Strategies of Refusal in American English and Egyptian Arabic Discourse

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Abstract

This study investigates strategies of refusal in Egyptian Arabic dialect, and American English focusing on the speech acts of apology, request, and invitation. Furthermore, the study sheds light on the similarities and differences between Egyptians and Americans in realizing the three above-mentioned speech acts. Sixty respondents from two different cultural groups, one American and one Egyptian participated in the study. Data were collected using closed-ended role plays which consisted of 6 scenarios eliciting refusal of apology, request, and invitation. Different groups of American and Egyptian participants sometimes yielded the same results in acceptance; however, some other times they were different.

Keywords: Refusal strategies, speech acts, culture, age, gender, American English, Egyptian Arabic, apology, request, invitation

Introduction

Since the Egyptian Arabic dialect is going to be investigated as a means of eliciting the strategies of refusal, it is worth noting to mention the linguistic phenomenon of diglossia. The countries in which Arabic is an official language have been described as diglossic speech communities, i.e. communities in which two varieties of a single language exist side by side. People speak one language variety at home and learn a different one in school, write in one language and express their feelings in another. There is a more complex variety used in a large body of written literature, classical Arabic (CA), and modern standard Arabic (MSA). Both are learned by formal education, however; (MSA) is used for most written and formal spoken purposes, yet neither the (CA), nor the (MSA) is used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. The variety of

Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA), Cairene dialect, is going to be investigated as a form of communication in everyday life interactions.

It is necessary to understand pragmatics in order to comprehend speech acts. Pragmatics deals with *utterances* and enables us to know what someone meant by what they said after knowing who uttered the sentence and in what context to be able to make inferences regarding why they said it and what they intended us to understand. People commonly mean quite a lot more than they say explicitly.

The concept of speech acts was introduced by Austin (1962) in his book *How to Do Things with Words.* Saying something can entail performing an action. Therefore, speakers apparently contribute more information than what is just said.

In the field of speech act research, numerous concepts and frameworks have been hypothesized, such as pragmatic competence (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983), theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and many other theories. All of them played a significant role in proving that speech acts provide a better understanding of how human communication influences linguistic behavior. Eventually, speech acts can depict similarities and differences in the way interactions are carried out across different languages and cultures.

Aim of the study

This study aims at highlighting the similarities and differences between the American English and Egyptian Arabic cultures concerning refusal of the speech acts of apology, request, and invitation in an attempt to alleviate the cultural differences and cause less misunderstanding.

Different cultures have been shown to vary drastically in interactional styles, leading to different preferences for speech act behaviors. Al-Kahtani (2005) and Lee (2004) point out that different cultures realize speech acts in different ways. This goes along with Treuba, Rodriguez, Zou, & Cintron, 1993)'s definition of culture as "composed of socially shared elements, socially shared norms, codes of behavior, values, and assumptions about the world that clearly distinguish one sociocultural group from another" (p. 34).

An Overview of Speech Act Research

The design of the current study is informed by previous speech act studies.

Abdul Sattar, Che Lah., and Suleiman (2011) define refusal as:

> A negative response to an offer, request, invitation or suggestion. Refusals are important because of their central place in everyday communication. It is often difficult to reject requests. Rejecting requests appropriately involves not only linguistic knowledge, but also pragmatic knowledge. It is even harder to reject them in a foreign language, where one risks offending the interlocutor. One may have a wide range of vocabulary and a sound knowledge of grammar, but misunderstandings may still arise if one does not apply pragmatic knowledge appropriately. (p.70)

The concept of face, a person's public self-image, presented in Goffman's (1967) work, one of the earliest efforts to form an outline for the politeness phenomena in relation to behavior, is the basis for Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness. Brown and Levinson point out two types of face: negative and positive face. Negative face is a person's

desire to be free from obligation and annoyance, while positive face refers to a person's longing for approval and to be liked by others.

