

SAYING NO: REFUSAL STRATEGIES OF
NATIVE ARABIC SPEAKERS AND
NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

by

EMILY DURHAM

DILIN LIU, COMMITTEE CHAIR
CATHERINE DAVIES
SAAD BUSHAALA

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of English
in the Graduate School of
the University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2019

ABSTRACT

The majority of the extant literature claims that native Arabic speakers are typically more indirect in their refusal strategies, a specific speech act, than are native English speakers. The present study examined the level of directness in the refusal strategies of native Arabic speakers, living in the United States and the Middle East, compared to that of native English speakers using Matsugu's (2014) multiple-choice discourse completion test. The role of refusing in Arabic compared to refusing in English, for native Arabic speakers, was also examined. It was predicted that native Arabic speakers would be significantly less direct in their refusal strategies in English than would native English speakers. It was also predicted that native Arabic speakers, living in the United States and the Middle East, would be significantly less direct in their refusal strategies in Arabic compared to in English. Finally, it was predicted that native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East would be significantly less direct in their refusal strategies in English and Arabic than would native Arabic speakers living in the United States.

The findings of this study challenge previous research, in that as a whole there were no significant differences in the directness of the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers, in English and Arabic, and those used by native English speakers. Therefore, the present study supports the importance of studying speech acts as small units of discourse and not making generalizations about the communication style of a culture/language. The results of this study indirectly show the need for continuous instruction of pragmatics throughout a course. Moreover, this study recommends that future research examine similar research questions with a larger sample size of participants and using multiple methods to assess the directness of speech acts.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

DCT Discourse Completion Test

IL interlanguage; the language produced by a learner of a language

L1 first language

L2 second language (or any language learned after the first language)

NNS nonnative speaker

NS native speaker

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I am indebted to Dr. Dilin Liu, the chair of this thesis, for the sharing of his research expertise and for his thorough and generous help throughout the process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Catherine Davies and Dr. Saad Bushaala. Dr. Davies provided very helpful feedback, particularly regarding speech acts, and I am thankful for her expertise in this area. I am thankful to Dr. Saad for his work in translating between Arabic and English in various parts of this thesis and for his sharing of his knowledge about Arab culture. I would like to thank Sarah Dunlap, at the Institute for Social Science Research, for her help with the statistical analyses in this thesis. Finally, I am thankful for the encouragement and support of my husband, as well as that of my family and fellow graduate students, in the writing of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies how context affects the meaning of language. Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, which argues that utterances have illocutionary forces that indicate a speaker's intent (Austin, 1962). This thesis will specifically examine the speech act of refusal. Within the field of pragmatics, there is a need for studying cross-cultural pragmatics, which compares the speech acts of different cultures. It takes little time around those of a different culture to recognize that cross-cultural miscommunications can happen easily, due to different rules guiding speech among cultures and languages (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Bach, n.d.; Bruti, 2006; Gass, 2013). When interacting with those of a different culture, one recognizes that a high proficiency in grammar and vocabulary does not guarantee socially and culturally appropriate speech. Moreover, whereas grammatical errors indicate a lack of proficiency, culturally inappropriate speech is often interpreted by interlocutors as a lacking in character (Abed, 2011). Therefore, there must be a focus on using language in context properly to prevent cross-cultural miscommunications and the unnecessary offense of interlocutors. This thesis aims to examine this issue by investigating how Arabic ESL learners express refusals. It begins with a review of current literature regarding the following important related topics: pragmatics (including cross-cultural pragmatics, a key aspect of intercultural communication), speech act theory, pragmatic transfer, especially Arabic culture and pragmatic transfer in refusal strategies, and common methods used in the study of cross-cultural pragmatics. Then, the thesis reports on a study on the degree of directness in refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers compared to the degree of directness in refusal strategies used by native English speakers. It will

include a description and discussion of the methodology, data analysis, results, and limitations of the study as well as its pedagogical and result implications.

PRAGMATICS AND CROSS-CULTURAL PRAGMATICS

Definition of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics that studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, conversational implicature, talk in interaction, and other approaches to language behavior in philosophy, sociology, linguistics, and anthropology. At its essence, pragmatics is concerned with contextualized language use (Kasper, 1992). The pragmatic competence of second language learners is defined as how effectively learners use speech acts in the target language and how they interpret the intentions of their speech acts (Rintell, 1997). Therefore, second language learners must be aware of socio-cultural constraints on speech acts to be pragmatically competent.

In the field of pragmatics, Leech (1983) distinguishes between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. According to Leech, pragmalinguistics refers to “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (p. 11). Kasper (1992) argues that the dimension of politeness should be added to the concept of pragmalinguistics. Politeness-marking devices include directness and indirectness, as well as “a plethora of lexical, syntactic, and prosodic means capable of mitigating and aggravating illocutionary force” (p. 208). Prior research has identified two types of politeness: discernment politeness and strategic politeness. Discernment politeness marks “interlocutors’ relationship in terms of ingroup-outgroup, social power, and social distance irrespective of the speaker’s current communicative goal” (p. 208). Strategic politeness is used to mitigate the potentially negative consequences of a face-threatening speech act, such as refusals. Leech (1983) defined sociopragmatics as “the

sociological interface of pragmatics” (p. 10). Sociopragmatics, thus, refers to social perceptions of the performance and interpretation of a speech act. There are cross-cultural differences of perceptions of interlocutors’ social distance, social power, rights, obligations, and degree of imposition involved in different speech acts (Takahashi & Beebe, 1992).

Speech Acts

As noted above in the definition of pragmatics, pragmatics encompasses speech act theory. Therefore, it would be very helpful to discuss what speech acts are, as well as address the specific speech act of a refusal that is relevant to the present study. J. L. Austin (1962) first introduced speech act theory, which argues that every utterance has an illocutionary force that indicates a speaker’s intent. The illocutionary force of words depends on the context in which the words are uttered (Searle, 1977). Verbs such as *order*, *warn*, *assert*, *question*, *offer*, and *promise* are often used to express the illocutionary force of utterances. The illocutionary force of a speech act, indicating a speaker’s intent, usually has an effect on the actions, thoughts, or beliefs of the interlocutor. Moreover, the interlocutor’s understanding of the speaker’s attitude influences the interlocutor’s understanding of the speech act (Bach, n.d.). For example, by warning someone, a speaker may scare the interlocutor. All languages have speech acts, but the form of specific speech acts varies according to culture (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Gass, 2013). Moreover, speech acts may be direct or indirect, with indirect speech acts often conveying more politeness and direct speech acts often conveying more clearness (Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Bruti, 2006).

Semantic formulae, which are used in speech acts, include expressions of regret, excuses, offers of alternatives, and promises (Gass, 2013). For example, a refusal could include an expression of regret (*I’m sorry*), followed by an excuse (*I have a class at that time*), and, then, an offer of alternative (*maybe I could come tomorrow*). The factors involved in semantic formulae are similar across languages, “but the *order* in which the formulae are used differs from language

to language” (p. 324). Due to the variation of speech acts, and the semantic formulae of these speech acts, across languages, the study of second language speech acts is focused on possibilities in languages for speech acts and how cultural variations in speech acts influence performance in a second language and interpretation of second language learner speech acts by native speakers.

The Speech Act of Refusal

A specific type of speech act is a refusal, which is a “face-threatening act that tends to disrupt harmony in relationships” (Umale, 2011, p. 18) and functions as a negative response to a request, invitation, or suggestion (Abdul Sattar, Che Lah, & Suleiman, 2011). Speakers often try to make refusals more polite in order to minimize the damage done to relationships (Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016). Additionally, refusal strategies may be direct or indirect, with socio-cultural factors determining the appropriateness of a refusal strategy (Bruti, 2006; Umale, 2011). Direct strategies may be viewed as impolite and abrupt, potentially harming relationships (Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016). However, indirect strategies, including expressions of regret, excuses, suggestions, and promises of later acceptance, may lack clarity (Abed, 2011). At the same time, the type of response considered inappropriately direct or inappropriately indirect may vary from culture to culture. The cross-cultural study of speech acts, particularly face-threatening speech acts such as refusals, is necessary for preventing cross-cultural miscommunications and offending interlocutors (Abed, 2011).

Importance of Cross-Cultural Pragmatics and Pragmatic Transfer

Cross-cultural pragmatics is a subfield of pragmatics that compares the speech acts of different cultures. As previously mentioned, cultural factors often determine the appropriateness of different speech acts (Bruti, 2006; Umale, 2011). However, the ability of nonnative speakers to interpret and produce speech acts, even if this is done differently from native speakers, points

to the presence of universal pragmatic knowledge (Leech, 1983). According to Blum-Kulka (1991), universal pragmatic knowledge includes “basic notions associated with the use of language in contexts, such as the ability to infer communicative intentions from indirect utterances, the ability to realize speech acts in non-explicit ways and a general sensitivity to contextual constraints in the choice of modes of performance” (p. 255). In other words, as long as learners are linguistically competent enough, they have access to the same strategies as native speakers have to accomplish particular speech acts (Kasper, 1992). Learners have been shown to be aware of factors such as context and politeness strategies needed for face-threatening speech acts, like refusals.

Although universal pragmatic knowledge is shown to exist, there are still cross-cultural differences in pragmatics. According to Romaine (2000), it is nearly impossible to separate language and culture. Moreover, understanding the culture of a language is a requirement to effectively communicate with speakers of that language (Tanck, 2004; Umale, 2011). English language learners may simply translate speech acts from their native language into English, using their own cultural knowledge to do so (Al-Eryani, 2007; Umale, 2011). This translation, based on native cultural knowledge can result in miscommunication between interlocutors and negative social consequences (Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016). Therefore, to minimize cross-cultural miscommunication, one needs not only to be proficient in grammar and vocabulary, but also to be able to use language in context properly. This necessitates the study of pragmatics, how language is used in context (Gass, 2013).

