, this course? but actually this course is not the field of my study because My study is coursework but not in academic world so you can suggest this course to some research students.

15. Umm, maybe I will think about it. I will give you the answer next week or next month.

Situation 2: Suggestion (-P, -D)

1. Umm, yes. I'm also thinking about some relative courses regarding the research methodology but I'm afraid I have my own study plan, my own structure, my courses for each semester umm I'm not sure if I can register for the research method next semester.

2. Er, for me because I have a, still have some core courses left so I want to finish that first. So don't worry, I have my own plan.

3. Oh, no my friend. Next semester is so busy for another courses so I cannot follow you advice.

4. Yes I see, but I think it's too soon to let me take the research. I have few core courses not take yet so I think I will take it later.

5. Yeah, I would like to but actually I have thought about that but I think next semester I have so many courses to select if I take research methodology that will be very stressful for me. I think I will leave it to another semester.

6. Research method course? It's very useful, but I've already taken this course last semester and I still remember what I learnt at that time. So I better save this time for other workshops or courses.

7. Research method course? My friend I've already taken this research method course for my master. So right now I think no need to take it anymore.

8. You know I've heard it's very difficult so I think I should be prepared very well. Don't worry I know it's very important for my dissertation but next semester I won't take it.

9. Thanks man, but sorry don't have time to take this course, I checked timetable before, got time conflict.

10. I'd like to but I have my own plan. I will do my research next semester. Don't worry I know the research method is the compulsory course for every students but next semester I will be very busy so maybe I will take this course after next semester.

11. Er, yes this course is very important to research. But I already took it this semester.

12. Umm, no, I think. Because my major is public policy. I think I don't need to take research method. So forget it I think I cannot take this.

13. Sorry, but I don't have time.

14. I would like to enroll research method course but actually I did that last semester.

15. I think this course is not so hard maybe I can just borrow one book and then I study it alone. I think I can manage it.

Situation 3: Request (+P, -D)

1. Er, I appreciate it very much. I think this kind of workshop will be helpful. How I wish I could attend it, but this Saturday I'm not sure I can make it because I already has an appointment with my friend but the time is not certain so I don't know if I can make it. Of course I will try my best.

2. Er, yes, thanks so much for letting me know about this workshop. I think it's a good idea and also I would like to attend this workshop but the thing is so next week my friend will come to visit me. I already fixed an appointment with him so I don't want to give my words. I'm afraid I cannot attend this workshop. So sorry.

3. Thank you professor for your information. I wish I could attend it but unfortunately, I' m sorry I cannot attend this meeting because I'm busy with my assignments. Maybe you can inform other classmates.

4. Er, dear Dr, It's a helpful workshop, and I know you consider that it will be good for my study but I'm sorry I will let you down, because I have an appointment this Sunday with my friend. If you inform earlier, I will not promise my friend. So maybe next time.

5. Umm, ok. I'm really very into that workshop but I'm sorry because you know on I live in Puchong. As we all know Puchong is quite far from here. So it's not possible

for me to come here to attend this workshop. You can ask others who is into this area to come and attend this workshop.

6. Umm, yeah, I think it will help me a lot. But for me, I don't work or study on Saturday. So I'm so sorry. If next time there is another time, I will attend it.

7. Yeah it's a helpful workshop but you know every Saturday I will go to the church. And you know for the Christian, the most important thing is to serve for the god. So maybe if I have other opportunity I will take it next time for this research workshop.

8. This Saturday right? Wow, sounds very good. But I'm sorry madam I'm working on Saturday. If I know it earlier, I will change my schedule. But now I don't think I can make it. I'm so sorry.

9. Thanks for telling me this workshop, but this Saturday I need go back my country, it is *independence day*, you know country for me very important, sorry for can't join the workshop, so sorry.

10. Um, I'd like to but you know I'm a full research student. I don't have holiday and I'm in a hurry to submit my proposal and my proposal defence will be very hard for me. So I cannot go for this workshop on Saturday. Maybe another time.

11. Aha, I knew this workshop, it's really good. But I have attended it before so maybe you can ask other students to attend this workshop since it's very useful. But for me, I think I don't need to attend it again.

12. No, because I don't have a lot of time for this and I have a lot of assignments, a lot of study recently. So maybe next time. I'm so sorry for that.