The current study examines how refusal of the speech acts of apology, request, and invitation are realized in Egyptian Arabic by Egyptians native speakers, and compares their performance to that of native speakers of American English speaking American English. According to Searle and Vandervken (1985), a speech act of refusal is defined as the negative counterpart to acceptances and consentings. Just as one can accept offers, requests, and invitations, each of these can be refused or rejected. In many instances, the answer "no" is not nearly as important as how it is said. Hence, refusal requires a skillful strategy. It is the task of the speaker to know and use the suitable form of refusal and when to use it, depending on the linguistic criteria of the culture. Ramos (1991) argues that refusing one's offer or invitation without hurting one's feelings is significant, as the "inability to say 'no' clearly has led many non-native speakers to offend their interlocutors" (as cited in Al-Kahtani, 2005, p.3).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), refusals are face-threatening acts and belong to the category of commissives because they commit the refuser to not performing an action (Searle, 1976). Chen and Zhang (1995) further depict refusals as a speech act by which a speaker "fails to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor" (p.121).

Brown and Levinson (1987) and Fraser (1983) argue that from a sociolinguistic perspective, refusals are important because they are sensitive to social variables such as gender, age, and level of education. Overall, refusals require "face saving maneuvers to accommodate the

noncompliant nature of the act" (Gass & Houck, 1999, p. 2; Félix-Brasdefer, 2002, p.160).

Many cross-cultural research studies were conducted to examine the realization of speech acts across various cultures and languages.

Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz. (1990) finds that Japanese learners of English (JE) resemble native speakers of Japanese (JJ) in their refusal, yet differ from native speakers of English (AE).

Another major contributor to the understanding of speech acts is Hymes (1962). Hymes purports that speech acts are practical components in interaction that are directed by the socio-cultural rules of communication in a particular speech group. One of Hymes' key contributions is bringing attention to the cultural and social customs and beliefs that shed light on speakers' understanding of speech acts.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), there are certain speech acts that are considered face threatening (FTAs). One example is the speech act of request. A request threatens the hearer's negative face because the speaker intends to obstruct the hearer's freedom from obligation. Therefore, refusal of request threatens the hearer's positive face and indicates that the speaker does not value the hearer's wants and that the speaker's desires differ from the hearer's, which is considered a threat to the positive face of the hearer. One of the universal factors, proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), that affect the importance of an FTA is the weight of the request, referred to as rank, e.g. asking someone to stay with them for a couple of nights vs. asking someone to pass a glass of water.

A refusal of the speech act of invitation is more sensitive and should be dealt with in a more tact and subtle manner by means of mitigation strategies. However, in a refusal of apology the speaker tends to pay little or no consideration to the hearer's positive face.

Many research studies were conducted over the last three decades, examining the realization of speech acts across various cultures and languages. Cross-cultural studies focus on the realization of speech acts in two or more cultures of languages, and that is what the current study is trying to investigate. The current study is a descriptive speech act study that examines how the speech act of refusal is realized in Egyptian Arabic by Egyptians native speakers, and compares their performance to that of native speakers of Americans speaking American English.

Eslami-Raeskh (2004) studies reactions to complaints in English and Persian. His study shows that in situations of moderate offense, Persian speakers use multiple strategies, primarily overt apology which often varies according to the status of the addressee. It is shown that Persian speakers are more sensitive to contextual factors and vary their face keeping strategies accordingly, whereas English speakers mostly use one apology strategy and intensify it based on contextual factors.

In another study, Kim (2008) investigates the speech act of apology in Korean and Australian English. He comes to the conclusion that South Korean and Australian English speakers use different combinations of apology strategies. While South Koreans use compensatory utterances, Australian speakers in various strategies do not emphasize compensation.

Beckers (1999), on the other hand, looks at refusal strategies in American English and German. The study shows that Germans seem to employ more gratitude and politeness strategies than Americans. As a matter of fact, Germans tend to use the avoidance strategy more often than Americans. Another difference is that German refusals might be less direct and their excuses also tend to be vaguer than those given by Americans. Americans might often use more direct refusals and give their own inclinations as reasons for the refusal.

