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Refusals of offers by Catalan learners of English

TFG Estudis Anglesos
Supervisor: Dr. Hortència Curell i Gotor

Montserrat Fruitós Cortijo

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Abstract

This paper is an interlanguage pragmatics study dealing with the performance of refusals of offers made by Catalan EFL (English Foreign Learners) subjects (henceforth referred to as ILC) compared to those made by British English native subjects. The research questions that it aims to answer are to know what strategies ILC use while performing refusals of offers and to determine whether ILC achieve a native-like frequency while performing refusals of offers or not. The ILC data was gathered by means of a DCT (Discourse-Completion Task) and coded following Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) classification. The British English data was taken from Aksoyalp's (2009) study. The main finding in the paper is confirming, as expected, that ILC do not have a native-like frequency and do not use the same strategies (while doing the speech act of refusing offers) as English native speakers. Regardless of the ILC's level of English (C1 or more), and of their high level of linguistic knowledge, they have been found to not have a high pragmatic knowledge of English, of their culture and of the face saving strategies that they use so as to appropriately avoid FTAs (Face Threatening Acts).

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the speech act of refusals of offers, within the field of interlanguage pragmatics, *i.e.*, the branch of second language research which studies how non-native speakers understand and carry out linguistic action in a target language and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge (Kasper, 1992: 203). The main purpose of the study is to discover how Catalan speakers learning English as an L2 in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context carry out refusals of offers. These refusals are elicited by means of a Discourse-Completion Task (DCT), a written questionnaire including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study (Kasper & Dahl, 1991:221) taken from Aksoyalp (2009). Then, the results are compared to the answers of British English native speakers¹ (data taken from the aforementioned study).

The research questions that this paper aims to answer are: (1) What are the strategies used by Catalan-speaking EFL learners while performing the speech act of refusal of offers? and (2) Do native Catalan speakers studying English achieve a native-like frequency of use while performing the speech act of refusal of offers?.

1.1 Expected results

As can be seen from the section 2.2 Studies on refusals where two studies are reviewed (Aksoyalp, 2009; Ramos, 1991), the expected results are that EFL Catalan native speakers do not achieve a native-like frequency of the different pragmatic strategies while

¹ See Appendix B.

performing refusals of offers. The studies suggest that this fact may be due to pragmatic transfer of the students' L1 (Catalan), but since the present study has no data on Catalan native speakers this cannot be proved nor denied. The level of the students, C1 or more, is supposed to trigger a more native-like frequency than those with a lower English level, yet not a fully native-like frequency.

1.2 Pragmatics of L2

As Jessner (1996) explains, achievement of pragmatic competence is an issue of high relevance when learning a second language, because pragmatic errors can cause violations of the social norm of the given culture and thus affect the communication as well as the Speaker's (S) and Hearer's (H) face. Errors in syntax or pronunciation are made due to the S' (low) level of competence. However, pragmatic errors are not directly related to it since, as Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei (1988) (cited in Codina-Espurz *et al.*, 2009: 143) suggest, "advanced proficiency in a language does not equate with the same level of sociocultural knowledge and values". Such knowledge is needed in order to avoid having pragmatic difficulties because as explained by Kasper (1990: 193) "When the nonnative speakers violate speech act realization patterns typically used by native speakers of a target language, they often suffer the perennial risk of inadvertently violating conversational (and politeness) norms thereby forfeiting their claims to being treated by their interactants as social equals".

Negative politeness strategies are those strategies which show respect of the other's rights and emotional distance (Brown & Levinson, 1978) and positive politeness ones are those strategies used when there is need for inclusion and social approval, desire

to be liked through showing solidarity (Curell, 2011). Taking into consideration that British English culture uses negative politeness strategies and Catalan culture uses positive politeness ones, and through the comparison of the elicited data, it will be seen if Catalan speakers have been able to change their positive politeness strategies to negative ones. It will also be taken into account, if applicable, to what extent they have done it and if they have been able to do it so as to achieve a native-like frequency in the pragmatic performance of the speech act of refusals of offers. Achieving this native-like frequency is of major relevance for avoiding having pragmatic difficulties.

1.3 Refusals (of offers)

Refusals are acts which indicate that one is not willing to accept or grant something offered or requested. They are classified as commissive acts (Searle, 1975), since they commit the speaker to (not) doing a future action. Refusals are Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) given that they threaten the H's positive face.

To explain what FTAs are we first have to look at Goffman's (1967: 5) idea of face which he explained as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself". Brown & Levinson's (1978) divided Goffman's idea into two: negative face, *i.e.*, one's freedom of action, and positive face, *i.e.*, one's self-esteem or desire to be liked, admired, and ratified. They agreed that while communicating we want to protect our (as well as other's) faces, but speech acts can threaten our face or the hearer's face. For this main reason, negative and positive politeness strategies (face saving strategies) are used to try to diminish FTAs. There are different strategies for managing FTAs (see Figure 1) but, due to the nature of the present study, we are only interested in strategies doing the FTA

on record and with redressive action, since it is where the positive and negative politeness strategies are situated. Those strategies are used to minimise the potential threat of FTAs. On one hand, by using negative politeness strategies, we want to have a non-imposing or mitigating behaviour so as to minimize the damage to the H's negative face. On the other hand, by using positive politeness ones we want to demonstrate closeness and solidarity by emphasizing common grounds so as to decrease the threat to H's positive face. We can now account for the reason why refusals (of offers) are FTAs that threaten the H's positive face: they are threatening the desire to be ratified of the person who has made the offer.

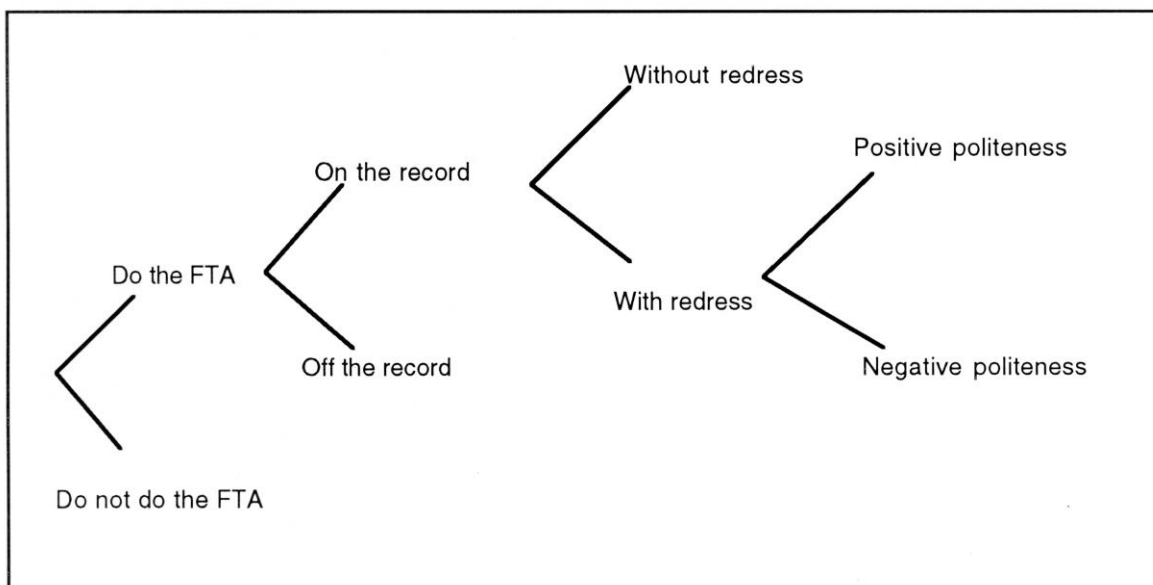


Figure 1. Schematic adaptation of Brown and Levinson's (1978: 60) classification of different strategies for dealing with FTAs.

Refusals are the second part of adjacency pairs. Adjacency pairs are certain consecutive speech turns that are closely related, which consist of a first and a second part (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973:74) which occur "when a certain turn projects a relevant next action or range of actions to be performed by another speaker in the next turn" (Ad-Darrajī' *et al.*, 2012: 1). Refusals have four different possible first parts, namely, invitations, offers, requests and suggestions (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990: 56).

Offers are “(...) putting something forward for another’s choice (of acceptance or refusal)” (Ad-Darrajī’ *et al.*, 2012: 2). As refusals, offers are commissive acts since they commit the speaker to doing a future action. Within FTA theory, offers threaten the S’s negative face since they commit the speaker to doing something, thus, limiting their freedom of action.

Refusals are dispreferred seconds because they are second parts of an adjacency pair (whose first parts can be requests, offers, suggestions or invitations) that tend to be avoided because are seen as something wrong, harmful or socially incorrect. The accurate realization of performing speech acts in a pragmatic-like level is limited by the fact that EFL learners have very little amount of exposure, sometimes even inexistent, to the target language and culture outside the classroom. Apart from the difficulties related to the amount of exposure, the subjects of this study will have to perform refusals which are speech acts that are dispreferred seconds, i.e., they are longer, delayed in time and structurally complex (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Consequently, refusals, as dispreferred seconds, will require more conversational effort than preferred seconds (*e.g.*, accepting an offer) (Atkinson & Drew, 1979). This fact creates an extra difficulty since the more complex and long, and the more strategies of delaying it uses, the more difficult it is for the L2 learners to produce the speech act accurately. Refusals, then, may easily lead to pragmatic difficulties.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Speech act theory

The Oxford philosophers Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) developed Speech Act Theory (SAT) (introduced by the former, revised and improved by the latter), in which it

was claimed (among other assertions) that speech acts are cultural performances, that is to say, they differ from one culture to another. Thus, they are bound to the culture in which they are performed. For this reason, the strategies used to fulfil them will not always be transferable across cultures.