13. No, I won't, because I got a date.

14. Umm, you know I know this is very important to my study but you know my problem is that I attended this workshop last semester. This time I have another workshop to attend which is also important to me so I don't think I will take this workshop this time.

15. Er, I have a plan to go to Thailand this Saturday and I already booked the ticket. If you tell me earlier, I can postpone the trip and attend it. So I cannot make it.

Situation 4: Request (-P, +D)

1. Hum, for me, I don't really like workshop personally so that's why I came here for so long and I've never attended workshop because sometimes the workshop is very, I mean time-consuming and also costing so I prefer to study the relevant topic by myself from other sources. But still thank you.

2. I'm so sorry because I've already had an appointment with my friend this Saturday. So I cannot attend it.

3. Come on, it's on Saturday, I don't want to spend time on workshop on Saturday, next time if it's in another day, I will consider it.

4. Yes it sounds good but I have a trip with my friend which I've already booked the air ticket. I think I will take with you next time.

5. I think this Saturday I'm not free. I have made an appointment with another friend. So maybe another time.

6. Umm, I have to reject it about this workshop because I don't go out on Saturday. Because I need rest after a week's study. So maybe another time.

7. Because this workshop is on Saturday. I'm afraid I need to get sleep and go shopping so I don't have much time to attend workshop.

8. Ok thank you for your information but I'm not very interested in research. I don't like it. I'm not that kid of person but thank you anyway.

9. No la, man, my supervisor also asks me to join, but you know that day I'm not free.

10. Um, thank you so much for inviting me to attend the workshop but I, right now, I'm very busy to do my own research. I don't think this workshop has a very close relation with my area. So this Saturday I will still stay in my lab and continue doing my research. Maybe next time I will go with you.

11. Thanks for the information but this Saturday I got a meeting with my customer.

12. Er, no. I already had my plans on Saturday. And you know me, I'm a kind of person if I made a decision, I will never change it.

13. No reply.

14. This is really good but I have another appointment.

15. My friend invites me to go for a movie so I cannot go with you. Sorry.

Situation 5: Invitation (+P, +D)

1. Er, dear prof. this Sunday I'm afraid I can't make it because currently now I'm working on my thesis and the deadline is approaching. Besides, I don't celebrate New Year, we only celebrate Chinese New Year. So I would like to thank you and I wish you a good time.

2. Umm, thanks for your inviting professor, but this Sunday I cannot join you because I have an appointment with my friend, which is important to me. If you told me earlier, I might attend. I'm so sorry.

3. Er, thank you for your inviting professor. But you know Chinese culture, we celebrate Chinese New Year. So I'm so sorry.

4. Er, thanks for you invitation prof, but I'm sorry because I need to go back home to celebrate Chinese new year with my family and my flight is on Sunday.

5. Oh, that sounds quite great. I would like to join u but I've already made an appointment with my friend on Sunday. If I knew it earlier, I will not promise my friend. Maybe how about maybe next time when we find an opportunity we can gather together, celebrate other event together.

6. Yeah, I would like to but I can't, because I have an exam at that time. This exam is very critical to me because it helps 20 percent, so I need to. I think this my priority event. So I cannot attend. Sorry.

7. I think it's good to celebrate this New Year but I am quite busy with my study. I'm afraid I will not attend.

8. Sorry prof. I think I will be working at that time in school so I cannot go. If you told me earlier, I will ask for a leave but now it's too late. I'm so sorry. Maybe next time.

9. Wow, I like party, but so sorry, I can't come that day, my girl friend will come up from Johor to see me, so I have duty, really hope I can be there.

10. Umm, yes it sounds very exciting and very err happy time. I would like to go with you professor but err maybe next time. This Sunday I'm so sorry I will be absent but enjoy your party.

11. Oh, thanks for your invitation. I would like to go but my roommate and me have make a party for other friends so I cannot go for this New Year party. If you tell me earlier, for sure, I will change my schedule. But now, I'm sorry.

12. I'm sorry, prof. Usually we don't celebrate New Year. We will really a celebration during Chinese New Year only, but still than you so much for the invitation.

13. I would like to but I am so busy with my assignments.

14. I'm sorry, prof. I would like to go buy you know what this Sunday because you know yesterday my grandmother just broke her arms and right now she is in hospital so this Sunday I will go to hospital to see her. Sorry. Maybe next time.