The construction of the speech act of apology by Arabic-speaking EFL learners is investigated by Ghawi (1993). The findings indicate that the Arab learners' sociopragmatic customs are sometimes transferred to L2. The study further suggests that pragmatic transfer of certain apology strategies as explanation strategy may be related to the learners' understanding of the language universality.

A study conducted by Bataineh (2006), which focuses on the apology strategies employed by Jordanian EFL university students, depends on the way in which Goffman (1967) defines apologies. Goffman defines apologies as corrective exchanges that are used to reestablish social harmony after a real or perceived offense.

Banikalef1 and Maros (2013) conduct a study on the social beliefs for the realization of the speech acts of apology among Jordanian EFL graduate students, mainly to highlight the influence of social status and social distance on the choice of apology strategies. The data show that Jordanian EFL learners are inclined to transfer their L1 (Arabic) pragmatic norms to L2 (English). For example, lecturers in Jordan are considered higher in

social status than students, so they do not have to offer any explicit apology to their students. Thus, they prefer to use explanation apology strategy. In Jordan, people of superior status are supposed to be appreciated more and have more authority over their inferiors. As a result, Jordanian EFL learners transferred their L1 sociopragmatic knowledge to the target language (English). Furthermore, Jordanian EFL learners tended to transfer their pragmalinguistic knowledge to L2 (English). For instance, some Jordanian EFL learners tried to intensify their apology through repeating an expression of regret (e.g., sorry, sorry, sorry). Using this form of intensification is due to the lack of pragmalinguistic competence in using the proper intensifiers (e.g. very, so, etc.).

In the study conducted by Al-Momani (2009), he investigates advanced Jordanian EFL learners' request speech act realization and compares it to that of American English native speakers. In addition, Al-Momani investigates the influence of Arabic, the learners' native language (L1), on learner's realization of the speech act of request.

Al-Momani's work points out how much of a continual concern speech acts have traditionally been for the second language learner. Al-Momani's work asserts Billmyer's claim that speech acts are "complex, highly variable, and require that the non-native speakers understand the multiple functions each serves" (Billmyer, 1990, p.2). One of the most common speech acts within everyday life is request.

Second language learner (SLL) studies find that mastery of requests is fundamental to SLL communicative and pragmatic competence. In order

to avoid pragmatic failure, Al-Momani emphasizes that a second language learner must have substantial linguistic and sociolinguistic knowledge.

One of the most common findings of Bataineh's (2013) study is the repeated appeal to God in Jordanian native speakers (JNS) responses to congratulations, thanks, or apologies. Bataineh states that religion affects communication in Arabic, and religious expressions convey politeness in almost all social situations. Jordanians invoke God's name in greeting, inviting, apologizing, disagreeing, blaming or even agreeing. In contrast, English tend to lack these same usages and their frequency. One strategy that is used time and time again among JNSs is a prayer or an appeal to God. All American native speakers (ANSs) and some JNSs use a simple "thank you" as a response. Yet, the majority of JNSs respond by an appeal to God for the person they think they are indebted to. In her study, the author finds that ANS respondents employ more strategies, such as the prevalence of thanking, reassuring, and explaining.

Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary (2002) find that when it comes to American English and Egyptian Arabic refusal strategies, there may be more similarities than differences. The authors asked interviewees who spoke either Cairene Arabic or American English to respond to orally hypothetical situations. The authors find that both Americans and Egyptians used similar types of refusal strategies, and both often provided reasons in addition to using a multitude of indirect strategies to make their refusals. However, Egyptians may have used the strategy of giving reasons in situations that they found difficult to refuse as a way of trying to explain their refusals.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the speech act theory that was developed earlier by Searle (1969), following Austin's (1962) work, and the notion of politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The study utilizes both the descriptive and comparative approaches in analyzing different corpora. The descriptive approach tries to explain things as they really are to find the rules that people follow when they respond to different situations in their everyday life. The study also uses the comparative approach to compare acceptance in two languages, and different speech acts based on the data collected from participants.

