Identity and pragmatic Transfer: The role of Omani EFL learners' identities in their pragmatics choices in English

FATEMA AL-RUBAI'EY

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Abstract

Several researchers contend that learners' identities influence their understanding and use of L2 pragmatics (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1991; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). They observe that L2 learners might be aware of L2 sociopragmatic variables (i.e., cultural and social rules that govern the use of L2 speech acts) and might possess the pragmalinguistic ability to realize a certain speech act as NSs would, yet learners choose to respond in a way consistent with their L1, which reflects their identity. However, the role of learner identity in L2 pragmatic use has received little attention in current research on L2 pragmatics. This study aims to address this gap by examining the oral production of refusals in English by EFL learners and the role of learner identity in their pragmatic choices and transfer. Each of 10 Omani EFL learners responded to 12 Oral DCT scenarios, four in Omani Arabic and eight in English, and then responded to interviews about why they made certain pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices when responding to the scenarios in English.

The findings revealed that the participants' pragmatic choices when refusing in English were influenced by their perceptions of various sociopragmatic and contextual variables. Furthermore, their perceptions of these variables were greatly influenced by the way they see themselves as EFL learners and as Omanis. Therefore, this study argues that the participants' pragmatic transfer seems to be an enactment of their identity. The focus on the influence of learner identity in this study is unique and responds to recent calls in SLA to redefine language learning as a social rather than a purely cognitive process (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 2007). By combining cognitive and sociocultural approaches to studying L2 pragmatics, this study reveals a complex interaction between pragmatic behavior and identity. One of the main implications of the study is a call for re-conceptualizing pragmatic transfer in SLA to better reflect L2 learners' sociolinguistic reality. In addition, L2 teachers should be made aware that L2 learners' pragmatic transfer is influenced by learners' identity, and, as a result, should not be treated simply as a pragmatic 'error' or 'failure' to be corrected and criticized.

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Fatema Al Rubai'ey

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at examining the influence of L2 learner identity on L2 pragmatic choices and specifically pragmatic transfer when refusing in English. Many researchers have attested to the influence of first language (L1) pragmatic knowledge on the use and comprehension of second language (L2) pragmatics (e.g., Thomas, 1983, Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Kasper, 1992). Kasper (1992) describes this influence as pragmatic transfer, or "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). Since the 1990s, pragmatic transfer has received much attention in SLA research because of its potential for miscommunication between native speakers (NSs) and nonnative speakers (NNSs) of a particular language. While Asian learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) have been the focus of many studies, little attention has been given to non-Asian groups such as Arab EFL learners. In addition, in-depth examination of learners' perception of their pragmatic choices is rarely addressed in the L2 pragmatic research. Therefore, the current study seeks to examine the realization of refusal speech acts by Omani EFL learners. Specifically, it investigated instances of pragmatic transfer by examining both the learners' performance and assessment of their performance. In so doing, the study attempts to understand the role of learner identity in their production and perceptions of their performance when refusing in English and particularly in triggering pragmatic transfer. As such, this study contributes to the growing literature on pragmatic transfer research in SLA by describing and comparing the realization patterns of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic and in English by EFL learners and by uncovering the role of learner identity in pragmatic transfer.

1.1 Rationale

Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) have argued that speech acts such as requesting, apologizing and inviting are universal pragmatic behaviors. Therefore, speech acts are unavoidable in both first and second languages. However, speech acts understood as pragmatic behaviors are problematic for acquisition because they can have different functions, can be realized in different ways, and can vary across contexts and cultures (Billmyer, 1990; Cohen, 1996). Cohen (1996) stated that speech acts are "an area of continual concern for language learners since [learners] are repeatedly faced with the need to utilize speech acts such as complaints, apologies, requests, and refusals, each of which can be realized by means of a host of potential strategies" (p. 383). Thus, deviation from the pragmatics norms of native speakers (NSs) is expected. Such an observation has been documented in several studies of L2 pragmatics. For example, Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) and Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1995), among others, have documented important differences in the perception (i.e., understanding and assessment) and production of speech acts by (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English.

Among the problems documented in the production of speech acts by NNSs is "pragmatic transfer." Pragmatic transfer is the influence of L1 pragmatic knowledge on the use and comprehension of L2 (Kasper, 1992). Many researchers have attested to the negative influence of pragmatic transfer on L2 communication (e.g., Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Kasper, 1992; Thomas, 1983). Despite the perception that pragmatic transfer is a potential source of miscommunication between NSs and NNSs of a particular language, it has received little attention in SLA (e.g., Beebe et al., 1990; Kasper, 1992; Al-Issa, 2003; Maeshiba, Eslami, & Ghahraman, 1996; Keshavarz et al., 2006). Most studies on pragmatics remain cross-cultural in nature, focusing on the similarities and differences in the realization patterns of a particular

speech act in two different languages (e.g., Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989; Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Houck & Gass, 1999; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Savić, 2014). In the few studies that directly examined pragmatic transfer, it was studied in relation to factors such as L2 proficiency levels and learning context (i.e., ESL and EFL). However, the findings have been inconclusive and indicate a need for more research on L2 pragmatics and pragmatic transfer; there is also a need to consider other factors that might be crucial for understanding pragmatic transfer but have gone unnoticed in previous research, factors such as learner identity.

The identity of the learner has long been a suspected yet unexamined factor affecting L2 learners' pragmatic choices, and thus, pragmatic transfer (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1991; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Some researchers, for example, contend that despite L2 learners' awareness of the sociopragmatic rules of the L2, they may elect to deviate from them by using their L1 pragmatic norms (Al-Issa, 2003; Hinkel, 1996). Such observations highlight the role of learner identity, or "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, p. 45, 2013). However, to the best of my knowledge, the role of learner identity has not been examined in current research on L2 pragmatics and pragmatic transfer. Therefore, by examining learners' perceptions (i.e., understanding and assessment) of their performance and asking not only how, but also why they make certain pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices, this study hopes to reveal the role of learner identity in pragmatic transfer.

For the purpose of this study, I will examine refusal speech acts because they are pragmatically demanding and little research has been done on their use by Arab EFL learners. Considering the face-threatening nature (i.e., possibility of appearing impolite) of refusals to the interlocutors, refusals require the interlocutors to display their best pragmatic knowledge

(Martínez-Flor, 2011). Although refusals have been examined in several cross-cultural studies, the focus in these studies remains on Western and Asian languages and little attention has been given to refusals in Arabic and refusals by Arab English language learners. Among the few studies on refusals in different varieties of Arabic (Al-Issa, 2003; Al-Kahtani,2005; Al-Eryani, 2007; Abed, 2011; Nelson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002), Al-Issa's study is the only one that focused on pragmatic transfer in refusals by Arab learners of English. Thus, there is a need to conduct more studies on Arabic language pragmatics and on L2 pragmatics use by Arab English learners, which will enhance our understanding of L2 pragmatic transfer by this group of English learners. Also, due to the linguistic and cultural differences across the different varieties of Arabic, generalizing the findings of one Arabic variety to other varieties is problematic. To the best of my knowledge, there is no existing study on the realization of refusals in Omani Arabic or on pragmatic transfer in Omani EFL learners' use of English. Therefore, this study will explore the realization patterns of refusals in Omani Arabic and English as a foreign language for Omani students.

Previous research on speech acts, such as the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSRP) by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), adopted a cross-cultural approach to identify the differences between speech acts produced by NSs and NNSs of a particular language (e.g., Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). This approach originally aimed at establishing the similarities and differences in the realization patterns of different speech acts (e.g., requests, apologies, and invitations) across cultures and languages. To link their pragmatic transfer research to mainstream SLA research, SLA researchers have used the cross-cultural research framework in two ways. First, they used it to establish the similarities and differences in the realization of a particular speech act across two languages. Second, to locate

deviant use of the L2, researchers compare the use of L2 by NNSs and NSs. Then, when deviant use is located, it is compared to the L2 learners' use of this particular speech act in their first language. If similarities in use are found between the L2 learners' deviant use in the L2 and their use of the same speech act in their L1, then such similarities are treated as evidence of pragmatic transfer. Following this line of research, the current study employed a two-phases design. In phase one, the realization patterns of refusals in the L1 were established. In phase two, the realization patterns of refusals in the L2 were established. Then, instances of pragmatic transfer were identified and examined in relation to learner identity (i.e., the L2 learners' relationship with the L2 and how this relationship is constructed through pragmatic choices when communicating in the L2).

However, unlike cross-cultural frameworks used to examine pragmatic transfer, the current study adopts an emic perspective toward the identification and explanation of pragmatic transfer. In other words, the participants were asked if they perceived instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusals in English and if so, they were asked to explain their pragmatic transfer. Therefore, no data from NSs of English is collected and hence no comparison between the participants' realization of refusals in English and refusals of NSs of English was conducted. The emic perspective was chosen to allow the participants to explain their usage without any external influence.

It should be noted, however, that examining learners' production of speech acts only reveals the pragmalinguistic level of the speech act, "the linguistic form [which] conveys the right pragmatic purpose" and not the sociopragmatic level, the knowledge of the social conditions that dictate the appropriate use of the linguistic form of the speech act (Kasper & Rose, p. 98, 1999). Thomas (1983) explains that pragmatic transfer could result from mapping

semantically and/or syntactically equivalent linguistic materials from the L1 onto the L2 (i.e., pragmalinguistic transfer). Or it could result from the L2 users' transferring of their perceptions about what is socially appropriate for a particular speech act in a particular context in their L1 onto a similar context and speech act when they communicate in their L2 (Kasper, 1996). Therefore, examining L2 learners' perceptions could help us understand whether pragmatic transfer is caused by the transferring of L1 sociopragmatic rules (i.e., sociopragmatic transfer) or by the transferring of equivalent linguistic materials from the L1 (i.e., pragmalinguistic transfer). Investigating learners' perceptions would require interviewing learners about their performance. Additionally, examining learners' perceptions of their performance could provide insights into how they understand and construct their relationship with English as an L2 through conformity and/or resistance to English pragmatic norms. Such an examination can shed light on the role of L2 learners' identities through their L2 pragmatic choices and pragmatic transfer.

1.2 Research Questions

As noted above, this study aimed at examining the role of Omani EFL learners' identities in their pragmatic choices and pragmatic transfer when using English, their L2. This study has three main research questions in relation to the following three themes: (1) the realization patterns of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic; (2) the realization patterns of refusal speech acts in English by Omani EFL learners and whether the learners perceive their refusals in English to involve pragmatic transfer; and (3) the relationship between Omani EFL learners' identities and pragmatic choices and specifically pragmatic transfer when refusing in English. As will be explained in Chapter 3, the study has two phases. Phase one addressed the first theme, while Phase two addressed the second and third themes. The two phases and the corresponding research questions of the study are as follows:

Phase 1*:* The realization and perception of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic

1. How do Omani Arabic speakers realize refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic?

2. How do Omani Arabic speakers explain their realization of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic in relation to (a) sociopragmatic variables and (b) their identities (as Arab EFL learners)?

Phase 2: The realization and perception of refusal speech acts in English by Omani EFL learners and whether they perceive pragmatic transfer in their English refusals, and the relationship between Omani EFL learners' identities and their pragmatic choices and specifically pragmatic transfer.

The second phase is divided into two sub-phases. The first sub-phase or Phase 2.1 examines two themes: the realization patterns of refusals in English by Omani EFL learners and evidence of pragmatic transfer. The first set of questions in Phase 2.1 aims at describing how Omani EFL learners realize refusals in English as well as their understanding and evaluation of the sociopragmatic rules that trigger the realization patterns they use.

The realization of refusal speech acts in English by Omani EFL learners:

1. How do Omani EFL learners realize refusal speech acts in English?

2. How do Omani EFL learners explain their realization of refusal speech acts in English in relation to sociopragmatic variables?

A second goal of Phase 2.1 is to allow the Omani EFL learners to identify instances of pragmatic transfer, that is, deviations in their realizations of refusals in English from NSs' use that can be explained in relation to the participants' use and understanding of refusals in Arabic:

1. Do Omani EFL learners perceive any instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusals in English?

2. How do Omani EFL learners explain pragmatic transfer in their refusals in English?

The second sub-phase, or Phase 2.2, examines the relationship between Omani EFL learners' identities and their pragmatic transfer when refusing in English. Specifically, it examines how Omani EFL learners understand their relationship with English and how such a relationship is constructed as conformity and/or resistance (i.e., pragmatic transfer) to English pragmatic norms when refusing in English. The following questions are addressed:

1. How do Omani EFL learners define their relationship with English?

2. How do Omani EFL learners construct their relationship with English through their pragmatic choices when refusing in English?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the growing literature on pragmatic transfer in SLA by uncovering the role of learners' identities in their realization of refusals in English and their perceptions of their refusals, particularly in triggering pragmatic transfer. The findings have implications of how we conceptualize "pragmatic transfer." For example, what has been commonly described as "pragmatic transfer" in L2 pragmatics studies might be a conscious attempt by L2 learners to express their identity and not a reflection of their pragmatic competence (or lack thereof) in the L2. Also, this study will contribute to our understanding of how learners as social beings select and decide on the pragmatic norms that are most relevant to their communication. As a result, the findings could lead to revisiting predetermined notions of "successful communication" and "competence" in mainstream SLA (Canagarajah, 2007a, 2007b; Jenkins, 2006; Firth & Wagner, 1997; House, 1999; Seidlhofer, 2004). Jenkins (2006), for example, asserted that we cannot afford to neglect the sociolinguistic reality of L2 learners of English because common assumptions in SLA about L2 learners' desires to conform to the

norms of English NSs and only communicate with English NSs are not true. The majority of

users of English in the world are NNSs of English. Thus, Jenkins argued that not only might L2

learners desire to use English to communicate with NNSs of English, but also they might use

their bilingual and multilingual resources to meet their communication needs and goals.

Therefore, what defines competence when communicating in English is not the monolingual

norms of English NSs, but rather the bilingual and multilingual resources of NNSs. Accordingly,

pragmatic transfer can be understood as necessary and beneficial for successful communication

rather than as an "error" to be corrected.

Furthermore, by focusing on learners as social beings, this study can bring the

sociolinguistic reality of the learners and their social communication needs to the forefront of L2

pragmatics research. The findings of this study can inform our understanding of L2 pragmatics

learning and use as a social rather than purely cognitive process (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky,

1978). For example, Lantolf (2000) asserted that the cognitive development of language learning

and use does not reside in the brain, but rather, in social interaction. Thus, understanding learners

as social beings is vital to understanding their language learning development, and hence, L2

pragmatics development as a social process. Also, such an understanding can support social

approaches to the teaching and assessment of L2 pragmatics, which are based on "purposeful"

(i.e., geared towards meeting learners' needs) social interaction (Lantolf, 2000; Ohta, 2005).

Approximating the norms of NSs and communicating with NSs are often assumed to be the

objectives of all NNSs. Thus, the focus of L2 pragmatics research tends to focus exclusively on

the way social interactive learning activities facilitate cognitive development. In contrast, this

study attends to the sociolinguistic realities of learners, and thus, its findings can inform the

design of social interaction activities for the learning, instruction and assessment of L2

pragmatics that are more relevant to the cultural norms most needed by L2 learners for successful communication.

Finally, this study was conducted at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in Oman, which makes it particularly beneficial for SQU and SQU students for two reasons. First, considering that my PhD study is funded by SQU, this study on identity and pragmatic transfer can uniquely add to the quality research SQU is seeking. Arabs in general and Omani EFL learners in particular are an understudied population. To the best of my knowledge, there is no study on Omani EFL learners' actual use of English in their everyday communication. Therefore, this study will, for the first time, examine how Omani EFL learners perform refusal speech acts in English. This study also documented how these learners refuse in Omani Arabic. Second, the focus on the influence of learners' identities in this study is unique and reflective of recent calls in SLA to redefine language learning as a social rather than purely cognitive process (Lantolf, 2000, Firth & Wagner, 1997; Block, 2003). Since the participants in this study are Omani EFL learners, the findings of this study could inform English language courses at SQU and other universities in Oman about English language use as a social process and how Omani learners' identities influence their learning and use of English. Hence, better understanding can inform better language policies, instruction and assessment methods for EFL learners. Finally, despite some differences between Omani EFL learners and other Arab EFL learners, the findings of this study can provide some insights about refusal speech acts by Arab learners and the role of their identities in pragmatic transfer.

This thesis has four chapters in addition to the introductory chapter: a literature review, a methods chapter, a results chapter, and a discussion chapter. The literature review discusses the relevant literature on L2 pragmatics, pragmatic transfer, refusals and methodological issues in

the research of L2 pragmatics. The methods chapter describes participants, the design, the data

collection tools and steps, and the data analysis procedures of the study. The results chapter

reports the findings of the study related to the three main research questions: the realization and

explanations of refusals in Omani Arabic, the realizations and explanation of refusals in English,

and the influence of learner identity on pragmatic choices and pragmatic transfer in L2. The

discussion chapter relates the findings of the study to the findings of previous studies on L2

pragmatics and learner identity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although many scholars agree that pragmatics is about *language use* or the *functionality* of language (Verschueren, 1999, 2009), they tend to focus on different aspects of this definition of pragmatics. For example, Austin (1955) and Searle (1969) defined pragmatics as the language user's intentional meaning. Grice (1975) agreed with them and added that intentional meaning is not only user-dependent, but also context-dependent. Thomas (1995) viewed pragmatics as "meaning in interaction" (p. 23). To understand how these diverse definitions have contributed to the development of the field, it is important to examine the development of these definitions and how each has informed a particular L2 pragmatics research framework. Such an understanding will also set the background for the conceptual framework of this study.

In this review, I will first explain the conceptualization of the different approaches used in L2 pragmatic research. Second, I will describe and justify the conceptual framework of the current study. Third, I will trace the development of speech act theory. Fourth, I will explain pragmatic transfer and the various variables that affect it. Lastly, I will describe the two research methods that are particularly important for the current study.

2.1 Research Approaches in L2 Pragmatics

Because there are different definitions of pragmatics or language use and because each definition focuses on different aspects of a complex phenomenon, various approaches are used in the study of second language (L2) pragmatics. Kasper (2009) identified four different approaches to the study of L2 pragmatics: cognitive, sociocultural theory (cultural-historical psychology), language socialization (linguistic anthropology), and conversation analysis (sociology). Each approach, Kasper explained, examines distinct aspects of L2 pragmatics, and thus, operates in

isolation from other approaches of L2 pragmatics (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Indeed, as

Verschueren (2009) cautioned, rival approaches have resulted in a fragmented field. Thus, it is

important to understand the way that each approach has theorized and addressed particular

aspects of L2 pragmatics. Such an understanding will be used later in this chapter to explain the

possibilities of combining these different approaches for the purpose of meeting the objectives of

the current study.

2.1.1 *The Cognitive Approach*

Within the cognitive perspective of SLA, L2 pragmatics is called "interlanguage

pragmatics" (ILP). Kasper (2009) defines the cognitive perspective as mainly based on

cognitive-psychological theories. L2 pragmatic researchers adopting the cognitive approach

theorize L2 language learning and, consequently, language use (i.e., L2 pragmatics), as an

"attempted learning" or "approximation" (Selinker, 1972) of the English of NSs. Selinker

theorized that foreign or second language learning involves the development of an

"interlanguage" system, which is different from both the learners' L1 and the L2. Selinker

explained that when learners attempt to learn "only one norm of one dialect" (p. 213), they are

involved in several learning processes such as transferring linguistics rules or patterns from their

L1, overgeneralizing the rules of the L2, or attempting to communicate by using the already

known words and grammar of the L2. However, Selinker asserted that despite the learners'

attempts to approximate the norms of native speakers of an L2, these learning processes produce

a language that is different from the L2 as well as from the L1 of the learners, and hence, this

language is described as an interlanguage or a language with an intermediate status between the

L1 of the learner and the L2. Selinker, in fact, described these differences as "errors," and in the

case of L2 pragmatics they are described as "pragmatic failure" such as pragmatic "transfer."

Selinker believed that some of these errors become "fossilized" (i.e., they can never be amended). This ostensibly imperfect production is taken as evidence of the "deficit" of L2 learners' linguistic ability. In fact, Selinker affirmed that L2 learners "will *not* 'succeed'" in approximating the native speakers' norms since different production from the L2 is expected (p. 213).

To enable ILP research, researchers adopt a speech act framework. This framework is based on speech act theory, developed by Austin (1955), Searle (1969) and Leech (1983) along with insights from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Searle (1969, p. 16) considered speech acts such as apologizing or requesting to be "the basic or minimal units of linguistics communication" and, hence, they are the minimal units of analysis in this framework.

Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) incorporated speech act theory into their cross-cultural framework in a research project called the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). The cross-cultural framework of ILP research aims at describing, comparing, and explaining the realization patterns of pragmatic behavior (i.e., speech acts) of L2 learners. Blum-Kulka et al. examined the similarities and differences in the realization patterns of particular speech acts by NNSs of a particular language compared to the NSs of the same language. For the purpose of their project, they used a written discourse completion task (DCT) as an elicitation instrument to collect their data. Gradually, the crosscultural framework and the DCT measures became the standard in ILP research (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Other scholars have introduced different methods to ILP research such as oral DCT (i.e., oral instead of written responses are required), multiple-choice questionnaires, closed-response questionnaires, retrospective verbal protocols and role-play in an effort to account for some of the shortcomings of written DCT (Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992, 1995).

Several researchers (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996) have observed that ILP research continuously struggles with explaining the factors that influence L2 pragmatic development and pragmatic transfer. For example, ILP researchers struggle to define the relationship between pragmatic ability and other types of language abilities (e.g., grammatical ability including syntax and semantics). Kasper (2001) noted that ILP ability in SLA is examined either as "an autonomous component or in its interaction with grammatical ability" (p. 502). The learners' grammatical ability is assumed to have some relationship with pragmatic ability. However, the findings regarding the effect of proficiency or grammatical ability (used interchangeably in the literature) on pragmatic use are inconclusive (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) contended that the learners' level of proficiency has an effect on what type of errors the learners recognize, but this effect merits further investigation. Bardovi-Harlig (1999) emphasized the interrelatedness of pragmatics and grammar. She stated, "Although grammatical competence may not be a sufficient condition for pragmatics development, it may be a necessary condition" (p. 677).

The second issue in ILP research is the tendency to focus on use with little attention to the cognitive processes involved in ILP. Kasper (1996) affirmed that ILP pragmatics research has to address both use and acquisition to build a complete picture of ILP. However, ILP research tends to focus mainly on use with little attention to the development of ILP ability (Kasper, 1992; Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). Kasper (1992) attributed the focus on use over development in the majority of early ILP studies to the theoretical underpinnings and methodologies of these studies, which were based on cross-cultural pragmatics research first proposed by Blum-Kulka, et al. Kasper explained that the

cross-cultural approach is not concerned with the acquisitional process, but rather, it is concerned with finding the similarities and differences in the use of pragmatics across languages. Kasper and Schmidt (1996) contended that modeling ILP research on cross-cultural research made it comparative rather than acquisitional. The focus remains on the *object* of learning rather than on the *process* of learning (Kasper, 2009). Bardovi-Harlig (1999) commented that there are many studies on ILP, but not much can be said with confidence about either the "changes within the L2 pragmatics system," or the "influences on that system" (p. 681). As a result, explanations of pragmatic development are mainly provided as ad hoc explanations in ILP research (Kasper, 2009; Kasper & Rose, 2002).

Even with limited research on the cognitive processes of ILP, ILP researchers have been able to examine other cognitive variables that influence the process of ILP acquisition such as awareness and control-over use. Schmidt (1993), for example, stated that there is abundant evidence for learning resulting from "attended processing" rather than "unattended processing" (p. 35). Therefore, he contended that in the acquisition of L2 pragmatics, learners need to pay attention to the "linguistic forms, functional meanings, and the relevant contextual features" of L2 pragmatics (p. 35). That is, learners need to be pragmatically aware. Schmidt distinguished between two levels of awareness: noticing and understanding. Noticing means "registering the simple occurrence of some event," while understanding is the "recognition of a general principle, rule, or pattern" (p. 26). Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) tested the effect of Schmidt's concept of awareness on the level of noticing to find out whether ESL and EFL learners notice grammatical and pragmatic errors and whether proficiency level influences the noticing of such errors. They found that the type of errors noticed by learners is influenced by their level of proficiency and context of learning (ESL or EFL). However, they added, citing Schmidt (1993),

that noticing is an insufficient condition for the development of L2 pragmatics. This observation has been made by other researchers who stated that the noticing of L2 pragmatics does not translate into actual target-like production. For example, Takahashi (2001) observed that while the learners in her study noticed the target request forms, few managed to identify their functions.

These observations led ILP researchers to pay attention to the second cognitive variable that has an effect on ILP acquisition: control over attention. Bialystok (1993) proposed a two-dimensional model (knowledge and control) for pragmatics acquisition. She maintained that although the learners' pragmatic knowledge is important for the acquisition of pragmatics, their control over the attention to this knowledge is crucial. When Hassall (2008) tested Bialystok's model on two groups of low and intermediate proficiency Australian learners of Indonesian, he found that high-proficiency learners had more advanced pragmatic knowledge and less control over it than low-proficiency learners. Specifically, Hassall found that low-proficiency learners with basic pragmatic knowledge exhibited more control over pragmatic knowledge. Hassall explained that the limited pragmatic knowledge allows these learners to control it better than advanced proficiency learners. Due to their high amount of pragmatic knowledge, advanced learners needed more control over their knowledge to use it successfully. These findings confirm Bialystok's model. As Hassall concluded, "learners face a constant task of gaining control over ever-changing states of knowledge, thus control over attention to pragmatic knowledge is important" (p.89).

Research within the cognitive approach to ILP has provided abundant evidence for variation in the use of speech acts between NSs and NNSs. However, although within the cognitive approach pragmatic meaning is understood to be user- and context-dependent, the

interaction between interlocutors and the context of interaction are undermined in this line of research (Roever, 2011). Often, the use of speech acts is examined in controlled DCT and not in actual interactions. As a result of an awareness of these limitations, another approach, conversation analysis (CA), has been introduced to ILP research in order to highlight and examine the role of interaction in the generation and understanding of pragmatic meaning.

2.1.2 *The Conversation Analysis Approach*

Conversation analysis (CA) as an interdisciplinary field emerged in sociology, but it draws some of its insights from ethnomethodology (Kasper, 2009). CA is used in ILP research to address some of the methodological problems inherited from previous research in ILP (specifically research on speech act realization) (Kasper, 2006). Kasper explained that the cognitive approach to ILP research treats pragmatics as fixed linguistic formulas, rendering it unable to explain the role of interactional ability in ILP development. Kasper proposed a "discursive approach" to the study of speech act research by incorporating CA into ILP research. In the CA framework for ILP, pragmatic meaning is no longer about the use of appropriate linguistic moves such as speech acts; rather, pragmatic meaning is co-constructed and negotiated by the interlocutors (Kasper, 2006). According to Kasper, CA approaches view "meaning and action as constituted not only *in* but also *through* social interaction" (p. 284). Hence, pragmatic ability in the CA framework is not located in the mind of the speaker, but rather in the interaction that takes place between interlocutors. That is, the pragmatic meaning of a speech act unfolds "turn by turn" during the interaction (Walters, 2009, p. 34).

From a CA perspective, the situatedness of meaning in interaction requires the suspension of any prior cognitive, social or cultural assumptions about the interlocutors and the interaction (Seedhouse, 2006). As a result, CA researchers only transcribe and analyze the details

of the "turn by turn" of natural interaction in order to examine the pragmatic ability of the interlocutors. Consequently, CA is neither concerned with explaining the effect of the outside context or the perceived context of interaction on pragmatic meaning or with providing explanations for ILP development *per se* (Kasper, 2009).

Nonetheless, Kasper (2006) asserted that CA is able to illustrate the importance of interactional competence for the understanding of L2 pragmatics. In other words, since pragmatic competence is situated in interaction according to CA, the development of interaction is in itself a development of pragmatic competence. Agreeing with Kasper and Rose (2002), Lee (2006) treated interactional competence (i.e., the knowledge and ability to use interactional resources) as both a resource and a goal of learning. Specifically, learners were observed to utilize interactional resources such as turn taking, sequencing, overall structuring of conversation, and repair practices to achieve their learning goals. At the same time, these practices can be the object of learning. That is, learners can acquire these practices to enable them to communicate effectively. Similarly, Ishida (2006) examined the use of modal expressions by L2 Japanese learners in a decision-making activity. Ishida found that the use of modal expressions in the interaction influenced the process (i.e., practices of interaction) of making a decision. Furthermore, Ishida observed that the participant became aware of the "consequentiality" of using any modal expression during the interaction. Kasper remarked that Ishida's findings show "the dual role of interaction competence" as a resource and a goal of learning. However, as noted above, one limitation of the CA approach is that it tends to ignore the cognitive, social and cultural assumptions underlying interactions. Other interdisciplinary approaches to L2 pragmatics such as sociocultural theory and language socialization, in contrast,

emphasize that social and cultural assumptions about social interactions are important and should be considered in the study of L2 pragmatics research.

2.1.3 *The Sociocultural Approach*

The sociocultural approach to L2 pragmatics research is based mainly on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) of cognitive development. The central premise of SCT is that social interaction mediates the cognitive development of language acquisition (Lave &Wenger, 1991). A key concept in SCT is the concept of "the zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Vygotsky defined the ZPD as "the difference between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Lantolf (2000) explained that mental development in the ZPD does not reside in the brain or cognition, but rather, in social interaction. He clarified that while human biology has the foundations for acquiring a language, without social interaction, such ability will not develop. Therefore, in the case of SLA, adults or more capable peers collaborate with the learner through social interaction to help him/her reach the next level of language development.

The social interaction is achieved through using mediational means. Lantolf (2000) explains that human beings use material and symbolic artifacts and tools that are socially and culturally constructed to mediate or regulate their cognitive development. In the case of language acquisition, language itself is not only the goal of learning, but also the tool of mediating learning as well (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Lave &Wenger, 1991). Ohta (2000) commented that as learners appropriate language as a meditational tool during social interactive activities of learning, they gradually develop their cognitive abilities of language learning as evident in the

gradual acquisition of language. Though a major emphasis is placed on social interaction for mediating cognitive development, Ohta agreed with Lantolf (2000) that inner or private speech (i.e., metacognitive reflection) is another tool for mediation. Learners are capable of mediating their learning by reflecting on their own learning processes.

Research methods based on SCT in the study of SLA are holistic in nature. Ohta (2000) explains that a sociocultural approach to SLA requires the use of a "holistic qualitative methodology" (p. 53). Based on the assumption that language acquisition "occurs moment by moment in social interaction," Ohta states that a sociocultural research methodology has to examine language acquisition as it takes place during interactions (p. 54). This, in turn, requires the use of audio and video recorded naturally occurring data, which are transcribed and analyzed using discourse analysis and CA procedures.

Unlike the CA framework for L2 pragmatics research, the SCT approach to L2 pragmatics does not suspend assumptions about learners' cognitive development and the nature of social interaction. Assumptions about the learners' current developmental levels prior to their involvement in an interaction are important in order to decide what the social interaction will be about and how it will be carried out. On this point, Lantolf (2000) affirmed that social interaction in SCT is purposeful. Purposeful interaction, he elaborates, should be based on the learners' motives for learning a language because it is the learners who trigger the social interaction. Lantolf asserted that the conditions of the social interaction such as the use of "appropriate *meditational means*" are important for it to have the desired effect on the cognitive development of learners (p. 8). Thus, in order to understand the effect of the social interaction on L2 pragmatics development, researchers should consider the cognitive and the social variables involved in the interactive learning activity.

Ohta (2005) noted that most SCT studies of L2 pragmatics are mainly observational studies of L2 instruction. She explained that pragmatic development is discussed as merely a secondary finding in L2 research adopting the SCT. However, she contended that it is possible to use the SCT to reanalyze data from studies that have examined L2 pragmatic instruction but did not adopt an SCT framework. For example, she reanalyzed Samuda's (2001) data on a teacher's intervention in the acquisition of English models by a group of ESL students. By applying an SCT approach to examining L2 pragmatic development, Ohta found that the teacher's evaluation of the students' knowledge prior to any task provided information about their current level of L2 pragmatic development, the next level they needed to reach, and what they might need to accomplish the task. Ohta argued that the social collaboration to accomplish the task by the students reflects the importance of social interaction, which shows that social interaction is important and effective in accomplishing the task and moving the learners to the next developmental level of using English models (i.e., L2 pragmatics development). The occasional intervention of the teacher when it was needed reflects the importance of experts' collaboration to facilitate learners' L2 pragmatic development. Therefore, SCT as an interdisciplinary approach to L2 pragmatics research is able to explain that L2 pragmatic development is socially mediated using purposeful social activities.

Swain, Kinnear and Steinman (2015, p.27) explained that the participation in the ZPD is "always situated (that is, integrated with context and local negotiation)" focusing on how the "intermental" or social interaction lead to changes on the "intramental" or individual plane. They elaborated that not only the individual is influenced and hence transformed by the social interaction and the mediational means, but also the mediational means and the social interaction are influenced and transformed by the individual. They commented: "as we use the artifacts

created by us or our predecessors, we change them, which then changes us" (p. 9). They described the relationship between the individual and social interaction and mediation as "bidirectional" and "reciprocal." In addition, they said that Vygotsky would argue that ZPD is more fitting with educational settings in which initial teaching and hence mediated learning take place. However, they believe that ZPD could continue beyond the school setting to new contexts.

Therefore, to capture the influence of the larger contexts or "the various levels of institution and the hierarchy beyond the immediate school," Swain, Kinnear and Steinman stated that Activity Theory, initiated by Vygotsky and developed later by Leont've (1981), is best suited for this task (p. 28). Activity Theory "conceptualizes human cognition in relationship to human physically and socially motivated activity" (p. 95). They explained that action(s) is a part of an activity, which is an interaction between the individual(s) and the social reality. This interaction takes place as part of a system called an "activity system" that connect the subject(s) or agent(s), object(s) or goal(s), and the mediational means. Also, action(s) take place in particular conditions or circumstances, which have been taken into consideration to understand any activity. Sannio, Daniels, & Gutiérrez (2009) sustained that "[a]n emphasis on psychological approaches without consideration of anthropological, sociological, historical, and linguistic characteristics of activity is risky and narrows the focus [of Activity theory] to the study of specific and limited aspects of activity" (p. 1). Therefore, using Activity Theory, researchers were able to examine activities including transformative, ambivalent and contradictory SLA actions in relation to, for example, agency and identity and the personal histories and experiences of the individual(s).

2.1.4 *The Language Socialization Approach*

Language socialization (LS) is another interdisciplinary approach to L2 pragmatics (Kasper, 2001, 2009). LS is concerned with the acquisition of cultural and linguistic practices through language (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004). Ochs (1996) defined LS as "the process whereby children and other novices are socialized through language, part of such socialization being a socialization to use language meaningfully, appropriately, and effectively" (p. 408). Accordingly, L2 socialization is defined as the "socialization beyond ones first, or dominant, languages and encompasses second, foreign, and (concurrent) bilingual and multilingual learning contexts" (Duff, 2011, p. 565).

Kulick & Schieffelin (2004) stated that LS addresses the absence of focus on language in children socialization studies. They affirmed that "children are socialized through language, and are socialized to use language" (p. 350). Also, they stated that LS "addresses the lack of culture in language acquisition studies" (p. 350). Ochs and Schieffelin (1984) affirmed that LS is inherently cultural. They stated that in the LS approach, all language practices including teaching and learning are "culturally constructed." For example, they observed that even though LS practices are universal, the practices used in the socialization process in each community are different and unique. Riley (2011) added that in the LS approach to SLA, the influence of culture, whether that of the teacher, student, or the larger community, cannot be neglected; rather, it should be brought to the forefront of any analysis of SLA. Watson-Gegeo (2004), who has looked at the political dimension of SLA, contended that the political factors "influence which linguistic forms are available or taught and how they are represented" for language learners (p. 340). For example, educational policies influence what and how language(s) are

taught at schools in a particular community. They also influence who gets access to what types of knowledge and how learning experiences are explained (Bronson &Watson-Gegeo, 2008).

Another important premise of LS is the agency and identity of the language learner (Kulick & Schieffelin, 2004; Duff & Talmy, 2011). Watson-Gegeo and Nielson (2003) maintained that language learners are "active and selective agents" (p. 65). Norton (2000) contended that the identity of the language learner is reflected in the learner's understanding and construction of his or her relationship with the world. As a result, language learners as agents "may contest or transform as well as accommodate practices others attempt to induct them into" (Duff & Talmy, 2011, p. 97). Duff and Talmy added that the language learner as an agent might conform, resist, or negotiate the LS practices to mark his or her identity. Duff and Talmy affirmed that LS practices are "bi-directional" (p. 98). As the more expert members of a certain community socialize the novices, novices also socialize the expert members into their learning needs and identities.

To meet the theoretical premises of the LS framework, rigorous research methods are used to study language socialization practices (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). Watson-Gegeo emphasized the use of a combination of "ethnographic and other forms of qualitative research as the key methods" in LS research (p. 341). Data is first collected using careful observation, longitudinal field notes, print-text and multimodal materials, audio and video taped natural interactions, and interviews. Then, data are carefully transcribed and subjected to thorough and "iterative analysis" using discourse analysis and CA (Duff &Talmy, 2011, p. 99). Thus, CA is an important research method in the LS approach.

LS is not concerned with developmental changes *per se*; rather, it examines the direct and indirect influences of cultural and political factors as well as the influences of the individual's

agency and identity on learning interactive activities. Li (2008) argued that "most research on language socialization will implicitly, if not explicitly, deal with the acquisition or development of pragmatic competence" (p. 71). Li suggested that Ochs' (1996) definition of LS as a "socialization to use language meaningfully, *appropriately*, and *effectively*" [emphasis added by Li] is the essence of language use (i.e., pragmatics) (p. 71). For example, Talmy (2008) conducted a study on a group of ESL learners in a high school in Hawai'I who adopted Hawai'i Creole English as their L2. Because this form of English is ideologically stigmatized in American culture, all speakers of Hawai'i Creole English are required to take ESL classes in which they will, presumably, learn the "right" English (i.e., standard English). However, Talmy noticed that these students resented being stigmatized because of their Hawai'i Creole English and, consequently, they resisted learning Standard English and thus, had low achievement. Talmy explained that the students' resistance and low achievement could only be understood in light of the negative effects of the American educational community's ideology and its language policies. Not only are Talmy's ESL participants a case in point for the influence of identity upon language acquisition, but they also demonstrate how the explicit resistance to learning Standard English is in itself an implicit resistance to use, and thus to conformity to, the pragmatics of Standard English.

Therefore, by adopting a LS approach to L2 pragmatics, researchers can examine the influence of social, cultural, political, agency and identity variables on the social interaction of language learning, and by extension, on L2 pragmatic development and use. However, the LS approach to L2 pragmatics does not provide explanations for the cognitive processes of pragmatics development *per se*.

Thus, the study of language use (i.e., pragmatics) is central to LS. LS is a comprehensive approach to L2 pragmatics research. Similar to the SCT approach to language acquisition, LS situates the cognitive development of language acquisition in social interactions. LS examines the effects of long-term cultural and political dimensions of the larger society on classroom interactions in which cognitive language acquisition development is situated. Thus, LS takes the study of SLA and L2 pragmatics one step further by examining not only the immediate social contexts of learning, but also the society or community at large with all of its various social, cultural and political dimensions.

2.2 The Conceptual Framework of the Current Study

Each of the approaches to L2 pragmatics outlined above, although imperfect, has something unique to offer to the study and understanding of L2 pragmatics use and development. For instance, the cognitive approach to L2 pragmatics mainly focuses on describing L2 use. Although it has paid little attention to the cognitive processes of pragmatic development, research within this approach has shown that noticing, awareness, and control over use are important cognitive variables in L2 pragmatic development (Bialystok, 1993; Schmidt, 1993). However, this approach does not explain the exact relationship between pragmatic ability and grammatical ability. In the case of the CA approach, while it accounts for the importance of interactional ability in pragmatic development, it does not explain the influence of social and cultural variables on interaction. On the other hand, SCT and LS approaches demonstrate that social interaction and mediation are central to the development of L2 pragmatics. Also, they emphasize that social interaction can neither be fully understood in isolation from the cultural and political aspects of the community in which this interaction takes place nor in isolation from the influences of the learners' agencies and identities. None of the last three approaches explains

the influence of cognitive processing on L2 pragmatics development. Therefore, because no approach alone is able to account for the complexity of L2 pragmatics, it seems that a combination of approaches is needed if the goal is to understand L2 pragmatic use and development.

When Kasper (2001, 2009) examined the compatibility of the different approaches to L2 pragmatics, she concluded that the CA, SCT and LS approaches to L2 pragmatics are compatible because they share some philosophical and methodological stances. For example, she contended that these three approaches share a similar ontological stance (i.e., the situatedness of language acquisition in social interaction) even though they have different epistemological goals. The goal of the SCT approach is to examine the way social interaction influences cognitive development, while the LS approach is "interested in the integrated acquisition of culture and language" (p. 523). Duff (2007, p. 313) explains that LS is "BROADLY based on sociocultural" theory because the focus of LS research is different from that of SCT research. SCT research aims mainly at investigating how the cognitive development of language is situated in social interaction, while LS's main focus is investigating how such social interaction is situated in the cultural and/or political ideologies of a certain context or community.

Both approaches utilize a similar research design (i.e., longitudinal) and use similar research methods: multiple observations, longitudinal field notes, and video or audio recorded natural interaction. Even though CA isolates interaction from important external social and cultural variables, it remains an effective method for analyzing social interactions in the SCT and LS approaches. Kasper agreed with Duranti (1997) who argued that CA offers the "conceptual and analytical tools required to capture the intricate details of talk-in-interaction" (Kasper, 2001, p. 523). That is to say, the details of interaction described by CA are essential not just to

uncovering the interactive abilities of learners, but also to uncovering the broader social variables the learners attend to during interaction. Hence, findings from these three interdisciplinary approaches to L2 pragmatics can converge and communicate to develop a better understanding of the field.

However, Kasper believed that the cognitive approach, which she terms the "information-processing model," to L2 pragmatics research is incompatible with the other three approaches to L2 pragmatics (i.e., CA, SCT and LS). She attributed the discrepancy between the cognitive approach and the other three approaches to the differences in the ontological, epistemological and methodological stances underlying them. She contended that the cognitive approach to L2 pragmatics locates the cognitive development of language acquisition in the individual mind in isolation from interaction with others and the social context, while CA, SCT and LS situate the cognitive development of language acquisition within the social interaction. Additionally, the cognitive approach tends to utilize quantitative (QUAN) methods of data collections, while the other approaches often employ qualitative (QUAL) research methods. Kasper (2006) contended that the cognitive approach research methods are incompatible with the CA methodology due to apparently irreconcilable differences in these methodologies. Thus, she concluded that while the CA methodology allows for greater communication between the CA, SCT and LS approaches and making them compatible, the cognitive approach is incompatible with these approaches.

Although the cognitive approach is incompatible with other approaches, it is fundamental to the study of L2 pragmatics (Kasper, 2001). Kasper maintained that the four approaches are necessary for studying different aspects of L2 pragmatic development. For instance, while SCT can explain the ways in which social interaction mediates the cognitive development of pragmatics, it does not explain "higher cognitive functions" such as "attention, memory,

representation, restructuring, transfer, and speech processing in comprehension and production," which the cognitive approach is capable of doing (p. 525). Kasper (2009) asserted that "microanalysis of cognitive processing is just as indispensable as microanalysis of interaction" to the study of L2 pragmatic development (p. 525). Therefore, she recommended "multiple theoretical and empirical perspectives to the acquisition of pragmatics" (p. 525) in which the combining of these approaches should be clearly justified. However, the question remains, is it possible to combine the cognitive approach with other approaches to research on L2 pragmatics?

I contend that the different approaches to L2 pragmatics research are compatible. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) rejected the incompatibility of research methods and affirmed that they are compatible as long as their use in the same study is clearly justified. They stated that one of the advantages of mixing different research methods is to provide better and stronger inferences by offsetting "the disadvantages that certain methods have by themselves" (p. 34). Similarly, Kasper (2001, 2009) in her discussion of the compatibility of various approaches of L2 pragmatics illustrated the way in which combining different approaches is possible. Kasper examined possible points of connection between these four approaches. She argued, for instance, that even though CA treats interaction differently from SCT and LS, the focus on interaction as a unit of analysis is what connects these three approaches and makes them compatible approaches to the study of L2 pragmatics.

A similar case could be made concerning the research methods in these interdisciplinary approaches in relation to the cognitive approach. The cognitive approach research methods can offset the limitations of the other approaches in two ways. First, researchers can use elicitation methods from the cognitive approach such as Discourse Completion Task (DCT) to inform research in the SCT approach. As stated earlier, SCT aims to uncover the cognitive development

of the learners' linguistic acquisition by examining the learners' interactions with their teachers or with more capable peers. Therefore, assumptions about the learners' developmental levels prior to the social interaction are important for examining how social interactions help the learners move from their current development level to the next one. However, since speech acts are co-constructed in interactions, this might obscure information about the developmental level of each individual learner. Therefore, in addition to evaluating the pragmatic development of the L2 learners as a group participating in the same social activity of language learning, using DCT before and after the social interaction could help the SCT researchers evaluate the influence of the social interaction on the pragmatic development of each individual learner separately.

Furthermore, the use of elicitation methods does not completely disagree with SCT's prioritization of social interaction. Since what learners can do in collaboration they also can do alone, these elicitation methods can provide an opportunity to find out what learners can do by themselves. In addition, since interaction is not limited to social interaction, the learners' interaction with the DCT questionnaire, for example, can be treated as a form of interaction with linguistic resources. Therefore, not only do the elicitation methods meet some of the SCT assumptions, but they can also offset some of the limitations. This limitation applies also to the LS approach. Whenever an evaluation of the individual learner's pragmatic competence is in question, the elicitation methods would be valuable for these approaches. Thus, the research methods of the cognitive approach can be compatible with the other approaches to researching L2 pragmatics. In the case of the current study, the DCT test can be used to examine the pragmatic choices of each learner independent of other learners.

The second way that the cognitive approach can offset some of the limitations of the other approaches is by providing a time-efficient data collection tool. Researchers who want to

use CA, SCT, and LS methodologies to collect particular pragmatic data might find themselves burdened with the demands of these methodologies in which observations, longitudinal field notes, interviews, and video/audio recorded natural data are required for detailed transcription and analysis (Roever, 2011). However, this study is specifically concerned with refusal speech acts, which might be difficult to obtain using natural interaction-based data. The chances that the participants will produce a sufficient number of refusal speech acts in natural communication settings are very slim. Natural communication settings are unpredictable and obtaining data pertaining to the objectives of this study might take a long time. Also, in this study, the effect of the cultural distance between interlocutors as a sociopragmatic variable will be examined. This variable would require the participants in this study (Omani EFL learners) to refuse speech acts initiated by two types of interlocutors: NSs of English (American or British NSs of English) and NNSs of English (Omani Arabic NSs). There is a very slim chance for observing Omani EFL learners refusing both types of interlocutors in natural interactions. Thus, using elicitation data collection tools such as DCT from the cognitive approach provides a more feasible alternative for collecting the required data. Section 2.5 below will explain how combining DCT and interviews can offset some of the limitations of both research methods to address the objective of studying pragmatic transfer in this study.

2.3 Speech Act Theory

Pragmatics as a field of study emerged to challenge mainstream thinking about language as an abstract system independent of its users by illustrating the importance of language use. Pragmatics studies the generation and understanding of meaning, which is user- and context-dependent (Austin, 1955; Searle, 1969; Grice, 1975). This conception of pragmatics led to the development of an influential theory called speech act theory. Speech act theory explains "in

which senses and under which conditions uttering something can be doing something, thus providing a conceptual framework for describing and understanding the various kinds of linguistic actions" (Sbisà, 2009, p. 231). This theory is used to inform the majority of research in second language (L2) pragmatics (Kasper, 1992, Kasper & Dahl, 1991, Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). However, Speech Act Theory as it is known today has been developed and drafted by several researchers whose contributions uniquely shaped current understandings about pragmatics. In what follows, I will trace the early and recent developments of speech act theory and discuss the speech act of request as a case in point pertaining to this study.

2.3.1 *Early Development of Speech Act Theory*

Prior to Austin's (1955) work, semanticists such as Bertrand Russell, Alfred Tarski and Rudolf Carnap were "principally concerned with the properties of sentences which could be evaluated in terms of *truth* or *falsity*" using an approach known as "truth-conditional semantics" (Thomas, 1995, p. 30). In this approach, the linguistic meaning of a sentence is true only if the truth conditions of that sentence are true (i.e., can be verified). Consider the following examples taken from Thomas (1995):

1. There are seven words in this sentence.
2. I sleep all the time, doctor.

Thomas explained that the first sentence is true because it can be verified by counting the words in the sentence. In other words, the use of 'seven words' refers to exactly seven words in the sentence. The second sentence, on the other hand, cannot be verified simply because the speaker has been awake to speak to the doctor; it is not true that the speaker sleeps all the time. Thomas commented that even though such a sentence might be commonly used in ordinary language, for

truth-conditional semanticists, it remains false or meaningless. The question, then, is how do people manage to communicate with meaningless language?

Speech act theory was developed as a philosophical endeavor to challenge the radical thinking of semanticists who neglected ordinary language use in favor of a more logical language. Austin observed that ordinary language is successfully used in communication, even though it can fail the truth-conditional semantics tests. That is, Austin argued that people not only state or describe when they talk; they also "perform actions," which he calls "performatives." For instance, when someone says, "I apologize," the speaker performs the action of apologizing by saying these words rather than making a claim as in "I drive a white car" (Thomas, 1995, p. 32). Based on these observations, Austin put forward his "performative hypothesis" which states that "people do not use language just to make statements about the world; they also use language to perform actions, actions which affect or change the world in some way" (Thomas, 1995, p. 44).

However, Austin realized that equating "doing things with words" with particular performative verbs is problematic because "doing actions with words" can be realized by using statements, which have no performative verbs. Thomas explained that *inviting,* for example, can be realized without the use of the verb *invite* and the same is true for *requesting, thanking and* other actions. Accordingly, Austin rethought his approach by distinguishing between three levels of meaning: locution, illocution and perlocution. Thomas (1995, p. 49) explained that locution is the meaning of "the actual words uttered" or the "literal" or "abstract" meaning (used interchangeably in the literature) of the words independent of the users while illocutionary meaning is "the force or the intention behind the words" or the "intentional meaning" of the speaker. For instance, the illocutionary meaning of the locution *"It is hot here!"* might be *"I want*

some fresh air!" Perlocution, on the other hand, is "the effect of the illocution on the hearer" as in "Someone opens the window." This classification of the different levels of meaning made Austin revise his early work and argue that even statements can be performative. Since the "intentional meaning" is meant to have some effect on the listener, it is necessarily performative as well. Hence, any statement carried with an intentional meaning can be performative. To exaggerate by saying, "I sleep all of the time, doctor" is to carry an effect on the doctor, perhaps to make the doctor realize the bad condition of the patient due to oversleeping.

John Searle took Austin's work on performatives and illocutionary acts one step further by attempting to formalize Austin's thinking. Searle (1969) stated that "a theory of language is a theory of action" (p.17). Thus, he maintained, "[t]he unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, … but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act" (p. 16). He defined a speech act as "the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication" (p.16). Another Searlian contribution to the development of speech act theory is the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. Direct speech acts are identified by the existence of "a conventional relationship between sentence type and speech act (illocutionary force)" (Archer, Ajimer, & Wichmann, 2012, p. 41). For instance, "a speaker may utter the sentence *I want you to do it* by way of requesting the hearer to do something" (Searle, 1969, p. 265) while indirect speech acts are "cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by the way of performing another" (Archer, et al., p. 42). Searle (1969, p. 265) offered the following example: "*Can you reach the salt?*" He explained that this is not "merely a question" of ability to the act of reaching the salt, but also an indirect request.

Another development in the theory of speech acts is the introduction of implicature by Grice (1957). Building upon Austin's work on illocutionary meaning, Grice proposed a distinction between what is said (i.e. meaning in semantics) and what is implicated (meaning in pragmatics). Unlike Austin and Searle who saw the distinction between the conventional meaning of utterances and the intentional meaning from the point of view of the speaker, Grice drew his distinction based on the views of the speaker and the hearer together. However, in his work, Grice mainly focused on explaining how "a hearer gets from the level of expressed meaning to the level of the implied meaning" (Thomas, 1995, p. 56). Also, Grice emphasized the role of context in generating the implied meaning. Thus, the context is expanded to take into account the linguistic context of utterances as well as the whole context of communication. To illustrate his views on the role of context in mediating the implied meaning, Grice dedicated his attention to "conversational implicature" (i.e. the implied meaning by the speaker which varies across contexts of communications). Grice proposed several conversation maxims and then suggested that flouting these maxims would result in implicature.

Austin, Searle and Grice introduced a revolutionary way of thinking about language. In their speech act theory, language can be used to do actions directly and indirectly. Thus, the speech act is the basic unit of analysis in the study of language use. Although these researchers developed sets of principles about how to explain the generation and understanding of implied meaning, these principles are only able to explain some typical cases of communication. Variation in pragmatic meaning use is left unexplained (Thomas, 1995). This fact brings the sensitive role of context to the forefront of the study of speech acts. Context was not accounted for well enough in the early development of the speech act theory of Austin, Searle and Grice. Consideration of context has resulted in the further development of this theory.

2.3.2. *Further Developments in Speech Act* Theory

As neo-Gricean pragmatists, Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978) rethought the Grice's implicature theory to address some of its shortcomings. Like Austin, Searle, and Grice, Leech conceptualized meaning in pragmatics as user and context-dependent. However, he elaborated further on the role of context. To know that one is dealing with pragmatic rather than semantic phenomena, Leech defined pragmatics as "meaning in relation to a speech situation" (p. 15). He explicated that meaning in semantics is independent of the context of interaction and the interlocutors; it is "purely the property of expression in a given language" (p. 6). Leech affirmed that meaning in pragmatics, on the other hand, cannot be achieved without considering the identity of the interlocutors in a communicative event (i.e. the speaker and the hearer), the context of interaction, be it the social setting or the shared background knowledge between the interlocutors, the purpose or goals of the interaction, and so on. Leech also claimed that opting for politeness, people violate Grice's conversational maxims, which explains, for example, their occasional choice of indirect speech over direct speech. Therefore, he proposed the "politeness principle" (PP) which associated indirectness with politeness and "has a higher regulative role than" the role of Grice's cooperative principle (CP). According to Leech, PP works "to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place" (1983, p. 82).

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) further developed the notion of politeness to support Grice's CP by proposing the "face-saving view" (Fraser, 1990). Fraser stated that even though politeness was never clearly defined by Brown and Levinson, they suggested that "considerations of politeness…provide principled reasons" for "deviation" from "a socially natural framework [(i.e., Grice's CP)] within which ordinary communication is seen to occur" (p.

228). In other words, consideration of politeness leads to non-observance of Grice's CP. Brown and Levinson added that speakers not only encode their intentional meaning of a speech act, but they also encode their intention to be polite. Fraser expanded on this by explaining that when a speaker says "I would really like it if you would shut the door," the speaker not only communicates a request, but also a polite request. Thus, failure to encode such politeness might be taken as an "absence of the required polite attitude" (p. 228).

Maintaining a "polite attitude" is understood to maintain the interlocutors' "public-self-image," "reputation," "good name" (Goffman, 1967) or "face" (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Thomas (1995) stated that "[w]ithin politeness theory, 'face' is best understood as every individual's feeling of self-worth or self-image; this image can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others" (p. 169). Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that face has two aspects: positive and negative. "An individual's positive face is reflected in his or her desire to be liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others. An individual's negative face is reflected in the desire not to be impeded or put upon, to have the freedom to act as one chooses" (Thomas, p. 169). Brown and Levinson defined positive and negative politeness as follow (p. 70):

> *Positive Politeness:* "[T]he assurance that in general the S [speaker] considers H's [hearer] wants at least some of H's wants; for example, that S considers H to be in important respects 'the same' as he, with in-group rights and duties and expectations of reciprocity, or by the implications that S likes H so that the FTA [face threatening act] doesn't mean a negative evaluation in general of H's face."

> *Negative Politeness:* "[The] assurance that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action. Hence negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to vey restricted aspects of H's self-image, centering on his want to not unimpeded."

Brown and Levinson stated that speakers employ semantic units or strategies such as gratitude, apology and compliment to address the "wants" of either one or both of the hearer or speaker's face. The speaker could use negative strategies such as apology to address his/her own face desires achieving by that negative politeness. On the other hand, the speaker could use the positive strategies such as compliment to address the face wants of the hearer and sometimes his own face wants hence achieving positive politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) maintained, "some acts are intrinsically threatening to face" positive and negative wants (p. 24). They explained that the speakers rely on three culturally-sensitive variables in their evaluation of face-threatening acts (FTA) and hence, choose the strategies most suitable to address positive and negative face want which would result either in positive or negative politeness: the social distance between interlocutors, the relative power the speaker has over the hearer, and absolute ranking of impositions in a particular culture. Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1992, p.25) defined these variables as follow:

> *Relative Power (P):* This involves the power of the speaker with respect to the hearer. In effect, it is the degree to which the speaker can impose his or her will on the hearer because of a higher rank within an organization, professional status, or as the result of the hearer's need to have a particular duty or job performed. This, then, relates to the relative rank, title, or social position between the two interactants.

> *Social distance (D):* This represents the distance between the speakers and the hearer and is, in effect, the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share as represented through in-group or out-group membership. This is reflective of the degree to which the two interactants identify with each other and share some affiliation and solidarity.

> *Absolute ranking of imposition (R):* This is the potential imposition of carrying out the speech act, in terms of the expenditure of goods and/or services by the hearer, or the obligation of the speaker to perform the act.

With the notion of face and politeness and of the three variables influencing the choice of politeness strategies, the conceptualization of context in speech act theory has expanded to

include psychological, social and cultural dimensions. This conceptualization of face, politeness

and context has furthered the development of speech act theory.

2.3.3 *Refusal Speech Acts*

As noted above, this study focuses on the realization of refusal speech acts by Omani

EFL learners. Refusal speech acts are negative responses that occur "when a speaker directly or

indirectly says 'no'" to an initiating act of an invitation, a request, a suggestion, or an offer (Al-

Eryani, 2007, p. 21). Since refusals are negative responses, they are inherently offensive and

"face-threatening" (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Disapproving or rejecting an initiated speech act might be a threat to the hearer, because

his/her positive face wants or expectations of agreement and compliance with his/her action are

not met. Thus, a speaker may attempt to protect the positive face of their interlocutor by

mitigating a refusal. Takahashi and Beebe (1987), for example, observed what can happen when

refusals are not mitigated or not performed indirectly: "the inability to say 'no' clearly and

politely [...] has led many nonnative speakers to offend their interlocutors" (p. 133). Al-Kahtani

(2005) affirmed, "sending and receiving a message of 'no' is a task that needs special skill" (p.

37). Therefore, refusing requires speakers to employ their pragmatic knowledge to avoid

offending the listener and undermining their relationship with the interlocutor (Martínez-Flor,

2011).

Refusals have been examined in a number of studies. In an early study that investigated

pragmatic transfer in refusing, Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) examined the

realization patterns of refusals by 20 Japanese NSs and 20 Japanese ESL learners and compared

them to the refusal patterns of 20 English NSs using a DCT questionnaire. Beebe, et al. analyzed

the realization patterns of refusals by their participants and classified them into two types: direct

and indirect refusals. Under each type of refusal, they identified several types of refusal strategies. This classification has been used in other studies on refusals to classify refusals (e.g., Martínez-Flor, 2011) and to identify pragmatic transfer in refusals in L2. Using this classification, Beebe, et al. were able to identify three areas of pragmatic transfer: the sequence, frequency and content of the semantic formulas. The sequence of semantic formulas concerns the typical order of these formulas used by a particular group of participants in response to a particular speech act such as requests or invitations in a particular speech situation (e.g., request for information or request for help) (Al-Kahtani, 2005). Frequency refers to the frequency of occurrence of a particular semantic formula in the responses of a particular group of learners to a particular speech act in a particular speech situation (Keshavarz, Eslami, & Ghahraman, 2006). Content refers to the type of semantic formulas (e.g., regret, apology, explanation) used by a particular group of participants in response to a particular speech act in a particular speech situation (Al-Issa, 2003).

Following Beebe, et al., several cross-cultural studies have examined refusals in Western and Asian languages (e.g., Chen, 1996; Martínez-Flor, 2011), and a few concentrated on speakers of different varieties of Arabic (e.g., Al-Issa, 2003, Al-Kahtani, 2005; Al-Eryani, 2007; Abed, 2011; Nelson, Al Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). Only Al-Issa and Abed examined pragmatic transfer in refusals by Arab learners of English. Al-Issa (2003) examined pragmatic transfer in English refusals by Jordanian Arab EFL learners. Analyzing data collected via DCT, Al-Issa found evidence of pragmatic transfer in English refusals by Jordanian EFL learners; this transfer occurred in three areas: choice of semantic formulas, content of semantic formulas and length of response. While the choice and content of semantic formulas correspond with the content of semantic formulas identified by Beebe, et al., the length can be considered as a new area of

pragmatic transfer identified by Al-Issa. Instead of examining the frequency of semantic formulas, Al-Issa examined the length of response or "the number of semantic formulas employed by each group in response to each DCT situation" (p. 584). Al-Issa found that there was no significant difference in the length of responses by Arab students in their responses in Arabic and their responses in English. However, there was a significant difference between the Arab participants' responses in English and the responses of the NSs of English. The Arab participants used significantly more semantic units (i.e., lengthier responses) to refuse compared to NSs of English. Therefore, Al-Issa concluded that the length of a response is another area of pragmatic transfer. However, he noted that in a study by Nelson, Al-Batal and El Bakary (2002), the responses of the Egyptian Arab participants were less elaborate than the NSs of English. Al-Issa expounded that this difference could be due to differences in the culture, the variety of Arabic used by a particular Arabic speaker, or even the type of response elicited by DCT (i.e., oral or written response). He contends that the length of response is an interesting indicator of pragmatic transfer that requires further investigation.

2.4 Pragmatic Transfer

Pragmatic transfer is one of the main topics of L2 pragmatic research. In mainstream SLA, L2 pragmatics is called "interlanguage pragmatics" (ILP) in an analogy with interlanguage phonology or interlanguage grammar (Kasper, 2009). In other words, pragmatics is treated as a linguistic component such as phonology, syntax, semantics, and so on. Kasper (1996) defined ILP as "the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge" (p. 145). Pragmatic transfer is defined as "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (Kasper, 1996, p. 207).