15. Um, sorry prof. as a Chinese, I don't celebrate New Year so I already made an appointment with my friends so maybe I cannot go there. But thanks for you invitation.

Situation 6: Invitation (-P, -D)

1. Umm, my dear friend I guess I cannot join you in this coming new year because I'm already invited by other Chinese friends to attend the new year party so the time is conflicting. So thank you so much for the invitation. I hope you guys have a very good time.

2. Ok, for this party, actually I'd like to, but I think maybe I cannot go there, enjoy the party with you, because so actually I have some other things to do. I'm dong my research now and my supervisor wants me to show some progress so I think I should finish it first.

3. Thank you my friend. Thank you for your inviting. Unfortunately I have another party with my other friends. Thank you. Maybe next time.

4. It sounds nice, but I think my final exam is just after New Year so I need to take time because I'm afraid of my marks.

5. I'd like to but you know I live quite far from here. If I attend this party, it will take quite a long time and it will become depressed. It will be very inconvenient for me to go back home.

6. Yeah, I'd like to attend, but I now am leaving with my Indian friend, so if I need to go for this party I need to go with him together because the different culture normally will nor enjoy this new year so to consider his feeling I think it's better stay at dorm with him. Sorry.

7. Sorry I'm not sure. Normally I don't celebrate New Year party. So I guess I cannot go.

8. You know we are good friends, but you know I don't like to go out with people I don't know well because I will behave very very strange. So your friends I don't know them. So sorry.

9. New Year party, fantastic, but my Chinese friends also have one party, I'm in charge, so can't join lah.

10. That sounds very exciting but this New Year party has conflict with my own schedule because I will go to my supervisor's office and discuss with him. I'd like to join this New Year party. It's very happy time for everybody but this time maybe I cannot join you guys. I hope you can enjoy it.

11. Thanks for you invitation. I would like to go but this New Year, my parents will come to Malaysia. So I will stay with them.

12. Er, no, because I'm a Chinese so we follow our own calendar and celebrate Chinese New Year which is considered as real New Year.

13. I don't celebrate New Year usually.

14. But actually, for New Year party. I just promised another friend to attend his Indian party so sorry.

15. I usually celebrate the New Year party with my parents so I cannot go. Sorry.

Situation 7: Offer (+P, -D)

1. Er, it sounds a really great opportunity for me but you see I'm afraid one year is too long for me because I'm gonna graduate this year. Thank you so much for this. But I know it's a good opportunity, so you can give this offer to other classmate who needs a job.

2. Thanks for your offer. Actually I would like to work with you. It's very very comfortable actually, but the time is not proper because, because I want to finish, finish my, because I want to go back to my country in one year. So I'm not sure if I can accept it. So sorry.

3. Thank you for your offers. I think I cannot stay here one year. I need to go to other place after my postgraduate, my master. Thank you, thank you for your offers. But many students they are looking for a job now, so you can kindly give this offer to others. Thanks so much for considering me.

4. Er, it's a good chance. It's really a good chance. I will definitely accept it if I knew this job opportunity earlier but now I already had a part-time job so I need to discuss with my boss for a while then I can answer you. Thanks so much for you offer.

5. Er, as far as I know doing a research assistant is quite a fantastic job but it's challenging for me. As you know even though I'm very interested in doing that but there are a lot of documentary work and Microsoft work which is a bit challenging for me I think maybe you can give this offer to my other excellent classmates because I'm not equal to that job. But still thank you so much.

6. Hum, I should say no first because as I sad before I'm a fresh man so I still need more experience to be a qualified to this position. So I'm not comparative now and in future if have this chance I don't mind to take this opportunity but now I should say no. Sorry.

7. Oh, that's really good, prof. Thanks so much for this kind offer. But I think one year is too long for me. Maybe I need some time to consider then I will decide to do it or not. So right now I I'm not sure.

8. Oh definitely it's good for me. I think it's very good. I wish I could work with you but sorry lecturer, because I have to go back to china for my further internship in

university so I cannot do one year. I'm so sorry. If I knew it earlier, I prefer to work with you.

9. Thanks for the offer, but, I already did a part-time job. So maybe you can give this offer to others. Cos I don't think I have enough time to take a second job. I'm so sorry and thank you so much.

