The study of refusals and pragmatic modifiers in jordanian arabic

Kayed, Murad Al; Al-zu'bi, Mohammad Akram; Alkayid, Majd

The study of refusals and pragmatic modifiers in jordanian arabic

O estudo de recusas e modificadores pragmáticos em árabe jordaniano

Murad Al Kayed
Department of English Language and Literature, Jordania
murad.alkayed@bau.edu.jo

Mohammad Akram Al-zu'bi
Ajloun University College, Al-Balqa Applied University,
Jordania

Majd Alkayid
Applied Science Private University, Jordania

ABSTRACT:

This study aims at investigating politeness strategies and pragmatic modifiers used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic to perform the speech act of refusal. The data were collected from 24 hours of recorded conversations taken from different mixed and same-sex conversations by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. The researchers observed these conversations and utterances that perform the speech act of refusal. The strategies of refusals were analyzed following Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) model, while pragmatic modifiers were analyzed following House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). The results of the study showed that the Jordanians used complex strategy more than direct and indirect strategies. The findings showed that Jordanians used many pragmatic modifiers to soften their refusals. The study found that external modifiers were more frequent than other types of pragmatic modifiers. The study also found out that culture affected the use of refusal strategies and pragmatic modifiers. The impact of culture appeared clearly in the fact that Jordanians tended to use Islamic religious expressions to mitigate their utterances. Besides, it seemed that Jordanians preferred complex strategies because they viewed repetition and using more than one strategy as a polite way to save the face of others.

KEYWORDS: jordanian arabic, modifiers, politeness, pragmatics, refusals, speech act.

RESUMO:

Este estudo tem como objetivo investigar estratégias de polidez e modificadores pragmáticos usados por falantes nativos do árabe jordaniano para realizar o ato de fala de recusa. Os dados foram coletados a partir de 24 horas de conversas gravadas, tiradas de diferentes conversas mistas e do mesmo sexo entre falantes nativos do árabe jordaniano. Os pesquisadores observaram essas conversas e enunciados que realizam o ato de fala de recusa. As estratégias de recusa foram analisadas seguindo o modelo de Beebe, Takahashi, e Uliss-Weltz (1990), enquanto modificadores pragmáticos foram analisados seguindo House e Kasper (1981) e Blum-Kulka, House, e Kasper (1989). Os resultados do estudo mostraram que estratégia complexa foi usada mais do que estratégias diretas e indiretas. As conclusões mostraram que os jordanianos usaram muitos modificadores pragmáticos para amenizar suas recusas. Verificou-se que modificadores externos foram mais frequentes do que outros tipos de modificadores pragmáticos. O estudo também descobriu que a cultura afetou o uso de estratégias de recusa e modificadores pragmáticos. O impacto da cultura apareceu claramente no fato de que os jordanianos tendiam a usar expressões religiosas islâmicas para mitigar seus enunciados. Além disso, pareceu que os jordanianos preferiam estratégias complexas porque veem a repetição e o uso de mais de uma estratégia como uma maneira educada de protejer a honra do outro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: árabe da Jordânia, modificadores, polidez, pragmática, recusas, ato de fala.

NOTAS DE AUTOR

murad.alkayed@bau.edu.jo

Introduction

Speech acts

People in conversations usually use language not only to express emotions or to provide pieces of information but also to perform an action. The act performed by language (utterance) is known as a speech act (Saeed 1997). Lyons, for example, (1977, p. 730) believes that a speech act is "[...] an act performed in saying something". Speakers use many utterances to perform speech acts, like apologizing, requesting, ordering, inviting, etc. One of these speech acts is a refusal in which the speaker does not comply with a request, invitation, or suggestion. A refusal is defined as "[...] the negative counterparts to acceptances and consenting are rejections and refusals. Just as one can accept offers, applications, and invitations, so each of these can be refused or rejected" (Searle & Vandervken, 1985, p. 195). In refusals, the speakers "[...] respond negatively to an offer, request, invitation, etc." (Al-Kahtani, 2005, p. 37). According to Searle (1969), refusals belong to Commissives, which are used by speakers to commit themselves to do or not to do something in the future.

Beebe et al. (1990) classify refusals into semantic formulas and adjuncts. A semantic formula is an utterance that performs a refusal using direct or indirect strategies. An adjunct is an expression that supplements a refusal, but it cannot perform a refusal. The researchers did not include adjuncts in their analysis because they were studied as part of pragmatic modifiers (see Appendix 1).

Pragmatic modifiers

A pragmatic modifier refers to a rhetorical device, which "[...] softens the impact of some unpleasant aspect of an utterance on the speaker or the hearer" (Danet, 1980, p. 525). Pragmatic modifiers include two types: internal and external modifiers (Blum-Kulka, 1987). Internal pragmatic modifiers include the lexical and grammatical devices used inside the head act, while external pragmatic modifiers used outside the head act (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Classification of pragmatic modifiers was taken from House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), as shown in Appendix 2. The researchers added 'thanks' and 'religious markers' to satisfy the requirements of the data.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions:
  - How do Jordanian undergraduate students make refusals?
  - What are the politeness strategies used by those students in refusals?
  - What are the pragmatic modifiers used to mitigate the impact of refusals?