Pragmatic transfer is divided into two types: pragmalinguistic transfer or failure and sociopragmatic transfer or failure (Kasper, 1992; Thomas, 1983). Kasper defined pragmalinguistic transfer as "the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L1 influences learners' perception and production of form-function mappings in L2" (p. 209). Based on Thomas's definition of pragmalinguistic failure and Kasper's definition of pragmalinguistic transfer, pragmalinguistic transfer occurs under two conditions:

1. If the mapping of the pragmatic forces associated with particular linguistic materials in the L1 onto "semantically/syntactically equivalent" linguistic materials in the L2 "convey a different pragmatic force in the target language" (Thomas, 1983, p. 101). Thomas explains that Russians often use "of course" instead of "Yes" to give an affirmative reply. However, the use of "of course" and "Yes" in English has different pragmatic forces depending on the context. While the use of "of course" in a reply to an invitation in English means an enthusiastic reply, it might be insulting when used to reply to a question asking if a store is open at a particular time. Thomas adds that while to Russian speakers of English, using "of course" in such situations might intend a polite affirmative answer, this answer might be understood by English NSs as having an impolite intention that hints at their stupidity for asking an obvious question.

2. If L2 learners' inappropriately transfer their L1 pragmalinguistic strategies, such as using direct speech (e.g., a directive statement) when indirect speech (e.g., asking a question) is most appropriate. Using Russian speakers of English as an example, Thomas explains that a direct request of information about directions from strangers

is considered a polite request in Russian. However, when Russian speakers of
English make a similar direct request, it might be perceived as an impolite request by
English NSs.

Kasper (1996) explained that sociopragmatic transfer is "operative when the social
perceptions underlying language users' interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L2
are influenced by their assessment of subjectively equivalent L1 contexts" (p. 209). Brown and
Levinson (1987) identified three sociopragmatic variables influencing choice of politeness
strategies that are cross-culturally sensitive: relative power, social distance, and absolute ranking
of imposition. Speakers in any given context evaluate the influence of these variables in order to
choose the politeness strategies most appropriate for the given context. In DCT tests, researchers
manipulate these variables in each scenario in order to see whether and how learners vary their
responses accordingly. Therefore, sociopragmatic transfer is operative under the following
condition:

- If the L2 learners do not vary their requests, for example, as NSs of English might do
  relative to the perceived degree of imposition of the requests, or their requests are varied
  but different from the NSs pragmatic variation, then the pragmatic choices of the L2
  learners will be taken as a non-observance of this sociopragmatic variable for social
  power. Non-observance cases will be compared with the participants' responses in their
  L1. If their responses have similarities to their responses in their L1, then they are taken
  as evidence for sociopragmatic transfer.

It is important to note that although DCT is based on Brown and Levinson's explanation
of sociopragmatic rules, many researchers do not adopt their classification of positive and
negative strategies of politeness (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Beebe et al., 1990; Houck and

Gass, 1999). Rather they classify the strategies under a particular speech act as direct and indirect only (see for example section 3.2.2). One possible explanation for their behavior could be a rejection of Brown and Levinson's assignment of positive and negative values to particular strategies. Watts (2003) examined Brown and Levinson's work and commented on the pre-assignment of politeness values to strategies: "we can once again see the discursive struggle over the social values of politeness, and it is precisely this struggle that Brown and Levinson do not take into account" (p. 92). He explained that utterances "are not in themselves polite, but they are employed to carry out facework; for this reason, they maybe be interpreted as polite within the context of interaction." Thomas (1995) confirmed: "a single utterance can be oriented to both the positive and negative face simultaneously" (p. 176). Perhaps this critique resulted in referring to these strategies in pragmatic research as pragmatic strategies and not politeness strategies (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008).

It is also important to note that Kasper (1992) stated that so called negative transfer is "just one of the possible scenarios. Transfer resulting in IL outcomes consistent with L2 patterns (positive transfer) has been attested in pragmatics" (p, 209). Therefore, even though researchers who are interested in pragmatic transfer tend to focus mainly on "deviant" use in L2 pragmatics, or negative transfer, Kasper defined pragmatic transfer in relation to interlanguage (IL). She remarked that positive transfer has received little attention because it is less likely to cause miscommunication between the L2 users and the NSs of a particular language. She added that another reason for focusing on negative transfer in research could be attributed to the methodology of identifying positive transfer. She explained that positive transfer cannot be distinguished from the production data alone. Therefore, by combining production and

perception data, this study aimed at examining transfer in general and from the point of view of the L2 user.

2.4.1 *Variables Affecting Pragmatic Transfer*

The most commonly examined factors that affect pragmatic development and by association affect pragmatic transfer are L2 proficiency and learning context (i.e., ESL and EFL). However, findings concerning both variables are inconclusive. For example, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) examined "whether learners can recognize when an utterance is pragmatically at odds with target expectations for politeness with the same frequency as they recognize that an ungrammatical utterance is at odds with the target language's expectations for grammaticality" (p. 236). Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei found that the ESL learners in their study focused on the severity of pragmatic inappropriateness, while the EFL learners focused on grammatical errors. Within the EFL group, however, high-proficiency learners recognized grammatical errors more than pragmatics errors, while lower-proficiency learners rated both types of errors similarly. Within the ESL groups, high-proficiency learners recognized pragmatic inappropriateness more often than did lower-proficiency learners, while lower-proficiency learners recognized the grammatical errors more frequently than they did pragmatics errors. Accordingly, Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei contended that the learners' levels of L2 proficiency and learning context have an effect on what type of errors learners recognize and that this merits further investigation. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) maintained that the duration of time spent in the context of the target language (TL) is more influential than proficiency level on L2 pragmatic development. They noticed that despite their advanced L2 proficiency level, the longer the Hebrew NNSs in their study stayed in Israel, the shorter and more similar their requests became to those of Hebrew NSs. A similar observation was made by Schmidt in his (1983) longitudinal study.

Schmidt observed that his participant, Wes, exhibited advanced pragmatic ability in comparison

to his grammatical ability, which was lagging behind after three years of living in the U.S.

However, although the learning context is an influential factor, Kasper (1992) cautioned that

"extended residence in the target community does not in and of itself make 'negative' pragmatic

transfer goes away" (p. 220). For instance, while Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991) found an

increase in target-like use of speech acts among NNSs of English who stay longer in the U.S.,

they also documented cases of increased non-target use of mitigators and non-use of aggravators

in these learners' speech acts. Thus, findings concerning the effects of L2 proficiency and

learning context on pragmatic development and transfer are inconclusive. These findings

indicate a need for more research on L2 pragmatics and pragmatic transfer. There is also a need

to consider other factors that might be crucial for understanding pragmatic transfer but have gone

unnoticed in previous research such as learner identity.

2.4.2   *The Role of Cultural Distance*

While context has been examined in previous research, the definitions of context are not

often appropriate for L2 pragmatic transfer research. In L2 pragmatic research, two types of

context are identified: the learning context and the interaction context. The learning context is

defined as either EFL or ESL, while the interaction context is defined in terms of the relationship

that the interlocutors construct during the interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that this

relationship is defined by the interlocutors' assessment of sociopragmatic variables such as the

social distance between interlocutors, the relative power the speaker has over the hearer, and

absolute ranking of imposition. However, these variables are not always sufficient for describing

the relationships among interlocutors.

The conceptualization of these variables was originally developed to describe how the relationship among NSs of the same language affects their pragmatic choices (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Thus, neither language nor culture was considered as a source of variation for pragmatic use among NSs of the same language since language and culture are assumed to be stable features across different contexts of interaction among NSs. However, this conceptualization has also been adopted in crosscultural research (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989). Using this framework, crosscultural researchers examine the realization patterns of speech acts of the NSs of a particular language. Then, they compare these patterns with the realization patterns of the same speech acts of the NSs of another language to identify similarities and differences across languages and cultures. Linguistic and cultural similarities within the same group in a study remain stable features and justify their exclusion in crosscultural research. This conceptualization is applied to L2 pragmatic research but with close attention paid to linguistic and cultural differences. An example of the applicability of this approach to L2 pragmatic transfer research is the examination of the linguistic and cultural differences between NSs and NNSs of a particular language, which are then used to explain the two types of pragmatic transfer: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatics (Kasper, 1996; Thomas, 1983).

However, this conceptualization is lacking when applied to L2 interactions that take place among NNSs due to the tacit assumption in L2 pragmatic research that NNSs would only use the L2 to communicate with L2 NSs and this assumption omits the possibility that NNSs would use the L2 among themselves. Instead, L2 pragmatics research tends to consider only the linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between the NSs and NNSs of a particular language to understand pragmatic transfer. This approach ignores the similarities and differences between the NNSs when using the L2 for communication amongst themselves. This is problematic because

there is evidence that the linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between NNSs of a particular language are equally influential on the pragmatic choices they make when they communicate with each other using the L2. For example, several authors who advocated for English as an international language (EIL) or English as a lingua franca (ELF) have affirmed that the pragmatic choices made by NNSs of English when communicating with each other are not necessarily reflective of the norms of English NSs, but rather of the immediate communication needs and goals of NNSs and their hybrid linguistic and cultural resources (e.g., Canagarajah, 2007a, 2007b; Jenkins, 2006; House, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2004). A similar observation was made by World Englishes researchers such as Kachru (1992) who attested to the fact that English is used to express the local cultural norms of the users rather than those of English NSs, which has resulted in the emergence of localized varieties of English such as Indian English and Singlish. Thus, it seems that if it is important to consider the linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between the NSs and NNSs of English to explain their pragmatic choices and pragmatic transfer in L2 pragmatics research, then it is equally important to consider such similarities and differences when examining interactions among NNSs in EFL or ESL contexts.

Therefore, I propose the addition of cultural distance (i.e., the linguistic and cultural distance between interlocutors) as another sociopragmatic variable that needs to be considered when examining the pragmatic choices of L2 learners. By expanding the definition of context of interaction to include cultural distance, I am hoping to find out whether this expanded notion of context can shed light on L2 pragmatic transfer. Specifically, I would like to find out if the shared linguistic and cultural resources among NNSs of English when interacting in English in an EFL context encourage more reliance on such resources compared to when they interact with NSs of English in English in the same context. In this study, cultural distance is included as

another sociopragmatic variable in order to find out whether and how the linguistic and cultural similarities and differences between Omani EFL learners and their interlocutors influence their pragmatic choices. Thus, this study will examine not only the interactions of Omani EFL learners as NNSs of English with English NSs (NSs of English in Oman), but also their interactions with other Omani NNSs who use English as a L2.

However, it is simplistic to assume that by simply manipulating the sociopragmatic variables in a DCT questionnaire and adding another variable (i.e., cultural distance) we could fully explain the pragmatic choices of Omani EFL learners when refusing in English. The effect of one or all of these variables is dependent upon how the interlocutors co-construct their relationship during interaction by evaluating the sociopragmatic rules of the context (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Therefore, language use or pragmatics cannot be treated as mathematical equations. After all, Austin (1955), Searle (1969), Grice (1975), Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978) challenged early semanticists who treated language like math in favor of more realistic representations of language use that is user- and context-dependent. Hence, with this expanded notion of context, I would like to focus on learners as users of the language. Specifically, I would like to consider how the individual identities of the learners affect their pragmatic choices and, consequently, pragmatic transfer.

2.4.3 *Learner Identity*

Several researchers have contended that learner identity might have an influence on learning, understanding and using L2 pragmatics and thus pragmatic transfer; however, learner identity is not examined in research on L2 pragmatic transfer (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1991; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Savic, 2014)). Researchers have observed that L2 learners might be aware of the sociopragmatic variables (i.e., the cultural and social rules that govern the

use of speech acts in a particular language) and might possess the pragmalinguistic ability (i.e., the linguistic resources) to realize a certain speech act as NSs would (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). However, these learners may choose to respond in a way consistent with their L1 to reflect their personal attitudes towards a particular situation. For instance, Hinkel (1996) observed that although English NNSs recognized the accepted pragmalinguistic behavior in the U.S., they viewed its use critically and were sometimes unwilling to adapt to it. Similarly, Al-Issa (2003), in a study investigating the reasons that motivated Jordanian EFL learners to choose the pragmatic norms of their L1 over those of English when they communicated in English, found that the participants deliberately transferred their pragmatic knowledge from Arabic to English because of their love of the Arabic language, commitment to religious beliefs, and/or negative political views of English NSs. The views of the learners in Al-Issa's study seem to reflect their understanding and construction of their relationship with the English language and their overall identities. This view is in line with the sociocultural view which argues that language, culture and identity are inextricably linked (Hall, 2016). Hall stated that both culture and identity are realized in the discursive activities. Therefore, discursive activities, including pragmatic choices, could be seen as an embodiment of culture and as an enactment of identity at the same time.

Learner motivation is closely linked to the conception of self or identity. A commonly examined concept of motivation in L2 learning that links motivation with the learner's self is "integrative motivation," which is "the desire to learn an L2 of a valued community so that one can communicate with members of the community and sometimes even become like them" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 22). For example, Schmidt (1983) observed that his participant, Wes, focused on communicating with NSs of English because he was motivated to do so. The desire to

communicate with NSs of English, Schmidt contended, contributed to Wes's pragmatic development. Thus, Wes's motivation can be described as an integrative motivation because he had a desire to identify with NSs of English. However, Dörnyei (2009), among others, has challenged the concept of integrative motivation in L2 learning in World Englishes and EIL/ELF contexts because the ownership of English by its NSs in these contexts is questioned. Neither the NSs of English nor their cultural norms are considered relevant to the local and international communication needs in these contexts (Kasper, 2006). To account for such contexts, Dörnyei and Csizer (2002) called for re-theorizing motivation as an "*identification process* within the individual's *self-concept*" (p. 456). In other words, whether the learners desire to identify with or distance themselves from the NSs of the L2, their motivation relates to how they view themselves. Hence, the focus of L2 learning motivation shifts from the other (L2 NSs and their community) to the learner's construction of his or her self-concept. According to Dörnyei, both "integrative" and "instrumental" motivations are related to the self. In other words, whether L2 learners desire to identify with the L2 NSs and their culture (integrative motive) or they desire to use the L2 as a tool or instrument for communication or professional development (instrumental motive), their motivations relate to how they see or imagine themselves. Consequently, Dörnyei (2005, 2009) has proposed viewing L2 motivation as a "L2 Motivational Self System."

To establish the relationship between the different types of motivation and self, Dörnyei (2009) argued that different motivations are related to different images of the self. He adopted Markus and Nurius's (1986) concept of "possible selves" to explain his argument. According to Markus and Nurius, there are three types of possible selves: "ideal selves that we would very much like to become," "selves that we could become," and "selves we are afraid of becoming" (p. 954). They argued that the possible selves are derived from "representations of the self in the

past and they include representations of the self in the future" (p. 945). Using Higgins' (1987) classification of selves, Dörnyei named the first type of Markus and Nurius's possible selves the "ideal self" or "ideal L2 self," while he named the other two the "ought self" or "ought-to L2 self." He explained that the "*ideal self* refers to the representations of the attributes one would ideally like to possess (i.e., representations of hopes, aspirations, or wishes), while the *ought self* refers to the representations of someone's sense of duties, obligations or moral responsibilities" (p. 13). Even though these types of selves are imagined future states of the self, Dörnyei affirmed that they are a continuation of the current self/selves and that they guide L2 learners' current interactions with the L2.

Using the two types of self, Dörnyei explained that the integrative motivation represents L2 learners' personal attitudes toward the NSs of the L2 and their community and is linked to the ideal L2 self. Positive attitudes towards the NSs of the L2 and their community correlate positively with positive images of the ideal L2 self. Dörnyei added that "it is difficult to imagine that we can have a vivid and attractive ideal L2 self if the L2 is spoken by a community that we despise" (p. 28). On the other hand, instrumental motivation is linked to the ideal L2 self and to the ought-to L2 self because this type of motivation has "promotion focus" and "prevention focus" (p. 28). Promotion focus is centered on the use of L2 as a promotional or advancement tool for the self, such as academic achievement or professional development. Hence, it is linked to the ideal L2 self. Prevention focus is centered on the use of L2 as a tool or instrument to avoid undesired outcomes, such as studying "in order not to fail an exam or not to disappoint one's parents" (p. 28). Hence, it is linked to the ought-to L2 self.

However, for a better understanding of motivation and possible selves, Dörnyei (2009) recapitulated Ruvolo and Markus's (1992) claim that "possible selves are only effective

insomuch as the individual does indeed perceive them as *possible*, that is, realistic within the person's individual circumstances" (p. 19). Dörnyei also affirmed that L2 motivation might not stem from the ideal L2 self or the ought-to L2 self, but rather, emerges from immediate interaction with the learning context. He explained that L2 learners without any conceptions of selves might successfully participate in L2 learning because "they discovered that they are good at it"(p. 29). The L2 learning context is an important component of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, in addition to the ideal and the ought-to L2 self. However, Dörnyei does not provide any further explanation of how the interaction with the learning context is or is not related to the learner's self.

Ushioda (2009) has argued that motivation is situated in the context of interaction and called for "a person-in-context relational view" of language motivation. She stated that context is viewed as an independent variable in motivation research, "either as the object of our attitudes and perceptions, or a determinant of our behavior" (p. 218), and that by doing so, researchers have overlooked the possibility that both alternatives can be true at any given moment of interaction. Ushioda (2011) stressed that due to the complex interaction between the individual as a "self-reflective agent" and the learning context, motivation can be seen as "an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations" (p. 13). Hence, motivation is "relational" and "contextually grounded." Reiterating McCaslin's claims, Ushioda stressed that learners' linguistic choices are not the "prime expression of identity" (p. 21). McCaslin (2009) explained that opportunities for all learners to make such choices are not "equitably distributed," which "restrict the usefulness of choice in understanding motivation and emergent identity" (p. 138). Ushioda agreed with McCaslin that besides making choices, "struggle" and "negotiation"

can inform motivation and identity since they can trigger particular responses such as "striving, compliance, resistance, [and] adaptation" (p. 21) in the process of L2 learning.

In a similar vein, Norton (2000) affirmed that identity is socially constructed, multiple, complex, and a site of struggle and so is learner motivation. She defined identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). She explained that there is no one-to-one relationship between motivation and identity and rejected the simplistic understanding of learners as motivated or unmotivated beings in favor of the concept of "investment" which captures the complex nature of identity. Norton explained that investment "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. If learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wide range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (Norton, 2006. 504). Thus, investment captures how learner motivation interacts with the context of communication or learning and with the social context at large, resulting in a desire to learn and practice the L2 that might change across time and space. Investment can also explain why although some learners are motivated to learn the L2, they refrain from participating in particular L2 practices. In other words, L2 learners' participation and or lack thereof reflect their choices of investments, which are closely linked to the construction of their identities. From this perspective, L2 learners' use and/or resistance to the L2 pragmatic norms can be seen as a form of investment in their identities.

By examining L2 learners' views of their current and future relationships with L2 pragmatic norms and how they construct and reconstruct their relationship with the L2 through

conformity and non-conformity to the pragmatic norms of L2, the role of their identities can be

uncovered. Using the definition of identity provided by Norton, this study aimed to examine the

role of L2 learners' identities in their perceptions and uses of the speech acts of refusal in

English and pragmatic transfer in terms of the following:

1. L2 learners' definitions of their relationship with the L2 language and culture.

2. L2 learners' perceptions of their use of L2 pragmatics when they communicate in L2.

3. L2 learners' future decisions regarding L2 pragmatic use.

2.5 Research Methods

The Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was used in the current study because it allows

manipulating the sociopragmatic variables that reflect the objectives of the study. DCTs often

take the format of a questionnaire with several "scripted dialogues" representing different

communication situations (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989). The participants are asked to complete the

dialogue by writing how they would respond in each situation. Their written responses are

considered the expected speech acts. The following is an example of a refusal scenario for a

request initiation act:

> At lunchtime, you are sitting at the cafeteria eating your lunch. A student, who you've never seen
> before, puts his books on the table and asks you to watch them until he brings his food but you cannot.
> Student: Excuse me. Could you please watch my books while I go through the line and get my food?
> *You refuse by saying*:   (Al-Issa, 2003, p. 597)

Usually, each situation (i.e., prompt) reflects a different configuration of various

sociopragmatic variables such as relative power, social distance and degree of imposition (see

Section 3.3.2). According to Hudson, et al. (1992), the relative power variable is classified into

high (the speaker has a higher power over the listener), equal (the speaker and the hearer have an

equal power), and low (the speaker has a lower power than the hearer). The social distance

variable describes the degree of familiarity between interlocutors and is classified into

close/intimate, acquaintance/familiar, and distant/stranger. The degree of imposition is defined by the nature of the speech act itself. In other words, it pertains to the face-threatening nature of the speech act. For example, requests are considered more face-threating than invitations. Requesting a service or goods from the hearer, as in requests, is more imposing than offering something to the hearer, as in invitations. Additionally, the degree of imposition of a single speech act could vary depending on the extent of expenditure requested of the hearer. For example, requesting a small amount of money could be less imposing than requesting a large amount of money. In addition to these variables, the setting (time and place) of the interaction is described to help respondents visualize the setting and presumably produce responses representative of their reactions to similar situation in a natural setting. The manipulation of these sociopragmatic variables in each situation, thus, allows researchers to collect data pertaining to their research objectives efficiently.

DCT has its limitations, however. The methods of the other L2 pragmatics approaches (CA, SCT, and LS) can offset the limitations of the DCT. While the data collection tools typically used in the CA, SCT and LS approaches, such as field notes and interviews, are time consuming, they provide insights that cannot be obtained by the elicitation data collection tools in the cognitive approach such as the DCT. In this study, interviews were used to complement the DCT and to better understand the L2 pragmatic choices of the participants. As Kasper and Schmidt (1996) affirmed, establishing the similarities and differences between the learners' native language and target language does not explain the "conditions under which learners are likely to transfer or not to transfer" the pragmatic knowledge of their L1 (Kasper &Schmidt, 1996, p. 157). Kasper and Dahl (1991) and Kasper and Schmidt (1996) affirmed that research using the data collections tools of the cross-cultural or cognitive approach such as DCT produce

insufficient evidence of pragmatic transfer. Such methods only examine the performance (linguistic production) of the learners while neglecting learners' understanding and evaluation of the sociopragmatic variables that are not always reflected in their performance at the moment that DCT tests are conducted. For example, what might appear (in a DCT) to be a pragmalinguistic transfer or simple mapping of the L1 linguistic materials onto semantically and/ or syntactically equivalent materials in the L2 may, in fact, be motivated by an erroneous perception of the L2 sociopragmatic variables. Thus, examining learners' perceptions or assessments of the scenarios as well as their performance can provide better understanding of the root cause (pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic) of pragmatic transfer.

Another unique contribution of interviews to L2 pragmatic research is their utility in gaining insights about the influence of learners' identities on their L2 pragmatic choices and transfer.   DCT as an elicitation data collection tool is a deductive method. In other words, it depends on the prior hypothesis that the manipulation of a set of sociopragmatic variables would result in a particular pragmatic behavior (Kaper, 1996). Further, Kasper and Schmidt (1996) stated that although "total convergence to NS [native speakers] norm is not desirable," NS norms are assumed "adequate" in measures used in the cognitive approach such as DCT (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). That is, the reality of pragmatic behavior in DCT seems to be assumed to be "premeditated" and "singular" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In contrast, because they are inductive (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), interviews allow researchers to examine "multiple" realities of L2 pragmatic behavior. Patton (2001, p. 341) stated: "the purpose of interviewing…is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective." The participants' perspectives, explanations and justifications for their pragmatic choices can result in the construction of multiple realities that go beyond the monolithic perspective that seems to be imposed by the

DCT. Such insights can bring the pre-determined sociopragmatic variables under scrutiny as the participants evaluate the effects of these variables on their pragmatic choices. This approach also allows viewing pragmatic norms as being related to the context of interaction as seen fit by the participants and can help explain learners' individual "preferences for certain forms and strategies over others, including specific cultural values associated with different styles" (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 239). In other words, learners' individual assessments, explanations and preferences can shed light on how they understand their relationships with the L2 and how they construct these relationships through conformity and/or resistance to the L2 pragmatic norms. Interviews can thus complement DCTs and provide unique insights about the influence of learners' identities on their L2 pragmatic choices and transfer. The following chapter describes how the conceptual and methodological considerations discussed in this chapter shaped the methods of the current study.

3. METHOD

This chapter describes the context and the processes of data collection and analysis. It is divided into five sections: context of the study, study design, participants, data collection methods and procedures, and data analysis.

3.1 Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). SQU is the leading public university in education and research in the Sultanate of Oman. The majority of students at SQU are Omani students, with a small number of students from other Arab countries participating in exchange programs between SQU and other universities in the Arab Gulf states. Teachers at SQU come from many different nationalities. For example, the English Department has professors from different nationalities and includes both native and non-native speakers of English. Students must graduate from an English language foundation program prior to joining the English Department. Al-Ruabi'ey and Nassaji (2013) explained that in order to successfully complete the foundation program, students have to pass an in-house proficiency test. Scores on this test are highly correlated with scores on IELTS. The students' proficiency levels range from 4.5 to 5 on IELTS (considered to be a lower-intermediate level) when they join the English Department.

There are three English-related majors in the Department: English Language and Literature, English Education, and Translation. The three majors are described on the website of SQU as follows:

> Bachelor of English Language and Literature: This is an eight-semester program in which the student has to finish 126 credit hours. The students take advanced courses in language skills for the first four semesters, which are followed by courses in English literature for another four semesters.

Bachelor of English Education: This is an eight-semester program in which the students are accepted by the college of Education, but they take most of their courses in the English Department. When the students finish the language requirement in the Language Center they start taking advanced courses in language skills, linguistics, and language teaching in the English department. The students also take some of their educational courses in the college of Education.

Bachelor of Translation: This is an eight-semester program in which the students take courses in language skills, translation skills, and linguistics.

English pragmatics is not taught explicitly in the department either as a course or as a sub-component of a course. However, based on my own observations as a student and, later, instructor in the program, professors do provide feedback on pragmatic issues to students when it seems necessary.

In order to describe the type of English taught at SQU and its source or reference, I referred to the Language Center (LC) as the starting point and the main center for teaching English at SQU. In addition, prior to joining the English Department, all of the participants in this study were enrolled in an English program called the Foundation Programme English Language (FPEL) at the LC (Foundation Programme English Language Curriculum Document, 2012-2013). This document states that this program teaches English language skills geared towards improving the students' Academic English, which will help them succeed at University studies. However, this document does not explicitly describe English as an EFL, ESL or EIL/ELF. In personal communication via email with the administration of the LC inquiring into the description of English, Dr. Meena Inguva, Head of Curriculum Unit at the Language Center, said: "I searched in all files for documented evidence [that explicitly describe the English as an EFL or ESL] but could not trace any as I have files only from 1999. Maybe at the time of inception of the LC, decision may have been taken to teach English as a Second Language in FP [Foundation Program] Courses and English for Academic Purposes in Credit Courses."

Also, this document does not explicitly define the type of English (i.e., NSs variety or another international variety) they adopt as reference for teaching and learning English. Dr.

Iguva wote: "there is no specific variety of English followed here at the center. Two reasons for this. First, teachers from different countries are hired and these teachers come with different experiences and different cultural background. However, these teachers have, more or less near native degree of English (other than native speakers). Second, for students to achieve native speaker level of English, just one year of FP [Foundation Program] English is not enough. They need longer time to acquire native level English. So I would say, the variety of English followed here is - comprehensible English."

However, it seems that the LC is in favor of NS varieties of English. Dr. Inguva described the English level of the teachers in the LC as either NSs of English or near native. Also, she commented that FP is not long enough to allow the students to achieve native-like English. In addition, in the FPEL document, there are several indications that the English varieties most preferred are British English and American English. For example, the document identified Oxford Wordpower and Macmillan dictionaries for the teachers to encourage students to use them. The document also recommends Penguin, Oxford Bookworms, Macmillan, and Cambridge for the students' extensive readings. Similarly, the pronunciations style described in this document is based on American and British varieties. Furthermore, professors and teachers are expected to adhere to the norms of British and North America Standard English varieties.

Therefore, even though the description of the English taught and learned at SQU context is not explicitly defined as an ESL, EFL or other varieties of English, it is implicitly based on the inner circles of English (i.e., British English and American English) Kachru (1992). Kachru described the English that is not used as a dominant language of communication and whose use is limited to specific contexts such as education as an EFL. He described this context of using English as an "expanding circle" because even though the use of English is limited, the reference

for the English used in this context is based mainly on the Englishes of the inner circles, or the so called NS varieties.

3.2 Study Design

As noted in the introductory chapter, this study sought to answer questions about L2 learners' pragmatic choices when communicating in English and the role of their identities in these pragmatic choices. The study included two phases of data collection and analyses as shown in Table 3.1 below. Each data collection phase was designed to answer one of the three main research questions of the study. The first phase of the study involved collecting production and perception data to address questions related to the realization of refusals speech acts in Omani Arabic. Using similar data collection methods, the second phase was divided into two sub-phases (i.e., Phase 2.1 and Phase 2.2). Phase 2.1 addressed questions related to the realization of refusal speech acts in English by Omani EFL learners. Furthermore, it involved participants identifying cases of pragmatic transfer in their own L2 use. Phase 2.2 focused on the role of the learners' identities in their perceptions and use of pragmatic choices when refusing in English. A pilot study with three professors and four students was conducted in order to try to improve the data collection tools and procedures of the study. Some modifications to the ODCT scenarios and the interview questions were made based on the findings of the pilot study.

Table 3.1. Overview of Research Questions, Data collection, Number of Participants and Data Analysis

	Research Questions	Data Collection/source	Participants	Data Analysis
Phase 1: The realization and perception of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic				
1.	How do Omani Arabic speakers realize refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic?	Arabic ODCT	10 Omani EFL learners	Frequency, order, and content of semantic units
2.	How do Omani Arabic speakers explain and evaluate their realization of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic in relation to sociopragmatic variables?	Arabic interview	10 Omani EFL learners	Thematic analysis
Phase 2.1: The realization and perception of refusal speech acts in English by Omani EFL learners and whether they perceive pragmatic transfer in their English refusals				
1.	How do Omani EFL learners realize refusal speech acts in English?	English ODCT	10 Omani EFL learners	Frequency, order, and content of semantic units
2.	How do Omani EFL learners explain and evaluate their realization of refusal speech acts in English in relation to (a) sociopragmatic variables and (b) their identities (as Arab EFL learners)?	English Interview	10 Omani EFL learners	Thematic analysis
3	Do Omani EFL learners perceive any instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusals in English?	English ODCT English interview	10 Omani EFL learners	Content of semantic units Thematic analysis
4	How do Omani EFL learners explain their pragmatic transfer in their refusals in English?	English interview	10 Omani EFL learners	Thematic analysis
Phase 2.2: The relationship between Omani EFL learners' identities and their pragmatic choices when refusing in English				
1.	How do Omani EFL learners define their relationship with English?	English interview English Follow-up interview	10 Omani EFL learners	Thematic analysis
2.	How do Omani EFL learners construct their relationship with English though their pragmatic choices when refusing in English?	English interview English Follow-up interview	10 Omani EFL learners	Thematic analysis

Notes:
- ODCT = Oral Discourse Completion Test
- Data in all phases was collected from the same ten participant

3.3 Participants

All of the participants were Omani students in the English Department at SQU. Since the students' major is irrelevant to their ability to request in Omani Arabic, EFL students from the same or different majors in English (i.e., English Translation Studies, English Language and Literature, and English Education) were invited to participate in the study. To compare the students' performance in their L1 (Omani Arabic) and L2 (English), the same group of participants was invited to participate in the three phases of the study. Only students who were in their fourth year of study in these programs were invited to participate in the study since their proficiency levels are high-intermediate to advanced. Ten students participated in the study, (five females and five males).

Since the study's primary goal was to get an in-depth understanding of the role of learners' identities in their pragmatic choices, it was decided to include a small sample of participants. A small sample allows allocating more time to each participant to elaborate on his or her pragmatic choices. Furthermore, for the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the role of learners' identities in their L2 pragmatic use, participants were invited to participate in a follow-up interview as described below.

In cooperation with the head of the English Department, fourth-year students were identified and a recruitment email in Arabic and in English (see Appendix A) was sent to them specifying the general objectives of the study and the required characteristics of the participants. The email also explained the procedures of data collection in both phases as well as the total time of participation and compensation for each participant. Prior to the first data collection session, all volunteer participants received a consent form to sign (see Appendix B). Each student who participated in this study was compensated for his/her time with ten Omani Rials (OMR)

(approximately 33 CAD) in each phase. Students who participated in both phases of the study received twenty OMR each. An additional ten OMR was given to each student who participated in the follow-up interview in the third phase.

Table 3.2 summarizes the participants' background information such as their pseudonyms, gender, major, year of study and the region they come from in Oman. The participants chose their own pseudonyms. Their age ranged from 22 to 23 years old. All the participants spoke Omani Arabic as their mother language and learned English as a second language. In addition, they all graduated from the same public school system of Oman. Even though the participants had different majors, they are all registered as students of the English Department because they were taking all of their English related courses (i.e., advanced English language skills, linguistics, literature and translation) at the English Department.

Table 3.2. Participants' Bio Data

Pseudonym		Gender	Major	Region
1	Mimi	Female	Translation	AL Dakhilyah
2	Taif	Female	English Education	Al-Dhaherah
3	Reem	Female	Translation	AL Dakhilyah
4	Fajir	Female	English Literature	Al Batinah-North
5	Areej	Female	Translation	Al-Batinah-South
6	Abdualla	Male	English Education	AL Dakhlyah
7	Al-Yazan	Male	English Education	Al Sharqyah-South
8	Ali	Male	English Education	Al-Dhaherah
9	Khaled	Male	English Education	Al Sharqyah-South
10	Yusuf	Male	English Education	Al-Dakhilyah

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Five data collection tools were used in the study: two oral DCT (one in Arabic and one in English), two interviews about the participants' perception of their pragmatic choices when

refusing in Arabic and when refusing in English, and a follow-up interview about the role of their identity in their pragmatic choices in English.

3.4.1 *Oral DCT*

For the purpose of this study, the DCT was used to serve two objectives. In the first phase, it was used to elicit refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic and in the second phase, it was used to elicit refusal speech acts in EFL (see Table 3.1 above). Oral DCT (henceforth ODCT) was selected for two reasons. First, written DCT in Omani Arabic might trigger the use of Standard Arabic which is commonly used in written communication in Oman. Second, written refusal responses to the DCT in English by Omani EFL learners might be linguistically demanding. Thus to avoid responses in Standard Arabic and to reduce the linguistic demands inherent in written DCT in English, participants were asked to respond orally. In addition, while the scenarios of the English ODCT were written in Standard English, the Omani Arabic ODCT was written in Omani Arabic. Since I was familiar with the university where the study took place, I developed the scenarios based on my knowledge about this context. I am an Omani Arabic NS. I was a student at the Department of English Language and Literature from 2001 to 2005. I worked at the same Department as a teacher-assistant from 2005 to 2007 and as an English lecturer from 2009 to 2011. Hence, I developed the scenarios for the ODCT in both languages based on my knowledge of the context and on scenarios developed by other Arab researchers such as Al-Issa (2003). Additionally, due to the lack of standardization of Omani Arabic, I wrote the scenarios in my Omani Arabic dialect, which is a widely used dialect in Oman. Furthermore, the participants were allowed to ask for clarification during the course of main data collection.

Prior to conducting the study, I conducted a pilot study with three professors and four students at SQU. The pilot participants (professors) were asked to identify the possible scenarios for the Arabic ODCT and English ODCT from a pool of scenarios I had developed. Further, they were asked to evaluate the clarity of the language of each scenario. Next, I tried the selected scenarios in the ODCTs with four pilot participants (students). This step allowed me to uncover possible difficulties the participants and I might encounter when conducting the main study. For example, to address some of the issues identified during the pilot study, I added a practice scenario to the Arabic ODCT.

3.4.1.1 *ODCT in Arabic*

The scenarios in the ODCT in Arabic (henceforth Arabic ODCT) included two sociopragmatic variables: relative imposition (± RI) and social distance (± SD). The first one was the absolute ranking of imposition (i.e., ± RI). Refusal responses were required for a less imposing speech act, invitations (or –RI), and a more imposing speech act, requests (or +RI). In other words, the expenditure of goods, services and abilities requested of (or imposed on) the hearer (the participants) by the speaker (the speech act initiator) to fulfil the request proposition were considered greater than those required to fulfill the proposition of the invitation. The second sociopragmatic variable was social distance (i.e., ± SD) or familiarity or lack of it between the participants and their interlocutors. Social distance was operationalized as familiar (known), or no social distance between the participants and their interloctors (-SD) and unfamiliar (unknown), or presence of social distance between the participants and their interlocutors (+SD).

The sociopragmatic variable of relative power (i.e., ±P) was not considered in the design of the ODCT. Relative power has three variables: high, equal and low. In an educational setting,

high power can be assumed between teachers and students, equal power can be assumed between students of the same age or educational background, and low power can be assumed between freshman and non-freshmen (Al-Issa, 2003). Professors were the only speech act initiators in this study, which leaves high power as the only possible relationship between participants and interlocutors. However, as will be discussed in the results chapter, the findings of this study indicated that when participants refused the unfamiliar professor, the majority of participants did not think of them as unfamiliar professors, but rather as older strangers. Therefore, power remained high as dictated by the age difference between the participants and their interlocutors.

All the speech act initiators in the Arabic ODCT were Omani professors. Hence, this ODCT had two requests and two invitations initiated by familiar and unfamiliar Omani professors (see Table 3.3). In column one, AR refers to Arabic request and AI refers to Arabic invitation. Furthermore, some abbreviations are used to mark the sociopragmatic variables for each scenario. Relative imposition is marked by ± RI (column two), social distance is marked by ± SD (column three). The positive sign (i.e., +) indicates the existence of the sociopragmatic variable under examination, while the negative sign (i.e., -) indicates its absence. Column four describes the theme of each scenario. Since gender marking is important in Omani Arabic, two different versions of the Arabic ODCT were used: one for male respondents and one for female respondents (see Appendix C). Participants' responses to the Arabic ODCT were audio recorded.

Table 3.3. Overview of Arabic ODCT Scenarios

Scenario	Sociopragmatic Variables		Description
	Relative Imposition (±R)	Social Distance (± SD)	
AR1	Request (+)	Familiar Prof. (-)	Request to help with an exhibition
AR2	Request (+)	Unfamiliar Prof. (+)	Request for directions to the Deanship of the College of Arts
AI3	Invitation (-)	Familiar Prof. (-)	Invitation to a lecture
AI4	Invitation (-)	Unfamiliar Prof. (+)	Invitiation to a media event

3.4.1.2 *ODCT in English*

The scenarios in the ODCT in English (henceforth English ODCT) included three

sociopragmatic variables: absolute ranking of imposition (i.e., ± RI), social distance (i.e., ± SD),

and cultural distance (i.e., ± CD). Cultural distance is the linguistic and cultural differences

between the participants and their interlocutors. Omani interlocutors and American/British

interlocutors represented this variable. Therefore, the shared linguistic and cultural background

between Omani EFL learners and their Omani interlocutors meant that there was no cultural

distance between them, or -CD. On the other hand, the lack of a shared linguistic and cultural

background between participants and American/British interlocutors meant that there was a

cultural distance between them, or +CD.

The English ODCT included a total of eight scenarios: four invitation/offer initiation acts

and four request initiation acts (see Appendix D). Table 3.4 summarizes the distribution of the

sociopragmatic variables in the English ODCT. For ease of reference to the scenarios, the serial

number of the scenarios as they appeared in the English ODCT (i.e., 1, 2, 3…etc.) is used (see

column one in the Table 3.4). Two letters preceded each number: ER for English Request and EI

for English Invitation. Therefore, ER1 refers to English request scenario number one, while EI5 refers to English invitation scenario number five. The cultural distance variable is marked by $\pm$ CD (column four). Participants' responses to the English ODCT were audio recorded.

Table 3.4. Overview of English ODCT Scenarios

Scenario	Sociopragmatic Variables			Description
	Relative Imposition ($\pm$R)	Social Distance ($\pm$ SD)	Cultural Distance ($\pm$ CD)	
ER1	Request (+)	Familiar (-)	British/American (+)	Request to help with a workshop
ER2	Request (+)	Familiar (-)	Omani (-)	Request to help with an exhibition
ER3	Request (+)	Unfamiliar (+)	Omani (-)	Request for directions to the Language Center
ER4	Request (+)	Unfamiliar (+)	British/American (+)	Request for directions to the Deanship of the College of Arts
EI5	Invitation (-)	Familiar (-)	British/American (+)	Invitation to a seminar
EI6	Invitation (-)	Familiar (-)	Omani (-)	Invitation to a lecture
EI7	Invitation (-)	Unfamiliar (+)	British/American (+)	Invtiation to an open day event
EI8	Invitation (-)	Unfamiliar (+)	Omani (-)	Invtiation to a media event

3.4.2 *Semi-structured Interviews*

Three semi-structured interviews were used in this study. The first interview was used in phase one (henceforth Arabic interview), the second was used in the second phase (henceforth English interview), and the third was used in the third phase (henceforth English follow-up interview) (see Table 3.1 above) Semi-structured interviews were selected for this study because

although several pre-determined questions were used in each interview, impromptu questions could be asked when needed to elicit more in-depth information from the participants. To avoid linguistic restrictions on the participants, they were allowed to use both English and Omani Arabic to express themselves and to use the Omani dialect they are most comfortable with. The interview questions were also in both languages. To ensure the clarity of the interview questions, the interview was tried with four pilot participants (students). This step allowed me to improve the interview. For example, I added some questions to the interviews and moved questions concerning the second condition for learner identity from the English follow-up interview to the English interview. Additionally, to ensure clarity, I used Arabic when asking questions. The following sub-sections describe each of the three interviews.

3.4.2.1 *Arabic Interview and English Interview*

The Arabic interview (see Appendix E) and English interview (see Appendix F) were used to investigate the Omani EFL learners' explanations of their performance in the ODCT in Arabic and English, respectively. Upon completion of each ODCT, each participant was asked to reflect upon his/her responses in the ODCT. The audiotaped recording of each participant's response to each scenario in the ODCT was played and the participant was asked to explain his/her selection of semantic units, and to discuss the sociopragmatic variables (i.e., absolute ranking of imposition, social distance, cultural distance) that influenced his/her perception of each scenario and realization of refusal to each scenario.

The participants were asked two sets of questions: general and specific. The general questions were designed to elicit the participants' general assessment of their performance in response to the ODCT. The specific questions included two types of questions: questions about the use of semantic formulas and questions about the explanation of sociopragmatic rules. The

questions about the semantic units targeted the type of strategies used to realize a refusal such as

Negation, Regret, Gratitude, their level of directness (i.e., direct versus indirect), and their order.

These questions were designed following Al Issa's (2003) classification of the content of refusals

as described in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5. Al-Issa's (2003) Classification of Refusal Speech Acts

Strategy Type	Strategy Name

I Direct	1. Performative: (e.g., ''I refuse.'')
	2. Explicit rejection (e.g., ''hell no''; ''no way'')
	3. Nonperformative:
	    (1) ''No''
	    (2) Negative ability/willingness (e.g., ''I can't'')

II Indirect	1. Regret (e.g., ''sorry…''; ''excuse me…''; ''forgive me…'') 2. Wish (e.g., ''I wish I could'') 3. Explanation/Excuse (e.g., ''I have to study''; ''I'm very busy'') 4. Alternative (e.g., ''why don't you ask X?''; ''I'd rather…''; ''I'd prefer…'') 5. Future or past acceptance (e.g., ''Can we do it next week?''; ''If you'd asked me ten minutes ago…'') 6. Statement of principle (e.g., ''I don't borrow money from friends''; ''I don't ride with strangers'') 7. Negative consequence (e.g., ''I'm afraid you can't read my notes'') 8. Insult/Attack/Threat (e.g., ''who asked about your opinion?''; ''if you don't get out of here I'll call the police'') 9. Criticize (e.g., ''that's a bad idea''; ''you are lazy'') 10. Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g., ''don't worry about it''; ''that's ok'', ''you don't have to'') 11. Reprimand (e.g., ''you should attend classes too'', ''you shouldn't wait till the last minute'') 12. Sarcasm (e.g., ''I forgot I'm your servant!'') 13. Conditional acceptance (e.g., ''if I finish early I'll help you'') 14. Hedging (e.g., ''I'm not sure''; ''I don't know'') 15. Postponement (''I'll think about it'') 16. Request for information (e.g., ''why do you think I should take it?'') 17. Request for understanding (e.g., ''please understand my situation…'') 18. Return favor (e.g., ''I'll pay for you and me'') 19. Positive opinion/feeling/agreement (e.g., ''that's a good idea but…'') 20. Pause filler (e.g., ''well…''; ''oh…'') 21. Gratitude (e.g., ''thank you very much''; ''I appreciate it'') 22. Removal of negativity (e.g., ''you are a nice person but…'') 23. Define relation (e.g., ''Okay my dear professor but…'')

The questions about sociopragmatic variables targeted the participants' explanation of

how the various sociopragmatic variables influenced their perceptions and their pragmatic

choices (i.e., semantic units) when refusing. In other words, the participants were asked to explain how their perceptions of relative imposition (requests versus invitations), social distance (familiar versus stranger professor), and cultural distance (Omani professors versus American/British professors) influenced their pragmatic choices. Because the cultural distance variable was not relevant to the realization of refusals in Omani Arabic, it was not examined in the first phase. Furthermore, questions about pragmatic transfer were not included in the first phase because they were only relevant to the realization of refusals in English (see Appendix F).

While the study was not originally designed to examine the influence of gender on learners' pragmatic choices, its effect was examined in general to account for possible gender effects. The participants were first asked to identify the gender of their interlocutor, and later in the specific questions, they were asked about any perceived influence of the interlocutor's gender on their realizations of refusals.

The participants were allowed to evaluate and assess their own performance using their own words prior to asking them explicitly about the sociopragmatic rules. Only after the participant finished evaluating his/her use of semantic formulas were explicit questions about sociopragmatic rules asked. Moreover, the participants were asked to use their responses to the ODCT as examples to support their responses to the interview questions.

Two issues emerged during the course of the pilot study and the main study that I thought were important to consider. The first issue was the participants' desire to use alternative responses to refusals of invitations. In the pilot study, some participants preferred an approval response in the form of initial approval or a promise to fulfill the invitation such as "Insha' Allah," [God willing] "I'll try," or a combination of both. However, the participants stated that they abstained from responding in this way in the English ODCT. They thought that for the sake

of the study, they had to adhere to the norms of English NSs by giving a direct or indirect

refusal, although in reality, when they communicate in English, they would rather use alternative

responses. During the English interview in the main study, similar views emerged. Therefore,

towards the end of the second interview, I asked each participant if he/she would use alternative

responses rather than refusals in responding to invitations. I also asked them to explain their use

of such alternative responses and to give examples.

3.4.2.2 *English Follow-up Interview*

The third semi-structured interview (henceforth English follow-up interview) was

conducted upon completion of phase two (see Appendix G). This interview was used to gain in-

depth insights about the impact of Omani EFL learner identity on their pragmatic choices and

pragmatic transfer. The interview questions were designed using the three conditions proposed

by Norton (2000) for the definition of L2 learners' identities: L2 learners' definitions of their

relationship with the L2 language and culture, how they construct and reconstruct this

relationship though L2 use, and L2 learners' perception of future relationship with the L2. The

first set of questions in the follow-up interview targeted the definition of the L2 learners'

relationship with the English language and its culture (i.e., the first condition). Specifically, the

participants were asked about their motivation for learning and using English as an L2. Other

questions targeted past experiences and future expectations and aspiration as well as learners'

attitudes towards L2 NSs and their community.

The second set of questions aimed at examining the influence of the learners' identities

on their pragmatic choices with reference to examples of the participants' refusals to the English

ODCT and their perceptions of their refusals (i.e., second condition). This set of questions

closely examined cases of conformity and non-conformity to L2 pragmatics from the

participants' production as well as their perceptions of their refusals in English. However, the questions under this condition were moved from the English follow-up interview to the English interview under pragmatic transfer after the pilot study (see Appendix F) for two reasons. First, in order to reduce the time gap between phase 2.1 in which pragmatic transfer was identified and phase 2.2 in which discussion about the influence of the learners' identity upon such transfer was conducted, it was more fitting to ask such questions immediately after the participants identified instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusal responses. Otherwise, the time gap between the two sub-phases might be problematic as the participants might not be able to give an in-depth explanation for their L2 pragmatic choices and transfer. Second, when the participants identified instance of pragmatic transfer in their responses in phase 2.1, they also provided identity-related explanations for such transfer. Thus, it was more reasonable to include questions related to the second condition in the English interview.

The third set of questions aimed at further examining the relationship between the learners' identities and their pragmatic choices by using future examples. In other words, the students were asked about their future decisions regarding the use of Arabic pragmatic norms when communicating in English with native and non-native speakers of English. The participants were reminded of their responses and their explanations in phase two. Their explanations of their pragmatic choices and pragmatic transfer were used as a primer to discuss the third condition.

3.4.3 *Data Collection Procedures*

Data collection was completed over two phases (see Figure 3.1 below). In the first phase, the participants completed the Arabic ODCT and then immediately the Arabic interview. After four weeks, the phase 2.1 took place in which the participants completed the English ODCT, which was immediately followed by the English interview. A week later, the English follow-up

interview (phase 2.2) was conducted. Each ODCT took approximately fifteen to thirty minutes to complete. The Arabic interview took approximately one hour to an hour and a half to conduct, while the English interview took about two hours. The English follow-up interview took approximately one hour to an hour and a half to complete.

| Step 1 | → | Arabic ODCT | → | Immediatly followed by | → | Arabic interview |

| Immediatly followed by | ← | English ODCT | ← | Step 2 | ← | Four weeks later |

| English interview | → | A week later | → | Step 3 | → | English follow-up interview |
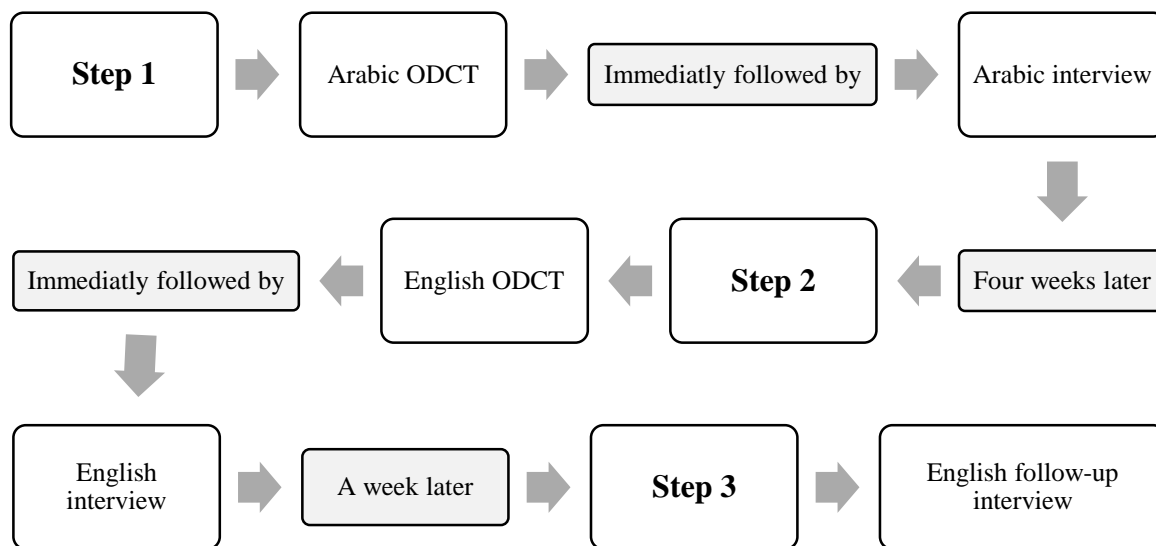
Figure 3. 1. Steps of data collection

While the ODCT scenarios were combined into one document as shown in Appendices C and D, during data collection, the document was cut into slips of paper. Each slip of paper contained one of the scenarios. The directions for responding to the ODCT were presented on separate slips of paper. Therefore, the first slip of paper included the directions for responding to the ODCT. After the participant read the instructions, she or he was asked to explain what they understood and if they needed any clarification. Then, the directions slip was removed and the participant was presented with the slip of paper containing a practice scenario. When the participant was done responding to the practice scenario, the participant was asked to comment on the clarity of the scenario and their understanding of how the data would be collected from

them. After that, the practice scenario was removed and the first scenario was presented to the participant. The same steps were repeated with the rest of the scenarios. Each scenario was presented based on its order in the ODCT in Appendices C and D.

The students' performance on the ODCTs was audio taped using the AudioNote app on a Mac computer. While this app was used to record the participants' refusal responses to the ODCT and the interview questions, a Voice Recorder app on an iPhone was used to record the students' refusal responses to the ODCT. The Voice Recorder app allowed me to replay the participant's responses to the ODCT one-by-one in order to discuss them during the interview. Further, during the replay, I had the time to write down the participants' responses in order to remind the participants of their responses during the interview.

When the responses to all of the scenarios were completed and the interview started, the participant was giving back the slip of paper of the first scenario and his or her response to it was played back. Hence, during the discussion of each scenario, the slip of the paper containing the scenario under discussion remained with the participant. When the discussion of that scenario was completed, the slip of paper was removed and replaced with the one containing the following scenario. The same steps were repeated for the discussion of each scenario.

The participants were also asked to organize the scenarios based on their relative degree of difficulty. The request scenarios slips were presented to the participant on one side of the interview table and the participant was asked to organize them from most difficult to easiest or the opposite. When two or more scenarios were perceived to be of equal degree of difficulty, they were placed on top of one another. When this step was completed, the participant was asked to explain his or her ranking. Then the same steps were repeated with the slips of paper containing the invitation scenarios. After that, the participant was asked if he or she thought that

all or some of the request scenarios were more difficult to refuse than the invitation scenarios or vice versa. The participant was asked to order all of the scenarios according to their degree of difficulty. Then the participant was asked to explain his or her ranking.

Presenting the directions and each scenario on separate slips of paper served two purposes. First, it allowed the participant to focus on one task at a time, either understanding the directions, understanding and responding to a scenario, or assessing and evaluating his or her response to a scenario. Second, it created a movable visual display of all of the scenarios, which facilitated the ranking of the different scenarios based on their perceived degree of difficulty.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 *Translation*

The participants' refusal responses in Omani Arabic were translated into English. The translation is almost literal to preserve the speakers' original use and word order. Considering the semantic variation in word use between Arabic and English, it is important to highlight the translation of the words in Table 3.6 due to possible variation in their translation into English.

During the translation process, I was faced with a few issues. The first one was regarding the translation of regret or apology expressions. The participants argued that the English regret expressions were not equivalent to the Arabic ones. For example, the participants did not see "I'm sorry" as an equivalent to "آسف/ آسفه" or "aːsif /aːsfaː" in Arabic. Also, they perceived some variation in the meaning of "عذرا، معذرة،اعذرني،اسمحلي لي، السموحة" or "ʕuðrann, maʕðiratann, ʔuʕðrniː, ʔismaħliː, and a-sumuħa" in Arabic such as degree of formality. Therefore, since "sorry, "I'm sorry" and "Excuse me" were the only available options in English, I used them to translate the Arabic regret expressions. However, in the data, the participants' perceptions of the

actual meanings of these words were explained. Words numbered from 1 to 4 represents

differnet apology terms, while words numbered 5 and 6 are used to mark "can" and "could."

Table 3.6. Translation Key for Some Arabic Words and Expressions used by the Participants

Arabic expressions	Transcription	English Translation
آسف/ آسفه	a:sif (male)/ a:sfa: (female)	Sorry or I'm sorry
آسف جدا	a:sif gidann	I'm very/so sorry
عذرا، معذرة،اعذرني اسمحلي لي، السموحة	ʕuðrann, maʕðiratann, ʔuʕðrni: ʔismaħli:, i-sumuħa (Bedouin dialect in Oman)	Excuse me
بصراحه	bisˤaraħa	Frankly
أنا مقدر	ʔana mqadir	I appreciate
شكرا	ʃukrann	Thank you
خصوصا، خاصة	xa:sˤatann, xusˤ u:sˤann	Especially
فعلا	fiʕlann	Really
والله	wallah	By Allah
إن شاء الله	ʔin ʃa:ʔ alla:h	God willing
ممكن، بإمكانك	mumkin, biʔimkanik	Could, you could

Below are four examples of refusals in Omani Arabic from the data in this study. Each

example is followed by its transliteration using the IPA transcription and its English translation.

Given that English and Arabic have different directionality (i.e., from left to right or right to left),

numbers (between parentheses) are used to indicate which words in the transcription and English

versions correspond to which words in the Arabic version. Note that Arabic reads from right to

left; however, the transliteration was written from left to write to match the English translation.

Arabic Refusal to AR2:	آسفه (1) بس تو أنا مستعجله. ممكن (5) تشوف حد ثاني
IPA Transcription:	a:sfa: (1) bas taww ʔana mistaʕgila. Mumkin (5) tuʃuf ħad θa:ni
English Translation:	I'm sorry (1) but now I'm in a hurry. You could see someone else.

Arabic Refusal to AR2:	السموحه(2) دكتور ما أقدر لازم أرجع البلاد هذا الإسبوع
IPA Transcription:	i-sumuħa (2) duktu:r ʔana mqadir. la:zim ʔagaʕ ilbila:d haða: alʔisbu-ʕ
English Translation:	Excuse me (2) doctor. I can't. I have to go to my hometown (home) this week

Arabic Refusal to AR2:	عذرا (3) مستعجله عندي محاضره
IPA Transcription:	ʕuðrann (3) mistaʕgila ʕandi muħaðˤarah
English Translation:	Excuse me (3). I'm in a hurry. I have a lecture.

Arabic Refusal to AR2:	أنا آسف(4). أنا عندي موضوع مهم لازم أخلصه، فبإمكانك(6) إنك تسأل أشخاص ثانيين.
IPA Transcription:	ʔana a:sfa:(4). ʔana ʕandi mawðˤu:ʕ muhim la:zim axllsuh fa biʔmkanik (6) ʔinak tisʔal aʃxa:s <u>θ</u> a:nyi:n
English Translation:	I'm sorry (4). I have an important matter I have to finish. You could (6) ask other people.

While regret expressions were substituted by English equivalent expressions, the phrases of "wallah" and "ʔin ʃa:ʔ alla:h" were transcribed without translating them into English. When refusing in English, the participants substituted the Arabic regret expressions with the English ones; however, they maintained the same Arabic expressions of "Wallah" and "Insha' Allah." Therefore, it was reasonable to keep their Arabic forms in the English translation. Also, in previous research these expressions were translated to "Wallah" and "Insha' Allah." Thus, in this study the same transliteration was used.

Another issue was the translation of "بإمكانك، ممكن "or "mumkin, biʔimkanik," words the participants used to suggest solutions for their interlocutors. These words could be used to indicate ability and possibility at the same time in Arabic, unlike the English words "can" which suggests ability and "could" which suggests possibility. It was important to distinguish the difference in meaning because the word "could" is classified as a Downtoner pragmatic marker in English (see Table 3.9 below). Therefore, I decided to treat these words as expressions of possibility (i.e., could) when they were used with a suggestion strategy. (See the words followed by the numbers 5 and 6 in the examples above).

3.5.2 *Transcription*

Table 3. 7 describes the transcription conventions used for the Arabic and English data. Column one includes the transcription key such as "/." The second column describes the function of the key. For example, the function of the key "\" is to mark self-correction or the "speaker identifies an error either during or immediately following production and stops and reformulates the speech" (Foster, et al. 2000, p. 368) as in " I can't come/attend. " The third column describes my coding decision. For example, while both "come" and "attend" appeared in the transcription, in the coding of semantic units, only "attend" as the final version of the production was included.

Table 3.7. Transcription Key

Key	Function	Example	Coding Decision
/	Self-Correction: "the speaker identifies an error either during or immediately following production and stops and reformulates the speech" (Foster, et al. 2000, p. 368).	I can't come/attend.	Only the final version is coded.
…	Short pause: The speaker pauses then continues his/her speech.	I have to submit my…the final paper	Not coded
Ah	Pause filler: The speaker produces a pause filler then continues his/her speech. Note if the "Ah" is followed by an exclamation mark as in "Ah!" it is coded as Emotion pragmatic marker (see section on coding pragmatic markers below).	Ah…	Not coded
[word/s]	Clarification: Bracketed words, phrases, and sentences are not part of the speaker's original production. They are added by the researcher for clarification.	Thank you for telling me about this subject [event]	Not coded .
…/	Self-correction and short pause	Thank you for…/Thank you for telling me.	The pause is not coded Only the final version is coded.

In addition, responses in English were transcribed the way the participants produced them. Thus, grammatical errors related to sentence structure or word choice were not corrected. Considering that there is gender marking in Arabic, some of the expressions were presented in

both formats in the data. For example, the apology expressions "آسف" or "a:sif" means "Sorry" or "I'm sorry" and has two formats to mark the gender of the speaker "آسف/ آسفه" or " a:sif (male)/ a:sfa: (female)"

3.5.3 *Coding*

In line with previous research on refusals, the data were coded in terms of type of pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns.

3.5.3.1 *Coding of Pragmatic Strategies*

The refusal response or speech act consists of one or more semantic formulas (Beebe et al. 1990) and can express refusal directly or indirectly. The semantic formula is the smallest unit of analysis in the speech act. Each semantic formula constitutes a refusal strategy and is classified either as direct or indirect strategy based on the classification developed by Beebe et al. For example, when, in response to a professor's request to help in organizing a workshop over the weekend, a respondent refused by saying: "I'm sorry. I have to go home this weekend," this was coded as consisting of two units: [Regret] and [Excuse].

While the classification of Beebe et al. is the most cited one, other researchers have used modified versions of this classification to accommodate the needs of their research (e.g., Houck & Gass, 1999; Felix-Brasdefer, 2008; Al-Issa, 2003). Beebe et al developed their classification based on the refusals of their participants who were American NSs of English, Japanese NSs of Japanese, and Japanese learners of English as a foreign language. This justifies the need to modify the classification when analyzing data from participants with different demographic and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, the classification scheme used in this study was adapted from Al Issa (see Table 3.5 above) and Félix-Brasdefer (2008) (see Appendix H). It was modified and finalized based on the data of the current study. Table 3.8 describes the scheme used to classify

the refusals in this study. The scheme includes two direct strategies and thirteen indirect strategies. The direct strategies are Flat No and Negation. The indirect strategies are Regret, Excuse, Solution Suggestion, Proposition Suggestion, Condition for Past Acceptance, Condition for Future Acceptance, Indefinite Reply, Indefinite Acceptance, Combination, Postponement, Wish for Self, Wish for Others, Gratitude, Compliment, Assurance and Sense of Loss.

