



L1 Sociocultural Transfer In Algerian EFL Learners' Refusals To Requests And Offers: Evidence, Characteristics, And Motivating Factors

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Abstract

The present study examines sociocultural transfer in Algerian EFL learners' refusals to requests and offers. The written Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and retrospective interviews were used to gather data from three groups: 32 Algerian native speakers of Arabic (NASs), 42 Algerian EFL learners, and 18 American native speakers of English (NESs). The performance of these groups was compared to detect the differences in refusals realized by Algerians and Americans as well as the characteristics of sociocultural transfer in EFL learners' refusals. The findings suggest that L1 sociocultural norms were sometimes transferred to L2. This transfer was observed at the level of semantic formulas' choice and content. It was found that opting for directness to guarantee clarity, avoiding positive opinions and postponements to avoid misunderstandings of later compliance, giving detailed explanations to save face, using gratitude expressions abundantly due to the value of thankfulness in the Algerian culture are the characteristics and motives of this sociocultural transfer.

Keywords: Refusals; L1 sociocultural transfer; requests; offers.

1. Introduction

Algerian English learners frequently encounter challenges in accurately expressing refusals due to the impact of their native sociocultural norms and values. In the realm of EFL learning, the phenomenon of sociocultural transfer from learners' L1 to the target language remains an area ripe for exploration. Understanding how cultural backgrounds shape learners' choices in L2 communication is vital for effective teaching and development of communicative competence. This study delves into the complex dynamics of sociocultural transfer from L1 in Algerian EFL learners' refusals to requests and offers. By examining the evidence, characteristics, and motivating factors driving such transfer, this research illuminates the intricate interplay between language, culture, and communication strategies. This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. How likely is it for Algerian EFL learners to transfer sociocultural rules and norms from L1 to L2 when realizing refusals to requests and offers?
2. What are the characteristics and motives of this sociocultural transfer?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Refusals

The act of refusal is produced as a response to four kinds of initiating acts: suggestion, offer, request and invitation rather than being uttered as an initiating turn on the part of the speaker (Gass & Houck, 1999). It is an act by which a speaker turns down to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor (Chen et al., 1995). It is a face-threatening act because it is against the interlocutor's expectation. According to Beebe et al. (1990), this act involves interpersonal negotiation. It refers to the utterances that the listeners do not want to hear, which require the speakers to offer support to help them keep away from embarrassment (Beebe et al., 1990). On this account, refusals require a high level of sociocultural competence.

2.2. Sociocultural Transfer

Sociocultural transfer, as described by Wolfson (1989), can lead to inappropriate performance in L2. It occurs when speakers apply the cultural norms and rules of their L1 to L2 (Kasper, 1992). Research on sociocultural transfer has explored various speech acts across different languages, demonstrating its impact on L2 speech performance (Jaworski, 1994; He, 1998; Hassall, 2003; Byon, 2004; Huth, 2006). Kasper (1992) categorizes this transfer into positive and negative forms. Positive transfer occurs when the rules and conventions of language use are similar between L1 and L2. Conversely, negative transfer occurs when the knowledge of L1 differs from that of L2.

2.3. Previous Studies on Sociocultural Transfer in Refusals

Beebe and his research partners (Beebe & Cummings, 1985; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990) conducted several investigations on refusals comparing refusals of Japanese ESL learners, NESs, and native Japanese speakers. Participants were required to fill in a DCT in which they were asked to give rejections in four types of situations: requests, invitations, offers and suggestions. The study's data were examined from three perspectives: the frequency of semantic formulas, their order, and their content. The results revealed differences in the use of refusal strategies between native Japanese speakers and Japanese ESL learners compared to NESs, suggesting the existence of sociocultural transfer.

Similar results emerged in other studies. Wang and Li (2007), for example, examine Chinese students' performance of refusals. They found that Americans provided more specific excuses such as "I'm going to the theater with my friend in an hour" and "I'll have to have dinner with my mum on Sunday". Native Chinese and Chinese EFL learners, on the contrary, tended to avoid specificity. Native Chinese speakers used expressions like "wo you dian ji shi" (I have some other things to deal with) and "wo hen mang" (I'm busy). This suggests that in terms of refusal strategies' content, Chinese EFL learners were prone to transferring their L1 expressions to the TL.