Literature review

A huge number of studies investigated the speech act of refusal in different cultures and languages, whether among native or nonnative speakers (Valipour & Jadidi, 2014; Han & Burgucu-Tazegül, 2016; Kwon ,2004; Abed, 2011; Asmalı, 2013; Wannaruk, 2008; Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Lin, 2014; Çapar, 2014; Chang, 2009; Delen & Tavil, 2010; Genç & Tekyıldız, 2009; Bulut, 2003; Shishavan & Sharifian, 2016; Lee, 2013; Morkus, 2014; Shokouhi & Khalili, 2008). However, few studies tackled politeness strategies in refusals in Jordanian Arabic. For example, Al-Issa (1998) examined the socio-pragmatic transfer in refusals performed by Jordanian EFL learners. His study was a comparative one that found out that Jordanians were more

likely to express regret (like 'I'm sorry') than Americans. The study also discovered that both Jordanians and Americans used explanations and reasons more than any other strategy.

Al-khatib (2006) examined the nature of invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society from a pragmatic point of view. His study attempted to categorize different strategies used in invitation making and acceptance in Jordanian society. The results of the study showed that the process of invitation making and apologizing is functional and rule-governed. Moreover, the study revealed that social factors like sex and age played a significant role in choosing the type of politeness strategy.

In another study, Kreishan (2018) studied the speech acts of refusal and complaint used by Jordanian undergraduate EFL learners. The data were collected using a discourse completion test and role-plays. The results exhibited that explanation/ excuse was the most used refusal strategies. The findings also pointed out that Jordanians preferred using indirect strategy.

Moreover, several studies investigated politeness strategies in refusals in Arabic dialects other than the Jordanian dialect. Abdul Sattar, Che Lah, and Suleiman (2010) examined the preferred semantic formulas used in refusing suggestions in Iraqi Arabic. The sample of the study consisted of 30 Iraqi Arabic native speakers studying at University Sains Malaysia, Malaysia. The data of the study were analyzed and categorized according to the refusal taxonomy by Beebe et al. (1990). The study confirmed that contextual variables, which include the status of speakers, had a significant influence on variation in the frequency and the content of semantic formulas.

Al-Dawsari (2013) investigated the refusal strategies employed in Najdi Saudi Arabic Dialect. The researcher analyzed refusals in requests and invitations using Beebe and Cummings's taxonomy (1996). Moreover, the researcher concentrated mainly on the role of status and social distance in politeness strategies. The results of the study noted that speakers of Najdi Saudi Arabic used different refusal strategies.

It is clear from the previous literature that few studies investigated refusals in Jordanian Arabic. To the best knowledge of the author, there were only three studies that addressed refusals in Jordanian Arabic, as it was mentioned above. The first one was Al-khatib's study (2006), which investigated how Jordanians make invitations and acceptance from a pragmatic point of view. However, his research did not concentrate on refusals in Jordanian Arabic. The second study was Al-Issa's study (1998), which analyzed the phenomenon of transfer in the use of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners. The third one was Kreishan's study (2018), which focused on refusal and complaint used by Jordanian undergraduate EFL learners. Therefore, the current study is significant since it focuses on the refusal strategies used by native speakers of Jordanian Arabic. Besides, this study is important because it tackles how refusals are mitigated using pragmatic modifiers.

Methodology

The corpus of the study consisted of 24 hours of conversations taken from different mixed and same-sex conversations. The study took place at Ajloun University College/ Al Balqa Applied University between May 2019 and December 2019. The researchers asked 20 students who were studying English to help them to record the conversation. These 20 students conversed with their friends/colleagues and performed different types of requests. They recorded the responses of their colleagues/friends. The researchers collected instances of refusals (179 examples). After collecting the data, the researchers asked the participants for their permission to use the related responses. The extracted examples were studied and analyzed according to Beebe et al. (1990) model. Furthermore, the researchers transcribed the Arabic examples using IPA phonetic transcription. Concerning the refusal strategies, the researchers added a new strategy 'complex strategy' in which the speakers used more than one strategy whether direct or indirect strategy. Pragmatic modifiers were classified based on House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The pragmatic modifiers 'thanks' and 'religious markers' were added to the taxonomy to satisfy the requirements of the data (see appendix 2).

Results and discussion

This section presents the results related to the strategies of refusals and pragmatic modifiers found in the data.