Pragmatic Transfer

Kasper (1992) claims that nonnative speakers’ comprehension and production of linguistic action is considerably influenced by their L1 pragmatic knowledge. Various definitions of pragmatic transfer exist. Generic pragmatic transfer is vaguely defined as “the influence

resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). According to Abed (2011) and Wolfson (1989), pragmatic transfer is the use of rules from one’s native language and culture when speaking in one’s second language. Kasper (1992) clarifies that pragmatic transfer includes more than transferring word order from one’s L1 to L2 by saying that “in the real world, pragmatic transfer matters more, at least, more obviously than transfer of relative clause structure or word order” (p. 205). Kasper defines pragmatic transfer as referring “to the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production, and learning of L2 pragmatic information” (p. 207). In line with this idea Beebe et al. (1990) define pragmatic transfer as “transfer of L1 sociocultural competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation, where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular function of language” (p. 56).

Further definitions of pragmatic transfer result from the different definitions of pragmatics provided by Leech (1983) and applied by Thomas (1983) to identify pragmatic failure. Based on Leech’s (1983) definition of pragmalinguistics, “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions,” (p. 11), Thomas (1983) defined pragmalinguistic transfer as

“the inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances, which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different ‘interpretive bias’, tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language” (p. 101).

This definition of pragmalinguistic transfer implies that pragmalinguistic transfer is only negative/inappropriate and that pragmalinguistic transfer is the reason for pragmalinguistic failure. In an effort to make pragmalinguistic transfer neutral and to include the transfer of

politeness assignment along with illocutionary force, Kasper (1992) defines pragmalinguistic transfer as “the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L2 influences learners’ perception and production of form-function mappings in L2” (p. 209). Most pragmalinguistic transfer occurs in the transfer of strategies and forms that affect the politeness value of a speech act, not its illocutionary force (Kasper, 1992). For example, Japanese learners of English were found to transfer from Japanese excuses and strategies not found in English into their refusal strategies in English (Beebe et al., 1990).

Based on Leech’s (1983) definition of sociopragmatics as the social perceptions of the performance and interpretation of a speech act, sociopragmatic transfer occurs when the social perceptions underlying interlocutors’ perceptions and performances of speech acts in L2 are influenced by similar speech acts in L1. According to Olshtain and Cohen (1989), “speakers may transfer their perceptions about how to perform in given situations from native language behavior to a second language situation. Such transfer could affect whether they would use a given speech act, and if so, how frequently, and how much prestige they afford other participants in the encounter” (p. 61).

Thomas (1983) argued that pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer are interrelated in pragmatic failure, which has consequences for pedagogy. For example, when performing a face-threatening speech act, such as a refusal, interlocutors must make decisions about how much politeness to use in the speech act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These decisions are influenced by relevant contextual factors, which are sociopragmatic factors. At the same time, interlocutors are making decisions about a certain politeness strategy and the language used to accomplish it, which are pragmalinguistic factors. According to Kasper (1992), in speech act situations like this “one illocution is carried out by means of another one” (p. 210). Due to the

unclear boundary between sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer, they will be considered together as pragmatic transfer throughout the rest of this thesis.

Positive and Negative Pragmatic Transfer

Positive transfer, appropriately using the first language in a second language context, (Gass, 2013) is most clear when “language-specific conventions of usage and use are demonstrably non-universal yet shared between L1 and L2” (Kasper, 1992, p. 212). For example, positive transfer is evident when learners “successfully transfer specific conventionally indirect forms for requesting, such as formal equivalents of ‘can you’” (p. 212). However, generally it is difficult to determine whether learners are applying pragmatic knowledge from their L1 or from their universal pragmatic knowledge, or whether learners are generalizing from their interlanguage pragmatic knowledge. In other words, positive pragmatic transfer does occur, but it may not be a causal factor of learners’ pragmatic behavior. There may be other explanations for learners’ pragmatic behavior. Moreover, positive transfer may be problematic if “native speaker-like pragmatic behavior is deemed inappropriate for non-native speakers” (p. 212). In this case, native speakers perceive the pragmatic behavior of nonnative speakers to be inconsistent with their role as foreigners (Janicki, 1985). That is, it seems odd to native speakers that nonnative speakers are exhibiting the pragmatic behavior of their target language.

Negative transfer, inappropriately using the first language in a second language context, occurs because pragmatic rules differ between languages/cultures (Beebe et al., 1990). For example, Japanese learners of English have been found to follow the pragmatic rules of Japanese when refusing in English, by varying their selection of refusal strategies according to whether the refuser’s status was higher or lower than the interlocutor’s refusal strategy. In contrast, American native speakers chose a refusal strategy based on the distinction between status-equal and status-unequal relationships, regardless of the direction of inequality. Interestingly, the social

acceptability of a speech act in learners' native culture may influence whether and how they execute that same speech act in the target culture (Kasper, 1992). In refusals, Beebe et al. (1990) found that Japanese speakers of English exhibited some features of Japanese communication style, such as discernment of politeness and, sometimes, formulaic indirectness, when refusing in English. Moreover, German learners of English have been found to transfer specific excuses from their L1 to English, whereas native speakers of British English used formulaic, rather than specific, excuses (Kasper, 1981; House, 1988). As Kasper (1992) points out, it is important to remember that although a negative pragmatic transfer implies a difference from the L2, a difference from the L2 does not necessarily result in miscommunication. That is, a negative pragmatic transfer does not necessarily cause miscommunication.

Arabic Culture and Pragmatic Transfer in Refusal Strategies

The present study specifically addresses the pragmatic differences between the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers and native English speakers (Abed, 2011; Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Issa, 2003; Al-Kahtani, 2005; Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Morkus, 2014; Nelson, Batal, & Bakary, 2002; Umale, 2011). In general, native Arabic speakers were found to use more indirect refusal strategies than native English speakers (Abed, 2011; Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Umale, 2011). For example, native Arabic speakers used the indirect refusal strategies of giving a reason/explanation and expressing regret more often than did native English speakers (Abed, 2011). Al-Issa (2003) found socio-cultural transfer in the refusal strategies of native Arabic speakers who are learners of English that resulted in more indirect refusal strategies. In agreement with this study, Al-Eryani (2007) found that Yemeni English language learners, at times, used their cultural background in Arab culture when formulating refusals in English, again resulting in more indirect refusals. Additionally, Al-Mahrooqi and Al-Aghbari (2016) also found a transfer of Arabic speech acts into English.

Arabic speakers were found to be more likely to use indirect refusal strategies with a high level of detail to avoid hurting others' feelings. However, this can be inappropriate for an English context that generally values directness and clearness (Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016).

Although prior studies have found differences in refusal strategies used by Arabic speakers and English speakers, it is important to not generalize about the communication style of a language or culture (Nelson, Batal, & Bakary, 2002). Contrary to prior research, Nelson et al. found that Egyptian males used more direct refusal strategies than Americans did. Although this study used a sample of urban Egyptian male Arabic speakers and, consequently, the results may not be generalizable, it is still important to question whether Arab persons always use indirect strategies.

Pedagogy for Pragmatics

Explicit instruction in pragmatics has been found to be important for language learners, with research pointing to a need for regular explicit instruction of pragmatics as part of curriculum (Halenko & Jones, 2011; Kasper, 1992). For example, Japanese learners of English reported that their perceptions of Japanese and American refusals were partially influenced by explicit instruction in the pragmatic differences between the two cultures and partially influenced by their observation of American culture. Moreover, Jeon and Kaya (2006) have found that explicit instruction is more effective than implicit instruction in teaching L2 pragmatic competence. In line with the idea of explicit instruction, according to Schmidt's Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 1992, 1993), the noticing of information is required for learning, especially for the learning of pragmatic knowledge by adults.

Studies have often combined metapragmatic discussion with some sort of activity designed to raise consciousness, showing this coupling to be effective in teaching pragmatic features (Mwinyelle, 2005; Pearson, 2001; Rose & Ng, 2001; Tateyama et al., 1997; Tateyama,

2001). For example, Olshtain and Cohen (1990) used model dialogues, discussion of differences between expressions, metapragmatic information, and an intensifications scale to teach contextualized expressions. A seminal study in the pedagogy of pragmatics is that of Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012), which examined “whether guided pragmatic noticing activities help learners increase oral production of targeted conventional expressions and whether such gains (if they are realized) can be generalized to other conventional expressions” (p. 77) for university-level students in intensive English classes. In this study, instruction was defined as “contextualized input plus focused metapragmatic noticing during pair work” (p. 78). Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga’s study aimed to encourage teachers to include pragmatics in existing curricula, similar to House’s (1996) that incorporated pragmatics as part of a semester-long communication course for advanced students. This practice of teaching pragmatics throughout the semester is contrary to the prevailing practice of teaching pragmatics as a special unit within a curriculum, as in Olshtain and Cohen’s (1990) study.

Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012) used recognition and production tasks previously used in research regarding the instruction of pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2009). The recognition task was used to determine familiarity with the conventional expressions used in the study (Bardovi-Harlig, 2011). Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012) prefer “input-based activities in pragmatics instruction which may train learners to notice language use outside of the instructional setting (p. 80). Consistent with many other approaches to teaching pragmatic awareness, Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga coupled contextualized input of the conventional expressions with guided metapragmatic noticing (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Tatsuki & Houck, 2011; Vellenga, 2008). Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012) found that, particularly when conventional expressions are fairly transparent and learners’ current interlanguage grammar is sufficient, “[t]he presentation of contextualized examples paired with

guided metapragmatic noticing activities seems to promote the use of some conventional expressions” (p. 86). However, learners’ interlanguage grammar was found to constrain learners’ production of exact matches to conventional expressions. At the same time, learners still attempted contextually appropriate conventional expressions, even when these expressions exceeded their grammar. Therefore, this study confirms that noticing can cause changes in language learners’ L2 pragmatic system. Bardovi-Harlig and Vellenga (2012) claim that perhaps the modest gains in instruction in this study could be increased with the addition of production activities.