In an earlier study, Al-Issa (2003) investigates sociocultural transfer in refusals among Jordanian EFL learners. The study aimed to determine if this transfer from Arabic to English was evident in the realized speech acts and to probe into the factors that would contribute to it. Data were captured from 150 participants (including Jordanian advanced EFL learners, Jordanian NASs, and American NESs) and analyzed employing semantic formulas as units of analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the Jordanian EFL group to identify the motivating factors. The results indicated evidence of sociocultural transfer in the refusals by Jordanian EFL learners, particularly in the frequency, choice, average, and specific content of semantic formulas. With regard to contributing factors, a number of motives were identified, including the lack of exposure to the TL authentic input, learners' love and pride in their L1 as well as religious beliefs.

In another study, Kwon (2003) scrutinizes the existence of sociocultural transfer in the refusals realized by Korean EFL learners across three different proficiency levels. Forty native Korean speakers, 37 NESs, and

111 Korean EFL learners (22 beginners, 43 intermediate, and 46 advanced) took part in this study. A written DCT was employed to gather data, eliciting refusals from interlocutors of varying statuses. Sociocultural transfer was detected in the refusals of the three proficiency levels. However, it increased as learners' proficiency level advanced. Advanced-level students' refusals resembled those of native Korean speakers because they had linguistic resources which enabled them to transfer the semantic formulas from L1 to the TL.

Last but not least, Sahin (2011) examines the refusals of American NESs, native speakers of Turkish and Turkish advanced EFL learners. This study aimed to investigate the refusal strategies of the three groups and to find out if the Turkish EFL learners exhibit sociocultural transfer in their refusals. Hence, data were collected using a DCT, analysis was carried out manually, and refusals were coded. CLAN (Computerized Language ANalysis) CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System) was employed to identify the typical combinations of refusal semantic formulas realized by the three groups. Subsequently, PASW (Predictive Analytics SoftWare) was employed for descriptive statistics, calculating the frequency and percentages of refusal strategies as well as semantic formulas. The results showed that refusals and the management of rapport in refusals to status-equal interlocutors are culture- and situation-specific, differing both cross-culturally and intra-culturally. Results also revealed that the Turkish EFL learners often realize pragmatically appropriate refusals their refusal strategies correspond to those of NESs. There were, however, some instances in which the evidence of sociocultural transfer was detected in the frequency of certain semantic formulas.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The sample of this study comprised three groups: The first group consisted of 32 participants of NASs. They are third year students at the Department of Sociology and Demography, Batna 1 University. Their responses provide L1— i.e. Arabic— baseline data. The second group consisted of 18 participants of NESs. They are American undergraduate and graduate students who major in different fields at three different Chinese universities. Their responses provide the TL baseline data. The third group consisted of 42 Algerian EFL learners. They are students of second year at the English department of Batna 2 University who have been studying English for 8 years on average and none of them has ever been to an English-speaking country. Their responses provide the IL baseline data.

It is worth mentioning that the three groups enjoy age homogeneity but lack gender homogeneity. Regarding age, the calculation of the mean in these groups gave the following results: NASs (21.19), NESs (23.76), and EFL learners (21.25). As far as gender is concerned, females outnumbered males in the three groups by chance: NASs (Males: 11, females: 21), NESs (Males: 6, females: 12), EFL learners (Males: 9, females: 33). Gender is not considered a variable in this study though it may be influential in such studies.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using a DCT which refers to “written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study” (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). In the present study, two versions of DCT were provided: An English version for NESs and Algerian EFL learners and an Arabic one for NASs. The DCT was employed because it enables researchers to collect a large amount of data in a short period. Moreover, it is easily controlled by researchers. There were altogether six situations offered in this test. Participants were asked to give rejections to requests and offers. These two initiating acts were chosen in particular because they are, in the researcher's eyes, the most face-threatening refusal initiating acts among the four acts. Variations in the six situations included: social status, social

distance the rating of imposition. For every eliciting act, the refusal was made to interlocutors of higher, equal, or lower status.

In addition to data elicited from the DCT, retrospective interviews were conducted with four subjects from each group. The rationale for employing these interviews was to gain data about the participants' perceptions of the situations and their production of refusals.