Strategies of refusals

The results of the study showed that undergraduate students used complex strategies more than indirect strategies and more than direct strategies, as shown in the following Table 1:

Strategy	Frequency
Direct strategies	35
Performative	0
Non-performative	35
Indirect strategies	59
A. Wish	7
B. Excuse, reason, explanation	15
C. Statement of alternative	8
D. Set condition for future or past acceptance	7
E. Promise of future acceptance	6
f. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	5
G. Avoidance	6
H. Giving hints	5
Complex strategies	85

TABLE 1.
Strategies of refusals in JA.
Beebe et al. (1990).

a) Direct strategies:

By using this strategy, the native speakers of Jordanian Arabic speaker use explicit and direct expressions of refusal to convey his/her unwillingness to do/accept/comply with the hearer's request, invitation, or offer. The analysis of the data shows that Jordanians did not use the performative 2rfud 'refuse' to perform the speech act of refusal. However, they depend mainly on using negative particles such as la 'no', and mi# 'not', and negative ability structures, such as ma baqdar 'I cannot', ma: jemkini: 'I cannot'. Consider the following examples:

(1) A: bid-i: ashu:f-ak b3d il-mu7adarah.
Need- I see-you after ART-lecture
'I want to see you after the lecture.'
B: bxa:f ini: ma: aqdar. Ana asif
Afraid I NEG can I sorry
'I am afraid I can't. I am sorry'
(2) A: tfidal ishrab ma3-i qawah?
Come drink with-me coffee?
'Come on, have a cup of coffee with me?'
B: ma baqdar, 2shkur-ak
NEG can, thank-you
'I cannot, thanks'

In the previous examples, speaker B refuses the request by using direct expressions of refusals.
b) Indirect strategies
The data show that the Jordanians used indirect strategies 59 times. The speakers know that their refusals are face-threatening acts, so they try to mitigate their refusal by using indirect strategies. Indirect strategies include the following subcategories:
- Excuse, Reason, and Explanation

According to this strategy, the speaker provides reasons for their refusals. Instead of refusing directly, Jordanians prefer providing reasons for this refusal. The data show that the most frequent indirect strategy was 'excuse, reason, and explanation'. Consider the following examples:

(3) A: tru:7 ma3i: 3la: al-maktabah,?
Go. 2SG with-me to ART-library?
'do you want to go with me to the library?'
B: 3and-i: mu7adarah,
Have-I. 1SG NOM lectures,
'I have a lecture.'

In (3), speaker B uses 'excuse' strategy to imply that he is unwilling to go to the library because he has a lecture to catch.

(4) A: Nour, tistna:-ni: ba3d al-mu7adarah ?
Nour Wait-me after ART-lecture?
'Nour, could you wait me after the lecture?'
B: ?uxt-i: ma3-i: w-lazim 2rawi7
Sister-my with-me. And-should leave
'My sister is with me and I have to leave.'

In (4), Speaker A requests Nour to wait for her, but Nour does not refuse directly; instead, Nour provides a reason that she cannot wait. She cannot wait because her sister was with her and she had to leave.
- Statement of alternative
When the speaker feels that his/her refusal will threaten the face of the hearer, he/she offers a new solution to mitigate the impact of refusal, as illustrated in (5) and (6).

(5) A: i3ti-ni: daftar-ak l-2drus 3li:-h?
Give-me book-GEN to-study on-it
'Give me your notebook to study?'
B: Sawr-ih, 2a7san.
Photocopy. IMP-it better
'It would be better if you photocopy it.'
(6) A: fadi n-ru:7 3la: al café?
free [2SG] 1PL-go to ART café ?
'Are you free to go to the café?'
B: Ahmed fa:di:. t-iqdr t-ru:7 ma3-uh
Ahmed free . 2SG PRS-can 2SG PRS-go with-him
'Ahmed is free, you can go with him.'

Speaker B in (5) refuses the request of his friend indirectly by offering a solution that A may photocopy his notebook. In (6), speaker B refuses to go to the café with A and provides him with a solution as compensation.
- Promise of future acceptance
Speakers may also avoid the potential threat of some FTAs by expressing his/her willingness to cooperate with the hearers by using promises. Promise strategy is a method used to soften refusals by showing the speaker's good intention in satisfying the hearer's face wants. As a strategy, the speaker may make real or false promises. Consider the following example:

(7) A: tiji m3i: 3la: il-sinima:?
Come with-me to ART-cinema?
'Do you want to go with me to the cinema this weekend?'
B: il-2sbu3 iljai bru:7 ma3-ak, aw3d-ak .
Art-week next go with-you , promise-you
'I promise I will go with you next time.'

In 7, speaker A invites B to accompany him to the cinema, but B refuses indirectly by promising him to come with him next week.

- Wish

According to this strategy, Speakers try to save the face of others by wishing that they can adhere to the request, invitation, or offer, as in (8):

(8) A: ma3-ik sha:7in ?
    with-you. F charger?
    'Do you have a charger?'
    B: ya: reat aqdar asa3d-ik
    Oh. Wish can help-you. F
    'Oh, I wish I could help you'

In the previous example, Speaker A asks speaker B for a phone charger, and B refuses to give her using a 'wish' strategy.