10. Er, I appreciate you offer me the chance but I've already got my own project. My supervisor is also my boss. I earn the salary from him. So if I knew it before I work with my supervisor, I will consider it. But now I'm nervous. I don't want to make any accidents for this project. So maybe after I finish this project I will go to meet you. Hopefully I will join you next project. I'm very glad to work with you. This time I just appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you very much.

11. Thanks for you offering this job. But, I've already got a job outside and this job is related to my project so I cannot work with you maybe u can offer this job to others. I'm sorry.

12. Er, thanks so much prof, but I'm afraid no, prf. because I want to go back to my hometown and I want to go to local government and find a job, work there. I know this is a good chance, so please offer it to my other classmates.

13. Actually I really want to accept but I'm sorry I've got no time.

14. You know I know this chance is very important for me especially for my academic career. How I wish I can work with you. But you know my situation, right now I've just got married and you know my wife is going to give birth a child. Right now she needs me much. I cannot occupy my time. I need to give more time to take care of her.

15. Thanks so much for this offer, prof. but right now I think I should focus on my thesis so maybe next time after I finish my thesis I will consider about that.

Situation 8: Offer (-P, +D)

1. That sounds good, but I'm already have my own career plan. I will go back to china upon I graduate from UM. So I'm not considering for working in Malaysia for a moment. Thanks very much for this offer.

2. Thanks for your offering, so actually I prefer to work in china. So maybe I cannot stay here to go for this job but thanks very much again, you know, for your good offer.

3. Er, I want to work here my friend but I have to go back to my country. My parents ask me to go back. Thank you.

4. Oh my god, thank you so much. I dreamed to work here but my parents has a plan to let me to work in a family company so I cannot.

5. Er, I think I'm already familiar with the environment of Malaysia. I would like to experience a new life in another country so I think I won't stay here to work.

6. I cannot give you the answer now because I still have not decided what I will do after I have graduated. Maybe I will apply for the PhD degree so I cannot take this offer and al lot of considerations. I come from china and I need to go back because my relative already offered me a chance to work in a bank. I think it's a good opportunity for me so I think for any consideration, I need to say sorry. Thank you.

7. It depends, it's a one-year job. I'm afraid I cannot get enough working experience. Also I don't know the position you offered. If the project is relative to my thesis I think I will consider it. It depends. So right now I cannot give you my answer.

8. Umm. I have to say this country is really nice compared to china. It I very very good. But my home is in China so I just want to go back to china because my parents are in China. So but thank you for your offer, thank you so much but I cannnot do that.

9. Sorry, my friend. I will go back my country after I graduate from UM, can't work with you, but hope you will be fine in future.

10. Er, I'd like to but I've already applied for the PhD course. I think there will be no spare time for me to work in Malaysia. I think internship will be better for me. I think after I graduate I will go back to my country to have a rest for a few days, then go to another country for PhD course. So thanks for your offer. Maybe in the future, I will contact you and work with you.

11. No, I would like to go back to my country. I've been here for five years already.

12. No, because we have different cultural history and a lot of things different so I cannot accept this work. I prefer to go back to China.

13. Actually the payment is quite lower than I can get from china

14. Actually, Malaysia is a very good country for me but I still prefer New Zealand. Thank you.

15. Actually I don't want to work in Malaysia because I want to work in Singapore. so, sorry sorry.

APPENDIX G

IRAQI DATA TRANSCRIPTIONS

Situation 1: Suggestion: (+P, +D)

1. Ok, Prof., but I think for me, I'm so sorry I cannot take this course this semester, because I have other courses to do it and surely I cannot all these courses together. Surely I will do it to next semester.

2. Great prof. I think it's a, your suggestion but I think I'm already gone because I'm already applied for other three courses. I may cannot get this course but for sure I want to take it before writing my research I'm sorry I cannot.

3. Well I guess I'm not so interested in this one, because I have no idea about it and I've already take my BA.

4. Sorry prof. I cannot attend this course because I already took it my master. I took so many research courses and research method courses.

5. Well, prof. I really appreciate your suggestion but I need to tell you that I won't be able to take it now or this semester because I have to go back to visit my family. I think the other semester I can maybe enroll to.. I can take this course, the research methodology course.

