

# Refusal Strategies by Young Jordanian Speakers in Arabic and English

Anas al Huneety

Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Jordan

Abdallah Alshdaifat

Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities, UAE

Esraa al-Faqeeh

Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Jordan

Bassil Al Mashaqba

Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, The Hashemite University, Jordan

Luqman Rababah

Jadara University, Jordan

**Abstract**—This study aims to investigate refusal strategies used among Jordanian Arabic speakers and EFL learners of English in Jordan. Two Discourse Completion Tests (DCT), containing scenarios of refusal, were completed by 43 Jordanian Arabic speakers along with 37 EFL learners of English in Jordan. Data analysis reveals three main refusal categories used in the data: direct, indirect and adjuncts to refusals. Jordanian Arabic speakers used 7% direct refusals, 57% indirect refusals, and 36% adjuncts to refusals. In contrast, EFL learners used 13% direct refusals, 62% indirect refusals, and 25% adjuncts to refusals. Additionally, strategies such as insisting, insulting, praising the other, and invoking the name of God were observed. In conclusion, both groups preferred indirect refusal strategies over other types. It was also noted that EFL learners used more direct and indirect refusal strategies than Jordanian Arabic speakers but fewer adjuncts to refusals. Both groups produced similar strategies in response to the four types of situations, indicating that cultural background significantly influenced the way refusals were performed, despite the different languages used.

**Index Terms**—face-threatening acts, Jordanian Arabic, pragmatic competence, speech act theory

## I. INTRODUCTION

While acquiring a new language, one has to learn and understand how to utter and employ several grammatically correct words and sentences. However, grammatical knowledge of a language is not sufficient to communicate properly in the target language. A non-native speaker must know the cultural background and proper pragmatic knowledge to communicate sufficiently (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language effectively in a contextually appropriate fashion. Obtaining a pragmatic competence, in any language, is a necessity to fulfill a successful communication between interlocutors (Han & Burgucu-Tazegul, 2016).

Communication is essential in the sharing of thoughts, feelings, and information between individuals, and it serves to maintain associations and relationships (Kreishan, 2018). When communicating with others, a speaker and a responder perform speech acts between each other. One of those is to refuse which is to say 'No' in one way or another. A refusal is a negative response to an offer, a request, an invitation or a suggestion (Alkahtani, 2005). Refusals play a great role in one's life for their sensitive role in making relationships stronger or breaking them down. Even though a speaker is expected to say 'No' to a request or an invitation directly or indirectly (Han & Burgucu-Tazegul, 2016), how one says 'No' is much more important in many societies than the answer itself (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Sattar et al., 2012). Therefore, a refusal can be a difficult speech act to perform.

Refusals are face-threatening or face-damaging acts (Hsieh & Chen, 2005). In other words, when performing a refusal, a responder has to limit the needs of the speaker, and interlocutors pay greater attention to their strategies while performing the speech act of refusals to avoid losing and/or damaging the public self-image of the addresser and the addressee failing to meet the speaker's expectations threatens the face of the responder. That is to say, a "refusal, in virtue of its noncompliant nature, also impedes interactants' face want and hence falls into the type of face-damaging act that calls for maneuvers to reach politeness" (Hsieh & Chen, 2005, p. 3). Therefore, acting refusals is a challenging mission for the responder and is complicated because they depend on social and cultural backgrounds such as education, gender, and social status (Kreishan, 2018). In other words, refusals can cause a misunderstanding between the speaker

and the responder if they are not mitigated or softened. Hence, the study of the speech acts of refusals is especially interesting because it may require extensive planning on the part of the refuser" (Osborne, 2010, p. 36).

Austin's (1962) theory, known as Speech Act Theory, had a transformative impact on the field of pragmatics. Austin (1976) proposed a classification of speech acts into three main categories: (i) the locutionary act, which refers to the act of uttering or expressing something about the world; (ii) the illocutionary act, which represents the speaker's intention conveyed through an utterance, such as making a request or expressing a complaint; and (iii) the perlocutionary act, which aims to achieve a desired effect on the listener (H), such as influencing (H) to take a specific action to bring about happiness. Austin categorizes illocutionary acts into five distinct types: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. Verdictives involve a speaker giving a verdict, such as acquitting or diagnosing. Exercitives involve speakers exercising powers, rights, or influence, such as excommunicating or resigning. Commissives involve speakers committing themselves to causes or courses of action, such as promising or betting. Behabitives pertain to attitudes and social behavior, such as apologizing or toasting. Expositives involve speakers clarifying how their utterances fit into lines of reasoning, such as postulating or defining (Green, 2007). To serve the purpose of this study, we are examining acts of refusal within the commissives category.

## II. RESEARCH ON EFL STUDENTS' REFUSAL STRATEGIES

Many recent studies have examined how EFL students from different cultures reject English. Interlanguage pragmatics of refusal studies is covered here. First, Han and Burgunen-Tazegul (2016) examine Turkish EFL students' refusal strategies. The data of the study was collected using DCT. 18 Turkish-speaking non-native English speakers and 18 native English speakers participated. EFL students used indirect methods more. Turkish EFL learners of English considered the interlocutor's social power when refusing. In another study, Rahayu (2019) examined Indonesian EFL students' refusal strategies. Rahayu studied 13 Indonesian native speakers, 13 EFL Indonesian learners of English, and 13 American native speakers to achieve the study's goal. The majority of refusals were indirect. Native Indonesian speakers refused directly more than the other two, and EFL learners regretted indirectly.