- Set condition for future or past acceptance

Speakers may mitigate the influence of their refusals by arguing that they will or would accept the request, invitation, or offer under certain conditions, as it is clear in the following examples:

(9) A: Bed-na nru:7 3la al-qal3ah, shu r2ya-ak?
    Want-we go to Art-castle, what opinion-you?
    'We want to go to the castle, do you want to come with us?'
    B: Law qult-u-li min imba:r7. kan ru7t
    If tell. PST-you-me from yesterday. will. PST go
    'If you told me yesterday, I would go with you'

Speaker B in (9) reduces the impact of his refusal by stating that if speaker A told him before, he would come.

- Avoidance

Speakers may reduce the impact of their refusals by using verbal and non-verbal avoidance. Nonverbal avoidance includes Silence, hesitation, doing nothing, and physical departure. On the other hand, non-verbal avoidance includes topic switch, joke, repetition of part of a request, postponement, and hedging.

(10) A: 2bo-i 3indoh mat3am itha 7ab tishtighil ba3ad il-jam3ah?
    Father-my has restaurant if like [2SG] work. 2 PRS after ART- University?
    'my father has a restaurant if you want to work after university'
    B: Ra7 afkir
    will think. 1SG
    'I will think about it'

The speaker, in example (10), does not refuse directly; nevertheless, he avoids responding to the request of speaker A by using postponement strategy.

- Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

According to Beebe et al. (1990), this strategy includes six sub-strategies: threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester, guilt trip, criticizing the request/requester, request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request, letting the interlocutor off the book, and self-defense. Consider the following example:

(11) A: 2waSl-ak l-il-jam3ah?
    Drop-you to-ART-university?
    'Do you want me to give you a ride to the university?'
    B: La: tghalib 7alak , shukran
    NEG bother yourself thanks
    'You do not have to do it, thanks'

In the previous example, Speaker A offers to give speaker B a ride, but speaker B refuses by letting the speaker off the book. Speaker B refuses indirectly by telling A that he does not have to do it.

(12) A: xali-na: n-i7dar 7aflah bi-mahraja:n jarash.
    Let-us we-attend party at-festival Jerash
    'Let's attend the concert at Jerash festival.'
    B: ma: batwaqa3 in-ha: fikrah kwaysah
    NEG expect.1SG it-is idea good
    'I do not think it is a good idea.'

In 12, instead of refusing the invitation of speaker A directly by saying " I cannot attend the concert", Speaker B minimizes the imposition on speaker A by saying that he believes that it is not a good idea to attend the concert.
- Giving Hints
According to this strategy, the speaker gives the listener a hint or a comment, and the listener should use the knowledge of the world, mutual knowledge, and life experience to understand the hint. Consider the following example in (13):

(13) A: ta3Ti-ni: 10 dana:ni:r?
    Give-me 10 JDs?
    'Can you lend me ten JDs?'
    B: il-ma7fadah bi-l-bayt.
    ART- wallet at-ART- home
    'The wallet is at home.'

In the previous example, speaker A asks B to lend him 10 JDs, and speaker B responds that his wallet is at home. Speaker A depends on life experience to interpret the speaker's response as a refusal. People usually keep money in their wallets. So when speaker B says that he left his wallet at home, it means that he cannot give speaker A the money he asked for. The following example is a case in point:

(14) A: t3a:l xli:-na: n-ishtari: ishi: n-ishrab-uh
    Come. IMP let-us 1PL-buy something 1PL-drink-it
    'Come, let's buy something to drink.'
    B: il-sa:3ah Sa:rt 4
    ART- hour become.PST 4
    'It's four o'clock.'

In (14), speaker A asks B to go with her to have something to drink, and B says that it is 4 o'clock. Speaker A depends on a mutual knowledge between A and B to understand B's response as a refusal. Speaker A knows that A's bus comes at four o'clock, so she has to leave to catch her bus.
c) Complex strategy:
According to this strategy, the speaker refuses an invitation or request by using more than one strategy. The researchers find out that complex strategy is the most used one with 85 occurrences. Consider the following examples:

(15) A: shu: ra2y-ak n-itla3 n-it3asha:?
    What opinion-GEN we-go we-dine?
    'How about going out to have dinner?'
    B: ya: rayt 2qdar .law 7akit-li baki:r
    Oh Wish can .If told-me early
    'I wish I could. If you told me early, I would come.'
(16) A: 7a:b tru:7 m3i: biha:d il2sbu:3 3la: ilsinima:?
    Want.2SG go with-me in-this ART-week to ART-cinema?
    'Do you want to go with me to the cinema this weekend?'
    B: ma aqdar, 2w3d-ak aru:7 ma3-k il-marah il-jaiah.

NEG can [1SG], promise-you go with-you ART-time ART- next
'I cannot, I promise I will go with you next time.'