The theory makes a division between three different acts that speakers are said to perform simultaneously when saying an utterance: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. As Austin (1962) claimed, locutionary acts say something which has a meaning, illocutionary acts are the actual performance of this meaning, that is to say, the real force and meaning that we give to the act and, finally, perlocutionary acts carry the real effects of the locutionary acts on the real world. As Aksoyalp (2009:15) explains: “In other words, the locutionary act conveys the literal meaning of the utterance while the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts serve to change the conditions in which the sentence is uttered.” The present study will deal with illocutionary acts. Those acts, which were later categorized in five different subtypes that Austin (1962:150) called “verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives”, are the ones that contain speech acts. As Aksoyalp (2009:16) defines it in her study:

Verdictives involve the giving of a verdict or judgment (*i.e.*, acquit, convict, diagnose). Exercitives refer to the exercising power, right or influence (*i.e.*, appoint, order, name). Commissives are illocutionary acts which entail the assuming of obligation or giving of an undertaking (*i.e.*, promise, agree, bet). Behabitives are related to displaying attitudes and social behaviour (*i.e.*, apologise, compliment, welcome) and as for expositives, these speech acts address the clarifying of reasons, arguments and expounding of views (*i.e.*, concede, deny, inform).

2.2 Studies on refusals

Different studies on refusals have been carried out for L1, L2 and/or comparing both L1 and L2 in different languages: Takahashi & Beebe (1987), Beebe *et al.* (1990), King & Silver (1993), Al-Issa (1998), and Sadler & Eröz (2001) among others. However, they are not equivalent with the present study since they are not focused exclusively on refusals of offers. To the researcher's knowledge, no study on refusals has dealt with Catalan speakers of English yet.

Aksoyalp (2009) is a qualitative case study focused on the realizations of refusals. The author claims that an ongoing change in recent decades has brought a major shift in the way language is taught and learnt, towards a communicative approach in which learners have to achieve grammatical competence as well as pragmatic competence, *i.e.*, language learners' ability to manipulate available linguistic resources and sociocultural knowledge about the target language in accordance with a given context (Rose & Kasper, 2001). This notion has led to the need to explore the language learners' development of pragmatic competence from cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives, which has given rise to a new area of research known as interlanguage pragmatics. Within this field Aksoyalp tries to answer the following research questions: (1) What are the strategies used by Turkish-speaking EFL learners while performing the speech act of refusal? and, (2) Is there any evidence of pragmatic transfer in the refusal strategies used by Turkish-speaking EFL learners?. In order to gather data to answer those questions, the subjects of the study were divided into three groups: 16 native speakers of English (NSEs), 16 native speakers of Turkish (NSTs), and 150 EFL Turkish speakers as the interlanguage

group (IL). The author includes the NSTs (teachers between 26 and 38 years old) in order to establish a base for cross-cultural and intracultural norms. The IL group was composed by 31 first year students, 41 second year students, 25 third year students and 53 last year students. In order to collect the data from these three groups a DCT was used which consisted of two versions, the original one, by Beebe *et al.* (1990), given to the NSEs and a slightly modified version for the NSTs and the IL groups.² Both had twelve situations which varied in three different parameters: relative social dominance of S-H ($S > H$, *i.e.*, the fictional characters making the offers in the DCT are of a higher status than the subjects; $S = H$, *i.e.*, both characters have the same status; and $S < H$, *i.e.*, the fictional characters making the offers in the DCT are of a lower status than the subjects), gender of the S (female, male), and social distance of S and H (distant, in-between, *i.e.*, acquaintances, and close). Out of the 12 situations there were 3 refusals of requests, 3 of invitations, 3 of suggestions and 3 of offers. The 3 situations eliciting refusals of offers were: situation 7 (refusing a lower status person's offer), situation 9 (refusing an equal person's offer) and situation 11 (refusing a higher status person's offer).³

The data was analysed following two steps. First, the semantic formulas were coded as 'direct', 'indirect' and 'adjuncts', based on Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) classification.⁴ Second, they were classified into different sequences of semantic formulas, *i.e.*, a word, phrase, or sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question (Cohen, 1996). Once the data

² See Appendix D.

³ See Appendix G.

⁴ See Appendix A.

was coded, the refusal strategies were quantified by choice and frequency. The IL data was then compared to the NSEs and NSTs regarding the frequency of their semantic formulas. The author described that there was evidence of pragmatic transfer when “the frequency of strategies used by the IL group in their refusals differed from that of the NSEs, and resembled that of the NSTs” (Al-Issa, 2003; Kahraman and Akkuş, 2007; Chang, 2008, cited in Aksoyalp, 2009: 56).

In general, there was pragmatic failure since the IL group did not obtain a native-like frequency as seen from the obtained results.⁵ As can be observed in Figure 2, the NSEs used 10.78% direct strategies, 54.47% indirect strategies and 34.75% adjuncts, while for the IL group 19.28% of direct strategies were used (closer to the 15.25% of the NSTs), 59.48% of indirect strategies (again closer to the NSTs’ 55.83%) and 21.24% of adjuncts (far from the NSEs’ percentage and from the NSTs’ 28.92%, but again closer to the NSTs).

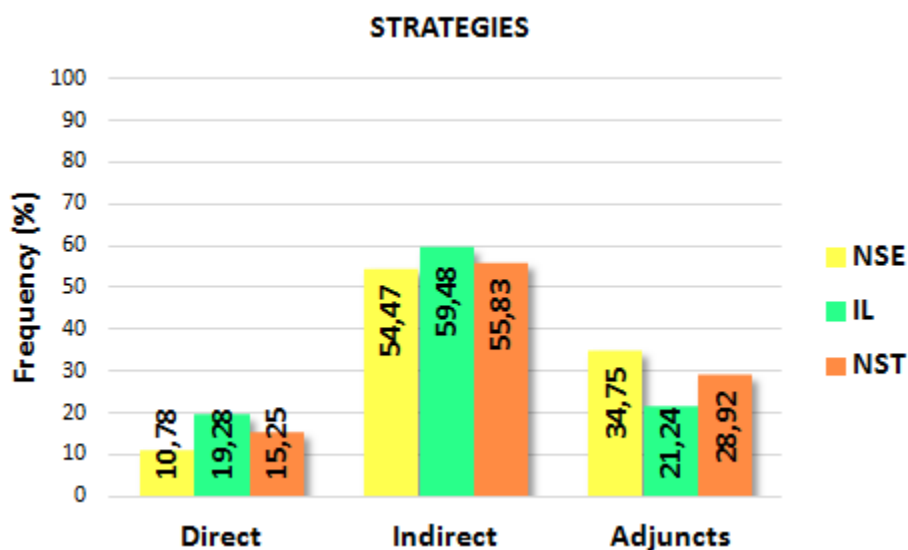


Figure 2. Comparison of the frequency of direct, indirect and adjunct strategies for the three groups (NSE, NST, IL).

⁵ See Appendix H.

Focusing only on refusals of offers, and taking into account the 20 different semantic formulas used by IL of the classification (2 of direct, 11 of indirect and 7 of adjuncts), the tendency of the IL group for doing one of the three possible options, *i.e.*, approximation to the TL, unique IL pattern, and L1 pragmatic transfer; can be summarized from more frequent to less frequent for each situation as it follows. This classification is done counting the number of instances of: approximation to the TL, unique IL pattern, and L1 pragmatic transfer for the 20 different aforementioned semantic formulas. First, the situation of dealing with a higher status person (situation 11) will be described, then, the one regarding an equal status person (situation 9) and it will be finished with the one which is to refuse a lower status person (situation 7).⁶

In situation 11, IL subjects had both a tendency to approximate to the target language (TL) and a unique IL pattern (6 instances of both). The pragmatic transfer of their L1 (Turkish) was shown only with a few strategies (3 instances).

In situation 9, the IL group had a tendency to answer in a way which was a unique pattern of this group (since it differed from the frequency of both NSEs and NSTs) (7 instances). It was followed by approximation to the TL and pragmatic transfer of Turkish. Both were very close (the former having only 1 more instance of use than the latter (5 and 4 instances respectively)).

⁶ This classification is done taking into account the results of Appendix I.

In situation 7, there were more instances of approximation to the TL (5 instances), followed directly by pragmatic transfer of Turkish (4 instances) which was also followed directly by the use of unique IL patterns (3 instances).

Regarding the number of instances of each possibility mentioned above (approximation to the TL, L1 transfer, and the creation of a new IL frequency), the IL group, equally tended out of 43 instances,⁷ with 16 instances of both, to use unique IL patterns and to approximate to the frequency of the TL, in this case, English. Regarding the pragmatic transfer of their L1, it was shown only in 11 instances. Even though the pragmatic transfer was lower than the approximation to the TL, it cannot be claimed that those subjects had a native-like frequency of strategies on refusals of offers since there are too many instances of the use of unique IL patterns, which accounts for the subjects' creation of a pragmatic interlanguage state which was not similar to the TL.⁸

The author concludes that to overcome the fact that the IL group did not have the same frequency of use of semantic strategies while refusing an offer than the frequency of the NSEs, it is necessary to help learners to develop English pragmatic competence. This can be done by, for example, adding speech acts to the educational curricula by means of techniques and course materials based on both the functional use of the language and its formal aspects. This implementation is of vital importance, since students have to be aware of the social and cultural factors of the TL in order to be proficient in it.

⁷ This number comes from a total of 60 instances (20 strategies multiplied by 3 situations) minus 17 instances discarded since none of the groups used a strategy in either one, two or three situations.

⁸ See Appendix I.

Ramos (1991) attempts to investigate the kind of transfer shown in the speech act of refusing in English among two groups of 20 Puerto Rican Spanish speakers (PRNNs), one of advanced learners and the other of beginners. Their answers were compared to those of 20 American English native speakers (AmNs) and to those of 20 native Puerto Rican (Spanish) speakers (PRNs). To collect the answers, Ramos used a DCT with six different situations in which the four different groups of subjects were asked to write refusals of requests (2 situations), invitations (2 situations) and offers (2 situations). He finally looked for transfer among PRNNs and tried to see if it was more evident among beginner English speakers than among advanced speakers. Such as in the previous study, Ramos concluded that pragmatic transfer did occur because PRNNs were more direct than AmNs tending to be closer to PRNs who were as well more direct than AmNs, and that, as expected, it was more evident among beginners than among advanced speakers of English.