Boonsuk and Mbele (2019) found that Thai EFL students used indirect strategies the most. Their study found direct and indirect methods. Unlike Beebe et al. (1990), no refusal adjuncts were found. Thai EFL students refused without softeners. The results showed two important indirect strategies: advise and absence of empathy. Results also show that EFL Thai learners should emphasize pragmatic knowledge to improve refusal.

In the context of Jordan, Native speakers and EFL learners of English are being studied in Jordan. First, Al-Issa (2003) examined sociocultural transfer and its effects on Jordanian EFL learners' speech act refusal. The study participants numbered 150. 50 EFL Jordanians, 50 native Jordanians, and 50 native Americans participated. EFL students, like Jordanians, gave longer answers than Americans. All categories refused more indirectly than directly (excuse). EFL students used 'inshallah' or 'Gods willing' for future acceptance. Despite sharing subject groups, Al-Issa and the current study differ in the number of situations given to participants and the study's goal and methods.

Alshboul and Huwari (2016) compared Jordanian and American native speaker refusal models. The study had 30 participants (15 Jordanians, 15 Americans). Americans filled out an English DCT form and Jordanians an Arabic one. More Americans than Jordanians refused directly. Jordanians used indirect tactics like excuse. Jordanians used other crucial indirect strategies: use proverbs, God swears, Saying taboo, Self-defense, requesting divine favor. The main findings of this study match with those reported in Al-shboul and Maros (2020). According to Al-shboul and Maros, indirect refusal strategies are most common, followed by adjuncts and direct.

Al-Kayed et al. (2020) used another method to study refusals and pragmatic modifiers in Jordan. 24 hours were spent monitoring mixed- and same-sex conversations. Findings found that indirect and direct refusals were used less than complex strategies, which use multiple strategies.

An intercultural study by Al-Shboul and Maros (2012) examined Jordanian and Malay ESL post-grad refusal strategies. Six male Jordanian and Malay EFL students completed an English DCT form. Results showed both groups refused indirectly more than directly. Jordanians refused indirectly more than Malay students. Jordanians were less grateful to equals and inferiors, and they tended to be more sensitive to social power.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses four common methods to assess speakers' pragmatic competence and speech act performance in different languages: naturally occurring speech acts, closed role-play, open role-play, and Discourse Completion Task. DCT tests with 12 scenarios are used in this research. The Background Questionnaire (BQ) collects participant information like age, gender, nationality, target language proficiency, and length of residence in the target country. Its ability to observe spontaneous speech in naturalistic settings makes the DCT test preferred. This method is time-consuming, difficult to collect demographic data, and difficult to handle unplanned responses.

The 1980s-developed naturally occurring speech act method is preferred in intra-lingual speech act research because it collects data from one language/culture. This method has been used to study student and Brazilian friend refusals (Osborne, 2010). Researchers often use role play to identify non-contextual speech act variations like gender, age, and social status. Open and closed role plays exist. Participants can have multiple-turn conversations in open role-plays,

improving response detection. Both methods identify non-contextual varieties, especially in Arabic, where dialects distinguish written and spoken language.

DCT is another popular ILP and cross-cultural data collection method. It lets researchers control context, compare native and non-native speakers, calculate semantic formulas, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data. DCTs also allow researchers to study how social status affects participant responses and quickly collect large datasets. DCTs limit participants to one-turn responses and miss sociopragmatic norms. Participants may think of the best way to respond, which may not be their true answer.

The current study uses an open-ended DCT with 12 scenarios targeting higher, equal, and lower social powers. Scenarios were inspired by Beebe et al. (1990) but written differently due to cultural norms and imposition levels. This study seeks to reconcile these differences and create new scenarios that fit Jordanian culture and life.

This study examines how social status affects university student refusals. It analyzes higher-status interlocutors' responses to show how social status affects each situation. Jordanian Arabic speakers (JAS) and EFL Learners of English in Jordan (EFL) were studied. The JAS group included 42 18-22-year-old university undergraduates, 37 females and 5 males. They were from Muta and Hashemite universities. The study did not consider participants' majors or academic years. Participants who lived in an English-speaking country were excluded to ensure validity. The study shows how social status affects university refusals. Understanding how social status affects student responses to requests can improve workplace communication and collaboration.

Two refusal strategy categories were examined in the study. Data was divided into semantic formulas for direct, indirect, and adjutant refusals. Direct refusals can be performative or non-performative, while indirect refusals are excuses, regret, wishes, or alternatives. Refusals have adjuncts that reduce their illocutionary force but cannot stand alone.

The study analyzed data quantitatively and qualitatively. For each group, semantic formula frequency was calculated, converted into percentages, and tabulated or graphically displayed. Semantic formula content and type were examined qualitatively. Direct (performative), non-performative, indirect (excuses/reason), consideration of the interlocutor's feelings, philosophy, wish, alternative, opinion/principle, consultants, sarcasm, request for more information, apology/regret, future acceptance/promise, proverbs, insisting, hedging, affirmations, invoking God's name, willingness, gratitude, and praising the other were refusal strategies. Each category had refusal strategies from the data in the table. The study sought to understand each group's common excuses and provide refusal strategies from the data.