Table 3.8. Classification of Refusals Used in this Study

Type of strategy	Definition	Examples (from this study)
1. **Direct strategies**		
a. **Flat "No"**	• Flat "No"	• No.
b. **Negation**	• Negating the proposition by expressing Negative ability or willingness	• I can't; I won't; I don't think.
2. **Indirect strategies**		
a. **Regret**	• "Expressions of regret or asking for forgiveness function as indirect refusals that may be considered manifestations of relational work and […] open for polite interpretation" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 78).	• I'm sorry; Excuse me; I apologize.
b. **Excuse**	• General excuse does not provide details. • Specific excuse includes detailed information (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008).	• I'm in a hurry. • I have a lecture.
c. **Suggestion:** **1.** **Solution Suggestion**	• Suggesting an alternative solution to help the requester or the invitee find the needed fulfillment for the request or invitation.	• Perhaps you can ask someone else.
2. **Proposition Suggestion**	• Suggesting a completely different proposition instead of the proposition in the request or the invitation.	• I will look for something else, which I will enjoy more.

d. **Set condition for:**
  1. **Future Acceptance**
  2. **Past Acceptance**
	• This strategy is "used to refuse or put off an invitation, a request or a suggestion by creating a hypothetical conditional under which acceptance would occur (future) or would have occurred (past)" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 78).	• If I had the time, I would have had attended.

e. **Indefinite Reply**	• "The speaker's intentional message remains vague, uncertain, or undecided" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 75).	• I don't know.

f.	**Indefinite Acceptance**	• The speaker accepts the request or the invitation but his/her acceptance remains indefinite.	• I'll try to attend.
g.	**Combination** (Set condition for future acceptance and indefinite acceptance)	• The participant sets a condition for future acceptance of the request or the invitation but instead of giving a definite acceptance, he/she gives an indefinite one.	• If I finish them, Insha'Allah, I will try to attend.
h.	**Postponement**	• The "speaker does not want to explicitly make a commitment and, therefore puts off an invitation, a request, or a suggestion" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 76).	• I'll think about it. • I'll see.
i.	**Wish:**		
4.	**Wish for Self or personal wish** (interest/desire)	• This strategy "communicates the participant's desire or wish to accept an invitation, a request or a suggestion" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 78).	• I wish I could attend. • I would like to help you.
4.	**Wish for Other**	• This strategy communicates the speaker's good wishes for his/her interlocutor.	• I hope somebody will guide you.
j.	**Gratitude**	• This strategy is used to express appreciation to the interlocutor	• Thank you. • I appreciate…
k.	**Compliment**	• This strategy expresses positive opinion and/or feeling about the proposition, or the interlocutor.	• I think it will be a wonderful event. • I'm enthusiastic.
l.	**Assurance**	• Positive statements intended to inspire confidence or give encouragement to the interlocutor.	• Could you please ask someone around here? *They will help you.*
m.	**Sense of Loss**	• Negative opinion and/or feeling, which is intended to express a sense of loss by the speaker for not being able to accept the request or the invitation.	• Too bad.

The classification scheme in Table 3.8 differs from pervious classification schemes in three ways. First, Adjuncts are included as indirect strategies. In their study of requests, Blum-Kulka et al distinguished three parts of the speech acts: Head Act, Alerter, and Supportive Move or Adjunct. They defined Head Act as "the minimal unit which can realize a request; it is the core of the request sequence" (p. 275). They defined Alerter as" an opening element proceeding the actual request, such as a term of address or an attention getter" (p.276). For example, *John* is an Alerter, while *clean up the kitchen* is the Head Act in "John, clean up the kitchen." They

defined Supportive Move as "a unit external to the request, which modifies its impact by either aggravating or mitigating its force." (p. 276). For example, *I'll call the police* is the Supportive Move or the Adjunct in "Stop bothering me or I'll call the police." Alerters and Supportive moves are assumed not essential to the realization of the request itself, which can be achieved via the Head Act alone. In a similar vein, Beebe et al. (1990) identified two parts in the refusal response: Head Act and Adjunct. Head Act is any semantic unit that can function as a direct or indirect refusal independent of the other semantic units in the refusal response; otherwise, they are termed Adjunct. For instance, Beebe et al. classified the expression of positive feeling such as "I'd love to…" before an excuse as an Adjunct. They explained, "Without the excuse, the expression of positive feeling would sound like an acceptance." (p. 57). Thus, any semantic unit that cannot perform refusal directly or indirectly is an Adjunct. Accordingly, it cannot be classified as a direct or indirect strategy or refusal. Beebe et al identified four general types of adjuncts: statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (including compliment), statement of empathy, pause filler, and gratitude/appreciation.

However, the current data set provided counter evidence to Beebe et al's view on Adjuncts. For example, one participant used a Compliment and an Indefinite Acceptance as a refusal to an invitation to attend an activity. Specifically, in response to an invitation to an open day event, this respondent refused by saying: "It seems good. I'll try to attend." According to Beebe et al.'s definition both semantic formulas (i.e., Compliment and Indefinite acceptance) can perform an approval rather than a refusal whether they are used in isolation or together. However, during the interviews, the participant who produced this response insisted that his response was an acceptable refusal in his culture (i.e., Omani Arabic). Similarly, another participant stated that she could refuse an invitation by simply saying: "Thank you." Hence, it

was reasonable to treat Adjuncts as indirect strategies of refusals to accommodate the data of this study.

The second modification to the classification of refusals was the treatment of Alerters (titles and attention getters) and other internal modifiers (e.g., very, really, please, etc.) as pragmatic markers. Pragmatic markers are not addressed in previous classifications of refusals. However, they were frequently used by the participants in this study. As will be described below, these features were coded and classified as pragmatic markers.

The third modification to the classification of refusals was the modification and addition of new indirect strategies. For example, all types of suggestions are included under Alternative strategy in previous classifications. In this study and based on the data, two different types of alternatives were identified: alternative solution and alternative proposition. Each type of alternative was treated as a sub- type of suggestion, hence, in the data analysis they were respectively called: Solution Suggestion and Proposition Suggestion. Another modification was the classification of wishes. Two types of wishes were identified in the data: personal wish, or wish for self, and wish for the interlocutor. These are labelled Wish for Self and Wish for Others, respectively, in Table 3.8. Thus, while Suggestion and Wish are not new strategies, their subcategories are. However, the indirect strategies of Assurance, Sense of Loss, and Indefinite Acceptance are strategies that emerged from the data in this study. Another addition is the Combination strategy, which refers to the combination of Condition for Future Acceptance and Indefinite Acceptance.

The Excuse strategy was problematic because previous research did not account for complex sentences that include several semantic units that could be treated as explanation. For example, Beebe et al classified "I'm busy" and "I have three final exams tomorrow" as two

excuses which differ in "specificity and persuasiveness" (p. 58). "I am busy" was treated as a reason because it was general, while "I have three final exams tomorrow" was treated as an explanation because it clarified the excuse by providing details. Most importantly, the two excuses are two independent sentences. Therefore, it was not clear how to classify utterances that included more than one explanation especially when the explanations are constituents of the same sentence. To resolve this issue in this study, every time a new piece of information was provided or every semantic unit of explanation was treated as a new excuse/explanation even if it was a part of the same clause or sentence. For example, the following utterance was coded as including four units as follows: I'm sorry [Regret]. I cannot help you with the workshop you are doing [Negation], because I have a midterm paper [Excuse] that I have to submit next week [Excuse]. The clause "I have to submit next week" adds new information to the previous clause "I have a midterm paper". The two clauses represent two different semantic units and, as a result, are treated as two different strategies of Excuse/Explanation. All excuses and explanations were coded as Excuse strategy.

3.5.3.2 *Coding of Pragmatic Markers*

Early studies of refusal speech acts seem to have inadvertently missed the examination of internal modifiers or pragmatic markers, which obscured the pragmatic role of these markers in the realization of refusal speech acts. This resulted in an unintentional negligence of pragmatic markers in later refusal studies, which was something I did during the course of planning this study. However, during interviews with participants in this study, I observed that they used expressions such "unfortunately" or "frankly," which seemed to add and/or modify the pragmatic force of the produced speech acts. Therefore, I decided to examine the use of pragmatic markers in this study.

Previous research on the refusal speech act mainly focused on the classification of semantic formulas or pragmatic strategies. Research on request and apology speech acts, in contrast, tended to focus on the internal modifiers or pragmatic markers of speech acts in addition to pragmatic strategies. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, p. 19) defined internal modifiers as "elements within the request utterance proper (linked to the Head Act), the presences of which is not essential for the utterance to be potentially understood as a request." For example, expressions such *please*, *awfully,* and *very* are not essential to the understanding of the speech act as a request or an apology. Blum-Kulka et al. stated that internal modifiers have a sociopragmatic force "which affects the social impact the utterance is likely to have" (p.19). They explained that these modifiers act as intensifying devices, upgraders, mitigating devices or downgraders.

Given that the participants in this study tended to use internal modifiers relatively frequently I decided to examine these modifiers in order to better understand their sociopragmatic effect on the refusal speech act. The classification of internal modifiers was adapted mainly from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Fraser (1996). The coding scheme is displayed in Table 3.9 below. It is important to note that this scheme is selective because it only includes the categories needed to address the internal modifiers documented in the data of this study.

Table 3.9. Classification of Pragmatic Markers used in this Study

Type	Definition	Examples (from this study)
1. Basic markers	• They signal "the force of the basic message." (Fraser, 1996, p.169)	
Subjectivizer	• "[T]he speaker explicitly expresses his or her subjective opinion vis-à-vis the state of the affairs referred to in the proposition, thus lowering the assertive force of [the refusal]" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, p. 284).	• <u>I think</u> it will be a wonderful event. • <u>I don't think</u> I'll be able to attend.
Preparator	• "Utterances by which the speaker prepares his/her hearer for the ensuing refusal by announcing in some way that he/she will refuse an invitation, a request, or a suggestion" (Félix-Brasdefer, 2008, p. 79). They are also used to introduce the main point or issue such as introducing explanation or excuse.	• <u>The problem</u> is that I don't have time.
Politeness	• Politeness is also used "to bid for co-operative behavior" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, p. 283).	• For that <u>please</u> excuse me.
Downtoner	• Downtoner "narrows the force of the utterance to a suggestion" (Fraser, 1996, p. 175).	• <u>Perhaps</u> you can ask someone around here.
Consequences Downtowner	• Insha'Allah or God willing "allows Muslims to mitigate the undesirable consequences of their offensive actions, whether in the form of turning down a request or failure to honor their commitment to carry out specific future actions" (Nazzal, 2011, p. 171).	• I'll try, <u>Insha' Allah.</u>
Emotion	• "Interjections [or] emotive words or phrases which stand alone and function as separate sentences." (Fraser, 1996, p. 176). "They are often assigned a meaning which is in fact carried by the intonation imposed on them and not by the form itself" (Fraser, 1996, p. 176).	• <u>Ah!</u> Sorry doctor. • <u>Oh!</u> <u>Really!</u> Too bad… • <u>Wow!</u>
2. Commentary markers:	• They comment "on some aspect of the basic message" (Fraser, 1996, p.179).	
Assessment	• Assessment "signal[s] the speaker's evaluation of the state of the world represented in the proposition" (Fraser, 1996, p. 180).	• <u>Unfortunately</u> I can't attend. • <u>Actually,</u> I 'm not interested in media.
Manner of Speaking	• They "signal a comment on the manner in which the basic message is being conveyed" (Fraser, 1996, p. 181). Wallah, for example, is a "solemn or formal appeal to God (or a deity or something held in reverence or regard) in witness to the truth of the statement, or the binding character of a promise or undertaking" (Abd el-Jawad, 2000, p. 217).	• <u>Frankly,</u> I don't think I can attend. • <u>Wallah,</u> doctor, I wish I could attend.

Emphasis	• They "have the function of emphasizing the force of the basic force" (Fraser, 1996, p. 181).	• I can't <u>really</u> help you. • I am <u>really</u> sorry.
Understater	• "[T]he speakers underrepresent the state of the affairs denoted in the proposition" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, p. 283).	• I have <u>a little bit</u> of work. • I have <u>some</u> work to do.
Intensifier	• Intensifiers are "adverbial intensifiers used to increase the impact of certain elements of the proposition on the hearer' (Barron, 2007, p141). Time intensifiers are "adverbial intensifiers used to increase the credibility of the refusal for the hearer" (Barron, 2007, p141).	• I'm <u>very/so</u> sorry. • I am <u>too</u> busy. • I have <u>a lot of</u> work to. • I can't help you <u>right</u> now.

3. Parallel markers:
   • They signal "a message in addition to the basic message" (Fraser, 1996, 169).

Address	• Address is a means of indicating formality and/or politeness such as "closeness, reverence, respect, difference or solidarity" (Farenkia, 2015, p. 598). Also, it is used to direct the message towards a particular addressee (Fraser, 1996).	• I'm sorry <u>sir.</u> • <u>Doctor,</u> I am sorry.
Solidarity	• Solidarity is used by the speaker to send "a message expressing (un)solidarity with the addressee" (Fraser, 1996, p. 186).	• And <u>you know</u> I have the term paper to submit next week.

As Table 3.9 shows, internal modifiers in this study refer exclusively to pragmatic markers (Fraser, 1996). Fraser distinguished between two types of internal modifiers; discourse markers and pragmatic markers. He defined discourse markers (e.g., and, but, however, so) as markers that "signal a relationship between the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1. They have a core meaning which is procedural, not conceptual" (Fraser, 1999, p. 950). On the other hand, he defined pragmatic markers (e.g., actually, frankly, I think, please) as " linguistically encoded clues, which signal the speaker's intentional communicative intentions" (Fraser, 1996, p. 168). Thus, they are "separate and distinct from the propositional content of the sentence" (p. 168). Fraser explained that" truthfully" in example (a) below is a pragmatic maker because it singles the manner of speaking; hence, it is not part of the propositional meaning of the sentence. However, "truthfully" in example (b) modifies the word "answered" or the manner

of answering; hence, it is part of the propositional meaning of the sentence and not a pragmatic marker. In example (c) "truthfully" is used as a pragmatic marker, sentence initially, and as a modifier of the manner of answering, sentence finally. Both uses can coexist in the same sentence but with distinct functions.

a) <u>Truthfully</u>, you should have answered.

b) You should have answered truthfully.

c) <u>Truthfully</u>, you should have answered truthfully.

Second, while previous research focused on various types of pragmatic markers, for the purposes of this study, the focus on pragmatic markers was limited to lexical or phrasal modifiers such as verbs, nouns, adverbs and idiomatic use of some expressions such as please and Okay. Thus, intonation (e.g., rising and falling tones) and syntactic markers (e.g., statement versus questions) were not included. Third, while pragmatic markers are part of the semantic unit, interjections or emotive words such as Oh!, Aha!, Ah-huh! are exceptional cases of pragmatic markers. According to Fraser (1996), they can "stand alone and function as separate sentences" (p. 176).

Adding a classification of pragmatic markers helped address several issues in the existing classification schemes of refusals. First, the classification of pragmatic markers accounted for Alerters, which were ignored in previous classifications of refusals. Second, it resolved the dilemma of classifying Negations that start with Subjectivizer such as "I think" or "I don't think." For example, Beebe et al. classified any refusal starting with "I don't think" as in "I don't think I can help you" as a direct strategy of refusal, while Félix-Brasdefer classified it as an indirect strategy and created a new category for it called Mitigated Refusal. Félix-Brasdefer might have been trying to capture the unique influence of the mitigating device of "I think" on the refusal. However, this is problematic because a direct strategy mitigated by "I think" does

not become an indirect strategy; rather it becomes a mitigated direct strategy. By adding a classification for pragmatic markers, this problem could be resolved. Negation is classified as a direct strategy in this study, while the mitigating device of "I think" is classified and discussed as a pragmatic marker. Accordingly, the pragmatic force of both Negation and the Subjectivizer can be captured. Third, this classification highlights the pragmatic role of the pragmatic markers in the realization of refusal speech acts, which can result in a better understanding of the realization of refusals and expand the study of refusal speech acts beyond the pragmatic strategies to include pragmatic markers.

3.5.3.3 *Coding of Refusal Patterns*

The realization of refusals to requests and invitations in both Omani Arabic and English consisted of a combination of direct and indirect pragmatic strategies arranged in many different combinations such as Regret + Negation + Excuse or Negation + Excuse + Excuse + Regret. Each combination or order is referred to as a refusal pattern. As will be described in the results chapter, I coded each refusal made by the participants in terms of the order or sequence of the refusal strategies they used.

3.5.4 *Coding Reliability*

I coded the data. In addition, a second coder recoded the data to ensure inter-coder agreement. The inter-coder was a fourth year student majoring in psychology, B.Sc., at the Faculty of Health, York University. She coded the pragmatic strategies and pragmatic markers of the refusal responses. She received training on how to classify and code refusals prior to starting the coding process. She was presented with a handout explaining the definition of pragmatic strategies as semantic units, their classification in the study and how they were distinguished from each other in a refusal response. In addition, I explained the handout for her and

encouraged her to ask questions. After that, she was presented with one practice refusal and how it was classified. Then, she was given another practice refusal to classify by writing the name of the strategies under each semantic unit in the refusal response. In addition, she was told to refer to the refusal strategies classification table in the handout and to ask for clarification anytime. When she was done and we discussed her classification, she was presented with another six practice refusal responses. After she completed the classification, she compared and discussed her classification with me. No disagreement in the classification was found. Then, she was presented with the refusal responses of the ten participants to classify (i.e., 100 % of the data). During the classification of the refusals, she referred to the refusal classification table. Immediately after she finished the classification, we compared her classification to mine. When disagreement was found, she explained her coding and then I explained mine. This order was maintained to allow the inter-coder to provide her justification unaffected by mine. A few days later, the same steps were taken with the same inter-coder in the classification of pragmatic markers. However, the pragmatic markers in the refusal responses were highlighted to distinguish them from other markers that are not included in this study.

The total number of classified units in Omani Arabic and English refusals was 430 strategies and 99 markers. The percentage agreement in the classification of pragmatic strategies was 99.3% and after resolving disagreement, it reached 99.8%. The percentage agreement on the classification of pragmatic markers was 98% and remained the same after an attempt to resolve disagreements. One of the disagreements concerned the classification of the pragmatic marker "Really!" as in "Oh! Really!..Too bad…." I classified this marker as an Emotion marker because it expressed a feeling of surprise and amazement, which was confirmed by the participant who

used it. However, the inter-coder thought it was an Emphasis marker since it was used as such with other strategies as in "I'm <u>really</u> busy." Thus, I chose to keep my coding.

3.5.5 *Analysis Procedures*

Two types of data analysis were conducted. The first one involved computing descriptive statistics concerning the frequency and order of semantic units. The second was thematic and involved the categorization of the participants' explanations of their refusals during the interviews under various themes.

3.5.5.1 *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the frequency of the pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers, and patterns of refusal used by the participants. Additionally, the frequency of pragmatic strategies and pragmatic markers in relation to various sociopragmatic variables (i.e., relative imposition, social distance, and cultural distance) was examined. In addition, the number of participants who used each pragmatic strategy and pragmatic marker as well as the frequency of their use were examined. Given the small sample, the frequency of refusal patterns was only examined in relation to the sociopragmatic variable of relative imposition (i.e., requests versus invitations). Another form of descriptive statistics consisted in averaging the ranking of the scenarios in terms of the participants' perceptions of the difficulty to refuse to each scenario in relation to various sociopragmatic variables.

3.5.5.2 *Thematic Analysis*

Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data from the Arabic interview, the English interview, and the English follow-up interview. In the Arabic and English interviews two types of qualitative data were identified. The first concerned the participants' understanding of the meaning of pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns independent of the

sociopragmatic variables. The names of the pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns were used as guiding themes in this thematic analysis. However, while I was able to identify the pragmatic markers in the participants' responses to the scenarios, I did not ask the participants for explanation about their use of these markers when refusing since these markers emerged during data analysis as explained above. However, some participants did provide explanations for their use of some of these pragmatic markers during the interviews. These explanations are discussed in Chapter 4.

The second type of qualitative data concerned the participants' explanations of their refusal responses in relation to specific sociopragmatic variables. During the interview, each participant was asked to explain his or her use of specific pragmatic strategies and (sometimes) pragmatic markers and refusal patterns in relation to the sociopragmatic variables under examination. The sociopragmatic variables in this study (i.e., social distance, degree of imposition and cultural distance) served as guiding themes for the thematic analysis of the Arabic and English interview data. Gender was added as a new theme because it emerged during data collection. Participants' explanations that are related to each theme were identified and compared. For the English interview data, a theme called pragmatic transfer was added because the participants identified and explained instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusals in English.

During the process of examining the participants' explanations of their refusals in relation to the sociopragmatic variables in the study, some of the explanations were unique and did not mesh with any of the sociopragmatic variables in the study. For example, some participants perceived relative power to have a stronger influence than other sociopragmatic variables on the difficulty to refuse. Consequently, a theme called relative power was added to the analysis. The

participants also referred to other dimensions of the speech act situation as described in the scenarios (e.g., time of the request, amount of effort required to fulfill it). These responses were classified under nature of the situation. Another factor mentioned by the participants was their perceptions of their professors' traits such as being kind, considerate, and understanding, and how they react to such traits (i.e., did they like or dislike their professors). These factors were classified under "affective factors," which refer to "the personal-social-emotional behaviors of the teachers and learners and to the feeling tone of the learning environment generated by their interactions" (Ripple, 1965, p. 477). These four factors (i.e., nature of the situation, affective factors, relative power, and gender) and their effects on the participants' pragmatic choices are discussed in Chapter 4.

The analysis of the follow-up interview focused on the role of the learners' identities in their pragmatic choices and transfer. Specifically, the three conditions for defining L2 learners' identities (i.e., L2 learners' definition of their current and future relationship with the L2 and their current conformity and non-conformity to the L2 use) were used as a framework for analyzing the participants' responses in the final interview.

3.5.5.3 *Data Analysis Process*

Figure 3.2 summarizes the process and outcomes of each phase of data analysis. In phase one, using the Arabic ODCT data, the pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers, and refusal patterns were identified. Then, their frequency was examined. Next, using the data in the Arabic interview, the participants' explanations relative to these strategies, markers and patterns were identified and categorized. The participants' explanations of these strategies, markers and patterns were then examined in relation to the sociopragmatic variables in the study. This phase

produced findings concerning the realization patterns and perceptions of refusals in Omani Arabic, which answered the first research question.

      After the analysis of the data concerning refusals in Omani Arabic was completed, the second phase of the analysis started. In the second phase, the same steps of analysis were applied to the data concerning the production and perception of refusals in English. The second phase produced the findings concerning the realization patterns and perceptions of refusals in English by Omani EFL learners, which answered the second research question. Another outcome of this phase was the emergence of examples of non-conformity with the NSs pragmatic norms and related explanations. After the second phase of analysis was completed, the third one commenced. In this third phase, the analysis focused on the perception data in the English follow-up interview. Explanations related to the three conditions of defining L2 learner identity were identified and categorized. Findings from this phase answered the third research question concerning how Omani EFL learners' identities influence their refusals in English. The next chapter reports the results of the different analyses described above.
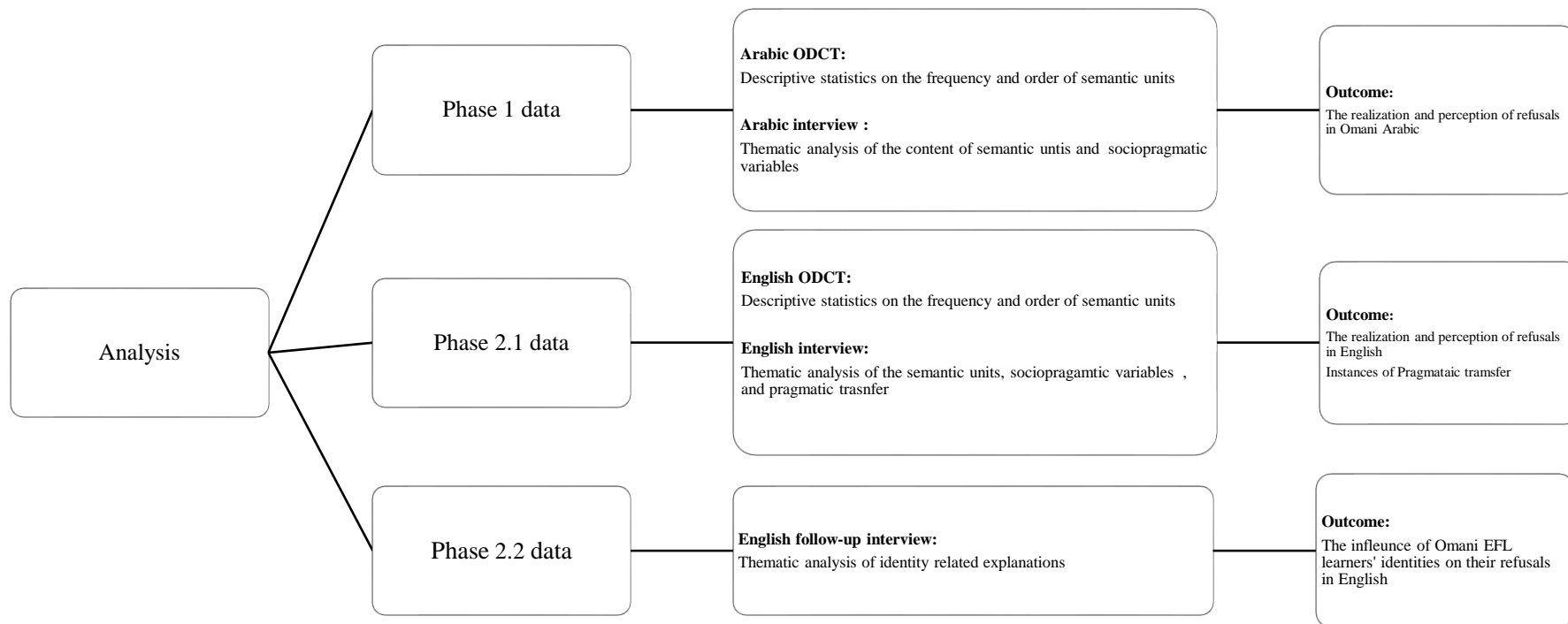
Figure 3.2. Overview of data analysis process

4. FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings of the study and is structured around its three main research questions: the realization and perception of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic, the realization and perception of refusal speech acts in English, and the influence of Omani EFL learners' identities on their pragmatic choices when refusing in English. To answer the first and second research questions, the participants' realization (i.e., use) of pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns are reported in terms of type and frequency and each is followed by the participants' explanation of their use. To answer the third question, the pragmatic transfer and identity related responses are reported.

4.1 Refusals in Omani Arabic

This section focuses on the participants' use and perception of refusal speech acts in Omani Arabic. It is divided into two sections. The first section reports findings about the use and perception of refusal responses in Omani Arabic. The second section reports findings about the participants' perceptions of the influence of the sociopragmatic variables on their refusals in Omani Arabic.

4.1.1 *The Realization and Perception of Refusals in Omani Arabic*

This section reports the participants' use and perception of refusals in Omani Arabic. It is divided into three sub-sections: the use and perception of pragmatic strategies, the use and perception of pragmatic markers, and the use and perception of refusal patterns. The use data concern the types and frequencies of pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns. The perception data concern the participants' explanation of their use of pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns.

4.1.1.1 *Use of Pragmatic Strategies*

Table 4.1 reports the frequency of the refusal strategies used by the participants when refusing requests and invitations in Omani Arabic. The table includes the following information for each strategy and for each scenario: the frequency of use of the strategy across all participants who used that strategy (f), the number of participants who used the strategy (n) out of the total number of participants in the study which is 10 participants, the sum of the frequencies of strategies across scenarios ($\sum f$), and the percentage of the times the strategy was used out of the total number of all strategies across all scenarios and participants ($\%$).

As shown in Table 4.1, when refusing requests in Omani Arabic, the participants used eight types of strategies: two direct strategies, namely, Negation and Flat No, and six indirect strategies, namely, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Solution Suggestion, Assurance, and Condition for Past Acceptance (see Example 4.1). The indirect strategies were used 85% (f= 69) of the time in comparison to the direct ones, which were used only 14.8% (f=12) of the time. The most frequent strategy was the indirect strategy of Excuse (49.4%, f=40) followed by the indirect strategy of Regret (24.7%, f=20) and the direct strategy of Negation (13.6%, f=11). The least frequent strategies were the direct strategy of Flat No and the indirect strategies of Assurance, Past Acceptance and Solution Suggestion which each occurred 1.2% (f= 1).

Example 4.1:

Negation:	I can't attend.
Flat No:	No Doctor.
Regret:	I'm sorry doctor/ Excuse me.
Excuse:	I really have something important in the weekend.
Wish for Self:	I wish I could help you.
Solution Suggestion:	Could you ask someone else here?
Assurance:	Everybody will help you.

Condition for Past Acceptance: Frankly doctor. If I had the time, I would have attended.

The sociopragmatic variable of social distance (i.e., ± SD) influenced the type and frequency of the refusal strategies that the participants used. In refusing the request of the known professor (i.e., -SD request), the participants used five types of strategies: Negation, Flat No, Regret, Excuse, and Wish for Self. However, in addition to these five strategies, they used another three strategies to refuse the request of the unknown professor (i.e., +SD request): Solution Suggestion, Assurance, and Condition for Past Acceptance. In terms of frequency, all participants (n=10) used Excuse in refusal to the -SD request (f=18) and in response to the +SD request (f=22). However, only nine of them used Regret in refusal to the -SD request (f=9) and all of them (n=10) used it in refusal to the +SD request (f=11). On the other hand, six students used Negation in refusal to the -SD request (f=6) and only two of them used it to refuse the +SD request (f=2).

In refusals to invitations in Omani Arabic, the participants used nine strategies: Negation, Flat No, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment, and Combination (see Example 4.2). Indirect strategies were the most frequently used strategies at 79.5% (f= 62), while direct strategies were only used 20.5% of the time (f= 16) (see Table 4.1). The direct strategy of Negation was used 19.2% (f= 15) rendering it second to the indirect strategy of Excuse at 44.9% (f=35). The indirect strategy of Regret came in the third place at 12.8% (f=10). The least frequent strategies were the direct strategy of Flat No and the indirect strategies of Proposition Suggestion and Combination (1.3%).

Table. 4.1. Frequency of Pragmatic Strategies in Omani Arabic Refusals

	Strategy	Requests (+RI) Scenarios						Invitations (-RI) Scenarios					
		AR1 (-SD)		AR2 (+SD)		∑f	%	AI3 (-SD)		AI4 (+SD)		∑f	%
		f	n	f	n			f	n	f	n		
	Direct												
1	Negation	9	6	2	2	11	13.6	9	6	6	6	15	19.2
2	Flat No	1	1			1	1.2			1	1	1	1.3
	***Total* of direct strategies (*f*)**	**10**		**2**		**12**	**14.8**	**9**		**7**		**16**	**20.5**
	Indirect												
1	Regret	9	9	11	10	20	24.7	6	5	4	4	10	12.8
2	Excuse	18	10	22	10	40	49.4	20	10	15	10	35	44.9
3	Wish for Self	1	1	2	2	3	3.7	1	1	2	2	3	3.8
4	Solution Suggestion			4	4	4	4.9						
5	Proposition Suggestion									1	1	1	1.3
6	Assurance			1	1	1	1.2						
7	Gratitude							3	3	4	4	7	9
8	Compliment							3	3	1	1	4	5.1
9	Cond. for Past Acceptance			1	1	1	1.2	1	1			1	1.3
10	Combination									1	1	1	1.3
	***Total* of indirect strategies (*f*)**	**28**		**41**		**69**	**85**	**34**		**28**		**62**	**79.5**
	Grand total of direct and indirect (*f*)	**38**		**43**		**81**		**43**		**35**		**78**	

Notes:
f: frequency of use of strategy in response to the scenario across all participants.
n: number of participants who used the strategy in response to the scenario.
∑*f:* sum of the frequencies of strategies across scenarios.
%: the percentage of the times the strategy was used out of the total number of all strategies across all scenarios and participants .

Example 4.2:

Negation:	I can't attend.
Flat No:	No
Regret:	I'm sorry doctor/ Excuse me
Excuse:	I'm not very interested in Media field.
Wish for Self:	Wallah Doctor, I wish I could attend.
Proposition Suggestion:	I will try to look for another event to enjoy more.
Gratitude:	Thank you doctor for the invitation.
Compliment:	Wallah doctor it is a good opportunity.
Combination:	If I finish them, Insha' Allah, I'll try to attend.

The variable of social distance influenced the type of strategies used in refusals to invitations in Omani Arabic. For example, nine different strategies were used to refuse the +SD invitation: Negation, Flat No, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment and Combination. However, only six of these strategies were utilized to refuse the -SD invitation. The following strategies were not used with the -SD invitation: Proposition Suggestion, Compliment, and Combination.

In addition, the sociopragmatic variable of ± SD influenced the frequency of the strategies used by the participants in the study. In response to the -SD invitation, all participants (n=10) utilized Excuse two times, on average (f= 20), in contrast they utilized it less frequently (f= 15) in refusals to the +SD invitation. Six of them employed Negation nine times to refuse the -SD invitation and six times in refusals to the +SD invitation. Five of them used Regret in refusals to the -SD invitation (f= 6), while four used it to refuse the +SD invitation (f= 4). Also, Gratitude was utilized four times by four participants in refusal to the +SD invitation.

The difference in refusals between requests and invitations represents the difference in the sociopragmatic variable of absolute ranking of imposition (i.e., ± RI). The ranking of imposition variable had an influence on the type and frequency of strategies used to refuse requests and invitations in Omani Arabic.   The participants used eight strategies to refuse the +RI requests, while they used ten strategies to refuse the -RI invitations (see Table 4.1). The difference between the number of strategies employed to refuse requests and invitations was not considerable; however, there was a noticeable difference in the type of strategies employed. The participants exclusively used Solution Suggestion and Assurance in their refusals to +RI requests. On the other hand, they exclusively used Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment, and Combination in their refusals to the -RI invitations. Strategies such as Negation, Flat No, Regret, Excuse and Wish for Self and Solution Suggestion were employed in both cases of refusals.

In terms of frequency (i.e., $\sum f$), the indirect strategies were the most frequently used strategies to refuse the +RI and -RI speech acts. The frequency of indirect strategies was higher in refusals to requests (85%, $f= 69$) than in refusals to invitations (79.5%, $f= 62$). However, the opposite was true with the use of direct strategies. They were used more frequently when refusing invitations (19.2%, $f= 15$) than when refusing requests (13.6%, $f= 11$%). In terms of the most frequently used strategy to refuse the + requests, Excuse (49.4%, $f= 11$) came first followed by Regret (24.7%, $f= 20$), and Negation (13.6%, $f= 11$). Again, Excuse (44.9%, $f=35$) came first in refusals to the invitations; however, it was followed by Negation (19.2%, $f= 15$) and Regret (12.8%, $f= 10$).

Summary

To realize refusals in Omani Arabic, the participants utilized eight strategies to refuse requests (+RI) and nine to refuse invitations (-RI). They exclusively used Solution Suggestion, Assurance, and Condition for Past Acceptance to refuse requests, while they exclusively used Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment and Combination strategies to refuse invitations. Indirect strategies were the most frequently used strategies to refuse both types of speech acts. Similarly, the Excuse strategy was the most frequently used strategy to refuse both of them. However, the Regret strategy was more frequently used for refusing requests than Negation strategy, while for refusing invitations, Negation was more frequent than Regret.

In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of social distance, when refusing both types of speech acts, the participants applied more strategies to refuse to unfamiliar professors or +SD than when refusing to a familiar or -SD professor. They used eight strategies to refuse the request of +SD interlocutors and only five strategies to refuse to the -SD interlocutor. Additionally, they used nine strategies to refuse the invitations of the +SD interlocutor and only six strategies to refuse to the -SD interlocutor.

4.1.1.2 *Perception of Pragmatic Strategies*

Flat No and Negation

The participants used a Flat No strategy in Omani Arabic which is "لا" or "laː" meaning "No" in English. It was used twice: once to refuse a request and once to refuse an invitation. The participants considered the Flat No strategy as too direct, and hence, it might imply impoliteness. They observed that such impoliteness was not only harmful for their interlocutor's face but also might be harmful to their own face. For example, Yusuf had second thoughts about using a Flat No to refuse a request because it could be very offensive to the listener. He used Flat No in

response to AR1: "<u>No</u>, doctor. I can't be late because I will go home." He stated: "It is better to start with an apology than with a Flat No." At the same time, he perceived that the negative effect caused by this strategy to the listener also affects him. He noted: "I won't feel impolite" if I start with an apology unlike starting with a Flat No. Even though Reem did not use a Flat No strategy in her refusals, she attested to its negative impact on the interlocutor's face. She commented: "I don't say No to peoples' faces. I don't accept it morally." She added: "I would use No when I am kidding with my professors if they were kidding with me as well." Despite her use of Flat No in her refusal to AI4, Mimi acknowledged its negative effect on the interlocutor. She commented: "' laː ' is a strong refusal. I mean there is no consideration" for the feelings of the interlocutor when somebody uses it. However, she viewed her use of Flat No when refusing the media event invitation in AI4 as acceptable because she thought that its negative effect was counterbalanced with the Gratitude strategy she used immediately after Flat No. She refused by saying: "<u>No,</u> thank you. I'm busy till the end of the week."

The Negation strategy was realized by the use of "ما أقدر"or "maː ʔqdar"meaning "I can't." The participants usually used "maː ʔqdar" followed by the preposition of the request or invitation. The participants perceived a Negation as being less offensive than a Flat No. They maintained that unlike Flat No, Negation mainly expressed their inability to fulfill the request or the invitation due to their circumstances, while Flat No was a plain refusal. Al-Yazan used Negation, for example, in his refusal to AI3: "Doctor, I appreciate this matter [the invitation] or this situation, but <u>I can't</u> because I have a limited time to finish my research. So, excuse me. <u>I can't</u>." He clarified that Negation might indicate a lack of desire to help, while a Flat No might indicate rudeness. He observed: "If I say " maː ʔqdar", he [the interlocutor] will feel that I don't want to help. It will be rude of me at the same time to use "laa" directly…Rude for both of us."

To reduce the undesired negative implication of using Negation, the participants often preceded and/or followed " ma: ʔqdar" with an indirect strategy such as Regret or Gratitude as in the previous example. The participants who used Negation more than twice in the same refusal response such as Al-Yazan explained that such repetition was meant to confirm or emphasize that their refusal was final and there was nothing they could do to fulfill the request or the invitation.

Regret

The participants used different expressions to express Regret in Omani Arabic such as "عذرا، معذرة،اعذرني،اسمحلي لي، السموحة" or "ʕuðrann, maʕðiratann, ʔuʕðrni:, ʔismaħli:, i-sumuħa" which translate to "Excuse me" in English. For example, Mimi used "ʔuʕðrni: " in refusal to AR1: "Excuse me. I can't participate because I have an appointment with my family." Also, they used "آسف/آسفه" or "a:sif /a:sfa" which translate to "Sorry" and "I'm sorry" in English. For example, Reem used "a:sfa" and ʔismaħli:" to refuse to AR2: "Sorry doctor. I'm in a hurry now. And I mean I don't have time to explain to you. So, excuse me." While expressions that imply the meaning of "Excuse me" were viewed as similar in meaning, some participants argued that they would use "ʕuðrann, maʕðiratann, ʔuʕðrni:" in more formal settings in which Standard Arabic could be used for communication such as in a university setting and/or other official circles. On the other hand, they viewed "ʔismaħli:" and " i-sumuħa" as standard expressions for "Excuse me" in Omani Arabic, which could be used in formal and informal communication settings.

All the participants agreed that none of the regret expressions they used to refuse requests and invitations were meant to show real regret or apology. They explained that they used them as a courtesy or a politeness gesture to reduce the negative impact of the direct refusal on their interlocutors and, hence, to appear as polite speakers. The participants added that the regret

expressions that mean "Excuse me" could suggest that the speaker had no other choice but to refuse due to his/her circumstances. For example, Reem believed that "aːsfa," had stronger meaning than "ʔismaħliː" because it implied a true sense of regret. She clarified that "aːsfa" meant that one had the ability to comply with the request or the invitation; hence, she could use it to express a sense of regret when refusing. On the other hand, "ʔismaħliː" meant that the fulfilment of the request or the invitation was out of her hands, which meant her confidence in her inability to comply with the request or the invitation was very high, and thus there was no sense of guilt at all in her refusal. Accordingly, other participants avoided using the expression of "aːsif" or "aːsfa" altogether to avoid expressing any real sense of regret or apology. Fajir, for example, said that she would not use it to refuse. She explained that you use "'aːsfa' when you are wrong." She added: "'i-sumuħa' is better because you are not apologizing for something you did wrong." Fajir noted that the meaning of "'aːsfa' " will vary depending on the nature of the situation (see Section 4.1.2 below).

On the other hand, Khaled had a different take on the expressions with the meaning of "Sorry. " He contended that, "aːsif", for example, could also imply that the refusal was final and there was no point in arguing or trying to convince him to comply with the request or the invitation. For example, in refusing to AI4, he said: "I won't be able to attend the event. I will have work to do after three days. Sorry." He explained that "Sorry" would not allow his interlocutor to negotiate the refusal. He commented on his use: "I use 'aasef' if the thing [refusal] is final." However, he contended that 'esmahli' as in his refusal to AR2, "Excuse me my brother. There is someone waiting for me. I'm going to the library to get some essentials [references.] I have an assignment. I have to finish it," as "an attempt to win his [interlocutor's] satisfaction, but if he did not feel happy about the refusal, that would be his problem."

Excuse

The Excuse strategy was frequently used in refusals to both speech acts by all ten participants. As discussed in Section 4.1.2 below, the participants' explanations for their use of this strategy were related to sociopragmatic variables such as degree of imposition, social distance, situational variation and affective factors.

Suggestion and Assurance

The participants used two types of Suggestion strategies: Solution Suggestion and Proposition Suggestion. In refusals to AR2 (i.e., directions request), four participants used a Solution Suggestion strategy and one of them followed it with an Assurance strategy. They attributed their use of these strategies to their desire to eliminate two negative feelings: their interlocutor's fear and hesitation to ask again for directions from other people and the negative impression their interlocutor might have about them because they refused to help. Al-Yazan, for instance, used Solution Suggestion to refuse AR2: "I'm sorry. I have something important. I have to finish. So, you could ask other people." He explained that he made a suggestion to his interlocutor because, "Some people feel hesitant to ask. We are afraid that the person we ask might not know [the directions] or we might bother him/her." Taif followed her Solution Suggestion (the first underline part of her response) with an Assurance (the second underlined part) in her refusal to AR2: "I wish I could help you but I have something urgent. I have to do. Excuse me. You could ask somebody else here. Everybody will help you." She explained her use of Solution Suggestion as follows: "I tried to do at least a little thing to help her [the interlocutor]. She might think everybody would refuse to help her. I open the way for her to ask [by suggesting a solution] and I leave." It seems that by using the Assurance strategy, Taif wanted "to assure her [the interlocutor]."

Areej, on the other hand, wanted to preserve her image in her refusal to AR2: "I'm sorry but now I'm in a hurry. <u>You could see someone else</u>." She explained that suggesting a solution was a strategy to "not give him [the interlocutor] a space to think of something else [negative]…to make him forget that there was a person who passed by and refused to help." She added: "He won't think that she did not help me. All what he will think of is something else," specifically, finding another person to help him. Al-Yazan assumed that the unfamiliar professor who was asking for directions was new to SQU. Therefore, because Ali was a member of the SQU community, he felt "committed to SQU" and that he "represents SQU." Accordingly, any negative impression he might give to strangers might be generalized to the SQU community as a whole.

Proposition Suggestion was used by one participant in refusing the invitation to a media event (AI4). Taif refused to AI4 by saying: "Thank you for the invitation but frankly I'm not very interested in Media field. <u>I will try to look for another event to enjoy more</u>. Excuse me." She explained that she had to propose an alternative to the proposition in the invitation because she already established that she "was looking for an event to attend," but, at the same time, she was not interested in media related events. Therefore, she felt that she needed to suggest what else she would try to attend after finishing her assignments.

Gratitude and Compliment

A Gratitude strategy was only used to refuse invitations in Omani Arabic. It was often used at the onset of a refusal. The participants mainly used "شكرا " or "ʃukrann" (Thank you) to express gratitude. For example, Mimi refused AI3 using "'ʃukrann' ": "<u>Thank you</u> but I can't attend. I'm too busy." Al-Yazan was the only one who used "أنا مقدر " or "ʔana mqadir" (I appreciate) as a gratitude expression in his refusal to AI3: "Doctor. <u>I appreciate this matter [this</u>

invitation] or this situation. But I can't because I have a limited time to finish my research. So, excuse me. I can't attend." However, Al-Yazan confirmed that "Ɂana mqadir" and "ʃukrann" had similar meanings. In refusing the professor who was inviting them to a lecture related to their research projects (AI3), the participants affirmed that the use of a Gratitude strategy was meant to express a sincere gratitude. For example, Mimi explained that expressing gratitude meant that she wanted to recognize" her professor's "initiative" for inviting her to something beneficial for her. Al-Yazan added that "because he [the interlocutor] is introducing something to you [inviting you] that you will benefit from and you have to appreciate it." On the other hand, when they were invited to an event they thought they would not benefit from, such as the invitation to a media event, the participants tended to use the Gratitude strategy to express politeness, rather than gratitude. For example, Fajir refused to AI4: "Aha! Thank you doctor for the invitation but Wallah I'm not interested. Frankly, I don't think I can attend." She explained that "ʃukrann" in such situations would be a polite way of saying No and not a real "Thank you." Mimi added that "ʃukrann" meant "I can't" in a polite way. She explained that it was like saying " aːsif" when you refuse a request. Taif confirmed this interpretation and added that "ʃukrann" meant that she was simply "not interested."

Similar to the utilization of Gratitude, Compliments were used to express either gratitude or as a gesture of politeness. For instance, Ali, Abdullah and Fajir used Compliment to refuse the invitation of a professor who invited them to a lecture they would benefit from (AI3). Abdualla refused by saying: "Wallah doctor, it is a good opportunity but the problem is that I don't have time and the project I haven't completed it and I need all the time to work on it." In the interview, Abdullah said that he could replace a Compliment with any expression of gratitude. Fajir and Ali agreed. However, in his refusal to a professor's invitation to a Media event (AI4), Ali stated that

he used a Compliment as a touch of politeness only and not to express appreciation since the invitation was a public event and he might not benefit from it. In his refusal to AI4, Ali said: "Walla it was my desire to attend. I am enthusiastic, but I have an assignment and many things I have to finish first. If I finish them, Insha' Allah, I'll try to attend."

Wish, Condition for Past Acceptance and Combination

Four participants used the strategy of Wish for Self to refuse requests and invitations in Omani Arabic. The participants used this strategy for two reasons: to express a sincere interest in the proposition of the request or the invitation and to express appreciation. For example, in their refusals to requests, Taif and Ali stated that they wanted to express that they had a sincere interest in fulfilling the requests. Thus, using Wish for Self helped them to express clearly such a sincere desire despite their refusals of the propositions. In her refusal to AR1, Taif said: "I wish I could help you but I have something urgent. I have to do. Excuse me. You could ask someone else here. Everybody will help you." However, Fajir and Al-Yazan utilized this strategy to express appreciation in their refusals of invitations. Fajir used it in her refusal to AI3: "I wish but I can't. It would be nice but I can't. I have a lecture doctor. I have too much work." Fajir commented on her response in the interview as follows: "I'm appreciative that he wanted to help me" by inviting me to attend a lecture that I would benefit from.

The Condition for Past Acceptance strategy and Combination strategy were used three times. The participants attributed their use of the Condition for Past Acceptance strategy to their desire to comply with the request that they refused due to personal reasons. For example, in her refusal to AI3, Areej said: "Frankly doctor, if I had the time, I would have attended, but I have to submit [my] research and I don't have time." Areej explained during the interview that the

Condition for Past Acceptance strategy "means that you want to attend…as if I'm, in a way, I'm obliged to refuse."

Ali was the only one who used the Combination strategy in refusing AI4. He first placed a Condition for a Future Acceptance (the first underlined part in the following example), then he ended his response with an Indefinite Acceptance (the underlined second part). Idris refused by saying: "Wallah, it was my desire to attend. I'm enthusiastic, but I have assignments and many things I have to finish first. If I finish them, Insha' Allah, I'll try to attend." During the interview, Ali described his use as a precaution due to the uncertainty of the future. He explained: "I expect anything to happen in the coming days. My assignment might be delayed to the following week. So, I can attend. So just in case any change takes place."

Summary

To sum up, the participants used two types of direct strategies: Flat No and Negation. They perceived Flat No as more offensive than Negation and the two participants who used Flat No had second thoughts about using it. The participants thought the Flat No strategy expressed a strong sense of rejection, while they thought Negation expressed the speaker's inability to comply with the proposition, which implied that the speaker was willing to help in the first place.

In addition, the participants used nine indirect strategies. For the Regret strategy, the participants used a variety of regret expressions in Omani Arabic, which could be mainly translated as "Excuse me" and "I'm sorry" in English. The Regret strategy in refusing requests was mainly used to express politeness by reducing the negative effect of the Negation strategy. However, some participants expressed a real apology in refusal of the directions situation. In the refusal of invitation, the Regret strategy was used as a gesture of politeness and sometimes it was used to express that the refusal to the invitation was final. The second strategy was Excuse,

which was utilized in relation to various sociopragmatic variables such as social distance and affective factors. Solution Suggestion and Assurance occurred together. They were mainly used in refusal of the directions situation to offer alternative solutions to the interlocutor by way of expressing care and understanding the interlocutor's request for immediate help. Proposition Suggestion was used to refuse once in response to an invitation. Its use was motivated by the nature of the situation itself. In other words, the participant thought it was important to explain to her interlocutor what else she was interested in attending after refusing the invitation to attend a public event. Gratitude and Compliment strategies were mainly used in refusal of invitations. Both strategies were used to express appreciation to the initiator of the invitation and as a gesture of politeness. Wish for Self and Set Condition for Past Acceptance strategies were used to refuse requests and invitations. They were mainly used to express sincere interest in the proposition of the speech act. The Combination strategy was used as a precaution technique in case the circumstance of the speaker changed and he could attend the event he was invited to.

4.1.1.3 *Use of Pragmatic Markers*

Table 4.2 reports results concerning the use of pragmatic markers by the participants when refusing in Arabic. In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of degree of imposition, two main differences are worth noting in the use of pragmatic markers by the participants to refuse requests and invitations in Omani Arabic: the type and frequency of pragmatic markers used. In refusals to requests, the participants used ten pragmatic markers: Preparator, Downtoner, Consequences Downtoner, Assessment, Emphasis, Manner of Speaking, Understater, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity as shown in Example 4.3.

Table 4.2. Frequency of Pragmatic Markers in Omani Arabic Refusals

| Marker | Requests (+RI) Scenarios | | | | | | Invitations (-RI) Scenarios | | | | | |
| | AR1(-SD) | | AR2 (+SD) | | | | AI3 (-SD) | | AI4 (+SD) | | | |
	f	*n*	*f*	*n*	Σ*f*	*%*	*f*	*n*	*f*	*n*	Σ*f*	*%*
1. Subjectivizer									2	2	2	5.1
2. Preparator	1	1	1	1	2	6.7	1	1	1	1	2	5.1
3. Downtoner			4	4	4	13.3						
4. Consequences Downtowner	2	2			2	6.7			1	1	1	2.6
5. Emotion									2	2	2	5.1
6. Assessment	1	1			1	3.3	1	1	1	1	2	5.1
7. Emphasis	1	1			1	3.3						
8. Manner of Speaking	2	1	1	1	3	10	4	3	6	5	10	25.6
9. Understater			1	1	1	3.3						
10. Intensifier	2	2	2	1	4	13.3	5	5	4	2	9	23.1
11. Address	7	7	4	4	11	36.7	8	8	3	3	11	28.2
12. Solidarity			1	1	1	3.3						
Total	**16**		**14**		**30**		**19**		**20**		**39**	

Notes:
f: frequency of use of pragmatic markers in response to the scenario across all participants.
n: number of participants who used the pragmatic markers in response to the scenario.
Σf: sum of the frequencies of pragmatic markers across scenarios.
%: the percentage of the times the pragmatic marker was used out of the total number of all markers across all scenarios and participants.

Example 4.3:

Preparator:	<u>The problem is</u> that I am in a hurry.
Downtoner:	You <u>could</u> ask someone else here<u>.</u>
Consequences Downtoner:	<u>Insha' Allah</u>, I'll try to attend.
Assessment:	<u>Unfortunately</u>, I can't.
Emphasis:	I can't because I <u>really</u> have something important in the weekend.
Manner of Speaking:	<u>Wallah</u> it was my desire frankly to participate with you in the exhibition.
Understater:	I have <u>a little bit</u> of work.
Intensifier:	I'm <u>so</u> sorry.
Address:	Excuse me <u>doctor</u>.
Solidarity:	Excuse me <u>my brother</u>.

The participants used eight pragmatic markers when refusing invitations: Subjectivizer, Preparator, Consequence Downtoner, Emotion, Assessment, Manner of Speaking, Intensifier, and Address. For examples of Subjectivizer and Emotion markers, see Example 4.4. Some pragmatic markers were exclusively used to refuse +RI requests such as Emphasis, Downtoner, Understater and Solidarity, while Subjectivizer and Emotion markers were exclusively used to refuse the -RI invitations.

Example 4.4:

Subjectivizer:	<u>I don't think</u> I will attend.
Emotion:	<u>Oh!</u> The time does not suit me.

In terms of frequency, Address, Intensifier and Downtoner were the most frequently used pragmatic markers to refuse requests and invitations as shown in Table 4.2. However, there was a slight difference in the frequency of these markers depending on degree of imposition. For example, Address was used 36.7% ($f = 11$) when refusing requests and 28.2% to refuse invitations ($f = 11$). Intensifier and Downtoner were used 13.3% ($f = 4$) in refusing requests

followed by Manner of Speaking at 10% (f= 3). However, in refusing invitations, Manner of Speaking was used at 25.6% (f= 10) followed by Intensifier at 23.1% (f= 9).

In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of social distance, some variation in the type and frequency of pragmatic markers was observed. For instance, the participants used the pragmatic markers of Consequences Downtoner, Assessment and Emphasis exclusively to refuse the -SD requests, while they used the markers of Downtoner, Understater and Solidarity exclusively to refuse the +SD requests. The pragmatic markers of Address, Intensifier and Manner of Speaking remained the most frequent markers in both types of scenarios with a varying degree of frequency. For example, seven participants used Address in refusals to the -SD request (f=7), in contrast to four participants who used it in refusal to +SD requests (f= 4). Intensifier was used by two participants to refuse the -SD request (f= 2) while it was used only by one participants twice to refuse the +SD request.

Social distance had a similar influence on refusals to invitations. The pragmatic markers of Subjectivizer, Consequences Downtoner and Emotion were exclusively used to refuse the +SD invitation while the rest of the markers were shared by both types of (i.e., ± SD) invitations but with varying degree of frequency. For example, eight participants used Address to refuse the -SD invitation (f= 8), while only three of them used it to refuse the +SD invitation (f= 3). Also, five of them used Intensifier to refuse the -SD invitation (f= 5), while two of them used it four times to refuse the +SD invitation (f= 4). Manner of Speaking, on the other hand, was used by three participants with the -SD invitation (f= 4), while it was used by five participants with the +SD invitations (f= 6).

Summary

To sum up, in terms of the use of pragmatic markers, participants used ten pragmatic markers to refuse requests and eight markers to refuse invitations. Downtoner, Emphasis and Understater markers were exclusively used to refuse requests. The Address marker was the most frequently used marker in refusal to both types of speech acts followed by Intensifier and Manner of Speaking markers. The participants used an equal number of pragmatic markers (seven markers) to refuse the requests of +SD and -SD interlocutors. However, they used eight pragmatic markers to refuse the invitation of the +SD interlocutor and only five to refuse that of the -SD interlocutor.

4.1.1.4 *Perception of Pragmatic Markers*

Subjectivizer

Two students used a Subjectivizer marker of "ما أظن" or "<u>ma: ʔaðˤun"</u> and "مأعتقد" or <u>"ma: ʔʕtaqid"</u> (I don't think) when refusing the invitation of an unfamiliar professor to a media event. Fajir used "<u>ma: ʔaðˤun"</u> to refuse to AI4: "Aha! Thank you doctor for the invitation but Wallah I'm not interested. Frankly, <u>I don't think</u> I can attend" while Abdualla used <u>"ma: ʔʕtaqid"</u> in refusal to the same scenario: "Wallah I have attended the Creative Media Forum the last time and I didn't like it much. Especially, I am not interested in Media. So, <u>I don't think</u> I will attend." Both of them justified their use of this marker as a way to introduce their personal opinion about the proposition. For instance, in the interview, Fajir attributed her use of a Subjectivizer to "the lack of a reason that prevents [her] from attending…I don't have interest, so frankly I don't think I can attend…It is an opinion, a feeling" and not a solid reason. She refused by saying: "Aha! Thank you doctor for the invitation but Wallah I'm not interested. Frankly, <u>I don't think</u> I Can attend."

Emotion

The Emotion marker of " اوه " or (Oh!) was used by Reem in her refusal to AI4, " Oh! The time doesn't suit me. Sorry. But thank you for the invitation." During the interview, Reem explained that she used this marker to express that she wanted to attend the event but she couldn't. In other words, this emotional marker reflected her feeling of missing out on an opportunity. Fajir, on the other hand, used the Emotion marker of "اها" or "ʔaha:" (Aha!) as a compliment in her refusal to AI4: " Aha! Thank you doctor for the invitation but Wallah I'm not interested. Frankly, I don't think I can attend." She commented during the interview that "When somebody brings you news. When somebody is enthusiastic telling you something, you have to show him/her that you like the news."

Preparator

The participants used the Preparator marker "المشكلة "or "almuʃkila" (the problem). Abdulla and Areej maintained that the use of " almuʃkila" was to express that they were refusing and at the same time they had reasons preventing them from fulfilling the request or the invitation. Areej, for example, used this marker when refusing to AR2: "The problem is I am busy during this time and I can't attend." During the interview, she explained: " 'almuʃkila' clarifies that I am busy. It means that if I have the time, there will be no problem. I will attend…It explains that that I have an excuse." Similarly, in his refusal to AI3, Abdulla refused by saying: "Wallah doctor, it is a good opportunity but the problem is that I don't have time…and the project I have not finished it and I need all of the time to work on it." During the interview, he explained that "'almushkilah' means I'm refusing and there is something a little bit difficult that stops me from helping."

Consequences Downtoner

The Consequences Downtoner marker of "إن شاء الله" or "ʔin ʃa:ʔ alla:" (God willing) was used by three participants. Khaled used it in his refusal to AR1: " I can't be with you there in the exhibition because I will go on a picnic with my family on Saturday, <u>Insha' Allah</u>. So, I can't. Excuse me." Taif used this marker when refusing to AR1: " Excuse me doctor. I can't because I promised my family to go home this weekend and we have a plan, <u>Insha' Allah.</u> So, unfortunately I can't. " In both cases, the use of this marker coincided with talking about future plans; however, no explanation was provided concerning its use during the the interviews.

The third participant, Ali, used this marker as part of a Combination strategy, which consisted of a Condition for Future Acceptance strategy and an Indefinite Acceptance strategy. He refused to AI4 as follows: "Wallah it was my desire to attend. I'm enthusiastic, but I have an assignment and many things I have to finish first. If I finish them, <u>Insha' Allah</u>, I'll try to attend." Ali explained his use of the Combination strategy during the interview by stating that he had no knowledge of how the future would unfold and there could be possible changes in his circumstances that might allow him to attend. Idris did not provide a direct explanation for the use of "Insha' Allah." However, his justification for using the Combination strategy also fits with the definition of "Insha' Allah" as a downtoner for potential future negative consequences.

Downtoner

Downtoner markers were use to suggest a solution in refusals to giving directions (AR2). The participants used "بإمكانك،ممكن " or "mumkin", and "biʔimkanik" (could). Areej, for example, used "mumkin" to refuse to AR2: "I'm sorry but now I'm in a hurry. <u>You could see someone else</u>." Al-Yazan used " biʔimkanik" to refuse the same scenario: ""I'm sorry. I have something

important. I have to finish. So, <u>you could ask other people</u>." No data was collected concerning the use of this marker.

Assessment

The Assessment marker was used three times by three participants: once to refuse a request and twice to refuse invitations. All three participants used"للأسف" or "lilʔasaf" (unfortunately) as an Assessment marker. The participants reported that the use of "lilʔasaf" was triggered by a wish or a desire to fulfill the request or the invitation. Yusuf, for example, used this marker in his refusal to AI4:"<u>Unfortuantley</u> doctor, I can't, because I have assignments. I have to submit by the end of the week." During the interview, Yusuf remarked that "It [lilʔasaf] is similar to wish. I feel bad that I could not accept his [the interlocutor's] invitation. I use unfortunately to clarify to him that I am interested." During the interview, Taif questioned her use of "unfortunately" in her refusal to the request in AR1: "Excuse me doctor. I cannot because I promised my family to go home this weekend and we have a plan Insha' Allah. So, <u>unfortunately</u>, I can't." She explained: "I shouldn't have used it. The desire to go home is stronger than helping her [the interlocutor]." Khaled, on the other hand, did not have a desire to attend the lecture in AI3; however, he felt that using "lilʔasaf," " might indicate a desire to attend, which would be a nice gesture that would make his interlocutor happy. He refused by saying: "Sorry doctor. I can't attend because I have a submission [deadline for submitting an assignment]. It has to be ready during this time exactly. So, <u>unfortunately</u>, I can't. Sorry."

Manner of Speaking

As a Manner of Speaking marker, the participants utilized "بصراحة" or "bisˤaraħa" (frankly) and "والله" or "Wallah" (By Allah). For example, Areej used "bisˤaraħa" with Condition for Past Acceptance to refuse to AI3: " <u>Frankly</u> if I had the time I would have attended, but I

have to submit [my] research and I don't have time." Al-Yazan used "Wallah" with a Wish for Self strategy to refuse to AI4: "Wallah doctor I wish I could attend but I have assignment. I have to finish them by the end of the week. So, excuse me. I can't attend, I mean, with you." Idris, on the other hand, used both markers together to intensify the Compliment in his refusal to AI3: "Wallah, frankly, it is a good chance to attend but I have no time. And I have to finish the research quickly. Thank you for…/Thank you for telling me about this subject." The participants agreed that "bisˤaraħa" and "Wallah" could be used interchangeably. They stated that both expressions were used to express the sincerity of the produced speech act, be it an apology, a wish, a compliment, or an excuse. For example, during the interview, Abdulla commented on his use of Wallah before a Compliment as follows: "It means that honestly I think it is a good thing…It means that I care a lot."