3. Methodology

The collection of refusals of offers was done by means of a DCT taken from Aksoyalp (2009) which was based on Beebe *et al.* (1990). The data was gathered from a group of L2 EFL students and compared to a group of British English natives.

The interlanguage data was taken from a group of 23 university students which were enrolled in the third year subject “Contrastive Linguistics” in the English Studies degree at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, whose L1 was Catalan. Their proficiency level was at least C1, since all of them had been required to have passed the subject “Use of English 2” which requires having a C1 level of English (according to the

Common European Framework of Reference) to pass it. Their ages ranged between 20 and 29. 5 of the 23 subjects were male and 18 female. This group will be referred henceforth as ILC (interlanguage group formed by native speakers of Catalan studying English). In order to gather the ILC data three different documents were given to them to obtain their consent and to obtain the data.⁹ The documents were taken from Aksoyalp (2009) and adapted to fit the present purpose. So as to make sure that the participants fulfilled all the requirements, they were asked first which their L1 was, and those with a dominant language other than Catalan (*i.e.*, Spanish, Romanian, Russian, Georgian, and Catalan and Spanish bilingual) were discarded. In the questionnaire they were also asked about other languages that they spoke and if they had ever gone to an English-speaking country. The information collected revealed that within the ILC group there were subjects who spoke, apart from Catalan and English; Spanish, German, French, Italian, and Japanese. Of the 23 subjects of this group only 1 had never been to an English-speaking country, the other 22 had been there for a minimum of 3 days and only 2 of them had been abroad for 6 months or more.

The obtained refusals were classified following Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) classification system¹⁰ and compared to those of a group of native speakers of English (NSE) taken from Aksoyalp (2009).¹¹ This group was made of 16 NSE who were working as English language teachers at an institute located in Eastbourne in the UK. Their ages ranged between 23 and 40 years old and of the 16, 12 were female and 4 were male.

⁹ See Appendix E, F and G.

¹⁰ See Appendix C.

¹¹ See Appendix J.

4. Results and Discussion

Refusal strategies	Participants			
	NSE (n=16)		ILC (n=23)	
	n	%	n	%
Direct	53	10.78	58	20.79
Indirect	268	54.47	120	43.01
Adjunct	171	34.75	101	36.20
Total	492	100	279	100

Table 1. Total numbers and percentages of direct refusals, indirect refusals and adjuncts to refusals.

As Table 1 shows, the 16 subjects of the group taken from Aksoyalp's (2009) study (*i.e.*, the NSE) produced a total of 492 instances of examples of semantic strategies while the 23 ILC subjects produced only 279. NSEs had 53 examples of direct strategies (10.78%) different from ILC which had 58 instances (20.79%). Regarding indirect strategies, there was a difference in percentages again; NSEs produced 268 instances (54.47%) while ILC produced only 120 (43.01%). The percentage of adjuncts was similar in both groups: NSEs had 171 instances (34.75%), and ILC had 101 instances (36.20%).

As shown in Figure 3, the majority of ILC subjects used indirect strategies, followed closely by adjuncts (only 7% less than indirect strategies). The strategies which were the least used were direct ones, which constitute 21% of the total number.

Instances of strategies used by ILC

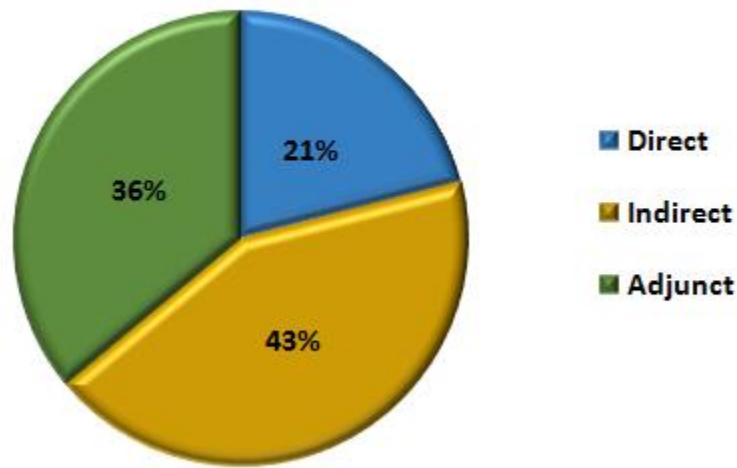


Figure 3. Percentage of instances of strategies used by ILC.

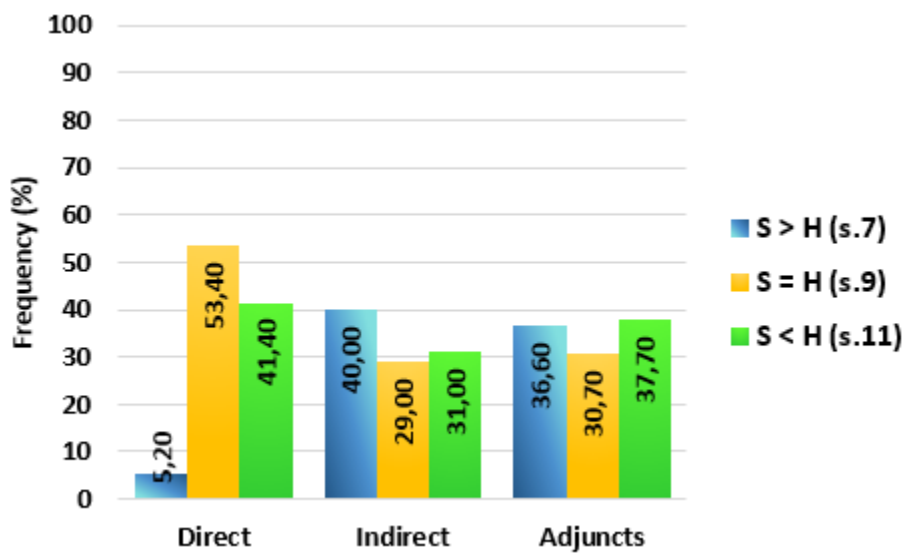


Figure 4. Percentage of instances of strategies per situation used by ILC.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of the instances of direct, indirect and adjuncts divided into the 3 situations (situations 7, 9, 11) used by ILC. Of the 58 direct strategies used by the ILC group only 3 were used in situation 7 (5.2%), 31 were used in situation 9 (53.4%), and 24 in situation 11 (41.4%). Taking into account the 120 instances of indirect strategies, 47 were used in situation 7 (40%), 35 in situation 9 (29%), and 38 in situation 11 (31%). Regarding the 101 instances of adjuncts, the ILC produced 37 in situation 7 (36.6%), 31 in situation 9 (30.7%) and the 33 missing were produced in situation 11 (32.7%).

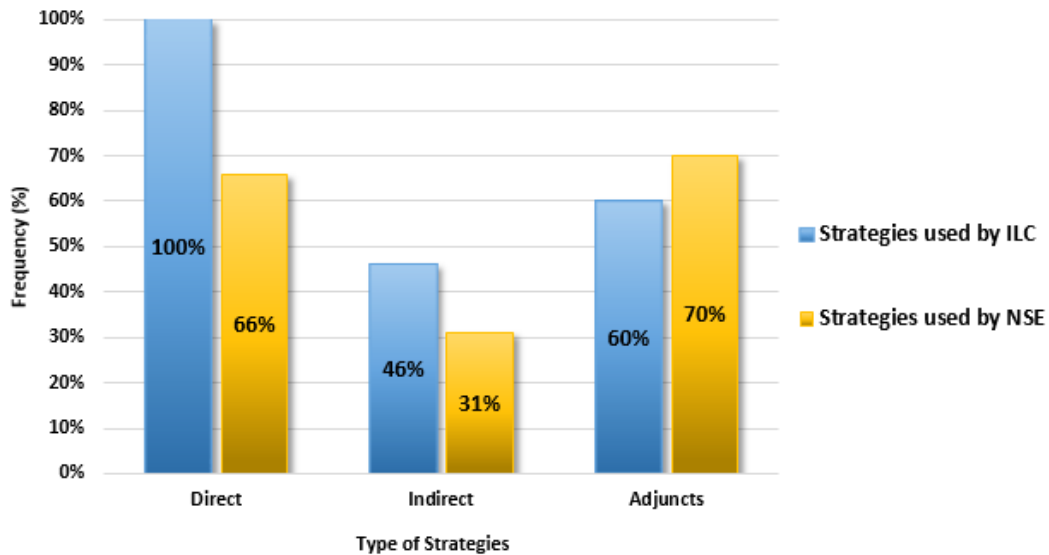


Figure 5. Comparison of the number of strategies used in direct, indirect and adjuncts used by ILC and NSE.

As observed in Figure 5, within Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) classification,¹² of a total of 3 direct strategies the ILC group used all of them (100%) while the NSE group only used 2 (66%). Regarding indirect strategies, of a total of 26, the ILC used 12 (46%) while the NSEs used only 8 (31%) of which 7 were common to both groups. Of a total of 10 adjuncts, 7 were used by NSEs (70%) and 6 (60%) by ILC (5 in common).

It is important to highlight that Figure 6 has a maximum of 50% instead of 100% due to the fact that no strategy implied more than 50% of the total and it would not have been possible to observe the other percentages properly if it had had a maximum of 100%.

As can be observed in Figure 6, the percentage of direct strategies used by ILC was divided into 15.5% for 'Performative' formulas, 36.2% for 'Passive negative willingness' formulas, and 48.3% for 'Direct no'.

¹² See Appendix A.