6. Ok, but I don't think I need it at this moment maybe I can take it other semester.

7. Actually I want to take this course after I take my, after I start my research. Maybe it's better for me. Sorry.

8. No, I don't need to take this course next semester. I can postpone it to another semester, to the semester after next semester. Because I have few courses in next semester, English course and Bahasa Malaysia, so I would be busy.

9. I think I can start writing without this course. Maybe it's just a way of waste time

10. I don't think I will attend it because I'm not ready.

11. I don't think I need to take it. I already took it twice before so I think I'm ok with research methodology. I don't think I need to take it anymore.

12. Sorry professor. You know, in my master I already attended this course.

13. I'm not going for register this course. I'm sorry.

14. Actually I don't prefer to take this course now. Maybe for the next semester I will take this course but in the beginning of my research, I want to give more attention to all those things.

15. No, I don't need it because I took it in my master degree so I don't have to repeat it here.

Situation 2: Suggestion (-P, -D)

1. I am not sure that I can take research method next semester because I have other subjects to finish. It might be difficult for me to do that. Thanks for your suggestion.

2. Yeah, you are right I think but you know I don't like research method because I already taken it undergraduate when I was an undergraduate. I don't think it's very helpful. I can gain it on YouTube or other sources. I don't think it's good. Just forget it. That's it.

3. Well, I already had taken two courses so I guess I'm gonna delay it to next semester.

4. Well I took it for four times before. I think it's not useful for me this time because it's the same content, the same, yeah, so I took it before so I think it's not useful to take it again.

5. Ok, I wish I could but I won't be able to take it because some of my friends will come here and they are new. So I cannot attend it.

6. I cannot make it next semester because I already have many other courses to attend.

7. Actually it will help my thesis but now I'm taking the three major courses of my field. So I don't have time to take research method course.

8. No I don't need such course because I already took it before.

9. Well, I don't think I need it anymore because I've taken it before and I'm almost done with my thesis.

10. Oh thank you so much for the offer but I think I cannot. I'm busy next semester. I think I will pass.

11. I already took it before. I don't think I will take it again.

12. Yes but next semester will be so tough for me. You know maybe I take it after next semester.

13. Er, I have to finish all other courses so I will leave it to last semester. Sorry.

14. Yes, that is good. But I cannot take it in the next semester. Based on my plan, I plan to do it after two semesters from now. Because it will make me busy.

15. I'm sorry I will not take it because I took it in my master degree. So no need to do it again.

Situation 3: Request (+P, -D)

1. Thank you very much for that, but I think I cannot make it. Because this Saturday I have a plan so I have another appointment with other lecturers, so I already make an appointment with him so surely I have to go because there's just no way to do it but I'm so sorry for that I can't make it.

2. Great, even I don't know what it is about but as you say it's good for me. But I'm so sorry and I apologize that I cannot attend this workshop because I have a lot of things to do and I have already applied for another workshop at different universities and maybe almost same with this kind of workshop.

3. I'm so sorry because this Saturday processingly I'm going to go to get my parents from airport. They are coming here to Malaysia. So maybe another time.

4. Sorry Dr. I have to pick my wife to the hospital so at that time I think it's not suitable for me to attend this workshop for this Saturday. So in the future, there are same workshop, I will attend it.

5. Ok, prof. to be honest with you, this Saturday I'm really really involved. And I cannot really promise to go and attend this workshop because I have to go to the airport in the morning and pick up one of my family is coming to Malaysia. So it will be difficult for me to attend this workshop.

6. I am sorry I think it's important for me to attend this workshop but I don't think I can make it this Sunday because I'm busy. Hope you understand.

7. Er, actually I have an appointment this Sunday. So I'm not sure that I can attend this workshop this Sunday.

8. I don't need to attend such er workshop because I don't like the one who give this workshop. Moreover it is not in the heart of my study. It is a bit far from my study.

9. Um, I don't think I can make it this Sunday. I have something to do.

10. Thank you but I think I don't want that course. I already know how to do research.

11. Saturday and Sunday, I'm so sorry. I don't like to go out my house. It's holiday for me.

12. So sorry so sorry. Saturday I do have an appointment about family issues so I would like to ask your permission to not attend this workshop.

13. Sorry to say no. It's very expensive to attend workshop. I have to save money.

14. I would like to attend this workshop but I really busy with my research and I have many assignments. That's why. I'm sorry that I cannot attend this workshop.