In 15, speaker B refuses to dine with his friend by using the indirect strategy of 'wish' ya: rayt 2qdar 'I wish I could' and the indirect strategy of 'set condition for future or past acceptance' law 7akit-li baki:r 'If you told me early, I would come'. In 16, Speaker B refuses the invitation of his friend by using one direct strategy by using ma aqdar 'I cannot', and the indirect strategy of 'promise' by saying 2w3d-ak aru:h ma3-k ilmarah iljay 'I promise I will go next time'.

Pragmatic modifiers

The results of the study show that Jordanians depend on external modifiers to reduce the effect of their refusal more than internal modifiers, as shown in the following Table 2:

Type	Frequency
External modifiers	102
b. Sweeteners	7
c. Disarmers	5
d. Grounders	35
f. Apology	30
g. Religious markers	20
h. thanks	5
Internal part of the speech act itself	44
- Syntactic modifiers	19
Past tense	0
Interrogative	9
Passive voice	2
Conditional structure	8
- Lexical modifiers	25
Downtoners	12
Consultatives	6
Politeness markers	7

TABLE 2.
Pragmatic modifiers.
House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989).

a) External modifiers:
External modifiers stand for the utterances located outside the head act of refusal. They include religious markers, thanks, sweeteners, grounders, disarmers, and apology. The data show that the most used pragmatic modifier is 'grounders' with 35 occurrences. However, the data show that 'disarmers' is the least used pragmatic modifier with five occurrences. External modifiers with examples are discussed below:
- Sweeteners
Sweeteners stand for compliments paid for the addressees before or after the refusal, as in the following example:

(17) A: ishtr-i-l-i sanwishah.
Buy-for-me sandwich
'Buy me a sandwich!'
B: ma ma3i: mS:ari ya: qalb-i.
NEG with-me money oh heart-my
'Oh dear, I did not have money'

Speaker B refuses to buy a sandwich for her friend, and she uses endearment expression ja: qalb-i 'oh, my heart' to save the face of the hearer.

- Disarmers

Disarmers were used by Jordanians to indicate that they were aware of the negative impact that results from the refusal. Consider the following example:

(18) A: 2iddras-ni: ma:dit il-al2dab il-2mriki:?
Teach-me subject ART- literature ART-American?
'Could you teach me American Literature?'
B: b3raf ?in-ak bi7a:jat 3lamah minehah l-tnjah, bas ma: baqdar a:sif.
know that-you need mark good to-pass but NEG can sorry
'Um, I understand that you need a good mark to pass the course, but I cannot, sorry.'

Speaker B refuses the request of speaker A by using direct strategy ma: baqdar 'I cannot'. She mitigates the impact of her refusal by using the external pragmatic modifier 'disarmer'. She told her friend that she is aware that he needs a good mark in the exam, but she cannot help him.

- Grounders

This external modifier provides reasons for not accepting or adhering to the request, invitation, or offer of the speaker. Jordanians tend to use a direct strategy; then, they tried to mitigate the influence of their refusals by explaining the causes for their refusals. Consider the following example:

(19) A: Nour, tistna:-ni: ba3d al-mu7adarah ?
Nour Wait-me after ART-lecture?
'Nour, wait after the lecture?'
B: ?uxt-i: ma3-i:
Ma badar l2nuh Sister-my with-me.
'I cannot because my sister is with me.'

Speaker B refuses the request of her friend directly, then saves the face of her friend by explaining the reasons why she can't wait for her.

- Religious markers

Jordanians tend to use many religious markers to mitigate the impact of refusals. They use their markers to make others believe them, as shown in the following example:

(20) A: tru:7-i: m3-i: 3la: maktab il-doctor?
Go-you.SG with-me on office ART- doctor?
'Do you want to come with me to the Doctor's office?'
B: wallah la:zim 2rawi7 ummi tistana-ni
God should go [1SG] mother-GEN wait- me
'I swear, I have to go. My mother waits for me.'

In this example, the speaker refuses to go with her friend to the doctor because she has to go. She tries to reduce the force of the refusal by using wallah 'I swear'. She uses the religious marker wallah 'I swear by God' to make Speaker A believe her.

- Thanks

After refusing invitations or offers, Jordanians may thank others, as shown in the following example:

(21) A: Bed-ak maSari?
Need-you.M money?
'Do you need some money?'
B: La ma bed-i, shukran
NEG, NEG want-I, thanks
'No thanks'

In the previous example, speaker B refuses A's offer directly by saying La: ma: bedi: 'no, I do not want'. The speaker knows that his utterance may threaten the hearer's face, so he thanks speaker A for his offer.

- Apology

Native speakers of Jordanian Arabic tend to apologize before or after performing refusals. Consider the following example:

(22) A: tru:7-i: ma3-na: 3la: 3i:d mi:la:d Huda?
    Go-you.F with-us to celebration birthday Huda?
    'Would you like to go with us to Huda's birthday party?'
    B : yi:i:h, 3nd-i: imti7a:n bukrah, ana a:sif
    Oh, have-I.OBL exam tomorrow, I sorry
    'Oh, I have an exam tomorrow, I am sorry.'