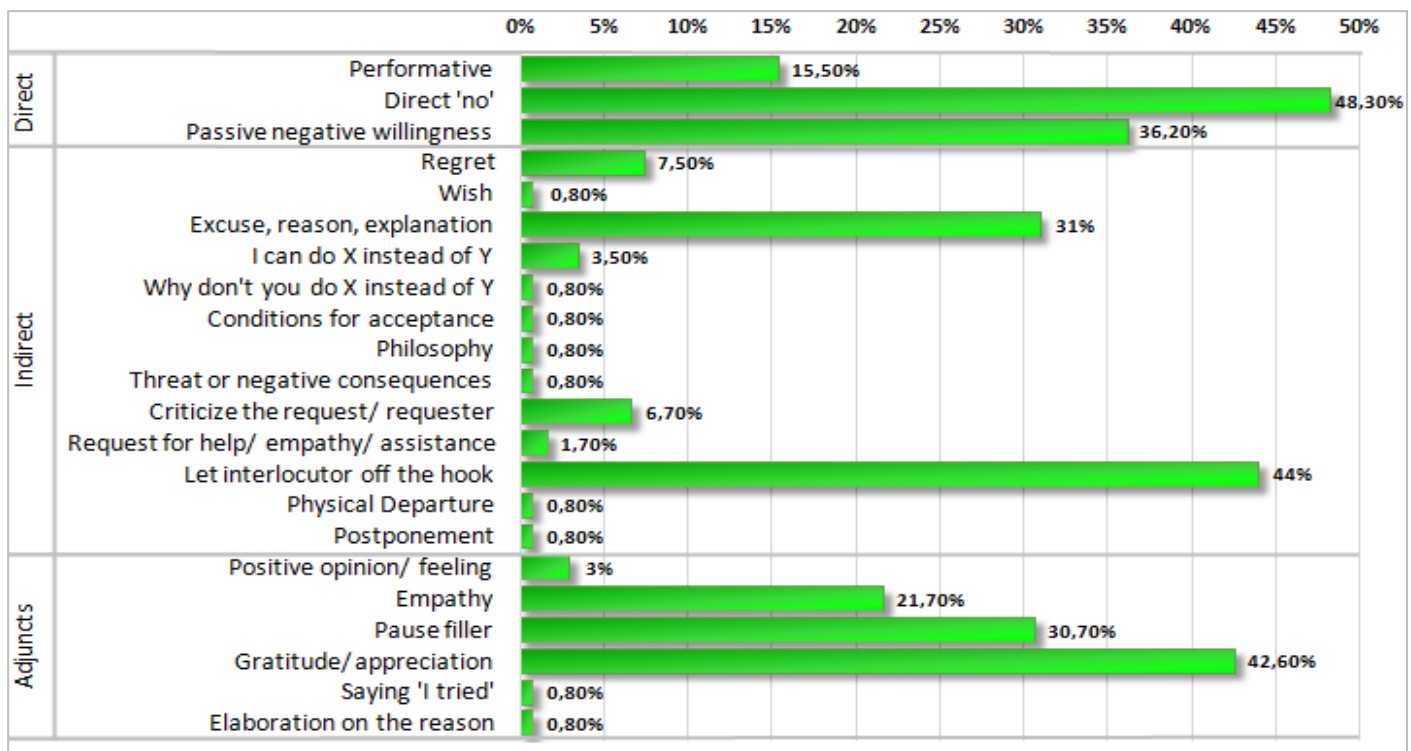


Figure 6. Percentage of instances of strategies coded by semantic formulas produced by ILC.

Of the 12 indirect strategies used by the ILC there were 7 which constituted only 0.8%, namely, 'Wishing', 'Asking the interlocutor to do X instead of Y', 'Setting the conditions for future or past acceptance', 'Statement of philosophy', 'Threatening/telling negative consequences to the hearer', 'Physical departure', and 'Postponing' the offer. Those strategies were followed by 'Request for help/empathy or assistance' (1.7%), closely followed by 3.5% of 'Statement of alternative (I can do X instead of Y)', then 6.7% for 'Criticizing the request or the requester' and after, 7.5% of 'Showing regret'. The most used indirect strategies were giving an 'Excuse, reason or explanation', with 31% and 'Letting the interlocutor off the hook', which had 44%. Of the 6 strategies in adjuncts: 0.8% were for 'Saying I tried' and for 'Elaborating a reason', 3% for expressing a 'Positive opinion or feeling', 21.7% for showing 'Empathy', followed directly by 30.7% of 'Pause fillers', and 42.6% for showing 'Gratitude or appreciation', which was the most frequently used indirect strategy.

Semantic Formulas	NSE (n=16)			ILC (n=23)			
	S > H (%)	S = H (%)	S < H (%)	S > H (%)	S = H (%)	S < H (%)	
	Situation 7	Situation 9	Situation 11	Situation 7	Situation 9	Situation 11	
Direct	Performative	∅			0	0	40 (9)
	'No'	0	100 (16)	0	9 (2)	65 (15)	0
	Negative willingness/ability	0	37.5 (6)	25 (4)	0	26 (6)	48 (11)
Indirect	Statement of regret	0	0	6.25 (1)	0	4.5 (1)	30.5 (7)
	Wish	∅			0	0	4.5 (1)
	Excuse, reason, explanation	0	25 (4)	68.75 (11)	0	61 (14)	69.5 (16)
	Statement of alternative	37.5 (6)	0	0	0	0	22 (5)
	Set conditions for acceptance	∅			0	0	4.5 (1)
	Statement of philosophy	37.5 (6)	0	0	0	0	4.5 (1)
	Threat or negative consequences	∅			0	0	4.5 (1)
	Criticize the request/requester	∅			9 (2)	4.5 (1)	0
	Request for help/empathy/assistance	∅			0	0	9 (2)
	Let interlocutor off the hook	87.5 (14)	50 (8)	0	91.5 (21)	26 (6)	4.5 (1)
	Physical departure	∅			4.5 (1)	0	0
	Postponement	0	6.25 (1)	12.5 (2)	0	0	4.5 (1)
	Hedging	0	0	6.25 (1)	∅		
	Adjuncts	Positive opinion/feeling	0	50 (8)	62.5 (10)	0	0
Statement of empathy		0	0	6.25 (1)	69.5 (16)	4.5 (1)	0
Pause fillers		18.75 (3)	31.25 (5)	6.25 (1)	43.5 (10)	40 (9)	22 (5)
Gratitude/appreciation		6.25 (1)	62.5 (10)	25 (4)	4.5 (1)	65 (15)	69.5 (16)
Passive negative willingness		0	31.25 (5)	50 (8)	∅		
Saying I tried/considered		0	25 (4)	0	0	0	4.5 (1)
Elaboration on the reason		∅			0	0	4.5 (1)
Asking a question		0	0	6.25 (1)	∅		

Table 2. Percentage of semantic formulas in refusals of offers by NSE and ILC.¹³

¹³ The ILC percentages have been rounded up so as to make it easier for the reader to follow.

In Table 2 some strategies within the total number of strategies described by Beebe *et al.* (1990)¹⁴ are not shown since they were produced by neither the ILC group nor the NSE group.¹⁵ The strategies which have been produced by either one of the groups or by both of them (the ones shown in the table) are going to be described below.

Direct strategies

Performative

In direct strategies we find that NSEs did not use performatives to refuse in any of the situations, while ILC used them (*e.g.*, “*I have to decline your offer*”) in refusing the boss’ offer of a raise and promotion if s/he is willing to move to an island (situation 11).

Direct ‘no’

Regarding ‘direct no’, NSEs did not use this strategy in refusing the cleaning lady’s offer to pay for the China vase she broke (situation 7) but 9% of ILC did it (2 subjects). In situation 9 (refusing a friend’s offer of another piece of cake), NSEs used this strategy 100%, while only 65% of the ILC group (15 out of 23) used it.

Negative willingness/ ability

None of the groups used this strategy in situation 7. For situation 9, it was used 37.5% (5 subjects) by NSEs and only 26% by ILC (6 subjects) (*e.g.*, “*I can’t*”). In situation 11, this strategy was used only 25% (4 subjects) by NSEs. ILC almost doubled the percentage with 48% of use (11 subjects) (*e.g.*, “*I don’t want to move anywhere*”).

¹⁴ See Appendix A

¹⁵ The strategies were: ‘Promise of acceptance’, ‘Statement of principle’, ‘Guilt trip’, ‘Self-defence’, ‘Unspecific reply’, ‘Avoidance’, ‘Nonverbal’, ‘Silence’, ‘Hesitation’, ‘Do nothing’, ‘Topic switch’, ‘Joke’, ‘Repetition of part of request, etc.’, ‘Lack of enthusiasm’, ‘Statement of solidarity’, and ‘Statement of relinquishment’.

Indirect strategies

Statement of regret

None of the groups used this strategy while refusing situation 7. In situation 9, none of the NSE subjects used it but it was used by a subject in the ILC group (4.5%) (*e.g.*, “*Sorry*”). For refusing situation 11, both groups used the strategy but with a huge difference between them: NSEs had only a subject using this strategy (6.25%) while ILC had 7 (30.5%) (*e.g.*, “*I am so sorry*”).

Wish

This strategy was not used in any situation by any of the NSE subjects. ILC did not use it neither while refusing situation 7 nor while refusing situation 9, but an ILC subject used it (4.5%) while refusing situation 11 (*e.g.*, “*I hope you find someone else!*”).

Excuse, reason, explanation

None of the groups used this strategy while refusing situation 7. In refusing situation 9, 25% (4 subjects) of NSEs used it, as opposed to 61% (14 subjects) that used it in the ILC group (*e.g.*, “*I’m on a diet*”). Regarding situation 11, both the NSEs and the ILC (*e.g.*, “*My mother is ill*”) used it almost 70% (68.75 the former with 11 subjects, and 69.5% the latter with 16 subjects using it).