A table from Alghmaiz (2018) was used to analyze answers as semantic formulas. The table lists direct, indirect, and adjunct refusals from 1 to 6. This research authors transliterated each answer using the table and placed semantic formulas under the appropriate strategy. For instance, the JAS response used gratitude, praise, and excuse. Three indirect strategies were used by EFL: regret/apology and excuses.

Direct, indirect, and adjunct refusals were calculated using another table. JAS had 129 answers and 298 refusal strategies. A form was emailed to two university professors and distributed to students for data collection. Author provided brief questionnaire content and duration summary. Automatically received and analyzed all answers. The study examined how semantic strategies affect responses in different situations.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### Refusal strategies and social status

This section provides the findings of how social status affected the use of refusal strategies. In other words, differences between refusing high, equal and low status of interlocutor are discussed and highlighted. Results indicate that social status affects significantly the way participants responded to refusals. Further, there are some differences in the results of social status relation with refusal strategies between the two groups.

##### Direct refusals and social status

In this part, direct refusals were studied in the light of social status. The percentage of direct refusals to high, equal and low status is provided. Results indicate a remarkable difference between the two groups.

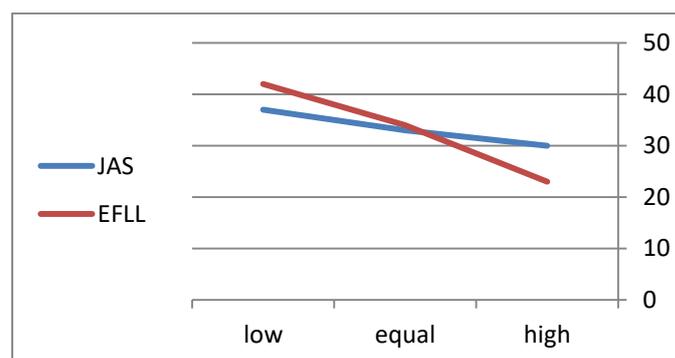


Figure 1. Direct Strategies by Status

Figure 1 shows that JAS used direct refusals mostly with interlocutors with low (L) and equal (E) with an average (37% and 33%). The lowest percentage of using direct refusals was when addressing an interlocutor with a higher (H) social status (30%). A significant difference in using direct refusals by JAS was not found. On the other hand, a remarkable difference in the use of direct refusal strategies by EFLL was noticed. The most frequently direct refusals were used when responding to (L) (42%), followed by the percentage of refusing (E) (34%). Refusing (H) directly was used the least by EFLL (23%).

It can also be seen that the use of direct refusal strategies as a response to (E) was nearly the same by the two groups. Thus, JAS used direct strategies with (H) more than EFLL. On the contrary, EFLL used more direct refusals when they refused (L) person compared to JAS.

#### Indirect refusals and social status

Indirect refusals, in this part, are discussed in terms of how frequently they were used with high, equal and low status interlocutor. Percentages of the use of them are given in this part. Findings indicate that there is a noticeable difference between the frequency of the use of indirect strategies in the light of social status between the two groups.

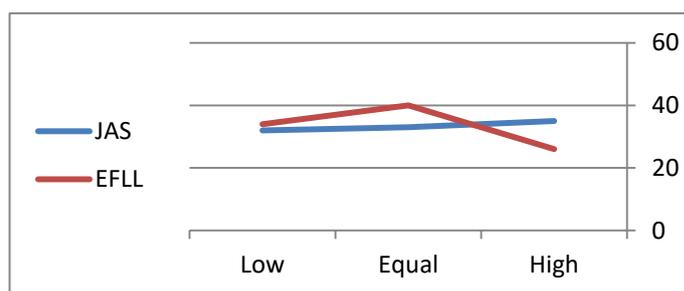


Figure 2. Indirect Strategies by Status

Figure 2 presents the percentages of using indirect strategies with high, equal and low interlocutors. The figure illustrates that JAS have used indirect strategies mostly with higher status interlocutors (35%). Similarly, the percentage of using indirect strategies with equal status interlocutors is (33%). Finally, the use of indirect strategies with a lower status person is (32%).

On another ground, refusing an equal status interlocutor by EFLL was the most frequent (40%). Secondly, participants refused a low status interlocutor (34%). Refusing a higher status interlocutor using indirect refusal strategies was the least frequently used (26%).

As a matter of comparing, refusing higher status by JAS was more common than EFLL. In contrast, participants in the EFLL group refused equal status using indirect strategies more frequently than JAS group. However, the difference in refusing a lower person status is not significant between the two groups.

#### Adjuncts to refusals and social status

In this part, the frequency of the use of adjuncts to refusals was investigated. As a response to high, equal and low social status, percentages of the use of adjuncts to refusals are presented. Results indicate that significant difference between the group EFLL and JAS exists.

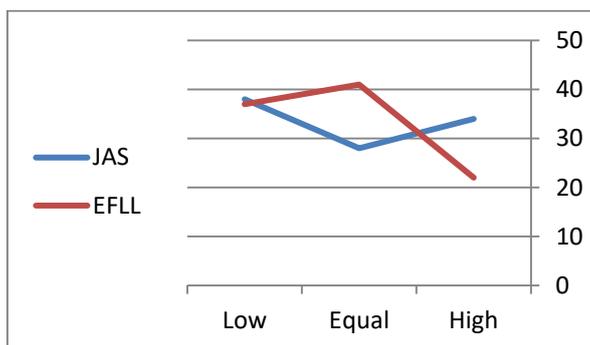


Figure 3. Adjuncts Strategies by Status

Figure 3 shows the percentages of the use of adjuncts to refusals in a relation with social status. The highest frequency of the use of adjuncts by JAS is when addressing a lower status interlocutor (38%). The second most frequent use is with high status interlocutor (34%). The least use of adjuncts to refusals is with an equal status interlocutor (28%).