Speaker B refuses to go to Huda's party by using the reason strategy 3nd-i: imti7a:n bukrah 'I have an exam tomorrow'. The speaker also mitigates the negative effect of his utterance by using an apology after the refusal ana: a:sif 'I am sorry.'

b) Internal modifiers

Internal modifiers refer to the expressions located inside the refusal head act. They include syntactic and lexical modifiers. The data show that Jordanians use lexical modifiers more than syntactic modifiers, as shown in Table 2.

b.1) Lexical modifiers

Lexical modifiers refer to the linguistic items used inside the refusal head act to mitigate the impact of a refusal. They include downtoners, consultatives, and politeness markers. The data show that 'downtoners' is the most used lexical modifier used in Jordanian Arabic with 12 occurrences.

- Downtoners

Downtoners refers to lexical modifiers (often adverbs) that mitigate or soften the force of the speech event. The study showed that Jordanians use a range of downtoners, such as yemkin 'possible', i7timal 'probable', bijouz 'might', etc. Consider the following example:

(23) A: Reem bedha tzur-ni bokrah, tiji?
    Reem want visit-me tomorrow, come-2SIG ?
    'Reem wants to visit me tomorrow. Do you want to come?'
    B: I7timal akun mashghul
    Probable will busy
    'It is probable that I will be busy.'

- Consultatives

Consultatives stand for optional items used to consult the addressee's opinion. Consider the following example:

(24) A: Fadi-ah iljum3ah 2aw ilsabat?
    Free-2SNG F Friday or Saturday?
    'Are you free Friday or Saturday?'
    B: xali-ha il-2sbu3 il-jai 2a7san, shu ra2y-ak?
    Leave-it ART-week ART-next better, what opinion-your
    'Next week would be better. What do you think?'

In the previous example, speaker A invited speaker B to hang-out with him. However, speaker B refuses the invitation by suggesting an alternative date. She also mitigates her refusal by consulting Speaker A using the consultative shu ra2y-ak? 'What do you think?'

- Politeness markers

Politeness markers refer to optional elements added to bid for co-operative behavior. Jordanians used 3afwan'sorry' and u3thirni 'sorry' to mitigate the impact of the speech event, as shown in the following example:

(25) A: mumkin ta3tini raqam telefon-ik?
Could give-me number phone-GEN F
'Could you give me your phone number?'
B: Ma baqdar u3dhirni
NEG can sorry
'I cannot, sorry'
b.2) Syntactic modifiers

Native speakers of Jordanian Arabic adopt many syntactic devices, such as conditional structures, interrogatives, and passive voice structures, to decrease the negative force of the refusal.

- Conditional constructions

Conditional structures reduce the negative effect of refusals because these structures do not force the hearer to do something in the real world. Consider the following example:

(26) A: tru:7 3la qal3at 3ajloun?
Go.you to castle Ajloun?
'Do you want to go to Ajloun castle?
B: Law qult-u-li min imbar7. kan ru7t
If tell. PST-you-me from yesterday. will. PST go
'If you told me yesterday, I would go with you.'

Speaker B in (26) reduces the impact of his refusal by using /law/ 'if' construction. He states that if he was told before, he would go to the castle.

- Interrogatives

Jordanians use interrogatives to refuse requests, invitations, and offers indirectly, as shown in the following example:

(27) A: Tishrab qagwah?
Drink.2SIG coffee?
'Do you want to have some coffee?'
B: Laesh ma n-ishrab shai ?
Why NEG we-drink tea?
'Why do not we have tea instead?'

Speaker B refuses the invitation of A by suggesting having tea instead. He uses the interrogative structure to mitigate the impact of his utterance.

- Passive structures

The study shows that Jordanians used passive structures to displace the hearer from the speech event, as illustrated in the following example:

(28) A: Keif-ik Enas, 7ani:n maridah . tru7-i 3li-ha?
How-you.F Enas, 7anin sick, go-2SG F to-her?
'How are you Enas. Hanen was sick. Do you want to visit her?'
B: Law itxabart, kan zurt-ha
If tell. PST. Passive, was visit-her
'If I was told, I would like to visit her.'

Speaker B uses the passive structure to save the face of the hearer.

The analysis of the data shows that these results are in line with Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. It seems that Jordanians understand that refusals are face-threatening acts, so they use different strategies to express politeness. Jordanians depend on complex strategies to perform refusals as a way to mitigate the impact of a refusal event. This tells us that Jordanians do not feel that it is enough to use one strategy.