15. I cannot do that, I'm sorry, because I have something to attend. I mean somewhere to go in the weekend.

Situation 4: Request (-P, +D)

1. Thank you very much, my friend, I think I have another appointment with my other friends this Saturday. I'm afraid I cannot make it. Thanks very much.

2. I know it will help me a lot but Saturday, it's weekend I think I need some time to myself. I want to rest. Sorry for reject, but I don't think I will be able to attend it. No.

3. I'm so sorry but this Saturday, only these two days that I have rests so I'm gonna spend them with my family.

4. Thank you, you know, I like to attend it but on Monday, the next Monday I have a final exam so I think it's not, I cannot spend my time on this workshop. I need time to rest.

5. In fact I think it will be very helpful if I attend this workshop but I'm not really sure that I can attend it on Saturday because I have an appointment with my friends to go and visit our friend who just came to Malaysia. I think I won't be able to attend this. I'm so sorry.

6. Thank you very much for informing that workshop but I don't think I can make it.

7. Umm, I want to try to attend this workshop but I cannot because maybe I will be busy with my thesis.

8. No, I don't want to attend this workshop. I'm busy and I prefer to study at apartment.

9. Well, I'm sorry. I don't think I can make it on Saturday because I'm living far.

10. I don't think it's useful for me. I don't like to take it actually.

11. I think I already know everything about my research topic, almost everything. I don't think anything will benefit me now, since it's almost the end of my research.

12. This Saturday, umm, actually I have an appointment. So sorry. I'm not sure I will be available.

13. I'm busy this Saturday so I cannot go.

14. I think this workshop is very important and related to my research. But I have to attend another workshop, and I already gave my promise so I cannot make it.

15. I'd love to but the problem is that I got an appointment with another lab brother on Saturday so I will spend my weekends in lab.

Situation 5: Invitation (+P, +D)

1. Thanks for your invitation but I think also we have a party with friends, so we have a gathering, all my friends, they r coming very far away. So it's just I already made appointment for gathering for party so I'm so sorry for that but thank you very much for invitation. Hopefully we can make it another time.

2. Thank you so much for invitation, prof. It's very kind of you but I'm so sorry I have already promised my friends we are going to celebrate in my friend's apartment. I'm so sorry but I'm really appreciate thank you so much. I hope you forgive me.

3. I'm so sorry Prof. I can't make it this time because I'm going to the airport for getting my parents from airport. So next time I promise.

4. I would like but you know prof. this Sunday I keep with my family and pick them all for shopping and to have fun. So I'm so sorry I cannot attend this party.

5. Ok prof., actually it's my pleasure, I love to come and attend this party and see your family member, yeah, I just but actually this Sunday, I, I think I cannot come to this party, because I have commitment with other friend who invited me for his son's birthday. So yeah, I cannot manage to come this Sunday.

6. Thank you very much but I'm so sorry, as a Muslim, New Year is not important. But still thank you.

7. Thanks for your invitation but I'm so sorry to tell you that as a Muslim, we don't celebrate New Year. So sorry I cannot attend this party.

8. I'm sorry I can't come to your party because I have to err…I have to take my family outside Putra Jaya I promised I took them to Putra Jaya this Sunday.

9. I'm sorry I can't do that I'm a Muslim and normally I don't celebrate New Year.

10. I'm so sorry I don't celebrate New Year because I am a Muslim. I cannot join you.

11. I need to say sorry. I cannot make it because in Islam, we don't celebrate New Year. I really cannot make it. So sorry.

12. Well I'm so sorry. I've already give appointment with my parents. We will have dinner together. So I'm sorry.

13. Thanks for your invitation. I'm really busy with my parents on Sunday so I cannot go.

14. I would like to but there are so many things I need to do weekends, because of my work and because of my family. So I cannot.

15. Are you kidding, because you know my religion, I cannot come to your party.

Situation 6: Invitation (-P, -D)

1. Oh, that's a very good news from you. But I have to say so sorry because I've already promised other's friends New Year party. I'm so sorry that I cannot make it. Sorry for that but thank you so much for your invitation.

2. Oh, that's a great thing. I think so you will be enjoyed. Thank you for your invitation but I think I will not be able to come because on that day I will be moving to another apartment so I will be very busy. Thank you for your invitation even I have no time for myself to celebrate New Year party but thank you so much for the invitation.