In addition, the participants extended the sense of sincerity conveyed by this marker from one part of their speech act, or one strategy with which the Manner of Speaking occurred, to the other strategies or even to the whole refusal speech act. For instance, Areej extended her use of "bisˤaraħa " in her refusal to AI3 from Condition to Past Acceptance to the Excuse that followed. She remarked during the interview that "It [bisˤaraħa] means that I am honest. My excuse is true." Additionally, the participants explained that the sense of sincerity conveyed by the Manner of Speaking markers was intended to convey that all of their speech was important and true which would make the whole refusal more convincing and more polite. Fajir explained the politeness conveyed by the Manner of speaking markers by stating that, even though honesty was unpleasant because it meant that you were refusing, it also meant "I respect you [the interlocutor]…I don't want to lie to you." Fajir explained that affirming that she was frank by using "bisˤaraħa" in a way was a compliment to the interlocutor.

Emphasis

The Emphasis marker of "فعلا" or "fiʕlann" (really) was used once by one participant in her refusal of AR1. Fajir refused by saying: "I'm so sorry doctor. I can't attend. I can't be there because I really have something important on the weekend." During the interview she explained her use of "fiʕlann" as an emphasis tool stating that "Because there is no [reasonable] reason to refuse [from the point of view of the interlocutor]. It is just I am going home. I use ' fiʕlann ' to emphasize the reason and make it more effective."

Understater

Understater markers in the form of "شويه" or "ʃuwayya" which means "قليلا" or /qalilann/ in standard Arabic (a little bit) were used once by one participant. Idris used "ʃuwayya" in his refusal to AR2: "Wallah, excuse me doctor. I …It is my desire to help but I have to go. I have a little bit of work." However, no explanation was provided for the use of this marker during the interview.

Intensifier

The participants used Intensifier markers to intensify the meaning of the strategy they were used with. The participants used intensifying words such as " واجد/وايد، كثير" or "wayed/wagid and kθiːr", which means "كثيرا " or "kaθiːrann" in standard Arabic (a lot, too much, very, too or many). For example, Mimi used " kθiːr"" with her Excuse in her refusal of AI3: "Thank you but I can't attend. I'm too busy." Reem used "wagid" in her refusal to AR1: " Sorry doctor. I have too much work on Thursday and Friday." Also, the participants used "جدا" or /gidann/ which (very or so).   For example, Fajir used "giddan" with Regret strategy: "I'm so sorry doctor. I can't attend. I can't be there because I really have something important in the weekend."

However, when they intensified time, some participants used "كافي" or /kafi/, which means "كاف" or /kafinn/ in standard Arabic (enough). Taif used "kafi" in her refusal to AI3: "sorry doctor. I don't have enough time to attend. I have to finish the work of my research and submit it within these two weeks." Abdulla used "كل" or /kull/, (all). He refused to AI3 by saying: "Wallah doctor, it is a good opportunity but the problem is that I don't have time and the project I have to finish it and I need <u>all</u> of the time to work on it."

Most of the participants did not provide explanations for their use of these markers, except for Fajir and Abdulla who provided short explanations for their use of an Intensifier. For example, Fajir explained during the interview that "When the reason [for refusal] is not strong, you notice too much, really, [and] very" in her refusals. In other words, the use of an Intensifier marker seems to be intended to give credibility to her refusal. Similarly, Abdullah perceived his use of an Intensifier marker as a way "to make him/her [the interlocutor] understand that it is not about refusing to help. It is about I am truly in a hurry."

Address and Solidarity

The title "doctor" was the only title used to address the professors. The participants attributed their use of titles mainly to the influence of the sociopragmatic variable of social distance. One participant, however, attributed her use of titles to the degree of imposition in addition to social distance (see Section 4.1.2 below).

Solidarity, on the other hand, was used by one participant in refusing a request for directions. Khaled used "my brother" to address his interlocutor. During the interview, he explained that he imagined a young Omani man close in age to him but older than him. Therefore, he contended that he did not see a need to use a title to address his interlocutor. Thus, "my brother" was meant to express solidarity. He refused AI2 by saying: "Excuse me <u>my</u>

brother. There is someone waiting for me. I am going to the library to get some references. I have an assignment. I have to complete it."

Summary:

In conclusion, the participants used twelve pragmatic markers: Subjectivizer, Preparator, Downtoner, Consequences Downtoner, Emotion, Assessment, Emphasis Manner of Speaking, Understater, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity. The participants used five basic markers to modify the pragmatic force of the speech act, be it the refusal or pragmatic strategies in the refusal speech act, such as Excuse and Solution Suggestion. The Subjectivizer marker, for example, was used with Negation strategy to introduce the refusal as the participants' personal opinion. The Emotion marker was used to refuse invitations. "Oh!" was used to express interest in the proposition of the invitation and "Aha!" was used to compliment the speech act initiator's work. The Preparator marker in the form of "the problem is" was used to announce the refusal and, at the same time, to indicate the problematic nature of the situation that prevented the speakers from complying with the request. The Consequences Downtoner was used when talking about future actions or plans. The Downtoner marker was used with Solution Suggestion. However, no explanation for the use of the latter markers was provided.

The participants used Assessment, Manner of Speaking, Emphasis, Understater, and Intensifier to comment on the content of the pragmatic strategies. They used the Assessment marker to comment on how unfortunate their inability to attend was because it ran counter to their desire to attend. They used "frankly" and "Wallah" as Manner of Speaking markers to comment on the sincerity of their manner of speaking, be it an excuse, apology, or even a compliment. The Emphasis marker was used to stress the message of the pragmatic strategy it was used with, be it an apology, excuse or any other strategy. The Intensifier markers were used

with different strategies such as Regret and Excuse to intensify the meaning of the strategy. In some cases, they were used to intensify the time, but no explanation for this use was provided. In addition, no explanation was provided for the use of the Understater markers. The use of the parallel marker of Address was motivated by the sociopragmatic variable of power and social distance. Finally, the parallel marker of Solidarity was used to refuse the directions request. When the participant wanted to express solidarity with his Omani fellow interlocutor.

4.1.1.5 *Refusal Patterns in Omani Arabic*

The realization of refusals to requests and invitations in both Omani Arabic consisted of a combination of direct and indirect strategies arranged in many different ways that resulted in 15 different combinations of semantic formulas. Each order or combination is referred to as a pattern. For economical purposes, the patterns were categorized under main patterns or head patterns and sub-pattern that branch out from the main patterns. This categorization resulted in fifteen main patterns, which were given numbers from 1 to 15 as shown in Table 4.3. For example, the main pattern number 2 is Negation-Excuse and includes three sub- patterns: **Φ (i.e.,** Negation—Excuse only**),** Negation-Excuse followed by **Regret, and** Negation-Excuse followed by **Negation and Regret.** The numbers from 1 to 15 are used to refer to these main patterns in Table 4.3. In addition, each slot in the pattern is allocated for the type of the strategy, but not the number of times the strategy was used. In other words, if the same strategy was used more than once consecutively, it was assigned the same slot in the pattern only once (see Example 4.5). The symbol **Φ means that no other stratgey was used with the main pattern. It is important to note that the same refusal patterns were found in the English refusal.**

Example 4.5:

Main Pattern: Pattern 4: Regret—Excuse

Sub-Pattern: Regret—Excuse (i.e., two excuses or ×2 Excuse) — **Φ**

Refusal: Excuse me—I'm in a hurry—I have lecture

Table 4.3. Refusal Patterns

N.	Main Pattern	Sub-Pattern (followed by)
1	Flat No	1. Negation—Excuse 2. Gratitude—Excuse
2	Negation—Excuse	1. Φ (i.e., no other strategies are used with the main pattern) 2. Regret 3. Negation—Regret 4. Excuse
3	Regret—Negation—Excuse	1. Negation 2. Negation—Regret 3. Regret 4. Wish for Others
4	Regret—Excuse	1. Φ 2. Regret 3. Regret—Negation 4. Negation 5. Negation—Excuse 6. Negation—Past Acceptance--Excuse 7. Solution Suggestion 8. Solution Suggestion—Regret 9. Gratitude
5	Regret	1. Solution Suggestion—Excuse 2. Wish for Self—Excuse 3. Gratitude—Excuse—Negation—Regret
6	Excuse	1. Φ 2. Negation 3. Regret—Negation/Gratitude 4. Proposition Suggestion—Compliment
7	Compliment—Excuse	1. Φ 2. Gratitude 3. Proposition Suggestion
8	Compliment—Negation	1. Φ 2. Excuse
9	Compliment	1. Indefinite Reply 2. Gratitude—Indefinite Reply—Negation
10	Wish for Self—Excuse	1. Φ 2. Regret 3. Regret—Negation 4. Regret—Solution Suggestion—Assurance

			5. Solution Suggestion—Assurance
11	Wish for Self	1.	Negation—Compliment—Negation--Excuse
		2.	Compliment—Excuse—Combination
12	Gratitude—Negation	1.	Φ
		2.	Excuse
		3.	Excuse—Regret—Negation
13	Gratitude—Excuse	1.	Φ
		2.	Negation
		3.	Regret—Negation
		4.	Proposition Suggestion—Regret
14	Gratitude	1.	Regret—Negation
		2.	Regret—Negation—Excuse—Negation—Regret
		3.	Wish for Self—Excuse—Regret
15	Others	1.	Sense of Loss—Excuse
		2.	Solution Suggestion—Excuse—Regret
		3.	Past Acceptance—Excuse
		4.	Postponement

However, if the same strategy occurred two or more times and each occurrence is separated by another type of strategy, each occurrence of this strategy is assigned a new slot in the pattern as shown in Example 4.6.

Example 4.6:

Main Pattern:	Regret—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Excuse—Negation—Excuse
Refusal:	I am sorry—I'm in a hurry—I cannot help you right now—because I have a midterm.

In refusals to requests in Omani Arabic, the participants employed six main patterns: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 (see Table 4.4). The most frequent pattern was pattern 4 (i.e., Regret—Excuse) which accounted for 20% (f= 8) of the refusals, followed by pattern 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) at 25% (f= 5). The rest of the patterns accounted for between 5% and 10% (f= 1 and 2) of all the refusals (see Examples 4.7 and 4.8). However, in refusals to invitations, the participants used a wider range of combinations of strategies resulting in eleven patterns: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10,

11, 12, 13, and 14 (see Table 4.4). Patterns 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were exclusively used to

refuse invitations in Omani Arabic. Pattern 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) and pattern 6

(i.e., Excuse) were the most frequently used patterns (15%, $f=$ 3) (see Examples 3.9 and 3.10).

The frequency of the rest of the patterns varied between 5% and 10% ($f=$ 5 and 2).

Table 4.4. Frequency of Refusal Patterns in Omani Arabic Refusals

	Pattern	Requests			Invitations		
		f	*n*	*%*	*f*	*n*	*%*
1	Flat No	1	1	5	1	1	5
2	Negation—Excuse	2	2	10	2	2	10
3	Regret—Negation—Excuse	5	5	25	3	3	15
4	Regret—Excuse	8	8	40	1	1	5
5	Regret	2	2	10			
6	Excuse				3	3	15
7	Compliment—Excuse				2	2	10
10	Wish for Self—Excuse	2	2	10	1	1	5
11	Wish for Self				2	2	10
12	Gratitude—Negation				2	2	10
13	Gratitude—Excuse				2	2	10
14	Gratitude				1	1	5
	Total	**20**			**20**		

However, in refusals to invitations, the participants used a wider range of combinations

of strategies resulting in eleven patterns: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 (see Table 4.4).

Patterns 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were exclusively used to refuse invitations in Omani Arabic.

Pattern 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) and pattern 6 (i.e., Excuse) were the most frequently

used patterns (15%, $f=$ 3) (see Examples 3.9 and 3.10). The frequency of the rest of the patterns

varied between 5% and 10% ($f=$ 5 and 2).

Example 4.7:

Main Pattern 4:   Regret—Excuse

Sub-Pattern: Regret—Excuse—Regret

Refusal:	Sorry doctor—I'm in a hurry now—And I mean I don't have time to explain to you—So, excuse me.

Example 4.8:

Main Pattern3:	Regret—Negation—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Negation—Excuse— **Φ**
Refusal:	I'm sorry doctor—I can't because of a circumstance—Because I want to go to the library.

Example 4.9:

Main Pattern 3:	Regret—Negation—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Negation—Excuse (×2)—Negation—Regret
Refusal:	Sorry doctor—I can't attend because I have a submission [deadline for submitting an assignment]—It has to be ready during this time exactly—So, unfortunately, I can't—Sorry.

Example 4.10:

Main Pattern 6:	Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Excuse (×3) —Negation
Refusal:	Wallah I have attended the Creative Media Forum the last time— and I didn't like it much— Especially, I am not interested in Media—So, I don't think I will attend.

A Regret strategy was used fifteen times out of twenty refusals to requests as a head. However, in refusals to invitations, strategies such as Wish for Self, Compliment, and Gratitude were the preferred head strategies. As will be discussed below in Section 4.1.2 below, the participants' choices seem to be motivated mainly by their perceptions of the degree of imposition of requests and invitations.

Summary

To summarize, in their realization of refusals in Omani Arabic, the participants used six refusal patterns for refusing requests, while they used eleven patterns to refuse invitations. Refusal Pattern 4 (i.e., Regret—Excuse) and Pattern 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) were the most frequent patterns in refusal of requests. However, in refusal of invitations, Patterns 3

and 6 (i.e., Excuse) were the most frequently used patterns. In addition, participants preferred to start with the apology strategy when refusing a request to counterbalance the negative effect of Negation. However, starting a refusal response to an invitation with a Regret strategy was commonly accepted among the participants as a gesture of politeness. Initiating their refusal to invitation with Regret and Gratitude strategies was preferred.

4.1.2   *Perception of Sociopragmatic Variables*

This section reports the participants' perception of the influence of sociopragmatic variables on their pragmatic choices when refusing in Omani Arabic. The sociopragmatic variables examined in the Arabic ODCT were absolute ranking of imposition and social distance. However, in addition to these variables, the participants related their pragmatic choices to other variables such as the nature of the situation, affective factors, social power and gender.

4.1.2.1 *Absolute Ranking of Imposition*

During the course of the interviews, the participants were asked to rank the scenarios based on how difficult it was for them to refuse to each scenario. The participants ranked the scenarios from one (the most difficult to refuse) to four (the least difficult to refuse). The ten participants agreed that requests were more difficult to refuse than invitations. This was evident in their ranking of the two requests (i.e., AR1 and AR2), which were ranked first and second in terms of degree of difficulty to refuse, while they ranked invitations in the third and fourth places. They gave an average ranking of 1 to AR1 and 1.6 to AR2 and ranked AI3 at 3 and AI8 at 3.8.

The participants perceived requests as more difficult to refuse because they felt that the consequences of not fulfilling the requests were more problematic than the consequences of not fulfilling the invitations. These consequences, they thought, were triggered by the interlocutors'

need for them to comply with or fulfill the proposition of the request or the invitation rather than by the extent of the expenditure of goods, services and abilities requested of them (Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992) to fulfill both types of speech acts. All the participants maintained that, unlike requests, in the invitation situations, the interlocutor was offering something to them rather than asking for something from them. Therefore, the interlocutor did not need to comply with the invitation proposition and, as a result, refusing the invitation would not affect the interlocutor. As Fajir said during the interview, "It is easier to refuse an invitation than a request, because he [the interlocutor] won't be affected if I refuse the invitation…He is not in need." Similarly, Idris affirmed: "Because he [the interlocutor] is offering me something not requesting from me, he will not be affected by my refusal." Mimi also commented that " I know myself when I need to ask for something I have to gather the courage to do it, because you have to keep in mind that there is a possibility that this person might refuse. But in invitation, for sure there will [be] other people if the person you invited would not attend. It is ok. It does not mean much."

This understanding of the consequences of requests and invitations seems to have led to important variation in the pragmatic choices of the participants. For instance, the participants used a Regret strategy in their refusals to requests and invitations. However, this strategy tended to be used less frequently when refusing invitations than when refusing requests. The students who did not use any expression of regret to refuse invitations explained that there was no need to apologize for refusing invitations because the interlocutor was not in need of them to accept the invitations in the first place. Ali, for example, maintained that "gratitude is better than apology" when refusing an invitation. However, those who used regret to refuse an invitation explained that the less imposing nature of invitations allowed them to easily suspend any negotiation about

the invitations by using apology. Thus, apology was not used to express a true regret or a polite

gesture with invitations. For similar reasons, the direct strategies of Negation and Flat No tended

to be used slightly more frequently when refusing invitations (20.5%, f= 16) than when refusing

requests (14.3%, f=12). Overall, it seems that the students felt more at liberty to directly refuse

invitations than to refuse requests because invitations were less imposing.

As noted above, Regret expressions were not used to convey a true sense of regret when

refusing requests; however, they were used as polite gestures to reduce the negative impact of

direct refusal strategies such as Negation on the interlocutor's face. Furthermore, considering that

expressions with the meaning of "Excuse me" could suggest that the speaker had to refuse

because of their circumstances, the participants seemed to prefer to use this strategy more

frequently when refusing requests than when refusing invitations. Specifically, they used this

strategy twelve times out of the twenty times a Regret strategy was used to refuse a request.

Some of the participants realized that the negative consequences for the interlocutor's

face (i.e., the desire not to be rejected) could have a rebound effect for their positive face (i.e.,

the need to be respected and appreciated) in the form of perceived impoliteness. In other words,

they realized that when the interlocutor's request or invitation was rejected, the interlocutor could

perceive them as being impolite. For instance, Areej said that sometimes the interlocutor "might

not be affected [by her refusal] but I will worry what he might think of me." Thus, to be

perceived as a polite person, i.e., maintain a positive face, was important for Areej. Reem

affirmed that she would use titles when she refused her professors' requests even if she did not

use titles in previous turns in the conversation. She attributed her behavior to the potential

negative effect of refusals on the interlocutor's face and her own face. As she explained, "how

could I say I can't without [using the title] 'doctor'!" She clarified: "I have to say doctor. It is out

of being nice…because you don't want to be rude." However, she was not so adamant about using titles when refusing invitations because she perceived invitations as less imposing than requests.

While the participants mainly focused on their interlocutor's expectations of them to comply with his/her proposition in their assessment of relative imposition of requests versus invitations, they considered the extent of the expenditure of goods, services and abilities requested of them as relevant to their evaluation of this variable when they refused to the directions situation (AR2). In comparison to the first request (AR1), the participants perceived AR2 as being more difficult to refuse because of the minimal effort required of them to fulfill it. For example, Fajir commented: "I understand his situation…it is only a description of a place [directions to a place]. It is not like something that will take time." She affirmed: "This thing [request] is simple. It won't take much effort. It is difficult to refuse in this situation. Maybe that is why I asked for forgiveness."

However, one participant, Idris, cautioned against generalizing the perception of a limited expenditure of goods, services and abilities in the directions request to similar situations as the consequences could differ drastically. Ali explained that if somebody asked him for a limited amount of help in an urgent situation, he had to consider not only how his interlocutor would be affected but also how he (i.e., Ali) would be affected. For example, in an exam situation, if a student asked him for his pen (small request), he would easily refuse to help this student (severe consequences for the student). He elaborated that giving his colleague his pen would mean that he would not have a pen to write his exam, which would mean severe consequences for himself. Thus, he contended that it would not be so difficult to refuse in this situation even though the request was small and urgent and the consequences were severe for the interlocutor. Fajir added

that the difficulty to refuse in the directions situation could be simply explained by her lack of knowledge about the needed directions. She said: "Maybe if I don't know the place, I would say that I don't know. It won't be difficult. And I don't have to apologize. I don't know and that's it. Sorry. I don't know."

4.1.2.2 *The Nature of the Situation*

The participants maintained that even though requests were more imposing than invitations, the particulars of the situation such as time constraints had an impact on their perception of the difficulty to refuse in the various situations. All the participants agreed that the directions request (AR2) was more difficult to refuse than the request to help with the exhibition (AR1) due to lack of time. For example, in comparison with the request to help with the exhibition, the participants found the timespan for fulfilling the directions request to be limited and more urgent. Khaled explained this urgency during the interview: "It is difficult to refuse in this situation…because something might happen for him or there is something urgent…Maybe he wants to see someone in the deanship or maybe someone is waiting for him. Maybe he has an appointment." Also, the time required to fulfill the request was short. Khaled remarked: "I won't lose anything. In one minute, I can tell him [give him directions] and go."

In addition, they thought that the lack of time resulted in limited alternative options for the interlocutor to find somebody else to fulfill the directions request, which made the consequences high if the request was refused. Reem, for instance, thought that the consequences of refusing to help with the exhibition were less severe than the consequences of not fulfilling the directions request because the interlocutor had other alternatives to fulfill his/ her exhibition request. In her refusal of AR1, Reem said: "Sorry doctor. I have too much work on Thursday and Friday." During the interview she explained: "The request is for something in the weekend. Also,

you [the interlocutor] can find other students. Ask your students. Don't ask strangers. Here [the directions request], he does have other choices. He has to ask whoever he sees." Therefore, she used the Excuse strategy twice and provided lengthier explanation when refusing to AR2 compared to AR1: "Sorry doctor. I'm in a hurry now. I don't have time to explain to you. So, excuse me." Mimi also shared this understanding although there were no notable differences in the responses in terms of the type of strategy or length of refusal across the two scenarios.

The participants also considered the emotional burden the interlocutor could experience when asking for directions from strangers. For example, Fajir said: "He is really in need to ask for help. It is impossible for someone to stop you like that just to talk to you." She added: "If I am in his place, it would be embarrassing for me to stop someone to ask for directions. He would find it strange that I did not give him [directions]." Therefore, she wanted to help the interlocutor in the only way she could by suggesting a solution: "I'm sorry doctor, but you could ask someone else here, because I have to go now."

The participants' evaluations of the directions request and its consequences for the interlocutor resulted in unique uses and assessments of refusal strategies. For example, out of the eight times "aːsif /aːsfa" was used in refusing requests, the participants employed this strategy five times to refuse the directions request. However, unlike the use of the Regret expressions in refusing to help with the exhibition, the participants maintained that "aːsif /aːsfa" and other expressions that mean "Excuse me" carried a real meaning of regret when refusing to give directions. Furthermore, as explained previously, in an attempt to elevate the severity of the consequences for the interlocutor, some participants chose to suggest solutions and assure the interlocutor that they needn't worry about finding help.

Al-Yazan considered his desire to go home in the refusal to AR1 in his evaluation of degree of imposition. He stated that he found it easy to refuse to help with the exhibition because helping with the exhibition would mean he had to sacrifice his plans to go home, which were more important to him than helping his professor. He said: "commitment with my family…the appointment. The reason here is stronger than my relationship with any professor." Al-Yazan gave a longer explanation in his refusal to AR1; however, he ascribed his pragmatic behavior to his desire to stress the importance of his reason to refuse. He refused by saying: "Doctor, I apologize, because I already have an appointment with my family. I will go out with them on a trip during the weekend. I have already agreed on the appointment. So, I can't, I mean, be with you to organize this exhibition/this… the opening of the exhibition."

The effect of the nature of the situation was also evident in the participants' rankings of the invitation scenarios. The majority of the participants viewed the invitation to a lecture (AI3) as being more difficult to refuse than the invitation to the media event (AI4) due to the difference in the benefits of fulfilling both of them. They perceived the invitation in AI3 as beneficial because it was for a lecture they could benefit from for their research. On the other hand, the media event invitation was a public invitation with no foreseen benefits for them. For example, Ali commented: "It is a chance for me to learn something [from the lecture], while it is not in this scenario [scenario AI4]. It is not necessarily a chance for learning something. It is more about fun."

4.1.2.3 *Social Distance*

Table 4. 5 shows how many participants thought it was more difficult to refuse a familiar or unfamiliar professor in each situation. The numbers under "Familiar" and "Unfamiliar" represent the number of participants who reported that they chose one of the two factors as being

more influential than the other in affecting their refusals to each scenario. The "Neither"

category represents the number of participants who reported that they did not consider degree of

familiarity or social distance when responding to a particular scenario.

Table 4.5. Perception of Difficulty to Refuse Relative to Social Distance

Scenario	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Neither
AR1	7	2	1
AR2	6	4	0
AI3	8	2	0
AI4	8	2	0

The results in Table 4.5 indicate that the social distance between the participants and the

interlocutor influenced the participants' pragmatic choices. Most of the participants agreed that

refusing a familiar professor (-SD) was more difficult than refusing an unfamiliar one (+SD).

Six out of the ten participants perceived refusing a request by a familiar professor to be more

difficult than refusing a request by an unfamiliar professor. Even though in the directions request

(AR2) and in the invitation to the media event (AI4) the participants refused offers made by

unfamiliar professors, they stated that it would have been more difficult to refuse if the

interlocutor was a familiar professor because a refusal could affect their relationship with the

professor negatively. Taif, for example, was concerned about maintaining her positive face. She

remarked: "It is more difficult to reject to somebody you know. I will think of what he/she thinks

when I reject him/her and will our relationship be affected?" For example, in her refusal to AI3,

she said to a familiar professor: "Sorry doctor. I don't have enough time to attend. I have to finish

the work of my research and submit it within these two weeks." However, in her refusal to AI4

to an unfamiliar professor, Taif was less considerate of what the interlocutor would think of her.

She responded frankly that she was not interested in his/her work. She said: "Thank you for the

invitation, but frankly I'm not very interested in Media field. I will try to look for another event to enjoy more. Excuse me."

Some participants stated that they would express this attitude through the amount of explanation they would provide to the interlocutor. They reported that their refusals would be longer when refusing a request or invitation from a familiar professor, while they would be shorter for an unfamiliar professor. Yusuf commented: " If I don't know the person, I won't explain. I don't have to, unless he asked for an explanation." However, there was no difference in the length of Yusuf's responses to familiar and unfamiliar professors. The participants contended that familiarity with a professor was not the only factor that influenced the amount of explanation they provided in their refusals. They maintained that their liking and disliking of the personality of the familiar professor was equally important (see the section on affective factors below).

Social distance also influenced the use of titles. For example, some participants stated that they would not hesitate to use the title "doctor" with the interlocutor in AR1 and AI3, because they know the interlocutor. However, they contended that because they were unfamiliar with the interlocutor in AR2 and AI4, it made more sense for most of them not to perceive the interlocutor as a professor. Therefore, most of them refrained from using the title "doctor." Taif, for example, said: "he could be anybody. I would use the title if I am sure that he/she is a doctor." Also, Areej affirmed that she would use the title "doctor" if she were "sure 100% that he is a doctor." The few participants who used the titles with unfamiliar professors used them because they assumed that the interlocutor was a professor based on the description in the scenarios. Those who did not assume that the interlocutor was a professor thought he/she could

be an employee at SQU, or a visitor to SQU, or a person who was closer to their age (see Section 4.1.2.5 below on relative power).

In contrast, Fajir and Reem stated that making a refusal to an unfamiliar professor was more difficult than refusing an invitation or a request from a familiar one. They attributed this difficulty to their interlocutor's lack of knowledge about their circumstances, which would result in more chances for misunderstanding and hence a risk to their face. On the other hand, if the interlocutor was a familiar professor, he/she would be familiar with their circumstances as well and, as a result, he/she would be more understanding of their refusals. Fajir, for example, in her refusal to AI4, used Emotion, Address, Assessment (twice), Subjectivizer, Gratitude, Negation, and Excuse: "Aha! Thank you doctor for the invitation but Wallah I'm not interested. Frankly, I don't think I can attend. "However, in her refusal to a familiar professor's invitation in AI3, she used Wish for Self, Negation, Compliment, and Excuse: " I wish but I can't. It would be nice but I can't. I have a lecture doctor. I have too much work." However, in her refusal to requests, there was no noticeable difference in her responses. Reem also affirmed: "Refusing the invitation of a stranger would be more difficult, because he does not know my circumstances. Even though the wording might be the same when I refuse to an invitation of a familiar and unfamiliar professors, I will feel it is more difficult to refuse to a stranger."

Two other participants, Abdulla and Al-Yazan, perceived a lack of familiarity with the interlocutor in the directions request situation (AR2) as an intensifying factor, which would result in a higher degree of difficulty of refusing in this situation. They assumed that the interlocutor was a stranger to SQU. Therefore, any negative impression the stranger might develop about them, he/she would automatically generalize about the SQU community; they both reasoned that because they were members of the SQU community as students, they

represented SQU. Abdulla said: "Here I imagined a doctor from outside the university. He came from outside. So, he will have [a negative] idea about the university students if I refuse. I thought of the image of the university and the students." Al-Yazan confirmed this attitude: "I represent SQU, so I should try my best to help…I have to help." Abdulla and Al-Yazan, wanted to preserve a good face to protect their identity as students who were members of the SQU community. Abdulla did so by setting a Condition for Past Acceptance for the interlocutor: " Excuse me but the problem is that I'm in a hurry, too much. And my friend is waiting for me in order to give me a ride to the library So, I can't. If I was free, I would have helped you but now I'm too busy. I'm in a hurry." Al-Yazan, used Solution Suggestion: "I'm sorry. I have something important. I have to finish. So, you could ask other people."

4.1.2.4 *Affective Factors*

Table 4.6 displays frequencies concerning the participants' perception of the difficulty to refuse relative to their liking of the personalities of their familiar professors. Only the scenarios in which a familiar professor was the speech act initiator were considered (AR1 and AI3). The numbers under "Easy" and "Difficult" refer to the number of participants who reported that it was easy or difficult for them to refuse to a familiar professor that they liked. The numbers under "Neither" represent the number of students who did not think this variable was relevant to their refusals.

Table 4.6. Perception of Difficulty to Refuse Relative to Affective Factors

Scenario	Easy	Difficult	Neither
AR1	3	4	3
AI3	3	4	3

Some participants stated that knowing a professor was one thing, liking what they knew about the professor was another matter. The participants were asked about their assessment of

the degree of difficulty in refusing requests and invitations of a professor they know who was kind, understanding and friendly. They had three different views on the matter. Three of them maintained that it would be easier to refuse a professor that they liked than a professor that they did not like. They explained that if they liked the professor that would mean he/she would be a professor who understood their circumstances as students and he/she was fair and kind. Fajir said that she would give less explanation to a kind and understanding professor. She commented: "I would be more casual like laughing and talking less formally with a kind professor." Reem, however, said that she would give more explanation if she liked the professor. On the other hand, Al-Yazan said that the length of explanation would depend on what he knew about the preference of the professor. If the professor preferred more explanation, he would give more explanation; otherwise, he would give a shorter one. However, he added: "If the professor is not fair, my response will be short and I won't give him too many reasons. Just a short reply such as 'I can't and I have my personal reasons.'"

In contrast to the first group, four of the participants maintained that because a kind professor would understand their circumstances and, accordingly, their refusals better than an unkind professor, refusals made to such a professor would be more difficult. They would feel more obliged towards the kind professors and would manifest such feeling by providing more explanations. For instance, Abdulla reported that he would explain more to a professor he liked "in order to clarify that I want to help him but I can't." However, with a professor he did not like, Abdulla reported that he would do the opposite. He said: "I don't think I will give him many excuses. I will give him one excuse, because he was bad with me." Abdulla affirmed that giving more explanations was a way to confirm his sincerity in wanting to help the kind professor.

While the majority of the participants agreed that requests were more imposing than invitations, Yusuf and Abdulla had a different position on the matter due to affective factors. They both believed that invitations could be more imposing than requests. They ranked the invitation to a lecture (AI3) second, that is, higher than the request to help with the exhibition (AR1) because it suggested consideration on the part of the professor. They thought that the lecture invitation was directed privately to them, which reflected the professor's care about them and their work. For example, in his refusal to AI3, Abdulla said: "Wallah doctor, it is a good opportunity but the problem is that I don't have time and the project/ I haven't finished the project and I need all of the time to work on it." Abdulla explained his refusal as follows during the interview: "I feel that in [an] invitation, the person who invites you cares. So, it is too difficult to reject him. To say to him that you don't want." However, Abdulla contended that sometimes the nature of the invitation might make it less imposing than a request due to the nature of the situation. Finally, three of the participants stated that affective factors would have no influence on their pragmatic choices because they perceived power (i.e., P) to be more influential than affective factors as the following section illustrates.

4.1.2.5 *Relative Power*

Table 4.7 reports results concerning the students' perceptions of the relative power between them and their interlocutors (i.e., high, low, or equal) for the four scenarios in the Arabic ODCT. The majority of the participants imagined the unfamiliar professors in AR2 and AI4 to be either a professor or an unfamiliar older individual such as an SQU employee or a visitor from outside SQU. In most of the cases of refusals, the power ($\pm$ P) of the hearer (the interlocutor) relative to the speaker (the participant) remained high due to the fact that the interlocutor was described as a professor at SQU while the participant was a student. Even when

the participant assumed the interlocutor to be an SQU employee, the participant perceived the

interlocutor to have a higher social power due either to differences in membership (i.e., student

vs. staff member) or to age differences (i.e., the interlocutor being older than the student). In the

Omani culture, generally, an older person has relatively more social power than a younger

person.

Table 4.7. Perception of Relative Power in the Various Scenarios in the Arabic ODCT

Scenario	Sociopragmatic Variables	
	Relative Power (±P)	**Social Distance (± SD)**
AR1	High (+)	Familiar (-)
		• Professor
AR2	High (+)	Familiar (-)
		• Professor
		• Employee (older individual)
AI3	High (+)	Unfamiliar (+)
		• Professor
AI4	High (+)	Unfamiliar (+)
	Equal (=)	• Professor
		• Employee/older individual
		• Student (similar age)

One participant, Abdulla, however, imagined a student inviting him to the media event,

which suggests that he perceived relative power to be equal as shown in Table 4.7. Had he

assumed that his interlocutor was a professor or an older person, he would have responded

differently. He said: "I won't say that I have attended the Creative Media Forum the last time and

I did not like it last time." Rather, he would say: "I am not interested in media. So, I don't think I

will attend."

Despite the varying views on the effects of the other sociopragmatic variables, all the

participants agreed that some degree of formality was in order, as dictated by the academic

relationship between them and their professors. Thus, any violation to the code of respect and

politeness with a professor would result in a threat to their self-image or positive face.

Accordingly, the participants ascertained that even though some of them would give longer

explanations to professors that they liked, that would not mean that shorter responses would be less polite. Reem affirmed that giving equal polite treatment to all professors was essential for her "because at the end, it is a matter of being polite with doctors." They wanted to maintain a positive face by using equally polite refusals with all professors.

Three participants viewed relative power as more influential than affective factors. However, they claimed that they would always preserve the same level of treatment including the same amount of explanations with their professors. They ascertained that the relative power or the academic relationship was more influential than what they felt about their professors' personality. For instance, Yusuf stated that he would give similar explanations to his professors regardless of whether he likes the professor or not because he was afraid of the negative consequences he might suffer if he used different levels of politeness in his refusals. He stated: "I would give the same response to any doctor teaching me to protect myself." Khaled said that liking or disliking his professors' personalities was not important; rather, "what is more important is that I behave politely with everyone."

Relative power seems to have affected the pragmatic choices of the participants such as the use of a title. The participants used titles to mark and recognize the social status of their interlocutor (i.e., professors). For instance, Areej stated during the interview: "I have to call him [the interlocutor] something. Without a title as if I am minimizing his [social] status. Abdullah affirmed "there is disrespect" in not using a title with a professor. He elaborated: "there are doctors who get upset when you don't use it [a title]." Yusuf had a similar understanding for the use of titles, however, he remarked, "Title use could be a formality with a rude doctor, but with a kind professor a title means respect." Despite the clear effect of the perceived affective factors on the degree of respect encoded in the use of titles, Yusuf asserted that he would always address

his professors using titles despite what he thought about them. Thus, relative power remained a more influential factor than affective factors.

Relative power seems to have eliminated the differences between Omani and other Arab professors. In some situations, the participants imagined their interlocutor to be non-Omani Arab professors. However, when the participants were asked during the interview to think of an Omani professor and asked to respond again, they gave similar responses arguing that there was no difference between Omani and other Arab professors because the relationship between them and Omani or other Arab nationality professors would remain the same: teacher-student relationship or academic relationship.

4.1.2.5 *Gender*

Table 4.8 describes the participants' perceptions of the difficulty to refuse relative to the gender and relative power of the interlocutor. The numbers under relative power and gender represent the number of participants who selected either of them as more influential. The numbers under "Neither" represents the number of participants who chose another variable.

Table 4.8. Perception of the Difficulty to Refuse Relative to Interlocutor's Gender and Relative Power

Scenario	Relative Power	Gender	Neither
AR1	10	0	0
AR2	10	0	0
AI3	10	0	0
AI4	10	0	0

The ten participants agreed that relative power influenced their refusals in the four scenarios more than the gender of the interlocutor. They ascribed this perception to the academic relationship between professors and students that dictate that male and female professors should be treated equally. Taif stated: "there is no difference between male and female doctors. They are both at the same level. At the end they are my doctors and nothing else." Thus, the gender of the

interlocutor did not seem to affect the participants' pragmatic choices. However, the female students stated that while the pragmatic choices would remain the same when dealing with both genders of professors, they felt more comfortable talking to female professors since they were women like them. Areej added: "It is not comfortable refusing to her [a female interlocutor]. It is comfortable talking to her."

Some of the participants perceived gender as more influential in the absence of the relative power influence. Outside student-teacher relationships, Taif asserted that there would be a difference in treatment between males and females. For example, when commenting on her refusal to the directions request (AR2), she reported: "I won't use Wish [strategy] with a male. Sorry I can't help only."

Taif would exclusively use a Wish strategy to refuse a female in order to express her understating. In addition, Reem said that she might use a softer tone when refusing the request of a female interlocutor who was not her professor. She commented on refusing to give directions to a female who is not professor as follows: "I will feel more for her. I would use a tone to show that I'm sorry. I feel for her. I don't feel for males. With males there is this…as if there is a wall you don't cross it. Like a social distance."

Relative power seems also to have influenced the refusal behavior of the female participants. Because of the assumed academic relationship between them and their professors, the female participants avoided mentioning what they perceived as private reasons in their refusals. In their refusals to the exhibition request (AR1), all five female participants avoided mentioning that they had plans to go on a picnic during the weekend with their families. They viewed the details of their commitment as a private matter and, thus, they preferred to say that they were either busy or going home. For example, Reem refused AR1 by saying: "Sorry doctor,

I have too much work on Thursday and Friday." She commented: " I don't want to talk about personal things…because we are not at the same level. Why would I want to talk to my professor about my personal life?" However, the male participants did not perceive going on a picnic with their families as a private matter. Three of the male participants mentioned the picnic as the reason in their refusals. For example, Khaled said: "I can't help be there in the exhibition because I will go on a picnic with my family on Saturday, Insha' Allah, so I can't. Excuse me." While the other two male participants did mention the picnic as a reason for their refusal, at the same time they did not think it was a private reason.

Summary

When refusing requests and invitations in Omani Arabic, the participants related their pragmatic choices to the sociopragmatic variables under examination: degree of imposition (i.e., request versus invitations) and social distance (i.e., familiar versus unfamiliar professors). In addition, the participants related their pragmatic choices to other variables that were not under examination in the study, such as the nature of the situation, affective factors, relative power and gender. In relation to the first sociopragmatic variable, degree of imposition, the participants viewed their interlocutor's expectation that they would comply with the speech act as related to the relative imposition of requests and invitations. The requests were perceived as more imposing speech acts than invitations because they thought that their interlocutor needed them to comply with the proposition of the request. Therefore, not complying with the request would result in potentially negative physical and emotional consequences such as disappointment and embarrassment, which would be threatening to the interlocutor's positive face or his desire to be helped. On the other hand, the participants reasoned that in invitation situations, their interlocutor

would be offering something to them rather than needing something from them, which meant he/she wouldn't suffer any harm from their refusal.

In addition to viewing their interlocutors' desire for compliance as connected to the relative imposition of the speech act, the participants also saw the extent of the expenditure of goods, services and abilities requested of them as relevant to the difference in imposition between the different request speech acts. However, counter to the common association of a high degree of imposition with a greater expenditure, and a lower degree of imposition with a smaller expenditure, the participants perceived the small expenditure of energy needed to fulfill the directions situations as the cause of difficulty in refusing the directions situation.

The second sociopragmatic variable was the nature of the situation. The participants perceived the particulars of the situation of interaction as contributing to the difficulty to refuse in some situations. For example, the time factor and specifically the lack of time made the directions request more urgent and made the options for fulfilling it very limited. Thus, the limited time contributed to the difficulty to refuse in this situation.

In relation to the third sociopragmatic variable, social distance, the majority of participants perceived refusing a familiar interlocutor to be more difficult due to the negative nature of refusal speech act, which could result in disharmony in the relationship with the familiar interlocutors. They wanted to preserve a positive face and hence maintain a positive relationship with the familiar interlocutors. On the other hand, the few of them who perceived refusing an unfamiliar interlocutor as more difficult ascribed this difficulty to the possible misunderstanding on the part of their interlocutor. In other words, because the unfamiliar interlocutor was not familiar with them and their circumstances, he/she might easily misunderstand their refusal behavior as impolite. In addition, refusing the directions request of

unfamiliar interlocutors invoked in two participants a strong desire to present a positive self-image as polite students and hence, as representatives of the university community they identify with. Finally, all the participants preferred using the title "doctor" with familiar professors and avoided using it with unfamiliar professors.

In relation to affective factors, four participants perceived refusing an interlocutor they liked to be more difficult because they would have a sense of obligation and respect towards an interlocutor who was kind to them. However, three participants believed that refusing an interlocutor they liked would be easier because he/she would understand their refusal. Another three, on the other hand, did not perceive any relationship between their positive impression of the personality of their interlocutor and variation in their pragmatic choices because their interlocutors were professors and they would use similar pragmatic behavior with all professors.

The participants perceived the sociopragmatic variable of social power as relevant to their refusals because professors had a higher social power than the students, and thus some level of formality and politeness when speaking to professors was dictated by the university culture. Therefore, despite their liking or disliking of the professors' personality, they reported that they would observe some level of politeness with all professors.

In addition, the high relative power eliminated the difference between male and female professors, which resulted in the use of similar pragmatic choices for both genders.   The participants perceived gender as less relevant to their refusals to male and female professors because of the assumed academic relationship between the participants as students and their professors. However, the female participants stated that they would feel more comfortable dealing with female professors because they were females like them. In addition, unlike the male

participants, the female participants stated that they would refrain from explaining personal reasons when they refused their professor.

4.2 Refusals in English by Omani EFL Learners

This section focuses on the participants' use and perceptions of refusals in English. It is divided into two sections. The first section reports findings about the use and perception of refusal responses in English. The second section reports finding about the participants' perceptions of the sociopragmatic variables that influenced their responses.

4.2.1 *The Realization and Perception of Refusals in English by Omani EFL Learners*

This section reports the participants' use and perceptions of refusals in English. It is divided into three sub-sections: the use and perception of pragmatic strategies, the use and perception of pragmatic markers, and the use and perception of refusal patterns. The use data concern the type and frequency of strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns used to realize refusal speech acts in English. The perception data focus on the participants' explanations of their use of pragmatic strategies, pragmatic markers and refusal patterns.

4.2.1.1 *Use of Pragmatic Strategies*

As shown in Table 4.9 below, when refusing Omani professors' (i.e., -CD) requests in English, the participants used four strategies: Negation, Regret, Excuse, and Solution Suggestion (see Example 4.11). Indirect strategies were used more frequently (81.1%, f= 60) than were direct ones (18.9%, f=14). The indirect strategy of Excuse came first at 41.9% (f=31), followed by the indirect strategy of Regret at 33.8% (f=25). The direct strategy of Negation was third registering 18.9% (f= 14).

Example 4.11:

Negation: I cannot help you with the opening of the exhibition

Regret: I'm very sorry

Excuse: Because I have to go home.

Solution Suggestion: Perhaps you can ask someone around here to help you.

Table 4.9. Frequency of Pragmatic Strategies in Refusals of Requests (+RI) in English

	Strategy	Omani Prof. (-CD)						A/B Prof. (+CD)					
		ER2 (-SD)		ER3 (+SD)		$\sum f$	%	ER1 (-SD)		ER4 (+SD)		$\sum f$	%
		f	*n*	*f*	*n*			*f*	*n*	*f*	*n*		
	Direct												
1	Negation	10	8	4	4	14	18.9	10	9	4	*4*	14	19.7
	Total of direct strategies (f)	**10**		**4**		**14**	**18.9**	**10**		**4**		**14**	**19.7**
	Indirect												
1	Regret	12	10	13	10	25	33.8	11	10	10	10	21	29.6
2	Excuse	14	10	17	10	31	41.9	16	10	14	10	30	42.3
3	Wish for Self							1	1			1	1.4
4	Wish for Others									1	1	1	1.4
5	Solution Suggestion			4	4	4	5.4			3	3	3	4.2
6	Assurance									1	1	1	1.4
	Total of indirect strategies (f)	**26**		**34**		**60**	**81.1**	**28**		**29**		**57**	**80.3**
	Grand total of direct and indirect (f)	**36**		**38**		**74**		**38**		**33**		**71**	

Notes:
f: frequency of use of strategy in response to the scenario across all participants.
n: number of participants who used the strategy in response to the scenario.
$\sum f$: sum of the frequencies of strategies across scenarios.
%: the percentage of the times the strategy was used out of the total number of all strategies across all scenarios and participants

The sociopragmatic variable of social distance (± SD) was associated with variation in the type and frequency of strategies used by the participants. For instance, the participants used three strategies (Negation, Regret and Excuse) to refuse the -SD request (ER2), and four strategies (Negation, Regret, Excuse, and Solution Suggestion) to refuse the +SD request (ER3). In terms of frequency, as Table 4.9 shows, all ten participants used Excuse when refusing the -SD request ($f= 14$) and the +SD request ($f= 17$). Also, all of them used Regret when refusing the -SD request ($f= 12$) and the +SD request ($f= 13$). However, only eight of them used negation when refusing the -SD request ($f= 10$), while four of them used it when refusing the +SD request ($f= 4$).

In refusing the requests of American/British professors (i.e., +CD), the participants employed seven types of strategies: Negation, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Wish for Others, Solution Suggestion, and Assurance (see Example 4.12). The indirect strategies were employed more frequently (80.3%, $f= 57$) than the direct ones (19.7%, $f= 14$). The indirect strategy of Excuse was the most frequent (42.3%, $f= 30$), followed by the indirect strategy of Regret (29. 6%, $f= 21$) and the direct strategy of Negation (19.7%, $f= 14$).

Example 4.12:

Wish for Self:	I wish I could do that for you.

Wish for Others:	I hope somebody will guide you.

Assurance:	They will help you.

Once again, the sociopragmatic variable of social distance was associated with variation in the type and frequency of strategies used by the participants. In terms of the type of strategies used, the participants utilized only four strategies to refuse the -SD request (ER1), namely, Negation, Regret, Excuse and Wish for Self. However, in addition to these strategies, the participants utilized another three strategies, namely, Wish for Others, Solution Suggestion, and

Assurance, to refuse the +SD request (ER4). In terms of frequency, all the participants (n=10)

used Excuse to refuse the -SD request (f= 16) and the +SD request (f= 14). Also, the participants

used the Regret strategy to refuse the -SD request (f= 12) and the +SD request (f= 10). On the

other hand, only nine of them used Negation to refuse the -SD request (f= 10) and four of them

used it when refusing the +SD request (f= 4). Similar to the latter tendency, four participants

used the Solution Suggestion to refuse the +SD request (f= 4).

As shown in Table 4.10, when refusing the invitations of Omani professors in English

(scenarios EI6 and EI8), the participants employed a total of ten strategies: Negation, Flat No,

Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment, Indefinite

Acceptance, and Sense of Loss (see Example 4.13). The indirect strategies were utilized 84.7%

(f= 50), while the direct strategies were utilized only 15.3 % (f= 9). The indirect strategy of

Excuse was the most frequent at 37.3% (f= 22) followed by Regret (18.6, f= 11) and Negation

(13.6%, f= 8). The rest of the strategies recorded a frequency between 1.7% and 10.2% (f= 1 to

f= 6).

Example 4.13:

Negation:	I cannot attend the class.
Flat No:	No
Regret:	I'm sorry
Excuse:	I'm really busy next week.
Wish for Self:	I wish I could come.
Proposition Suggestion:	I will look for something else.
Gratitude:	Thank you for the invitation.
Compliment:	That would be great.
Indefinite Acceptance:	I'll try to attend.
Sense of Loss:	*Too bad.*

The sociopragmatic variable of social distance resulted in a slight variation in the type and frequency of strategies used by the participants. When refusing the -SD invitation (EI6), the participants used nine strategies: Negation, Flat No, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment, and Indefinite Acceptance. However, when refusing the +SD (EI8), they employed two more strategies, namely, Indefinite Acceptance and Sense of Loss and did not use Flat No. Regarding the frequency of strategies, nine of the participants used Excuse to refuse both the -SD and + SD invitations ($f= 11$). However, five of them used Regret to refuse the -SD invitation ($f= 6$) and three of them used this stategy to refuse the +SD invitation ($f= 5$). Also, five of them utilized Negation in refusing the -SD invitation ($f= 5$) and three of them used it to refuse the +SD one ($f= 3$).

When refusing the invitations of American/British professors (EI5 and EI7), the participants made use of eight different strategies: Negation, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Gratitude, Compliment, Indefinite Reply and Postponement (see Example 4.14). Once again, the indirect strategies were used most frequently at 76.1% ($f= 51$) in comparison to the direct ones (23.9%, $f=16$) (see Table 4.10). Excuse was most frequent (31.3%, $f= 21$), followed by Negation (23.9%, $f= 16$) and Regret (19.4%, $f= 4$). The rest of the strategies showed a frequency between 1.5% and 14.9% ($f= 1$ to 10).

Table 4.10. Frequency of Pragmatic Strategies in Refusals of Invitations (-RI) in English

	Strategy	Omani Prof. (-CD) Scenarios						A/B Prof. (+CD) Scenarios					
		EI6 (-SD)		EI8 (+SD)		Σf	%	EI5 (-SD)		EI7 (+SD)		Σf	%
		f	n	f	n			f	n	f	n		
	Direct												
1	Negation	5	5	3	**3**	8	13.6	6	6	10	**10**	16	23.9
2	Flat No	1	1			1	1.7						
	Total of direct strategies (f)	**6**		**3**		**9**	**15.3**	**6**		**10**		**16**	**23.9**
	Indirect												
1	Regret	6	5	5	3	11	18.6	8	7	5	4	13	19.4
2	Excuse	11	9	11	9	22	37.3	11	9	10	7	21	31.3
3	Wish for Self	1	1	1	1	2	3.4	3	3			3	4.5
4	Proposition Suggestion	1	1	1	1	2	3.4						
5	Gratitude	3	3	2	2	5	8.5	3	3	7	7	10	14.9
6	Compliment	2	2	4	4	6	10.2			2	2	2	2.9
7	Indef. Reply									1	1	1	3
8	Indef. Acceptance			1	1	1	1.7						
9	Postponement									1	1	1	1.5
10	Sense of Loss	1	1			1	1.7						
	Total of indirect strategies (f)	**25**		**25**		**50**	**84.7**	**25**		**26**		**51**	**76.1**
	Grand total of direct and indirect (f)	**31**		**28**		**59**		**31**		**36**		**67**	

Notes:
f: frequency of use of strategy in response to the scenario across all participants.
n: number of participants who used the strategy in response to the scenario.
Σf: sum of the frequencies of strategies across scenarios.
%: the percentage of the times the strategy was used out of the total number of all strategies across all scenarios and participants

Example 4.14:

Indefinite Reply: I don't really know.

Postponement: I'll think about it.

       Social distance also seems to have affected the type and frequency of strategies used by the participants. When refusing the -SD invitation (EI5), the participants employed five strategies: Negation, Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, and Gratitude. On the other hand, they used seven strategies to refuse the +SD invitations (EI8): Negation, Regret, Excuse, Gratitude, Compliment, Indefinite Reply, and Postponement. Nine of the participants used Excuse to refuse the -SD invitation ($f= 11$) and only seven of them used it to refuse the +SD invitation ($f= 10$). Seven of them used Regret to refuse the -SD invitation ($f= 8$), while only four used this strategy to refuse the +SD invitation ($f= 5$). Finally, six of them used Negation to refuse the -SD invitation ($f= 6$), while ten used it to refuse the +SD invitation ($f= 10$).

       In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of the relative imposition (±RI) of the speech act, or the difference between requests (+RI) and invitations (-RI), a considerable degree of variation was observed in the type of refusal strategies used by the participants, while the difference in frequency of these strategies was very small as shown in Table 4.11. Specifically, the participants utilized twelve strategies to refuse the -RI invitations, while they used only seven strategies to refuse requests. The participants exclusively used Solution Suggestion, Wish for Others, and Assurance in their refusals to the +RI requests. On the other hand, they exclusively used Flat No, Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment, and Indefinite Reply, Indefinite Acceptance, Postponement, and Sense of Loss in their refusals to the -RI invitations. Four strategies, Negation, Regret, Excuse and Wish for Self, were utilized to refuse both cases of ±RI speech acts.

Table 4.11. Frequency of Pragmatic Strategies in English Refusals

	Strategy	Requests (+RI)		Invitations (-RI)	
		$\sum f$	%	$\sum f$	%
	Direct				
1	Negation	28	19.3	24	**18.6**
2	Flat No			1	0.8
Total of direct strategies (f)		**28**	**19.3**	**25**	**19.4**
	Indirect				
1	Regret	46	31.7	24	18.6
2	Excuse	61	42.1	43	33.3
3	Wish for Self	1	0.7	5	3.9
4	Wish for Others	1	0.7		
5	Solution Suggestion	7	4.8		
6	Proposition Suggestion			2	1.6
7	Assurance	1	0.7		
8	Gratitude			15	11.6
9	Compliment			8	6.2
10	Indef. Reply			1	0.8
11	Indef. Acceptance			1	0.8
12	Postponement			1	0.8
13	Sense of Loss			1	0.8
Total of indirect strategies (f)		117	80.7	101	78.3
Grand total of direct and indirect (f)		145		129	

In terms of frequency, the indirect strategies were used more frequently when refusing the ±RI speech acts than the direct strategies. However, the difference in the frequency of indirect strategies of the +RI requests (80.7%, *f*= 117) and the -RI invitations (78.3%, *f*= 101) was small. Similarly, the difference in the frequency of the indirect strategies of the +RI requests (19.3%, *f*= 28) and the -RI invitations (18.6%, *f*= 25) is a slight one. In both cases of refusals, Excuse was the most frequent strategy at 42.1% (*f*= 61) for the +RI requests and 33.3% (*f*= 43) for the -RI invitations. Regret was second at 31.7% (*f*= 46) for the +RI requests and 18.6% (*f*= 24) for the -RI invitations. Negation was third at 19.3% (*f*= 28) for +RI requests and 18.6% (*f*= 24) for the -RI invitations.

Summary

In summary, in refusing in English, the participants refused two types of speech act initiators: Omani professors and American/British professors. In refusal to Omani professors, the participants used four strategies to refuse requests and ten strategies to refuse invitations. They exclusively used Flat No, Wish for Self, Proposition Suggestion, Gratitude, Compliment, Indefinite Acceptance, and Sense of Loss to refuse invitations, while they used Solution Suggestion exclusively to refuse requests. In refusal of both types of speech acts, indirect strategies were the most frequently used. Furthermore, the Excuse strategy was the most frequently applied strategy, followed by Regret and Negation strategies. In relation to the sociopragmatic markers of social distance, the participants used more strategies to refuse +SD interlocutors. They used four strategies to refuse +SD request and three to refuse the -SD request. Similarly, they used four strategies to refuse the +SD invitation and three strategies to refuse the -SD invitation.

In refusal to American/British professors, the participants utilized seven strategies to refuse requests and eight strategies to refuse invitations. They used Wish for Others, Solution Suggestion and Assurance exclusively in refusing requests, while they used Gratitude, Compliment, Indefinite Reply and Postponement strategies exclusively in refusing invitations. In the refusal of both types of speech acts, the indirect strategies were the most frequent ones. Additionally, Excuse was the most frequently utilized strategy to refuse both of them. However, in the refusal of requests, the Regret strategy was used more frequently than Negation, while in the refusal of invitations, Negation was used more frequently than Regret. In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of social distance, the participants used seven strategies to refuse the requests of +SD interlocutors, while they used four of them to refuse to -SD interlocutors. In the

refusal of invitations, they used seven strategies to refuse +SD interlocutors, while they used five strategies to refuse -SD interlocutors.

4.2.1.2 *Perception of Pragmatic Strategies*

Flat No and Negation

Only one participant used "No" as a Flat No strategy in English in refusing the invitation to a lecture (EI6). Areej used Flat No to refuse EI5: "No thank you but I have to work on my paper." During the interview, she commented on her use of Flat No as follows: "Because he wants me to attend the lecture. It is an answer to his invitation." In contrast, Al-Yazan stated that he would not use Flat No because "It carries a direct meaning [refusal]." He added: "It is not nice to start with a direct refusal."

All the participants agreed that there was a difference in the level of directness between Flat No and Negation. They all preferred the use of "I can't" to "No." However, they were not able to articulate the exact difference between the two strategies. Khaled described "No" as "cruel" while "I can't" was still somehow offensive but not necessarily "cruel." Al-Yazan commented that: "'I can't' is an apology not a refusal. Refusal requires the use of clear and direct language, but apologizing about something is different." Therefore, he affirmed: "'I can't' is for apologizing and not refusing." Ali and the other participants used "I can't" in refusals of requests and invitations. For example, when refusing the request in ER2, Reem said: "I'm sorry doctor. I can't help you. I need to go home." In his refusal to EI8, Khaled said: "Sorry doctor. I cannot attend because I don't like this kind of events. So, I'm sorry."

Regret

The participants used "Sorry" and "I'm sorry" as a Regret strategy in English. They attested that both expressions were not equivalent to "a:sif/a:sfa" in Arabic, rather they were

equivalent to " ʕuðrann, maʕðiratann, ʔuʕðriː, ʔismaħliː, i-sumuħa," (Excuse me). All the participants agreed that both "Sorry" and "I'm sorry" mean, "Excuse me." Abdualla, for instance, said: "I am sorry here means excuse me not "aːsif." Only one participant used "Excuse me" to refuse the request for directions. Despite their awareness of the availability of "Excuse me" in English, the participants preferred using "Sorry" and "I'm sorry." However, none of them provided an explanation for their choices during the interview. Instead, to express a real apology, the participants tended to use Intensifier and Emphasis pragmatic markers such as "so," "very," and "really." Idris, for instance, explained that "So," "makes it [the apology] stronger like 'aːsif gidden' ['I'm very sorry' in Arabic]."

Except when Intensifier and Emphasis were used with the Regret strategy, the participants agreed that they were not truly apologizing to the interlocutor; rather they were trying to be polite. They explained that Regret reduces the negative impact of the direct strategy of Negation such as "I can't." During the interview, Reem commented on her use of 'I can't' as follows: "I'm not apologizing. I'm just saying that, like, it's about politeness. I'm not being sorry. I'm being polite." She elaborated on what she would use for a real apology in English: "Sorry is lighter in English. Even if I made a mistake, I would say 'I'm sorry.' Maybe because they [NSs of English] use it with everything. They say sorry all of the time. You don't see Arabs walking around saying 'ʔana aːsf ' and 'ʔana aːsfa.' It is common for Arabs to use 'ʔismaħliː' [meaning excuse me, to express politeness]." Taif maintained that: "It was difficult to use sorry in a situation where you don't have to feel sorry. It is enough that you explain why. That is why I did not use it in all the situations." She commented on her use of "I'm sorry" in response to ER1 and ER2 as follows: you use "Sorry when you do something wrong, but in this situation, I did not do something wrong. It is normal. He asked and I told him 'I can't.' I don't know why I felt in

Arabic [it] is different. In Arabic, I would use 'ʕuðrann' [Excuse me]" She added: " ʔismaħliː and ʔuʕðrniː [in Arabic] you apologize but you are not regretting anything. It feels good not to use sorry." Likewise, Yusuf commented that "sorry" with the meaning of " aːsf" is used "when you do something wrong…it is a confession."

Because of the association between the use of Regret and the direct strategy of Negation, some participants argued that "I can't" could be completely replaced with a Regret strategy because the refusal would be implied. Al-Yazan, for example, said: "Maybe apology could be taken as a refusal but it is different from a direct refusal." Khaled said: "I'm sorry" had similar meaning to "I can't" albeit better than the less direct strategy. He reported that "I can't" meant, "I wish but I can't." Also, Mimi stated that using "I'm sorry" and giving reasons are sufficient for a refusal, while Negation or "I can't" was not essential.

Excuse

All the explanations that the participants provided for their use of Excuse were associated with various sociopragmatic variables and are discussed in Section 4.2.2 below.

Suggestion and Assurance

The participants used two types of Suggestion strategies: Solution Suggestion and Proposition Suggestion. The Solution Suggestion was used in refusals to the direction scenarios: four times in refusals to ER3 and three times in refusals to ER4. For example, in her refusal to ER4, Reem said: " I'm really sorry. I'm in a hurry. Maybe you can ask the security to guide you." One participant, Taif, followed her Solution Suggestion in response to ER4 with an Assurance: "I wish I could, but my friend is waiting. Could you please ask someone around? They will help you." The participants used the Solution Suggestion and Assurance to express consideration for the feelings of their interlocutor due to the urgent nature of ER3 and ER4 and the significant

negative consequences that refusal had for their interlocutor (see Section 4.2.2.2 below on the nature of the situation).

On the other hand, two participants used Proposition Suggestion to refuse invitations: once to refuse to EI6 and once to refuse to EI8. Taif used this strategy in her refusal to EI8: "Actually I'm not interested in media. I will look for something else which I will enjoy more." Abdualla used this strategy in his refusal to EI6: "That would be great but I don't have time to finish the term paper. So, I'll work on the term paper." Taif explained that she used Proposition Suggestion because she wanted to propose that she would attend something else if she wasn't going to accept the invitation to the Media event. She commented: "because I said earlier that I am looking for an event to attend." Abdualla, however, used Proposition Suggestion as an indirect refusal strategy. He remarked: "It means that I'll not come. I did not mention at the beginning that I would not come."