On the other hand, the use of adjuncts to refusals is most commonly used by EFLL when responding to an equal status interlocutor (41%). Then comes refusing a lower status interlocutor with an average of (37%). Finally, adjuncts to refusals are used the least frequently with a higher status interlocutor (22%).

It can be concluded that there is a remarkable difference in the use of adjuncts to refusals with an equal status interlocutor between EFLL and JAS; EFLL used more adjuncts to refusals. The difference is also noticeable between

the two groups when refusing a higher status person; JAS used more adjuncts to refusals. However, there is no significant difference between JAS and EFL in using adjuncts to refusals when refusing a lower status person.

### Order of refusal strategies by status

While investigating the relation between social status and the use of refusal strategies, it is important to tackle whether social status has an influence on the strategies used to refuse and what the most frequent refusal strategies are used with each social status. For this reason, this part is providing the most commonly used strategies with high, equal and low social status interlocutors by JAS and EFL participants.

In Table 1, it can be seen that JAS participants started their refusals mostly with the statement of a positive opinion with higher status interlocutors. Then they used excuses or reasons to justify their refusals. And finally, they expressed their opinion or principle about the situation given. For example:

TABLE 1  
ORDER OF STRATEGIES WITH HIGH STATUS

Social status	Group	Order			
		1	2	3	4
High	JAS	Statement of positive opinion	Excuse	Opinion/principle	
	EFL	Statement of positive opinion	Apology	Excuse	

This example below gives the order of the most frequently used strategies while refusing a high-status interlocutor. Compared to answers by JAS, answers responded by EFL were much shorter, e.g. "congratulations...but I'm sorry... I'm busy".

"بشرفني أحضر هالحفلة وإشاركك فرحتك... بس بدني أقضي وقت مع العيلة... واننا عارف الجمعة يوم العيلة"

*I am honored to come and share your joy... but I want to spend time with my family... and you know that Friday is family day.*

It is seen that both groups used statements of positive opinion as the most frequent strategy to initiate their answers with. It can also be noticed that none of the two groups have started their answers with excuses. Further, EFL group preferred to apologize or ask for forgiveness before giving excuses when addressing a higher-status interlocutor.

TABLE 2  
ORDER OF STRATEGIES WITH EQUAL STATUS

Social status	Group	Order			
		1	2	3	4
Equal	JAS	Invoking the name of God	Excuse	Alternative	Future acceptance
	EFL	Gratitude	Apology	Alternative	

This table illustrates that JAS used invoking the name of God as an initial strategy to begin their refusals with. Then they used excuses as a refusal strategy, then giving alternatives and finally they promised for a future acceptance as shown in the example below.

"يا الله، حاليًا صعب بسبب ظروف الشغل، رح أقترحك اسم قناة عاليوتيوب بتفيدك كثير، أنا شخصيًا استفدت منها، وبعدها إن شاء الله إذا كان "لسا بدك كمان إشي ما بقصر، بالتوفيق يا رب"

*"Oh God... now it's due to work conditions... I will suggest you a name of a YouTube channel that is good...I personally benefited from it. And after that if you still need any help, I am in. Good luck and God bless you!"*

EFL on the other hand used Gratitude to begin their refusals when responding to an equal social status interlocutor. They also used apology or regret as the second frequent strategy. Then they provided alternatives, such as "Thank you... but I am busy... you can go to our neighbor he will help you".

It is noticed that both groups used the indirect strategy Alternative as the third in the order of the answer. Rarely had it been used in the first part of the answer.

TABLE 3  
ORDER OF STRATEGIES WITH LOW STATUS

Social status	Group	Order			
		1	2	3	4
Low	JAS	Statement of positive opinion	Excuse	Opinion/principle	Future acceptance
	EFL	Gratitude	Excuse	Opinion/principle	

This table indicates that JAS used the statement of positive opinion to refuse low-status interlocutors. Then they used excuse as an indirect refusal strategy. The third most commonly used strategy is opinion/principle and finally comes the statement of future acceptance. See the example below:

"الف مبارك بس الجمعه حاجز مع العيلة نطلع و انت عارف هاي وزارة الداخليه هاي و الواحد ماشي الحيط الحيط باجيك في غيرها ان شاء الله"

"Congratulations... but I have plans with my family on Friday, and you know it is like dealing with the Ministry of Interior, and one has to be careful. I'll visit another time".

Gratitude was the most frequently used strategy to begin with their answers by EFLL. Then, like the JAS group, they used excuses and finally, they used opinion/principle strategy, as in the example below:

"I appreciate your offer, but I need the laptop ...and I don't like anyone to see my laptop"

The table also shows that both groups were identical in the used of the second and third strategies to refuse low-status interlocutors. Further, both groups have started their answers with adjuncts to refusals.

**Overall refusal strategy use by all groups in all situations**

This part is discussing the frequency of the semantic formulas used by the two groups; JAS and EFLL in all situations.