3.3. Data coding and analysis

Data collected from the DCT were coded on the basis of semantic formulas using a coding scheme adapted from Beebe et al. (1990). Cohen (1996) explains the semantic formula as "a word, phrase, or sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question". For example, in the following refusal of a teaching assistantship offer "I'd really love to teach but this term is hard for me. Thank you very much", we can detect three refusal strategies: "I'd really love to teach" is a positive feeling, "but this term is hard for me" is an explanation, and "Thank you very much" is a gratitude.

To assure the reliability of coding, two Algerian raters (the researcher herself and an EFL lecturer from the English department of Batna 2 University) coded data obtained from NASs group and EFL learners and two English native speakers coded the data collected from NESs. It is worth mentioning here that the responses produced by NASs are translated into English and those made by Algerian EFL learners are presented as they are without any corrections.

After coding, the frequencies of the semantic formulas were calculated to figure out the differences between the three groups and hence decide whether or not sociocultural transfer exists in the responses of Algerian EFL learners' group. The frequency of semantic formulas refers to the number of occurrences of a specific semantic formula in each situation within each of the groups. It is calculated by dividing the number of participants using one specific strategy in one situation on the number of participants in each group and then multiplying the result by 100%.

Sociocultural transfer is likely to occur when the frequency of semantic formulas show any of the following situations:

1. The frequency of a strategy employed by the NASs is the highest and the frequency of responses by EFL learners' group is also higher than that of the NESs.
2. The frequency of a strategy used by the NASs is the lowest and the frequency of responses by the EFL learners' group is also lower than that of the NESs.
3. The frequency of one strategy used by NASs and EFL learners' group are equal or almost equal while the frequency of the responses by NESs group is higher or lower than NASs and EFL learners' groups.
4. Both NASs and EFL learners use one strategy that NESs never use.
5. NESs employ one strategy that neither NASs nor EFL learners employ.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Semantic Formulas' Frequency

4.1.1. Refusals to Requests

Table 1. The three most frequently employed refusal strategies to requests

NASs	EFL learners	NESs
1. Explanation (89%)	1. Explanation (92%)	1. Explanation (76%)

Higher	2. Negative ability (47%) 3. Regret (41%)	2. Negative ability (51%) 3. Regret, statement of alternative (39%)	2. Statement of alternative (60%) 3. Regret (51%)
Equal	1. Negative ability (87%) 2. Explanation (75 %) 3. Regret, statement of alternative (29%)	1. Negative ability (93%) 2. Explanation (59%) 3. Regret (35%)	1. Explanation (83%) 2. Regret (49%) 3. Statement of alternative (24%)
Lower	1. Regret (91%) 2. Negative ability (77%) 2. Explanation, future acceptance, statement of alternative (60%)	1. Regret (87%) 2. Negative ability (67%) 3. Explanation, future acceptance, statement of alternative (59%)	1. Regret (69%) 2. Explanation (38%) 3. Positive feeling (28%)

When refusing a teacher's request to answer an open-ended questionnaire, all the groups used explanation the most. However, its content varied largely. Responses of NESs were specific (e.g., "I have a meeting with my advisor after 10 minutes") but those of NASs and EFL learners were general (e.g., "I have something important", "I've to go now"). Interestingly, negative ability was the second most frequently employed by NASs and EFL learners but not used by NESs.

In refusing a graduate learner's request to borrow a PC, NASs and EFL learners used the strategy of negative ability the most frequently whereas NESs employed explanation. The common feature in all the responses of the three groups is that they were long. For the two groups of NASs and EFL learners, negative ability was used along with explanation and regret in most of the cases. A respondent, for example, said "I'm in a hurry. I have to submit a homework tomorrow. I can't. I'm really sorry." Another one said, "I have to make some corrections in the final copy of my thesis and show it to my supervisor today. If I were not in a hurry, I would have lended it to you right now". Sociocultural transfer can be observed here. The ELF learners' group utilized negative ability as did the NASs whereas the NESs group used this strategy the least frequently.

When refusing a junior student's request for an interview, all the groups used regret the most frequently. However, regret was directly followed by negative ability in the NASs and EFL learners' refusals but with explanation in the NESs'. For example, one participant of the NESs group said, 'I'm terribly sorry. I'm quite busy. I have a class right now'. The use of negative ability by the NASs and EFL learners and its absence in the NESs' refusals is evidence of sociocultural transfer. In this situation, sociocultural transfer was also observed through the use of future acceptance and statement of alternative by NASs and EFL learners only. For instance, NASs said, "Sorry, I don't have enough time. Next time maybe inshaaAllah. Maybe those students there can answer it". EFL learners said, "I'm afraid I can't help. I'm so sorry. I have to go back home before I miss the bus. I hope I can help next time. Maybe you can interview other students who are still staying here".