Although much research has found that metapragmatic discussion with a consciousness-raising activity is effective in teaching pragmatic features, Takimoto (2012) sought to evaluate the effectiveness of metapragmatic discussion alone by examining the effectiveness of consciousness-raising approaches with metapragmatic discussion and consciousness-raising approaches without metapragmatic discussion in teaching English request downgraders. Rutherford (1987) and Sharwood Smith (1993) claim that the “conscious-raising approach refers to drawing learners’ attention and awareness to specific properties of language” (Takimoto, 2012, p. 1241), in line with Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis (1990, 1992, 1993). Takimoto (2006) supported this idea, finding that consciousness-raising tasks are effective, particularly for form and meaning. However, Takimoto (2012) found that metapragmatic discussion of pragmatic features causes

participants to have additional metapragmatic information about the target pragmatic features, familiarize themselves with the target pragmatic features, and be more motivated and attend to the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic conventions of English request downgraders more intensively (p. 1251).

In conclusion, prior research points to the importance of increasing learners' noticing/consciousness of pragmatic features, coupled with metapragmatic discussion. At the same time, metapragmatic discussion by itself promotes effective learning of pragmatic features.

METHODOLOGY IN PRAGMATICS

Methodological Issues

Matsugu (2014) argued that the language classroom has not focused on pragmatics as seriously as it has focused on other skill areas. Moreover, little focus has been placed on assessing second language pragmatics, especially second language pragmatics in a classroom context (Ishihara, 2009; Liu, 2006). Further difficulty in assessing pragmatics is a result of its contextualized nature, leading to a sort of dichotomy between the authenticity of an assessment task and its practicality (McNamara & Roever, 2006; Roever, 2004).

Identifying pragmatic transfer has also been a methodological issue in studies on pragmatic transfer. In identifying pragmatic transfer, it is best to determine whether the pragmatic differences between a learner's interlanguage and the learner's native language are statistically significant and to determine how these differences relate to the target language (Kasper, 1992). Therefore, positive transfer would be found to occur when there are no statistically significant differences in the frequencies of a pragmatic feature in a learner's target, native language, and interlanguage. Negative transfer would be found to occur when there are statistically significant differences in the frequencies of a pragmatic feature between the interlanguage and the target language and the native language and the target language. Additionally, negative transfer would be found to occur when there are no statistically significant differences between the interlanguage and the target language.

Methodologies Used in Previous Studies

As could be expected, in pragmatics research, "different tasks constrain language use in different ways" (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 215). That is, different data collection instruments

influence the elicited data (e.g., amount of talk and negotiation) and the frequency of semantic formulae (Beebe & Cummins, 1985; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1992). This may be because different instruments “impose different processing demands on learners and thus influence the selective activation of pragmatic knowledge” (Kasper, 1992, p. 222). For example, Edmondson and House (1991) found that learners are more talkative than native speakers on production questionnaires but not in role plays. Moreover, Bodman and Eisenstein (1988) found that different instruments have different effects on pragmatic questionnaires. For example, learners have been found to transfer L1 proverbs and ritual expressions in written questionnaires but not in role plays. This transfer is likely a result of learners having time in written questionnaires to, in a controlled manner, prepare material for a literal translation of L1. Interestingly, Zhang (1992) found that pragmatic transfer for Chinese learners of English occurred in the discursal development of a speech act, but not in a discourse completion questionnaire with its one-turn response. In the discourse completion test, the Chinese learners’ responses were very similar to the responses of native English speakers. Data collection methods can be characterized by the degree to which the instrument constrains the data and the type of language use participants are engaged in, as will be seen in the following section that will describe and evaluate various methods used in pragmatics research (Kasper & Dahl, 1991).

Role play and authentic conversation

In early studies of pragmatics, participants were instructed to ignore the context of speech acts (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). For example, Walters (1979) asked participants to determine the relative politeness of request strategies, such as “shut up” compared to “please be quiet”, isolated from context. However, as Kasper and Dahl (1991), pointed out, even if participants are asked to evaluate the politeness of a speech act devoid of context, the participants are likely to mentally construct some information regarding context anyway. At the same time, even if context is

provided, this method is problematic because then research findings are difficult to generalize to other contexts.

One method used in pragmatics research that pays a great deal of attention to context is role play. In particular, open role plays “allow the examination of speech act behavior in its full discourse context (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 228). Open role play instructions only give information regarding players’ roles, the initial situation, and at least one player’s communicative goal. However, the instructions for open role play do not address conversational outcomes or how to achieve these outcomes. Therefore, the speech act behavior is considered to be “real”.

Open role plays are fairly similar to authentic conversation (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). However, role plays could be considered more beneficial for research than are authentic conversations because role plays are replicable, allowing “for the comparative study of NNSs and L1 and L2 NS controls” (p. 229). A disadvantage of open role plays, that also applies to authentic conversational data, is that both need to be transcribed, which can be quite time consuming. Moreover, coding open role play data is much more difficult than coding data from more controlled measures. Authentic conversation is often not used in pragmatics research because authentic speech is not replicable and the data from observations of authentic speech must be transcribed and coded, which is time consuming.

Discourse completion tasks

Discourse completion tasks have been frequently used and, at the same time, frequently criticized (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Discourse completion tasks were first developed by Levenston and Blum (1978) and then first used to investigate speech acts by Blum-Kulka (1982). Kasper and Dahl (1991, p. 221) describe discourse completion tasks as “written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the

speech act under study”. Participants are then asked to fill in what they perceive to be a suitable response to the situation given the context provided. According to Beebe and Cummings (1985, p. 13), discourse completion questionnaires are very effective for:

1. gathering a large amount of data quickly;
2. creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech;
3. studying the stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate (though not always polite) response;
4. gaining insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and
5. ascertaining the canonical shape of refusals, apologies, partings, etc., in the minds of the speakers of that language.

However, discourse completion tasks face several criticisms. Firstly, they are criticized for viewing pragmatic transfer as a product, not a process (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Additionally, discourse completion questionnaires may take too long for participants to complete. Participants in interlanguage studies, like the present study, usually do not receive any monetary compensation or course credit for participating in a study. Consequently, the participants may be unmotivated to write very complete responses that accurately address how they would respond to a situation. Moreover, data provided by a discourse completion questionnaire is not as rich as that provided by open role play tasks. Furthermore, Beebe and Cummings (1985, p. 14) present the following criticisms of discourse completion questionnaires, claiming that they do not adequately represent:

1. the actual wording used in real interaction;
2. the range of formulas and strategies used (some, like avoidance, tend to be left out);

3. the length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfill the function;
4. the depth of emotion that in turn qualitatively affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance;
5. the number of repetitions and elaborations that occur; or
6. the actual rate of occurrence of a speech act- e.g., whether or not someone would naturalistically refuse at all in a given situation

Multiple choice discourse completion test

Despite these issues with discourse completion tests, Matsugu (2014) argues that discourse completion tests, specifically multiple-choice discourse completion tests (MCDCTs), are still advantageous for use because they are highly practical to administer and easy to score, unlike measures such as role-play test or listening laboratory production test (Liu, 2006). Multiple choice discourse completion tests could be especially beneficial in classroom settings where instructors want to assess pragmatic competence but have a limited amount of time to do so (Matsugu, 2014). In this type of situation, other pragmatic instruments, which may more accurately replicate real speech may be impractical to use. Therefore, Matsugu claims that MCDCTs could still be useful in assessing pragmatic competence if they are developed appropriately.

Hudson et al. (1992; 1995) developed six instruments to measure pragmatic competence: self-assessment test (SA), listening laboratory production test (LL), open discourse completion test (OPDCT), multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT), role-play self-assessment test (RPSA), role-play test (RP). These tests were used by Hudson et al. to assess the pragmatic competence in English of Japanese learners and varied in type, method, and settings for each study. Hudson et al. (1995) considered three points in developing their MCDCT: strategy use, sociopragmatic misjudgments, and phrasing/expressions.

However, for Hudson et al.'s (1992; 1995) multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT), no systematic protocol study was conducted, there were no agreement data on metapragmatic assessment between native speakers and non-native speakers of English provided, and there were no statistical analyses associated with reliability and validity carried out (Liu, 2006). Additionally, Yamashita (1996) statistically analyzed translated, slightly modified, versions of Hudson et al.'s tests (1992, 1995) used to assess learners of Japanese. She found many issues with the MCDCT, such as low reliability, compared to the high reliability and validity found in the other five assessment instruments (self-assessment test, listening laboratory production test, open discourse completion test, role-play self-assessment test, and role-play test). Yamashita did find, though, that the translated instruments were appropriate for use with English speaking learners of Japanese, although she did not conduct a metapragmatic assessment regarding social variables (Liu, 2006). Enochs and Yoshitake-Strain (1996, 1999) in a validation study using Japanese learners of English, found that Hudson et al.'s (1992, 1995) instruments were reliable and valid except for the open discourse completion test and the multiple-choice discourse completion test. In contrast, Roever (2005) found strong evidence for the validity of a MCDCT he developed. This is the only study of the previous studies mentioned that did not reveal MCDCT to be low in reliability in assessing L2 learners' pragmatic competence.