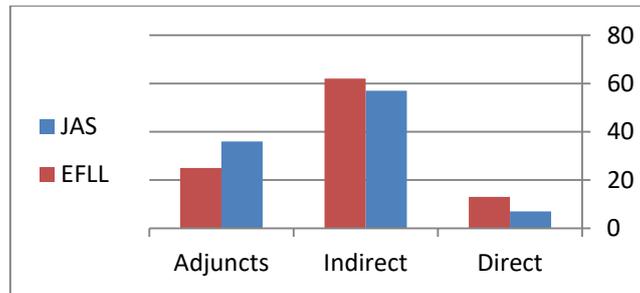


Figure 4. Direct, Indirect and Adjuncts by All Groups in All Situations

Figure 4 shows the overall use of the three main refusal strategies by the two groups in all situations. It can be seen that JAS used indirect strategies the most (57%). The second most frequently used strategies are adjuncts to refusals (36%), and the least are direct refusals (7%).

In rhyme, the most frequently used strategies by EFLL are indirect strategies (62%), then adjuncts to refusals (25%). Direct refusals by EFLL were the least frequently used (13%).

Although the difference is not significant, it is clear that EFLL used more indirect strategies than JAS. It is also noticed that the use of adjuncts to refusals by JAS is more than the use of them by EFLL. Furthermore, direct strategies were used by EFLL nearly two times more than JAS. In other words, differences between the two groups exist.

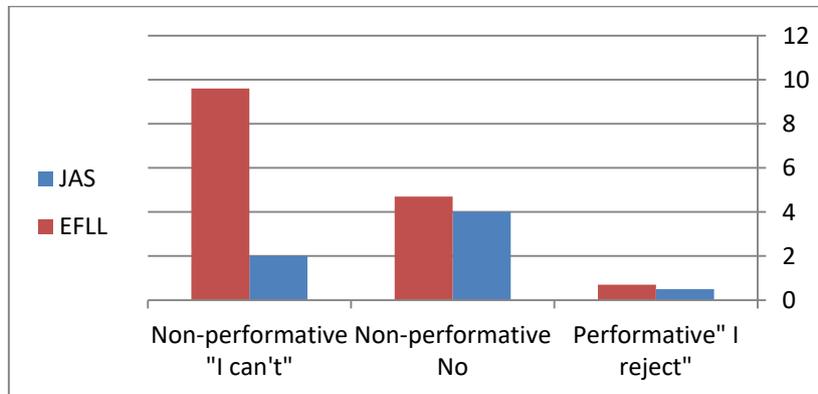


Figure 5. Direct Refusal Strategies by All Groups in All Situations

Figure 5 indicated the use of the three direct refusal strategies by JAS and EFLL in all situations. It can be clearly seen that both groups were close in the percentage of the use of Performative "I reject" and non-performative "No". However, there is a significant difference in the use of non-performative "I can't" between JAS and EFLL group (2% vs. 9%). That is to say, EFLL group used non-performative "I can't" nearly three times more than JAS.

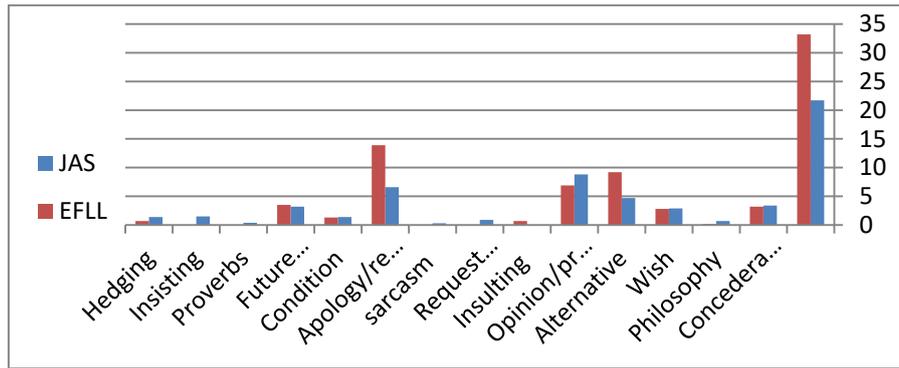


Figure 6. Indirect Refusal Strategies by All Groups in All Situations

In Figure 6 excuse is the most frequently used indirect strategy by the two groups in all situations. To start, the difference between JAS and EFLL in using excuses is remarkable. It can be seen that the percentage of using excuses by EFLL is more than the percentage of JAS use. This is also the case in using alternatives, apologies, and future acceptance. For instance, both the use of alternative and apology strategies by EFLL was approximately double the amount of the use of JAS group. Significantly, insulting was used by EFLL and was not used by JAS.

On the other hand, the use of consideration of the interlocutor's feeling, wish, opinion/principle, condition and hedging was more frequent by JAS than EFLL. It can also be noticed that strategies like requests for additional information, proverbs, and insisting were found only in the answers of JAS and never in the answers of EFLL.

Strategies like consideration of the interlocutor's feelings, wish, condition and future acceptance did not show a noticeable difference between the two groups.