4.1.2. Refusals to Offers

The three most frequently employed refusal strategies to offers

	NASs	EFL learners	NESs
Higher	1. Explanation (93%) 2. Negative ability (60%) 3. Gratitude (57%)	1. Explanation (90%) 2. Negative ability (63%) 3. Gratitude (51%)	1. Statement of regret (86%) 2. Explanation (73%) 3. Positive feeling, postponement (47%)
Equal	1. Gratitude (94%) 2. No (83%) 3. Explanation (46%)	1. Gratitude (97%) 2. No (61%) 3. Explanation (47%)	1. No (91%) 2. Gratitude (79%) 3. Explanation (55%)
Lower	1. Gratitude (97%) 2. No (85%)	1. Gratitude (91%) 2. No (80%)	1. No (95%) 2. Gratitude (93%)

Declining an advisor's proposal for a teaching assistant position, NASs and EFL learners used explanation the most frequently while NESs used statement of regret the most frequently. For example, a respondent from the NESs group said, "Unfortunately, I'm not fan of teaching". A respondent from the NASs group said, "I do not have enough ability to teach this course. I am not ready for this task now" while a participant from the EFL learners' group responded, "I'm busy preparing for the final exams and working on my dissertation. I don't think I can make the two ends meet". Interestingly, the long expressions of gratitude are abundant in NASs' and EFL learners' refusals but absent in those of NESs. This can be considered evidence of sociocultural transfer. Examples of such gratitude expressions include "It's such an honor to have this opportunity. I'm grateful for this offer" and "I do appreciate this. I'm very pleased to be invited by to be your assistant, professor." The strategy of statement of alternative was used by the NESs only.

In declining a classmate's offer of a ride, the three groups were similar in terms of the refusal strategies used. These strategies encompassed gratitude, no, and explanation. Unlike the refusals in the other situations, those of the present situation were brief. Examples include "No, thanks a lot", "I almost arrived", and "No need, thank you". Those of NESs were the briefest in this situation. Interestingly, NASs and the EFL learners used No much less frequently than did the NESs. The EFL learners' explanation, however, appeared to be slightly lengthier when compared to the explanations given by the other two groups (e.g., "I have to go to the book store first to look for some handouts").

Unlike the previous situations, all the groups employed only two refusal strategies in the third situation: Gratitude and no. Moreover, these refusals were the briefest. Unlike the NESs group which used No the most frequently, the other two groups used gratitude the most frequently followed by No. Interestingly, the refusals of this situation were the briefest. NESs, for instance said, "No. Thanks" and NAs said, "Thanks a lot. No". Based on the retrospective interviews, this scenario is considered the simplest due to the social distance between the interlocutors, making it a more impersonal situation. Based on the retrospective interviews, this scenario is considered the simplest due to the social distance between the interlocutors, making it a more impersonal situation.

4.2. Use of Direct Strategies

When refusing requests, NESs were less direct than NASs and EFL learners. NESs used explanation the most frequently for higher and equal status interlocutors and regret for lower status ones. They hardly used negative ability which was the second most frequently employed strategy by NASs and EFL learners when refusing requests of higher and lower status interlocutors and the most frequently employed when refusing equal status refusals. The avoidance of direct strategies by NESs is probably due to the fact that they consider the face of the interlocutor (Brown & Levinson, 1987). They wish to avoid causing any emotional distress. NASs and

EFL learners, on the other hand, gave clarity the priority. The follow-up interview revealed this probability. One of the EFL interviewees said, “Sometimes, you have to say directly that you cannot do something so that you put like final dot so that you do not leave any possibility for the hearer to misunderstand you”.

While negative ability expresses a certain degree of straightforwardness, it is, in fact, less direct than no which was not used by the three groups in refusing a request no matter what the interlocutors’ status was. Considering that religion and culture are tightly interrelated. The way of avoiding saying No is most probably cultural. According to a follow-up interview, the respondents from the NASs and EFL learners’ groups expressed similar opinions concerning this. One from the NASs said, “That is, it is inappropriate to say no in a rude way because our religion says so”. This interviewee referred to the verse “And as for the petitioner, do not repel [him] » and used it in the sense that if a needy person asks for help, if you can help, you should help him; if you cannot, you should apologize politely, but should never scold him.