The corpus also shows that Jordanians tend to use many pragmatic modifiers to mitigate the impact of their utterance. They do not use the direct strategies of refusals without pragmatic modifiers. This suggests that

Jordanians are very polite in performing refusals. What makes the Jordanian very polite comes the fact that Jordanians do not refuse directly by using the performative 2rfud 'I refuse'. They depend mainly on complex strategies, and if they have to refuse directly, they use pragmatic modifiers, especially external modifiers. The fact the Jordanians prefer to use more than one strategy and their preference for external pragmatic modifiers is not a strange finding because Jordanians tend to repeat their words. Feghali (1997), for example, argues that the Arabic discourse is elaborative and complex. Samovar and Porter (1991) suggest that native speakers of Arabic use many words to express one single idea. Thus, repetition is part of politeness norms in Jordanian Arabic.

The study also finds out that the most used indirect strategy in the data is 'reason, excuse, and explanation'. This result is consistent with Al-Issa (1998) study, which suggests that Jordanians used explanations and reasons more than any other strategy. It seems that Jordanians prefer to provide reasons for their refusals. It is also found that Jordanians use many religious expressions to mitigate their utterance, which reflects the impact of Islamic culture on their language.

Conclusion

This paper aimed at investigating refusal strategies and pragmatic modifiers used in Jordanian Arabic. The findings of the study proved that the politeness strategies of refusal, that used by undergraduate students at Al Balqa Applied University, agree with the face-saving theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). The study showed that Jordanians used many refusal strategies and pragmatic modifiers to save the face of others. The study revealed that Jordanians used direct, indirect, and complex strategies, but the most preferred strategy was the complex one. Besides, the study found that the most used direct strategy was 'non-performative', while the most frequent indirect strategy was 'reason, excuse, and explanation'. The paper also showed that Jordanians used many pragmatic modifiers to reduce the negative impact of their refusals. The data showed that Jordanians adopted external modifiers more than internal modifiers. The study found that the most used external modifier is 'grounders'. The analysis of the data showed that culture affected the use of strategies and pragmatic modifiers. For example, Jordanians were influenced by Islamic culture; thus, they used many religious expressions as pragmatic modifiers. The study concluded that Jordanians were very polite in performing the speech act of refusal.

Appendices

Direct strategies	A. Performative (e.g., 'I refuse.') B. Non-performative 1. 'No' 2. Negative willingness/ability (e.g., 'I can't' 'I don't think so')
Indirect strategies	A. Statement of regret (e.g., "I'm sorry. . .") B. Wish (e.g., "I wish I could help you. . .") C. Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g., "I have a headache.") D. Statement of alternative 1. I can do X instead of Y (e.g., "I'd prefer. . .") E. Set condition for future or past acceptance (e.g., "If you had asked me earlier, I would have. . .") F. Promise of future acceptance (e.g., "I promise I'll. . ." G. Statement of principle (e.g., "I never do business with friends.") H. Statement of philosophy (e.g., "One can't be too careful.") I. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor 1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (e.g., "I won't be any fun tonight" to reuse an invitation) 2. Guilt trip (e.g., waitress to customers who want to sit a while: "I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.") 3. Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling) 4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request. 5. Let interlocutor off the book (e.g., "That's okay) 6. Self-defense (e.g., "I am trying my best.") J. Acceptance that functions as a refusal 1. Unspecific or indefinite reply 2. Lack of enthusiasm K. Avoidance 1. Nonverbal a. Silence b. Hesitation c. Do nothing d. Physical departure 2. Verbal a. Topic switch b. Joke c. Repetition of part of request, etc. (e.g., "Monday?") d. Postponement (e.g., "I'll think about it.") e. Hedging (e.g., "I'm not sure.")

APPENDIX 1
Classification of refusals by Beebe et al. (1990)

Type	Characteristics
1. External modifiers	Utterances that occur before or after the head acts.
a. Perpetrators	Utterances that the speaker uses to lead the hearer onto the issue he/she is going to raise.
b. Sweeteners	Compliments or positive remarks paid for the hearer before or after the refusal.
c. Disarmers	Used to show the speaker's awareness of the offense.
d. Grounders	The reasons behind the refusal
f. Apology	All expressions used to express apology
g. Religious markers	Religious expressions used before or after refusal speech act.
2. Internal part of the speech act itself	Syntactic or lexical mitigating devices located within the speech act
a. Syntactic modifiers Past tense	Syntactic devices used to reduce the effects of the offensive act.
Interrogative Passive voice	Interrogative structures
Conditional structures	All devices that provide conditions
b. Lexical modifiers	Lexical and phrasal choices used to mitigate the force of utterance.
Downtoners	Sentence modifiers which are used by the speakers to reduce the impositive force of his or her criticism.
Consultatives	Optional devices explicitly consulting the hearer's opinion.
Politeness markers	optional elements like 'please'.

APPENDIX 2
Pragmatic modifiers

References

Abdul Sattar, H. Q., Che Lah, S., & Suleiman, R. R. (2010). A study on strategies used to refuse suggestions in Iraqi Arabic. *International On-Line Research Journal: Language, Society and Culture, 30*, 81-95.