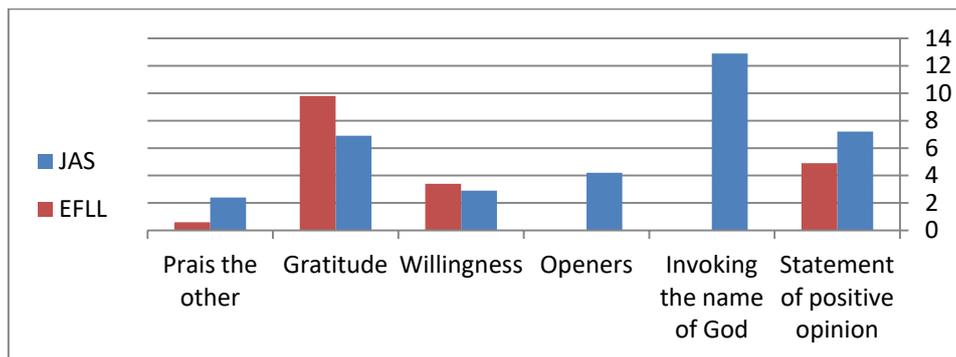


Figure 7. Adjuncts to Refusals by All Groups in All Situations

Figure 7 illustrates the use of adjuncts to refusals by the two groups in all situations. Invoking the name of God is the most commonly used strategy. It was found only in the answers of JAS and never in the answers of EFLL. On another ground, gratitude was the most frequently used strategy by EFLL and less frequent by JAS. The use of statement of positive opinion was also frequent by JAS and EFLL. However, JAS used more statement of a positive opinion than EFLL. Openers were also used only by JAS, and it was considered the fourth frequently used strategy by them. Willingness or agreement was the fifth common strategy used by the two groups. Findings in the figure show that EFLL used it more than JAS. The least adjuncts to refusal strategy that was used was praise the other. Significantly, this strategy was used by JAS nearly more than two times the use of it by EFLL.

TABLE 4  
THE FREQUENCY OF REFUSAL STRATEGIES BY ALL GROUPS IN ALL SITUATIONS

Strategies	JAS				EFLL			
	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations
Direct strategies								
Performative "I refuse"	2	4	0	0	3	1	0	0
Non-perfomative "No"	17	22	5	3	15	5	1	4
Non-perfomative "I can't"	2	2	12	9	1	5	17	28
Indirect strategies								
Excuse/reason	27	33	108	94	19	28	56	73
Consideration of the interlocutors feelings	2	9	20	10	4	5	1	7
Philosophy	5	4	0	0	1	0	0	0
Wish	1	0	20	11	0	0	12	3
Alternative	13	34	10	0	14	22	13	0
Opinion/principle	62	43	1	1	28	3	4	2
Insulting	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Request for additional information	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Apology/regret	3	3	45	29	5	4	44	21
Condition	4	10	1	3	2	1	2	2
Future acceptance	4	1	10	24	1	1	9	8
Proverbs	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
Insisting	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hedging	7	0	3	7	0	0	0	0
Strategies	JAS				EFLL			
	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations	Suggestion	Offers	Requests	Invitations
Adjuncts to refusals								
Statement of positive opinion	0	5	2	80	0	0	0	29
Invoking the name of God	39	17	53	34	0	1	0	0
Openers	25	4	16	6	0	0	0	0
Willingness/ agreement	14	6	14	6	2	4	10	4
Gratitude	26	53	0	4	24	40	0	18
Praise the interlocutor	12	14	0	3	0	3	0	1

Table 4 above gives the frequency of the refusal strategies used by the two groups in the four situations. The most frequently direct strategy used is the non-performative "NO" by JAS as a response to an offer and the non-perfomative "I can't" by EFLL as a response to invitation situations. Participants from both groups did not use the performative "I reject" when answering a request and an invitation.

In the findings of indirect results, it can be seen that the most frequently used strategy is giving excuses/reasons. While JAS used excuses the most when refusing requests, EFLL group used it the most in refusing invitations. The use of philosophy is the highest when refusing a suggestion by JAS and EFLL. Remarkably, both groups acted identically in using wish as an indirect strategy to refuse; they both used the highest frequency of it to refuse requests. This is also the case in refusing using alternatives; both groups used alternatives the most when refusing an offer. Further, both groups used Apology/regret most commonly when refusing a request. Likewise, JAS and EFLL also used the statement of positive opinion as an adjunct to refusals most frequently in responding to an invitation. Gratitude was also used the most by both groups when refusing an offer.

The indirect strategy insulting was used by EFLL only as a refusal to a suggestion and never by JAS. On the other hand, using proverbs, insisting and invoking the name of God were found only in the answers of JAS.

TABLE 5  
REFUSAL STRATEGIES AND STATUS BY GROUP IN ALL SITUATIONS

Strategies	JAS			EFL		
	Low	Equal	High	Low	Equal	High
<b>Direct strategies</b>						
Performative "I refuse"	2	0	4	3	1	0
Non-performative "No"	14	21	11	12	9	0
Non-performative "I"	10	8	5	19	16	13
<b>Indirect strategies</b>						
Excuse/reason	84	89	91	58	67	51
Consideration of the	10	24	7	3	11	3
Philosophy	3	3	3	1	0	0
Wish	10	20	2	1	8	4
Alternative	21	34	4	16	30	3
Opinion/principle	37	8	62	21	12	5
Insulting	0	0	0	5	0	0
Request for additional	0	7	4	0	0	0
Apology/regret	22	24	34	21	26	27
Condition	5	4	8	2	4	1
Future acceptance	13	16	10	10	7	2
Proverbs	3	5	0	0	0	0
Insisting	0	0	12	0	0	0
Hedging	9	5	14	4	4	0