Gratitude and Compliment

Gratitude was exclusively used to refuse invitations in English. The participants mainly used "Thank you" to express gratitude; however, one student (Al-Yazan) used "I appreciate" as a gratitude expression twice. However, during the interview, Al-Yazan stated that there was no difference in the meaning of the two expressions. The participants affirmed that their use of Gratitude was chiefly an expression of sincere appreciation, which was meant as recognition of the interlocutor's kind efforts to invite them. Taif, for example, refused to EI5 by saying: "Thank you doctor. I really want to attend your seminar, but I have another meeting. The time doesn't suit me." Later, during the interview, she explained her use of Gratitude as follows: "Because he invited me unlike in previous scenarios [requests]. It is to express gratitude." In response to EI7, she commented: "although it was a courtesy [invitation]. He apologized and decided to invite

me. So, I thanked him." In addition to its utility as an appreciation strategy, Mimi believed that the Gratitude strategy could be employed to protect the interlocutor's feelings, especially if he/she was unfamiliar to her (see Section 4.2.2.3 below on social distance).

Al-Yazan argued that in addition to expressing appreciation, the Gratitude strategy could be used as an indirect strategy to refuse invitations as well. He also explained that gratitude was similar in meaning to an apology when refusing an invitation. Thus, either Apology or Gratitude was fine to use when refusing an invitation. However, he preferred gratitude expressions because of the appreciation implied by it, unlike an apology. In contrast, because of the indirect refusal implied in Gratitude when refusing invitations, Ali avoided using Gratitude in his response to EI5. He refused by saying: "I wish I could attend, but I have to…/I promised my friends to go with them." He commented: "If I start with it [Gratitude], it will indicate directly that I don't want to attend. Starting with 'Thank you' is a direct refusal. It is like saying 'No.'" Ali used Gratitude only in his refusal to EI6: "Thank you doctor for suggesting, but you know I have to submit my…my…the final paper next week. So I cannot attend." He clarified during the interview that he treated the speech act as a suggestion more than an invitation. Therefore, he explained, "The professor does not expect you to attend… If I thought of it as [an] invitation, I would have responded differently." Taif disagreed with Ali. She stated that she would use the Gratitude strategy to express appreciation in refusing invitations. That is why in her refusal of EI8, she thought Gratitude was not "necessary," because she perceived the speech act as a suggestion more than an invitation. She refused by saying: "Actually, I'm not interested in media. I will look for something else which I will enjoy more."

The Compliment strategy was used to express either gratitude or as a gesture of politeness. It was used two times in refusals to EI6, two times in refusals to EI7, and four times

in refusals to EI8. For instance, Abdullah used this strategy in his refusal to EI6: "<u>That would be</u> <u>great</u> but I don't have time to finish the term paper. So, I'll work on the term paper." During the interview, he commented on this strategy as follows: "This means thank you… I am thankful… because this is for me [invitation to the lecture]. Maybe he thinks that I have lack of resources or something." Yusuf perceived his use of Compliment as "showing respect."

Wish

The participants used two types of Wish strategies: Wish for Self and Wish for Others. The participants used Wish for Self for four reasons: to express sincere interest in the proposition of the request or the invitation, to express appreciation, to protect their interlocutors' feelings, and to preserve/maintain a good self-image. For example, Mimi refused EI5 by saying: "<u>I really</u> <u>would like to come</u> but I have an appointment." During the interview, she explained that by expressing a desire to attend, she was attending to the interlocutor's feelings, and at the same time, she was expressing appreciation. She did not want the interlocutor to lose face. She commented: "I have to show an interest. …when somebody invites you to attend something he is doing, you have to show appreciation. You have to make him feel that he is doing something important." In his refusal to EI6, Yusuf said: "Sorry doctor. <u>I wish I could come</u> but unfortunately I have to submit the paper next week. You know that." Yusuf wanted to maintain a good self-image in addition to expressing interest. He explained during the interview that he used Wish for Self, "to show the doctor to what extent I'm enthusiastic about this paper [his research paper]. I really want to go. I'm active...'I wish' will create a better effect on the doctor that I am a good student." Wish for Self and Wish for Others were also used for the purpose of maintaining a positive self-image when interacting with strangers (+SD) especially those who did not belong to the participant's culture (i.e., +CD or American/British) (see Section 4.2.2.5 below).

Indefinite Acceptance, Indefinite Reply, Postponement and Sense of Loss

The strategies of Indefinite Acceptance, Indefinite Reply, Postponement, and Sense of Loss were each used once. They were mainly used to refuse invitations. Ali contended that due to his assumption that his interlocutor was not expecting him to comply with the invitation in EI8, he felt that using an Indefinite Acceptance was an eligible response. He refused EI8 by using this strategy: "It seems good. I'll try to attend." Ali commented that the Postponement in response to EI7 had the same meaning of the Indefinite Acceptance in EI8. He refused EI7 by saying: "I'll think about it." Thus, he contended: "I could say 'I'll try'" instead of saying that "I'll think about it." Fajir used the Indefinite Reply strategy in her refusal to EI7: "I think it will be a wonderful event. Thank you for the invitation, but I don't really know. I will not be able to come." However, she did not comment on her use of this strategy during the interview. Mimi used the Sense of Loss strategy in her refusal to EI6: "Oh! Really! I'm…/Too bad. I don't have enough time to come/to attend." She explained that she used this strategy as a way of expressing interest because she would be missing a good opportunity to benefit from the lecture. She said: "Because I want to attend but I have a paper."

Summary

To summarize, in the refusal of both Omani professors and American/British professors, the participants used two indirect strategies: Flat No and Negation. They perceived Flat no as more offensive than Negation. In addition, they used a total of thirteen indirect strategies: Regret, Excuse, Wish for Self, Wish for Others, Solution Suggestion, Proposition Suggestion, Assurance, Gratitude, Compliment, Indefinite Reply, Indefinite Acceptance, Postponement, and Sense of Loss. To realize the Regret strategy, they mainly used "Sorry" and "I'm sorry." However, they used these apology expressions mainly to express the Arabic meaning of "Excuse

me." To express a real sense of apology, they intensified the meaning of the Regret strategy using the Intensifier and Emphasis markers. They contended that they mainly used the Regret strategy, in refusing requests, to reduce the negative impact of the direct strategy of Negation on the hearer. The strategy of Excuse was used in relation to the various sociopragmatic variables such as social distance and affective factors.

The strategies of Solution Suggestion and Assurance were used together in the same response and in refusal to the directions requests. The participants used them to express a deep understanding of their interlocutors' need for urgent help by offering an alternative solution to him/her. The strategy of Proposition Suggestion was used to refuse invitations. One participant used it as a substitute to the proposal of the invitation, while another participant used it to express direct refusal by suggesting that he was not interested in the proposal of the invitation. The Gratitude strategy was mainly used to express appreciation for the invitation. The Compliment strategy was mainly used to express appreciation and as a polite gesture. The participants stated that it could be used as a substitute for the Gratitude strategy. The Wish for Self strategy was mainly used to express interest in the proposition of the request or invitation. Wish for Others was mainly used to maintain a good image of Omanis in front of strangers who did not belong to the participants' culture. Indefinite Acceptance and Postponement were used to refuse invitations because invitations were perceived to be less imposing speech acts than requests. The Sense of Loss strategy was used to express the speaker's interest in the proposition of the invitations by way of expressing the disadvantage the speaker would experience by not attending. The Indefinite Reply strategy was also used to respond to an invitation, but no explanation was provided for its use.

4.2.1.3 *Use of Pragmatic Markers*

As shown in Table 4.12, the sociopragmatic variable of relative imposition (±RI) resulted in some differences in the types and frequency of pragmatic markers employed to refuse requests (+RI) and invitations (-RI). In refusals of requests, the participants made use of seven pragmatic markers: Politeness, Downtoner, Emphasis, Understater, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity (Example 4.15).

Example 4.15:

Politeness:	Could you <u>please</u> ask someone else?
Downtoner:	You <u>might</u> ask another one [person].
Emphasis:	I'm <u>really</u> sorry.
Downtoner:	<u>Perhaps</u> you can ask someone around here to help you.
Understater:	I have <u>some</u> work to do.
Intensifier:	I'm <u>very</u> sorry.
Address:	I'm sorry <u>doctor.</u>
Solidarity:	I have a lot of work. And <u>you know</u> I have the term paper to submit next week.

In refusals of invitations in English, the participants also utilized seven types of pragmatic markers, namely, Subjectivizer, Emotion, Assessment, Emphasis, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity. However, Politeness, Downtoner and Understater markers were solely used in refusing requests, while Subjectivizer, Emotion and Assessment were exclusively used to refuse invitations (Example 4.16).

Example 4.16:

Subjectivizer:	<u>I think</u> it will be a wonderful event.
Emotion:	<u>Wow!</u> It would be great if I could come.
Assessment:	<u>Unfortunately,</u> I have to submit the paper next week.

Table 4.12. Frequency of Pragmatic Markers in Refusals of Requests (+RI) in English

Marker	Omani Prof. (-CD) Scenarios ER2 (-SD) f	n	ER3 (+SD) f	n	∑f	%	A/B Prof. (+CD) Scenarios ER1 (-SD) f	n	ER4 (+SD) f	n	∑f	%	Total ∑f	%
1. Politeness			2	2	2	7.4			1	1	1	3.8	3	5.7
2. Downtoner			2	2	2	7.4			3	3	3	11.5	5	9.4
3. Emphasis	2	2	1	1	3	11.1			3	3	3	11.5	6	11.3
4. Understater	1	1			1	3.7	1	1	1	1	2	7.7	3	5.7
5. Intensifier	3	3	4	4	7	25.9	3	2	1	1	4	15.4	11	20.8
6. Address	9	9	3	3	12	44.4	9	9	3	3	12	46.2	24	45.3
7. Solidarity							1	1			1	3.8	1	1.9
Total of markers	**15**		**12**		**27**		**14**		**12**		**26**		**53**	

Notes:
f: frequency of use of pragmatic markers in response to the scenario across all participants.
n: number of participants who used the pragmatic markers in response to the scenario.
∑f: sum of the frequencies of pragmatic markers across scenarios.
%: the percentage of the times the pragmatic marker was used out of the total number of all markers across all scenarios and participants.

With regard to the most frequently used pragmatic markers, Address came first (45.3%, f= 24) in refusals to the +RI requests, followed by Intensifier (20.8%, f= 11) and Emphasis (11.3%, f= 6) (see Table 4.12). However, in refusals to invitations, Address (32.6%, f= 15) was followed by Intensifier (21.7%, f= 10) and Assessment (15.2%, f= 7). Thus, while Address and Intensifier remained the most frequently used pragmatic markers in both cases of refusals, their frequency varied across ±RI speech acts.

The second source of variation in the type and frequency of pragmatic markers was the cultural distance variable or ± CD (Omani versus American/British). For example, six pragmatic markers were used in refusals of -CD requests while seven of them were used to refuse +CD requests. The Solidarity marker was only used once with the +CD scenario. Address, Intensifier, and Emphasis were the most frequently used pragmatic markers for both scenarios, but with some variation in their frequency. For instance, an Address marker was used 44.4% (f= 12) with the -CD requests in contrast with 46.2% (f=12) with the +CD requests. Intensifier, on the other hand, was employed 25.9% (f= 7) with the -CD requests and 15.4% (f= 4) with the +CD requests. Also, Emphasis scored 11.1% (f=3) in reaction to -CD requests and 11.5 (f=3) in reaction to +CD requests.

In the case of invitations, the participants utilized seven pragmatic markers to refuse the -CD invitations and six to refuse the +CD invitations (see Table 4.13). The Solidarity marker was exclusively used with the -CD invitations. The pragmatic markers of Address registered a frequency of 30.4% (f= 7) and Intensifier registered 26% (f= 6). They were followed by Assessment marker at 17.4% (f= 4). However, in refusals of the +CD invitations, Address was the highest in frequency (39.1%, f= 9) followed by Intensifier and Emphasis (17.4%, f= 4).

Table 4.13. Frequency of Pragmatic Markers in Refusals of Invitations (-RI) in English

	Marker	Omani Prof. (-CD) Scenarios EI6 (-SD) f	EI6 (-SD) n	EI8 (+SD) f	EI8 (+SD) n	Σf	%	A/B Prof. (+CD) Scenarios EI5 (-SD) f	EI5 (-SD) n	EI7 (+SD) f	EI7 (+SD) n	Σf	%	Total Σf	%
1.	Subjectivizer			1	1	1	4			3	3	3	13	4	8.7
2.	Emotion	3	2			3	13			1	1	1	4.3	4	8.7
3.	Assessment	2	2	2	2	4	17.4	1	1	2	2	3	13	7	15.2
4.	Emphasis	1	1			1	4.3	2	2	2	2	4	17.4	5	10,9
5.	Intensifier	3	3	3	2	6	26	2	2	2	2	4	17.4	10	21.7
6.	Address	5	5	2	2	7	30.4	5	5	3	3	8	38.8	15	32.6
7.	Solidarity	2	2			2	8.7							2	4.3
	Total of markers	**16**		**7**		**23**		**10**		**12**		**23**		**46**	

Notes:
f: frequency of use of pragmatic markers in response to the scenario across all participants.
n: number of participants who used the pragmatic markers in response to the scenario.
Σf: sum of the frequencies of pragmatic markers across scenarios.
%: the percentage of the times the pragmatic marker was used out of the total number of all markers across all scenarios and participants.

The sociopragmatic variable of social distance (± SD) was the third source of variation in the participants' use of pragmatic markers in their refusals of requests and invitations. In refusals of the -SD requests of Omani professors, the participants used four strategies in comparison to five strategies with the +SD requests. They used Understater exclusively with the -SD request, while they used Politeness and Downtoner exclusively with the +SD request. The most frequent pragmatic marker was Address with the ± SD request of Omani professors. However, Address was used by nine participants with the -SD request ($f= 9$) and only three of them used it with the +SD request ($f= 3$).

In refusals of the requests of the American/British professors, the participants used four pragmatic markers to refuse the -SD request, while they used six with the +SD request. The participants used Politeness, Downtoner, and Emphasis solely with the +SD request. Nine participants used Address nine times, rendering it the highest in frequency in refusals of the -SD request. However, in refusals of the +SD request, Address, Emphasis and Downtoner were equal in frequency ($f=3$, $n= 3$).

When refusing the invitations of Omani professors, the participants utilized seven pragmatic markers to refuse the -SD invitation, while they used only four pragmatic markers to refuse the +SD invitation. The Address marker was the highest in frequency in refusals of the -SD invitation and was used five times by four participants. However, in response to the +SD invitation, Assessment ($f= 3$, $n= 3$) and Intensifier ($f= 3$, $n=2$) were the highest in frequency.

When refusing the invitation of the American/British professors, the participants employed four pragmatic markers to refuse the -SD invitation and six to refuse the +SD invitation. Subjectivizer and Emotion were exclusively employed to refuse the +SD invitation.

The pragmatic marker of Address had the highest frequency in refusals of the -SD invitation

(f=5, n=5) and the +SD invitation (f= 3, n=3).

Summary

To sum up, in refusal to Omani interlocutors, the participants used six pragmatic markers

to refuse requests and seven to refuse invitations. They used the markers of Understater,

Downtoner, and Politeness exclusively in refusing requests, while they used Subjectivizer,

Emotion, Assessment, and Solidarity to refuse invitations. In refusal to both types of scenarios,

Address and Intensifier were the most frequently used markers. In addition, they used five of the

markers to refuse the +SD request and four to refuse the -SD request. However, they used four

markers to refuse the invitation of the +SD interlocutor and six of them to refuse the invitation of

the -SD interlocutor.

In refusal to American/British interlocutors, the participants used seven markers to refuse

requests and six markers to refuse invitations. They exclusively used the markers of Politeness,

Downtoner, and Understater to refuse requests, while they exclusively used Subjectivizer,

Emotion and Assessment to refuse invitations. In refusal of both types of speech acts, Address

and Intensifier were the most frequently used markers. Furthermore, they used six markers to

refuse the request and invitations of the +SD interlocutor and only four markers to refuse to the -

SD interlocutors.

4.2.1.4 *Perception of Pragmatic Markers*

Subjectivizer

Three participants used the Subjectivizer marker when they refused the EI7 and EI8

invitations. Abdulla explained his use of "I don't think" in response to EI7 and EI8 as an indirect

way of expressing his lack of desire in the proposition. For example, he refused EI7 by saying:

"Thank you but <u>I don't think</u> I'll be able to attend because I have lots of assignments to do."

During the interview he commented: "If you don't want to go, you don't tell him frankly that you

don't want to go to the party or the event. You would say that 'I don't think.'" Other participants

did not provide explanations for their use of this pragmatic marker.

Emotion

Four different Emotion markers were used to refuse invitations: Ah! Wow! Oh! and

Really! Khaled explained his use of "Ah!" in his refusal of EI6 as a way to express that he was

busy, and hence, he couldn't attend the lecture. He refused: "<u>Ah!</u> Sorry doctor. I have to

attend/do my paper/research paper that is due in one week. So, I have a lot of work to do. I'm

sorry. I can't attend." He explained during the interview: "I told him with emotion with a feeling

that I'm busy. I clarified for him that I can't. It clarifies for him the feeling of tiredness." Yusuf

used "Wow!" in his refusal to EI7: "<u>Wow!</u> It would be great if I could come, but unfortunately I

couldn't because I have an assignment due next week." Yusuf said that "Wow!" meant, "I'm

surprised." Mimi reported that both "Oh!" and "Really!" in her refusal to EI6, "<u>Oh!</u> <u>Really!...</u>Too

bad. I don't have enough time to come/to attend," were intended to express amazement.

Expressing amazement, she contended, was her way of "showing interest" in the proposition,

which in turn would express appreciation for the interlocutor for inviting her. She stated:

"Because I expect the same when I call somebody to tell him about my work. At least I should

show appreciation…Especially that the topic [of the lecture] is relevant to my paper. He burdens

himself to tell me about the [guest] speaker. So, I can't just say that I can't attend."

Politeness

Two participants used "please" as a Politeness marker three times to refuse direction

requests. Ali, for example, used please when refusing ER3: "I'm sorry doctor. I have a midterm

now. So, I'm in a hurry. Ahh…So you can ask someone here to guide [you] to the Language

Center. For that please excuse me." Taif used please in her refusal to ER3 as well: "Could you

please ask someone else? I have a midterm and I'm late." Also, she used this strategy in her

refusal of ER4. However, no explanation was provided concerning the use of this strategy during

the interview.

Downtoner

Three participants used the Downtoner markers "might," "could," "perhaps," and

"maybe" in response to ER3 and ER4. The participants did not provide any explanation for their

use of this marker during the interview. For example, Reem used "perhaps" to refuse to ER3:

"I'm sorry. I'm late to a midterm. Perhaps you can ask someone around here to help you." She

also used "maybe" in her refusal to ER4: "I'm really sorry. I'm in a hurry. Maybe you can ask the

security to guide you." Areej used "might" to refuse to ER4: "I'm sorry. I can't. You might ask

another person." Taif used "perhaps" in her refusal to ER3: "Could you please ask someone else?

I have a midterm and I'm late. Sorry." She also used Solution Suggestion in response to ER4.

Assessment

The Assessment markers "unfortunately" and "actually" were used seven times by five

participants in refusals of invitations. The participants ascribed their use of "unfortunately" to

their desire to accept the proposition of the invitation. For example, Yusuf used unfortunately to

refuse to EI5: "Sorry doctor. I wish I could come but unfortunately I have to submit [a] paper

next week. You know that." Yusuf justified his use of "unfortunately" by stating: "because it is

something I'm interested in. I'm losing by not attending." Areej agreed in her understating of

"unfortunately" with Yusuf. She said: "Maybe 'unfortunately' shows that I wish I could attend but

I can't. She added: "I would replace it with a wish." She used unfortunately to refuse to EI8:

"Unfortunately I have a lot of work to do." On the other hand, Abdulla used it "to show that I appreciate your [the interlocutor's] offer, but I can't." He used it to refuse to EI5: "Unfortunately I cannot attend this seminar because I have something else to do on this Tuesday." Taif was the only one who used "actually" in a refusal to EI8, "Actually I'm really not interested in media. I will look for something else, which I will enjoy," but she did not comment on her use of this marker during the interview.

Emphasis

The Emphasis marker "really" was used eleven times by six participants to refuse requests and invitations. The participants explained that they utilized "really" to emphasize the meaning they were trying to convey, which in turn helped them to express sincerity. For example, some participants believed that if "really" was used with an apology or excuse, it would make their apology and/or their excuse more sincere. Areej used "really" with Excuse in response to ER2, "Sorry doctor. I can't because I really have to go home this week." She commented: "It adds to the meaning. He [the interlocutor] would understand more that I have to go [home]." Yusuf said that "really" meant "honestly." He used it with Negation in response to ER4: "Sorry doctor. I can't really help you. Because I have to go to the library to get some resources…"

Mimi maintained that "really" could intensify an apology and transfer an apology such as "I'm sorry" from a simple apology, meaning "Excuse me" in Arabic, to a sincere one that is the equivalent of " a:sif / a:sfa:" in Arabic. Reem agreed with Mimi and added that "really" in "I'm really sorry" was equivalent to the Intensifier marker "so." Fajir agreed with them. She used "really"in her refusal to ER2: "I'm really sorry doctor. But I cannot. I have to go home." She

commented that even if she did mention her reasons to refuse, "I already used 'really.' It emphasizes the meaning."

Understater

The Understater marker "some" was used three times by one participant in his refusals of requests (ER1, ER2, and ER4). For example, in his refusal to ER4, Al-Yazan said: "I'm so sorry doctor. I have some work to do now. I'm busy. So, you can ask someone to direct you." However, Al-Yazan did not provide any explanation for his use of this marker during the interview.

Intensifier

Nine participants used 23 Intensifier markers to refuse requests and invitations. They used several intensifying words such as "so", "very", "many", "so much" and "a lot" to intensify the content of Regret, Excuse, Compliment, or Gratitude. For example, Al-Yazan intensified his apology in his refusal to ER3:" I'm so sorry. I have a midterm now. So, I'm in a hurry. Ahh…So you can ask someone to guide you to the Language Center." He stated that he wanted to express a sincere apology. Hence, he used "so" to intensify "I'm sorry" and make it equivalent to " aːsif " in Arabic. Idirs made a similar use of "so" with Regret. He commented: "It ['so'] is important. It makes it [the apology] stronger like 'aasef jeddan' [I'm so/very sorry in Arabic]." However, Khaled used the Intensifier "a lot" with Excuse "for persuasion." In other words, he intensified the meaning of his excuse to make it more persuasive for his interlocutor. He refused ER1 by saying: "Sorry doctor I can't help you with the workshop because I have a midterm paper to submit next week. And I have work, a lot of work to submit. Sorry." The participants did not comment on their use of the Intensifier marker with Gratitude and Compliment, but Fajir used "very" with Compliment in her refusal to EI6: "That would be very useful but I cannot come",

while Reem used "so much" with Gratitude to refuse to EI7: "Thank you <u>so much</u> for the invitation. Unfortunately, I can't attend because I have a family occasion on Friday."

Address and Solidarity

Address was the most frequently used marker. Address was used 24 times to refuse requests and 18 times to refuse invitations. The title *"doctor"* was the most commonly used and only twice did participants use the title "sir." For example, Abdualla used "doctor" in his refusal to ER1: "I'm sorry <u>doctor</u>. I cannot help you because I have a midterm to finish this week." Mimi, on the other hand, used "sir" in her refusal to the same scenario: "I'm sorry<u> sir</u> but I have a midterm next week. I can't." The participants attributed their use of titles mainly to the influence of the sociopragmatic variables of relative imposition, social distance and social power (see Section 2.2.2 below). On the other hand, three participants used the Solidarity marker "you know" three times: once to refuse ER1 and twice to refuse EI6. The participants ascribed their use of this marker to social distance (see Section 4.2.2.3 on social distance).

Summary

To summarize, the participants used a total of ten pragmatic markers to refuse the requests and invitations of Omani professors and America/British professors: Subjectivizer, Politeness, Downtoner, Assessment, Emotion, Emphasis, Understater, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity. The basic marker of Subjectivizer was used to express the speaker's personal opinion of the refusal. The Emotion marker was used to express different feelings such as exhaustion, surprise, and amazement. No explanation was provided for the use of Downtoner and Politeness; however, Downtoner was used with Solution Suggestion strategy and Politeness was used with Solution Suggestion and Regret strategies.

The participants used Assessment, Emphasis, Manner of Speaking, Understater, and Intensifier to comment on some aspect of the basic message of the different strategies these markers were used with. The participants used "unfortunately" as an Assessment marker to communicate that their desire to attend and their inability to attend make their situation unfortunate. However, no explanation was provided for the use of "actually" as an Assessment marker. The Emphasis marker was used to stress the meaning of the strategy it was used with, such as Regret and Excuse, by way of expressing sincere apology and sincere excuse for refusing. Similarly, the Intensifier marker was used to intensify the meaning of the strategy it was used with, be it a Regret, Compliment, Gratitude or Excuse by way of expressing sincerity. Thus, intensifying Regret transferred it from a regular politeness gesture to a real or sincere apology. No explanation was provided for the use of Understater marker. The use of of Address was influenced by the sociopragmatic marker of relative power and social distance. In addition, the Solidarity marker "you know" was used in refusing to a familiar professor.

4.2.1.5 *Use and Perception of Refusal Patterns*

In their refusals of requests in English, the participants used five main patterns: 3, 4, 5, 10 and 15 as shown in Table 4.14. Pattern number 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) was the most frequently used at 52.5% ($f = 21$) followed by pattern number 4 at 12.5% ($f = 16$) (see Example 4.17 and 4.18). The rest of the patterns were used less frequently at 2.5% ($f = 1$).

Table 4.14. Frequency of Refusal Patterns in Refusals of Requests in English

	Pattern	Omani Prof.			A/B Prof.				
		f.	*n.*	*%*	*f.*	*n.*	*%*	*∑f.*	*%*
3	Regret—Negation—Excuse	10	10	50	11	11	55	21	52.5
4	Regret—Excuse	9	9	45	7	7	35	16	40
5	Regret				1	1	5	1	2.5
10	Wish for Self—Excuse				1	1	5	1	2.5
15	Others	1	1	5				1	2.4
	Total		20			20		40	

Example 4.17:

Main Pattern (3):	Regret—Negation—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Negation—Excuse
Refusal:	Sorry doctor—I can't—I am going home this weekend.

Example 4.18:

Main Pattern (4):	Regret—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Excuse—Solution Suggestion
Refusal:	I'm really sorry—I'm in a hurry—Maybe you can ask the security to guide you.

In contrast, the participants used 14 main patterns to refuse invitations (i.e., 15 patterns expect for Pattern 11). Only patterns 2, 3, 5 and 10 were used to refuse both requests and invitations, while the rest of the patterns were used exclusively to refuse invitations (see Table 4.15). The most frequently utilized pattern to refuse invitations was pattern 4 (i.e., Regret—Excuse) at 15% (f= 6) (see Example 4.19). Second in frequency at 10% (f=4) were patterns 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse), 10 (i.e., Wish for Self—Excuse), and 12 (i.e., Gratitude—Negation) (see Examples 4.20, 4.21 and 4.22). The rest of the patterns were used between 2.5% and 7.5% (f= 1 to 3).

Table 4. 15. Frequency of Refusal Patterns in Refusals of Invitations in English

	Pattern	Omani Prof.			A/B Prof.				
		f	*n*	*%*	*f*	*n*	*%*	*∑f*	*%*
1	Flat No	1	1	5				1	2.5
2	Negation—Excuse				1	1	5	1	2.5
3	Regret—Negation—Excuse	2	2	10	2	2	10	4	10
4	Regret—Excuse	3	3	15	3	3	15	6	15
5	Regret	1	1	5	1	1	5	2	5
6	Excuse	2	2	10	1	1	5	3	7.5
7	Compliment—Excuse	2	2	10				2	5
8	Compliment—Negation	2	2	10	1	1	5	3	7.5
9	Compliment	2	2	10	1	1	5	3	7.5
10	Wish for Self—Excuse	1	1	5	3	3	15	4	10
12	Gratitude—Negation				4	4	20	4	10
13	Gratitude—Excuse	2	2	10				2	5
14	Gratitude	1	1	5	2	2	10	3	7.5
15	Others	1	1	5	1	1	5	2	5
	Total	**20**			**20**			**40**	

Example 4.19:

Head-Pattern (4):	Regret—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Excuse—Gratitude
Refusal:	I'm sorry doctor—I'm not interested in media—Thank you for the invitation.

Example 4.20:

Head-Pattern (3):	Regret—Negation—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Regret—Negation—Excuse—Regret
Refusal:	Sorry doctor—I cannot attend—because I don't like these kinds of events—So, I am sorry.

Example 4.21:

Head-Pattern (10):	Pattern 10: Wish for Self—Excuse
Sub-Pattern:	Wish for Self—Excuse
Refusal:	I really would like to come—but I have an appointment.

Example 4.22:

Head-Pattern (12):	Gratitude—Negation
Sub-Pattern:	Gratitude—Negation—Excuse
Refusal:	Thank you—but I don't think I will be able to attend—because I have lots of assignments to do.

The Regret strategy emerged as the most preferred strategy to start a refusal in English among the participants. It was used as the main strategy for refusal patterns of requests and invitations 50 times. In refusals of the four requests, the Regret strategy was used as the main strategy 38 times out of the 40 refusal occurrences. In refusals of invitations, it was used only 12 times. All the participants affirmed that the Regret strategy was important for their refusals of requests because of the high imposing nature (+RI) of the scenario and, hence, the high chance of offending the interlocutor. They perceived the interlocutor needed them to comply with the request and, as a result, declining to fulfill the request might be harmful to the interlocutor's face (see Section 4.2.2.1 on relative imposition). The Regret strategy was either followed by a Negation or an Excuse. As reported in Section 4.2.1.2 on Regret and Negation, the participants perceived Negation to be offensive to the interlocutor. Therefore, they needed to use Regret before Negation to reduce its negative impact on the interlocutor. Despite the fact that they did not associate the use of Excuse with offense, the participants tended to use Regret prior to it. As

explained in Section 4.2.2.1, Regret sometimes acted as an indirect refusal when Negation was not used.

However, when refusing invitations, the participants preferred to use a variety of strategies to start their refusals. In particular, they seemed to prefer to use strategies that had a sense of appreciation (i.e., positive politeness) such as Gratitude, Compliment, and Wish for Self. These strategies were used as the main strategy of refusal 21 times out of the 40 times invitations were refused. Regret was used as a main strategy only 12 times and other strategies were used only seven times. The participants ascribed their preference for Gratitude, Compliment, and Wish for Self as the main strategies for their refusal mainly to the not very imposing nature of invitations. In other words, they thought that the interlocutor was offering them something rather than requesting something from them. Hence, they felt that there would be fewer negative consequences for the interlocutor if they refused (see Section 4.2.2.1 on relative imposition).

Summary

To summarize, the participants used three patterns to refuse the requests of Omani interlocutors and twelve patterns to refuse invitations. Refusal Pattern 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) and 4 (i.e., Regret—Excuse) were the most frequently utilized patterns. In refusal of invitations, Pattern 4 was the most frequently utilized, followed by Patterns 3, 6 (i.e., Excuse), 7(i.e., Compliment—Excuse), 8 (i.e., Compliment—Negation), 9 (i.e., Compliment), and 13 (i.e., Gratitude—Excuse).

The participants used four refusal patterns to refuse requests of their American/British interlocutor, while they used eleven patterns to refuse invitations. In the refusal of requests, the Refusal Pattern 3 (i.e., Regret—Negation—Excuse) was the most frequent one, followed by

Pattern 4 (i.e., Regret—Excuse). In the refusal of invitations, the refusal pattern 12 (i.e., Gratitude—Negation) was the most frequent, followed by Patterns 4 and 10 (i.e., Wish for Self—Excuse).

The participants preferred to start their refusals of requests with the Regret strategy to reduce the negative impact of Negation. They perceived refusing requests as more imposing because their interlocutor needed them to comply with the proposition of the request. Thus, they preferred to counterbalance the negative impact of their refusals on their interlocutor by starting with the Regret strategy. However, in the refusal of invitations, they felt that their interlocutor did not expect them to comply with the proposition of the invitation. Therefore, they felt at liberty to use a variety of strategies to begin their refusals, such as Gratitude, Wish for Self, and Compliment. However, they preferred to start their refusals with Compliment and Gratitude because both express a sense of appreciation to the interlocutor for offering them the chance to attend something, rather than asking them to do something for the interlocutor.

4.2.2 *Perception of Sociopragmatic Variables in English Refusal*

This section reports the participants' perceptions of the influence of the sociopragmatic variables on their pragmatic choices when refusing in English. The sociopragmatic variables examined in the English ODCT were the absolute ranking of imposition, social distance, and cultural distance. Also, this section will discuss other variables that the participants perceived relevant to their pragmatic choices such as the nature of the situation, affective factors, social power, and gender.

4.2.2.1 Absolute *Ranking of Imposition*

Since there were eight scenarios in the English ODCT, the participants were asked to rank the degree of difficulty to refuse from one (the most difficult to refuse) to eight (the least

difficult to refuse). The participants ranked requests as being more difficult to refuse than invitations. They placed requests in the top three levels and ranked invitations 4 to 7. They gave an average ranking of 1.7 to ER3 followed by ER4 at 1.9. They gave the same average ranking of 3.5 to ER1 and ER2. EI6, on the other hand, received a higher average ranking of 4.7 than EI5 (5) and EI7 received higher average ranking of 6.7 than EI8 (7.2).

The majority of the participants maintained that they perceived requests to be more imposing (+RI) than invitations (-RI) due to the minimal consequences of refusing invitations compared to refusing requests. They explained that with requests, the interlocutor needed them to comply with the proposal unlike with invitations. Thus, refusing a request would result negative consequences for the interlocutor. This perception seems to have influenced the participants' pragmatic choices in their refusals to both types of speech acts. For example, many participants perceived Regret as a very important strategy in realizing their refusals to requests; however, they perceived it as less important in their refusals to invitations. Most of the participants, in fact, preferred to substitute Regret with other strategies such as Gratitude and Compliment. Fajir, for instance, justified the lack of Regret in her refusals to all invitations by saying: "No need for apology. He won't be affected [by my refusal]…because this [invitation] is something that will benefit me. He gives the invitation for me, not for him. He [the interlocutor] won't be affected if I don't attend." Despite the fact that other participants used Regret in their refusals to invitations, they agreed with Fajir's explanations. For example, Ali responded to EI7 by saying: "I appreciate your invitation doctor, but I'm sorry. I can't come because due to a wedding in the family. I can't attend the open day and I'm sorry for that." He affirmed: "It is an invitation, so starting with apology is not important...In response to invitations using gratitude is more important than apology."

A similar effect of the weak imposition of invitation was observed in relation to other pragmatic choices made by the participants such as the use of Excuse and title. For example, Areej contended that the use of short or even no excuses can be explained by the weak imposition of invitations. She stated: "There is no need to explain…my attendance is not important. He won't be affected." Therefore, she used either a short Excuse as in her refusal to EI5, "Sorry but I'm busy at that time," or no Excuse at all as in her refusal to EI7, "Thank you but I can't attend." She also associated the use of the title "doctor" with the relative imposition of the speech act. She did not use the title "doctor" when refusing invitations, explaining "Maybe I did not use it because it is easier to refuse an invitation than a request," however, she noted: "I could add the title."

For the same reasons, eight of the participants proposed short alternative responses that consisted of one or a combination of the following pragmatic strategies and pragmatic markers: Gratitude, Compliment, Postponement, Indefinite Acceptance, Indefinite Reply, Consequences Downtoner, Address, and Intensifier. Fajir explained her alternative responses to EI7 and EI8 by saying: "I won't refuse. I would say, 'I'll see.' He won't look for me at the event. I could say: 'Thank you doctor for the invitation. I'll see.'" Also, she commented on her alternative response to EI5: "My attendance is not important in the seminar. He might not even notice me in the seminar." Thus, she said she would refuse by saying: "I'll see," or "Thank you doctor for the invitation. I'll see." Alternative responses are also discussed in Section 4.3.2.2 below)

Seven participants viewed ER3 and ER4 as being more difficult to refuse than ER1 and ER2 due to the limited expenditure of goods, services and ability required of them to fulfill these requests. Al-Yazan, for example, attributed his use of intensified apology, "I'm so sorry," in response to ER3 and ER4, to the minimum effort needed to fulfill the directions request

compared to other types of requests in the English ODCT: "The reason is that I know the place but there is a reason [why] I would not tell him. In previous situations, I'm not familiar with the nature of the work they will ask from me to do, while here I know. I know that I could do it. If he was asking me about a place I don't know, it would be easier to refuse." While the general ranking of scenarios shows that requests were more imposing than invitations, some participants perceived some invitations to be more imposing than requests due to the nature of the situation in the scenarios as explained in the following section.

4.2.2.2 *The Nature of the Situation*

When looking closely at how individual participants ranked the degree of difficulty of refusing requests and invitations, the nature of the situation was one of the most influential variables influencing their perceptions and, accordingly, their pragmatic choices. Some participants perceived the invitation in scenario EI6 as being more difficult to refuse than some requests (ER1, ER2, ER3) even though invitations were easier to refuse than requests more generally. For example, Abdulla considered scenario EI6 to be more difficult to refuse than scenario ER1, while Yusuf viewed EI6 to be more imposing than ER1 and ER2 together. Both participants attributed the difficulty to refuse EI6 to the benefit they would gain from attending the lecture they were invited to, which was related to their research project assignments. Abdualla commented on the invitation to a lecture in scenario EI6 in comparison to the invitation to a seminar in scenario EI5 as follows: "This is for me…Offer to help me." Yusuf remarked that the invitation in scenario EI6 "is beneficial for me."

The participants' evaluations of the particulars of the request and invitation situations in this study made them perceive some requests as being more imposing than other requests. Seven participants viewed ER3 and ER4 as being more difficult to refuse than ER1 and ER2. The

participants attributed their ranking to the nature of the situations in these scenarios and particularly to the time factor. They stated that the lack of time in the directions situations made them urgent and accordingly not fulfilling them could result in severe physical and emotional consequences for the interlocutor. From Reem's point of view, lack of time meant lack of time for alternative solutions for the interlocutor in comparison to the other requests, which meant that the interlocutor would suffer immediate physical consequences if she refused. She affirmed: "He is in a crisis. These people [in ER2] can find solutions to their requests for help," because they have the weekend, unlike the interlocutor in the directions situations. Reem explained that she suggested a solution for her interlocutor because she understood the urgency of the requests in ER3 and ER4. She refused to ER3 by saying: "I'm sorry. I'm late to a midterm. Perhaps you can ask someone around here to help you."

In addition to the physical consequences that the interlocutor might suffer, the participants perceived possible emotional consequences in the form of embarrassment for the interlocutor. For instance, Mimi commented on ER3: "It is hard [to refuse] whether you know him or don't know him… he might be embarrassed because he does not know the place or as if he is putting some effort to ask for help and then you refuse to help him! You are evil. You have to apologize." The participants also stated that their understanding of the emotional consequences that the interlocutor might experience affected them emotionally which made them express real sense of regret using intensified Regret. For example, Reem explained that her sincere apology using "I'm so sorry" and "I'm really sorry" in her refusals to ER3 and ER4 as follows: "I have sympathy for lost people, because I get lost all the time." Al-Yazan explained his repeated use of the Regret strategy as follows: "Because I know that I could have helped but I did not. Maybe I blame myself." He added that suggesting a solution is "a little help which I

could do in this situation." If he could not offer to help him by giving him the directions he needed, at least he could provide emotional help because "Maybe he [the interlocutor] will be hesitant to ask someone else. Maybe I will encourage him [to ask someone else]."

While the majority of the participants agreed that the direction requests (ER3 and ER4) were more difficult to refuse than ER1 and ER2, some of them found that the degree of difficulty in refusing each type of situation was different, again, because the specifics of each situation were different. Particularly, they thought the goal of each type of request was different. For example, Khaled and Areej perceived the interlocutor's need to go to the Language Center in ER3 to be more urgent than his/her need to go to the Deanship of the College of Arts in ER4. They thought that the interlocutor's need to go to the LC was academic in nature, which could mean he/she was going to classes and lectures that could not be missed. However, they thought that the interlocutor's need to go the Deanship of the College of Arts could be administrative in nature, which meant that it was less urgent because the Deanship staff would be available all day.

In addition, Areej, for example, considered the consequences for her if she had decided to fulfill the requests. She explained her use of a repeated apology in response to ER3, "<u>Sorry</u>. <u>Sorry</u>. I can't because I'm in a hurry now," and her use of one apology in response to ER4, "I'm sorry. I can't. You might ask another one [person]," as a consideration of the consequences she might suffer. She explained her use of a repeated Regret as an attempt to express to the interlocutor in ER3 that she was truly in a hurry because she could not be late for her exam. However, she commented on ER4: "I did not repeat the word 'sorry' because I am less in a hurry here in comparison with the pervious scenario. Here, my friend would understand if I am late." Thus, the consequences of being late for her exam were greater than being late to see a friend.

The nature of the situation also affected the students' reactions to ER1 and ER2. Some participants believed that a request to help with the exhibition (ER2) was more difficult to refuse than a request to help with a workshop (ER1) due to the difference in the time required to fulfill each request, which could lead to varying consequences for the interlocutor in each situation. For instance, Abdulla said that the time to fulfill ER2 was limited compared to ER1. In ER2, he explained, the interlocutor only had the weekend to find the help he needed, while in the workshop situation, the interlocutor had more time. That was why Abdulla wanted to show that he was sincerely sorry for refusing ER2, despite the fact that he used the same apology phrase "I'm sorry doctor" to refuse ER1 and ER2. He commented on his Regret in response to ER2: "I'm sorry here means aːsif...I think here I'm more obliged to help. I think here this person is in need."

On the other hand, Taif, Areej and Fajir had a different evaluation of the nature of both situations. They perceived ER1 as more imposing than ER2. For example, Taif perceived ER2 as the least imposing request among all the scenarios. She attributed this to the time of the request. She said that the exhibition request (ER2) was at "the wrong time," because the professor asked her to help him with the exhibition just before the weekend. She explained: "my desire to go home was too strong. There is nothing as important as going home" at the time of the request. She explained that "I can't" in her refusal to ER2 meant, "I don't wish to do it. There are two points here. He requested my help on a Thursday. Second, the weekend is my time. It is my right to refuse." In addition, she used a short response in refusing to ER2: "Sorry doctor. I can't. I'm going home." However, in response to ER1, she said: "Sorry doctor. I wish I could do that for you, but I'm busy preparing my midterm paper, which I'm planning to finish this week."

4.2.2.3 *Social Distance*

While the nature of the situation was quite influential on the participants' pragmatic decisions, the participants also attributed the difficulty in refusing some scenarios to the social distance between them and the interlocutor in those scenarios. Most of the participants agreed that their perception of social distance influenced their pragmatic choices. For example, as Table 4.16 shows, the majority of the participants appeared to perceive refusing the requests of a familiar professor in ER1 and ER2 as being more difficult than refusing the requests of an unfamiliar one. They exhibited similar perceptions in their refusals to the invitations in EI5, EI6, EI7, and EI8. They mainly attributed this difficulty in refusing a familiar professor to the emotional and physical consequences for both the speaker and the interlocutor.

Table 4.16. Participants' Perceptions of the Difficulty to Refuse Relative to Social Distance

Scenario	Familiar	Unfamiliar	Neither
ER1	8	2	0
ER2	7	2	1
ER3	5	5	0
ER4	5	5	0
EI5	8	2	0
EI6	7	2	1
EI7	7	3	0
EI8	7	3	0

For instance, Mimi and Taif thought that EI5 was more difficult to refuse than EI6 because the threat to the interlocutor's face was higher in EI5 compared to EI6. Mimi and Taif took into consideration who would be giving the lecture in EI6 and who would be presenting in the seminar in EI5. If the presenter was a familiar professor, then it would be more difficult to refuse, because refusal to attend meant refusal to attend the interlocutor's personal work as in EI5. Accordingly, it could result in a threat to his/her feelings. However, in EI6, even though the person who forwarded the invitation was a familiar professor, he/she was inviting them to the

work of a stranger. Thus, refusing to attend would not affect their professor's status. For example, in refusing EI5, Mimi used an intensified Wish for Self by using "really" to express her consideration for her professor's status. She refused: "I really would like to come but I have an appointment." By expressing a desire to attend or Wish for Self, she explained, she was attending to the interlocutor's feelings and, at the same time, expressing appreciation. She did not want him to lose face. She commented: "This is his effort. I have to show an interest. …when somebody invites you to attend something he is doing, you have to show appreciation. You have to make him feel that he is doing something important." Taif attested to this same understating by saying: "the speaker who is giving the talk is not the doctor himself [in EI6]. The refusal is not directed to the doctor."

Other participants focused mainly on the possible threat to their face. These participants thought that using more explanation in their refusal to a familiar professor was more important than when refusing an unfamiliar one. Doing so, they believed, would help avoid any possible negative impact on them. Khaled, for instance, wanted to avoid any possible negative effect on his face. Therefore, he noted: "If I know the person, I will have to explain more. If I give in-depth explanation, I leave him while I am feeling good [that I have explained myself to him]." Also, in response to a familiar professor in EI6, Areej said: "No, thank you but I have to work on my paper." However, if the interlocutor were an unfamiliar professor, she said that she would say: "No. Thank you" or simply "I can't," because he did not know her and they might not meet again.

For Yusuf, however, it was not only the impact for his face that mattered, but also the actual consequences he might suffer. He admitted that the consequences for refusing a familiar professor were higher in comparison with refusing someone he did not know. Such consequences

could be low grades for example. If, however, the professor was not teaching him or would not teach him in the future, he would give shorter responses to the professor. He stated: "I consider if he is teaching me because there are consequences… I'm afraid that he will affect me in anyway…If he does not teach me, then it will be easier" to refuse. He added: "If there are no consequences affecting me, I will give direct and short responses."

On the other hand, Reem and Fajir viewed refusing unfamiliar interlocutors in all scenarios as being more difficult than refusing familiar ones. Even though they did not feel obliged to unfamiliar interlocutors, they would feel it more difficult to refuse them because chances of misunderstanding were higher than when they refused somebody they were familiar with. Unfamiliar interlocutors, they contended, would not know their circumstances, and hence, when they refuse them, they might misunderstand their refusal.

However, despite their perception that the refusal of an unfamiliar interlocutor was more difficult than refusing a familiar one, they both asserted that they would explain more to a familiar professor than an unfamiliar one. They stated that they felt more obliged to do so with a familiar professor. For instance, Reem commented on giving longer explanations to a familiar professor: "Because when you know somebody, you feel you want to tell them that you can't. So you find them reasons and you tell them about your situation. But when somebody you don't know, maybe you don't care. You do care but still you don't need to explain because you don't…you don't owe them anything." Therefore, Reem and Fajir contended that even though they sometimes used Excuse in refusing an unfamiliar interlocutor, it was not as important to use it when refusing a familiar professor.

However, in refusing the requests in ER3 and ER4, half of the participants believed that refusing to give directions to a familiar professor was more difficult than refusing an unfamiliar

interlocutor. The participants who viewed refusing to give directions to familiar interlocutors in ER3 and ER4 as more imposing attributed their views to the feeling of obligation towards the people they know. However, those who perceived refusing to give directions to unfamiliar interlocutors as more difficult attributed their views to the complexity that the lack of familiarity added to situations that were already complex (see the Section 4.2.2.2 on nature of the situation). For example, Abdulla commented on refusing an unfamiliar professor compared to a familiar one in ER3: "Maybe he doesn't know that you have an exam and you are late for your exam. So, he won't comprehend. He won't understand you like Dr. O or another [familiar] doctor."

In the two cases of perceiving social distance as irrelevant to refusal, the two participants provided different reasons. Al-Yazan, for example, stated that because he wanted to go home (i.e., nature of the situation), he did not see the familiarity with his interlocutors or lack of it in ER2 as relevant to the realization of his refusal. Mimi, also, thought that social distance had no direct effect on the realization of her refusal to EI6 because familiar and unfamiliar professors would be inviting her to somebody else's work (i.e., a lecture by a guest speaker). Thus, refusing a professor of either type had no effect on the degree of difficulty to refuse in this situation.

Aside from the perception of difficulty to refuse relative to social distance, Fajir and Ali stated that they used the pragmatic marker of Solidarity "you know" because they assumed that the interlocutor, as professors at SQU, was familiar with their circumstances as students. For example, Fajir used "you know" in her refusal to ER1: "I'm sorry doctor but I cannot. I have a lot of work. And you know I have a term paper to submit next week." She commented on her use of this marker in the interview: "I know the doctor and I felt comfortable a little bit."

While social distance was perceived as influential in some of the participants' pragmatic choices, it was not the only factor that the participants took into account when refusing a familiar

professor. They stated that that how much they liked or disliked the professors certainly played an important role in their pragmatic choices.

4.2.2.4 *Affective Factors*

Table 4.17 shows the participants' perception of the degree of difficulty in refusing familiar professors whom the participants liked. The participants were divided into three groups: four of them viewed refusing a familiar professor they liked as difficult, three thought it was easy, while another three thought that liking or disliking a professor was irrelevant to how they realized their refusals.

Table 4.17. Perception of Difficulty to Refuse Relative to Affective Factors

Scenario	Easy	Difficult	Neither
ER1	3	4	3
ER2	3	4	3
EI5	3	4	3
EI6	3	4	3

The participants who believed it was more difficult to refuse a familiar professor that they liked attributed their perception to their sincere respect and appreciation of such a professor. They viewed such a professor as deserving of their respect and appreciation and thus, they didn't wish to refuse his or her request. For example, Mimi said: "he is someone I know very well. He expects me, for example, when he requests something from me or invites me to attend something he expects me to accept. I mean the reason is that our relationship is good." Accordingly, the participants thought they had to explain more to a professor they liked in comparison to one they did not like. However, Abdualla stated that while it was true that he would explain more to a professor he liked, he might explain even more to a professor whom he didn't like if the consequences to his face were high. However, Abdulla contended that if the chances of a misunderstanding when refusing to a professor he did not like were slim or none, he would only

give short explanations. On the other hand, Yusuf said that he would maintain the same level of treatment when refusing familiar professors regardless of whether he liked or disliked them due to the possible negative consequences he might suffer if he was rude to them. He maintained that what applies to the effect of social distance would apply to affective factors as well. Therefore, for Yusuf, affective factors were secondary in effect compared to social distance.

Both Abdulla and Yusuf agreed, however, that the meaning they encoded in the use of titles would differ depending on their like or dislike of the interlocutor. For example, Yusuf stated that using titles with an unkind professor would be a "formality" and not because he had a real respect for the professor. Also, Abdualla observed: "Prof. O [a professor he liked] I need to say professor [to him], because I really…I have to respect him."

Reem, Fajir and Al-Yazan perceived refusing a familiar professor they liked to be as easy as refusing an unfamiliar professor. They ascribed their behavior to the high chances of them being misunderstood by unfamiliar professors compared to familiar ones. They explained that a familiar professor they liked meant that he/she understood their circumstances and hence he/she would understand their refusals. However, just because it was easier to refuse professors they liked, that did not mean they would explain less. Rather, they asserted, they would consider explaining more to him/her out of respect. For example, Al-Yazan said: "I will give short response to a professor I don't like such as 'I am sorry. I can't,'" with no explanation. In addition, he commented: "[A repeated apology] is optional. Its use will depend on the personality of the professor." He explained that he would repeat an apology only with a professor he liked.

The participants who did not think that their like or dislike of a professor was relevant to the degree of difficulty in refusing a request maintained that relative power was more influential than any affective factors (see Section 4.2.2.6 on relative power). However, Ali, Khaled and Fajir

maintained that they would consider varying their responses according to whether they liked or disliked the professor. For example, Idris said: "I would explain some more for a professor I like. I will use short responses with a professor I don't like."

The influence of affective factors was also evident in the participants' perception of some of the invitations as being more difficult to refuse than others. For example, some participants viewed the invitation to a seminar in EI5 as being more difficult to refuse because they thought it was a very "special" invitation. They explained that the professor invited them to his/her seminar, which made them feel that he/she cared enough about them to invite them to attend. For example, Taif perceived a refusal to EI5 to be the most difficult among all the scenarios. She commented on her ranking of EI5: "This is a seminar by my professor. The invitation is also special… The invitation was like a special treatment." However, she did not perceive the same level of care from the professor in EI6 who was inviting her to a lecture related to her research paper. She stated: "Because he invited me coincidently. He did not mean to invite me in the first place. There is nothing special for me in it unlike the previous one [scenario EI5]." To express her gratefulness to the invitation in EI5, she used Gratitude and Wish for Self and Regret twice: "Thank you doctor. I really want to attend your seminar, but I have another meeting. The time does not suit me. Sorry." In response to EI6, however, she refused: "I'm really busy next week. Sorry doctor. I can't."

For similar reasons, some participants perceived the invitation to EI6 as being more special and, hence, more difficult to refuse than the invitation to the seminar in EI5. For example, Khaled asserted that EI6 was the most difficult to refuse among invitations, because "he cares about me and invites me to something that [I] will benefit from." However, he maintained that in EI5 "there is appreciation for me but not like in this situation [EI6]." Unlike Khaled, Mimi did

not think that EI6 was more difficult to refuse than EI5. She attested to the special care she received from her interlocutor in EI6. She refused by saying: "Oh! Really!...Too bad. I don't have enough time to come/attend." During the interview she explained that "Really!", an Emotional marker, was meant to express amazement, admiration and appreciation for the doctor's effort to invite her and the same for his/her care about her research.

Abdualla regarded EI5 and EI6 as being more difficult to refuse than EI7 and EI8 for the same reasons. He stated that in EI7 and EI8, the interlocutors did not mean to invite him. However, in EI5 and EI6, they wanted to invite him, which reflected care on their part. He commented on EI5 and EI7: "He wants me to come [EI5]. Here, [EI7], he interrupted us. He invited my doctor. He invited me out of courtesy and apology." He commented on EI8: "I don't think he really mean to invite me."

Ali and Areej considered EI8 to be more difficult to refuse than EI7 because the interlocutor interacted with them before inviting them. This interaction reflected their interlocutor's care for them. For instance, Areej commented on her refusal to EI8 in comparison to EI7: "He made me interested in the event." She refused EI7 by saying: "Thank you but I can't attend." However, in refusing EI8, she said: "Unfortunately I have a lot of work to do." During the interview she explained her response as follows: "Maybe 'unfortunately' shows that I wish I could attend but I can't. I did not use it in response to the previous scenario [EI7] because here he had a conversation with me. I felt, it [the media event] was interesting. He encouraged me." She added that she would replace "unfortunately" with Wish for Self.

4.2.2.5 *Cultural Distance*

Cultural distance was operationalized as Omani professors, or low cultural distance between the participant and the interlocutor (i.e., -CD), and American/British (i.e., A/B)

professors, or high cultural distance between the participant and the interlocutor (i.e., +CD.)

Table 4.18 describes the number of participants who perceived the sociopragmatic variable of

cultural distance to be relevant in their assessment of the difficulty of refusing each scenario. The

first column lists the scenarios in the English ODCT. The numbers under the category "Omani"

and "A/B" (second and third columns) represent the numbers of participants who considered

refusing to Omani or A/B more difficult, respectively. The "Neither" category represents the

number of participants who did not think cultural distance was relevant to their perceptions of

the degree of difficulty to refuse in each scenario.

Table 4.18. Perception of Difficulty to Refuse Relative to Cultural Distance

Scenario	Omani	A/B	Neither
ER1	2	4	4
ER2	2	4	4
ER3	1	5	4
ER4	1	5	4
EI5	2	4	4
EI6	2	4	4
EI7	1	5	4
EI8	1	5	4

According to Table 4.18, at least four of the participants considered the cultural distance

between them and the interlocutor (A/B) to be an influential variable in their perception of the

difficulty to refuse in all of the scenarios and another four thought it was irrelevant. One

participant, Mimi, perceived refusing A/B professors to be difficult if they were unfamiliar to her

as in scenarios ER3, ER4, EI7 and EI8. Otherwise, refusing familiar Omani professors would be

more difficult. Only one participant, Ali, regarded refusing Omani professors to be more difficult

than refusing A/B professors in all scenarios.

Abdudlla, Yusuf, Fajir and Taif regarded refusing A/B interlocutors to be more difficult

because of the lack of a shared culture between them and the interlocutor. This lack of a shared

culture was viewed as a potential source for misunderstanding, and, hence, a possible face loss for Omanis. For example, Abdualla explained the nature of this misunderstanding by comparing Omani to A/B professors: "Because he is an Omani, if I made a mistake, he will understand. I will give an example. [If] I want my grade, I think I will say to the doctor [Omani professor], 'I need my grade.' However, you say to Dr. T (NS of English): 'Could you please,' because sometimes the Omani doctor [professor]… He can tolerate this [pragmatic choice]." Abdualla added that when he did make mistakes, Arab and Omani professors in the English Department gave him feedback, while NSs of English in the English Department seemed offended. However, he contended that NSs of English in the Language Center were also understanding. Yusuf also affirmed that misunderstandings occurred less often between him and Omani and Arab professors relative to A/B professors. He attributed this to having "the same culture." Also, he agreed that the A/B Language Center teachers, at SQU, were more understanding of his mistakes. He explained: "When we make mistakes, Westerns or NSs of English feel offended. However, Language Center teachers they understand because we are learning the language…For example, I asked a doctor [NS of English professor in the English Department]: 'Can I see my paper?' He did not like the way I asked."

The participants noted that the some of the A/B professors, especially those who were in the English Department, would feel insulted by the students' pragmatic choices if they did not match the pragmatic norms expected by NSs of English simply because they do not understand the students' culture. This perception of possible offence created a threat for the student's face. As a result, the participants seem to have acted cautiously when making pragmatic choices to respond to NSs in order to maintain face. For example, Fajir said: "I feel limited in my conversation with NSs. I feel that I have to be on the safe side. I say the things that commonly

used in [English] conversations… I check the words more when I use them with a foreign doctor. Also, I don't talk too much in order not to make mistakes," because "foreigners develop negative ideas about students." Taif added: "I think with Arabs I will be more comfortable, because I am afraid to commit mistakes with natives [NSs of English] even inside the class. Maybe they will not understand my mistake. I think they would say she is a language specialist and she makes mistakes. However, Omanis have been through these situations, so you feel more comfortable because they will understand your mistakes."

Avoiding loss of face was a paramount concern in the participants' explanations of the realization of their refusals to unfamiliar A/B professors. For instance, Taif affirmed that it was particularly difficult to refuse foreigners in ER3 and ER4, because there is a risk she might give the wrong impression not only about herself, but also about all Omanis. She clarified that in the Omani culture, it would be acceptable for a female to give shorter responses to male strangers. However, she contended, an A/B man might not understand why she used short responses. In refusing ER4, Taif stressed the importance of using a Wish for Self with NSs of English. She said: "He is a stranger American/British. He is not Omani. It is important to clarify that you want to help him. So, he won't take the wrong impression about Omanis. Maybe it is his first time at SQU. If there is an Omani in this situation I won't need to use Wish. He would understand. An Omani person knows that Omanis are willing to help but with foreigners we have to leave [a good] impression." In addition, Taif attributed her use of Assurance in her response to ER4 to her desire to eliminate any potential negative perception of Omani people. She explained: "If you don't help a foreigner, he might think that all Omanis are like that." As a result, she felt that she had to assure him that was not the case. In addition, Abdulla employed Wish for Others for similar reasons in his refusal to ER4. He remarked on Wish for Others: "I want to help him and I

want to clarify to him that I want to help him but I don't have the time and I wish that someone would help him." Then he explained: "If it was an Omani in this situation, I don't have to say this [wish] to him. I used it here because he is a stranger and a foreigner. Therefore, I feel that if I said to him this [wish], it will give him a [good] idea about Omanis in general and about University's students in particular." Yusuf, however, thought that providing explanations is important when he refuses an A/B interlocutor. He said: "He is a stranger. He is not from our culture. I think I'm reflecting the culture, Omani culture. I should be more polite by giving so many reasons. He will think that Omanis are kind and so on. He won't have [negative] ideas." He continued, "Because the Omani [person] will understand more than the stranger. He knows that we Omanis help each other. I don't have to explain more because he already knows why." In response to scenario ER4, Yusuf commented: "I elaborated because he is a foreigner."

Al-Yazan, on the other hand, believed that refusing Omani professors was more difficult despite social distance. Mimi believed that refusing Omanis was more difficult except when she was dealing with unfamiliar A/B professors. Regarding their perception of difficulty in refusing Omanis, both agreed that the shared culture between them and Omani professors, somehow, obliged them to comply with the Omani interlocutors' requests and invitations. Otherwise, their Omani interlocutors might misunderstand their behavior as resistance to their Omani culture of helping and supporting each other. In other words, their Omani interlocutors would perceive them as uncooperative. Mimi, for example, attributed the variation in her use of the Regret strategy to this possible misunderstanding. She used Regret twice in her refusal to ER3, "I'm sorry. I'm very late. I'm really sorry," and only once in her refusal to ER4, "I'm sorry. I can't help you. My friend is waiting for me." She remarked: "I think maybe because A/B [professor] he will understand it. I don't think he will think that why she did not stop for one minute to help me. But

maybe an Omani would think so…because it is our nature…because it is in the nature of Omanis to help. They love to help any person despite anything else." She explained that an Omani person would think it was unnatural for another Omani not to help. She added: "I would feel the same if I'm in his place."

However, both contended that emotionally it would be more difficult to refuse Omani professors, while linguistically it would be more difficult to refuse A/B professors. They considered Omani (and Arab) professors to be more tolerant of their pragmatic choices than NSs of English. For instance, Al-Yazan argued: "With Arab professors we can give and take. Maybe because we have the same language [and] same religion. Also, it is easy to correct the mistakes we make when communicating with them. An Arab professor will understand even if you make mistakes when you talk to him in English." However, he claimed that A/B professors "might take negative idea about us. They take negative attitude about us. Maybe we will transfer a negative attitude not only about us but also about the country."

Another four participants did not perceive cultural distance as being relevant to their perceptions of the degree of difficulty in refusing in any of the scenarios; however, they contended that cultural distance influenced their sociopragmatic choices. For example, Ali reported that the professors' social status and his familiarity with him/her were more important for his perception of the degree of difficulty involved in refusals than cultural distance. However, he affirmed that there was more "caution" in his choices when talking to NS professors than when talking to Arabs and/or Omani professors. He affirmed that professors who were NSs of English were "sensitive" to his pragmatic mistakes. He sustained that Arab professors in general were "less sensitive to our mistakes. Arab professors correct our mistakes but NSs of English

they criticize us." This, he contended, "causes me too much stress when I communicate with NSs of English… When I talk to natives, I panic a little bit. It won't be nice if I do a mistake."