The study uses the speech acts of apology, requests, and invitation with one response, i.e. refusal. Participants in the study are described with regard to their age, gender, native language, and educational background.

Two equal pools of respondents participated in this study. The first one consisted of 30 native speakers of American English who fell under three categories. The first category is undergraduate students and the second one is holders of a bachelor's degree. The third category is participants who are enrolled in or have completed a Masters and/or a Ph.D. program. It is noteworthy that the majority of participants in the third category have not completed their Ph.Ds. Native speakers of American English consisted of participants ranging in age from 18 to 34 years old. Both the undergraduate and the bachelor categories consisted each of 4 females and 6 males. However, the graduate category was comprised of 4 males and 6 females. The second pool of participants are native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and have the exact same criteria as the American one.

The study uses closed-ended role play as one of the research instruments used for data collection. In that method, the respondent can only give a one turn oral response to a prompt.

The role play for the present study consists of descriptions of a number of scenarios, each of which requires the participant to produce a certain speech act e.g., apology, request, invitation and act them out in a way that is comparable to real life interactions. Because the data is drawn orally and in a way that is similar to real life interaction, Kasper and Dahl (1991), and Gass and Houck (1999) argue that it is one of the best ways to elicit data.

The study does not use the Discourse Completion Task (DCT), which is considered one of the most popular elicitation mechanisms in cross-cultural speech act research. The DCT is criticized for not giving respondents the option to choose not to respond (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Some speakers may decide not to answer because of certain background factors, which can include gender, age, and/or status of the interlocutor. This means that administering the DCT may not give an accurate depiction of important cultural differences. Besides, when the test is used in its usual written format, this can create problems because speech acts are usually understood orally.

Oral responses are more appropriate for Arabic speakers, as Arabic is a diglossic language with a written version fuşha [Modern Standard Arabic] or MSA and ɛammiyya [Egyptian Colloquial Arabic] or ECA, which is spoken, more than written, in most of the daily interactions.

Role play is a research instrument that offers participants a description of a situation they are required to perform. The face-to-face interaction between the two interlocutors allows the role play to come close to authentic language use. The role plays in the present study consist of 6 situations and include acceptance of the speech acts of apologies, requests, and invitations. These situations also vary with regard to the setting, as well as the object of refusal.

The researcher created the role play situations in the current study in order to be able to measure his hypotheses. The emphasis was on collecting instances of refusal from people with various educational backgrounds, different age groups, and both genders. In role plays, these variables can be controlled.

The researcher, a native speaker of Egyptian Arabic, did not collect the data from the speakers of American English. Instead, the researcher trained a native speaker of American English to collect the data in a reliable and consistent manner from native speakers of American English. The researcher did not collect the English data himself because he is a non-native speaker of American English, and he felt that this could affect the data elicited. If the native speakers of American English performed the role plays with a non-native English speaker, the participants would unconsciously or consciously alter their responses. This could potentially have obstructed the natural flow of the role plays and the language used. Another key reason is that this research focuses on how native speakers of American English realize the speech act of acceptance with other native speakers.

As for the part of Egyptian role play scenarios, a native Egyptian speaker who is well aware of the requirements instructed Egyptian participants of the role plays, and the researcher was just an observer.

The table below shows the role play situations that are used in the present study, and how they vary according to setting, speech act, and object of refusal.