In contrast to Hudson et al.'s (1992; 1995) multiple choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) Liu (2007) designed a MCDCT with high reliability and validity to assess the pragmatic competence of Chinese learners of English as a Foreign Language. In Liu's study, Chinese learners were asked to identify situations that require apologies and then assess how likely these situations would occur in their lives. Then, metapragmatic assessment, involving both Chinese and American students, analyzed the social variables in each situation. Each situation was then validated and multiple-choice options were designed for each situation. A

pilot study was then conducted using Chinese university students. Liu called for his method for developing a MCDCT to be replicated using different speech acts in different linguistic and cultural contexts.

Therefore, Matsugu (2014) replicated Liu's (2007) multiple-choice discourse completion (MCDCT) tests among a different native language group and with a different speech act (Appendix A). Matsugu developed a MCDCT for native Arabic speakers regarding the speech act of refusals. In Matsugu's study, 15 male native speakers of Arabic were asked to provide information about 10 situations they had experienced, seen, or heard of regarding a refusal in their home country. The participants were asked to rate how likely each situation was to occur. Next, a situation pilot study was conducted in which 14 native Arabic speakers and 11 native English speakers completed a questionnaire based on the 10 situations in order to collect responses to be used as keys or alternatives for the multiple-choice discourse completion test. Then, two native English speakers were instructed to rate the responses of the native Arabic speakers on a scale of appropriateness. After this was done, two or three responses marked inappropriate were included as alternatives in the MCDCT. Additionally, two of the responses of the native English speakers were included per situation as keys. Only six situations were included in the MCDCT because four situations did not elicit inappropriate responses by the native Arabic speakers. The remaining situations included two relationships between strangers (shop clerk-customer, in which the participant is the customer, and grocery store worker-customer, in which the participant is the grocery store worker), a father-son relationship, and three relationships between friends.

Matsugu (2014) claims that instruction and assessment cannot be separated. Therefore, language assessment researchers should develop better instruments to measure second language pragmatic competence in order for there to be better pragmatic instruction for language learners.

Matsugu also calls for further studies to develop instruments for measure second language pragmatic competence using his and Liu's (2006) method.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study sought to add to the body of literature regarding the level of directness in the refusal strategies of native Arabic speakers compared to that of native English speakers. For native Arabic speakers, the role of refusing in Arabic compared to refusing in English will also be examined. A pilot study revealed no significant difference between the level of directness in the refusal strategies of native Arabic speakers compared to that of native English speakers. In this pilot study, the native Arabic speakers were living in the United States, with a fair amount of exposure to Americans and American culture. This is contrary to the experience of participants in previous studies examining the directness of the refusal strategies of native Arabic speakers who are learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) and, thus, have significantly less exposure to American culture (Abed, 2011; Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Umale, 2011). Although the study by Nelson, Batal, and Bakary, (2002) was also done in an EFL context and, like the present study, indicated that Arabic speakers are not less direct than English speakers, perhaps living in the United States still plays a role in influencing the directness of the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers who are learning English in the United States. Therefore, the difference in level of directness in refusal strategies between native Arabic speakers currently living in the United States compared to those currently living in the Middle East will be examined. Each hypothesis will examine the statistical differences between the groups in order to determine if there are statistically significant differences. The importance of finding statistically significant differences as evidence of pragmatic transfer is indicated by prior research (Kasper, 1992). Based on prior research, the following hypotheses were made:

1. Native Arabic speakers, as a whole, will, on average, exhibit a significantly lesser degree of directness in their refusal strategies in English than will native English speakers for each situation and overall in the MCDCT.
2. Native Arabic speakers living in the United States will exhibit a significantly lesser degree of directness in their refusal strategies in Arabic compared to in their refusal strategies in English for each situation and overall in the MCDCT.
3. Native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East will exhibit a significantly lesser degree of directness in their refusal strategies in Arabic compared to in their refusal strategies in English for each situation and overall in the MCDCT.
4. Native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East will, on average, exhibit a significantly lesser degree of directness in their refusal strategies in both English and Arabic for each situation and overall than will native Arabic speakers living in the United States.

The present study used Matsugu's (2014) multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) to compare the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers and native English speakers (Appendix A). For the present study, the option of "other" was included in case the available options did not accurately or sufficiently express how a participant would perform the speech act of refusal in a situation. Despite the criticisms of discourse completion tests, the present study chose to use a multiple-choice discourse completion test because of its practicality in administering and scoring (Liu, 2006; Matsugu, 2014). Moreover, this specific multiple-choice discourse completion test (Matsugu, 2014) was chosen because it followed the careful procedure outlined and proven reliable/valid by Liu (2006). According to Kasper and Dahl (1991), "a good method is one that is able to shed light on the question(s) under study" (p. 245). Therefore, the present study used Matsugu's (2014) multiple choice discourse completion test

because it is a reliable and valid measure that would provide easily collected and analyzed data to answer the above hypotheses.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The present study was a quantitative study using Matsugu's (2014) multiple-choice discourse completion test, provided in English and Arabic (Appendices B and C). This method was selected because previous studies examining refusal strategies have used discourse completion tests (Abdul Sattar, Che Lah, & Suleiman, 2011; Abed, 2011; Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Chang, 2008; Nelson, Al-Batal, & Bakary, 2002).

Participants & Measure

There were three groups of participants in the present study: native Arabic speakers living the United States (Group A), native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East (Group B), and native English speakers living in the United States. (Group C). Detailed demographic information regarding the participants is provided in Appendix D. Concise demographic information regarding the participants is provided in Table 1. Participants for the native Arabic speakers group living in the United States (Group A) were recruited using the snowball sampling method and consisted of volunteers sought through recommendations from previous contacts with the Arab population at University A (pseudonym), a university in the southeastern region of the United States, or University A's English Language Institute (ELI). Similarly, participants for the native Arabic speakers group living in the United States (Group B) were recruited using the snowball sampling method and consisted of volunteers that the researcher previously knew. Participants for the native English speakers group (Group C), who are students at University A, were also recruited using the snowball sampling method. Each group of participants was informed about the study and asked about their interest in participating in the study. Those who

expressed an interest in the study and agreed to participate were then asked to complete Matsugu’s (2014) multiple-choice discourse completion test, translated into Arabic by the author’s Arabic professor (Appendix A). The total number of participants in this study was 49 participants. The English data for one participant, participant A12, was discarded because there was insufficient data.

Table 1: Concise Demographic Information of Participants

Participant Group	Number of Participants
Group A: native Arabic speakers in the United States	21
Group B: native Arabic speakers in the Middle East	8
Group C: native English speakers in the United States	20

Procedure

In the present study, participants in the native Arabic speakers living in the United States group (Group A) and native English speakers living in the United States group (Group C) were met with in a public place in the county of University A. Participants in the native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East (Group B) were contacted via WhatsApp (a messaging app). Each group of participants was asked to provide basic demographic information (age, gender, student status and year, country of origin, and years lived in the United States) and to complete the multiple-choice discourse completion test, with native Arabic speakers completing both the English and Arabic version of the test (Matsugu, 2014; Appendices B and C). Group B, native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East, provided this information via WhatsApp. The data were collected from late Fall of 2017 through Summer of 2018 and were analyzed in Fall of 2018.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

If a participant was missing half of the data or less in their original answers (i.e., they did not provide answers for three or fewer situations), mean imputation was used to provide the missing data. Mean imputation was used for participants A8 (English data), A11 (English data), A19 (English data), A20 (English data), and C2 (English data). It is important to note that mean imputation was not used for participant A11 for Situation 4 because 1 is the only option for degree of directness for this situation. If a participant was missing more than half the data or his/her answer for more than half the data was unclear, the data for this participant was discarded and the participant was excluded from the study (as was the case for participant A12). Moreover, some participants selected “other” as an answer, but did not provide an answer. For these cases, mean imputation was used if the participant was missing half of the data or less and the participant was excluded from the study if he/she was missing more than half of the data. Furthermore, participant A8 selected two answers for situation 6, so the researcher averaged the degree of directness for the answer choices that the participant selected. Information regarding detailed choices by each participant for each situation is provided in Appendix E.

The options of the multiple-choice discourse test were analyzed according to the classification system for refusal strategies of Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). Tables 7 through 12 in Appendix E demonstrate how each of the answer options for each situation were broken down into the utterances making up the semantic formula of the refusal act. Additionally, in the tables, each utterance is classified as a pre-refusal, main refusal, or post-refusal strategy. Pre-refusal strategies prepare the interlocutor for a refusal (e.g., “Uh, I’d really like to”). The

main refusal expresses the actual refusal of the speech act (e.g., “but I can’t”). Post refusal strategies follow the main refusal, working to emphasize or mitigate the refusal act (e.g., “I’m sorry”).

In the tables, each utterance is also classified according to the refusal strategy it represents, using the classification system of Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990): direct or indirect (and what specific type of indirect refusal). Finally, the degree of overall directness of the refusal is given, on a scale of one to five. The degree of directness was assigned based on the directness of the parts of the semantic formulae. For example, if each part of the semantic formula exhibited the use of an indirect refusal strategy, then the response was given a score of one (completely indirect). If there were more indirect refusal strategies than direct refusal strategies used in a response, then the response was given a score of two (mostly indirect). If there was an equal number of indirect and direct refusal strategies in a response, then the response was given a score of three (equally indirect and direct). If there were more direct refusal strategies than indirect refusal strategies used in a response, then the response was given a score of four (mostly direct). If each part of the semantic formula demonstrated a direct refusal strategy, then the response was given a score of five (completely direct). Tables 13 and 14 in Appendix E include the analysis of the semantic formulae and degree of directness of the “other” responses provided by the participants. It is interesting to note that participants A6 and A15 did not make a refusal for Situation 2 in English, but, rather, agreed to go to the market for their father. This response, therefore, was considered the most indirect refusal because it was not, in fact, a refusal at all. It should also be noted that Participant A8 wrote “another” as his response to Situation 2 in Arabic, but he did not, in fact, provide another response. Therefore, mean imputation was used to determine the degree of directness for this situation. Additionally, the

first pre-refusal of Participant A12's response for Situation 1 ("I swear to God") is one word in Arabic and is a religious word.