Statement of alternative

In situation 7, the NSEs used this strategy 37.5% (6 subjects) while ILC did not use it. None of the groups used this strategy for refusing situation 9. In situation 11, it was the opposite; 5 subjects of the ILC group (22%) used it (*e.g.*, “*I would prefer to stay here with my current position in the company*”) while NSEs did not.

Set conditions for acceptance

NSEs did not use this strategy for none of the situations. The ILC group did not use the strategy either in refusing situation 7 nor in refusing situation 9, but they used it 4.5% (1 subject) in refusing situation 11 (e.g., *“Or maybe I should check your conditions anyway...”*).

Statement of philosophy

This strategy was used 37.5% (6 subjects) by NSEs in refusing situation 7 while ILC subjects did not use it. For refusing situation 9, none of the groups used it. For refusing situation 11, it was used only by a subject of the ILC group (4.5%) (e.g., *“Accidents happen”*).

Threat or negative consequences

This strategy was not used by NSEs and neither was used by ILC in refusing situation 7 nor in refusing situation 9, but it was used in situation 11 by an ILC subject (4.5%) (e.g., *“I don’t think I’m the best call for a position like this”*).

Criticize the request/requester

This strategy was not used by NSEs and neither was used for refusing situation 11 by ILC. Nevertheless, ILC used it to refuse situation 7 (e.g., *“I can’t”*), 9% (2 subjects), and to refuse situation 9 (e.g., *“And now what, should I go back to fucking China to buy a fucking new one”*), 4.5% (1 subject).

Request for help/empathy/assistance

None of the NSEs used this strategy and neither did ILC while refusing situation 7 nor while refusing situation 9. For refusing situation 11, 2 ILC subjects used it (9%) (*e.g.*, *"Don't insist to me please"*).

Let interlocutor off the hook

The great majority of NSEs and ILC subjects used it to refuse situation 7. 87.5% (14 subjects) NSEs and 91.5% ILC (21 subjects) used it (*e.g.*, *"You don't have to pay it"*). For refusing situation 9, 50% of the NSE subjects (8) used it while only 26% of the ILC subjects (6) used it (*e.g.*, *"I'm fine"*). In situation 11, none of the NSE participants used it while an ILC participant (4.5%) did (*e.g.*, *"It's ok"*).

Physical departure

None of the NSEs used this strategy and neither did ILC while refusing situation 11 nor while refusing situation 9. For refusing situation 7, an ILC subject used it (4.5%) (*e.g.*, *"(I would leave the room)"*).

Postponement

No group used postponement to refuse situation 7. This strategy was only used by an NSE (6.25%) while refusing situation 9. For refusing situation 11, 2 NSE subjects (12.5%) used it while only an ILC subject (4.5%) used it (*e.g.*, *"Maybe another time"*).

Hedging

None of the ILC subjects used it and neither did NSEs while refusing situation 7 nor while refusing situation 9. For refusing situation 11, an NSE subject (6.25%) used it.

Adjuncts

Positive opinion/ feeling

None of the groups used this strategy while refusing situation 7. For refusing situation 9, NSEs used it 50% (8 subjects) while ILC did not use it at all. To refuse situation 11, 62.5% of the NSEs used it (10 subjects) while only 13% of ILC subjects (3) used it (*e.g.*, *"It sounds as a great offer and opportunity"*).

Statement of empathy

NSEs did not use empathy in refusing situation 7 or in refusing situation 9. For the former situation neither did ILC subjects use it. For the latter, 16 ILC subjects used it (69.5%) (*e.g.*, *"It's not your fault"*). In refusing situation 11, only an NSE subject (6.25%) used empathy while no ILC subject used it.

Pause fillers

This strategy was one of the most used. NSEs used it 18.75% (3 subjects) while refusing situation 7, as opposed to 43.5% of ILC (10 subjects) that used it (*e.g.*, *"oh"*, *"hey"*). In refusing situation 9, 31.25% of NSEs used it (5 subjects) and 40% of the ILC group (9 subjects) used it too (*e.g.*, *"well"*). In situation 11, it was used only by an NSE (6.25%) while 5 ILC subjects used it (22%) (*e.g.*, *"oh"*).

Gratitude/appreciation

This was the most used strategy. While refusing situation 7, a NSE subject (6.25%) and an ILC subject (4.5%) used it (*e.g.*, “*Thank you*”). To refuse situation 9, 62.5% (10 subjects) of NSEs used it and 15 ILC subjects (65%) used it too (*e.g.*, “*Thanks*”). In situation 11, only 25% of NSEs (4 subjects) used it while 69.5% of ILC (16 subjects) used it too (*e.g.*, “*I’m really pleased to see you thought of me*”).

Passive negative willingness

None of the ILC subjects used this strategy and neither NSEs used it in refusing situation 7. For refusing situation 9, 31.25% of NSEs (5 subjects) used it and for refusing situation 11, 50% of NSEs (8 subjects) used the strategy.

Saying I tried/considered

Neither NSEs nor ILC used this strategy while refusing situation 7. For refusing situation 9, 25% of the NSE subjects (4) used it while no one used it in the ILC group. Regarding the refusal of situation 11, no NSE participant used the strategy while an ILC participant (4.5%) used it (*e.g.*, “*I’ve been thinking about it*”).

Elaboration on the reason

No participant in NSE or in ILC group used this in refusing situation 7 or in refusing situation 9. For refusing situation 11, elaborating the reason was only used by an ILC subject (4.5%) (*e.g.*, “*It is some sort of trauma I guess*”).

Asking a question

No participant in NSE or in ILC group used this in refusing situation 7 or in refusing situation 9. For refusing situation 11, this strategy was only used by an NSE subject (6.25%).

Having described the use of each semantic formula, it can now be claimed that NSE and ILC subjects did not always use the same strategies, namely, 'Performative', 'Wish', 'Set conditions for future or past acceptance', 'Threat or negative consequences', 'Criticize the request/requester', 'Request for help/empathy/assistance', 'Physical departure', 'Hedging', 'Passive negative willingness', 'Elaboration on the reason' and 'Asking a question'. Additionally, the strategies which both groups had in common were not always used in the same situations or with the same frequency. Examples of strategies which were not used in the same frequency are: 'Direct no' was not used in situation 7 by NSEs while it was in the same situation by ILC subjects; 'Statement of regret' was not used in situation 9 by NSEs while it was in the same situation by ILC subjects; 'Statement of alternative' was not used in situation 7 by ILC while it was in the same situation by NSEs and in situation 11 it was not used by NSEs while it was by ILC subjects; 'Statement of philosophy' was not used in situation 7 by ILC while it was in the same situation by NSEs and it was not used in situation 11 by NSEs while it was by ILC subjects; 'Letting the interlocutor off the hook' was not used in situation 11 by NSEs while it was in the same situation by ILC subjects; 'Postponement' was not used in situation 9 by ILC subjects while it was in the same situation by NSEs; 'Positive opinion/feeling' was not used in situation 9 by ILC subjects while it was in the same situation by NSEs; 'Statement of empathy' was not

used by NSEs in situations 7 and 9 while it was in the same situations by ILC, and in situation 11, NSEs used the strategy and ILC subjects did not; 'Elaboration on the reason' was not used in situation 9 by ILC while it was in the same situation by NSEs, and it was not used in situation 11 by NSEs while it was by ILC subjects. Examples of using the same strategy but being dissimilar in frequency are: In 'Direct no' in situation 9 NSEs used the strategy 100% while ILC subjects did it only 65%; In 'Negative willingness/ ability', in situation 11, NSEs used the strategy 25% while ILC subjects used it 48%; in 'Statement of regret', in situation 11, NSEs used the strategy only 6.25% while ILC subjects used it 30.5%; in 'Excuse, reason, explanation' in situation 9, only 25% of NSEs used the strategy while 61% of ILC subjects used it; in 'Letting the interlocutor off the hook' in situation 9, NSEs used the strategy 50% while only the half (26%) of ILC subjects used it; in 'Positive opinion/feeling' in situation 11, NSEs used the strategy 62.5% while only 13% of ILC participants used it; in 'Pause fillers' there is a mismatch of frequency for all the situations, in situation 7, NSEs used the strategy 18.75% while more than the double of ILC subjects used it (43.5%), in situation 9, 31.25% of the NSEs used the strategy while 40% of ILC subjects did it, in situation 11 only 6.25% of NSEs used the strategy while there were 22% of ILC participants that did it; in 'Gratitude/appreciation' in situation 11, 69.5% of ILC subjects used the strategy while only 25% of NSEs used it.

Only few instances were pretty similar for both groups regarding the use of the same semantic formula and the same frequency of use. Those instances were: for direct strategies 'Excuse, reason, explanation' in situation 11 (NSEs used it 68.75% and ILC subjects used it 69.5%); for 'Gratitude appreciation' in situation 7 (NSEs used the strategy

6.25% and ILC subjects 4.5%), in situation 9 (62.5% of the NSEs used it and similarly, 65% of the ILC group used it too); for 'Letting the interlocutor off the hook, in situation 7 (the NSEs used the strategy 87.5% and ILC subjects used it 91.5%); and for 'Postponement' in situation 11 (NSEs used the strategy 12.5% and ILC subjects used it 4.5%).

There were also instances of strategies which were equally unused in the same situation for both groups. Those instances were: In situation 11, 'Direct no'; in situation 9, 'Statement of alternative' and 'Statement of philosophy'; and in situation 7, 'Negative willingness/ability', 'Statement of regret', 'Excuse, reason, explanation', 'Postponement', 'Positive opinion/feeling' and 'Saying I tried/considered'.

Having codified and compared all the strategies and semantic formulas and taking into account what has been previously exposed in this section, the first research question: 'What are the strategies used by Catalan-speaking EFL learners while performing the speech act of refusal of offers?' can now be properly answered. The strategies used by Catalan-speaking EFL learners are the ones shown on the following table (Table 3).