No, placed on top of direct strategies was often used by the three groups especially in refusals to offers from equal and lower status interlocutors. NESs explained this by saying that it is normal to say No to offers from friends and strangers even if they are of a lower status because this situation is impersonal. On the contrary, NASs and EFL learners were more direct in refusing offers from interlocutors of higher status as they employed negative ability very often. As the follow-up interview showed, this was due to prioritizing clarity due to the importance and seriousness of teaching-assistantship offer.

4.3. Use of Indirect Strategies

NASs and EFL learners were indirect in refusing offers from equal and lower status interlocutors as gratitude was the most frequently employed strategy. In using it, the respondents expressed thanks and appreciation to the interlocutor even of equal and lower status. This might be due to the value of gratitude and thankfulness in the Algerian culture. One EFL learner, for instance, commented, “We have to be grateful for God’s blessings. And we should also be grateful for peoples’ offers.” In the follow-up interview, all NESs interviewees said that they thanked the classmate only because he is a friend. They clarified that in the American culture, it is unnecessary to thank friends for offers. They also said that they employed gratitude when refusing a classmate’s offer of ride to close the conversation.

Interestingly, explanation was used by NESs in one situation only whereas it was abundantly employed by NASs and EFL learners. This may be culturally explained. It is not the norm that Americans explain a lot when refusing offers. Conversely, giving elaborated explanations when refusing offers is rooted in the Algerian culture. One respondent, for example, said, “If someone offers you something and you refused it then your refusal has to be well grounded. I mean you have to make it perfectly clear that you refuse for a particular reason.” What is more interesting is that unlike NESs who gave unspecific explanations, those of NASs and EFL learners were long and detailed.

Furthermore, in this study, only NESs used positive feeling such as “I’d like to but...” and postponement such as “I’ll think about it”. This is similar to Liao and Bresnahan (1996) where Americans used these two strategies more often than Chinese participants. Algerian respondents do not express positive opinions and postponements in their refusals as they might be afraid that if they do, they will be forced to comply. In refusing a teacher’s teaching assistantship offer, they preferred to use gratitude in order to mitigate their refusals especially that this type of offer is a privilege since it is a rare practice in the Algerian universities.

4.4. Evidence of Sociocultural Transfer

The abundant use of the strategy of negative ability by members of the two Algerian groups when refusing requests and its absence in the refusals of NESs is a strong evidence of sociocultural transfer. As already explained, this might be due to the fact they Algerians prioritize clarity.

Situation 1:

NA 7: أنا حقا آسف. لا أستطيع. لا بد لي من تقديم واجب منزلي غدا. (I'm in a hurry. I have to submit a homework tomorrow. I can't. I'm really sorry)

EFL 11: I have to make some corrections in the final copy of my thesis and show it to my supervisor today. If I were not in a hurry, I would have lended it to you right now, but now I can't. I'm so sorry.

Situation 3:

NA 8: حقا لا أستطيع الإجابة الآن. لدي فصل الآن والمعلم لا يسمح للطلاب المتأخرين بالحضور (Really I can't answer now. I have a class right now and the teacher does not allow late students to come in.)

EFL 13: Unfortunately, I can't answer now. I have to attend a lecture now.

Sociocultural transfer was also observed in the use of the strategies future acceptance and statement of alternative by NASs and EFL learners when responding to requests from lower status interlocutors. This reflects a native Algerian cultural rule. Senior members should provide help and support to juniors, especially when it comes to giving knowledge. When juniors ask for assistance in educational settings, a senior should not decline. Nevertheless, it is acceptable to decline with a valid excuse, while expressing a willingness to help if approached again in the future.

Situation 3:

NA 9: آسف ، ليس لدي الوقت الكافي. ربما في المرة القادمة إن شاء الله. ربما يستطيع هؤلاء الطلاب الإجابة عليها (Sorry, I don't have enough time. Next time maybe inshaaAllah. Maybe those students there can answer it.)