Results

The average scores of degree of directness (for each situation and overall) for each group of participants for the responses to the questionnaire in English are reported in Table 2, with the average scores of degree of directness for each situation and overall for Groups A and B (the native Arabic speaker groups) reported in Table 3. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank tests are reported in Tables 4 through 9.

Table 2: Average Scores of Degree of Directness for English Answers

Participant Group	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
	<i>M (SD)</i>						
Group A	2.70 (0.86)	1.40 (0.99)	2.35 (1.42)	1.00 (0.00)	1.43 (0.52)	1.50 (0.51)	1.73 (0.65)
Group B	3.25 (0.89)	1.16 (0.44)	1.66 (0.55)	1.00 (0.00)	1.50 (0.53)	1.88 (0.35)	1.74 (0.81)
Group C	3.00 (0.73)	1.40 (1.23)	1.45 (0.51)	1.00 (0.00)	1.30 (0.57)	1.45 (0.51)	1.60 (0.71)

Table 3: Average Scores of Degree of Directness for Arabic Answers

Participant Group	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
	<i>M (SD)</i>						
Group A	2.43 (0.98)	1.28 (0.90)	2.14 (1.28)	1.00 (0.00)	1.45 (0.50)	1.60 (0.49)	1.65 (0.54)
Group B	2.88 (1.13)	1.13 (0.35)	1.63 (0.52)	1.00 (0.00)	1.48 (0.51)	1.88 (0.35)	1.66 (0.68)

Table 4: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Hypothesis 1 Part 1 (Group A English to Group C English)

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
Z	-1.25	-.11	-2.44	.000	-1.06	-.55	-.94

<i>p</i> value	.21	.92	.02	1.00	.29	.58	.35
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Table 5: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Hypothesis 1 Part 2 (Group B English vs. Group C English)

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
<i>Z</i>	-.65	-.45	-1.13	.000	-1.41	-1.89	-1.36
<i>p</i> value	.52	.66	.26	1.00	.16	.06	.17

Table 6: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Hypothesis 2 (Group A Arabic vs. Group A English)

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
<i>Z</i>	-1.10	-.92	-.48	.000	-.07	-.67	-1.36
<i>p</i> value	.27	.36	.63	1.00	.94	.50	.17

Table 7: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Hypothesis 3 (Group B Arabic vs. Group B English)

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
<i>Z</i>	-1.00	-.45	-.45	.000	-1.00	.00	-2.03
<i>p</i> value	.32	.66	.66	1.00	.32	1.00	.04

Table 8: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Hypothesis 4 Part 1 (Group B English vs. Group A English)

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
<i>Z</i>	-1.27	-.54	-.38	.000	-.82	-1.44	-.31
<i>p</i> value	.21	.59	.71	1.00	.41	.15	.75

Table 9: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for Hypothesis 4 Part 2 (Group B Arabic vs. Group A Arabic)

	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Total
<i>Z</i>	-1.13	-.54	-1.00	.000	-.85	-1.00	-.31
<i>p</i> value	.26	.59	.32	1.00	.40	.32	.75

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to add to the existing literature regarding the degree of directness used by native Arabic speakers in refusal strategies compared to the degree of directness used by native English speakers. Therefore, it was hypothesized that native Arabic speakers would, on average, be significantly less direct in their refusal strategies than would native English speakers for each situation in the multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) and overall (Hypothesis 1). The hypothesis claiming that native Arabic speakers would, on average, be significantly less direct in their refusal strategies than native English speakers for each situation in the MCDCT was not supported. As seen in Tables 4 and 5, there was no statistically significant difference between the directness of the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers and those used by native English speakers.

Additionally, the present study examined whether native Arabic speakers were less direct in their refusal strategies in Arabic compared to in their refusal strategies in English (Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3). As seen in Table 6, the hypothesis claiming that native Arabic speakers living in the United States will be significantly less direct in their refusal strategies in Arabic compared to in their refusal strategies in English for each situation and overall in the MCDCT was not supported. However, as seen in Table 7, the hypothesis claiming that native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East will exhibit a significantly lesser degree of directness in their refusal strategies in Arabic compared to in their refusal strategies in English for each situation and overall in the MCDCT was partially supported. There was no statistically significant difference for each situation, but, overall, native Arabic speakers in the Middle East were shown to be statistically significantly less direct in the refusal strategies in Arabic compared to their refusal strategies in English.

The present study also examined whether, for native Arabic speakers, living in the United States (with a greater exposure to American culture) compared to living in the Middle East may

play a role in the directness of the refusal strategies, in Arabic and English, used by Native Arabic speakers (Hypothesis 4). As seen in Tables 8 and 9, the hypothesis claiming that native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East will be less direct in their refusal strategies in both English and Arabic for each situation and overall than will native Arabic speakers living in the United States was not supported. There was no statistically significant difference in the refusal strategies, in Arabic and English, used by native Arabic speakers living in the Middle East compared to those used by native Arabic speakers living in the United States.

Therefore, as a whole there were no significant differences in the directness of the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers, in English and Arabic, and those used by native English speakers. This is contrary to the majority of the extant literature, which claims that native Arabic speakers are typically more indirect in their refusal strategies than are native English speakers (Abed, 2011; Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Umale, 2011). Perhaps a likely cause for there being no statistically significant differences between the directness of the refusal strategies of the native Arabic speakers and the directness of the refusal strategies of the native English speakers was the small sample size of the study. However, this is also not the first study to indicate that native Arabic speakers are not always less direct in their refusals than are native English speakers (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Morkus, 2014; Nelson, Batal, & Bakary, 2002).

Moreover, prior research claims that, even when both native Arabic speakers and native English speakers used indirect strategies, the indirect strategies used by each group were still different (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Morkus, 2014). For example, native Arabic speakers have been found to use explanations, excuses, family-oriented reasons, religious expressions, proverbs, and expressions of gratitude, whereas American native speakers of English tend to use expressions of regret and personal reasons. In line with this research, the present study found that religious

expressions were used by native Arabic speakers. However, an indirect refusal strategy using a religious expression only occurred three times in the present study. Furthermore, contrary to the prior research, the present study found that both groups of native Arabic speakers, in English and Arabic, and the group of native English speakers used the same three indirect refusal strategies most often. For each group of participants, the indirect refusal strategy of providing an excuse/reason/explanation was used most often, followed by either using a statement of regret or a statement of alternative.

The present study supports claims of prior research that native Arabic speakers are not always less direct than native English speakers in refusals. For example, Nelson, Batal, and Bakary (2002) point to the importance of studying small units of discourse such as speech acts and not “making generalizations about the communication style of a language or culture as if one style (e.g., direct vs. indirect) is used unilaterally regardless of situation, gender, age, and status” (p. 52). Generalizations about an indirect style “in the blood of every Arabic person” (Katriel, 1986, p. 111) can cause non-Arab persons to perceive Arab persons as impolite, rude, or arrogant if Arab persons do use direct strategies in refusing, leading to cross-cultural misunderstandings. The results of the present study fall in line with the results of this study, with both studies indicating that native Arabic speakers are not less direct than native English speakers.

There are several additional potential reasons for why the present study produced results contradictory to those of many previous studies. Firstly, the instrument used, Matsugu’s (2014) multiple-choice discourse completion test, was perhaps not as reliable as other instruments because it provided choices for participants. As prior research has found, different instruments may produce different results (Beebe & Cummins, 1985; Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1992; Edmondson & House, 1991). An instrument that does not provide choices for participants may produce different results. A second reason for the results of the present study is

also related to the instrument used in the study. The results of the study may not be reliable because the present study relied on self-reporting. Therefore, what the participants indicated that they would do may not be, in fact, what they would actually do. In line with this idea, Zhang (1992) found that pragmatic transfer for Chinese learners of English occurred in the discursal development of a speech act, but not in a discourse completion questionnaire, with its one-turn response. In the discourse completion test, the Chinese learners' responses were very similar to the responses of native English speakers.

Moreover, learners may not necessarily automatically transfer pragmatic knowledge from their L1 into their L2 (Kasper, 1992; Robinson, 1992). Rather, there may be transferability constraints. For example, Robinson (1992) found that Japanese learners of English consulted both their L1 and interlanguage pragmatic knowledge when using refusal strategies. Moreover, according to Olshtain (1983), pragmatic transfer may involve an automatic processing (influenced by a learner's L1) in the beginning, followed by a more controlled processing (in which a learner's IL is consulted). Olshtain also claimed that other factors may be more influential than perceptions of what is pragmatically appropriate in L1 and L2. For example, learners may feel the need to be more negatively polite because they are new arrivals, and not yet members, in a community. Therefore, particularly in the case of native Arabic speakers with a higher level of English proficiency, perhaps there was a lack of pragmatic transfer evidenced in the refusal strategies because these learners were not only consulting their knowledge of Arabic pragmatics but were also consulting their developing knowledge of English pragmatics. Olshtain claims that it is during the controlled processing that a learner's interlanguage is consulted and this type of controlled processing is enabled by a discourse completion test, such as the one used in the present study. This lack of transferability of pragmatic knowledge may account for the lack of statistically significant differences in the directness of refusal strategies in the present

study, even though the native Arabic speakers did not produce statistically significant differences in directness in their refusal strategies in English and Arabic. The lack of statistical difference between the directness of refusal strategies in English and those in Arabic may simply be a result of the participants taking the tests at the same time. As a result of this, the native Arabic speakers may not have been able to truly focus on whether they would refuse differently in Arabic compared to English.