TABLE 6  
ADJUNCT TO REFUSALS ACCORDING TO SOCIAL STATUS

Strategies	JAS			EFL		
	Low	Equal	High	Low	Equal	High
Adjuncts to refusals						
Statement of positive opinion	42	4	41	10	2	17
Invoking the name of God	53	50	40	0	0	0
Openers	9	16	26	0	0	0
Willingness/ agreement	11	16	13	8	6	6
Gratitude	36	25	22	32	42	8
Praise the interlocutor	9	12	8	2	4	0

Table 5 provides the frequency of the refusal strategies used in a relation with the social status in all situations. The most frequently used strategy by JAS was the indirect excuse/reason when refusing a higher status interlocutor. However, excuse/reason was also the most frequently used but with an equal status interlocutor.

Both groups acted similarly in using wish and alternatives the most while refusing an equal status interlocutor. Further, the strategy opinion /principle was used most commonly by JAS when refusing a higher status interlocutor unlike EFL who used it the most with a lower status interlocutor. Both indirect strategies, insisting and hedging, were used most frequently with a higher status interlocutor.

The use of statement of positive opinion by JAS was nearly the same when refusing lower and higher status interlocutor, but there was a significant difference when refusing an equal status interlocutor. In rhyme, there was a notable difference in the use of statement of positive opinion by EFL with both higher and lower interlocutors and equal status interlocutors. Gratitude was used mostly by JAS with a lower status interlocutor when EFL used them the most with an equal interlocutor.

## V. DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the use of refusal strategies in Jordanian Arabic (JAS) and English Foreign Language Learners (EFL) and their relation to social status by situation. The study found that JAS and EFL responses consisted of multiple semantic formulas, with JAS having more words and diversity in using refusal strategies. EFL responses were shorter and less diverse, with vague, ambiguous, and general responses.

The order of the three main refusal strategies was given in the study, with indirect refusal strategies being used most frequently, followed by adjuncts to refusals, and finally direct refusals. However, the order of the use of refusal strategies might vary across cultures, as seen in previous studies.

Direct refusal strategies were classified as either performative "I reject" or Non-performative "No", "I can't", "I won't". In this research, the second strategy was divided into two parts: Non-performative "No" and Non-performative "I can't", "I won't". Direct refusals were the least used by both groups, with EFL being more direct than JAS due to fewer ranges of words.

Indirect refusal strategies were the most commonly used, with the most common being excuse/reason, consideration of the interlocutor's feelings, and apology/regret. Excuse was the most commonly used strategy by JAS, while consideration of the interlocutor's feelings was used by Jordanian native speakers. Apology/regret was also found to be the most frequently used refusal strategy by Persian speakers, unlike the results of the current study where excuse was the most frequently used strategy by both groups.

In conclusion, the study highlights the complexity of refusal strategies in Jordanian Arabic and the importance of considering the interlocutor's feelings when refusing. By utilizing indirect strategies and considering the interlocutor's feelings, JAS and EFLL participants can effectively communicate their refusals and maintain their social status. Moreover, this study explores the use of sarcasm and proverbs in Jordanian language refusals. Sarcasm is a significant strategy used to add humor to refusals, making them less threatening. Proverbs and common sayings are also part of the culture of Jordanians, serving the same purpose of decreasing tension while refusing. Some proverbs can deliver messages better than normal talk.

Indirect refusal strategies found include insulting and insisting. Swearing is the most efficient way to refuse by insulting a lower-status interlocutor, which is not normal in Jordanian culture. Insistence is another strategy used when participants are not satisfied with only refusing, insisting on what they want.

Religion plays a significant role in Jordanian communication, with three purposes for invoking the name of God: swearing, praying, and implying uncertainty about the answer. Openers are an individual strategy under adjuncts to refusals, but their use may vary depending on the cultural background of the participants. Praise is a norm in Jordanian society, and it is also used when refusing.

Vague answers are common in the answers of EFLL, as participants feel that praising others eases the act of refusal and shows appreciation for the interlocutor. Social status has a great impact on how participants refuse, with the two groups acting differently considering social status. For example, JAS participants tended to use more indirect answers to refuse when the interlocutor was with a higher authority. Adjuncts were used most frequently when addressing a lower-status person, and direct strategies were least used when targeting a higher-status interlocutor.