Role play	Setting	Speech Act	Object of Refusal
Role play 1	House Party	Apology	Racial slur
Role Play 2	Not a specific place	Apology	Failing to pick your friend from the airport
Role Play 3	House	Request	Stop smoking
Role play 4	University	Request	Borrowing your classmate's notes because you don't feel like attending the lecture
Role play 5	Not a specific place	Invitation	Spend the weekend with your father
Role play 6	Not a specific place	Invitation	Romantic Dinner

Table1

The role plays were conducted with two groups of participants: Native speakers of American English, and native speakers of Egyptian Arabic. The role play scenarios with the native speakers of American English were conducted at Western Washington University. American participants were given the Consent Form to sign. After that, the TA facilitated the role plays and briefly explained to each participant the nature of the role plays and read the general instructions to him or her in American English.

The participants were given a description of each role play in American English before they acted it out. All the role plays were audio recorded.

On the other hand, the role play scenarios with the native speakers of Egyptian Arabic were conducted at Cairo University. Egyptian participants were given the Consent Form to sign. Subsequently, the lecturer facilitated the role plays and briefly explained to each participant the nature of the role plays and read the general instructions to him or her in Egyptian Arabic. The participants were given a translated description of each role play in Egyptian Arabic before they acted it out. Both sets of role plays were recorded and then written to analyze the strategies used.
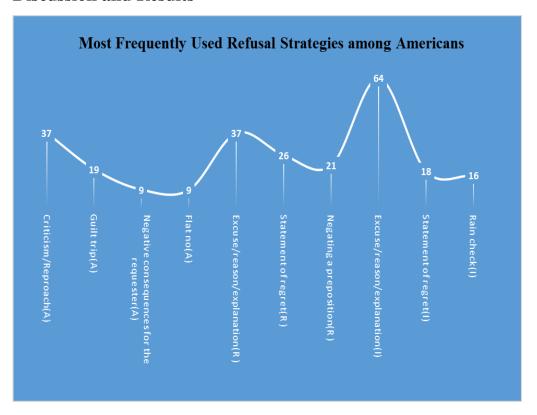
Discussion and Results

Figure 1

The most popular refusal strategy for the speech act of apology, according to the data collected from Americans, is criticism/reproach. It is one of the

common strategies used in the refusal of the speech acts of apology and sometimes requests. In those situations, participants reproach the interlocutor after they apologize for doing something grave. Beebe et al. (1990) use this strategy, which was named criticism and reprimand, to criticize the requester for making the request, and usually implies that the request is not fair.

American English: Apology - That was so stupid! *(criticism and reproach)*

Egyptian Arabic: Apology - متكلمنيش تانى و أنا كنت ممكن أرد عليك رد مش كويس. *(criticism and reproach)*

Translation: Don't speak to me again. I could've shown you what's up.

The second most popular strategy is guilt trip; however, the Americans also equally use direct refusals of flat no, and the indirect strategy of negative consequences to the requester as the third most popular.

The guilt trip strategy is used in refusing the speech act of apology among both American and Egyptian participants. Most of the time it is the deliberate attempt to make someone feel guilty for an action. It is used in several other studies like Beebe and Cummings (1996) and Ghazanfari, Bonyadi, and Malekzadeh (2013).

American English: *Apology* - I'm pretty much screwed. Thanks a lot. *(guilt trip)*

Egyptian Arabic: Apology - يعنى إيه أنا قعدت أشتغل على البحث ده إسبوع وأنت تضيعهولى كده؟!! *(guilt trip)*

Translation: I've been working on this research paper for a week now and you simply erase it?!

The most popular refusal strategy for the speech act of request, according to the data collected from Americans, is excuse/reason/explanation. It is

used to soften the refusal by communicating to the interlocutor that the speaker would accept had it not been for some reason or excuse. Some reasons can be given in detail and some can be general. This is significant in some cultures like Japanese Beebe et al. (1990), and Arabic Al-Issa (1998) and Al-Shalawi (1997), where speakers have a propensity for giving vague reasons and excuses when refusing whereas in the American culture speakers lean towards being more specific. It is noteworthy that the current study refutes Al-Issa (1998) and Al-Shalawi (1997)'s studies that state that Arabs are less clear than their American counterparts.