3. I really want to apologize, because I'm feeling so sick so maybe next year.

4. I don't like parties because I only focus on PhD. So any party I don't like to go.

5. Well actually the New Year, I'm not in Malaysia because I will go back to my country before New Year. So I wont be able to attend this New Year party.

6. Thank you very much but I already had plan for New Year party with other friends.

7. Actually I have a meeting with my wife, and we will go out together so I don't think I can come this party. Sorry.

8. No, because at that day I will be busy with my family. I told them I will take them for dinner so I don't want to disappoint them.

9. I'm sorry. I cannot make it. Actually I don't really celebrate New Year.

10. I would like to. Thank you for your invitation but I think I will be busy on the New Year. So I cannot attend that party.

11. I don't think I can make it. I'm really busy these days.

12. Actually I'd like to go but some other friends have invited me as well. I gave them appointment.

13. Thanks for you invitation but I really I have to do my assignments.

14. I would like to but it will be very difficult to me because I have meeting with my brother. And I have already discussed this meeting with my brother. So it's important so I cannot attend it. I'm so sorry.

15. I'd love to but I need to be with my family. I cannot go. I'm so sorry.

Situation 7: Offer (+P, -D)

1. Thank you very much for this offer. But I think I cannot make it because I have another job to do because I have part-time job I cannot make it so far I'm working part-time study, so I don't have enough time for that because there's no time for me.

2. Thank you so much. I think it's a good opportunity but I think I cannot. I'm sorry because I'm so busy with my courses and with my research. I think I have to improve my knowledge about my research and I'm really busy with my study. I think I cannot. I don't want to disappoint you.

3. I have to apologize because I get something going for this semester and the contract right here is at least one year so I guess I'm not gonna make it.

4. Well I think I have to visit my family in the hometown so I have to go back three or four times a year because my mother is sick I have to visit her every three month I have to follow her case. So I don't know I don't think it's suitable for me to stay a whole one year and work with you as a research assistant.

5. Prof. I want this opportunity of getting a job, since three years, I'm thinking of getting a job but actually this time I cannot I think I cannot accept this offer because this year I'm going back to my family to getting engaged actually I have engagement with someone so I have to go back this year maybe the next year I can come and get this job. Thank you.

6. I am very sorry to decline your offer because I have another job offer at the moment.

7. Actually I will leave this country maybe around 2 or 3 months so I'm sorry to tell you that I cannot join this program for one year.

8. I don't take it as a work, because working as a lecturer needs time . This time I need time to complete my study. So it is not time to work I prefer to complete my study as soon as possible.

9. I don't think I can make it. I need to go back because I have my family.

10. Thanks for your offer but I have a lot of responsibilities to take care of my family so I'm sorry I cannot do this job.

11. I'm not interested in working as a research assistant. I have other dreams to pursue. And I have other job opportunities to seek. I really don't think research assistant is a good challenge for me.

12. Actually I already applied for somewhere else. So I cannot work with you.

13. Actually I have a lot of assignments to do. I want to get high marks. So sorry I cannot go.

14. Actually working with you as a research assistant is an opportunity for me to get a new experience but the problem is that I don't have enough time to do this kind of work because I'm busy with my study. So maybe for future, we can do something like this.

15. I cannot take it. I might graduate this year and I might not be in Malaysia. Sorry.

Situation 8: Offer (-P, +D)

1. Umm. I think I don't like to do that because it's a good chance for me but have a better offer for me in my country. The salary is better than here and because my situation. Thanks for that. It's very kind of you but I cannot make it.

2. Er, in Malaysia, actually I will stay here in Malaysia till graduation but I think no because I'm already here for four years and I think I will get a job in my country so I don't think so. Sorry.

3. I have already made my mind. My plan is to work in another place.

4. I like to but you know I have a commitment with ministry of high education that after I finish my study I have to go and work in university. So sorry.

5. Well, I have a dream to work in UM but I have a contract with my previous university after I finish my masters I have to go back and work there because there is a contract there.

6. That's great. Thank you but I have to go back to my country to work there.

7. Actually I like but I cannot I have a job in my country and I must go back to my country. I'm sorry.

8. No, I prefer to leave Malaysia after I finish my study, because I have applied for a job in another country which offer me better salary.