Furthermore, for those native Arabic speakers in the present study with a lower proficiency level in English, this low proficiency level in their target language may be the reason for a lack of pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English in the present study. According to Blum-Kulka (1982), greater L2 knowledge may actually increase pragmatic transfer because, with a greater developed interlanguage, learners are more able to use L2 linguistic forms to accomplish L1 pragmatic strategies. That is, the advanced target language linguistic forms are helping the learners effectively transfer pragmatic knowledge from the native language into the target language. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) also found that learners did not transfer strategies and devices from their L1 into their L2 due to lack of L2 knowledge. For example, it has been found that advanced Japanese learners of English exhibited more pragmatic transfer in apologizing strategies than did intermediate learners (Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1992).

Finally, increased interaction, due to globalization, among various countries and cultures may have decreased the differences in the refusal strategies of native Arabic speakers and native English speakers. Native Arabic speakers may be influenced by the pragmatics of Western culture. Along with this idea, Blum-Kulka (1991) claimed that an “intercultural style” may develop as a result of the interaction between L1 and L2 pragmatic norms and conversational styles. This intercultural style is distinct from both the L1 and L2. For example emerging intercultural styles of speaking by American immigrants to Israel, sustained through the third and

fourth generation, and by Australian immigrants support this idea of intercultural styles emerging as a result of interaction between L1 and L2 pragmatic norms (Blum-Kulka, 1990).

Limitations

A clear limitation of the present study is the small sample size, which limits generalizability of the results. An additional limitation of the present study deals with the methodology used. As previously mentioned, different instruments may produce different results (Beebe & Cummins, 1985; Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1992; Edmondson & House, 1991). For example, in a multiple-choice discourse completion test, participants are given time to carefully consider their answers, perhaps resulting in their choosing what they ought to say, rather than what they actually would say. Moreover, in a multiple-choice discourse completion test, choices are provided for participants. Consequently, perhaps the measure used in the present study was not as reliable and valid as other measures of pragmatic transfer may be.

A final limitation is the proficiency level in English of the native Arabic speakers in the study, which may have caused the Arab participants to be more direct in their refusals. Although the native speakers of Arabic are all fairly proficient in the English language, they may miss certain subtleties in the language, causing them to be more direct than they intended to be (Al-Otaibi, 2015). As mentioned in the discussion of the results, learners with limited proficiency in a second language may lack the language skills to demonstrate pragmatic transfer.

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In summary, this study has found few, if any, differences in the directness of refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers, in English and Arabic, and those used by native English speakers, contrary to the findings of the majority of the extant literature. Even living in the United States compared to living in the Middle East and refusing in English compared to refusing in Arabic, as a whole, did not seem to influence the directness of the refusal strategies used by native Arabic speakers. Therefore, although it is tempting to make generalizations about the communication styles of a group, this may, in fact, be a dangerous practice that can hinder cross-cultural communication and increase stereotypes about different linguistic/cultural groups. As an alternative to making generalizations about communication styles of a group, the present study points to the need for studying individual speech acts of a group. At the same time, the results of this study may be a reflection of the measure used. A significant issue in the field of pragmatics is how to measure pragmatics, and the present study is a good example of the tension present in choosing an instrument. However, despite the limitations of the study, the results of the study do have some implications for pedagogy and future research, as described below.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of the present study do not point to a need for a change in how pragmatics are taught. Rather, the present study may indicate that the nonnative speakers of English in this study have been taught pragmatics well. Therefore, the present study indirectly points to a need for continued activities designed to promote noticing of pragmatic features (Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga, 2012; Schmidt, 1990; 1992; 1993), as well as for instructors to include metapragmatic discussion in order to promote effective learning of pragmatic features (Bardovi-Harlig &

Vellenga, 2012; Takimoto, 2012). This instruction should be done throughout a course, rather than only in one small unit on pragmatics within a course (Bardovi-Harlig & Vellenga, 2012). Throughout the course of instruction of pragmatics, instructors should ensure that learners' grammar is advanced enough to learn pragmatic features.

Research Implications

Just as shown in Nelson, Batal, and Bakary's (2002) study, the present study confirms the need for studying speech acts as small units of discourse and not making generalizations about the communication style of a group. Therefore, further research should be done regarding the directness of the individual speech acts performed by native Arabic speakers, especially compared to those performed by native English speakers. This research may need to use a different method than the one used in the present study (Beebe & Cummins, 1985). One generally must choose between a measure that is easy to administer, score, and analyze and a measure that may more accurately represent actual speech but may be quite time-consuming and difficult to analyze. Therefore, in order to determine whether it was, in fact, the measure used in the study that resulted in a lack of statistically significant results, the research questions of this study should be examined using a measure that more accurately represents actual speech, such as an open role play task. Future studies may also need to include multiple methods, including interviews.

Future research should examine similar research questions to those in the present study using a larger sample size. It may be easier to increase the sample size of the group of native Arabic speakers in the Middle East by recruiting participants and administering the multiple-choice discourse completion test in the Middle East. Because prior research indicates that learners with limited proficiency in a second language may lack the language skills to

demonstrate pragmatic transfer, future research could include participants only with a much higher level of proficiency in English.

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APPENDIX A
Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test (Matsugu, 2014)

Note: Options in italics are responses from native speakers of English.

1. Situation: A shop clerk tries to sell his product very persistently, but you don't want to buy it. What would you tell the clerk?
 - a. *No, thank you, I'm not interested.*
 - b. I have something similar.
 - c. I'm sorry, I don't want to buy anything. I am really sorry.
 - d. Sorry, I don't have time. I have to go to my home.
 - e. *No...it looks great, but I'm not going to get anything today.*

2. Situation: Your father asked you to get some groceries from the market, but you don't want to. What would you tell your father?
 - a. You should go.
 - b. *Can I do it later?*
 - c. I don't have enough money. Sorry.
 - d. *Ok, but I'm really busy today.*

3. Situation: Your best friend asked you for a lot of money, but you don't want to. What would you tell him?
 - a. I don't have money right now.
 - b. *I'd love to help you out, but unfortunately, I can't lend you the money.*
 - c. *I really don't have it to spare.*
 - d. Now, I can't give you.

4. Situation: Your friend asked you to have lunch with him, but you have to take your father to the market. So you cannot go to lunch with your friend. What would you tell your friend?
 - a. *I wish I could but I have to help my dad.*
 - b. *That would be fun, but I promised to take dad shopping. How about tomorrow?*
 - c. What about next day?
 - d. Sorry, I don't have time.

5. Situation: You work at a grocery store and your customer called you to deliver some food to his home, but you can't because you are too busy. What would you tell him?
 - a. Sorry because we don't have a car.
 - b. *I'm sorry. We are too busy right now, and there is a long delay on food delivery.*
 - c. Sorry. I don't have time

- d. *I'm sorry sir. We aren't able to bring groceries directly to our customers. We just don't have the staff for that kind of service.*
6. Situation: Your friend asked you to help with his homework, but you have an appointment with your dentist, so you can't help him. What would you tell him?
- a. Talk to somebody else. I have an appointment.
 - b. Sorry, I don't have to do it.
 - c. *I can't right now because I have to go to the dentist, but what about later today?*
 - d. *I'm sorry, but I have a dentist appointment then. Maybe a different time?*

APPENDIX B

Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test: English Version

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Are you a student at the University of Alabama or at the English Language Institute?
4. If so, what year/level are you?
5. What country is your family originally from?
6. How many years have you lived in the United States?

Select One Response for Each of the Following Situations

7. Situation: A shop clerk tries to sell his product very persistently, but you don't want to buy it. What would you tell the clerk?
 - a. No, thank you, I'm not interested.
 - b. I have something similar.
 - c. I'm sorry, I don't want to buy anything. I am really sorry.
 - d. Sorry, I don't have time. I have to go to my home.
 - e. No...it looks great, but I'm not going to get anything today.
 - f. Other:
8. Situation: Your father asked you to get some groceries from the market, but you don't want to. What would you tell your father?
 - a. You should go.
 - b. Can I do it later?
 - c. I don't have enough money. Sorry.
 - d. Ok, but I'm really busy today.
 - e. Other:
9. Situation: Your best friend asked you for a lot of money, but you don't want to. What would you tell him?
 - a. I don't have money right now.
 - b. I'd love to help you out, but unfortunately, I can't lend you the money.
 - c. I really don't have it to spare.
 - d. Now, I can't give you.
 - e. Other:
10. Situation: Your friend asked you to have lunch with him, but you have to take your father to the market. So you cannot go to lunch with your friend. What would you tell your friend?
 - a. I wish I could but I have to help my dad.

- b. That would be fun, but I promised to take dad shopping. How about tomorrow?
 - c. What about next day?
 - d. Sorry, I don't have time.
 - e. Other:
11. Situation: You work at a grocery store and your customer called you to deliver some food to his home, but you can't because you are too busy. What would you tell him?
- a. Sorry because we don't have a car.
 - b. I'm sorry. We are too busy right now, and there is a long delay on food delivery.
 - c. Sorry. I don't have time.
 - d. I'm sorry sir. We aren't able to bring groceries directly to our customers. We just don't have the staff for that kind of service.
 - e. Other:
12. Situation: Your friend asked you to help with his homework, but you have an appointment with your dentist, so you can't help him. What would you tell him?
- a. Talk to somebody else. I have an appointment.
 - b. Sorry, I don't have to do it.
 - c. I can't right now because I have to go to the dentist, but what about later today?
 - d. I'm sorry, but I have a dentist appointment then. Maybe a different time?
 - e. Other:

APPENDIX C
Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test: Arabic Version
Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test: Arabic Version

١. ما هو عمرك؟

٢. ما جنسك؟ ذكر، انثى، أو بخلاف ذلك.....