EFL 5: "I'm afraid I can't help. I'm so sorry. I have to go back home before I miss the bus. I hope I can help next time. Maybe you can interview other students who are still staying here"

Sociocultural transfer was not detected in the choice of refusal strategies only but in their content too. When refusing the teaching assistantship offer, NASs and EFL learners were likely to give such excuses as being engaged in other commitments, (e.g., "I'm busy revising for my final exams") or not competent enough to do it such (e.g., "I do not think I have the necessary capacities to do it"). NESs, on the other hand, gave more honest reasons "I think teaching is not my cup of tea". The act of downgrading their ability might be due to the cultural value placed on modesty in the Algerian society.

Situation 4:

NA 17: أنا مشغول بالتحضير للامتحانات النهائية والعمل على رسالتي. لا أعتقد أنني أستطيع التوفيق بين الأمرين (I do not have enough ability to teach this course. I am not ready for this task now)

EFL 12: "I'm busy preparing for the final exams and working on my dissertation. I don't think I can make the two ends meet".

5. Conclusion, Pedagogical Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study scrutinized sociocultural transfer in Algerian EFL learners' refusals to requests and offers. It was found that they transfer their Algerian socio-cultural norms into both the choice of refusal strategies and the content of semantic formulae. EFL learners preferred clarity which made them more direct in refusing others compared to American English speakers. Moreover, they gave long and detailed explanations as excuses as did NASs. This investigation contributes to cross-cultural communication by highlighting differences between Algerian and American native speakers regarding refusal patterns. Awareness of these patterns can help both groups of people avoid communication breakdowns, particularly in face-threatening speech acts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the present research has implications for the development of intercultural communicative competence:

- To achieve proficiency in the TL, learners need exposure not only to correct grammatical forms but also to L2 sociocultural rules.

- Lessons should incorporate the speech act of refusal within various cultural contexts.
- Teachers should employ audiovisual materials featuring contextually appropriate forms, coupled with regular practice of prefabricated expressions. It is crucial to emphasize that mastering intercultural competence does not require learners to assimilate into the target culture; instead, they should develop awareness and sensitivity when using L2.

It is crucial to highlight that the present study specifically examines two social variables: status and distance. Subsequent research endeavors could explore additional social variables, including age, gender, and formality level. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that it relies on the DCT, a tool that potentially generate data that differs from naturally occurring situations. Future investigations might consider analyzing data from a corpus of naturally spoken language or adopt an ethnographic approach to enhance our comprehension of refusals in authentic settings.

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Appendix: Classification of Refusal Strategies

a. Direct strategies: Direct denial of compliance without reservation

1. 'No'
2. Negative willingness/ability (e.g., 'I can't'; 'I won't'; 'I don't think so')

b. Indirect strategies

1. Regret: Utterances expressing regret (e.g., 'I'm sorry'; 'I feel terrible')
2. Positive opinion/feeling or agreement (e.g., 'That's a good idea'; 'I wish I could help you but...')
3. Excuse, reason and explanation: Explaining a reason for noncompliance
4. Statement of alternative: Suggesting other alternatives or possibilities in order to maintain a positive relationship with the interlocutor (e.g., 'I can do X instead of Y'; 'Why don't you do X instead of Y?')
5. Future acceptance: Using the promise to delay acceptance (e.g., 'I'll do it next time'; 'I promise I'll...')
6. Statement of negative consequences (e.g., 'It's your grade, not mine')
7. Criticism (e.g., 'That's a terrible idea!')
8. Letting interlocutor off the hook (e.g., 'Don't worry about me. You go and have fun')
9. Self-defence (e.g., 'It is not because I don't want to listen to your opinion')
10. Acceptance that functions as refusal: Unspeci_c or inde_nite reply or lack of enthusiasm (e.g., 'I'll do that when I have time')
11. Avoidance: Avoiding direct response to proposed act
 - 11.1. Topic switch (e.g., 'Now let's go back to Chapter One')
 - 11.2. Hedging (e.g., 'Gee, I don't know'; 'I'm not sure')
 - 11.3. Joke (e.g., 'I like walking in the rain')
 - 11.4. Questioning (e.g., 'How do you expect me to answer you?')
 - 11.5. Postponement (e.g., 'I'll think about it')
 - 11.6. Pause _llers: Use of _llers to _ll a moment between the

end of the interlocutor's utterance and the beginning of the speaker's refusal utterance (e.g., 'well...'; 'oh...'; 'wow')

12. Gratitude (e.g., 'Thank you for inviting me')

13. Asking for approval (e.g., 'Is that possible?')

14. Sarcasm (e.g., 'I forgot you almost got "A" last term')