Despite the fact that Yusuf saw a relationship between degree of difficulty and cultural distance, he perceived that some of his choices were not necessarily related to the difficulty in refusing A/B or Omanis. Rather, he sustained, it was an act to accommodate what was culturally acceptable to A/B and Oman interlocutors. For example, he said that he would use the Emotional marker "Wow" and Compliment with A/B interlocutors only in response to EI7: "Wow! It would be great if I could come, but unfortunately I can't because I have assignment due next week." He explained during the interview: "I would use it only with NSs not with Omanis. It is a form of denying/disregarding my culture." He attested that a Compliment is, "for formality and also they are from the West. I interact with them with their culture. With their language."

4.2.2.6 *Relative Power*

Table 4.19 shows how the participants perceived the interlocutors' social power relative to themselves in the different scenarios in the English ODCT. In response to familiar interlocutors in ER1, ER2, EI5, and EI6, the participants imagined that professors they were familiar with had high social power relative to them. In response to unfamiliar interlocutors, in ER3, ER4, EI7, and EI8, they either imagined unfamiliar professors or an unfamiliar older individual, which meant that they perceived the interlocutor to have a higher social status.

Power relations between interlocutors was omnipresent in the participants' explanations of their responses to the scenarios. Despite the variation in their perception of the other sociopragmatic variables and their influence on the perceived degree of difficulty to refuse within each scenario, relative power dictated some level of formality and politeness in the participants' responses. The participants maintained that this level of treatment was demanded

by the academic relationship between them and the professors (familiar or unfamiliar) and by the age difference between them and the older unfamiliar interlocutors. For example, Ali, Khaled and Fajir ascertained that relative power had a stronger effect on their perceptions of the degree of difficulty to refuse familiar professors than affective factors (see Section 4.2.2.4 on affective factors). They said that despite the variation in their responses to professors, they would always maintain the same level of politeness required by their academic relationship with professors. For a similar reason, the participants recognized that it is important to maintain an acceptable level of politeness with all professors regardless of social distance, cultural distance, gender and whether they like the professor or not (i.e., affective factors).

Table 4.19. Perception of Relative Power

Scenario	Sociopragmatic Variables	
	Relative Power (±P)	**Social Distance (± SD)**
ER1	High (+)	Familiar (-) • Professor
ER2	High (+)	Familiar (-) • Professor • Older individual
ER3	High (+)	Unfamiliar (+) • Professor
ER4	High (+)	Unfamiliar (+) • Professor • Older individual
EI5	High (+)	Familiar (-) • Professor
EI6	High (+)	Familiar (-) • Professor
EI7	High (+)	Unfamiliar (+) • Professor • Older individual
EI8	High (+)	Unfamiliar (+) • Professor • Older individual

However, due to the influence exerted by the variable of social distance on the participants' perceptions of refusing familiar and unfamiliar interlocutors in each of the scenarios, its influence was extended sometimes to the assignment of the title "doctor." The

participants employed titles in their refusing unfamiliar interlocutors less frequently. They viewed familiarity with the interlocutors as a condition for using the titles along with relative power. For example, in response to an unfamiliar interlocutor in ER3, Abdualla remarked: "He looks like a doctor. Maybe he is not a doctor. If he is a doctor, he deserves to be called a doctor. If he wasn't, he does not deserve it." Yusuf affirmed this attitude: "I wasn't sure [that he/she was a professor]. I have to be sure to use a title."

In other words, it did not make sense to these participants to call an unfamiliar interlocutor "doctor", unless they knew he/she was a professor. Since they were unfamiliar with participants in ER3, ER4, EI7 and EI8, some participants thought it would be sensible to not use the title "doctor." These participants used the title "doctor" mainly to address familiar professors. Reem, for example, stressed the importance of using the title "doctor" when communicating with familiar professors. She explained: " I think it is rude to say 'sorry I can't' without addressing the person using his/her title." Taif stated that in addition to expressing respect for her professors as demanded by their profession, she used the title also to appeal to them emotionally (see Section 4.2.2.4 on affective factors.) However, there were a few cases when the participants did not use titles to address familiar interlocutors. They explained that the lack of titles in these cases was an unintentional error, or because they assumed that the request or the invitation took place during the course of a conversation in which they had already used the title doctor before refusing. Areej, on the other hand, ascribed not using titles in her response to all invitations to the relative imposition of the speech act (i.e., requests versus invitation) (see Section 4.2.2.1 on absolute ranking of imposition).

Summary

To summarize, the participants related their pragmatic choices for refusing Omani and American/British interlocutors in English to the sociopragmatic variables under examination in the study (i.e., relative imposition, social distance and cultural distance) in addition to another four emergent variables: the nature of the situation, affective factors, relative power, and gender. In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of relative imposition, the participants focused on the interlocutor's need for them to comply with the action in weighing the imposition of request versus invitations. They believed that requests were more imposing because their interlocutor needed them to comply with the request, and hence, refusing requests was threatening to the interlocutor's positive face (i.e., the desire to be approved of, appreciated and liked) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). On the other hand, they believed invitations were less imposing because their interlocutor did not need them to comply with the invitations, and hence, refusing invitations was not threatening to the positive face of their interlocutor. However, the participants also used the concept of the extent of their expenditure of goods, services and abilities (Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1992) in their evaluation of the imposition of the directions requests versus other requests in the ODCT. Unlike the common assumption in the literature that a limited expenditure is associated with less imposing speech acts and a greater expenditure is associated with more imposing speech acts, the participants perceived the opposite in refusing in directions situations.

The nature of the situation or the particulars of the interactional context influenced the participants' perception of degree of the difficulty to refuse in several situations. Specifically, the participants thought that the lack of time in the directions situations made them more urgent than other situations and left limited options for the interlocutor to find the needed directions, which would result in immediate negative consequences for the interlocutor. Therefore, they perceived

refusing the directions requests to be more threatening to the face of their interlocutor than refusing within other kinds of scenarios.

The timing of the request was another contributing factor in the difficulty to refuse some requests. Some participants perceived that refusing to help with the exhibition was more difficult than helping with the workshop because the request for help with the exhibition was initiated in the last working day of the week and the opening of the exhibition in the first day of the following week. This would mean that the chances of finding other students to help during the weekend were less likely compared to during the week. However, due to the same issue of timing, other participants found it easier to refuse this request because they perceived their right to go home by the end of the week as more important than their social obligation to help their professor with the exhibition. Thus, they attended to their own negative face wants (i.e., their desire not to be impeded or put upon and to have the freedom to act as they choose) (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

In addition, the participants perceived the difference in the goal of the directions requests (i.e., going to the Language Center versus going to the Deanship of College of Arts) as a contributing factor to the degree of difficulty for refusing each type of request. Furthermore, the circumstances of the participants (i.e., late for a midterm exam versus late for a friend who was offering them a ride to the library) contributed to the degree of difficulty to refuse the two directions requests.

In relation to the second sociopragmatic variable, social distance, the majority of the participants perceived refusing a familiar interlocutor to be more difficult than refusing an unfamiliar one. They felt a sense of obligation towards the interlocutor they were familiar with. On the other hand, their perception of difficulty in refusing an unfamiliar interlocutor was

motivated by their belief that a lack of familiarity could result in more chances for misunderstanding. In other words, their unfamiliar interlocutor might easily misunderstand their refusal behaviour as impolite behaviour.

Affective factors seem to have interacted with social distance and hence affected the participants' pragmatic choices. For example, they would give lengthier explanations to an interlocutor they liked because they would feel a greater obligation to an interlocutor who was kind to them and who respected them. However, a few of them thought that affective factors would have no influence on their pragmatic choices because the academic relationship between them and their professor would be dictating their pragmatic behaviour.

In the same vein, other participants agreed that, regardless of affective factors, they would maintain a particular degree of politeness and formality when communicating with all of their professors. They attributed their pragmatic behaviour to the sociopragmatic variable of relative power and the academic relationship between them. The relative power of the professors also meant that the participants treated male and female professors in the same way. Furthermore, while the gender of the professor did not affect the pragmatic choices of the participants, the gender of the participants seems to have affected their pragmatic choices.

In relation to the sociopragmatic variable of cultural distance, the participants perceived different effects for this variable. Some perceived refusing NSs of English (+CD) interlocutors as more difficult due to possible misunderstandings triggered by a lack of a shared culture. They thought that foreign professors, for example, could construe any deviation in their pragmatic choices to be impolite behaviour.

In some cases, the perceived possible misunderstanding between them and their foreign interlocutor was heightened by the social distance variable. The female participants thought that

unfamiliar males could misunderstand the short refusal responses of Omani females in the directions situations as impolite behaviour. In their Omani culture, however, this behaviour would be polite. In addition, some of them perceived refusing unfamiliar foreign interlocutors as threatening to their group identity as Omanis. They thought that an unfamiliar foreigner could misunderstand their refusal to help with the directions and would generalize such a negative perception to all Omanis.

A few participants viewed refusing Omanis (i.e., -CD) as more difficult than refusing NSs of English. They ascribed this perceived difficulty to the shared cultural practice of Omanis helping each other, which meant that refusal was undesirable behaviour and could be viewed as a disregard for their Omani culture. Another few participants viewed cultural distance as irrelevant to their pragmatic choices due to the academic relationship that dictated their pragmatic behaviour when dealing with Omani and non-Omani professors. However, the latter two groups of participants affirmed that their NS interlocutors might misunderstand their non-native like pragmatic choices as impolite behaviour, while Omanis and Arab professors would understand their pragmatic choices because they shared the same Arabic culture.

4.3 The Relationship between Omani EFL Learners' Identities and their Pragmatic Transfer when Refusing in English

This section reports findings concerning how the Omani EFL learners' identities influence their pragmatic choices, and specifically their pragmatic transfer, when refusing in English. To address this question, data pertaining to themes are presented: The Omani EFL learners' definition of their relationship with English and their construction of this relationship through pragmatic transfer when refusing in English.

4.3.1 *Omani EFL Learners' Definition of their Relationship with English*

This section focuses on the participants' perceptions of their relationship with the English language. In order to clearly understand how Omani EFL learners define their relationship with English, the findings pertaining to their definition of their identity and the relationship between their identity, culture and language use are presented first. Next, findings pertaining to their attitudes towards the English language and its use are presented, including their motivation for learning English, attitudes about the English culture and NSs of English, and attitudes towards making English an official language in Oman in addition to Arabic. Finally, their views about the use of English in Oman are reported.

4.3.1.1 *Omani EFL Learners' Definition of their Identity*

The participants distinguished two types of identity: group identity and individual identity. They perceived identity as what distinguishes a group of people from other groups of people or what distinguishes an individual from other individuals. Group identity emerges from their interaction with their group culture, while individual identity emerges from the individual's interaction with his/her personal culture.

The participants based their definitions of identity on definitions of culture and the relationship between language and culture. They differentiated between two types of culture: group culture and individual culture. They defined group culture as the choices a group of people make from different cultural elements available to them such as language, religion, habits, customs, history, social manners and behaviors, manners of speaking, and lifestyle in general. They perceived the Omani culture as a combination of the Arabic culture, the Islamic culture and some other sub-cultures related to customs, tradition and history. However, they stated that these

sub-cultures are not necessarily exclusive to Omani culture. They could be used by other groups of people to build their own culture. Thus, they stated that what Omani people choose to believe in, follow and adopt from these sub-cultures defines their Omani culture.

Some participants believed that a group culture would be stable and would not change, while others believed that some components might be stable while others might change. For example, Al-Yazan thought that the Islamic religion and the Arabic language were fundamental "constants" to the definition of the Omani culture despite some changes within them. He said that there were basic beliefs and religious rituals in Islamic culture that would not change while there were other elements that would. He also thought that some elements in Arabic might stay the same while others might change which has allowed, for example, for the emergence of Omani Arabic as opposed to standard Arabic. The participants remarked that some of the social customs and traditions might also change over time.

Participants stated that individuals within the group might differ to some extent in their beliefs, choices and interactions with specific components of the group culture because of their personal experiences and exposure to other cultures. Ali defined the individual's personal culture as "a mixture of personal experiences [which] originally is based on the Arabic culture but [at the same time] it is influenced by the experiences of the individual and his circumstances. The Arabic culture is the foundation for his personal culture." He explained that personal culture would be what "distinguishes a person from others" because it emerges from his/her personal experiences. Mimi affirmed that individuals who associate with the same group culture differ in terms of their preference for one Omani dialect over another, a social custom over another and even varying degrees of religiosity. Abdulla added that personal culture could be influenced by cultures other than the Arabic culture, which would make it different from the group culture.

Abdulla remarked: "Sometimes your personal culture is adopted from different cultures. If you are exposed to other cultures and you like some cultural elements in another culture, you add it to your personal culture." Al-Yazan, for example, stated that "acquiring English is a part of his personal culture but it is not a part of his Omani culture."

All the participants agreed that personal culture changes over time. Taif stated that personal culture "changes" because "you develop it over time." She explained that because the personal experiences of an individual differ over time, so would some of his/her beliefs, choices and interactions with the general culture and/or other cultures.

Accordingly, they described identity as general "tendencies," "characteristics," "images," "reflections" and "presentations."Abdualla explained: "Identity is who you are. How you present yourself based on your beliefs." "It is the things that you choose from a culture and how you present them. Identity is about presentation of your choices and beliefs." He added: "I think identity is an image….it is about presentation of self." This image of self-presentation, he explained, could be carried via words and behavior. It is about what the individual actually says and does based on his/her cultural choices and beliefs. Al-Yazan agreed that identity is formed by a person "apply[ing]" his/her cultural choices and beliefs. Mimi added that the "general characteristics" of a group of people is what defines their identity. These characteristics, she contended, are a representation or a description of the group's "mentality." She said: "How people develop and build their mentality is important [for the definition of their identity]. Religious tolerance in Oman is a general mindset and common [among Omanis]. Therefore, we [Omanis] find [religious] difference acceptable and praised." Thus, she contended that these characteristics define the Omani mentality and hence the Omani identity. Mimi thought that the personal identity of an individual is the characteristics that describe his/her "personal mentality."

The participants agreed that because identity is inseparable from culture and culture could change, identity also could change. However, since some cultural elements might show stability over time, the participants perceived that identity can show some stability as well. Therefore, they tended to define identity using the stable beliefs and stable cultural choices of the group and the individual. This stability, they thought, helps to form a clear image of the identity of the group or the individuals. Mimi stated that identity is a "mindset" and a mindset is "susceptible to change," and thus identity is susceptible to change. Mimi agreed that group identity and individual identity can change; however, she stated that some stability is important for the definition of identity. She commented: "your identity is your choices. You decide. You alone can shape your identity. I know the things that are important for me in religion that I should keep and the things in my Omani culture that I should choose and I should keep. I have to shape my identity. I should keep the things that I choose if I am sure they are right for me. There are things that change, but there are things that stay stable." Thus, she contended, identity is not only about choosing cultural elements, but also about keeping or maintaining them, which gives the person or the group the general characteristics that distinguish them from others. However, while the identity of a group of people can show some stability, Al-Yazan contended that an individual identity can simply change, because "a person can change his group identity by changing his affiliation from one group identity to another."

4.3.1.2 *Omani EFL Learners' Attitudes towards English*

    Attitudes towards English language

The participants in the study had a positive attitude towards English. They used words such as "love", "desire," "passion," "like," and "choice, " to describe their attitudes towards learning English. Mimi, for example, stated: "It was my desire [to study English]. I love English", while Abdulla commented: "I love [the] English language a lot since I was at school." Fajir remarked: "I have a passion for English. I enjoy learning it."

This positive attitude was motivated by their view of English as an "international language," "a global language," and "a lingua franca," which they perceived as granting them international communication, access to knowledge and job markets. English was not just a second language for the participants; rather, it was a second language with an international value and status. They stated that this international status empowered them to speak with people locally and internationally. "It is a facilitating tool" as Areej described it, "because English is the most common language. The most widespread [language]." Ali commented: "It opens horizons for you. You can communicate with anyone from different nationalities."

In addition to its value as an international communication tool, the participants thought that English as an international language would grant them access to various resources of knowledge. Taif said: "It is important to learn English nowadays. The majority of the current knowledge resources and studies are in English." She believed that English, as "a global language", would grant her "access to more resources." She explained: "English is a part of our life. It is the language of communication. The language of technology and most of [the] sciences." Yusuf confirmed: "most of the new sciences are in English." Al-Yazan added that English as "an international language" is " a means of education," because **"**you can be up to

date in any field in education because the majority of research is conducted in [the] English language."

Some of the participants also thought that English was a means to access better jobs in the job market. Even when they talked about the local job market, the participants stated that the Omani job market does not operate in isolation from the rest of the world. To connect with the world, the local job market needs English as an international communication language. Abdualla commented: "most of the fields and institutions inside and outside Oman depend on English. Especially, nowadays, many companies [in Oman] use English as the main language of communication and not Arabic." Areej, however, explained that English is not necessarily a requirement for work in Oman; rather, the importance of English in Oman job market would depend on the nature of the job.

The participants thought that Omanis in general share the same positive attitude towards English. Taif stated: "People inside and outside SQU think it is an advantage to learn English. They think you are brilliant." However, the participants sustained that most Omanis value English because it is required for various jobs and not because of its value as a communication tool in the first place. Some participants reported that when people learned that they were majoring in English, they usually commented on their better chances in the job market. The Omani EFL learners' motivation for learning English could be described as "instrumental motive" (Dörnyei, 2009). In other words, they want to use English as a tool or instrument for communication or professional advancement.

Despite the positive attitudes among the participants towards English as an international language, nine of them objected to making English an official language in Oman in addition to Arabic. They perceived it as a threat to Arabic and, consequently, to their Arabic identity. Reem

objected to making English an official language in Oman. She said: "I won't like it even if I am an English language learner and a translator. I would not like to see the official language is English when we are Arab. The situation of English in Oman is good. It does not need to be official." Ali added that making English an official language in Oman is a threat not only to the Arabic language but also to the Arabic identity: "Because Arabic language is your identity, if you let it go and choose another language, you will lose your culture. There are people who are unaware of their culture…They don't understand the importance of the identity…[These] people see that English will provide them with more job opportunities. It is a materialistic matter but later, Arabic will be lost" and so is the Arabic identity.

Although the participants objected to making English an official language in Oman, they agreed that the English has "a special status" for them; however, this status was determined based on their perceptions of the utility of the English language. They also affirmed that for them Arabic would always have a higher status than English because Arabic is a part of their identity. Areej said: "Of course it [English] has a special place. Arabic has a higher status than English because it is my language. Taif proclaimed that "English has a special place for me, but it is not like that of Arabic. Arabic language runs in my blood. I love [the] English language and I am passionate about it, but [the] Arabic language is not a passion, it is a part of who I am." Mimi confirmed the higher status of Arabic, but she stated that in terms of their importance as communication tools, both Arabic and English were of equal importance. Abdulla and Khaled agreed with her. They maintained that both languages play different roles in their life. Thus, they were equally important.

Attitudes towards English culture and NSs of English

The participants strongly believed in the value of learning about English culture, specifically language use or pragmatics. The participants believed that there is a strong relationship between a language and its pragmatics. Areej stated: "It is important when you learn a particular language, you learn its culture. You learn how to use it. Culture influences language." Ali confirmed: "It is important to learn the English culture, because the language is connected to culture to a large extent. For example, when I speak with NSs of English, I have to use particular terms and I have to avoid other terms. For example, the use of 'I would like,' the style of speaking is part of the culture."

Generally, the participants had a positive attitude towards NSs of English albeit they viewed them as different from Omanis. They thought that NSs of English are generally kind, but not very sociable. They generally preferred communicating with NSs in English so they could improve their English. Al-Yazan commented: "some of them are kind and want to help the students. Some of them they don't care. They want to focus on their business only." Areej added: "Americans and British are formal and hardworking." Both participants wanted to communicate with NSs of English. Despite Al-Yazan' view of NSs of English as people who "stereotype" and believe that "non-westerns are terrorists," he preferred communicating with NSs of English to improve his English. Similarly, Taif preferred communicating in English with NSs of English; however, her "desire is covered in fear," because "I am afraid that they will say that I learned English and they expect me not to make any mistakes when I use it. I am afraid to talk to them." Unlike the other participants who wanted to communicate with NSs of English to improve their accuracy and fluency, Mimi stated: "Most of the professors who teach translation [courses] are

Arabs. So they…I think I can learn from them as much as I can learn from foreigners" [NSs of English].

The use of English in Oman

When asked about the use of English in their everyday communication, the participants stated that they mainly used English at SQU to communicate with their professors, especially those who are teaching English-related courses, or with foreign professors who do not speak Arabic. Some of them stated that they sometimes use English with colleagues who are majoring in English when discussing assignments. However, they stated that the language would be mainly a mixture of Arabic and English. For example, Abdulla remarked: "I rarely use English with students. Even in the classroom sometimes they use Arabic language. They feel it is the right thing. Sometimes I try [to speak with them in English], but I enter the classroom and they are speaking in Arabic. Speaking with them in English is not appropriate. They would say that he is showing off."

Despite the positive perception of English in Omani society, the participants said that it is not preferred as a language for everyday communication inside and outside SQU. The participants viewed English to be valuable only when they need it to communicate with a foreigner or at work to accomplish tasks that require using English. Beyond these situations, the participants perceived speaking a foreign language such as English as unacceptable for two reasons. First, using English in everyday communication could be taken as a sign of "showing off" since not many people speak English in Oman. Those who speak English should be conscious of the feelings of those who don't; otherwise, people might perceive the person who speaks English in public as a show-off, which is impolite. To avoid being perceived as impolite,

the participants affirmed that they would refrain from using English with other students from English-related majors as well as other majors.

The second reason was the perceived association between the everyday use of a particular language and identity. The participants strongly believed that the language one uses for everyday communication is the language that one identifies with. As a result, the participants thought that Arabic should be the language of everyday communication because it is the language that they identify with. They perceived using English instead of Arabic in everyday communication as a sign of rejecting the Arabic language and, hence, one's Arabic identity. Taif summarized this view as follows: "I use it [English] mainly in [the] classroom and with professors in the department. I rarely use it with my colleagues. We code-mix. We worry that other students will think that we are showing off. Some of them are extremists. They think that we are shedding our identity and there is no need to use English outside the study context. I sometimes use English outside SQU in shopping malls, hospitals when I am dealing with people who don't speak Arabic."

4.3.2 *Omani EFL Learners' Construction of their Relationship with English*

This section reports findings concerning the second and the third dimensions of the definition of L2 learner's identity: how Omani EFL learners' construct their relationship with English and their future decisions about English language use. This section documents, first, how the Omani EFL learners relate their definition of their identity to their use of English, and second, how they manifest these perceptions through pragmatic transfer. Third, this section reports the participants' current and future decisions about pragmatic transfer.

4.3.2.1 *The Relationship between Omani EFL Learners' Identities and their Use of English*

Although the participants agreed that English culture (i.e., cultural norms) was essential for their communication in English, they affirmed that Arabic cultural norms were equally important. They ascribed the importance of using Arabic culture in their communication in English to the perceived intimate connection between their culture and their identity. They thought that disregarding the use of Arabic culture when communicating in English would be a form of shedding one's identity. Thus, using Arabic cultural norms when communicating in English was a way of presenting and preserving one's identity. For example, Yusuf affirmed that English cultural norms were important for his communication in English; however, he maintained: "I'll present my culture as well." He protested: "Why should I disregard my being Omani and a Muslim when I talk in English?"

In addition, the participants believed that the use of Arabic cultural norms when communicating in English is a natural result of the way they define themselves, and hence, it is unavoidable behavior. Areej explained: ""One has to preserve his principles [cultural values]. It is true that I use their [NSs of English] language but the principles won't change. It is normal to use your own culture when you use your language or English. As if these principles are translated into English when you speak English. These principles stem from the Arabic and Islamic cultures. "Yusuf affirmed: "Even if I tried [to fully adopt the English cultural norms] I won't be able to do so, because the Omani culture is in me."

4.3.2.2 *Pragmatic Transfer*

When the participants were asked to identify any instances of pragmatic transfer from Arabic in their refusals in English, they stated that it was not easy for them to identify such instances with absolute certainty. They explained that through years of studying and using

English, they had developed their own "personal style" of using English. They maintained that this personal style of English use reflects their choices made based on English culture and the Arabic culture. For example, Yusuf described his personal style as "neutral" or a style that could be used in both cultures (Arabic and English). Abdualla also believed that his "neutral" responses "could be acceptable in both cultures." Al-Yazan added: "English in our society does not reflect their [NSs of English] culture nor our culture, because it is a mixture of both."

Sometimes, however, they were able to identify instances of pragmatic transfer from Arabic in their refusals in English such as Excuse, Wish for Self, Wish for Others, Solution Suggestion, Assurance, Compliment, Postponement and Indefinite Acceptance. In addition, the participants produced some alternative refusal responses for some of their refusals of invitations and they described them as instances of pragmatic transfer from Arabic.

Excuse

Some of the participants stated that the length of the explanations that accompanied their refusals in English was influenced by Arabic culture. They perceived NSs of English as succinct in their responses while Arabs tend to elaborate. For example, Taif said that her lengthy explanation in response to ER1: "Sorry doctor. I wish I could do that for you, but I'm busy preparing my midterm paper, which I'm planning to finish this week" was Arabic pragmatic behavior. During the interview, she commented: "when you refuse to help someone, you have to clear your conscenince by explaining a lot." She affirmed, however, that this practice is not necessarily important in English culture. Khaled agreed with her; he stated that it was not only the length of the explanation, but also the idea of justifying your refusal that was influenced by Arabic. He explained that when a NS of English refuses, he/she would "give a direct answer. Because if you ask him [why he refused] he would say: 'It is none of your business.'" Reem

confirmed: "NSs don't like elaboration in general. You have to be straightforward. You don't

need to elaborate." Abdulla added that even though he justified his refusal to all of his

interlocutors, giving an excuse is especially important when refusing an Omani interlocutor

because he has to attend to the cultural background of his interlocutor. He commented: "He is

Omani. He might not be convinced." However, when refusing to an A/B professor, the situation

would be totally different. He commented: "It is my nature when I speak to a foreigner using

English, I think the English culture is different. So they would understand more. So, when you

say something to them, you don't have to explain everything, but with Omani you have to

explain to him."

While Yusuf agreed with his colleagues that a lengthy explanation is motivated by Arabic

culture, he stated that he would use it with NSs of English more than Omanis because they might

not understand his refusal the way an Omani interlocutor would. He commented: "The length of

explanation when talking to foreigners is an Arabic style. He might not understand our culture,

so I need to explain to clarify things to them [NSs of English]. With Omanis, I would use shorter

responses."

Solution Suggestion

The participants stated that suggesting an alternative solution in the directions situation

requests (i.e., ER2 and ER3) were pragmatic choices motivated by their Omani culture. Al-

Yazan, for example, stated that his suggestion of a solution in his refusals to ER3 and ER4 was a

typical Arabic response. He stated that offering a suggestion to an A/B interlocutor was not

important because "it does not matter for foreigners if you suggest for them or not." However, he

made a suggestion to an A/B person in ER4 because he wanted to maintain a positive image of

Omanis. On the other hand, it was important for him to suggest to an Omani person in ER3

because he believed that it is part of the Omani culture to suggest an alternative solution to the interlocutor. During the interview he affirmed: "not suggesting for an Arab is a problem" in such a situation. Taif also ascertained that the solution she suggested when refusing to ER3 and ER4 was influenced by her Omani culture. However, she contended that using a question format to suggest a solution was an English style. Taif refused ER3 as follows: "<u>Could you please ask someone else?</u> I have a midterm and I'm late. Sorry." Al-Yazan reported that his suggestion in response to ER3 and ER4 is influenced by Omani culture. However, Reem and Areej thought that suggesting a solution was acceptable behavior in both cultures.

Wish and Assurance

Abdulla perceived his refusal to give directions to an A/B interlocutor in ER4, particularly his use of Wish, as influenced by his Omani culture. He refused ER4 by saying: "I'm sorry. I cannot help you because somebody is waiting for me, but <u>I hope somebody will guide you</u>." During the interview he commented: "It is Omani style because I was concerned about our image as Omanis and students. Especially the wish." Taif described her use of Wish for Self and Assurance as being motivated by her Omani culture and her desire to maintain the positive face of Omanis as helpful people in front of A/B foreigners. She refused to ER4 by saying: "I wish I could, but my friend is waiting. <u>Could you please ask someone around?</u> <u>They will help you.</u>"

Compliment, Postponement and Indefinite Acceptance

Fajir stated that using a Compliment in her refusal to the invitations in ER6 and ER7 was influenced by Arabic. For example, she refused ER6 by saying: "<u>That would be very useful</u> but I cannot attend." Ali described both of his refusals to EI7 and EI8 as transfer from Arabic because they were "indirect." He refused EI7 using a Postponement strategy: "I'll think about it," and to EI8 by using a Compliment and an Indefinite Acceptance: "It seems good. I'll try to attend."

Alternative responses

Table 4.20 reports the participants' alternative responses for refusing invitations in English. The first column reports the names of the participant, while the second column reports the number of invitation scenarios to which the participants choose to give alternative responses. The third column reports the alternative responses to these scenarios and their classification (i.e. codes of pragmatic strategies and pragmatic markers).

The participants described their original pragmatic choices in refusing invitations as a combination of English and Arabic pragmatic norms. However, they agreed that their alternative responses were transfer from Arabic. They perceived them as suitable responses in English for two reasons. First, their responses posed no negative effect on the interlocutors despite their cultural background because invitations, especially invitations to public events and functions, were less imposing than requests. The participants explained that the inviter was not expecting their attendance in the first place and the invitations would be forwarded to many people. Therefore, accepting or declining the invitation wouldn't affect the inviter negatively. They explained that in such circumstances, rather than using negative responses (i.e., responses that indicate a sense of immediate rejection) such as Flat No, Negation, Apology, Excuse, and even sometimes Gratitude (see explanation Section 4.1.2.1 and 4.2.2.1), they preferred using responses that were more positive (i.e., responses that do not indicate sense of immediate rejection). Reem explained: "Arabs don't say 'No' to your face like the A/B people do. If no, they [NSs of English] say: 'No. I can't. I have this and that in my schedule.' It is kind of polite to reply positively. It is better than something negative like a refusal." Yusuf confirmed this understanding: "It is a public invitation and confirming attendance is not necessary. In our culture we believe it is polite not to reject immediately…. In the NSs [of English] culture, we

have to refuse. [However, in the Omani culture], it is offensive to refuse a public invitation immediately." Therefore, the participants perceived such positive responses (i.e., alternative responses) for refusals as more polite, and hence they were more appropriate for refusing public invitations.

In their explanations for responses that involved transfer from Arabic, the participants mainly focused on the meaning and use of "Insha'Allah," because they stated that it was an expression they could use to substitute for any of their alternative responses. The meaning and use of Insha'Allah is user and context dependent. Ali explained that "Insha'Allah" could mean a refusal, acceptance, or a 50% acceptance and 50% refusal. The meaning would depend on the context of communication. He commented: "It is up to [the] interlocutor to infer the meaning [of Insha'Allah] from the context."

Mimi commented on her use of "Insha'Allah": " When you say 'Insha'Allah' that means you are thinking even though he [the interlocutor] knows that 90% you are not coming…the hearer prefers this response. If you say 'No,' he will think it is a little bit strong [refusal]." She affirmed that the use of "Insha'Allah" is not a "lie" because the interlocutor knows the meaning of this expression and why it was used in response to invitations to public events. If, however, a confirmation was required for an invitation, she stated that she would confirm or disconfirm her attendance using a different response in combination with or without "Insha'Allah." Mimi remarked on the use of "Insha'Allah" with acceptance responses: "People could say that they will attend and something might happen and they don't attend." Therefore, "Insha' Allah" could be used to mitigate the negative consequences of not meeting the strong promises people would make because of circumstance they have no control over.

Table 4.20. Alternative Responses for Refusing Invitations in English

Participant	Scenario	Alternative Response Pragmatic Strategy (Pragmatic marker)
Reem	EI7	Thank you. I'll try Gratitude—Indefinite Acceptance
	EI8	It sounds interesting. Thank you so much for the invitation/ Insha' Allah. Thank you. Compliment—Gratitude (Intensifier)/ (Consequences downtowner)—Gratitude
Ali	EI7	I'll try to attend/ I'll try to attend, Insha' Allah. Indefinite Approval/ Indefinite Acceptance (Consequences Downtowner)
	EI8	I'll try to attend, Insha' Allah. Indefinite Acceptance (Consequences Downtowner)
Abdullah	EI8	I'll see/ Insha' Allah, I'll see/ I'll try/ Insha' Allah, I'll try Postponement/ (Consequences Downtowner) Postponement/ Indefinite Acceptance/ Indefinite Acceptance (Consequences Downtowner)
Yusuf	EI6	Insha' Allah. (Consequences Downtowner)
	EI7	Insha' Allah. (Consequences Downtowner)
	EI8	Insha' Allah. (Consequences Downtowner)
Areej	EI7	Insha' Allah, I'll try/ Insha' Allah. I'll try. (Consequences Downtowner) Indefinite Acceptance/ (Consequences Downtowner) Indefinite Acceptance
	EI8	Insha' Allah. I'll try. (Consequences Downtowner) Indefinite Acceptance
Fajir	EI5	I think it will be a wonderful event. Thank you for the invitation. Compliment—Gratitude
	EI7	I'll see/ Thank you doctor for the invitation. I'll see Postponement/ Gratitude (Address)—Postponement
	EI8	Thank you. It will be a great/a wonderful [event]. Gratitude—Compliment.
Mimi	EI5	Insha' Allah. (Consequences Downtowner)
	EI6	Insha' Allah. (Consequences Downtowner)
	EI8	Insha' Allah (Consequences Downtowner)

Abdullah, while agreeing with his colleagues on the use of "Insha' Allah" and other alternative responses for refusing invitations, described them as a personal choice. He explained that even though the use of such responses was common in Omani Arabic, people would vary in how and when they use them. This was confirmed by Al-Yazan, Taif and Khaled's rejection of alternative responses to refuse invitations. They stated that they would only use "Insha' Allah," for example, to confirm their attendance or future actions and at the same time mitigate their promises in case they could not meet them for reasons out of their control. Khaled said he would use "Insha' Allah" only when there was a 50% chance that he might attend. Taif remarked: "I won't use Insha' Allah when I know that [I'm] not going to help or attend. I use it when there is a chance that I might be able to help or attend."

The second reason for electing to use alternative responses in their refusals of invitations was because participants were communicating with people in the local (i.e., Omani) context. The participants explained that their interlocutors were either Omanis or Arabs whom they shared the same culture with or foreigners (including NSs of English) who they assumed were familiar with the local culture. Therefore, they perceived their use of these alternative responses in the local context as acceptable to all interlocutors in the scenarios included in the study.

4.3.2.3 *Omani EFL Learners' Decisions about their Pragmatic Transfer*

Current decisions

All the participants were aware of the influence of their Arabic culture on their pragmatic choices and specifically transfer when refusing in English. They stated that they would maintain the use of Arabic pragmatic norms when using English for two reasons: their desire to maintain their culture and identity and their perception that using Arabic culture in conjunction with English when communicating in English was not inappropriate. For example, Abdulla said that

not using Arabic norms when communicating in English is "wrong." He explained: "Your identity is Omani. You have to use these things [Arabic pragmatic norms] whether you want or not. This is not a form of ridiculing English. On the contrary, you are using English. You care about English. You learned it. Your using of it with your Arabic culture is not a disrespect to English as a language." Abdulla added: "You are using English to speak English not to adopt their culture (i.e., NSs of Englis)." He ascertained: "It is wrong" to disregard your culture just because you are speaking in a different language. Taif agreed: "It is true that I am using the [English] language, but I should keep my identity, because learning the language does not mean I want to be engaged with your [NSs of English] culture and identity...Sometimes you [learn] a second language to emphasize your culture." She added: "there is no insult to English when I use my culture with it. English culture is important as well. If I change the English use to the Arabic use completely it won't sound like English. Nonetheless, I have to bring my culture when I speak in English."

Future decisions

All the participants stated that they would continue to transfer Arabic norms when refusing in English whether they are in Oman or in a context where English is the primary language of communication (e.g., USA, England). The participants reported that they would consider changing their pragmatic choices only if their refusals offend their interlocutors or cause a misunderstanding that could not be resolved by clarification. For instance, Reem stated that she would "transfer Arabic politeness to English unless my Arabic politeness might be offensive to NSs, then I would use their politeness." Al-Yazan asserted: "I won't change my [refusal] style as long as it was clear with Omanis or non-Omanis, unless somebody clarified to me a reason that could lead to misunderstanding."

The participants reported also that the amount of change or accommodation they would make for their interlocutors would vary depending on the context of communication (i.e., local Omani context versus abroad). They affirmed that they would show more consideration when they are abroad because their interlocutors wouldn't be familiar with the Omani culture; however, when they are in Oman, they would consider fewer changes in their use of Arabic norms because they expect NSs of English would be familiar with the Omani culture. Yusuf, for example, said: "I will consider the cultural difference when I communicate [in English] with foreigners, but the Omani culture will be present." He stated that he would maintain the same approach when communicating with people abroad simply because "I am trying to teach you [non-Omanis and non-Arabs] some of my culture values." However, he said that he would avoid any language use that could cause serious misunderstanding abroad. On the other hand, he stated that in his local context, "I would say 'I'm sorry. Keep your culture [NSs of English] to yourself. I use the language as a tool [of communication] here in Oman."

Summary

The participants defined their identities based on their definition of their culture. They distinguished between two types of culture: group culture and individual culture. A group culture is reflected in people's choices and beliefs in relation to cultural components such as language, religion, and history. The person's individual culture is reflected in their choices and beliefs in relation to components from the group culture they identify with and/or from other groups' cultures. They thought that the features of some of these cultural components might stay stable while others change over time. Thus, the group culture could be stable and changing at the same time. However, they contended that while the individual culture has similar features, it is more

varied than the group culture because of the experiences the individuals continuously go through that could influence and change some of their cultural beliefs and choices.

Using the difference between group culture and individual culture, the participants distinguished between two types of identity: group identity and individual identity. Group identity is the reflection, self-presentation, image or the characteristics of a group of people based on their cultural choices and practices. In similar fashion, the personal identity of an individual is the individual's self-presentation, image, reflection, or characteristics of his/her mindset based on cultural choices and practices from his/her group culture and/or other cultures. Since identity is a reflection of the group culture, it also takes on its features of stability and change. Likewise, the individual identity takes on the features of stability and change of the group culture the person identifies with and/or of those of other cultures.

To understand how the participants' identities relate to their English language use, their definitions of their relationship with English were examined. The participants described their relationship with English as positive; however, they had some reservations about the use of English. The participants had a positive attitude about the English language, English culture and the NSs of English. They saw the value of English in its utility as an international tool for communication, thus granting them chances to communicate with people from other cultures, access to educational resources, and opportunities for access to jobs that require English. Despite this positive attitude towards the English language, the participants did not agree with the idea of making English an official language in Oman in addition to Arabic. They ascribed their strong objection to the fact that Arabic is an essential component of their group and individual culture, and hence, it is essential for defining their group and individual identities. They affirmed that the use of Arabic as the language of everyday communication is vital to express and preserve their

identity. To allow English to be used in everyday communication would result in English competing with Arabic and thus influencing the way they define their identity. Nonetheless, the participants attested to the special status of English in their life as an international language even though it is secondary to that of Arabic.

Their positive perception of English as a lingua franca and their strong objection to making it an official language in addition to Arabic in Oman are reflected in their perception of English language use in Oman. The participants said that they limited their use of English to situations in which the use of English for communication is a necessity, such as communicating with their professors, foreigners who do not speak Arabic, and sometimes with colleagues to practice their English. Otherwise, they avoid using it because it is perceived either as impolite bragging about one's language skills or even a disregard for one's Omani identity.

The participants' perceptions of their own identity and their relationship with English influenced the way they constructed their relationship with English in their refusals. This influence was especially evident in pragmatic transfer when they refused in English. The participants believed that Arabic is an essential component of the definition of their culture and thus their identity. It is the language that they use to express and reflect their culture and thus their identity in everyday communication. Therefore, English is only used when it is necessary for communication.

However, when the need to communicate in English arises, the participants believed that it is important to continue to express and reflect their culture and identity through transferring Arabic pragmatic norms into English. At the same time, the participant attested to the importance of using English pragmatics as well. They identified two types of pragmatic transfer in their refusals: what I am referring to as unconscious pragmatic transfer and conscious pragmatic

transfer. Unconscious transfer is involved in what they described as their personal style of using and refusing in English. They described this style as a neutral style combining English and Arabic pragmatic norms. For them, using Arabic pragmatic norms when refusing in English was unavoidable behavior because of the intrinsic relationship between their way of expressing themselves and their culture. In this personal style of English, they cannot distinguish between the English and the Arabic pragmatic influences on their use of English. The second type of transfer was the conscious transfer of pragmatic strategies from Arabic to English. The participants explained that some of the pragmatic strategies they used in refusals in English such as Solution Suggestion, Wish for Self, and Compliment were consciously transferred from Arabic.

The participants said that they were aware of the influence of Arabic on their refusals in English. They affirmed that they would maintain using Arabic pragmatic norms when refusing in English and they would continue doing so when they think it was necessary. They explained this choice as a way not only to express and reflect their identity, but also as an act to preserve their identity when they substitute the language they identify with (i.e., Arabic) with another (i.e., English). In addition, even though their pragmatic behavior was different from that of NSs of English, they believed that it should not be seen as an insult to English NSs because their positive attitude towards English was evidence of their appreciation for English as an international language.

They stated that, in the future, they would continue using their individual pragmatic style for refusing in English. However, they would consider adopting more native-like pragmatic norms if they were in the context of NSs of English because in such a context, NSs would be unfamiliar with their culture. In addition, they would consider changes in their pragmatic

behavior if it led to serious misunderstandings or they were perceived to be impolite. However,

these changes would take place only if they could not resolve such issues with clarification.

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes and discusses the main findings of this study concerning Omani EFL learners' realization and perception of refusals in Omani Arabic and in English and the relationship between Omani EFL learners' identities and their pragmatic choices when refusing in English, particularly in relation to pragmatic transfer. Subsequently, the findings are compared with findings from previous research to draw conclusions about the refusal behaviour of Omani EFL learners and the influence of their identities on their pragmatic choices. Finally, the implications of the findings of this study for theory and teaching are presented followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 *Omani EFL Learners' Realization and Perception of their Refusals in Omani Arabic*

A refusal speech act is a second pair-part of an adjacency pair or a response to another speech act. In this study, refusals took place in reaction to two types of initiating speech acts: requests and invitations. The difference in the initiating speech acts triggered distinctive refusal patterns in which combinations of different strategies were used to realize each type of refusal (i.e., refusal of requests vs refusal of invitations). In refusal of requests in Arabic, the participants used Regret, Excuse and Negation most frequently and generated six refusal patterns that mainly started with Regret. In addition to these three main strategies, the participants sometimes used Solution Suggestion and Wish for Self. Regret seems to be the preferred strategy to start a refusal of a request in Arabic and when it is not used in the initial position, it usually immediately follows the strategy in the initial position.

In refusals of invitations in Arabic, the participants also used Regret, Excuse and Negation more frequently than other strategies. Unlike in refusals of requests, however, the participants tended to use a wider combination of strategies when refusing invitations, generating a total of eleven different patterns of refusals. In addition to these strategies, the participants commonly used Gratitude, Compliment and Wish for Self. Despite the fact that Regret is one of the frequently used strategies and it mainly came in the initial position in the invitation refusal patterns, the participants stated that Regret could be simply replaced with Gratitude. Thus, Gratitude seems to be their preferred strategy for refusing invitations in Arabic.

The participants ascribed their preference for the Regret strategy in response to requests and Gratitude strategy in response to invitations to the sociopragmatic variable of relative imposition. The participants defined this variable in relation to their interlocutors' expectations regarding their compliance with the request or invitation. This definition does not align with the definition of this variable by Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1992). Participants perceived requests as more difficult to refuse because they felt that, with requests, there was an actual need on the part of their interlocutor; that is, they felt that, with requests, the interlocutor was in need of compliance with the request. Thus, not fulfilling the request could result in unpleasant consequences for the interlocutor. However, with invitations, participants did not feel that compliance was necessary to the same extent and thus, there would be no negative effects for the interlocutor if participants refused him/her. Nonetheless, Regret emerged as the most frequently used strategy in response to both types of speech acts. The participants explained that Regret was mainly used to express politeness when refusing both speech acts . In other words, Regret was not meant to express a confession of guilt, which may explain the higher frequency of using regret expressions in Omani Arabic such as "ʕuðrann," "maʕðiratann," ʔuʕðriːˌ," "ʔismaħliːˌ," "i-

sumuħa" which translate to "Excuse me" in English, rather than "I'm sorry" or "I apologize," which could express a confession of guilt. However, the participants contended that the Regret strategy is essential when a direct strategy such as Negation (e.g., I can't) is used, because they perceived it as having the ability to reduce the negative impact of the direct strategies. Therefore, Gratitude and other strategies do not suffice when Negation, for example, is used to refuse an invitation. In such instances, the use of Regret seems to become essential. However, when Negation is not used, Regret is not important for refusing invitations. In general, the participants stated that the Regret-Negation combination is preferred when refusing requests and Gratitude is their preferred strategy when refusing invitations. Even though they used Regret to refuse some inviations, they stated that it could be simply substituted with Regret.

In this study, the demand to comply with a request could be seen as an imposition because the interlocutor (the speech act initiator) is demanding something of the hearer (the participant). However, the participants did not see this demand for compliance as imposing or burdensome behaviour, but rather as a call to understand the interlocutor's need for help and his/her vulnerable situation if the request is not fulfilled. This could explain why the participants did not focus on the imposition that requests can place on negative face (i.e., their desire not be impeded or put upon), even though the requests are assumed to be more imposing than invitations in the literature (Hudson et al., 1992). Rather, the participants seem to have been focused on maintaining the positive face of their interlocutors as well as their own. Therefore, despite some difference in the frequency of use of pragmatic strategies in the refusal of both types of speech acts, all strategies seem to have been employed to generate positive politeness or "the assurance that in general S [speaker] considers H [hearer] wants or at least some of H's wants" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.70). These positive politeness strategies seem to have been

aimed at achieving four goals: (a) presenting and promoting a good image of self and of the group one identifies with, (b) maintaining harmony, (c) stressing one's feelings of respect and appreciation, and (d) ensuring appropriate use of pragmatic strategies.

The only situation in which the participants' definition of relative imposition matched that of Hudson, et al. (1992) (i.e., the size of expenditure of goods, services and abilities requested of the hearer) was in the directions situation. However, in contrast to the common understanding of the effect of this variable on speech act realization in the literature, the participants perceived the limited expenditure of goods, services and abilities in the directions situation as a contributing factor to the difficulty in refusing this speech act compared to the greater expenditure required of them in the request to help with the exhibition situation. Furthermore, this perceived difficulty of refusing a small expenditure of goods, abilities and services did not trigger concerns about negative face, but rather about positive face, be that of the speaker or the listener. In the following sections, we will see how the participants' focus on positive face in interactions with various sociopragmatic variables seemed to be generally geared towards concerns for maintaining and promoting a good image of self or others, maintaining harmony, expressing respect, gratitude using pragmatic strategies appropriately.

The participants' desire to maintain harmony and good self-image were evident in their perception of the influence of social distance on their refusal responses. In order to maintain harmony between themselves and a familiar interlocutor, they used lengthy explanations. With unfamiliar interlocutors, however, they tended to be less concerned about harmony since their interlocutors were strangers to them.

On the other hand, when they refused strangers, they were primarily concerned with presenting and promoting a positive image of themselves and/or of the community they

associated with. The lack of familiarity alone triggered a desire to be perceived as helpful and hence, they used the Regret strategy with a real sense of regret such as "a:sif/a:sifah" (Sorry/I'm sorry), or they used Wish for Self, and they suggested alternative solutions. The participants who believed that their context, i.e., SQU, was relevant to their responses when refusing unfamiliar interlocutors, were concerned about promoting a positive image not only of themselves but also of their SQU community because they believed themselves to be representative of their university community.

For some participants, the amount of explanation accompanying refusals seems to have been determined by affective factors: an emergent factor in this study defined as the participants' like or dislike of a familiar interlocutor. Some participants explained that their lengthy explanations were meant to affirm their respect of and indebtedness to the interlocutor for being a caring and considerate person. It seems that their pragmatic behavior was a result of a sense of self-imposed obligation or commitment towards such an interlocutor, and a way to pay back their interlocutor's perceived kindness. Some participants perceived an opposite effect of affective factors on the length of their explanations. Rather than explaining more, these participants explained less to a professor they liked. They assumed that there would be a mutual respect and understanding between them and interlocutors they believed were kind. Therefore, their interlocutors would perceive their refusal as polite and respectful, and hence there was no need to use lengthy explanations.

Other participants did not see their like or dislike for familiar professors as having an effect on their pragmatic choices when refusing them because not only did the professors have a higher social status than the students, the relationship is a formal academic one. Those participants thought that the higher social status of the professor and the formal academic

relationship was more influential than affective factors on their pragmatic behaviour because such a relationship would dictate similar pragmatic behavior when refusing any professor. Those who thought that affective factors would influence the length of their explanations maintained that despite their like or dislike of a professor, they would observe a similar level of politeness with all professors (males and females). Failing to do so would result in disturbing the academic nature of their relationship, which would result in disharmony. It is important to note that although social power and the formal academic relationship are not directly examined in this study, their influence seems to be present in every pragmatic decision the participants made when refusing a familiar or unfamiliar professor. However, when refusing unfamiliar interlocutors whom the participants did not think of as professors but rather as older interlocutors, only social power seems to have affected their pragmatic decisions.

Social power seems also to influence how participants of both genders refuse in some situations. Unlike the male participants, the female participants stated that because of the formal academic relationship between them and their professors, they would refrain from mentioning private matters as explanations in their refusals. This is not because private matters create disharmony or pose a threat to anybody's face; rather, it is an inappropriate pragmatic choice given the formal nature of these participants' relations with their professors.

In addition to the pragmatic strategies used in the realization of speech acts in Arabic, the participants used a range of pragmatic markers. Even though I did not originally plan to examine pragmatic markers, insights about the role of these markers in the realization of refusals in Omani Arabic were gleaned from the few explanations on their use provided by the participants during the interviews. The participants used twelve pragmatic markers when refusing in Arabic: Subjectivizer, Preparator, Consequences Downtoner, Emotion, Assessment, Emphasis, Manner

of Speaking, Understater, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity. The markers of Address, Intensifier and Manner of speaking were the most frequently used. The participants said that they used the basic marker of Emotion, for example, to express interest and as a compliment. In addition, they seemed to use the commentary marker of Assessment "lilʔasaf" (unfortunately) to express their wish to fulfill the invitation. They tended to use the Manner of Speaking markers of "bisˤaraħa" (frankly) and "Wallah" to comment on the sincerity of their speech and to use Intensifier and Emphasis to intensify the content of their produced speech. For example, using "gidden" (very/so) with Excuse seems to be intended to make their reasons for refusal seem truer and, hence, better received by their interlocutor. Furthermore, the use of the parallel marker of Address and specifically the title "doctor" was mainly influenced by the social power that a professor has over the participant as a student and by familiarity since the participants stated that they would only use it with people whom they knew were professors. Interestingly, the participants affirmed that using the Address marker was more important for them when refusing requests than when refusing invitations. In addition, some participants claimed that the sense of respect they would encode in the title would be higher with a professor that they liked. With professors they did not like, they used the title as a formality.

5.1.2 *Omani EFL Learners' Realization and Perceptions of their Refusals in English as an L2*

In their refusals in English, the participants refused two initiation speech acts: requests and invitations. The difference in the initiation speech or the difference in the imposition degree coupled with the difference between the speech acts initiators (i.e., A/B versus Omani profs) resulted in a variety of refusal patterns. In refusals of the requests of Omani interlocutors, the participants used three refusal patterns while in refusals of American/British (A/B) interlocutors, they used four patterns. The participants used similar strategies in their refusals of both

interlocutors, mainly Regret, Excuse, Negation, and Solution Suggestion. In addition, they preferred to start their refusal patterns with Regret. On the other hand, in refusing the invitations of Omani and A/B interlocutors, the participants used a wider combination of strategies resulting in twelve refusal patterns in refusing Omani interlocutors and eleven refusal patterns in refusing A/B interlocutors. In refusals to Omani interlocutors, the participants tended to start with Regret, Excuse and Compliment while in refusals to A/B interlocutors, they tended to start with Regret, Gratitude and Wish for Self. They also tended to combine these strategies with Excuse, Negation, Gratitude, and Compliment strategies in addition to Regret.

The findings suggest that the participants' strategy preference for initiating their refusal responses was mainly influenced by their perception of the relative imposition of the initiation speech act (i.e., request versus invitations). For instance, participants perceived the act of refusing requests to be more imposing than refusing invitations because they felt that, unlike an invitation, their interlocutor needed them to comply with the request. Therefore, the participants felt that it was important to use Negation to refuse requests in order to give a clear response that they could not comply and that their interlocutor should not be hopeful about them complying with the request. The direct nature of Negation necessitated the use of Regret to soften the Negation blow to the interlocutor's face. Regret, hence, was not used to express a real sense of guilt, but rather to express concern for the interlocutor's positive face, which the participants felt was threatened by the direct refusal (i.e., Negation). This seems to explain the participants' preference for starting their request refusals with Regret followed by Negation or vice versa. On the other hand, when refusing invitations, the participants thought that it was not important for their interlocutor that they comply with or accept the invitation, and thus giving a clear refusal

using Negation was not necessary. Therefore, they initiated their refusal responses to invitations with a variety of strategies such as Gratitude, Wish for Self, and Compliment.

In addition to viewing an interlocutor's desire for compliance as related to the relative imposition of a speech act (request vs. invitation), the participants also viewed the limited expenditure of abilities and time requested of them in the directions situation as relevant to the relative imposition of request speech acts. Contrary to the common understanding of the effect of the size expenditure on the imposition of speech acts (Hudson et al., 1992), the participants in this study perceived that a limited expenditure of goods requested made the situation rather more difficult to refuse. Whether they viewed relative imposition in terms of their interlocutors' desire for them to comply or in terms of the size of expenditure requested of them, the participants did not see their interlocutors as trying to burden them by design. This could explain why the participants did not focus on their own negative face (i.e., their desire not to be impeded or put upon), but rather chose to focus on their interlocutors' need for help, i.e., his/her positive face, and their own positive face. However, in the response to the request to help with an exhibition, one participant prioritized her negative face needs over an interlocutor's positive face needs. This participant explained asking for help with the exhibition on the last day of the week was bad timing and created a sense of imposition on her. She thought that her "right" to go home was more important than helping her professor.

In sum, it seems that the participants' understandings of the relative imposition of speech acts resulted mainly in a focus on positive face rather than negative face which contradicts Brown and Levinson's (1987) prediction. This means that the various strategies used by the participants in refusing requests and invitations (i.e., Regret, Excuse, Gratitude or Compliment) were adapted to express positive politeness. Depending on the participants' perception of the

influence of the various sociopragmatic variables on their pragmatic decisions, politeness served

four main goals: (a) presenting and promoting good image of self and others, (b) maintaining

harmony, (c) stressing one's feelings of respect and appreciation to others, and (d) using

pragmatic strategies appropriately.

The desire to maintain harmonious relationships with the interlocutor was a recurring

goal when the participants refused the requests of familiar Omani and A/B interlocutors. They

felt a sense of social obligations towards fulfilling the requests and invitations of familiar

professors. They did not want their refusals to negatively impact their relationship with familiar

interlocutors. To this end, they tended to provide lengthy explanations.

However, they did not see lengthy explanations as the most suitable strategy for refusing

unfamiliar interlocutors because preserving harmony was not their primary concern. Rather, they

were interested in presenting and promoting a positive self-image in front of strangers. The

participants thought that a lack of familiarity could lead interlocutors who were strangers to think

that the participants' refusals were due to uncooperative behaviour and thus impolite. Some of

the participants thought that any negative perception of their refusals on the part of unfamiliar

Omani interlocutors could be generalized to all of the students at their university, SQU. Even

worse, they worried that negative perceptions could be generalized to all Omanis if their

interlocutors were unfamiliar A/B. To mitigate this effect, when refusing requests for directions

by unfamiliar interlocutors, the participants tended to use Solution Suggestion, Assurance, Wish

for Others, and Intensified Regret.

Concerns for maintaining one's self-image was perceived in relation to cultural distance

between the Omanis and their interlocutors (i.e., A/B profs.). The participants believed that not

conforming to the pragmatic norms of NSs of English would make A/B professors or NSs of

English think that the participants were intentionally rude to them. The participants claimed that even though they tried to pay extra attention to their interlocutors' desire for positive face by trying to adhere to their interlocutors' English pragmatic norms, complete conformity with NSs norms was not possible. As Omanis, they sometimes transferred their pragmatic norms to English which sometimes resulted in being perceived by their A/B professors as impolite. On the other hand, when they were communicating with Arab and Omani professors in English, not adhering to the pragmatic norms of English and transferring Arabic pragmatic norms did not result in a threat to either the Omani and Arab interlocutors' positive face or their own positive face. However, a few participants thought that refusing Omani interlocutors could sometimes be equally harmful to the positive face of their Omani interlocutors and their own positive face. They said that due to the shared culture of helping in Oman, there would be expectations of reciprocity. Thus, refusing to help unfamiliar Omanis in an urgent situation like the directions scenario, for example, could be seen as an intentional disregard for their Omani culture and thus unacceptable behaviour which could damage the positive face of both sides (i.e., the student and the interlocutor).

Affective factors seem to have caused a shift in the participants' goals of interaction with familiar professors. They shifted their attention from concerns for maintaining harmony to a desire to express respect and gratitude. These participants thought that a professor they liked would mean that this professor would understand their refusal and would not take their refusal as impolite behaviour because he/she was kind to them and understanding of their circumstances and, hence, their refusals. Therefore, these participants thought that using lengthy explanation was particularly important because they wanted to express and stress their sincere gratefulness and respect for the professors they liked. Other participants, however, thought that because of the

mutual understanding and respect between them and the professors they liked, they did not need to use lengthy explanation.

On the other hand, some participants did not see affective factors as relevant to their pragmatic choices, despite their liking or disliking of the professor. Rather they perceived the social status and hence the social power of the professor over them and the academic relationship between themselves and their professors as more influential. These participants thought that they had to maintain an appropriate formal and polite style of refusal with all professors regardless of affective factors, cultural distance, and gender. In fact, even the participants who though affective factors were relevant to their pragmatic choices also thought the academic relationship coupled with the high social status of the interlocutor demanded a particular level of formality and politeness regardless of affective factors, cultural distance and gender. Thus, they would attend to affective factors only after the demands of social status and the academic relationship were met. In addition, they did not see a contradiction between the goals of attending to both sociopragmatic factors. Thus, they commented that they would continue using lengthy explanations with professors they liked.

Concerns for appropriate pragmatic choices were raised by the female participants mainly regarding the gender of their male interlocutors, academic relationships, social distance and cultural distance. For example, unlike the male participants, the female participants perceived mentioning private matters to be inappropriate social behaviour when refusing due to the perceived formal academic relationship between themselves and familiar professors. If the interlocutors were unfamiliar professors or simply total strangers, the female participants said that they would give shorter refusal responses. This behaviour, they contended, was socially acceptable in Oman as females are expected to maintain a social distance between themselves

and unknown males. In other words, shorter refusals in this case would be more socially appropriate than longer ones. However, they maintained that while this behaviour would be understood by unfamiliar Omani males as a culturally acceptable behaviour, some of them doubted that unfamiliar A/B males would understand their refusal behaviour due to the lack of a shared culture or cultural distance between Omanis and A/B people in general. As a result, some of the female participants perceived a possible threat to the positive face of unfamiliar A/B professors, and hence their own positive face.

Finally, in their realization of refusals in English, the participants used a total of ten pragmatic markers to refuse the requests and invitations of Omani professors and NS professors: Subjectivizer, Politeness, Downtoner, Assessment, Emotion, Emphasis, Understater, Intensifier, Address, and Solidarity. The participants tended to use Address and Intensifiers more frequently than other markers and in refusal to both types of initiation speech acts. The participants only explained the meaning of one basic marker: Emotion marker. They used it to express three emotions: exhaustion, surprise and amazement. One of the participants stated that expressing surprise using "wow!" was triggered by the cultural background of his interlocutor (i.e., A/B), but he thought it would be inappropriate to use this marker with Omani interlocutors. The commentary marker of Assessment "unfortunately" was used to express wish or desire. The commentary markers of Emphasis and Intensifier, on the other hand, were used to intensify and stress the meaning of the pragmatic strategy by way of intensifying its pragmatic force. For instance, when an Emphasis or Intensifier marker is used with Regret, it transformed Regret from a simple gesture of politeness to a sincere apology. Similar effects were also intended when Intensifier was used with Excuse. Intensifier added to the truth of the provided excuse and thus made it more sincere and more credible. The commentary marker of Assessment "unfortunately"

expressed the participant's desire or wish to comply with the proposition of the speech act without the need of the Wish for Self strategy. Furthermore, the participants perceived the use of the parallel marker of Address "doctor" as mainly relevant to the sociopragmatic variables of social power and social distance. The participants stated that the use of this title was mandated by the social power the interlocutor had over them as students. Also, they stated that they would only use this title with people whom they knew were professors. However, some participants stated that the sincerity of respect encoded in the use of titles would very much depend on their like or dislike of the interlocutor as well (i.e., affective factors).

5.1.3 *Comparison of Realization and Perception of Refusals in Omani Arabic and Refusals in English*

In comparison with their refusals in Omani Arabic, there are noticeable similarities in the participants' realization and perceptions of refusals in English. The participants seem to have a similar preference for Regret, Negation and Excuse in addition to the Solution Suggestion and Assurance in refusal of requests in Omani Arabic and English. However, they used six patterns for refusing requests in Omani Arabic compared to a total of four in English. Similarly, they exhibited a preference for Gratitude, Compliment and Wish for Self when refusing in English, even though they used Regret and Excuse as well. They had a similar understanding of the effect of relative imposition on their pragmatic choices in reaction to requests and invitations in both languages. Specifically, they defined relative imposition in terms of the interlocutor's desire for compliance with the speech act. In addition, in the direction situations, they added the small expenditure of services and time as a contributing factor to the degree of imposition, which is different from the common perception in the literature. In both cases, relative imposition did not trigger in them a concern for their own negative face, but rather their focus remained on the

interlocutor's positive face and their own positive face. Thus, they deployed their pragmatic strategies to serve four main interactional goals: presenting and promoting a good image of self and of the group one identifies with, maintaining harmony, stressing one's feelings of respect and appreciation to others, and appropriateness of used pragmatic strategies.