EFLL participants were less sensitive to social status, using indirect refusal strategies the most with an equal-status interlocutor. Direct strategies were used less with higher-status interlocutors, and adjuncts to refusals were the least with a higher-status interlocutor. These findings contradict the results of JAS, suggesting that the language of refusing affects participants' sensitivity to social status.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study investigated refusal strategies used by Jordanian Arabic speakers and EFL Jordanian learners of English using a DCT test. The study involved 42 JAS and 37 EFLL participants, and results showed three main categories of refusal strategies: direct refusal, indirect refusals, and adjuncts to refusals. Indirect refusal strategies were the most commonly used by the two groups, followed by adjuncts to refusals and direct refusals. Significant strategies included invoking the name of God, sarcasm, praising the other, and the use of proverbs and common sayings. Both groups shared a range of age and cultural backgrounds, and similar responses were found when responding to each situation separately. However, there were differences between the two groups, such as the language of refusing and the power of the interlocutor. The study also found a strong relationship between the power of the interlocutor and the category of refusal used in the responses of JAS but not in the answers of EFLL. Limitations of the study include the difficulty in determining representative written answers and not considering the gender of the speaker. It is recommended to conduct further studies on other age groups of Jordanians, particularly schoolchildren, and to use observation as a method of data collection due to the downfalls of the DCT test.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Alghmaiz, B. (2018). *The development of refusals to invitations by L2 learners of Emirati Arabic: Language proficiency and length of residence in the Target Community* (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University).
- [2] Al-Issa, A. (1998). *Sociopragmatic transfer in the performance of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners: Evidence and motivating factors* (Doctoral dissertation). Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania.
- [3] Al-Issa, A. (2003). Sociocultural transfer in L2 speech behaviors: Evidence and motivating factors. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(5), 581-601.
- [4] Al-Kahtani, S. A. W. (2005). Refusals realizations in three different cultures: A speech act theoretically-based cross-cultural study. *Journal of King Saud University*, 18(1), 35-37.
- [5] Al Kayed, M., Akram Al-zu'bi, M., & Alkayid, M. (2020). The study of refusals and pragmatic modifiers in Jordanian Arabic. *Acta Scientiarum. Language and Culture*, 42(2), e52543-e52543.
- [6] Al-Shboul, Y., & Huwari, I. F. (2016). A comparative study of Jordanian Arabic and American English refusal strategies. *British journal of English linguistics*, 4(3), 50-62.
- [7] Al-Shboul, Y., & Maros, M. (2020). The high and low-context communication styles in refusal strategies by Jordanian Arabic and American English speakers. *Pertanika: Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(28), 2063-2080
- [8] Al-Shboul, Y., Maros, M., & Yasin, M. S. M. (2012). An intercultural study of refusal strategies in English between Jordanian EFL and Malay ESL postgraduate students. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 18(3), 29-39.
- [9] Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford, England: Calderon Press.

- [10] Austin, M. (1976). On non-linear species response models ordination. *Vegetatio*, 33(1), 33-41.
- [11] Balan, A. K. D., Lucero, J. A. M., Salinas, Z. T., & Quinto, E. J. (2020). Gender differences in refusal speech acts of Filipino college students. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 135.
- [12] Barron, A. (2003). *Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context* (Vol. 108). John Benjamins Publishing.
- [13] Bayat, N. (2013). A study on the use of speech acts. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 213-221. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.057>
- [14] Beebe, L., M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In R.C. Scarcelle, E. Anderson, & S. C. Krashen (Eds.), *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). New York: Newbury House.
- [15] Blum-Kulka, S. (1982). Learning how to say what you mean in a second language: A study of speech act performance of learners of Hebrew as a second language. *Applied Linguistics*, 3, 29-59.
- [16] Boonsuk, Y., & A, Ambele, E. (2019). Refusal as a social speech act among Thai EFL university students. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume*, 10(2), 213-224.
- [17] Green, M. (2007). *Speech acts*. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.
- [18] 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.
- [19] Hsieh, C. L., & Chen, C. Y. (2005). A cross-linguistic study on the speech act of refusals with pedagogical implications. In *Proceedings of the 5th Annual Wenshan International Conference on English Language Teaching, Literature, and Linguistics 2005* (pp. 188-202).
- [20] Kreishan, L. (2018). Politeness and speech acts of refusal and complaint among Jordanian undergraduate students. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(4), 68-76.
- [21] Mitkova, P. (2020). *Refusal strategies*.
- [22] Osborne, D. M. (2015). The realization of speech acts of refusals of an invitation among Brazilian friends. *Revista de estudos da linguagem*, 18(2), 61-85.
- [23] Rahayu, N. S. (2019). Refusal Strategy Performed by Indonesian EFL Learner. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 5(1), 67-76.
- [24] Sattar, H. Q. A., Lah, S. C., & Suleiman, R. R. R. (2012). Refusal strategies in English by Malay university students. *GEMA Online® Journal of Language Studies*, 11(3).

**Anas Al Huneety** completed his PhD from Salford University on the phonology and morphology of Wadi Mousa Arabic. That same year, he joined the Department of English Language and Literature at the Hashemite University in Jordan as an Assistant Professor of Linguistics. Since then, he has published around 45 peer-reviewed papers in reputed international journals and conferences.

**Abdallah Alshdaifat** is an associate professor in Linguistics at the Department of Arabic at the University of Mohammad Zayed University for Humanities. His main experiences and interests are in computational linguistics, Arabic morphology, Arabic syntax, and teaching Arabic as a foreign language.

**Esraa al-Faqeeh** earned her BA in English Language and Literature and MA in Linguistics from the Hashemite University in Jordan with an excellent average. Her areas of interest include discourse analysis and pragmatics.

**Bassil Mashaqba** earned his undergraduate studies in English Language & Literature at Yarmouk University, and his postgraduate studies in Linguistics at the University of Salford Manchester in the UK. Dr. Mashaqba is currently an associate professor of linguistics. His research interests lie in general linguistic theory with particular focus on theoretical phonological and morphological approaches to language varieties.

**Luqman Rababah** is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics within the School of English Language & Translation, Jadara University, Jordan, where he teaches courses on sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and second language acquisition theories. He has more than thirty publications. His research is concentrated in two areas: second language acquisition theories, and writing.