٣. من أي بلد عائلتك أصلا من؟

حدد إجابة واحدة لكل حالة من الحالات التالية

٤. الموقف : يحاول صاحب متجر بيع منتجه بشكل مستمر جدا، ولكنك لا تريد شرائه. ماذا ستقول لصاحب المتجر؟

- ا. لا، شكرا لك، أنا لست مهتما.
- ب. لدي شيء مماثل.
- ج. أنا أسف، لا أريد شراء أي شيء. أنا اسف جدا.
- د. عذرا، ليس لدي وقت. يجب أن أذهب إلى بيتي.
- هـ. لا ... يبدو رائعا، ولكن أنا لن اتحصل على أي شيء اليوم.

٥. الموقف: طلب والدك منك الحصول على بعض مستلزمات البقالة من السوق، ولكن انت لا تريد أن تذهب. ماذا ستقول لو والدك؟

- ا. يجب أن تذهب انت، ابي .
- ب. ا يمكنني أن أفعل ذلك في وقت لاحق؟
- ج. ليس لدي ما يكفي من المال. معذرة.
- د. طيب، ولكن أنا مشغول حقا اليوم.

٦. الموقف: طلب منك أفضل صديق لك الكثير من المال، ولكنك لا تريد تقرضه. ماذا ستقول له؟

- ا. ليس لدي المال الان.
- ب. أحب مساعدتك، ولكن للأسف، لا أستطيع أن أقرضك المال.

ج. أنا حقا ليس لدي.
د. الآن، لا أستطيع أن أعطيك.

٧. الموقف: طلب منك صديقك تناول الغداء معه، ولكن عليك أن تأخذ والدك إلى السوق. لذلك لا يمكنك الذهاب لتناول الغداء مع صديقك. ماذا ستقول لصديقك؟

ا. أتمنى لو أنني أستطيع لا بد لي من مساعدة والدي.
ب. هذا سيكون متعة، ولكن وعدت ان أخذ والدي للتسوق. ما رأيك غدا؟
ج. ماذا عن اليوم التالي؟
د. عذرا، ليس لدي وقت.

٨. الموقف: كنت تعمل في محل بقالة و زبونك نادك لحمل بعض الطعام إلى منزله، ولكن لا يمكنك لأنك مشغول جدا. ماذا ستقول له؟

ا. آسف لأننا لا نملك سيارة.
ب. أنا آسف. نحن مشغولون جدا الآن، وهناك تأخير طويل على تسليم الأغذية.
ج. معذرة. ليس لدي وقت.
د. انا اسف سيدي. نحن لسنا قادرين على جلب البقالة مباشرة لعملائنا. نحن ليس لدينا موظفين لهذا النوع من الخدمة.

٩. الموقف: طلب منك صديقك المساعدة في واجباته المنزلية، ولكن لديك موعد مع طبيب الأسنان الخاص بك، لذلك لا يمكنك مساعدته. ماذا ستقول له؟

ا. تحدث إلى شخص آخر. لدي موعد
ب. آسف، أنا لا يجب أن افعل ذلك
ج. لا أستطيع الآن لأنني يجب أن أذهب إلى طبيب الأسنان، ولكن ماذا عن في وقت لاحق اليوم؟
د. أنا آسف، ولكن لدي موعد طبيب الأسنان. ربما وقت مختلف؟

APPENDIX D

Detailed Demographic Information of Participants

Table 1: Demographics of Native Arabic Speakers Living in the United States (Group A)

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Student Status	Year/Level	Country of Origin	Years Lived in the U.S.
A1	21	Female	English Language Institute	4(Speaking/Listening) and 2 (Grammar)	Saudi Arabia	2
A2	27	Female	Not a student	N/A	Saudi Arabia	4
A3	19	Male	University A	Freshman	Saudi Arabia	2-3 years
A4	19	Male	University A	Freshman	Oman	11 months
A5	26	Male	University A	Junior	Saudi Arabia	4
A6	21	Male	University A	Junior	Saudi Arabia	3
A7	22	Male	University A	Freshman	Saudi Arabia	3
A8	24	Male	English Language Institute	3	Saudi Arabia	No answer
A9	27	Male	English Language Institute	No answer	Saudi Arabia	Almost 1 year

A10	26	Male	English Language Institute	No answer	Saudi Arabia	No answer
A11	30	Male	English Language Institute	Level 3	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A12	26	Male	English Language Institute	No answer	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A13	22	Male	English Language Institute	Level 3	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A14	24	Male	English Language Institute	Level 3	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A15	24	Male	English Language Institute	No answer	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A16	24	Male	English Language Institute	1 st year	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A17	23	Male	English Language Institute	Level 2	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A18	25	Male	English Language Institute	Level 3	Saudi Arabia	6 months
A19	26	No answer	No answer	No answer	Saudi Arabia	No answer
A20	27	Male	English Language Institute	No answer	Saudi Arabia	6 months

A21	24	Male	University A	3 rd year		Saudi Arabia	6 years
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Table 2: Demographics of Native Arabic Speakers Living in the Middle East (Group B)

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Student Status	Year/Level	Country of Origin	Years Lived in the U.S.
B1	22	Female	Student in the Middle East	5 th year student	Jordan	0
B2	49	Female	Student in the Middle East	3 rd year MA student	Jordan	0
B3	26	Female	Not a student	Was Level 3	Saudi Arabia	1 year (previously lived in the U.S.)
B4	30	Male	Not a student	N/A	Saudi Arabia	0
B5	20	Female	Not a student	N/A	Saudi Arabia	0
B6	26	Female	Was a student at the English Language Institute	Was Level 4 (Reading), Level 5 (Speaking and Listening), and Level 6 (Structure)	Saudi Arabia	1 year and 6 months
B7	20	Female	Student in the Middle East	No answer	Palestine	0
B8	17	Male	Student in the Middle East	N/A	Qatar	10 months (previously lived in the U.S.)

Table 3: Demographics of Native English Speakers Living in the United States (Group C)

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Student Status	Year/Level	Country of Origin	Years Lived in the U.S.
C1	23	Female	University A	1 st year of graduate school	United States	23
C2	24	Female	University A	1 st year of graduate school	United States	24
C3	52	Male	University A	1 st year of graduate school	United States	52
C4	21	Male	University A	Senior	United States	21
C5	20	Male	University A	Sophomore	United States	12
C6	22	Male	University A	Junior	United States	22
C7	23	Female	University A	1 st year of graduate school	United States	22
C8	23	Male	University A	Graduate Student	United States	23
C9	22	Female	University A	1 st year of graduate school	United States	22
C10	20	Male	University A	1 st semester freshman	United States	20

C11	18	Male	University A	Sophomore	United States	18
C12	22	Male	University A	Senior	United States	22
C13	39	Female	Not a student	N/A	United States	39
C14	22	Female	University A	Senior	United States	22
C15	20	Female	University A	Sophomore	United States	20
C16	19	Female	University A	Freshman	United States	19
C17	19	Male	University A	Freshman	United States	19
C18	22	Female	University A	Senior	United States	22
C19	19	Female	University A	Freshman	United States	19
C20	19	Male	University A	Freshman	United States	19

APPENDIX E

Information Regarding Detailed Choices by Each Participant for Each Situation

Table 4: Answer Choices in English of Native Arabic Speakers Living in the United States (Group A)

Participant	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6
A1	e.	d.	b.	a.	d.	d.
A2	a.	d.	b.	b.	b.	d.
A3	f. (other)	e. (other)	b.	b.	b.	c.
A4	e.	d.	b.	a.	b.	c.
A5	a.	b.	a.	a.	b.	a.
A6	f. (other)	e. (other)	a.	c.	a.	a.
A7	c.	a.	b.	b.	b.	c.
A8	a.	e. (other)	b.	b.	d.	c. & d.
A9	f. (other)	b.	d.	a.	a.	a.
A10	c.	b.	c.	b.	b.	c.
A11	c.	e. (other)	b.	No answer	No answer	No answer
A13	c.	b.	d.	b.	d.	d.
A14	a.	b.	b.	b.	b.	c.
A15	a.	e. (other)	d.	b.	a.	c.
A16	e.	b.	a.	a.	d.	c.
A17	c.	b.	d.	b.	a.	a.
A18	a.	b.	b.	b.	d.	d.
A19	e.	e. (other)	b.	b.	d.	d.
A20	c.	b.	a.	b.	e. (other)	e. (other)

A21	a.	b.	b.	b.	d.	c.
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Table 5: Answer Choices in English of Native Arabic Speakers Living in the Middle East (Group B)

Participant	Situation	Situation	Situation	Situation	Situation	Situation
	1	2	3	4	5	6
C1	e.	d.	e. (other)	b.	b.	c.
C2	e.	e. (other)	e. (other)	b.	d.	c.
C3	a.	b.	c.	b.	d.	d.
C4	a.	b.	b.	b.	d.	c.
C5	e.	d.	c.	b.	a.	c.
C6	c.	b.	b.	b.	b.	c.
C7	e.	b.	b.	b.	d.	c.
C8	c.	b.	b.	b.	b.	c.