Additionally, in refusing in Omani Arabic and in English, the participants had similar perceptions of the influence of social distance, power and gender. The variable of cultural distance was relevant only to the English ODCT and it seems to have added to the variation in the participants' pragmatic choices and influenced the way they perceived their refusals in English.

5.1.4 *Relationship between Omani EFL Learners' Identities and their Pragmatic Choices when Refusing in English*

The identity of the participants seems to have actively influenced their pragmatic choices when refusing in English and, hence, pragmatic transfer. The relationship between the identity of the participants and their refusal choices was manifested in (a) how they defined their relationship with English, (b) instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusals and their perception of such instances, and (3) their decisions about their future pragmatic choices.

The participants described their relationships with the English language as positive and instrumental. They generally had a positive view about the English language and culture and its NSs. Their motivation for learning and using English was primarily instrumental. They thought that English could be a tool for communicating with people from other cultures in local and international contexts and for accessing educational resources, given its international status. Additionally, at the local level, English could qualify them for jobs that require the use of

English. This instrumental motivation (Dörnyei, 2009) made them passionate about acquiring the English language.

However, beyond the utility of English as an instrument for communication, the participants had reservations about its use in their everyday communication. The participants strongly identified with the Arabic language and its culture. They affirmed that the use of Arabic in their everyday communication is vital to expressing and preserving their identity. As a result, they believed that English is not suitable for their everyday communication and should be used out of necessity only. In addition, when the need arose to use English, they believed that its use should reflect their own identity. To do so, they believed that transferring Arabic cultural values and, hence, pragmatic norms, to their English usage is an act of expressing and preserving their identity. At the same time, they believed that some consideration for the norms of English was important for its successful usage.

The participants identified some instances of pragmatic transfer. They were aware that they are transferring from Arabic culture and did not perceive these instances of pragmatic transfer as errors, but rather as appropriate for their communication goals. Additionally, the participants identified another influence from their Arabic pragmatics on English. Even though they are aware of it, they were unable to disentangle Arabic pragmatics from English pragmatics. They describe this combination of pragmatics as a "personal style" they developed over the years of learning and using English. It is also, personal, in the sense that it differed from one individual to another because it very much depends on the individual personal experiences and use of the pragmatics of both languages. Some of them claimed that their personal styles could be accepted for communication in English in Oman by Omani and even perhaps by A/B interlocutors, but some reservations might apply. In making refusals to A/B professors in English, some of them

stated that transferring from Arabic resulted in a threat to the positive face of their interlocutors and their own due to misperceptions of their pragmatic choices as impolite behaviour. In general, they thought that the influence of Arabic pragmatic norms on their English pragmatic use was inevitable because English in their society (i.e., Oman) reflects their local needs of pragmatic choices.

Not only were the participants aware of the influence of using and transferring Arabic norms, but they also affirmed that they would maintain these behaviors when refusing in English. They thought that pragmatic transfer was not only necessary to express their identity, but also to preserve their identity when they substituted the language they identify with (i.e., Arabic) with another (i.e., English). However, they stated that they would be willing to adopt more English native-like pragmatic norms to accommodate differences in the contexts of communication (i.e., Omani context or English NSs context) and also in cases of serious misunderstanding or communication breakdowns that could not be resolved with clarification.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

The discussion in this section aims to highlight some of the general trends in the findings of this study and to compare them to findings from previous research. The section starts by highlighting some of the main methodological differences between this study and other studies on refusal speech acts. Then, the findings of this study are compared to those of other studies in relation to the realization and perception of refusal speech acts, identity and pragmatic transfer**.**

5.2.1 *Methodology*

The main methodological difference between previous studies on refusal speech acts and the current study are in the data collection tools, the theorization of these tools, and the data analysis approach. Regarding data collection tools, some previous studies used written DCT (i.e.,

Discourse Completion Task) and a few used oral DCT (e.g., Nelson, Carson, & El-Bakary, 2002). Some studies used role play with or without DCT (e.g., Gass & Houck, 1999; Sasaki, 1998) and some followed the DCT with interviews (e.g., Torrens Salemi, 2006), while others used a judgment task questionnaire (e.g., Chen, 1996). In this study, however, oral DCT was followed by semi-structured interviews.

A closer look at the DCT data collection tools used in previous studies reveals major differences in the scenarios used to collect the refusal responses in these studies relative to the current study. These differences can be seen in terms of the description of the situation in which the speech act takes place (i.e., office, university, street, etc.), the content of the initiation speech act (i.e., request for promotion or invitation to the boss's house), and the role the participants or the respondents are required to assume when responding to the DCT (i.e., student, employee, etc.). For example, in some studies, the participants are university students, but when responding to the DCT or when role playing, they are asked to imagine themselves as employees in a company who have to refuse their boss. In this study, in contrast, the participants were university students and they were asked to assume their natural roles as students and to respond to familiar and unfamiliar professors. The content of the requests and invitations were relevant to the participants' university life: requests for help with organizing a workshop or an invitation to attend a seminar. The setting of the scenarios in this study was the university of the students. The scenarios included references and descriptions of familiar places to the participants such as Deanship of the College of Arts, the main library and the Language Center. Thus, this enhancement done in the ODCT of this study similar to that of Savić (2014). Unlike Savić's study, this study bought specific detailes from the particiapnts' context to the ODCT such as

mentioning places the participnats are familiar with such as the LC, the main library and Deanship of College of Arts.

In addition to the description of situations and the different roles the participants were assigned, there are differences in the sociopragmatic variables examined in this study relative to previous studies. Some studies examined refusals in relation to status or social power, while others add social distance or familiarity. These studies did not explicitly examine the sociopragmatic variable of relative imposition of speech acts, but the variation in the speech acts they included could be taken as one way of getting at relative imposition. Some studies have examined refusal speech acts in reaction to requests as initiation speech acts (e.g., Kitao, 1996), others have examined refusals in response to invitations alone or in combination with suggestions and offers (e.g., Beeb, et al., 1990), while other studies have examined refusals in response to requests and invitations (e.g., Stevens, 1993). The current study examined refusals in reaction to both requests and invitations. Additionally, refusals were examined in relation to degree of imposition (i.e., refusing requests versus refusing invitations), social distance (i.e., familiar versus unfamiliar professor), and cultural distance (i.e., Omani versus American/British interlocutor). The social power of the interlocutors is assumed higher than the participants due to the professor-student relationship. In situations in which the participants did not think of the unfamiliar interlocutors as professors, they mainly imagined interlocutors who were older than them. This maintained the higher social power of the interlocutors due to the influence of the age difference in Omani culture.

Furthermore, there are differences in the classification of refusal speech acts in this study and those in previous studies. While there is agreement between the classification scheme in this study and that of other studies on the coding of direct refusals (i.e., Negation and Flat No), there

are noticeable differences in the classification of some indirect strategies such as Suggestion, Wish, and Indefinite Acceptance. For example, Nelson et al. (2002) classified Gratitude as consideration for interlocutors' feelings, while in the classification of Beeb et al, (990), this strategy is classified as a statement of positive opinion/feeling (which are represented by Compliment and Wish for Self in the current study) or agreement (which was not documented in the current dataset). However, both authors classified Indefinite Reply as hedging under an avoidance strategy. Generally, the findings of this study agree with previous studies on their classification of several pragmatic strategies under the same code because they sometimes serve the same pragmatic purpose or have the same force. In this study, for example, Compliment and Wish for Self were classified separately, but were found to share a similar pragmatic force. They both were used to express appreciation, like Gratitude. However, this study also revealed that even though these strategies were used to express appreciation, they added a unique pragmatic force to the mixture of the refusal response. Wish for Self, for example, was used by the participants to directly express sincere interest in the proposition, and to express appreciation by implication (i.e., indirectly). Compliments tended to be mainly used to express appreciation, but sometimes it was used as a gesture of politeness or a courtesy, rather than as a sincere gratitude, when refusing invitations. Gratitude, on the other hand, seems to have been used to express sincere appreciation directly. Although these three strategies could carry out a similar pragmatic force, that of appreciation, they were used in unique and different ways by the participants in this study.

The classification scheme of this study differed from other schemes in two additional ways. First, it differed in the treatment of the so-called Adjunct and Alerters. Blum-Kulka et al. and Beebe et al. (1990) identified two main parts in the refusal response: Head Act and Adjunct

(i.e., Supportive Moves). The head act is the semantic unit that could realize refusal directly or indirectly without the other semantic units in the response. Other units which could not function as a head act are treated as mitigating or supporting moves to the head act, and hence they are not essential to the realization of the refusal speech act. These supportive moves or adjuncts are statements of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (i.e., Compliment, Wish for Self), statements of empathy (not documented in the data of this study), pause fillers such as uhh, well and uhm, and Gratitude or appreciation. The findings of this study provide evidence in favor of re-classifying supportive moves such as Adjuncts (Beebe et al., 1990) as essential units in the realization of refusal speech acts (Nelson et al., 2002 and Al-Issa, 2003). In both languages, the participants perceived that refusal responses that gave a sense of approval, appreciation or praise were culturally more appropriate for refusing invitations. They preferred refusing using Gratitude and Indefinite Acceptance (e.g., "Thank you. I'll try to attend") or Compliment with Indefinite Acceptance (e.g., "It seems good. I'll try to attend"), or Compliment with Gratitude (e.g., "I think it will be a wonderful event. Thank you for the invitation"). In addition, the participants claimed that even though Gratitude was mainly used to directly express appreciation, it could be used to express refusal indirectly. They believed that Gratitude, when used in response to invitations, could indirectly assume the same function of rejection produced by Regret in refusal of requests or invitations. Therefore, Adjunct strategies could be used to indirectly express refusals and they could be the main and only units used by Omani NSs and Omani EFL learners to refuse, which justifies their treatment as main strategies in the classification scheme of this study.

The second difference between the classification scheme of this study and previous ones is in the treatment of the so-called Alerters. An Alerter is "an opening element proceeding the

actual request, such as a term of address or an attention getter" (Blum-Kulka et al, p. 276). However, the findings of this study indicate that an address term such as "doctor" was used in reaction to various sociopragmatic variables and, consequently, it could be used to carry a pragmatic force (Fraser, 1996, 1999). In previous studies, the use of titles by Arabs has been described simply as deferring behaviour to people with higher social status (e.g., Hamady, 1960; Al-Issa, 2003). Thus, Arabs are described as being more conscious of status and more sensitive to the hierarchal social system. The findings of this study show a similar tendency in the participants' pragmatic behaviour as they wanted to express respect to their professors who had greater social power than them. However, the participants also associated the use of the title "doctor" with relative imposition and affective factors. They explained that using the title "doctor" once to address their professor in a conversation could be an expression of respect and formality as demanded by the academic context. However, to use the title again in a conversation could serve other purposes. For example, some participants thought using the title was indispensable to their refusal of request speech acts even if they used it in a previous turn in the conversation. However, they were not so adamant about its use when refusing invitations. Other participants explained that using this title when refusing requests and invitations of a professor they liked was essential to their refusal responses even if they had used it in previous turns in the conversation. They explained that their use of this title is a way of expressing sincere gratefulness and respect to the professor they liked for understanding and respecting them.

Consideration of the pragmatic force of titles in this study opened the door to consider other elements frequently used in refusal responses but not usually included in the examination of refusal speech acts: pragmatic markers. The few occasions on which the participants in the current study explained the role of pragmatic markers supported previous research that pragmatic

markers can affect the pragmatic force of the speech act as a whole or some of the units in the refusal response (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Some of the pragmatic markers documented in this study intensified the pragmatic force of the strategy, for example, to express sincere apologies and to increase the credibility of excuses. Furthermore, the classification of pragmatic markers in combination with pragmatic strategies might clarify some of the confusion in classifying Negation. Félix-Brasdefer (2008), for example, classified "I don't think" as a mitigated direct refusal. The findings of this study support this view: the participants in this study did not perceive "I don't think I can" as less direct than "I can't." However, they described their use of the Subjectivizer marker "I think" as a means to introduce their personal opinion in the refusal response. In other words, they thought that their reasons might not be perceived by their interlocutor as convincing enough and that is why they needed to present their refusal as a personal opinion. Therefore, the findings of this study support considering "I don't think" as a mitigated refusal, but at the same time, do not support its classification as an indirect refusal.

Furthermore, this study differs from previous research in the way it identifies and explains pragmatic transfer. Previous research utilized an etic perspective on pragmatic transfer, and was mainly concerned with establishing evidence for pragmatic transfer by way of comparing and contrasting participants' realization of a speech act in their first language and their use of it in the second language in comparison with the use of it by NSs of English (Thomas, 1983, Kasper, 1996). Unlike previous research, in order to examine the role of the Omani EFL learners' identities on their pragmatic transfer, it was important to allow the participants to offer their *own* take on their pragmatic transfer without an outside influence or imposed interpretation on their perception. Therefore, the participants were asked to identify pragmatic transfer (if any) in their refusal responses in English and to explain it.

5.2.2 *The Realization and Perception of Refusal Speech Act*

Having discussed some of the major methodological differences between this study and previous research, I now compare the findings of the current study concerning the realization of and perception of refusals in Omani Arabic and in English by Omani EFL learners and those of previous research. Nelson, et al. (2002) compared the refusals of Egyptian NSs of Arabic and American NSs of English. Even though Nelson, et al. did not examine the English refusals of Egyptian learners because their study was cross-cultural in nature, the refusals in Arabic by Egyptian NSs are comparable to refusals in Arabic by Omani NSs. Nelson, et al. found that Egyptian NSs of Arabic preferred indirect over direct strategies in refusing the request and invitation of a higher status familiar interlocutor. The Egyptian NSs utilized Excuse, Regret, suggestion of willingness (not documented in the current study), and consideration for the interlocutor's feeling (i.e., Gratitude). However, no information on which strategy was most preferred to start refusals was provided in Nelson, et al. The difference between refusing requests versus invitations was not discussed either.

The findings of this study support Nelson, et al.'s observation that even though it is possible to refuse in a situation, refusal might not be the most appropriate response. Nelson, et al. recommended investigating refusal behaviour by considering what is culturally more appropriate for the people to use in some refusal situations. They explained, "It may be that in some situations, refusing at all may result in more serious sociopragmatic failure than using inappropriate strategies that lead to pragmalinguistic failure" (p. 184). The participants in their study were reluctant to refuse the request and invitation of a higher status person due to differences in the social status of their interlocutors. In addition, the participants were reluctant to refuse a friend due to a bond of friendship. In the current study, the participants also thought that

a refusal was possible in the directions situations; however, they stated that they would not mind being late for a friend in order to help an unfamiliar interlocutor with the directions. One student, in fact, stated that he was willing to be late for his exam to give directions to his interlocutor who needed help. The participants felt reluctant to refuse because of their cultural expectations of reciprocity that understood it to be a human virtue to help in such situations. However, by refusing the invitations in English, the participants perceived positive responses such as Indefinite Reply and Indefinite Acceptance as culturally more appropriate responses than their original refusal responses starting with apology and gratitude in combination with other strategies.

The Omani participants in this study also preferred indirect strategies over direct strategies in their Arabic refusals. They employed similar combination of strategies especially that of Excuse, Regret, Negation, Solution Suggestion, Assurance, Wish for Self, Gratitude, and Compliment. Furthermore, other strategies documented in Nelson, et al. such as "let the speaker off the hook" and criticism were not documented in the current study. The Excuse strategy in the current study was also the most frequently employed strategy. The Excuse strategy was followed by Regret and Negation, while it was followed by consideration for the interlocutors' feeling and Suggestion of Willingness in Nelson, et al.

Al-Eryani (2007) compared the Arabic refusals of Yemeni NSs, English refusals of Yemeni EFL learners, and English refusals of NSs of English. Only findings related to the refusals of the first two groups to higher status interlocutor are comparable to the findings of this study. El-Eryani found that in refusing the request of higher status interlocutors, the Yemeni NSs used the direct strategy of Negation and the indirect strategies of Excuse, positive opinion (i.e., Compliment and Wish for Self in this study), Regret, and future acceptance (not documented in

the current data). Also, his participants mainly preferred Excuse to initiate their refusals. The Omani participants, in contrast, tended to use Excuse, Negation, Regret, Solution Suggestion and Assurance to refuse requests in Omani Arabic and to prefer using Regret to initiate their Arabic refusals.

On the other hand, the Yemeni EFL learners in Al-Eryani (2007) used the direct strategy of Negation in addition to the direct strategies of Regret, Excuse, Empathy (not documented in the current study), and future acceptance. They mainly preferred the Regret strategy to start their refusals. Similarly, the participants in this study tended to use Regret as the initiation strategy of refusals. However, none of the participants in this study used the empathy strategy. Rather they used others strategies such as Solution Suggestion and Assurance. However, the Omani participants in this study tended to use these strategies in response to the nature of the situation, rather than in response to the higher status of the interlocutors, as the participants in Al-Eryani did, or in response to social distance. Finally, it is not clear if the Yemeni NSs and Yemeni EFL learners in Al-Eryani proceeded or followed their Negation with Regret as the Omani participants in the current study did.

Al-Kahtani (2005) compared the refusal patterns in English by Americans, Japanese and Arabs. Only the refusals of the Arab (Arab EFL learners) to the requests and invitations of a higher status interlocutor are considered for this comparison. Al-Kahtani found that the Arab EFL learners' most preferred pattern of refusal of requests was Regret followed by Excuse. However, in refusal of invitations, they preferred agreement (i.e., Compliment, and Wish for Self, and approval which is not documented in the current study). The participants in this study also preferred Regret as their initiation strategy; however, it was mainly followed by Negation. When refusing invitations, the Omani participants in this study had a similar preference for the

initiation strategies used by the Arab participants in Al-Kahtani's study except for the approval strategy. Furthermore, the Arab participants in Al-Khatani's study used Excuse more frequently followed by Regret and Negation. A similar tendency was observed in the Omani EFL participants' data. Finally, in refusals of invitations, Excuse, Regret and Agreement were the most frequent strategies used by the Arab participants in Al-Khatani's study. A similar tendency was observed in the refusals of invitations by the Omani participants, expect that Negation was more frequent than the agreement strategies of Wish for Self and Compliment.

The participants' perception of context in this study is different from that of Brown and Levinson (1987). In their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson devised a system to assess the face threating effect of a speech act and the various sociopragmatic variables that influence the use of politeness strategies: power, social distance, and relative imposition. These sociopragmatic variables are used to define the context of a speech act; this conceptualization of context is often applied in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatic research (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Thomas, 1995). In this study, relative imposition and social distance were used to define the context of the initiation speech acts in the Omani Arabic ODCT. In addition to these variables, cultural distance was hypothesized as an important independent variable and was added to the context of the requests and invitations in the English ODCT. However, the findings of this study suggest that these variables require further discussion and theorizing. The following discussion will focus on (a) the definition of relative imposition of speech acts in relation to the concept of negative face, (b) other contextual variables that emerged during this study and seem to have affected how the participants perceived the scenarios in this study and their pragmatic choices (i.e., the nature of the relationship between the interlocutors, gender, affective factors, the nature of the situation), and (c) the interaction of these different variables.

First, the participants in this study defined the sociopragmatic variable of relative imposition of speech acts differently from previous research. Hudson, Detmer and Brown (1996) defined relative imposition as the size of expenditure of goods and services requested of the speaker. Small expenditure is associated with less imposition and great expenditure is associated with greater imposition. Contrary to this understanding of relative imposition, the participants in this study perceived relative imposition in terms of their interlocutor's need for compliance with the request and not in terms of the size of expenditure requested of them. The only occasion in which the size of expenditure seems to have affected their evaluation of imposition was in relation to the directions situation. However, even in this case, participants thought that the limited expenditure of goods was more imposing than the greater expenditure of goods in other situations. Divergence from the definition of sociopragmatic variables provided by Hudson et al. (1996) has been observed by other researchers as well. For example, Blum-Kulka and House (1989) noted that their participants associated rights, obligations and the likelihood of compliance with difficulty to request. In addition, all the participants in this study agreed in their evaluation of relative imposition of speech acts, which suggests that the participants' definition of relative imposition could be motivated by their shared culture. This observation is consistent with previous research on the culture-dependency of the conceptualization of sociopragmatic variables (e.g., Blum-Kulka & House 1989; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

In Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, relative imposition of speech acts is associated with the concept of negative face. Specifically, they theorized that imposing speech acts would create in the speaker a desire not to be impeded on or imposed upon by his/her interlocutors. However, in this study, the participants saw neither the demand of the compliance requested of them nor the size of expenditure as an imposing or burdensome behaviour; rather,

they thought of the requests as a call or a plea to understand the interlocutor's need and to see his/her vulnerable situation if the request was not fulfilled. This could explain why the participants did not focus on the threat to their negative face, although requests are often assumed to be more imposing than invitations and to be threatening to the negative face of the hearer. Instead, the participants focused on maintaining the interlocutor's positive face as well as their own positive face: they were more concerned with cooperation and solidarity than with being imposed upon. This finding contradicts Brown and Levinson's hypothesis of a linear relationship between high imposing situations and negative face, and at the same time supports Blum-Kulka and House's (1989) observation that in some cultures "concern for solidarity overrides the concern for distancing and deference in the expression of politeness" (p. 139). Again, these observations seem to support my earlier claim that the definition of relative imposition of speech acts could be culturally motivated at least in the contexts identified in the ODCT of this study. Using Hofstede's (2011) distinction between dimensions of culture, the culture of the Omani EFL learners could be described as collective as opposed to individualistic. As Meier (2010) explained, "individualistic tendencies are characterized by a greater concern for autonomy and individual needs and rights. Collective tendencies, in contrast, are characterized by giving priority to one's identity as a member of a group; in-group concerns take priority over individual's needs" (p. 79). The participants in this study seem to have concerns for sincerity, solidarity, cooperation and reciprocity, and in-group membership.

Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that the three variables of relative imposition, power and social distance were the sole factors that speakers attend to in their assessment of what kinds of politeness strategies to use. However, they stated: "we must concede that there may be a residue of other factors which are not captured within the P, D [i.e., SD] R [i.e., RI] dimensions"

(p. 16). One of these factors could be closely linked to social power. In this study, social power is assumed to be 'in play' in all situations, and hence a stable variable, since the speech act initiators are all professors and the respondents played their natural role as students. In a few situations, even though some participants did not think of the unfamiliar interlocutors as professors, they still assumed that the interlocutor had a high social status due to age differences. Despite a similar perception of the high social status of all interlocutors, the participants provided more explanations and expressed more concerns for solidarity when refusing familiar professors. This is in part due to the influence of degree of familiarity with the interlocutor. However, it seems that in addition to the familiarity and high social status of the interlocutor, the participants took into consideration the nature of the relationship between them and the interlocutor (i.e., student-professor). This formal academic relationship was perceived to dictate an adequate level of positive politeness and formality when refusing all professors regardless of cultural and gender differences. It seems, then, that it is not only social distance and power that is relevant to pragmatic behaviour, but also the roles the interactants play in the speech event. A similar observation was made by Blum-Kulka and House (1989) who observed a shift in the perception of social power and social difference when the interactants in their study had different social roles. Blum-Kulka and House remarked: "social distance and social power are not stable attributes of individuals, but context-dependent assessments which may shift with role-relationships in specific situations" (p. 151). This observation suggests that the relationship between interactants (i.e., the roles they play) in a speech event is perhaps another important variable that affects pragmatic choices; this variable is closely linked to social distance and social power.

Gender also seems to have affected the assessment and realization of speech act production in this study. The gender of some the participants (i.e., female) influenced some of their pragmatic choices in relation to the gender and the high social status of the interlocutor, coupled with the formal nature of the academic relationship (i.e., teacher-student). This observation suggests that despite the strong influence of high social status and formal academic relationships that demanded similar treatment of male and female interlocutors, the gender of female participants affected some of their pragmatic choices. This observation suggests that considering gender differences in the study of refusal speech acts might be important in understanding differences in participants' pragmatic choices.

Another variable is affective factors or what Brown and Levinson (1987) called the "liking factor." Brown and Levinson referred to early studies that provided opposing evidence to their model of politeness assessment. For example, they referred to Holtgrave (1984) and Baxter (1984) who found that their participants expressed greater politeness when interacting with interlocutors they liked. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson referred to Slugoski's (1985) proposal for distinguishing between social distance or familiarity and affect. They conceded that "'liking' might be an independent variable affecting choice of politeness strategy" (p. 16). This study provides evidence supporting Holgrave's and Baxter's findings that affect or affective factors do influence pragmatic choices. Length of excuse, for example, was mainly associated with the participants' "liking" of the interlocutor. Therefore, the findings of this study support Slugoski's proposal for distinguishing between familiarity and affective factors as two different sociopragmatic variables influencing the choice of politeness strategies.

Yet another factor that influences pragmatic choices and was documented in the current study is that of the nature of the situation. The nature of the situation is a general term used to

capture the contextual details of a scenario and that is not captured by the three sociopragmatic factors of power, social distance and imposition. It includes the physical context or setting (e.g., time and place) and the circumstance of the speech situation including, but not limited to, the goal of the speech act (e.g., request for directions to the Language Center versus request for direction to the Dean of the College of Arts), the state of the speaker (e.g., in a hurry or having a commitment). This observation suggests that the circumstances of the speech situation could influence the speaker's perception of the relative difficulty to refuse and, accordingly, his/her pragmatic choices when realizing refusal speech acts.

An important observation concerning the sociopragmatic and contextual variables above is their complex interactions. As noted above, the participants' assessments of the influence of each of the variables was done in relation to other variables. Relative imposition of a speech act, or required compliance with the proposition of the speech act, for example, was evaluated in relation to social power, social distance, academic relationship, the particulars of the context, and, for the English scenarios, cultural distance. Similarly, social power was evaluated in relation to the familiarity of the interlocutor, the nature of the relationship with the interlocutor, and the required compliance with the proposition of the speech act. Therefore, no variable was assessed in isolation from other variables. The interconnectedness of these variable points to a complex inter-dependent relationship among them.

Additionally, the perception of the influence of these variables and its impact on the realization of a refusal speech act in a particular situation is mediated by the individual user. Differences were documented in the participants' ranking of the degree of difficulty to refuse in a particular situation relative to the various variables in the study. Some participants perceived certain variables, such as gender, not to be relevant at all to their pragmatic choices, while others

thought that gender was relevant in some situations but not in others. Some of them thought that the nature of the situation of the directions requests was the most influential variable on their refusal behaviour, while social power and social distance were less relevant to their refusal; however, others thought not only social distance and power, but also cultural distance influenced their refusal in this situation. Therefore, while the participants shared general tendencies in their refusal behaviour, they also exhibited several individual differences.

The influence of the individuality of the participants was also reflected in their perceptions and realizations of refusals despite the collective culture that united them. Differences were observed among the participants in their concerns, for example, for solidarity, respect, appreciation, reciprocity, and presentation of a positive image of self and group in reaction to the different situations. In addition, even though the definition of relative imposition of speech acts by the participants could be seen as motivated by their collective culture, sometimes this definition was individualistic. One participant, for example, thought that his right to go home was more important than complying with his interlocutor's request to help with the exhibition. Other participants did not speak of personal rights per se in reaction to this situation, but of their desire to go home, and hence, self-interest overrode the desire to help the interlocutor. Therefore, while the participants tended to adopt similar general interactional concerns, which could be seen as commonly shared cultural concerns of their collective culture, this did not mean that they would not necessarily choose to deviate from their collective culture in order to attend to one's personal needs and rights. This could be a result of what they called their "individual culture." This observation is in line with the participants' conceptualization of two types of culture (i.e., individual and group). In addition, this observation supports Meier's (2010) argument that the relationship between cultural orientations such as individualism and

collectivism and speech act performance "is not to be viewed as monolithic or deterministic. Generalizations regarding cultural orientations and their effect on speech acts performance are made with the understanding that they will not apply to all individuals or to all domains [i.e., interaction situations]" (p. 80).

5.2.3 *Learner Identity and Pragmatic Transfer*

To examine how the Omani L2 learners' construction of their social identity influence the way they used English and specifically decisions to transfer Arabic pragmatics to English use I will first examine how they define their social identity and how Omani EFL learners' understand the relationship between language, culture and identity and how it is in line with current sociocultural perspective on this relationship. Then, I will discuss how their identity has influenced their pragmatic transfer when refusing requests in English.

It seems that participants' view of the relationship between language and culture as inherently related is fitting with the sociocultural perspective on the relationship between language and culture (Hall, 2016). At first, their definition of Omani culture as a system composed of several components such as religion, habits, customs, history, etc. could be seen as fitting with the more traditional view of culture as "a system of fixed bodies of knowledge possessed equally by all members of well-defined culture groups" (Hall, 2016, p. 16). However, participants believed that a culture is not the sum of cultural components, but rather, it is the choices people make from these elements. Furthermore, in their definition of culture, they also incorporated language, social manners and behaviours, and manners of speaking. These are descriptions of social activities, which suggests that culture is not an abstract body of knowledge about religion or language, but is the lived experience of this body of knowledge: the acting of this knowledge in social interactions. Perhaps participants do see their discursive interaction as

a realization of culture. Thus, culture "does not reside in the individual mind but in the activity" and specifically in the discursive activity (Hall, 2016, p.17)

Hall's (2016, p. 17) description of culture as "embodied actions" drawing on Street's (1993) work, could explain the participants' claim that Arabic cannot be stripped from Arab culture because they are intrinsically linked. In other words, Arabic is not void of meaning, rather it is "filled with evaluations and the perceptions of others" who use their social interactions as a social action to create the embodiment of Arab culture. Hall argues that "culture is seen to reside in the meanings and shapes that our linguistic resources have accumulated from their past uses and with which we approach and work through our communicative activities" (p. 16).

Certainly participants did not think that culture is "unitary" or "equally possessed by all members of well-defined culture groups," or "fixed" or "unique" as Hall (2016, p. 16) described the traditional view of culture. The participants identified two types of culture: a culture of a group of people and the personal culture of the individuals who associate with the larger culture of a particular group. This suggests that the association with a culture of a particular group does not cancel out the individuals' ability to have his/ her own personal culture. The participants stressed the importance of making choices, which implies the role of individual agency in construing personal culture. They describe, for example, while English language and culture is not a part of their Omani culture, they see the English language and culture as important sociocultural resources for their personal cultures. This is in line with Hall's view on the role of agency in culture. Another illustration of this is that even though there are some shared tendencies in using some pragmatic strategies to refuse requests and invitations such as a preference, for example, for using the Regret strategy to refuse a request and the Compliment or

Gratitude strategy to refuse an invitation, there are differences in how each participant combined various strategies to carry each refusal. The difference in their preference of combing strategies resulted in fifteen different main patterns of refusals, some of which are followed with up to nine sub-patterns. Furthermore, their beliefs that there are shared cultural norms of what is appropriate or not appropriate when refusing did not result in unified perception or assessment of the various sociopragmatic variables in each situation. Some participants viewed affective factors, for example, as important for their pragmatic decisions, while others thought them to be irrelevant because the academic relationship between them and their professors was more influential.

Even though participants perceived the personal culture of the individual as different from the group culture, this difference did not mean that the personal culture is "unique" or totally different and isolated from the group culture(s) the individual is a member of. This is perhaps evident in their argument that their group culture as Omanis is important for the construction of their personal culture, albeit the personal culture could benefit from the cultural sources and activities of other group cultures, the individuals associate with. Also, this could explain some of their general tendencies, such as their preference for the initiation strategies as in the above examples. Their general tendices could be evidence that despite their individuality in pragmatic choices, such chocies are isolated from their shared group culture. Thus, their individual cultures are different but not necessarily unique.

Some of them, however, argued in favor of some stability in culture be it that of the group or the individual, but this view does not necessarily contradict the current understanding of culture as "dynamic" and "emergent" (Hall, 2016). The participants who spoke of stability in culture spoke of one's confidence in his/her cultural choices and by extension, cultural practices.

Also, they spoke of having "constants" such as some of the teachings of the Islamic religion, which do not change over time and place. However, I would argue that these "constants" perhaps do not change as stable facts, but their stability does not eradicate the role of human agency, since agency is involved in executing these Islamic teachings. For example, praying five times a day or fasting Ramadan are some of the stable teachings of Islam across time and place; however, praying and fasting in Islam are accounted for by the act of praying and the act of fasting and not just by believing in their sheer existence as a part of the Islamic religion. Additionally, how each group of Muslims and each individual Muslim practice these Islamic teachings differ across time and place. Hence, the participants' belief in the need for some cultural constants does not change their perception of culture as dynamic and emergent. Thus, the participants' view of culture and the relationship between language and culture seem to be in line with current understanding of culture and language, which Hall summarizes as "a dynamic, vital and emergent process located in the discursive spaces *between* individuals" and hence it is inextricably linked to language (p. 17).

The participants' definition of their identity seems at first isolated from language and culture. Their social identity seems to be a snapshot capturing who they are in a fixed "image," or "reflection." However, they confirmed this image or reflection is a "presentation" carried through social actions among which are language and pragmatic choices used to illustrate their perception of their face or their "sense of self" (Norton, 2000, 2013). Hence, their pragmatic choices could be seen as their enactment of their identity. Every time they speak, it became an activity of presenting their image or enacting their identity, which means that identity is not only discursively realized, but is occurring and reoccurring every time they speak. This is in line with Norton's understanding of the relationship between language and identity. Furthermore, they

grounded their definition of social identity in culture, be it that of a group of people or of the individual. Since I have already established how they see culture as a dynamic, vital and emergent process mediated by human agency, the same could be said about the participants' definition of social identity. In addition, it was established earlier that linguistic practices including pragmatic choices are embodiment of culture. Therefore, the participants' identity is linked to their culture and to their language use. The embodiment of culture through language use is an enactment of identity and vice versa. Identity, hence, is not only their image or their sense of self, but it is also the construction and reconstruction of their sense of self through their discursive behaviour (Norton, 2000, 2013). Put another way, "identity is always in production" (Hall, 2016, p. 34).

The relationship between the social identity of participants as individuals and their identities as members of Omani society can be understood using Weedon's (1987) perception of identity as multiple. Having a unique identity as individuals does not mean that participants's iddentity has a fixed core. Multiplicity, rather, seems to be the norm of their identity. The participants are not the sum of their individual identity, rather, their identity is every social role they play, which is an enactment of some system of identity, be it playing a role as members in the Omani society, gender identity, or their identity as students, or even more specifically, as learners of English, or as students at SQU. The data show that in interaction with the different request and invitation situations in the ODCT, the participants enacted different identities. They enacted, for example, their identity as members of SQU in refusing the directions request of an unfamiliar Omani interlocutor. They saw themselves as representative of the SQU community and they wanted to maintain their positive face as good members of SQU. However, other students enacted their identity as Omanis who associate with the Omani cultural tradition of

doing one's best to help people in need. They wanted to be perceived as Omanis who practice this culture. This suggests that the participants' identity is multilayered (Weedon, 1987; Norton, 2000, 2013).

Additionally, even though they saw their personal identities as being influenced to some extent by their national identity as Omanis, they strongly believed that each and every one of their identities remained different but not necessarily unique. They thought that some agreement or similarities between their individual identities and their Omani identity were warranted since they associated with the latter identity. Perhaps this could be explained using Hall's (2016) perception of the relationship between the various social roles or identities we claim. Hall explains that we use linguistic resources to act our different identities and these resources "embody particular histories that have been developed over time by other group members enacting similar roles. In their histores of enactments, these identities become assoiciated with particular sets of linguistic actions for realising the activities, and with attitudes and belifes about them." (p. 32). In other word, the linguistic resources we use to enact our identities are not empty vessels, rather they are value-laden and shaped by the people who used them before us to enact similar social roles or identities. This suggests that participants' identities (i.e., individual identity and group identity) are linked thought the use of the same linguistic resources (i.e., Arabic and Omani Arabic to be more specific). Omani Arabic is laden with particular histories of Omanis over time. Therefore, some similarities between their identity as Omanis and as individuals are expected.

To clarify more, Hall also refers to Bourdieu's (1977) concept of "habitus." She said that habitus constitutes "The historically grounded, socially constituted knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes compromising our various social identities—predisposing us to act, think and feel in

particular ways and to perceive the involvement of others in certain ways" (p. 32). Thus, not only the linguistic resources, but also other resources as part of our habitus predispose us to perceive and act our identities and to perceive and interact with other people in particular ways. In fact, the participants attributed the similarities between their individual identities and group identity or national identity to the shared cultural resources such as Arabic, religion, history, etc. that they used to construct both types of identities. On the other hand, they attributed the difference between these two types of identities to their personal histories or experiences. They understood that not only choosing, but acting and interacting with cultural resources, be it that of their Omani culture or other cultures and in interaction with people whether they are Omanis or not, would influence how they as individual see and enact their social identities. Consequently, this will result in the construction of a different social identity for each individual albeit not necessarily unique.

Clearly the participants' identities are interrelated. This implies that their identity as English language learners does not exist in isolation from their identity as individuals or their identity as Omanis. However, one could argue that English EFL identity would require the use of English, which is not a shared cultural resources between their Omani identity and their EFL identity. Using the idea of the habitus, it seems that the way the participants learn and use English to enact their EFL identity is influenced by the participants' habitus. Thus, the participants do not acquire English as a blank slate, but rather, they come with their histories and their particular understanding of the world and how to perceive others and interact with them. It seems that the same habitus that predisposed them to act as Omanis and as individuals also predisposes them to act as EFL learners. Hence, the multiple identities of participants are all interrelated in one way or another and accordingly, the fact that the participants transferred

practices from the pragmatics of Arabic into their English use should be expected and understandable. For instance, the participants spoke of "a personal style" in English, which they developed over the years of using Arabic and learning and using English. This style they contended combines the pragmatics of both languages. They even claimed that this personal style is acceptable in Arabic and in English. The habitus effect predisposes them to use their linguistic resources in ways that align with how they were socialized to use both languages. Claiming that a "personal style" is acceptable to both types of interlocutors (Arab and NSs of English) might seem exaggerated. However, by considering the influence of the habitus, their claims could be understood differently. The participants use the personal style in interaction with Omani and Arab professors who could be exposed or socialized into, to some extent, the same habitus of the participants as Omanis, Muslims, Arabs and even as learners of English. Hence, they were predisposed to understand and accept the participants' style of speaking in English. Perhaps, also the continuous exposure to how the participants realize different speech acts could have predisposed some of the NSs of English professors at SQU to understand and accept their the participants' style of refusing, requesting, inviting, etc.

The same argument could apply to their use of the Regret strategy when refusing in English. In Omani Arabic, there is a difference in meaning among different expressions of Regret. Some expressions convey a real regret such as "a:sef/a:sfah" (i.e., Sorry/ I am sorry), while others convey apology as a courtesy only, such as "ismahli" (i.e., Excuse me). Considering that "sorry" and "I'm sorry" are used interchangeably with "excuse me" in English, the participants thought that the pragmatic force of "sorry" and "I'm sorry" is insufficient to express a sense of guilt. Hence, when they wanted to express such meaning, they usually intensified it with "very," "so" or "really." Interestingly, none of the participants identified such pragmatic

behaviour as a transfer from Arabic. This pragmatic behaviour could be seen as an influence of their habitus and how their enactment of their EFL identity does not happen in isolation from their Omani identity. Thus, both identities are possibly interrelated.

The enactment of various identities by the participants seems to be influenced by the context of interaction, which is not limited to the physical context and the immediate context of interaction, but also by society at large. Hall (2016) commented on the context relevancy of social identity: "[e]ven though we each have multiple, intersecting social identities, it is not the case that all of our identities are always relevant. As with the meanings of our linguistic resources, their relevance is dynamic and responsive to contextual conditions" (p. 33). In the participants' ODCT responses, they stated that their pragmatic choices including decisions to transfer from Arabic were mediated by context. In their evaluation, context included the setting (e.g., the time and place), how the participants perceived their interlocutors (e.g., Omanis or A/B, males or females, professors or others, familiar or unfamiliar, etc.), the context of the moment of refusal (their reasons to refuse, the goal of the invitation or request, etc.), the participants' personal histories and the histories of their larger social context (e.g., previous interactions with the same or similar interlocutors, their linguistic and cultural resources to carry out the refusals, etc.), and perhaps many other factors. This is in addition to their perception of some or all of these variables that are in complex interaction with each other. This implies that as the pragmatic choices of the participants are mediated by context, so are their various identities. In other words, the the participants' perception of the relevance of all or some of the context-related details invoked in them a desire to play particular roles or identities, but not others. For some participants, the directions requests stimulated in them the desire to appear as good and cooperative individuals, while it stimulated in others the desire to be perceived not only as a

good cooperative individual, but also as an individual who associated either with the SQU

community or the Omani community at large. Interacting with unfamiliar interlocutors did not

motivate in the participants the desire to be perceived as good language learners. However, they

attended to such conerns about their EFL identity when they communicated with their familiar

professors.

Another example shows how the participants related their future decisions about

transferring pragmatic choices from Arabic into English to the context. The participants stated

that differences in the context of interaction (i.e., Oman versus English NS countries) would

influence their pragmatic transfer. They believed that the Omani context facilitated their transfer

of Arabic pragmatic norms when communicating in English with NSs and non-NSs of English.

They assumed that interlocutors who were NSs of English would be exposed to the Omani

culture and would attempt to understand their pragmatic transfer. The context of the NSs of

English, however, would dictate that they should attempt to understand the local cultural context

and try to conform to its pragmatic norms. Consequently, they said that they could consider

transferring less from Arabic, and hence conform more to the pragmatics norms of NSs of

English.

The agency of the individual to engage in the linguistic moves to realize a particular

speech act is also influenced by the context of interaction. This point does not cancel the role of

agency because as Hall (2016) explains it, agency is not "an inherent motivation of the

individuals," (p. 34) rather, it is a "socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn, 2001, p.

112). Agency, hence, is influencing and being influenced by the sociocultural interaction.

Previous discussion on habitus applies to agency as well. As Hall notes, "constellations of

historically laden social identities…they dispose us to participate in our activities and perceive

the involvement of others in certain ways. At any communicative moment there exists the possibility of taking up a unique stance towards our own identity and that of others, and of using language in unexpected ways towards unexpected goals" (p. 35). This points to the observation that even though agency could be influenced by the context of interaction, it could act in unexpected ways. To illustrate, generally the participants in their refusals attended to the positive face of their interlocutors, their own positive face or both. I commented earlier in the discussion that this tendency could be attributed to the collective culture of the participants. This tendency could be better understood using the early argument of the influence of the habitus on our perception and use of language. However, at the same time, as mentioned earlier in the discussion that there was a case of one who spoke of her right not to be imposed upon when her interlocutor requested his attendance at an exhibition just before the weekend. She explained that his response was due not to the request per se, but rather to the timing of the request, which made him think that her interlocutor was inconsiderate of her own need to have a break on the weekend and to spend time with her family. Accordingly, speaking of the right to go home made him attend to her negative face. This opinion, unlike those of fellow colleagues is unique, but could be in line with Hall's argument that agency is mediated by context, but the context does not necessarily dictate the actions of agency, it just predisposes a person to act in particular ways. On similar grounds we could perhaps understand the participants' future decisions about pragmatic transfer. Even though a change in the context, from their point of view, would result in changes in what they would or would not transfer from Arabic to their English use, the participants believed that complete conformity with English pragmatic norms was still not possible for them. They affirmed that they would refrain from transferring some Arabic pragmatic norms when communicating in English in the NSs' context if their pragmatic transfer

resulted in miscommunication that could not be resolved by clarification. This lends support to the idea that identity through agency is not only influenced by context but it, itself, influences context (Norton, 2000, 2013).

Judging the participants' attitude and use of English, it appears that their identity is a site of struggle (Norton Pierce, 1995). The participants are motivated to learn English. They want to use English as a tool for international communication, to further their education, and to grant them access to jobs that require English skills. They also want to acquire advanced English language skills including English pragmatics. I could say, then, that the participants are "motivated" learners of English (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). However, even though the participants have generally a positive attitude about NSs of English and their culture, they do not aspire to "be like them." In other words, they do not have "integrative motivation" (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). Additionally, the participants do not want to use English as a language of everyday communication. They limit its use to situations of necessity and sometimes they even refrain from practicing it even in their educational context in which they are encouraged to use English. The concept of motivation, hence, is insufficient to explain this conflict in t the participants' attitude and use of the English language. Using Norton's (2000, 2013) concept of "investment," the observed conflict could be seen as a conflict of the desires of different identities. The desires of their Omani identity are in conflict with the desires of their identity as EFL learners. The enactment of their identity as EFL learners requires the use of English, while the enactment of their identity as Omanis only requires the use of Arabic language since it is the language through which they were socialized to enact their identity as Omanis in the first place. Consequently, their desire to limit the use of English to situations of necessity could be seen as a way to grant them a lager social space for the enactment of their Omani identity. Perhaps they see the use of

English in everyday communication as a threat to the enactment of their Omani identity because it takes some of the time that is usually dedicated for this Omani identity. Perhaps, this explains their rejection of English as an official language in Oman despite their positive views and their belief in its importance as an interactional language of communication and their passion for acquiring it.

Perhaps their pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English be it the "personal style" or conscious attempts to transfer from Arabic (explained later) is instigated by their habitus that prioritizes their Omani identity. Thus, their pragmatic transfer is not a simple case of motivated and unmotivated learners, but rather it is a case for competing cultures and hence identities, and their pragmatic realization in everyday interaction. Their transfer is not a case of motivation and lack of it, but rather it is a case of investment. Investment, Norton (2006) contended, "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. If learners "invest" in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wide range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital" (p. 504). However, investment is not an isolated concept from identity, context, culture, or agency (Hall, 2016, Norton, 2000, 2013; Darvin & Norton, 2015). Investment seems to be influenced by all of them. Hence, previous arguments about these concepts and the pragmatic choices of the participants, including decisions to transfer from Arabic, are all relevant to understaning the role of investment in the participatns' pragmatic chocies.

The conflicted identities of the participants, also, could be understood using Darvin and Norton's (2015) expanded concept of investment that includes ideologies, capital and identity. Specifically, I will focus on ideologies. They defined ideologies as "dominant ways of thinking

that organize and stabilize societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and

exclusion, and the privileging and marginalization of ideas, people, and relations" (p. 44).

Among such ideologies are language ideologies, which they defined using Blommaert's (2006)

theorization of this concept: "the identification of specific languages, each with a system of signs

and grammatical structure, together with the assemblage of particular speech communities, is

itself a powerful language-ideological fact" (p. 43). Also, they stated that ideologies could be

"invisible." Thus, they contend that "integrating the construct of ideology in this model of

investment allows one to analyze the relations between communicative practices and systematic

patterns of control at both micro and macro levels" and to "lay bare the systemic patterns of

control that have been rendered invisible" (p. 43).

The description of the English taught at SQU could be an illustration of invisible

language ideologies that can also dictate the teaching, learning and assessment of English at

SQU, and by extension, influence the perception and use of pragmatics by teachers and students.

For example, neither the Language Center (LC) employees nor their official documents that

describe in detail the English program state in plain terms that they are teaching English as a

foreign language (EFL), yet at the same time, description of the materials is based on NSs of

English varieties such as American English and British English. This language ideology, which

identifies NSs of English and hence their pragmatic norms as the preferred model for acquiring

English at SQU, dictates how the participants are positioned (i.e., as EFL learners) and what they

should acquire (i.e., the variety of English), and how and when they should acquire it (i.e., modes

of teaching, learning, assessment). The participants' perception and use of English pragmatics

could be influenced by this ideology. Even though they wanted to learn English, they did not

wish to become like NSs of English. Rather, they wanted to be successful users of English as an

international language. Perhaps, then, the perceived conflict and resistance to "be like them" (i.e., NSs of English) is instigated by the "invisible": the teaching and learning of English as an EFL variety at SQU that pushes the participants to read, write, listen and speak like NSs of English. Similarly, the professors' perception and reactions to the Omani students' pragmatic transfer as error to be corrected could be influenced by this ideology.

Darvin and Norton (2015) contend, however, that ideology "should not be understood as static, monolithic world views, but as a complex, layered space where ideational, behavioral, and institutional aspects interact and sometime contradict one another" (p. 44). This could be used to explain the reactions of the different professors at SQU to the Omani students' pragmatic transfer. The participants said their Omani professors did not feel offended by their pragmatic transfer, yet they corrected the students' use. They gave the students feedback on suitable pragmatic choices in English. Omani and Arab professors are members of SQU and are expected to abide by its English language policy in which they are expected to adhere to native-like pragmatic norms in their teaching and interaction with their students in English-related subjects. They are expected to help their students acquire English pragmatic norms. This explains the correction of the students' pragmatic choices when they deviated from the norms of NSs of English. It could be said, then, that Arab and Omani professors reproduced the same language ideology in their everyday interactions in English with their students.

At the same time, Omani professors and Omani students associated with the Omani Arabic identity, and Islamic identity, while other Arab professors associated with the latter two identities in addition to their national identities. Thus, the Arab and Islamic identities are enacted using Arabic, albeit there are some differences between the different Arabic varieties, which could be viewed as a shared linguistic and cultural resources by Omanis and Arab professors and

Omani students. Hence, there is a high chance that they are sharing similar worldviews of what is acceptable and what is not in communication. This is perhaps why they do not view their students' pragmatic transfer as offensive behaviour, but rather, they see it as an error to be corrected. This suggest that even though Omani and Arab professors shared a habitus with their Omani students that could have predisposed them to understand and accept their students' pragmatic transfer when they communicate in English, they continued to reproduce the same language ideology that considers the NSs of English as a model for their own use of English and that of their students.

On the other hand, the NSs of English professors' are divided into two camps as perceived by the participants in this study: those who feel offended by the Omani students' pragmatic transfer and those who deal with such transfer as an error to be corrected. Perhaps those who feel offended by their Omani students' pragmatic transfer are using their worldviews, as NSs of English, of what is acceptable in English language use. Thus, their habitus as NSs of English predisposes them to perceive their Omanis students' pragmatic choices as offensive behaviour, and hence they react in disapproval. On the other hand, I could attribute the different reaction of the other camp of NSs of English professors to their tapping into different linguistic and cultural resources that predispose them to perceive and react to their students' pragmatic transfer as a normal behaviour of language learners. In other words, perhaps they enact their identity as language teachers when they interact with their Omani students, and hence they do not see their students' pragmatic transfer as offensive, but rather simply an error to be corrected. However, this camp of NSs of English professors like Arab and Omani professors reproduce the same language ideology by helping Omani students to acquire the English varieties of NSs of English (i.e., American and British).

The Omani students' behaviour could also be triggered by the same language ideology. Perhaps because they were positioned as EFL learners by this language ideology, they aspire to improve their English and acquire more fluency and accuracy like that of NSs of English. Their socialization as English language learners could have encouraged them to want to acquire native-like abilities including English pragmatics. In a way, the Omani students who are majoring in English-related subjects could be themselves reproducing the same language ideology. This does not contradict the earlier argument that the participants do not wish to become NSs of English. By applying the expanded notion of investment, we could see that the desire to distinguish themselves from NSs of English or the conflict of multiple identities of the participants and their desire to acquire a native-like English skills do not necessarily contradict each other. Rather they could exist and interact with each other in a more complex way. Thus, while the participants' multiple identities continue to conflict, it does not mean that the participants will not reproduce the same language ideology that could have instigated the very same struggle between these multiple identities. Perhaps this is in part due to the invisible state of the EFL language ideology operating for years at SQU that has dictated the teaching, learning and assessment of English and has predisposed professors and students to perceive and use English in particular ways.

5.3 Implications

This section is divided into two sub-sections: implications for L2 pragmatics research and methodology and implications for L2 pragmatics pedagogy. The section addressing implications for L2 pragmatics research and methodology discusses (1) enhancements for L2 pragmatics data collections tools, (2) classification of refusal speech acts, (3) the notion of context in L2 pragmatics research and compatibility of L2 pragmatics research methodologies, and (3) a call for re-conceptualizing pragmatic transfer. Based on this latter implication, the next section calls

for drawing L2 teachers' attention to some general considerations for the teaching of L2 pragmatics and handling L2 learner's pragmatic transfer.

5.3.1 *Implications for L2 Pragmatics Research and Methodology*

Certainly naturally occurring data would be very useful to our understanding of refusal behaviour. I agree with Nelson, et al. (2002) that what "people believe they would say in a given situation may be different from what they would say if the situation arose in daily interaction" (p. 182). However, DCT provided a practical tool for collecting the required data for the study of pragmatics. This study illustrates one possible way to enhance DCT by making the content of the DCT scenarios and the roles played by the participants during the data collection reflect situations and roles in their everyday lives. For the purposes of improving this data collection tool, asking participants to assume their natural roles rather than, for example, imagining themselves as employees or top executives in a large accounting firm, would help them to produce refusals responses more reflective of the ones they would produce in a natural interaction. Assuming roles in the DCT scenarios that do not relate to the participants' reality could result in contrived responses. This proposal for enhancing DCT could be applied to role-play as well. Another enhancement to DCT illustrated by this study involves asking the participants to give oral instead of written responses in refusing in the DCT scenarios. If the goal of the study of pragmatics is to understand oral communication, then it would be better to allow the participants to produce oral responses to the DCT rather than written ones. If the goal is to understand the pragmatics of the written communication, it would make sense to collect written responses. However, this by no means implies that inferences regarding the pragmatics of oral use cannot be made based on written responses to DCT.

The findings of this study also agree with Nelson, et al. (2002) that "because DCT forces a refusal, there is no way to find out that these refusals would not occur" (p. 183). Nelson, et al. recommended investigating refusal behaviour by considering what would be culturally more appropriate for people to use in some refusal situations. A possible way to adjust for this issue is by instructing the participants to refuse when they perceive a refusal appropriate to the context of the interaction in the different scenarios in the DCT or role-plays. In addition, it would be intriguing to see the results of instructing the participants to refuse when they encounter refusals appropriate for them, in order to allow the participants to express their individuality. Such instruction might encourage responses that are not only culturally more appropriate for the participants as members of the same culture, but also more reflective of the individual's perception of the interaction.

However, even if such enhancement were possible, it might not be sufficient to fully understand the underlying logic for the participants' pragmatic choices. Consequently, this study supports Nelson's et al. (2002) call for combining DCT questionnaires with interviews in the collection of pragmatics data. Nelson et al. also remarked that the "disparity between the DCT and interview data suggests that the DCT may not capture the sociopragmatic complexity of refusing" (p. 183). This study illustrates how combining production or realization of refusal speech acts (using oral DCT) and perception data or explanations of refusal responses (using semi-structured interviews) allow for a deeper understanding about the refusal behaviour of the participants. Specifically, semi-structured interviews in this study allowed for the uncovering of the participants' reasoning for choosing various pragmatic strategies, refusal patterns and frequent use of particular strategies in relation to the sociopragmatic variables targeted in the study. Most importantly, semi-structured interviews offered flexibility by allowing the

participants to explain their refusals in relation to other variables that they thought were relevant to their refusals but were not necessarily targeted in the original design of the study. For example, semi-structured interviews in this study uncovered the influence of affective factors, the nature of the situation, gender, and the nature of the relationship between the interactants on the participants' refusal behaviour. In addition, it uncovered some complex interactions among the various sociopragmatic and contextual variables in the study and highlighted the role of participants' perception of their culture and identity in relation to their perception and use of English as an L2. In line with the main objective of this study, which is to examine the role of learner identity in pragmatic transfer, following the DCT questionnaire with semi-structured interviews provided significant insights. With a focus on the participants' emic perspective on pragmatic transfer, the semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to identify and explain their own pragmatic transfer in relation to their realization and perceptions of refusals in English and in relation to their own perceptions of identities.

As for the classification of refusal speech acts, the findings of this study support having general classification schemes for refusal speech acts, but these schemes have to be flexible enough to accommodate the cultural differences in the use of different and emergent pragmatic strategies. For example, whether to treat the so-called Adjunct strategies or supportive moves as essential or non-essential direct strategies of refusal speech acts would very much depend on the cultural background of the participants. In this study, the participants perceived the Gratitude strategy as an acceptable refusal response in their culture, and hence Gratitude was classified as an essential indirect strategy of refusal and not as a supportive move. In addition, the level of detail of the classification scheme of refusal speech acts in any study would very much depend on the purpose and method of the study. In this study, for example, distinguishing between the

Compliment and Wish for Self was possible because the semi-structured interviews uncovered how the participants understood and used these two strategies and how the difference between the two was important for them to express different interactional goals, albeit related ones. Thus, without examining the perception of the participants themselves regarding different semantic units in their refusals, the difference might be unclear. Furthermore, the findings of this study support the inclusion of pragmatic markers in the classification of refusal speech acts. From the evidence collected on pragmatic markers, this study shed some light on their role in adding, enhancing and mitigating the pragmatic force of a refusal speech act and its various semantic units.

The findings of this study suggest that relative imposition, social power and social distance (Brown & Levinson, 1987) are important variables for understanding the individual's pragmatic choices in realizing a particular speech act. However, they are insufficient to understand the full impact of the context on the realization of speech acts. The findings of this study suggest, like other studies (e.g., Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, Blum-Kulka & House, 1989), that other variables need to be considered: gender, the relationship between interactants (i.e., the roles they play) in a speech event, affective factors, and the nature of the situation. For the study of L2 pragmatics or interlanguage pragmatics, this study suggests considering cultural distance between the EFL learners and their interlocutors as well. Therefore, there is a need to expand the definition of context to include additional relevant variables.

The findings of this study revealed that the interaction between the sociopragmatic and contextual variables is a complex one (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). Thus, pragmatic refusal behaviour cannot be fully understood outside the context of interaction. Therefore, the meaning

of a speech act could be seen as situated in and, hence, shaped by, the context of interaction

(Austin, 1955).

In addition, the realization of refusal speech acts is influenced not only by the pre-

conceived or the given context (sociopragmatic and contextual variables) of interaction, but also

by the individual's perception of this context. This study demonstrated that not all

sociopragmatic variables are equally important to all participants in their realization of refusals

in the different situations. Therefore, what is relevant to the context of interaction could be

constructed and limited by the participants (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992; Thomas, 1995).

When the analysis of the data using the cross-cultural framework is juxtaposed to those of

the sociocultural perspective (Hall, 2016) on language, culture and identity, they provide a

deeper understanding about the influence of the context, the agency of the participants, and the

complex interaction between them. This latter perspective explains how the context (be it the

immediate one or the larger context) influences the L2 learners' perception and use of L2

pragmatics. At the same time, L2 learners could elect to behave differently and uniquely by

deviating from the expected L2 pragmatics norms and as a result, reshaping the context through

their language use. For instance, the cross-cultural framework is able to highlight that the

agency of L2 learners plays a role in their pragmatic choices. It was able to reveal that the

context was more complex than initially assumed in the DCT. The sociocultural perspective, on

the other hand, was able to elaborate on the interaction between context and agency and their

influence on the pragmatic choices of L2 learners.

The sociocultural perspective also suggests that language, culture and identity are

inextricably linked (Norton Pierce, 1995, Norton, 2000, 2013; Hall, 2016). Linguistics resources

embody the culture and culture is continuously constructed and reconstructed through language

use. Hence, linguistics resources are shaped by the histories of its users and reshaped by them to meet their communicative goals. Among these goals is the use of discursive activities to express one's sense of self or identity. Thus, identity also is enacted using cultural discursive practice. This suggests that studying L2 language use or L2 pragmatics requires the examination of the identity of the L2 learner as well. On the other hand, the cross-cultural framework to L2 pragmatics does not establish such a complex and interrelated relationship between language, culture and identity. Rather it accepts, for example, the use of binary terms to describe culture and social context such as familiar versus unfamiliar to define social distance and Omani versus American/British to define cultural distance and hence it is unable to explain their complex interaction. In addition, the cross-cultural perspective to L2 pragmatics could point to a contradiction in the L2 learners' perception and use of L2 pragmatics, but unable to explain such a contradiction. The sociocultural perspective, on the other hand, is conceptually equipped using its grounded understanding of identity in human discursive activities and a concept like "investment" to point out such contradictions and explain them (Norton Pierce, 1995, Norton, 2000, 2013).

The findings of the study also suggest that there is a need to reconsider the way pragmatic transfer is conceptualized in SLA. In interlanguage research, pragmatic transfer is described in negative terms, such as "error," and "failure," and could be perceived as impolite behaviour (e.g., Thomas, 1983; Kasper, 1992). However, the identity approach toward L2 pragmatic transfer suggests that L2 learners' pragmatic transfer is an enactment of their identity and not just a simple "error" or "failure."

Regarding the debate on the conceptualization of a context in L2 pragmatic research (Sbisà, 2000), the findings of the cross-cultural approach and identity approach suggest that the

context of a speech act could be pre-conceived or given, situated, constructed, limited and unlimited at the same time. This is, however, problematic from the point view of Sbisà (2002). Sbisà notes that there is an inherent contradiction between the given context and the constructed one, the limited and the situated, on one hand, and the unlimited one on the other hand. She remarked, "either we give up assigning to context any evaluated role, or context must be limited" (p. 426). Sbisà has called for a "delimitation of context, if we want to make a serious attempt at putting situatedness into our picture of the speech act" (p. 427). Perhaps rather than thinking of these constructs as contradictory, we could think of them as complementing each other to produce a deeper understanding of pragmatic behaviour.

A possible way to consider how the different constructs of context could complement each other could be by considering the contributions of the different approaches to the study of L2 pragmatics and specifically, the study of speech acts and pragmatic transfer. The DCT, for example, in the cross-cultural approach, could allow initial consideration of the commonly examined sociopragmatic and contextual variables (i.e., the pre-conceived context) if seen to be relevant to the purpose of the study. Using a pre-conceived context could allow the researchers to target particular pragmatic features and sociopragmatic variables. Interviews, on the other hand, could allow the researcher to consider the influence of other variables, whether they are related to the immediate context of interaction or to that of the larger context if believed relevant by the individual user. At the same time, examining the participants' perceptions could highlight how the speech act is situated in the context and how the context is simultaneously constructed by users. As explained above, by enhancing the cross-cultural pragmatic research methods using semi-structured interviews, findings suggested a wider range of variables and pointed to a complex interaction among them. Also, it identified pragmatic transfer and pointed to a

contradiction in the L2 learners' perception and use of L2 pragmatics. The identity theory approach complemented the cross-cultural approach by expanding the notion of context, for example, and explaining how the L2 learners' enactment of their identities resulted in contradicted perception and use of L2 pragmatics. While using the identity approach alone to study L2 pragmatics is more intriguing, it is not the most practical approach. Norton (2000, 2013), for example, spoke of such challenges in her research. Also, she only had five participants in her study whome she collected data from for two years. Certainly, Norton's data and analysis are rich and very informative about L2 acquisition and the identity of the L2 learner. However, it is impractical for a researcher who wishes to study a particular speech act and pragmatic transfer using a larger sample of participants. Combining both approaches has its limitations as well. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that the cross-cultural approach and identity theory approach to L2 pragmatics, even though they are different in their conceptualization, bring unique contributions to the field of L2 pragmatic research, and hence can complement each other at least methodologically.