9. I don't think so. I need to go back to my country and work there. It's close to my family.

10. Umm, actually the life standard. I'm not comfortable to live in Malaysia so I prefer to go back and work in my country.

11. No, my topic is focus on government. So I prefer to go back to my country and work in the government.

12. Well, I would like to but you know I've spent few years in Malaysia so I have enough experience here. So it's time to move on another place.

13. I wish I can but I have a contract with my old university so I have to go back as soon as I finish my study here.

14. Yes, I'd love to work but I cannot decide it now I cannot do the final decision now. I will tell you later.

15. I'm sorry to say but I have to because I got another chance in Dubai so I will not work here.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

CHINESE

1. Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role-play in each situation?

1. Yes, I tend to be more causal with friends or peels but more polite to people who are senior than me.

2. Yes, the social status is significant factor in my social intercourse.

3. Yes, I considered their social status when I though they are in higher rank, I answered in a very polite manner.

4. Yes, when the status of interlocutor changes, my way of response also changes in correspondence. For example, if the interlocutor has a higher ranking than me, my responses may be more cautious and polite. Vice versa.

5. Yes, I have to consider the social status because behave differently with different social status.

2. Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?

1. Yes, it's a habit for me to behave more polite to people not close to me and behave straightforward to familiar ones.

2. Yes, if somebody you are not familiar with, you don't know him well, so you must be careful when you refuse.

3. Yes, I am more euphemistic when I refuse someone who is not close to me.

4. Yes, I guess that is always part of my concern when I am responding. E.g., if someone is very close to me, then my way of refusing may be more direct.

5. Yes, the social distance is very important, because I will use different words to refuse with different social distance.

3. Did you consider your own culture and religion when you need to refuse your interlocutor in a Malaysian context?

1. Yes, everyone has own culture, so it is very important to consider them before you make the response.

2. Yes, all the time

3. Yes, everyone should show their respect to refuse the interlocutor. So I have to consider my own culture and religion. Is it acceptable by interlocutor?

4. Yes, before I respond to the interlocutor, I may take into account the culture and religion factors in order to come up with a more appropriate way to answer.

5. Yes, different cultures use different ways to refuse.

4. Would you refuse differently when your interlocutor has the same nationality as you?

1. Yes, nationality is an influential element in communication

2. Yes, same for me

3. Yes, people from different countries have different cultural backgrounds. So I need to consider their preferences.

4. Yes, if the interlocutor has the same nationality with me, it is easier for me to respond since we share the same culture or probably the same religion. Thus I tend to be more direct.

5. Yes, Chinese culture has its features, at the same time, other cultures have other characteristics.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

IRAQIS

1. Did you consider the status of your interlocutor when you respond to the role-play in each situation?

1. Yes, I consider the social status, if the interlocutor is higher status than me, my answer is as careful as I can and I did my best to be polite.

2. Yes, I will be different to refuse different social status people.

3. Yes, I am quite straightforward to my friends, but very polite to lecturers.

4. Yes, when my supervisor asks me to do something, for sure, I need to consider it well and be polite.

5. Yes, must be polite to refuse a higher rank people.

2. Did you consider the social distance (close/ not close) when you respond to the role-play situations?

1. Yes, I have to be more careful with unfamiliar person.

2. Yes, the relationship between us affect my response.

3. Yes, my replies towards close friend is different from others.

4. Yes, close friend are easy to refuse, but supervisor or lecturers are so difficult to refuse.

5. Yes, straightforward to close people, but very polite to not close people.

3. Did you consider your own culture and religion when you need to refuse your interlocutor in a Malaysian context?

1. Yes, I did, not only my own culture, and also Malaysian culture.

2. Yes, culture and religion are main factors of my responses.

3. Yes, my replies were part of my personality which is under influence of my religion.

4. Yes, but I consider Malaysian cultures more than my own.

5. Yes, I consider my own culture and try to be polite to meet the Malaysian culture.

4. Would you refuse differently when your interlocutor has the same nationality as you?

1. Yes, if the interlocutor from different countries, I should be more careful.

2. Yes, different individuals, different response based on the nationality. If the interlocutor from my country, I will be more straightforward.

3. Yes, since culture or language have a huge effect on refusals.

4. Yes, nationality does have an influence on my answers.

5. Yes, Arabic language is different from other languages, so when I refuse people from my country, I will use Arabic, so it will be different from using English.