As can be seen in Table 3, in situation 7 there are only 7 different strategies used, in situation 9 there are slightly more, a total of 9 different strategies. Finally, in situation 11, the ILC group used 17 different strategies so as to refuse the higher status offer.

The ILC group used less strategies (taking into account direct, indirect and adjuncts) in situation 7, that is to say, they used only a few strategies for dealing with the FTA of refusing an offer when $S > H$ (*i.e.*, the cleaning lady). In refusing an offer when $S = H$, they used a slightly more varied range of strategies (9). While refusing the boss' offer ($S < H$) they used many more different strategies (17) so as to try to diminish or avoid the FTA.

SITUATIONS	STRATEGIES	SEMANTIC FORMULAS (SF)	SF USED/ TOTAL
Situation 7 <i>(S > H)</i>	Direct	'Direct no'.	1 / 3
	Indirect	'Criticize the request/requester', 'Let interlocutor off the hook', 'Physical departure'.	3 / 26
	Adjuncts	'Statement of empathy', 'Pause fillers', 'Gratitude/ appreciation'.	3 / 10
Situation 9 <i>(S = H)</i>	Direct	'Direct no', 'Negative willingness/ability'.	2 / 3
	Indirect	'Statement of regret', 'Excuse, reason, explanation', 'Criticize the request/requester', 'Let interlocutor off the hook'.	4 / 26
	Adjuncts	'Statement of empathy', 'Pause fillers', 'Gratitude/ appreciation'.	3 / 10
Situation 11 <i>(S < H)</i>	Direct	'Performative', 'Negative willingness/ability'.	2 / 3
	Indirect	'Statement of regret', 'Wish', 'Excuse, reason, explanation', 'Statement of alternative', 'Set conditions for future or past acceptance', 'Statement of philosophy', 'Threat or statement of negative consequences', 'Request for empathy/help', 'Let the interlocutor off the hook', 'Postponement'.	10 / 26
	Adjuncts	'Statement of positive opinion/feeling', 'Pause fillers', 'Gratitude/ appreciation', 'Saying I tried/ considered', 'Elaboration on the reason'.	5 / 10

Table 3. Types of strategies used by the ILC group in their refusals of offers.

Regarding the second research question: Do native Catalan speakers studying English achieve a native-like frequency of use while performing the speech act of refusal of offers?, it can now be said that ILC do not achieve a native-like frequency of use in refusals of offers. Not only does the frequency of use vary but the use of strategies (direct, indirect, adjuncts) varies too. The fact that the frequency of use of the ILC group is not English native-like while producing refusals of offers fulfils what was expected in the Introduction. Nevertheless, the use of semantic formulas was expected to be similar and it is not, so the expectations are only partially satisfied.

The main findings of this study are that Catalan native speakers of English, as it was expected, did not attain a native-like frequency while performing refusals of offers. Furthermore, these subjects widely differed from the native English results (Aksoyalp, 2009). The reason may be found in the fact that British English has a culture based on negative politeness and Catalan has a culture based on positive politeness, as was previously discussed in the Introduction section. In order to discover if this is the reason behind it, further research is needed.

The reason why ILC did not attain a native-like frequency of use may be found in the fact that British English has a culture based on negative politeness and Catalan has a culture based on positive politeness, as was previously discussed in the Introduction section. In order to discover if this is the reason behind it, further research is needed. Nevertheless, as Aksoyalp (2009:126) explains the use of semantic formulas should be similar for both groups since refusal strategies, as Chang (2008) claimed, are thought to be universal. This fact was to be expected, since the data of her study and the similarity between the refusal strategies used by Turkish-speaking EFL subjects and the refusal strategies done by learners from different cultures (e.g., Japanese, Korean, Egyptian) is proven. The author concluded that the data she found corresponded to the claim made by Chang (2008) which indicated the similarity between the refusal strategies used by Turkish-speaking EFL subjects and the refusal strategies done by learners from different cultures (e.g., Japanese, Korean, Egyptian) which features that refusal strategies are universal. (Aksoyalp,2009:126). This expectation has not been fulfilled since the choice of semantic formulas and strategies of both groups (ILC and NSE) have been different.

5. Conclusions

The main findings of this study are that Catalan native speakers of English, as was expected, did not attain a native-like frequency while performing refusals of offers. Furthermore, these subjects widely differed from the choice of semantic formulas used by NSEs in Aksoyalp (2009). As shown in table 2, and explained in the section Results/Discussion, the ILC group used more semantic formulas (21) than the NSEs (16) and those which were in common were not always used in the same situations nor with similar frequencies. As has been explained, those findings are to be highlighted since no study had dealt before with Catalan speakers of English performing refusals of offers.

Some of the limitations of the study are that in order to duplicate appropriately Aksoyalp's (2009) study in order to compare it better, the same questionnaire should have been provided to Catalan native speakers to see whether the ILC subjects of this study had transferred from Catalan or if they had just used a new interlanguage pattern. Additionally, more subjects may be needed for both groups (NSE and ILC) so as to be able to generalize the findings of this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) taxonomy of refusals

1. Direct

- 1.1. Performative (e.g., *'I refuse'*)
- 1.2. Nonperformative statement
 - 1.2.1 *'No'*
 - 1.2.2 Negative willingness/ability (*'I can't', 'I don't think so'*)

2. Indirect

- 2.1. Statement of regret (e.g., *'I'm sorry ...', 'I feel terrible ...'*)
- 2.2. Wish (e.g., *'I wish I could help you ...'*)
- 2.3. Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g., *'My children will be home that night'; 'I have a headache'*)
- 2.4. Statement of alternative
 - 2.4.1. I can do X instead of Y (e.g., *'I'd rather ...', 'I'd prefer ...'*)
 - 2.4.2. Why don't you do X instead of Y (e.g., *'Why don't you ask someone else?'*)
- 2.5. Set conditions for future or past acceptance (e.g., *'If you had asked me earlier, I would have ...'*)
- 2.6. Promise of future acceptance (e.g., *'I'll do it next time', 'I promise I'll ...', or 'Next time I'll ...'; using 'will' or 'promise'*)
- 2.7. Statement of principle (e.g., *'I never do business with friends'*)
- 2.8. Statement of philosophy (e.g., *'One can't be too careful'*)
- 2.9. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

- 2.9.1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (*e.g.*, ‘*I won’t be any fun tonight*’ to refuse an invitation)
- 2.9.2. Guilt trip (*e.g.*, waitress to customers who want to sit a while: ‘*I can’t make a living off people who just order coffee*’)
- 2.9.3. Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion); insult/attack (*e.g.*, ‘*Who do you think you are?*’ ‘*That’s a terrible idea!*’)
- 2.9.4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request (*e.g.*, ‘*Please try to understand the economic situation that our company is undergoing now*’)
- 2.9.5. Let interlocutor off the hook (*e.g.*, ‘*Don’t worry about it*’, ‘*That’s okay*’, ‘*You don’t have to*’)
- 2.9.6. Self-defence (*e. g.*, ‘*I’m trying my best*’, ‘*I’m doing all I can do*’)
- 2.10. Acceptance that functions as a refusal
 - 2.10.1. Unspecific or indefinite reply
 - 2.10.2. Lack of enthusiasm (*e.g.*, ‘*I don’t want to eat that little piece*’)
- 2.11. Avoidance
 - 2.11.1. Nonverbal
 - 2.11.1.1. Silence
 - 2.11.1.2. Hesitation
 - 2.11.1.3. Do nothing
 - 2.11.1.4. Physical departure
 - 2.11.2. Verbal
 - 2.11.2.1. Topic switch (*e.g.*, ‘*I’m interest in your special offer if you have any*’)
 - 2.11.2.2. Joke
 - 2.11.2.3. Repetition of part of request, etc. (*e.g.*, ‘*Monday?*’)
 - 2.11.2.4. Postponement (*e.g.*, ‘*I’ll think about it*’)

2.11.2.5. Hedging (e. g., *'Gee, I don't know', 'I'm not sure'*)

3. Adjuncts to refusals

- 3.1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (e.g., *'That's a good idea...'; 'I'd love to ...'*)
- 3.2. Statement of empathy (e.g., *'I realize you are in a difficult situation'*)
- 3.3. Pause fillers (e.g., *'uhh', 'well', 'oh', 'uhm'*)
- 3.4. Gratitude/appreciation (e.g., *'Thank you very much, indeed', 'I appreciate you hard work'*)
- 3.5. Passive negative willingness (e.g., *'It will be difficult'*)
- 3.6. Saying I tried/considered (e.g., *'I already tried'*)
- 3.7. Statement of solidarity (e.g., *'As you and I have always known ...'*)
- 3.8. Elaboration on the reason (e.g., *'If I don't show up on time, my wife will kill me'*)
- 3.9. Statement of relinquishment (e.g., *'I can't do anything about it'*)
- 3.10. Asking a question (e.g., *'Is it really effective?'*)

Appendix B

Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) taxonomy of refusals:

Only strategies used by the NSEs in Aksoyalp (2009) with examples

1. Direct

1.2 Nonperformative statement

1.2.1 'No'

1.2.2 Negative willingness/ability ('I can't', 'I don't think so')

2. Indirect

2.1 Statement of regret (*e.g.*, 'I'm sorry ...', 'I feel terrible ...')

2.3 Excuse, reason, explanation (*e.g.*, 'My children will be home that night'; 'I have a headache')

2.4 Statement of alternative

2.4.1 I can do X instead of Y (*e.g.*, 'I'd rather ...', 'I'd prefer ...')

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

2.5 Set conditions for future or past acceptance (*e.g.*, 'If you had asked me earlier, I would have ...')

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

2.9 Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

2.9.1 Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (*e.g.*, 'I won't be any fun tonight' to refuse an invitation)

2.9.3 Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion); insult/attack (*e.g.*, 'Who do you think you are?' 'That's a terrible idea!')