American English: *Request* - I'm really sorry but I already have an appointment for the time that you need a ride and it's the total opposite direction. *(Excuse/reason/explanation)*

Egyptian Arabic: *Invitation* - لا معلش عمور عشان عندى ظروف والجماعة فى البيت عايزنى فى حاجات مهمة فمش هينفع أجى. المره الجايه.

Translation: I can't Amoor, I have things to do and my wife needs me for something important, so I can't make it this time, maybe some other time. *(Excuse/reason/explanation)*

The second most popular strategy is statement of regret, and the third most popular strategy is the direct refusal of negating a proposition.

The statement of regret strategy is one of the common strategies found in most refusal studies. It is found in research work investigating Arabic like (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Morkus, 2009). In this strategy the speaker regrets his/her incapability to accept the interlocutor's request or invitation in most of the cases or, sometimes, apologizes, as in this study.

American English: Invitation -Sorry man I got a couple things I gotta take care of. *(statement of regret)*

statement معلش والله لولا ميعاد الدكتور كان عنيه ليك. - Egyptian Arabic: Request *of regret)*

American English: *Request* -That's not gonna happen. *(Negating a proposition)*

Egyptian Arabic: Request - أنا مقدرشى أبطل السجاير *(Negating a proposition)*

The most popular refusal strategy for the speech act of invitation, according to the data collected from Americans, is excuse/reason/explanation. The second most popular strategy is statement of regret, and the third most popular strategy is rain check.

Rain check is rescheduling for a more convenient unspecific time. This strategy is found in the data collected from Egyptians and Americans in acceptance.

American English: Apology - No worries, we can have a rain check, things happen. (Rain Check)

Egyptian Arabic: Invitation - خلينا نأجلها شويه يا عمتو. *(Rain Check)*

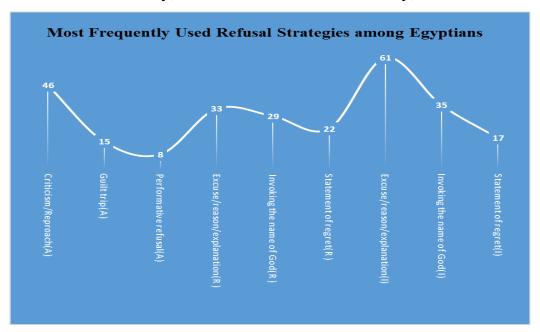Translation: It's okay, we can make it some other day, auntie.

Figure 2

The most popular refusal strategy in realizing the speech act of apology among Egyptian participants is criticism/reproach. The second most popular is guilt trip, and the performative refusal, subcategorized under direct refusals, is the third most popular strategy.

American English: *Apology* - I don't accept your apology. (performative)

Egyptian Arabic: Apology - .وأنا برفض الاعتذار

Translation: I don't accept your apology (performative)

The most popular refusal strategy for the speech act of request, according to the data collected from Egyptians, is excuse/reason/explanation. The second most popular is invoking the name of God, and the third most popular strategy is statement of regret.

The most popular refusal strategy for the speech act of invitation, according to the data collected from Egyptians, is excuse/reason/explanation. The second most popular is invoking the name of God, and the third most popular strategy is statement of regret.

In a study investigating the speech act of swearing in Arabic, Abdel-Jawad (2000) finds that swearing is used in Arabic to begin almost all types of speech acts. Swearing is generally used to stress the genuineness and importance of the speaker's proposition (Saleh and Abdul-Fattah, 1998). It is classified as a separate strategy in the realization of other speech acts in Arabic, such as apology (Bataineh, 2004). In the current study, the strategy of invoking the name of God is found abundantly in acceptance among Egyptian participants and was not used at all by any of the native speakers of American English.

Egyptian Arabic: Invitation - .والله جت فى وقتها أحسن وقت *(Invoking the name of God)*

Translation: You know what? Just in time.