Abed, A. Q. (2011). Pragmatic transfer in Iraqi EFL learners' refusals. *International Journal of English Linguistics, 1*(2), 166-185. Doi: 10.5539/ijel.v1n2p166.

Al-Dawsari, M. (2013). *Refusal strategies in najdi saudi arabic dialect* (Master's Thesis). Yarmouk University, Jordan.

Al-Issa, A. (1998). *Socio-pragmatic transfer in the performance of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners: evidence and motivating factors* (Ph. D. Dissertation). University of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania.

Al-Kahtani, S. A. (2005). Refusals realizations in three different cultures: a speech act theoretically-based cross-cultural study. *Journal of King Saud University, 18*(1), 35-57.

Al-Khatib, M. (2006). The pragmatics of Invitation Making and Acceptance in Jordanian Society. *Journal of Language and Linguistics, 5*(2), 272-294.

Allami, H., & Naeimi, A. (2011). A cross-linguistic study of refusals: an analysis of pragmatic competence development in Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*(1), 385-406. Doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.010

Asmalı, M. (2013). Cross-cultural comparison of non-native speakers' refusal strategies in English. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies, 1*(3), 110-135.

Beebe, L.M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In C. Scarcela, E. Anderson, & D. Krashen (Eds.), *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (p. 55-73). New York, NY: Newbury House.

Beebe, L. M., & Cummings, M. C. (1996). Natural speech act data versus written questionnaire data: How data collection method affects speech act performance. In S. M. Gass, & J. Neu (Ed.), *Speech acts across cultures: challenges to communication in a second language* (p. 65- 86). Belin, DE; New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter.

Blum-Kulka, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics, 11*(2), 131-146.

Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: requests and apologies*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Bulut, D. (2003). Saying 'no' in a foreign language: can you really do it? *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal, 11*(3), 247-270.

Brown, P., & Levinson, P. (1978). *Politeness: some universals in language usage*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Çapar, M. (2014). How do Turkish EFL learners say 'no'?. *International Journal of Language Academy, 2*(3), 262-282. Doi: 10.18033/ijla.121.

Chang, Y-F. (2009). How to say no: An analysis of cross--cultural difference and pragmatic transfer. *Language Sciences, 31*(4), 477-493. doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2008.01.002.

Danet, B. (1980). Language in the legal process. *Law and Society Review, 14*(3), 445-564.

Delen, B., & Tavil, Z. M. (2010). Evaluation of four coursebooks in terms of three speech acts: requests, refusals and complaints. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 9*(1), 692-697. Doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.219.

Feghali, E. (1997). Arab cultural communication patterns. *International Journal Intercultural Relations, 21*(3), 345-378.

Genç, Z. S., & Tekyıldız, O. (2009). Use of refusal strategies by Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English in urban and rural areas. *Asian EFL Journal, 11*(3), 299-328.

Han, T., & Burgucu-Tazegül, A. (2016). Realization of speech acts of refusals and pragmatic competence by turkish EFL learners. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal, 16*(1), 161-178.

House, J., & Kasper, G. (1981). Politeness markers in english and german. In F. Coulmas (Ed.), *Conversational routine: explorations in standardized communication situations and pre-patterned speech* (p. 157–185). New York, NY: Mouton Publishers.

Kreishan, L. (2018). Politeness and speech acts of refusal and complaint among jordanian undergraduate student's. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 7*(4), 68-76.

Kwon, J. (2004). Expressing refusals in korean and in american english. *Multilingua - Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication, 23*(4), 339-364. Doi: 10.1515/mult.2004.23.4.339

Lee, H. (2013). The influence of social situations on fluency difficulty in Korean EFL learners' oral refusals. *Journal of Pragmatics, 50*(1), 168-186. Doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2013.01.002

Lin, M. F. (2014). An interlanguage pragmatic study on Chinese EFL learners' refusal: perception and performance. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 5*(3), 642-653.

Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics*. London, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Morkus, N. (2014). Refusals in Egyptian Arabic and American English. *Journal of Pragmatics, 70*(1), 86-107. Doi: 1016/j.pragma.2014.06.001

Saeed, J. (1997). *Semantics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publisher.

Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (1991). *Communication between Cultures*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub.

Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Searle, J. R., & Vanderveken, D. (1985). *Foundations of illocutionary logic.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Shishavan, H. B., & Sharifian, F. (2016). The refusal speech act in a cross-cultural perspective: A study of Iranian English-language learners and Anglo-Australian speakers. *Language & Communication, 47*(1), 75-88.

Shokouhi, H., & Khalili, M. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in learners' refusals: a case of gender distinction. *Journal of the Faculty of Literature & Humanities, Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz, 2*(1), 215-252.

Valipour, S., & Jadidi, S. (2014). Study of iranian english language teachers' familiarity with language functions in request, apology, refusal, and greeting. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning, 4*(1), 13-30. Doi: 10.5861/ijrsll.2014.712

Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals. *RELC Journal, 39*(3), 318-337.