2.9.5 Let interlocutor off the hook (*e.g.*, 'Don't worry about it', 'That's okay', 'You don't have to')

2.10 Acceptance that functions as a refusal

2.10.2 Lack of enthusiasm (*e.g.*, 'I don't want to eat that little piece.')

2.11.2 Verbal

2.11.2.4 Postponement (*e.g.*, 'I'll think about it')

2.11.2.5 Hedging (*e.g.*, 'Gee, I don't know', 'I'm not sure')

3. Adjuncts to refusals

3.1 Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (*e.g.*, 'That's a good idea...'; 'I'd love to ...')

3.2 Statement of empathy (*e.g.*, 'I realize you are in a difficult situation')

3.3 Pause fillers (*e.g.*, 'uhh', 'well', 'oh', 'uhm')

3.4 Gratitude/appreciation (*e.g.*, 'Thank you very much, indeed', 'I appreciate your hard work')

3.5 Passive negative willingness (*e.g.*, 'It will be difficult')

3.6 Saying I tried/considered (*e.g.*, 'I already tried')

3.10 Asking a question (*e.g.*, 'Is it really effective?')

Appendix C

Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) taxonomy of refusals:

Only strategies used by the ILC group with examples

1. Direct
 - 1.1 Performative (e.g., *"I have to decline your offer"*, *"I'm afraid I'll have to refuse"*)
 - 1.2 Nonperformative statement
 - 1.2.1 'No'
 - 1.2.2 Negative willingness/ability (e.g., *"I can't"*, *"I can't eat anymore"*, *"I can't leave my family alone"*, *"I don't want to move anywhere"*)
2. Indirect
 - 2.1 Statement of regret (e.g., *"Sorry"*, *"I am sorry"*, *"I am sorry to deny it"*)
 - 2.2 Wish (e.g., *"I hope you find someone else!"*)
 - 2.3 Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g., *"I'm so full"*, *"I'm on a diet"*, *"My mother is ill"*, *"I'll soon move to a different city"*)
 - 2.4 Statement of alternative
 - 2.4.1 I can do X instead of Y (e.g., *"I would prefer to stay here with my current position in the company"*, *"I prefer to stay in the city and work here"*)
 - 2.4.2 Why don't you do X instead of Y (e.g., *"You should consider someone else"*)
 - 2.5. Set conditions for future or past acceptance (e.g., *"Or maybe I should check your conditions anyway..."*)
 - 2.8. Statement of philosophy (e.g., *"Accidents happen"*)
 - 2.9. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor
 - 2.9.1 Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (e.g., *"I don't think I'm the best call for a position like this"*)

2.9.3 Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion); insult/attack (e.g., *“And now what, should I go back to fucking China to buy a fucking new one”, “I don’t like cakes dude, are you really a friend of mine?”, “Gtfo [get the fuck out] with your cake”*)

2.9.4 Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request (e.g., *“Don’t insist to me please”*)

2.9.5 Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g., *“I’m fine”, “No need to worry at all”, “You don’t have to pay it”, “I’m good”, “It’s ok”*)

2.11 Avoidance

2.11.1 Nonverbal

2.11.1.4 Physical departure (e.g., *“(I would leave the room)”*)

2.11.2 Verbal

2.11.2.4 Postponement (e.g., *“Maybe another time...”*)

3. Adjuncts to refusals

3.1 Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (e.g., *“It sounds as a great offer and opportunity”*)

3.2 Statement of empathy (e.g., *“It’s just a vase”, “It’s not your fault”, “I just want to know if you are okay”*)

3.3 Pause fillers (e.g., *“oh”, “hey”, “really”, “wow”, “well”*)

3.4 Gratitude/appreciation (e.g., *“Thank you”, “I am very thankful”, “I’m really pleased to see you thought of me”, “That is very kind of you”*)

3.6 Saying I tried/considered (e.g., *“I’ve been thinking about it”*)

3.8 Elaboration on the reason (e.g., *“It is some sort of trauma, I guess”*)

Appendix D

Aksoyalp's (2009) DCT

Dear participants,

I am doing my MA degree in English Language Teaching Department at Eastern Mediterranean University. I am carrying out a study which aims to investigate the strategies used by Turkish learners of English while performing the speech act of refusal and search for evidence of pragmatic transfer in their refusals. You are kindly requested to fill out the questionnaire carefully and accurately. Your answers will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and help.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Year: Freshman () Sophomore () Junior () Senior ()

Gender: Male () Female ()

Nationality: T.R. () T.R.N.C. () Other (please specify):_____.

Type of school you graduated from:

College () Vocational High School () Anatolian High School ()

General High School () Commerce High School ()

Other (please specify): _____.

Have you ever been to an English-speaking country?

No () Yes ()

If yes, how long did you stay there? _____.

Do you speak language(s) other than Turkish and English?

No () Yes ()

If yes, please specify _____.

DIRECTIONS:

Please read the following **twelve** situations. After you read the description, write a response in the space after 'you' in the dialogue. Please pay attention to the role given to you and respond as you would do in an actual conversation, using the actual words you think you might use.

1. You are the owner of a bookstore. One of your best workers asks to speak to you in private.

Worker: As you know, I have been here just a little over a year now, and I know you've been pleased with my work. I really enjoy working here, but to be quite honest, I really need an increase in pay.

You: _____

Worker: Well... then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

2. You are a junior at a university. You attend classes regularly and take good notes. Your classmate often misses class and asks you for the lecture notes.

Classmate: Oh God! We have an exam tomorrow but I don't have notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes once again?

You: _____

Classmate: O.K., then I guess I'll have to ask someone else.

3. You are the president of a big printing company. A salesman from a printing machine company invites you to one of the most expensive restaurants in Istanbul.

Salesman: We have met several times now, I'm hoping you will buy my company's printing machine. I was wondering if you would like to be my guest at Hilton to sign the contract.

You: _____

Salesman: Perhaps we can meet another time.

4. You are a top executive secretary at a very large software company. One day the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: Next Sunday my wife and I are having a little party at my house. I know it's sudden...but I'm hoping all my top executives will be there with their wives/husbands.

You: _____

Boss: That's too bad. I was hoping everyone would be there.

5. You are at a friend's house watching TV. Your friend offers you a snack.

You: Thanks, but no thanks. I've been eating all day and I feel just terrible. My clothes don't even fit me.

Friend: Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?

You: _____

Friend: Well, you should try it anyway.

6. Your boss just asked you to bring a report to him. You can't find the report on your desk because your desk is very disorganized. Your boss walks over.

Boss: You know, maybe you should try to organize yourself better. I always write things down on a piece of paper so I don't forget them. Why don't you try it?

You: _____

Boss: Well, it was only an idea anyway.

7. You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you.

Cleaning lady: Oh God, I'm so sorry! I had a terrible accident. While I was cleaning, I bumped into the table and your china vase fell and broke. I feel very bad about it. I'll pay for it.

You (Knowing that the cleaning lady is supporting three children):

Cleaning lady: No, I'd feel better if I paid for it.

8. You teach English at a university. It is just about the middle of the semester now. One of your students asks to speak to you.

Student: Ah, excuse me, some of the students were talking after class yesterday. We kind of feel that the class would be better if you could give us more practice in conversation and less on grammar.

You: _____

Student: O.K., it was only a suggestion.

9. You are at a friend's house for lunch.

Friend: How about another piece of cake?

You: _____

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?

You: _____

10. A friend invites you to dinner, but you really don't like this friend's husband/wife.

Friend: How about coming to my house Sunday night? We're having a small dinner party.

You: _____

Friend: Well...maybe next time.

11. You've been working in an advertising company now for some time. The boss offers you an increase in salary and a better position, but you have to move to another town. You don't want to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new office in Seattle. It's a great town – only 3 hours from here by airplane! And, your salary will increase with the new position.

You: _____

Boss: Well...maybe you should think about it some more before turning it down.

12. You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave the office.

Boss: If it's okay with you, I'd like to spend an extra hour or two tonight so that we can finish up with this work. Can you stay a little longer at the office?

You: _____

Boss: Well, that's too bad. I was hoping you could stay.

Thank you very much for your contributions.

Yasemin AKSOYALP

MA student.

ELT Department

Faculty of Education

Eastern Mediterranean University.

Appendix E

Informed consent

Researcher: Montserrat Fruitós Cortijo.

Project Description: This is a TFG study which is going to be submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of English Studies, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The purpose of this study is to gather data of the Catalan speakers of English.

Procedure: If you agree to participate, you will fill out the attached discourse completion task. It will take you approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete it.

Study withdrawal: Participation in this study is voluntary.

Confidentiality: The data will be used for research purposes only. All your responses will be held in strict confidence.

I have read and understood the foregoing description of the study. I agree to participate in this study.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix F

Background Questionnaire

Dear participants,

I am doing my TFG for the degree in English Studies at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. You are kindly requested to fill out the questionnaire carefully and accurately. Your answers will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and help.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gender: Male () Female ()

What is your dominant language? Catalan () Spanish ()

Other (please specify): _____

Have you ever been to an English-speaking country? No () Yes ()

If yes, how long did you stay there? _____

Do you speak language(s) other than Catalan and English? No () Yes ()

If yes, please specify _____

Appendix G

Classification of results in Aksoyalp (2009)

Age: ____ Sex: M () / F () Dominant Language: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please read the following three situations. After you read the description for each situation, you will be asked to write a response in the blank after “you” in the dialogue. Please pay attention to the role given to you and respond as you would in actual conversation, using the actual words you think you might use.

Situation 7. You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you.

Cleaning lady: Oh God, I’m so sorry! I had a terrible accident.

While I was cleaning, I bumped into the table and your china vase fell and broke. I feel very bad about it. I’ll pay for it.

You: (Knowing that the cleaning lady is supporting three children):

Cleaning lady: No, I’d feel better if I paid for it.

Situation 9. You are at a friend’s house for lunch.

Friend: How about another piece of cake?

You:

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?