Table 6: Answer Choices in English of Native English Speakers Living in the United States (Group C)

Participant	Situation	Situation	Situation	Situation	Situation	Situation
	1	2	3	4	5	6
C1	f. (other)	b.	c.	a.	c.	d.
C2	a.	b.	c.	a.	d.	d.
C3	a.	d.	c.	b.	b.	c.
C4	a.	b.	b.	b.	d.	d.
C5	a.	d.	b.	a.	b.	d.
C6	e.	a.	c.	b.	b.	d.
C7	a.	b.	b.	b.	e. (other)	d.

C8	a.	d.	a.	b.	b.	c.
C9	c.	b.	c.	b.	b.	c.
C10	a.	b.	b.	a.	b.	c.
C11	a.	b.	b.	b.	e. (other)	c.
C12	e.	d.	c.	b.	d.	c.
C13	a.	a.	c.	a.	c.	c.
C14	c.	b.	b.	b.	b.	d.
C15	e.	b.	a.	b.	b.	d.
C16	a.	d.	b.	b.	b.	d.
C17	a.	b.	b.	b.	d.	d.
C18	e.	d.	b.	b.	b.	d.
C19	a.	b.	c.	b.	b.	c.
C20	a.	b.	c.	b.	b.	c.

Table 7: Semantic Formulae of MCDCT Responses for Situation 1

Option	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
a.	No, thank you	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	3
	I'm not interested	Post-refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
b.	I have something similar	Main Refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	1
c.	I'm sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	2
	I don't want to buy anything	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	
	I am really sorry	Post-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	
d.	Sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1

	I don't have time	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	I have to go to my home	Post-refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
e.	No	Main refusal	~Direct Refusal	4
	It looks great	Post-refusal	~Acceptance that functions as a refusal (Indirect)	
	But I'm not going to get anything today	Post-refusal	~Direct refusal	

Table 8: Semantic Formulae of MCDCT Responses for Situation 2

Option	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
a.	You should go	Main refusal	Direct refusal	5
b.	Can I do it later?	Main refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	1
c.	I don't have enough money	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	1
	Sorry	Post-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	
d.	Ok, but I'm really busy today	Main refusal	~Attempt to dissuade interlocutor through a guilt trip (Indirect)	1

Table 9: Semantic Formulae of MCDCT Responses for Situation 3

Option	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
a.	I don't have money right now	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	1
b.	I'd love to help you out	Pre-refusal	~Wish (Indirect)	2

	But unfortunately	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	
	I can't lend you the money	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	
c.	I really don't have it to spare	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	1
d.	Now, I can't give you	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	5

Table 10: Semantic Formulae of MCDCT Responses for Situation 4

Option	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
a.	I wish I could	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
	But I have to help my dad	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
b.	That would be fun	Pre-refusal	~Acceptance that functions as a refusal (Indirect)	1
	But I promised to take dad shopping	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	How about tomorrow?	Post-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	
c.	What about next day?	Main refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	1
d.	Sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
	I don't have time	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	

Table 11: Semantic Formulae of MCDCT Responses for Situation 5

Option	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
a.	Sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
	Because we don't have a car	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
b.	I'm sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1

c.	We are too busy right now, and there is a long delay on food delivery	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	Sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
d.	I don't have time	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	I'm sorry sir	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	2
	We aren't able to bring groceries directly to our customers	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	
	We just don't have the staff for that kind of service	Post-refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	

Table 12: Semantic Formulae of MCDCT Responses for Situation 6

Option	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
a.	Talk to somebody else	Main refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	1
b.	I have an appointment	Post-refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	Sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	3
c.	I don't have to do it	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	
	I can't right now	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	2
d.	Because I have to go to the dentist	Post-refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	But what about later today?	Post-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	
	I'm sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
	But I have a dentist appointment then	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
	Maybe a different time?	Post-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	

Table 13: Semantic Formulae of “Other” Responses in English

Participant	Situation	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
A3	1	This is really nice	Pre-refusal	~Lack of enthusiasm (Indirect)	2
		But I’m not interested	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	
		My apologies	Post-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	
A3	2	Can you ask my siblings	Main refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	1
		I’ll do it later if they don’t want to	Post-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	
A6	1	Thank you	Pre-refusal	~Unspecific or indefinite reply (Indirect)	1
		I will come back	Main refusal	~Postponement (Indirect)	
A6	2	I just go	Non-refusal	Indirect	1
A9	1	No	Main refusal	~Direct Refusal	2
		Next time I buy	Post-refusal	~Promise of future acceptance (Indirect)	
		Inshallah (meaning “God willing”)	Post-refusal	~Religious word (Indirect)	
A11	2	Sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	3
		I don’t want to go	Main refusal	~Direct Refusal	
A15	2	Yes, I can	Non-refusal	~Indirect Refusal	1
B1	5	I sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
		I don’t have enough money	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
		I wish I could give you	Post-refusal	~Wish (Indirect)	

C1	1	So sorry	Post-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	1
		I'm just looking	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
C7	5	But thank you	Post-refusal	~Unspecific or indefinite reply (Indefinite)	1
		I will add you to the delivery list	Pre-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	
C11	5	But know that the high volume of customers means it will take a long time	Main refusal	~Unspecific or indefinite reply (Indirect)	3
		I can't	Main refusal	~Direct Refusal	
		But I will find someone who can	Post-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	

Table 14: Semantic Formulae of "Other" Responses in Arabic

Participant	Situation	Response	Refusal-sequences	~Strategy	Degree of Directness
A3	1	This seems nice	Pre-refusal	~Lack of enthusiasm (Indirect)	2
		But I apologize	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	
A3	2	I am not interested	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	1
		Is it possible for you to ask my brother?	Main refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	
		Or I will go later	Post-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	

A6	1	Thank you	Pre-refusal	~Unspecific or indefinite reply (Indirect)	1
A6	2	I will come back to you later I am going to bring the groceries	Main refusal Non-refusal	~Postponement (Indirect) Indirect	1
A8	2	Another	-	-	-
A12	1	I swear to God	Pre-refusal	~Religious expression (Indirect)	1
		I'm sorry	Pre-refusal	~Statement of regret (Indirect)	
		I don't have money	Main refusal	~Excuse/reason/explanation (Indirect)	
A12	2	God willing	Pre-refusal	~Religious expression (Indirect)	2
		I will go	Pre-refusal	~Statement of alternative (Indirect)	
		But I am not going now	Main refusal	~Direct refusal	
A15	2	Ok, I'll go	Non-refusal	~Indirect refusal	1
A19	2	Even if I don't want to go, I will go without saying anything	Non-refusal	~Indirect refusal	1

Table 15: Degree of Directness for Each Situation in English by Native Arabic Speakers Living in the United States (Group A)

Participant	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6
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A1	4	1	2	1	2	1
A2	3	1	2	1	1	1
A3	2	1	2	1	1	2
A4	4	1	2	1	1	2
A5	3	1	1	1	1	1
A6	1	1	1	1	1	1
A7	2	5	2	1	1	2
A8	3	1.9	2	1	2	1.5
A9	2	1	5	1	1	1
A10	2	1	1	1	1	2
A11	2	3	2	1	2.333333333	2.333333333
A13	2	1	5	1	2	1
A14	3	1	2	1	1	2
A15	3	1	5	1	1	2
A16	4	1	1	1	2	2
A17	2	1	5	1	1	1
A18	3	1	2	1	2	1
A19	4	2	2	1	2	1
A20	2	1	1	1	1.25	1.25
A21	3	1	2	1	2	2

Table 16: Degree of Directness for Each Situation in English by Arabic Speakers Living in the Middle East (Group B)

Participant	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6
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B1	4	1	1	1	1	2
B2	4	2.25	2.25	1	2	2
B3	3	1	1	1	2	1
B4	3	1	2	1	2	2
B5	4	1	1	1	1	2
B6	2	1	2	1	1	2
B7	4	1	2	1	2	2
B8	2	1	2	1	1	2

Table 17: Degree of Directness for Each Situation in English by Native English Speakers Living in the United States (Group C)

Participant	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6
C1	1	1	1	1	1	1
C2	3	1	1	1	2	1
C3	3	1	1	1	1	2
C4	3	1	2	1	2	1
C5	3	1	2	1	1	1
C6	4	5	1	1	1	1
C7	3	1	2	1	1	1
C8	3	1	1	1	1	2
C9	2	1	1	1	1	2
C10	3	1	2	1	1	2
C11	3	1	2	1	3	2
C12	4	1	1	1	2	2
C13	3	5	1	1	1	2

C14	2	1	2	1	1	1
C15	4	1	1	1	1	1
C16	3	1	2	1	1	1
C17	3	1	2	1	2	1
C18	4	1	2	1	1	1
C19	3	1	1	1	1	2
C20	3	1	1	1	1	2

APPENDIX F
IRB Certificate



Completion Date 09-Sep-2017
Expiration Date 08-Sep-2020
Record ID 22433759

This is to certify that:

Emily Pickle

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Research (Curriculum Group)
Non-Medical Investigators (Course Learner Group)
2 - Refresher Course (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

University of Alabama



Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w8280ee6c-92bf-418a-8a6f-2e921355d90b-22433759

APPENDIX G
IRB Approval Letter



February 4, 2019

Emily Durham
Department of English
College of Arts & Sciences
The University of Alabama
Box 870244

Re: IRB # 17-OR-386-R2 "Saying No: Refusal Strategies of Native Arabic Speakers and Native English Speakers"

Dear Ms. Durham:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application. Your renewal application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. You have also been granted the requested waiver of documentation of informed consent. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

The approval for your application will lapse on February 3, 2020. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit a continuing review to the IRB as required by University policy before the lapse. Please note, any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.