According to the data collected from both Americans and Egyptians, it is evident that the two cultures use the two strategies of excuse/reason/explanation and statement of regret as common strategies.

Findings from the present study are compared to findings from studies that examined similarities and differences between Arabs and Americans in their realization of refusal.

Stevens (1993) comes to the conclusion that very few learners in the Arabic groups use softeners or hedges compared to Americans. Other Arabic refusal studies (Al-Issa, 1998) share that finding. This suggests that while the use of hedges and softeners is common in English, it does not seem to be one of the strategies frequently used in Arabic. However, the findings both studies share is not consistent with the present study, although the researcher investigate only native speakers' strategies of

(يا صاحبي) or the friend's nickname (يا كيمو).

The present study is not consistent with Al-Shalawi's, (1997), Al-Issa's (1998), and Al- Eryani's (2007) studies which find that the American participants use more direct refusal strategies than their Arab counterparts. The current study finds that the opposite is true. The Americans use direct refusal 7.2%, while the Egyptians use direct refusal strategies 8.2%. This study is partially consistent with Al-Shalawi's study which shows that Americans use the Flat No strategy more frequently than the Saudis. In the present study, the American participants use the Flat No strategy more than their Egyptian counterparts.

The present study is consistent with findings from other refusal studies that indicate that Excuse/Reason/Explanation is found to be the most frequently used strategy of refusal in studies adopting both the role play method and other more traditional methods such as the DCT for data collection (Al-Issa, 1998; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Beckers, 1999; Felix-Brasdefer, 2002; Henstock, 2003; Kwon, 2003; Margalef-Boada, 1993; VonCanon, 2006).

However, the current study is inconsistent with Kasper's (1997) which argues that bluntness is the cause of "processing limitation" that is evident when L2 learners adopt improper direct strategies for social or cultural reasons (Gass & Houck, 1999, p. 144). This is not the cause of bluntness that occurred in the current study by native speakers.

Conclusion

In realizing the three investigated speech acts of apology, request, and invitation, the study shows that some strategies of refusal Americans and Egyptians use are similar and some others are different. Culture played a significant role in selecting some most frequently used strategies. Egyptian, for instance, use the strategy of invoking the name of God as one of the popular strategies because of the prevalence of religion in the Egyptian culture.

Therefore, that affects the way people speak in everyday life. However, Americans, a more secular materialistic culture, there is little allusion to God, in a religious way, in their daily interactions.

Contribution of the study

A set of new role play scenarios that are culturally relevant to both Americans and Egyptians was designed to elicit refusal of the speech acts

of apologies, requests, and invitation. It is the first study to be done on strategies of refusal in Egyptian Arabic and American English realizing the speech acts of apology, request, and invitation, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. The study further added new strategy to Beebe et al. (1990) classification scheme of refusal (Table2).

Findings of the present study can be used to provide more insight into Arabic communication style, and how Arabic speech acts are realized. Findings can also be a helpful source for TAFL (Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language) teachers, and Arabic textbook writers.

New Strategies of Refusal the Researcher Identifies

Indirect Strategy of Refusal	Speech Act
- Courteous disapproval	Apology
- Playing the fool	Request
- Lack of empathy	Request
- Shocked/flabbergasted	Apology
- Cynical/suspicious	Apology
- Emphatic refusal	Apology- Request
- Blunt reason	Invitation

Table 2

Limitations of the Study

Most of the participants are from Washington State, not from all over the United States. There are mainly four regions in the United States: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Growing up in different regions may affect the way participants accept, as well as their preference of strategy choice. Genders are in pairs, so the study investigates two of the

same gender together. Future research should consider investigating interaction between the two genders.

Suggestions for Further Research

More research should focus on exploring non-verbal perspective of the strategies of refusal among native speakers of English and Arabic. There is also need for research that examines how native speakers with no higher education perform strategies of refusal in both languages. Further, it is important to have studies that replicate the present one, but in different dialects.

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