You:

Situation 11. You've been working in an advertising company now for some time. The boss offers you an increase in salary and a better position, but you have to move to another town. You don't want to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new office in Malta. It's a great island – only 3 hours from here by airplane! And, your salary will increase with the new position.

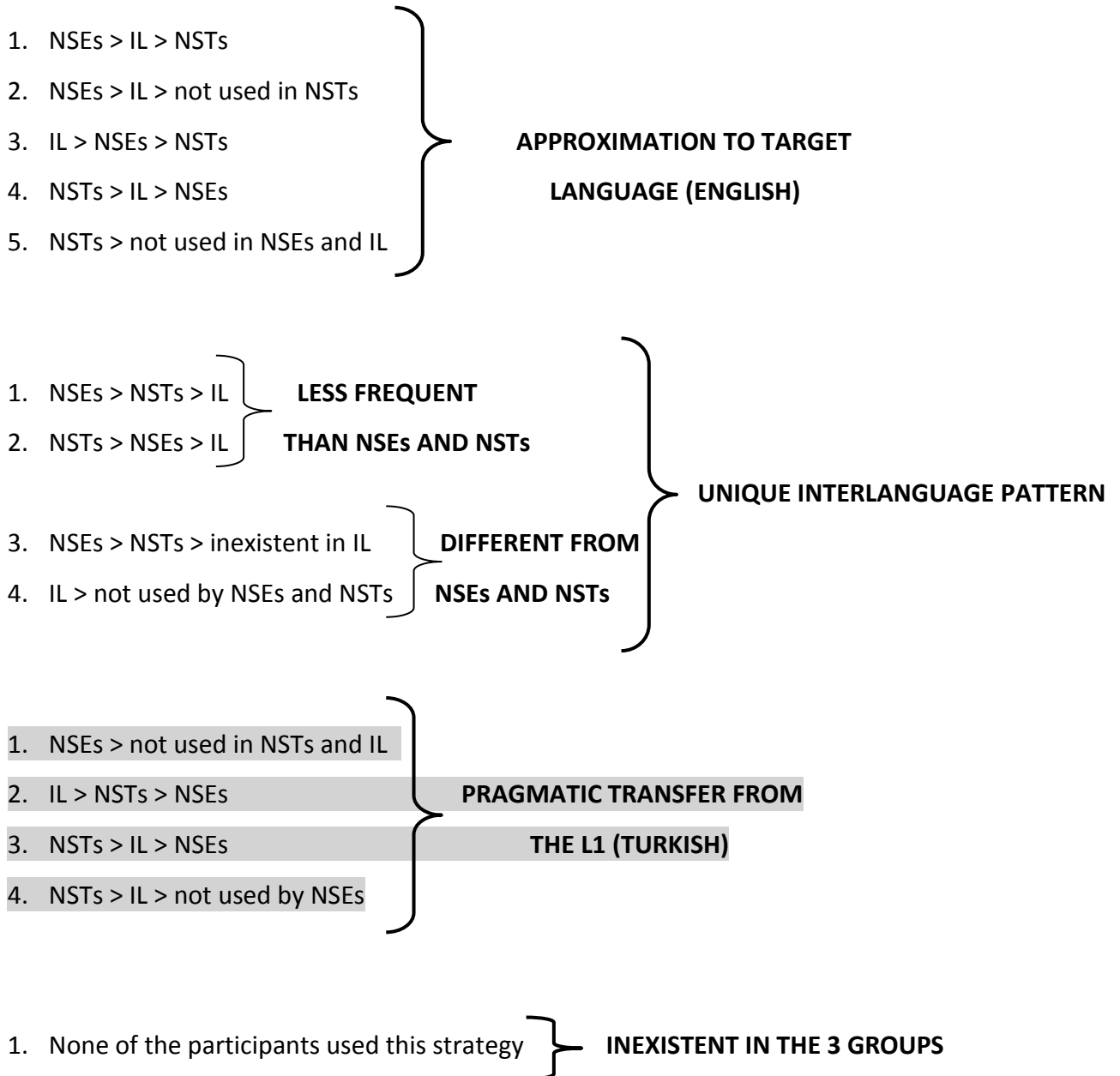
You:

Boss: Well...maybe you should think about it some more before turning it down.

Thank you for your contributions.

Appendix H

Classification of results in Aksoyalp (2009)



Appendix I

Frequency of semantic strategies obtained by the 3 groups (NSEs, NSTs, IL) for refusals of offers in Aksoyalp (2009)

*Classification of situations: from refusing a higher status person to refusing a lower status one

➤ DIRECT REFUSALS

Direct 'no'

- Situation 11:** IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).
Situation 9: NSEs> IL> NSTs (approximation to TL).
Situation 7: NSTs> IL> not used in NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Negative willingness/ability

- Situation 11:** NSTs> IL> NSEs (approximation to TL).
Situation 9: NSEs>NSTs>IL (less frequent than NSEs&NSTs, UNIQUE IL PATTERN).
Situation 7: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

➤ INDIRECT REFUSALS

Statement of regret

- Situation 11:** IL> NSTs> NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).
Situation 9: IL, not used by NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).
Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Excuse, reason, explanation

- Situation 11:** NSTs> IL> NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).
Situation 9: NSTs> IL> NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).
Situation 7: NSTs> IL, not used by NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Statement of alternative

- Situation 11:** IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).
Situation 9: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).
Situation 7: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Set conditions for future/past acceptance

- Situation 11:** *None of the participants used this strategy.*
Situation 9: *None of the participants used this strategy.*
Situation 7: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Statement of philosophy

- Situation 11:** *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 9: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 7: NSTs>NSEs>IL (less frequent than NSEs&NSTs, UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Statement of negative consequences

Situation 11: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 9: NSTs> IL, not used in NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Criticize the hearer

Situation 11: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 9: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 7: NSTs> IL, not used in NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Let the interlocutor off the hook

Situation 11: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 9: NSEs, inexistent in NSTs and IL (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Situation 7: NSTs> IL> NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Lack of enthusiasm

Situation 11: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 9: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Postponement

Situation 11: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 9: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Hedging

Situation 11: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 9: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

➤ **ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS**

Statement of positive opinion/feeling

Situation 11: NSEs> IL> NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 9: NSEs>NSTs>IL (less frequent than NSEs&NSTs, UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Passive negative willingness

Situation 11: NSTs>NSEs>IL (less frequent than NSEs&NSTs, UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 9: NSEs> NSTs, inexistent in IL (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 7: NSTs, not used in NSEs and IL (approximation to TL).

Gratitude/Appreciation

Situation 11: IL> NSEs> NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 9: NSTs> IL> NSEs (approximation to TL).

Situation 7: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Asking a question

Situation 11: NSEs, not used in NSTs and IL (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Situation 9: NSTs> IL, inexistent in NSEs (pragmatic transfer of Turkish).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Pause filler

Situation 11: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 9: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 7: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Saying 'I tried'

Situation 11: IL, inexistent in NSEs and NSTs (UNIQUE IL PATTERN).

Situation 9: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Situation 7: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Statement of empathy

Situation 11: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 9: *None of the participants used this strategy.*

Situation 7: NSEs> IL, not used in NSTs (approximation to TL).

Appendix J

Frequency of strategies used by NSEs for refusals of offers (Situations 11, 9 and 7) in Aksoyalp (2009)

➤ DIRECT REFUSALS:

- Negative willingness/ability

Situation 11: NSEs 25%
Situation 9: NSEs 37.50%
Situation 7: ***Not used by NSEs***

- Direct 'no'

Situation 11: ***Not used by NSEs***
Situation 9: NSEs 100%
Situation 7: ***Not used by NSEs***

➤ INDIRECT REFUSALS:

- Statement of regret

Situation 11: NSEs 6.25%
Situation 9: ***Not used by NSEs***
Situation 7: ***Not used by NSEs***

- Excuse, reason, explanation

Situation 11: NSEs 68.75%
Situation 9: NSEs 25%
Situation 7: ***Not used by NSEs***

- Statement of alternative

Situation 11: ***Not used by NSEs***
Situation 9: ***Not used by NSEs***
Situation 7: NSEs 37.50%

- Set conditions for future/past acceptance → ***NEVER USED BY NSEs***

- Statement of philosophy

Situation 11: ***Not used by NSEs***
Situation 9: ***Not used by NSEs***

Situation 7: NSEs 37.50%

- Statement of negative consequences → *NEVER USED BY NSEs*
- Criticize the hearer → *NEVER USED BY NSEs*
- Let the interlocutor off the hook

Situation 11: *Not used by NSEs*

Situation 9: NSEs 50%

Situation 7: NSEs 87.50%

- Lack of enthusiasm → *NEVER USED BY NSEs*
- Postponement

Situation 11: NSEs 15.20%

Situation 9: NSEs 6.25%

Situation 7: *Not used by NSEs*

- Hedging

Situation 11: NSEs 6.25%

Situation 9: *Not used by NSEs*

Situation 7: *Not used by NSEs*

➤ **ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS:**

- Statement of positive opinion/feeling

Situation 11: NSEs 62.50%

Situation 9: NSEs 50 %

Situation 7: *Not used by NSEs*

- Passive negative willingness

Situation 11: NSEs 50%

Situation 9: NSEs 31.25%

Situation 7: *Not used by NSEs*

- Gratitude/Appreciation

Situation 11: NSEs 25%

Situation 9: NSEs 62.50%

Situation 7: NSEs 6.25%

- **Asking a question**

Situation 11: NSEs 6.25%
Situation 9: *Not used by NSEs*
Situation 7: *Not used by NSEs*

- **Pause filler**

Situation 11: NSEs 6.25%
Situation 9: NSEs 31.25%
Situation 7: NSEs 18.75%

- **Saying 'I tried**

Situation 11: *Not used by NSEs*
Situation 9: NSEs 25%
Situation 7: *Not used by NSEs*

- **Statement of empathy**

Situation 11: *Not used by NSEs*
Situation 9: *Not used by NSEs*
Situation 7: NSEs 6.25%