5.3.2 *Implications for L2 Pragmatics Pedagogy*

It is beyond the scope of this study to offer definite approaches for L2 pragmatics pedagogy; however, some general implications arise from the findings of this study for L2 teachers. First, the conceptualization of pragmatic transfer as an "error" or "failure" to be corrected or viewed as impolite behavior is problematic because pragmatic transfer could be an enactment of identity. Accordingly, L2 teachers of English should be made aware that EFL learners' pragmatic choices and hence pragmatic transfer could be a result of the conflict between the different desires of their multiple identities. Hence, L2 teachers should learn to

understand, accept, and respect differences in the ways their L2 learners use the English language and express politeness.

Second, L2 teachers should be made aware that feedback on pragmatics is a "delicate matter" (Thomas, 1983). Correcting and criticizing the pragmatic transfer of L2 learners and demanding that they adopt the pragmatic norms of NSs of English could be seen by L2 learners as a criticism or a challenge to their cultural beliefs and values. Thomas (1983) remarks that "while foreign learners are fairly amenable to correction which they regard as linguistic, they are justifiably sensitive about having their social (or even political, religious, or moral) judgement called into question" (p. 104).

Accordingly, third, L2 teachers should be aware that their feedback and negative attitudes towards their L2 students' pragmatic transfer could result in resistance to English pragmatics (and language). Language learners are "active and selective agents" (Watson-Gegeo & Nelson 2003) and they might conform, resist, or negotiate the language socialization practices to mark their identity (Duff & Talmy, 2011; Talmy, 2008). For instance, L2 learners might think of their teachers' feedback and negative attitude towards their pragmatic transfer as an attempt to force them to adopt the identity of NSs of English, which could result in their resistance to the pragmatic norms of English (and the language).

Fourth, L2 teachers should be aware that what they might view as a pragmatic transfer and hence an error or impolite behavior could, in fact, be an excellent utilization and display of pragmatics knowledge or "symbolic capital" (Darvin & Norton, 1995) by L2 learners interacting in their local context. Also, L2 teachers should be aware of the "invisible" ideologies that could predispose them to react in particular ways towards their L2 learners' pragmatic choices. On these two points, I would like to reiterate Darvin and Norton's (2015) recommendation for

teachers "to reflect on the importance of treating the linguistic and cultural capital of learners as affordances rather than constraints and to question and reevaluate the taken for granted value system, they use to assess this capital" (p. 45).

Fifth, differences from the NSs' pragmatic norms could be harnessed to empower the identity of the L2 learner. It is not the job of L2 teachers to produce prototypes of NSs of English, but rather, to help L2 learners utilize English in ways the learners themselves believe to be relevant to their lives, needs and goals. Decisions of conformity and non-conformity to English pragmatics norms would essentially depend on the L2 learners' investment in English. Perhaps by utilizing the concept of investment (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000, 2013), rather than forcing L2 learners to adopt the pragmatic norms of English, L2 teachers could empower the L2 learners by helping them discover and expand their investment(s) in learning English.

To conclude, raising L2 teachers' awareness about how pragmatic choices and hence pragmatic transfer are perceived and utilized by L2 learners to express their identity is important to help them make informed decisions about ways of teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics.

5.4 *Limitations and Future Research*

There are some limitations in the design of this study that need to be addressed in order to understand directions for future research. This study examined the realization of refusals in Omani Arabic and English by a group of Omani EFL learners, as well as the relationship between learner identity and pragmatic transfer from the point of view of the user. However, in real interactions we must consider the influence of a range of variables relevant to the context of interaction including the perceptions of the interlocutors (i.e., the speaker and the hearer). As a result, it would be interesting to examine how the different participants in a speech event

perceive, construct, realize and negotiate refusal speech acts and pragmatic transfer in relation to their identities and the context of interaction.

Another limitation in the design of this study is the small number of participants and limited range of sociopragmatic variables examined. While a small number of participants was suitable for the purposes of the study (i.e., to gain an in-depth understating of the role of learner identity in pragmatic transfer) and to accomplish this research in a timely manner, the findings of this study should be taken as providing insights about the role of EFL learner identity in pragmatic choices and not as conclusive or generalizable to all Omani EFL learners. In addition, this study examined the influence of a limited number of sociopragmatic variables such as relative imposition, social distance and culture distance. However, the findings of the study highlight the effect of other sociopragmatic variables such as affective factors, the relationship between the interlocutors (the role they play during the interaction), and contextual factors on learners' pragmatic choices. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine the pragmatic refusal behavior of L2 learners using a larger sample of participants and in interaction with other relevant sociopragmatic and contextual factors. The examination of cultural distance or how L2 learners use English with NSs and NNSs of English would be particularly interesting because it questions the tacit assumption in L2 pragmatic research that L2 learners, specifically EFL, would only use English as an L2 to communicate with English NSs (Jenkins,2006; MacKay, 2002) and that they would feel required to adhere to the pragmatic norms of NSs of English. This assumption omits the possibility that L2 learners do, in fact, use English to communicate with other NNSs of English interlocutors. Therefore, using an English as a lingua franca perspective, it would be intriguing to find out how Omani EFL learners use English pragmatics in interaction with NS and NNS (Arab or otherwise) of English in their local context

This study was not designed to examine pragmatic markers; however, the few explanations provided by the participants on their use of these markers shed some light on the impact of pragmatic markers on the realization of refusal speech acts. The classification scheme of the pragmatic markers developed in this study is preliminary and limited. It is preliminary because I cannot claim that I fully understand how to identify and distinguish between pragmatic markers because they often tend to overlap in terms of function and form. Emphasis markers and intensifiers, for example, were both used to achieve similar purposes. Discrepancies in the classification of pragmatic markers have also been documented in previous studies. The proposed classification in the current study is limited in that it is only based on the data set of the current study. Therefore, the impact of pragmatic markers on refusal speech acts and their classification is in need of thorough investigation with other samples and in other contexts.

Due to the purpose of this study, I did not adopt the approach commonly used in interlanguage pragmatic research (Thomas, 1983) to identify pragmatic transfer; rather I used an emic perspective where the participants themselves identified instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusal repsonses. In order to examine the participants' perceptions of their refusal responses, pragmatic transfer and their perceptions of the role of their identities in pragmatic transfer, it was important to allow the participants to identify and explain instances of pragmatic transfer in their responses to the ODCT scenarios without outside influence. Therefore, it would be informative to compare the findings and the utility of both approaches of identifying and explaining pragmatic transfer (i.e., identified and explained by participants vs. identified and explained by the researcher based on comparing samples of pragmatic use of English by L2 learners and NSs). Furthermore, the participants in this study claimed that their personal style as a type of pragmtic transfer might be acceptable pragmatic behaviour in Arabic and English. This

claim can be examined by identifying instances of pragmatic transfer in their refusals and having

them evaluated in terms of their appropriateness or acceptability. Additionally, in this study,

pragmatic transfer was not examined and explained from an acquisition point of view. Therefore,

it would be interesting to find out if the pragmatic transfer of the participants could be due in part

to their developing proficiency and acquisition processes such as noticing.

Finally, some of the findings of this study point to the sensitive role of teachers when

they give pragmatics-related feedback to their L2 students. These findings suggest that research

examining the use of L2 pragmatics by teachers and students and how it is constructed and

negotiated in the context of interaction inside and outside the classroom is needed to hopefully

develop ways of teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics.

5.6 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the influence of Omani EFL learners' identities on their

pragmatic transfer when refusing in English. The participants' realization and perceptions of

their refusal in Omani Arabic and English was examined using oral DCT and semi-structured

interviews. The findings revealed noticeable similarities in the participants' realization and

perceptions of refusals in both languages. An important difference in the realization and

perception of refusals in English is attributed to the sociopragmatic variable of cultural distance.

While this variable was greatly influenced by social power, social distance, and the academic

relationship between the interlocutors, in the absence of these variables, the effect of cultural

distance variable is more visible. During the examination of the students' perceptions of their

refusals, other factors emerged as being quite important for their pragmatic decisions such as

affective factors (i.e., their liking and disliking of the interlocutor), the nature of the situation

(setting, goal of the interaction, and general circumstances during the interaction), the nature of

the relationship between interlocutors (i.e., the academic formal relationship between teachers and students), and gender. The participants defined relative imposition differently from definitions that emphasize the size of expenditure required (Hudson, Detmer & Brown, 1995). They also, unlike Brown and Levinson's (1987) conceptualization of politeness and face, attended mainly to positive face and were concerned about solidarity, cooperation, appreciation, respect, positive image of self and others, and appropriate use of pragmatic strategies.

The identity of the Omani EFL learners is found to be inextricably linked to their language use. Their identity has influenced their perceptions and pragmatic choices when refusing in English. However, their identity is found to be multiple and in conflict with itself (Norton Peirce, 1995). These characteristics of their identity are used to explain the contradiction in their perception and use of pragmatics when refusing in English and specifically on pragmatic transfer. It is found that this contradiction or conflict could be instigated by the different desires of their multiple identities. The concept of investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015) also explains the possible influence of language ideologies, specifically EFL language ideology, in the context of the participants. The findings suggest that the EFL ideology could have influenced the participants' contradictory perceptions and use of L2 pragmatics. Furthermore, by brining to surface this "invisible" language ideology, the Omani EFL learners' use of English could be seen as a reproduction of this ideology. Similarly, the professors could be, also, reproducing the same language ideology, which could explain their different reactions to the Omani EFL learners' pragmatic transfer.

This study concludes that L2 learners are active agents whose identities, cultures, and contexts of interaction are indispensable to their pragmatic decisions and pragmatic transfer. Therefore, reiterating McKay and Wong's (1996) cautionary note, "learners' historically specific

needs, desires, and negotiations are not simply distractions from the proper task of language learning or accidental deviations from a 'pure' or 'ideal' language learning situation. Rather, they must be regarded as constituting the very fabric of students' lives and as determining their investment in learning the target language" (p.603). In light of these observations, L2 learners' pragmatic transfer when refusing in English can be understood as an enactment of their identity, which is multiple and a site of struggle. Their pragmatic transfer, accordingly, cannot be simply reduced to "error" or "failure" to be corrected or criticized.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Letters

English version

Dear Students,

You are invited to participate in a research study about the use of English in everyday communication at Sultan Qaboos University. This study is being conducted as part of PhD dissertation at York University, Canada.

This study has three phases. In the first session, you will be asked to respond orally to one questionnaire and one interview, both of which will be in Omani Arabic. In the second phase, you will be asked to respond orally to one questionnaire in English and one interview. The interview will be conducted in the language of your choice (English or Omani Arabic). The third phase has one interview. It will take place a few days after the second phase is completed, and it will be conducted in the language of your choice (English or Omani Arabic). In total, you will be expected to attend three data collection sessions at three different times. Each questionnaire will take a maximum of 30 minutes and each interview will take 60 minutes. This will be done at a time convenient for you.
You will be compensated 10 OMR for each data collection session. A total of 30 OMR will be given to each student who completes all three phases. Your participation is important because this study will give you an excellent opportunity to reflect on your use of English and to freely express your views about the use of English at SQU. Your participation will help improve the teaching and learning experiences at the English Department.

All the information you supply will be kept confidential. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw from the study or any data collection session at anytime.

If you wish to participate in this study or you have any questions about the study, please contact me at rubaiey@squ.edu.om. Feel free to write to me in either Arabic or English.
If you are willing to participate in this study, you should be currently taking sixth, seventh or eighth semester courses

Yours sincerely,
Fatema Al- Rubai'ey, PhD Candidate
Department of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
York Univeristy

Arabic version

رسالة دعوة للمشاركة في بحث

أعزائي طلاب وطالبات قسم اللغة الانجليزية،

يسرني دعوتكم للمشاركة في دراسة تبحث استخدام طلاب وطالبات اللغة لهذه اللغة في محادثاتهم اليومية في جامعة السلطان قابوس. وهذه الدراسة جزء من رسالة الدكتوراه التي احضرها في جامعة يورك بكندا. وتركز على الإستخدام الفعلي للغة بغض النظر عن مستوى الدقة اللغوية للطالب/ الطالبة. لذلك لن يتم تقييم مستوى اللغة الإنجليزية للطلبة المشاركين في هذه الدراسة.

هناك ثلاث مراحل في هذه الدراسة. تركز المرحلة الأولى على استخدام الطلبة للغة العربية العمانية في المحادثات اليومية في جامعة السلطان قابوس بغض النظر عن لهجة الطالب/الطالبة. على الطالب/الطالبة الإجابة شفهيا باللغة العربية العمانية على إستبيان مكون من أربعة أسئلة ومن ثم ستتم مناقشة الطالب/الطالبة حول هذه الاجابات في مقابلة باللغة العربية. أما المرحلة الثانية فتركز على استخدام الطلبة للغة الانجليزية في المحادثات اليومية في جامعة السلطان قابوس. على الطالب /الطالبة الإجابة شفهيا باللغة الانجليزية على إستبيان مكون من ثمانية أسئلة ومن ثم ستتم مناقشة الطالب/الطالبة حول هذه الاجابات في مقابلة باللغة الانجليزية أو العربية حسب اختيار الطالب /الطالبة للغة المقابلة. والمرحلة الثالثة هي عبارة عن مقابلة تناقش إجابات الطالب/الطالبة في المرحلتين السابقتين وستكون المقابلة باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية حسب إختيار الطالب/ الطالبة. وستستغرق الإجابة على الإستبيان حوالي 30 دقيقة ومدة كل مقابلة حوالي ساعة واحدة.كما سيتم التنسيق معكم لإختيار أنسب الأوقات لمشاركتكم.

سيكافأ الطلبة المشاركون في كل مرحلة بمبلغ عشرة ريالات عمانية لكل مرحلة، أي ما مجموعه ثلاثون ريالا عمانيا لجميع المراحل. وسيستلم الطالب مبلغ المشاركة مباشرة فور انتهائه من كل مرحلة.

وتعد مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة ذات أهمية كبيرة، إذ تتيح الدراسة فرصة لإستطلاع أراء طلاب اللغة الانجليزية حول واقع استخدامهم لهذه اللغة داخل الحرم الجامعي للخروج بتوصيات تهدف إلى تطوير منهج وطرق تدريس وتقييم اللغة الانجليزية في القسم والذي من شأنه أن يثري التجربة الدراسية لطلاب القسم في المستقبل.

وأود إفادتكم بأني وبموجب قانون البحث العلمي في جامعة يورك وجامعة السلطان قابوس أضمن لكم سرية بياناتكم الشخصية التي ستقدمونها في هذه الدراسة، حيث ستستخدم بياناتكم الشخصية لمطابقة مشاركتكم في مراحل الدراسة، ومن ثم ستتلف هذه البيانات بعد استبدالها بأرقام تسلسلية. كما لن يكشف عن أسماء المشاركين لأي جهة كانت بما في ذلك جامعة السلطان قابوس وقسم اللغة الانجليزية.

كما أود أن أؤكد لكم أن مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة هي مشاركة طوعية ويمكنكم الانسحاب في أي وقت شئتم.
على الراغبين في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة والراغبين في الاستفسار أكثر عن هذه الدراسة التواصل على بريدي الإلكتروني rubaiey@squ.edu.om . يمكنكم الكتابة بكلتا اللغتين العربية والانجليزية.
كما يجب على الطلبة الراغبون في المشاركة أن يكونوا حاليا يدرسون مقررات أو مواد الفصل السادس أو السابع أو الثامن من الخطة الدراسية لتخصصهم.

هذا وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الشكر والتقدير.

فاطمة الربيعي
طالبة دكتوراه – اللغويات التطبيقية
جامعة يورك- كندا

Appendix B: Informed consent form.

English version

Study Name:
Identity and pragmatic transfer: The role of Omani EFL learners' identities in their pragmatics choices in English

Researcher:
Fatema Al-Rubai'ey (PhD candidate in Applied linguistics, *York University, Canada)*
       Email: rubaiey@squ.edu.om

Purpose of the Research:
This study aims to examine how Omani EFL learners communicate in English at Sultan Qaboos University. Specifically, the study will examine the participants' realization patterns of refusals in Arabic and English. The data will be collected from Omani students at the English Department at Sultan Qaboos University. The findings of this study will be reported in my PhD dissertation.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:
This study has three phases. In the first session, you will be asked to respond orally to one questionnaire and one interview, which both will be in Omani Arabic. In the second phase, you will be asked to respond orally to one questionnaire in English and one interview. The interview will be conducted in the language of your choice (English or Omani Arabic). The third phase has one interview. It will take place a few days after the second phase is completed and it will be conducted in the language of your choice (English or Omani Arabic). In total, you will be expected to attend three data collection sessions at three different times. Each questionnaire will take a maximum of 30 minutes and each interview will take 60 minutes. This will be done at a time convenient for you.

Risks and Discomforts:
I do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in this study.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:
You will be compensated 10 OMR for each data collection session. A total of 20 OMR will be given to each student who completes both phases of the study. Also, your participation is important because this study will give you an excellent opportunity to reflect on your use of English and to freely express your views about the use of English at SQU. Also, your participation will help improve the teaching and the learning experiences at the English Department because this study is expected to contribute to the development of future teaching and assessment methods in the English Department.

Voluntary Participation:
Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating in this study will not influence the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

Withdrawal from the Study:
You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide.
Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, SQU, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Also, if you decide to stop participating, you will still be eligible to receive the promised pay for the completed session(s) of data collection.

Confidentiality:
All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name won't be disclosed and will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The data will be collected using audiotaped responses to a questionnaire in addition to audiotaped interviews. Your data will be safely stored on a DVD, which only will be accessed by the researcher of this study. Upon the completion of this

study, which will complete in three years, the data DVD will be destroyed by deleting all of the data from the DVD. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research?
If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me by e-mail (rubaiey@squ.edu.om). Also, you may also contact the **Graduate Program in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics office,** South 567 Ross Building, York University, telephone 416-650-8046 or gradling@yorku.ca.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I *(   )*, consent to participate in *(The role of Omani EFL learners' identities in their pragmatic choices in English*) conducted by *(Fatema Al-Rubai'ey)*. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature   **Date**
Participant:

Signature   **Date**
Principal Investigator:

Arabic version

<div dir="rtl">

موافقة المشاركة في بحث

عنوان الدراسة:
إستخدام طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في محادثاتهم اليومية في جامعة السلطان قابوس

بيانات عن الباحثة:
فاطمة الربيعي، طالبة في الدكتوراه في اللسانيات التطبيقية بجامعة يورك، كندا (البريد الإلكتروني: rubaiey@squ.edu.om)

هدف الدراسة:
تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل كيفية تواصل الطلاب العمانيين الدارسين للإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة السلطان قابوس. وستجمع البيانات من الطلاب العمانيين في قسم اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة السلطان قابوس، وستوثق نتائج هذه الدراسة في رسالة الدكتوراه التي أقوم بإنجازها.

ما سيطلب منكم في هذا البحث:
تتكون هذه الدراسة من ثلاثة مراحل. في المرحلة الأولى، ستطلب منكم الإجابة شفهيا من خلال استبيان واحدة ومقابلة واحدة باللهجة العمانية. وفي المرحلة الثانية، سيطلب منكم الإجابة شفهيا باللغة الإنجليزية على استبيان واحد ومقابلة واحدة باللغة الانجليزية أو العربية حسب اختيار الطالب للغة المقابلة. أما المرحلة الثالثة فهي عبارة عن مقابلة تناقش إجابات الطالب في المرحلتين السابقتين وستكون المقابلة باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية حسب إختيار الطالب. وستستغرق الإجابة على الإستبيان حوالي 30 دقيقة ومدة كل مقابلة حوالي ساعة واحدة.

مزايا وفائدة البحث بالنسبة لكم:
سيكافأ الطلبة المشاركون في كل مرحلة بمبلغ عشرة ريالات عمانية لكل مرحلة، أي ما مجموعه ثلاثون ريالا عمانيا لجميع المراحل. وسيستلم الطالب مبلغ المشاركة مباشرة فور انتهائه من كل مرحلة. كما تعد مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة ذات أهمية كبيرة، إذ تتيح الدراسة فرصة لإستطلاع أراء طلاب اللغة الانجليزية حول واقع استخدامهم لهذه اللغة داخل الحرم الجامعي للخروج بتوصيات تهدف إلى تطوير منهج وطرق تدريس وتقييم اللغة الانجليزية في قسم اللغة الانجليزية والذي من شأنه أن يثري التجربة الدراسية لطلاب القسم في المستقبل.

المشاركة طوعية:
تعد مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة طوعية تماما، ويمكنكم التوقف عن المشاركة في أية لحظة شئتم. وإذا قررتم التوقف عن المشاركة في أية لحظة، فإن هذا لن يأثر على علاقتكم بجامعة يورك الآن أو في المستقبل.

سرية المشاركة:
تحظى كل المعلومات التي تدلون بها من خلال هذه الدراسة بالسرية التامة، وحتى اسمكم فإنه لن تتم الاشارة إليه ولن يظهر في أي تقرير أو بحث منشور إذا لم توافقون بصراحة على ذلك. وستتم عملية تجميع البيانات وتسجيل الإجابات عن الاستبيان والمقابلات بواسطة آلة التسجيل الصوتي. وستخزن البيانات في قرص مدمج(DVD)، والذي لن يسمح باستخدامه سوى من قبل الباحثة. وفور الانتهاء من هذا البحث الذي سيستغرق ثلاثة سنوات سيتم إتلاف القرص المدمج الذي يحتوي على البيانات. وستحظى بياناتكم بالسرية المطلقة وفقا للقانون.

هل لديكم أسئلة عن الدراسة؟
إذا كانت لديكم أسئلة عامة عن هذا البحث أو عن دوركم في الدراسة، لا تترددوا في الاتصال بي عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني:
(rubaiey@squ.edu.om). ويمكنكم أيضا الاتصال بمكتب الدراسات العليا في اللسانيات واللسانيات التطبيقية على العنوان التالي:

The Graduate Program in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics office, South 567 Ross Building, York University, telephone 416-650-8046 or gradling@yorku.ca

لقد تمت مراجعة هذه الدراسة والموافقة عليها من قبل اللجنة الفرعية للبث في مشاركة الأشخاص برعاية مجلس الأخلاقيات بجامعة يورك والتي خلصت إلى أن هذه الدراسة تتوافق مع معايير المجلس الثلاثي الكندي للأخلاقيات في البحوث. وإذا كانت لديكم أية أسئلة تتعلق بهذه المسألة أول حول حقوقكم كمشارك في هذه الدراسة، الرجاء الاتصال على العنوان التالي:

Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914. Email: ore@yorku.ca

حقوق قانونية وإمضاءات:
أشهد أنا الموقع(ة) أدناه(_____) بأنني أوافق على مشاركتي في البحث الذي يحمل عنوان: "دور هوية الطلبة العمانيين في طريقة استخدامهم للغة الانجليزية في محادثاتهم اليومية بجامعة السلطان قابوس"، والذي تنجزه الطالبة الباحثة فاطمة الربيعي. وأقر بأنني فهمت طبيعة هذا البحث وأرغب في المشاركة فيه. وبتوقيعي على هذه الاستمارة فإنني لا أتنازل عن حقوقي القانونية. ويعد توقيعي أدناه بمثابة موافقة على المشاركة.

إمضاء المشارك(ة): _____   **التاريخ:** _____
إمضاء الباحثة الرئيسية: _____   **التاريخ:** _____

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Appendix C: Arabic ODCT

English version

Read each of the following four communication situations in which you interact with someone. Pretend you are the person in the situation and reject all requests and invitations. Say what you would say in an actual situation.

Practice Scenario:

Your Omani professor is recruiting students to participate in interviews as part of a study he/she is conducting. He/she asks you to participate in the study but you cannot because you will have to miss one of your lectures, which is very important for you to attend.
Your professor speaking in English: Could you please participate in my study?
You refuse by saying:…………………………………………………………………………...

1. It is Thursday and you are looking forward to going home because you are going for a picnic/road trip with your family on Saturday. One of your (Omani) professors in the English Department asks you if you can stay and help him/her organize an exhibition during the weekend.
Your professor: There is a lot of work to be done before the opening of the exhibition this Monday. So, I am wondering if you can help me organize the exhibition during the weekend?
You refuse by saying:…………………………………………………………………………...

2. You need to go the main library to get important references for your assignment, which is due tomorrow. However, you missed the bus to the main library and you asked a friend to give you a ride in the half an hour break he/she has between lectures. In your way to your friend's car, an Omani person who is unfamiliar to you but you think he/she is a professor stops you. He/she asks you for directions to the Deanship of the College of Arts, but you cannot because you promised your friend that you will be on time.
Stranger professor speaking in English: Would you please tell me how I could get to the Deanship of College of Arts?
You refuse by saying:…………………………………………………………………………...

3. While you are discussing the requirements of your final paper with your Omani professor at the end of class indicates that he/she has a guest speaker coming to one of his/her classes next week and he/she invites you to attend that lecture but you cannot because your paper is due in two weeks.
Your professor: By the way, I have a guest speaker in my next class who will be discussing issues that are relevant to your paper. Would you like to attend?
You refuse by saying:………………………………………(adopted from Al-Issa, 2003)

4. While you are on a break from the many assignments that you have to finish and submit before the end of the week, you decided to read advertisements for activities on campus on one of the bulletin boards at the College of Arts. While you are reading the advertisements, an Omani person you have never met before but you think that he/she is a professor starts posting an advertisement for the annual Creative Media Forum.
The Omani professor: Are you looking for an interesting event to attend?
You reply: Yes. It will be nice to attend an event after I finish my assignments.
The Omani professor: I can tell you that the annual Creative Media Forum is an interesting one for sure. You should come to this event. It is going be in three days.
You refuse by saying: …………………………………………………………………………...

Arabic version (male students)

اقرأ كل واحد من مواقف المحادثات التاليه وتخيل أنك في هذه المواقف تتفاعل مع دكتور/دكتوره عمانيين في جامعه السلطان قابوس . في كل موقف أحد الدكاتره إما سيطلب منك شينا أو يدعوك لشيء ما. ويجب عليك الرفض في جميع هذه المواقف (طلب أو دعوه) رفضا واقعيا/ حقيبا كما لو كنت بالفعل في هذه المواقف. لا تسرد أو تشرح ما ستقول بل قل مباشره الكلمات أو العبرات التي ستستخدمها في الرد كما لو كنت في هذه المواقف في الواقع. استخدم لغتك أو لهجتك العمانيه.

مثال تدريبي:

واحد من دكاترتك العمانيين (رجال/حرمه) يبحث عن طلبه يشاركوا في مقابلات كجزء من دراسته أو دراستها. طلب منك الدكتور/ طلبت منك الدكتوره المشاركه ولكنك ما تقدر لأنك علشان تشارك لازم تغيب عن وحده من محاضراتك المهمه اللي من الصعب تغيب فيها.

الدكتور/الدكتوره: تقدر تشارك في دراستي؟

أنت ترفض: ....

1. اليوم يوم خميس وأنت متشوق تروح البيت أوالبلاد لأنك بتطلع رحله مع الأهل يوم السبت. لكن واحد من دكاترتك العمانيين (حرمه أو رجال) طلبت منك تساعدها تنظم معرض / طلب منك تساعده ينظم معرض خلال إجازه نهايه الأسبوع.
   الدكتوره/ الدكتور: عندنا واحد شغل قبل إفتتاح المعرض يوم الإثنين. هل بإمكانك تساعدني خلال الإجازه؟
   أنت ترفض:...

2. أنت تريد تروح إلى المكتبه الرئيسيه علشان تجيب مراجع مهمه لواجبك اللي لازم تسلمه بكره.وباص المكتبه راح عنك وطلبت من زميلك يوصلك المكتبه خلال النصف ساعه اللي عنده بين المحاضرات. وأنت رايح لسيارة زميلك وقفك شخص (رجال/ حرمه) ما تعرفه أو تعرفها بس شكله أو شكلها يقول أنه دكتور/ أنها دكتوره في الجامعه. هذا الشخص طلب منك أن تدله/تدلها على الطريق لعماده كليه الادآب ولكنك ما تقدر تعطيه/تعطيها الاتجاهات لأنك بتتأخر عن زميلك اللي واعدنه أنك ما بتتأخر.
   الدكتور/الدكتوره: لو سمحت ممكن تخبرني كيف أوصل لعماده كليه الآداب؟
   أنت ترفض:...

3. في يوم من الأيام كنت تناقش الدكتور/ الدكتوره في متطلبات بحثك اللي رح يكون التقييم الأخير في ماده هذا الدكتور/ الدكتوره. الدكتور خبرك/ الدكتوره خبرتك أنه في ضيف بيحضر الأسبوع القادم أحد محاضراته /محاضراتها وبيتحدث الضيف عن موضوع ليه علاقه بموضوع بحثك. الدكتور عزمك/ الدكتوره عزمتك تحضر هذه المحاضره بس أنت ما تقدر لأنك لازم تسلم البحث خلال أسبوعين وأنت ما عندك وقت.
   الدكتور/الدكتوره: بالمناسبه في ضيف بيحضر في وحده من محاضراتي الأسبوع القادم ورح يناقش موضوع متعلق بموضوع بحثك. بإمكانك تحضر هذه المحاضره.
   أنت ترفض:...

4. في أحد الأسابيع كان عندك ضغط واجبات واجد واللي لازم تسلمها في نهايه الأسبوع. قررت تقرأ لوحه إعلانات في كليه الآداب كإستراحه بسيطه من شغلك. وأنت جالس تقرأ الإعلانات جا شخص عماني (حرمه أو رجال) يدبس أعلان لملتقى الإبداع الإعلامي. أنت ما تعرف هذا الشخص بس شكلها أو شكله يقول أنه دكتوره /دكتور .
   الدكتوره سألتك/ الدكتور سألك: تدور علي فعاليه زينه علشان تحضرها؟
   أنت رديت: أيوا. زين أحضر فعاليه بعد ما أخلص واجباتي.
   ردت الدكتوره/رد الدكتور: إذا ملتقى الإبداع الإعلامي فعاليه ممتازه. أحضر هذه الفعاليه. بتكون بعد ثلاث أيام.
   أنت
   ترفض: ……………………………………

Arabic version (female students)

اقرأي كل واحد من مواقف المحادثات التاليه وتخيلي بأنك في هذه المواقف تتفاعلين مع دكتور/ دكتوره عمانيين في جامعة السلطان قابوس. في كل المواقف أحد الدكاتره إما سيطلب منك شيئا أو يدعوك لشيء ما. يجب عليك الرفض في جميع هذه المواقف (طلب أو دعوه) رفضا واقعيا/ حقيقيا كما لو كنتي بالفعل في هذه المواقف. لا تسردي أو تشرحي ما ستقولين ولكن قولي الكلمات أو العبارات التي ستقولها كما لو كنت في مثل هذه المواقف في الواقع. استخدمي لغتك أو لهجتك العمانيه.

مثال تدريبي:
واحد من دكاترتش العمانيين (رجال/حرمه) يبحث عن طلبه يشاركوا في مقابلات كجزء من دراسته أو دراستها. طلب منش الدكتور/ طلبت منش الدكتوره المشاركه ولكنش ما تقدري لأنش علشان تشاركي لازم تغيبي عن وحده من محاضراتش المهمه اللي من الصعب تغيبي فيها.
الدكتور/الدكتوره: تقدري تشاركي في دراستي؟
أنتي ترفضي: ....

1. اليوم يوم خميس وأنتي متشوقه تروحي البيت أوالبلاد لأنش بتطلعي رحله مع الأهل يوم السبت. لكن واحد من دكاترتش العمانيين (حرمه أو رجال) طلبت منش تساعديها تنظم معرض/ طلب منش تساعده ينظم معرض خلال إجازه نهايه الأسبوع.
الدكتوره/ الدكتور: عندنا واحد شغل قبل إفتتاح المعرض يوم الإثنين. هل بإمكانش تساعديني خلال الإجازه؟
أنتي ترفضي: ....

2. أنتي تريدي تروحي إلى المكتبه الرئيسيه علشان تجيبي مراجع مهمه لواجبش اللي لازم تسلميه بكره، لكن باص المكتبه راح عنش وطلبتي من زميلتش توصلش المكتبه خلال النصف ساعه اللي عندها بين المحاضرات. وأنتي رايحه لسيارة زميلتش وقفش شخص (رجال/ حرمه) ما تعرفيه/ ما تعرفيها بس شكله يقول أنه دكتور/ أنها دكتوره في الجامعه. هذا الشخص طلب منش تدليه/ تدليها على الاتجاهات لعماده كليه الاداب ولكنش ما تقدري تعطيه/تعطيها الاتجاهات لأنش بتتأخري عن زميلتش اللي واعدتها أنش ما بتتأخري.
الدكتور/الدكتوره: لو سمحتي ممكن تخبريني كيف أوصل لعماده كليه الآداب؟
أنتي ترفضي:. ....

3. في يوم من الأيام كنتي تناقشي الدكتور/ الدكتوره في متطلبات بحثش اللي رح يكون التقييم الأخير في ماده هذا الدكتور/ الدكتوره. الدكتورخبرش/ الدكتوره خبرتش أنه في ضيف بيحضر الأسبوع القادم أحد محاضراته /محاضراتها وبيتحدث الضيف عن موضوع ليه علاقه بموضوع بحثش. الدكتور عزمش/ الدكتوره عزمتش تحضري هذه المحاضره بس إنتي ما تقدري تحضري لأنش لازم تسلمي البحث خلال أسبوعين وأنتي ما عندش وقت.
الدكتور/الدكتوره: بالمناسبه في ضيف بيحضر في وحده من محاضراتي الأسبوع القادم ورح يناقش موضوع متعلق بموضوع بحثش. تعالي حضري هذه المحاضره.
أنتي ترفض: ....

4. في أحد الأسابيع كان عندش ضغط واجبات واجد واللي لازم تسلميها في نهايه الأسبوع. قررتي تقرأي لوحه إعلانات في كليه الآداب كإستراحه بسيطه من شغلش. وأنتي جالسه تقرأي الإعلانات جا شخص عماني (حرمه أو رجال) يدبس إعلان لملتقى الإبداع الإعلامي. أنتي ما تعرفي هذا الشخص بس شكلها/ شكله يقول إنها دكتوره /دكتور في الجامعه .
الدكتوره سألتش/ الدكتور سألش: تدوري علي فعاليه زينه علشان تحضريها؟
أنتي رديتي: أيوا. زين أحضر فعاليه بعد ما أخلص واجباتي.
ردت الدكتوره/رد الدكتور: إذا ملتقى الإبداع الإعلامي فعاليه ممتازه. حضري هذه الفعاليه. بتكون في خلال ثلاث أيام.
انتى ترفضي: ....

Appendix D: **English ODCT**

Read each of the following four communication situations in which you interact with someone. Pretend you are the person in the situation and reject all requests and invitations. Say what you would say in an actual situation.

1. While you are working on your final papers, one of your American/British professors asks you to help him/her to organize a workshop, but you cannot help.
   Your professor: Do you think you can help me organize a workshop this week?
   You refuse by saying: ………………………………………………………………………………

2. It is Thursday and you are looking forward to going home because you are going for a picnic/road trip with your family on Saturday. One of your (Omani) professors in the English Department asks you if you can stay and help him/her organize an exhibition during the weekend.
   Your professor: There is a lot of work to be done before the opening of the exhibition this Monday. So, I am wondering if you can help me organize the exhibition during the weekend?
   You refuse by saying:………………………………………………………………………..

3. While you are on your way to your class, which will start in less than two minutes, a foreign professor (American/British) that you do not know stops you and asks you for directions to the Language Center, but you are in a hurry and don't have the time to give directions.
   Stranger professor: Would you please tell me how I could get to the Language Center?
   You refuse by saying:………………………………………………………………………

4. You need to go the main library to get important references for your assignment, which is due tomorrow. However, you missed the bus to the main library and you asked a friend to give you a ride in the half an hour break he/she has between lectures. In your way to your friend's car, an Omani person who is unfamiliar to you but you think he/she is a professor stops you. He/she asks you for directions to the Deanship of the College of Arts, but you cannot because you promised your friend that you will be on time.
   Stranger professor speaking in English: Would you please tell me how I could get to the Deanship of College of Arts?
   You refuse by saying:………………………………………………………………………..

5. While you are in the office of your American/British professor, he/she invites you to attend a seminar on Tuesday, but you cannot because you have promised to meet your friends whom you have not seen for a long time.
   Your American/British professor: I would like to invite you to my seminar this Tuesday.
   You refuse by saying:………………………………………………………………………

6. While you are discussing the requirements of your final paper with your Omani professor at the end of class indicates that he/she has a guest speaker coming to one of his/her classes next week and he/she invites you to attend that lecture but you cannot because your paper is due in two weeks.
   Your professor: By the way, I have a guest speaker in my next class who will be discussing issues that are relevant to your paper. Would you like to attend?
   You refuse by saying:……………………………………(adopted from Al-Issa, 2003)

7. You have an assignment due next week on Sunday (first day of the week in Oman). You wanted to finish the assignment this week because you have a wedding in the family and you will be busy on the weekend. So, you went to see your American/British professor to discuss your assignment requirements. Before you start discussing your assignment, your professor tells you that a professor will be coming to see him/her for a few minutes. A few minutes later, an American/a British professor who you are not familiar with arrives. After greeting both of you, he/she hands an invitation card to your professor for an open day event on Friday (weekend in Oman). He/she apologizes to you for interrupting your discussion, hands you an invitation card and said: I would like to invite you as well for this open day event.
You refuse by saying: ………………………………………………………………..

8. While you are on a break from the many assignments that you have to finish and submit before the end of the week, you decided to read advertisements for activities on campus on one of the bulletin boards at the College of Arts. While you are reading the advertisements, an Omani person you have never met before but you think that he/she is a professor starts posting an advertisement for the annual Creative Media Forum.
The Omani professor: Are you looking for an interesting event to attend?
You reply: Yes. It will be nice to attend an event after I finish my assignments.
The Omani professor: I can tell you that the annual Creative Media Forum is an interesting one for sure. You should come to this event. It is going be in three days.
You refuse by saying: …………………………………………………………………...

Appendix E: Arabic interview

English version

General Questions:

1. Do you think it is appropriate? Why/why not?
2. Do you think others would respond differently? Why/why not? How?
3. What were the things you considered when responding? Before responding to this professor in this communication event, what did you consider?
4. When responding in this scenario, did you think or (assume) a specific gender of the speaker? What is the gender you assumed? Why?

Specific Questions:

1. Semantic formulas

A. Direct vs. Indirect Strategies:

1. Why did you use this/these particular words to express refusal?
2. Why didn't you use phrases such as I refuse/I won't/no way? /Why didn't you use phrases such as I wish I could/ sorry/ or I am very busy?
3. Do you think that using particular words to refuse in this situation have a positive or negative effect on your image as a person/ as a student? Why/not?

B. Content of Semantic Formula:

1. Why did you apologize/explain/justify/ compliment…etc. when you refused the professor's request in this communicative situation?
2. Do you think that explaining instead of apologizing or complimenting (another alternative would be used depending on the participant's content) would have been better? Why/why not?
3. Why did you use few/many words to refuse to this situation?
4. Why did you use this specific order in your response (for example, apology then explanation) in refusing a request/offer/invitation in this speech act?

2. Sociopragmatic Variables

A. Degree of Imposition (Invitations vs. Requests):

1. Do you think refusing an invitation was easier or harder than refusing a request? How? Why/not? Please give examples.
2. Order the request and invitation scenarios based on their degree of difficulty form easiest to most difficult or the opposite.
3. Why were some scenarios more difficult to refuse than others?

B. Social Distance (Familiar vs. Strange):

1. Do you think refusing the request/invitation of a professor you know/you are familiar with was easier or harder than refusing the request/invitation of a professor you do not know/you are not familiar with? / Do you think that familiarity or acquaintance with a professor made it easier or harder to refuse? How? Why/why not? Please give examples.

2. Do you think that familiarity or acquaintance with a professor has an effect on the way you refused an invitation? Why/why not? Please give examples.

3. Do you think your degree of familiarity with the personality of a particular professor and how you feel about what you know about him/her has any influence on your refusals? Why (not)? If yes, give examples. (New factor: Affective factors)

Gender:

1. Do you think that the gender of the interlocutor has an effect on how you responded to each scenario? Why (not)? If yes, explain how and give examples.

Arabic version

أسئله عامه:

1) هل تعتقد ان إجابتك مناسبه؟

2) هل تعتقد أن الآخرين ستكون إجاباتهم مختلفه؟

3) ما هي الأشياء التي أخذتها في الحسبان عند رفضك لهذا الموقف؟

4) ما هو جنس المتحدث الذي تخيلته عند ردك على هذا الطلب/ الدعوة؟ لماذا؟

أسئله محددة:

1. **الوحدات اللغوية:**

A. نوع الإستراتيجية: صريحة أو غير صريحة

1) لماذا أستخدمت هذه الكلمات للرد على هذا الموقف؟

2) لما لم تستخدم كلمات مثل أنا أرفض أو لا أستطيع مباشره عند رفضك في هذا الموقف ؟/ لماذا لم تستخدم كلمات مثل أود

ذلك/ عذرا/ أنا مشغول مباشره عند رفضك في هذا الموقف؟

3) هل تعتقد أن استخدام كلمات معينه للرفض في مثل هذا الموقف سيكون له أثر مختلف على شخصك كمتحدث؟

B. **محتوى الوحدات اللغوية:**

1) لماذا اعتذرت/شرحت/ بررت ...إلخ عندما رفضا في هذا الموقف؟

2) هل تعتقد أنه من الأفضل الشرح بدلا عن الإعتذار أو التمني بدلا عن الاعتذار في هذا الموقف؟

3) لماذا أستخدمت كلمات أو عبارات قليله / كثيره للرفض في هذا الموقف؟

4) لماذا لم تقدم الرفض على الشرح أو الشرح على الرفض في مثل هذا الموقف؟

2. **المتغيرات أو القوانين الإجتماعية:**

A. **درجه الفرض(الطلب والدعوة):**

1) هل تعتقد أن رفض الطلب كان أسهل أم أصعب من رفض الدعوة ؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

B. **المسافة الإجتماعية (شخص معروف وشخص غير معروف):**

1) هل تعتقد أن رفض طلب شخص معروف كان أسهل أم أصعب من رفض طلب شخص غير معروف؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

2) هل تعتقد أن رفض دعوه شخص معروف كان أسهل أم أصعب من رفضها لشخص غير معروف؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

3) هل تعتقد أن مدى معرفتك بشخصيه الدكتور أو الدكتوره ودرجة ارتياحك لشخصياتهم لها أثر علي طريقة رفضك؟ لماذا؟

أعط أمثله إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم.(سؤال مضاف: العوامل النفسية)

جنس المتحدث:

1) هل تعتقد أن جنس المتحدث له أثرا على رفضك لأي من هذه المواقف؟ لماذا؟ إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم اشرح هذا التأثير وأعط أمثله.

Appendix F: English interview

English version

    A. ***Questions about Arabic and English ODCT***

        1. Have you noticed any similarities and/or differences between the English ODCT and the Arabic ODCT? If so, please explain?

        2. Do you remember your responses to the Arabic ODCT?

    B. ***Question about using Arabic and English when communicating with professors at SQU***

        1. Which language do you prefer to use when communicating with professors at SQU? Why?

        2. In terms of difficulty and ease of use, which language do you think is more difficult to use when communicating with professors? Why? What type of difficulty do you face?

        3. If you compare Arab and American/British professors, which type of professors do you find easier to communicate with in English? Why? Give examples?

    General Questions:

        1. Do you think it is appropriate? Why/why not?

        2. Do you think others would respond differently? Why/why not? How?

        3. What were the things you considered when responding? Before responding to this professor in this communication event, what did you consider?

        4. When responding in this scenario, did you think or (assume) a specific gender of the speaker? What is the gender you assumed? Why?

    Specific Questions:

1. Semantic formulas

    A. Direct vs. Indirect Strategies:

        1. Why did you use this/these particular words to express refusal?

        2. Why didn't you use phrases such as I refuse/I won't/no way? /Why didn't you use phrases such as I wish I could/ sorry/ or I am very busy?

        3. Do you think that using particular words to refuse in this situation have a positive or negative effect on your image as a person/ as a student? Why/not?

    B. Content of Semantic Formula:

        1. Why did you apologize/explain/justify/ compliment…etc. when you refused the professor's request in this communicative situation?

2. Do you think that explaining instead of apologizing or complimenting (another alternative would be used depending on the participant's content) would have been better? Why/why not?

3. Why did you use few/many words to refuse to this situation?

4. Why did you use this specific order in your response (for example, apology then explanation) in refusing a request/offer/invitation in this speech act?

2. Sociopragmatic Variables

A. Degree of Imposition (Invitations vs. Requests):

1. Do you think refusing an invitation was easier or harder than refusing a request? How? Why/not? Please give examples.

2. Order the request and invitation scenarios based on their degree of difficulty form easiest to most difficult or the opposite.

3. Why were some scenarios more difficult to refuse than others?

B. Social Distance (Familiar vs. Strange):

1. Do you think refusing the request/invitation of a professor you know/you are familiar with was easier or harder than refusing the request/invitation of a professor you do not know/you are not familiar with? / Do you think that familiarity or acquaintance with a professor made it easier or harder to refuse? How? Why/why not? Please give examples.

2. Do you think that familiarity or acquaintance with a professor has an effect on the way you refused an invitation? Why/why not? Please give examples.

3. Do you think your degree of familiarity with the personality of a particular professor and how you feel about what you know about him/her has any influence on your refusals? Why (not)? If yes, give examples. (Added question on Affective factors)

C. Cultural Distance (NNSs of English vs. NSs of English)

1. Do you think that the cultural difference between Omani professors and non-Omani (specifically NSs of English such as American and British) professors has an effect on the way you refuse in English?

2. Do you think that this difference has an effect on the degree of your familiarity with the professor (strange versus familiar)? How? Why/why not? Please give examples.

3. Do you think that this difference has an effect on your responses to requests and invitations? How? Why/why not? Please give examples.

Pragmatic Transfer:

1. Do you think that your Arabic language and culture have any influence on your refusal to requests and invitations in English? Why? If there is any influence, please identify it in your responses.
2. Why did you conform to and/ or deviate from the use of English pragmatics norms?
3. If you were given the opportunity to respond/refuse in these speech situations again, would you change your response? Why?

Gender:

1. Do you think that the gender of the interlocutor has an effect on how you responded to each scenario? Why (not)? If yes, explain how and give examples.

Added questions:

Alternative Response:

1. Do you sometimes prefer to use responses like "I'll try," or "Insha' Allah" or a combination of both when responding to requests and invitations? If so, please specify in what scenarios you would use such responses? Why?
2. Would you use it with your interlocutors regardless of their cultural background? Why (not)?
3. What do such responses exactly mean to you? What do you think your interlocutors will understand?

Arabic version

A. اسئله حول ODCT باللغة العربية

1) هل لاحظت أي تشابه أو إختلاف بين ODCT بالعربي وبالإنجليزي؟ اشرح إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم؟

2) هل تتذكر إجاباتك لـ ODCT باللغة العربية؟

B. أسئله حول استخدام اللغة العربية والإنجليزية عند التحدث مع المدرسين/الدكاتره في الجامعه:

1) أي اللغتين تفضل للحديث مع الدكاتره في الجامعة؟ لماذا؟

2) أي اللغتين أصعب في الإستخدام عند التحدث مع الدكاتره في الجامعة؟ لماذا؟ ما نوع الصعوبة التي تواجهك؟

3) عند مقارنتك للدكاترة البريطانيين والأمريكان أي من هذه الفئتين يكون التحدث إليهم أسهل عند إستخدام اللغة الإنجليزية؟ لماذا ؟ اعط أمثله؟

أسئله عامه:

1) هل تعتقد ان إجابتك مناسبه؟

2) هل تعتقد أن الآخرين ستكون إجاباتهم مختلفه؟

3) ما هي الأشياء التي أخذتها في الحسبان عند رفضك لهذا الموقف؟

(4) ما هو جنس المتحدث الذي تخيلته عند ردك على هذا الطلب/ الدعوة؟ لماذا؟

أسئله محددة:

3. الوحدات اللغوية:

C. نوع الإستراتيجية: صريحة أو غير صريحة

1) لماذا أستخدمت هذه الكلمات للرد على هذا الموقف؟

2) لماا لم تستخدم كلمات مثل أنا أرفض أو لا أستطيع مباشره عند رفضك في هذا الموقف ؟/ لماذا لم تستخدم كلمات مثل أود ذلك/ عذرا/ أنا مشغول مباشره عند رفضك في هذا الموقف؟

3) هل تعتقد أن استخدام كلمات معينه للرفض في مثل هذا الموقف سيكون له أثر مختلف على شخصك كمتحدث؟

D. محتوى الوحدات اللغوية:

1) لماذا اعتذرت/شرحت/ بررت ...إلخ عندما رفضا في هذا الموقف؟

2) هل تعتقد أنه من الأفضل الشرح بدلا عن الإعتذار أو التمني بدلا عن الاعتذار في هذا الموقف؟

3) لماذا أستخدمت كلمات أو عبارات قليله / كثيره للرفض في هذا الموقف؟

4) لماذا لم تقدم الرفض على الشرح أو الشرح على الرفض في مثل هذا الموقف؟

4. المتغيرات أو القوانين الإجتماعية:

A. درجه الفرض(الطلب والدعوة):

1) هل تعتقد أن رفض الطلب كان أسهل أم أصعب من رفض الدعوة ؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

B. المسافة الإجتماعية (شخص معروف وشخص غير معروف):

1) هل تعتقد أن رفض طلب شخص معروف كان أسهل أم أصعب من رفض طلب شخص غير معروف؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

2) هل تعتقد أن رفض دعوه شخص معروف كان أسهل أم أصعب من رفضها لشخص غير معروف؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

3) هل تعتقد أن مدى معرفتك بشخصيه الدكتور أو الدكتوره ودرجة ارتياحك لشخصياتهم لها أي أثر علي طريقة رفضك؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم. (سؤال مضاف: العوامل النفسية)

C. المسافة الثقافية (عماني مقابل أمريكي أو بريطاني):

1) هل تعتقد المسافة اللغوية والثقافية بينك وبين المتحدث في هذه المواقف (شخص عماني وشخص غير عماني أمريكي/بريطاني) لها أثر في طريقه رفضك باللغة الإنجليزية؟ لماذا؟أعط أمثله.

2) هل تعتقد أن هذا الفرق الثقافي واللغوي له أثر في طريقه رفضك باللغة الإنجليزية لمدرس تعرفه ومدرس لا تعرفه؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله.

3) هل تعتقد أن هذا الفرق الثقافي واللغوي له أثر في طريقه رفضك باللغة الإنجليزية لنوع الموقف مثل الطلب والدعوة؟ أعط أمثله.

النقل البراغماتي:

1) هل تعتقد ان لغتك وثقافتك العربية لها أي تأثير على رفضك للطلب والدعوة؟لماذا؟ إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم حدد هذا التأثير في إجاباتك؟

2) لماذا إلتزمت/ لم تلتزم بما هو مقبول في استخدام اللغه الإنجليزية؟

3) إذا اعطيت الفرصة مرة أخرى للرد/الرفض لهذه المواقف، هل ستغير إجاباتك؟ لماذا؟

جنس المتحدث:

1. هل تعتقد أن جنس المتحدث له أثرا على رفضك لأي من هذه المواقف؟ لماذا؟ إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم اشرح هذا التأثير وأعط أمثله.

أسئله جديده تم إضافتها أثناء المقابلة:

إجابات بديله:

1) هل تفضل أحيانا الرفض بإستخدام عبارات مثل "سأحاول" أو "إن شاء الله" أو خليط من هذه العبارات؟ إذا كانت إجابتك بنعم،حدد في أي من المواقف ستستخدم مثل هذا الرد؟ لماذا؟

2) هل ستستخدم مثل هذه الإجابا مع جميع المتحدثين بغض النظر عن خلفيتهم الثقافية؟ لماذا؟

3) ماذا تعني مثل هذه الإجابات؟ ماذا سيفهم المتحدث إليك من هذه الإجابات؟

Appendix G: English Follow-up interview

English version

Condition 1: L2 learners' current definitions of their relationship with the L2 language and culture:

1. Can you tell me why you are majoring in an English-related field of study?
2. What does it mean to you to learn English? Why?
3. Are there any advantages or disadvantages of majoring in English compared to other majors in Arabic?
4. Do you want to be able to speak English like NSs one day? Why/not?
5. Do you want to sound like NSs of English when you speak? Why/not?
6. How do people at SQU such as professors, employees and students from other majors look at you when they know that you are majoring in an English related field? What about people from outside SQU?
7. Do you use English in your everyday communication? Why/not? Can you give examples?
8. How do people react when you use English to communicate with them or with other people inside and outside SQU? How do you feel about their reactions?
9. Do you think English should be used as an official language in Oman beside Arabic? Why/why not?
10. What do you think of NSs of English such as Americans and British? Do you like to communicate with them? Why/not? /Do you think that NSs of English such as American and Britons are similar or different from us (Omanis)? Why/not? Give examples?
11. Do you think that students majoring in English should be taught American/British English culture (how to speak, behave and think like NSs of English) in order to improve their English? Why/not?
12. How important is it to express your Arabic/Islamic values when you communicate in English (such as when you ask for a favor or request or invite somebody)?
13. Does English allow you to reflect on these values when you communicate in English?
14. Now after several years of learning English, what do you think of your English learning experience? Do you feel that the English language has a similar value/equal status as Arabic for you?

Condition 2: L2 learners' perceptions of use of pragmatics when they use the English as an L2
Questions are shifted to interview two under pragmatics transfer.

Condition 3: The L2 learners' future decisions regarding L2 pragmatics use.

1. Given this situation (an example of deviation and or resistance to L2 pragmatics from the participant's data") might cause misunderstanding between you and the NSs of English, how willing are you to adopt the English used by NSs of English in Oman and America/Britain when communicating with Omanis and/or NSs of English?

2. Given this situation (an example of conformity to L2 pragmatics norms: I'll add an example later) you might be perceived as attempting to disregard your Arabic cultural values of language use. How willing are to adhere to the norms of the NSs of English when you use English in Oman with other Omanis?

Definition of Culture and Identity:

1. How do you define culture?
2. How do you define identity?
3. Do you distinguish between personal identity and group identity? Why?
4. Is there any relationship between language, culture and identity? Why?

Arabic version

الشرط الأول: تعريف الطلبه بعلاقتهم باللغه الإنجليزيه وثقافتها

1) هل يمكنك أن تخبرني لماذا تخصصت في أحد مجالات اللغه الإنجليزيه ؟

2) ماذا يعني لك أن تتعلم وتكتسب اللغه الإنجليزيه؟

3) هل هناك مزايا (إيجابات) أو سلبيات لتعلم اللغه الإنجليزيه مقابله مع التخصصات الأخرى باللغه العربيه؟

4) هل تتمنى أن تتحدث اللغه الإنجليزيه مثل الإنجليز والأمريكان؟ لماذا؟

5) كيف ينظر لك المدرسين والموظفين والطلبه الآخرين حينما يعلمون أنك متخصص في اللغه الإنجليزيه؟ وكيف هي نظره الآخرين من خارج الجامعه لك؟ لماذا؟ ما هو شعورك إزاء نظرتهم لك؟

6) هل تستخدم اللغه الإنجليزيه في محادثاتك اليوميه داخل الجامعه/ خارج الجامعه؟ أعط أمثله

7) كيف تكون رده فعل الآخرين داخل الجامعه/ خارج الجامعه لك حينما تحدثهم باللغه الإنجليزيه ؟ ما هو شعورك إزاء رده فعلهم؟

8) هل تعتقد أن اللغه الإنجليزيه يجب أن تكون لغه رسميه في عمان إلى جانب اللغه العربيه؟ لماذا؟

9) ما هو انطباعك عن المتحدثين الأصليين باللغه الإنجليزيه مثل الأمريكان والإنجليز؟ لماذا؟ هل تحب التحدث إليهم؟

10) هل تعتقد أنهم كالعمانيين؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله

11) هل من المهم أن يتعلم طلاب اللغه الإنجليزيه الثقافه الإنجليزيه أيضاً؟ لماذا؟

12) ما مدى أهميه أن تعكس مبادئك العربيه والإسلاميه حينما تتحدث اللغه الإنجليزيه؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله

13) هل بمقدور اللغه الإنجليزيه أن تعبر عن مثل هذه المبادىء؟ لماذا؟ أعط أمثله

14) بعد عده سنوات من تعلم اللغه الإنجليزيه ما هو رأيك في تجربتك لتعلم هذه اللغه/ كيف تصف هذه التجربه؟ لماذا؟

15) بعد كل هذه السنوات في دراسه اللغه الإنجليزيه، هل أصبح للغه الإنجليزيه مكانه ذاتيه أو منزله خاصه لديك شبيهة بتلك التي تكنها للغه العربيه؟ لماذا؟

الشرط الثاني: مفهوم الطلبه للإستخدام الفعلي/ العملي للغه عند التحدث باللغه الإنجليزيه:

• تم طرح الأسئله في المقابله رقم ٢ تحت النقل البرغماتي.

الشرط الثالث: قرارات الطلبه المستقبليه فيما يخص إستخدامهم العملي/ الفعلي للغه الإنجليزيه:

1) لو إعتبرنا أن خروجك عن الإستخدام اللغوي المقبول للغه الإنجليزيه كما في مثل هذا الموقف سيؤدي إلى سوء فهم بينك وبين متحدثين الإنجليزيه تحديدا الأمريكان والأنجليز، هل ستتبني استخدامهم للغه الإنجليزيه حينما تتحدث إليهم سواء في عمان أو خارج عمان في المستقبل؟ لماذا؟

2) لو إعتبرنا أن تبنيك للإستخدام اللغوي المقبول للغه الإنجليزيه حينما تتحدث باللغه الإنجليزيه لعمانيين كما في مثل هذا الموقف سيؤدي إلى سوء فهم بينك وبين متحدثين اللغه العربيه العمانيه (بمعني سينظرون إلى أسلوب تحدثك كتبني للثقافه والفكر الغربي الإنجليزي)، فهل ستتبني استخدام اللغه الإنجليزيه كما هو مقبول عند متحدثيها حتى وإن كنت ستستخدم هذه اللغه مع عمانيين في المستقبل؟ لماذا؟

تعريف الثقافة والهوية:

1) ما هو تعريفك للثقافة؟

2) ما هو تعريفك للهوية؟

3) هل تفرق بين الهويه الشخصية وهوية الجماعة؟ لماذا؟

4) هل هناك علاقه بين اللغة والثقافة والهوية؟ لماذا؟

Appendix H: Classification of refusals by Félix-Brasdefer (compiled by Savić, 2014, p. 75-76).

Direct Refusals	
Strategy	**Examples**
A flat NO	*No, I totally made plans with my family.*
Negation of the proposition (syntactically expressed)	*I can't come to the party.*
(Lexically expressed)	*It's impossible for me to attend the party.*

Indirect Refusal		
Strategy	**Definition/Description**	**Examples**
Mitigated refusal	"expressions which are internally modified by hedges that reduce the negative effect that a negative refusal might have had on the interlocutor"	*So, I think probably I'm not gonna take the class.* *Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend your farewell party.*
Reason/Explanation	General (does not provide details) Specific (includes detailed information)	*I have plans.* *I'm having dinner with my parents who are visiting for the weekend.*
Indefinite reply	"the speaker's intentional message remains vague, uncertain, or undecided"	*Oh, I don't know if I can come to your party.* *I can't promise you anything.*
Apology/Regret	"expressions of regret or asking for forgiveness function as indirect refusals that may be considered manifestations of relational work and […] open for polite interpretation"	*I'm really sorry. I can't come.*
Alternative	used "to suggest alternatives or possibilities in order to negotiate face with the interlocutor and arrive at a mutual agreement"	*Why don't we go out for dinner next week?*
Postponement	"The speaker does not want to explicitly make a commitment and, therefore, puts off an invitation, a request, or a suggestion"	*Um, is it possible I could come in early on Monday?* *I'll think about it and I'll let you know later.*
Repetition of part of previous discourse	a verbal avoidance strategy used "to buy time to think of an appropriate excuse"	*next Friday?—Next Friday?*
Request for additional information	a verbal a voidance strategy which "delays the refusal response and diverts the attention away from the interlocutor"	*What time is the party?* *Where is it? Is it at your apartment?*
Set condition of future or past acceptance	"may be used to refuse or put off an invitation, a request or a suggestion by creating a hypothetical condition under which acceptance would occur (future) or would have occurred (past)"	*If you had asked me earlier, I would have accepted.*
Wish	"communicates the participant's desire or wish to accept an invitation, a request or a suggestion"	*I wish I could stay and work for two more hours, maybe next time.*
Promise to comply	Used when "the refuser does not want to make any commitment to accept an invitation, a request, or a suggestion, although s/he may try to do so at some point in the future"	*(not found in the US data)*

Preparator	"utterances by which the speaker prepares his/her hearer for to ensuing refusal by announcing in some way that he/she will refuse an invitation, a request, or a suggestion"	*I'll be honest with you, I really would prefer not to.* *I'll tell you what, I'd love to go, but you know, I've got something else.* *The thing is/The problem is…*
Adjunct to Refusals		
Strategy	**Definition/Description**	**Example**
Positive opinion	"a positive expression before or after head act in order to maintain harmony with the interlocutor"	*That's a good idea, but I don't think I'll be able to make it.*
Willingness	Used to indicate the speaker's "willingness to comply with an invitation, a request or a suggestion"	*I'd love to but…*
Gratitude/appreciation	"used to express relational work with an interlocutor"	*Thanks for the invitation, but I already have plans. I really appreciate the offer, but I have prior engagements.*
Agreement	"partial or weak agreement[s] [functioning as] manifestations of relational work" and expressing 'involvement with the point of view if the interlocutor by showing initial interest in an invitation, request or suggestion"	*Yes/okay, but*
Empathy	used to 'show involvement with and understand of another's situation, feelings, and motives"	*I understand you are in a pinch, but…*