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# Cross-cultural pragmatics: a study of refusals by Brazilian learners of English

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# Abstract

In this thesis, I aim to investigate the interlanguage produced by Brazilian learners of L2 English at two different proficiency levels, looking for potential L1 transfer of politeness strategies. To fundament the investigation and provide tools for the analysis, a presentation of relevant theory will be conducted, especially regarding Pragmatics, Second Language Acquisition, and Politeness theories and the core notions within the fields, as speech acts, language transfer, interlanguage, and pragmatic failure will be defined as of use for this study. In addition, an extensive review of previous studies regarding L2 refusals, particularly concerning English and Brazilian Portuguese, will be performed.

This study has a pseudo-longitudinal design and considers learners at different proficiency levels in the L2. The participants in this study were 60 Brazilians and 30 Americans between 20 and 30 years old. The Brazilians were divided into two groups according to their proficiency level in L2 English: intermediate learners and advanced learners. The instrument used for data collection was a Discourse Completion Task (DCT), containing 12 different situations (requests, offers, invitations, and suggestions). It is identical to Beebe, Takahashi, and Ullis-Weltz's (1990), with minor modifications. This DCT has been extensively used in interlanguage pragmatics research and thus provides the possibility for replication and comparison of L2 refusals from different language groups.

The research questions leading this study are five, and the first three attempt to answer how L1 English speakers, L1 BP speakers, and L2 English learners perform refusals in the 12 different situations provided in the DCT. The fourth research question aims to contrast refusals by L1 English and L1 Brazilian Portuguese speakers, seeing how the politeness strategies used differ between the groups and if they lead to differences in their politeness systems. Finally, I will consider whether transfer is visible in the L2 English learners' interlanguage, and if so, how it looks like and whether novice learners present more transfer than advanced learners.

The data produced by the participants was classified according to a modified version of Beebe, Takahashi, and Ullis-Weltz's (1990) taxonomy of refusal strategies and adjuncts. I also considered Brown and Levinson's (1987) notions of positive and negative politeness extensively when considering the different strategies in the analysis. The types of refusal strategies and adjuncts used were classified, and their frequencies were established and converted to percentages. The participants' performance was then compared and discussed.

Overall, there were more similarities than differences between the groups, good news for Brazilian L2 English learners. There were no striking, systematic differences in how Americans and Brazilians refuse in different contexts regarding indirectness levels, number of refusal strategies, and number of adjuncts. However, the results suggested fundamental differences between the American and Brazilian politeness systems, where the Americans had a greater preference for negative politeness while

the Brazilians favored positive politeness expressions. Moreover, L1 transfer was suggested in both learner groups, at different degrees, yet being more visible in the intermediate learner group.

However, this investigation presented some shortcomings, particularly concerning the uneven distribution of participants in the two L2 proficiency levels; therefore, further research is needed. In addition, a general larger population for all groups would allow for statistical significance tests to be run and provide a more comprehensive picture of refusals in both cultures, shedding further light on L2 learners' pragmatic competence development.

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# 1 Introduction

Refusals may be considered an impasse for many second language learners, as they have a complex nature. Also, they are prone to be affected by sociolinguistic variables that might be at play, such as power difference, the interlocutor's status, or social distance (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990, 56). Therefore, tactfulness is vital while doing an FTA and transiting between cultures as one learns a second language. In addition, appropriate adaptation to different cultural standards might be necessary due to the likely variation of sociocultural rules and values.

In this study, the fields of cross-linguistic pragmatics and second language acquisition have been intertwined to approach the intriguing and relevant terrain of interlanguage choices in speech act performance. More specifically, this investigation regards the way Brazilian learners of L2 English perform the speech act of refusals in different proficiency levels. For this, I will examine whether L1 Brazilian Portuguese (hereafter BP) learners of L2 English adopt politeness strategies like the ones they would use in their native language, that is, if their L1 'interferes' in their L2 production, or if these learners use strategies that are more target-like. Thus, I will look for possible pragmatic transfer of politeness strategies in their refusals.

Overall, few studies have considered and compared participants with different levels of L2 proficiency when studying L2 refusals (Ellis 2008, 188–89), and particularly, little data is available on refusals by Brazilian L2 English learners. So, this study aims to contribute with further understanding within the field of interlanguage pragmatics.

In order to prepare the underlying foundation of this study, it is essential to review the pragmatic theory of speech acts, politeness, and second language acquisition theories. Moreover, a review of previous L2 refusal studies focusing on English and BP and a brief overview of the Brazilian culture and social values will also be presented.

Besides having its fascination, investigating this field of inquiry is also highly relevant. It directly affects the teaching and learning of L2 English since successful cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication is at stake, valuable attributes in a globalized and interconnected world. Therefore, the information achieved will benefit learners and teachers of English as a foreign language in Brazil. Additionally, the fact that two different learner proficiency levels are considered here may provide significant insights into L2 pragmatic development and acquisition research in general and particularly in Brazilian Portuguese, a blossoming field that calls for further studies.

# 2 Introduction to Theoretical Background

In the present chapter, I will outline the first part of the theoretical background upon which my investigation will lie. This initial section has as its common focus the field of pragmatics since the research will contemplate the meaning produced through language in use. Thus, this section will be divided into shorter subsections, according to the main topic under consideration.

In 2.1, pragmatics will be defined, and the fields of semantics and pragmatics will be differentiated. In subsection 2.2, I will discuss the nature of speech acts and a short historical overview of the area. Subsection 2.3 will deal with the concept of politeness within the field of linguistics, with particular attention to Brown and Levinson's classical politeness theory (1987). In 2.4, the emphasis lies on how speakers may use minimization strategies and indirectness in politeness and reduce possible conversational and relational conflicts. Finally, in subsection 2.5, special attention will be given to the speech act of refusal and its characteristics, and a few significant works in the field will be mentioned. Each of these subsections is relevant for understanding the issue studied here, which is the production of the speech act of refusals by Brazilian learners of English.

## 2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics can be regarded as one of the most lively and growing fields in linguistics and the philosophy of language, as well as in anthropology, and sociology, to name a few (Huang 2017, 1). However, since the field is so fruitful and diverse, it has been to define the area in a unified way. This difficulty is due to not always agreeing upon what they are studying and because pragmatics is a complex field, with various disciplinary influences and without sharp boundaries (Chapman 2011, 1; Huang 2014, 1).

Traditionally, the study of meaning is conducted within two subdisciplines of linguistics: semantics and pragmatics. While the former is concerned with the study of the meaning of words in isolation or when set into sentences, the latter considers meanings when words are used in utterances produced by speakers using language in specific contexts (Katamba 2005, 113; Siewierska 2009, 186; Szabó 2009, 364). However, it is relevant to remember that not everyone working in the field agrees upon the exact borderline between semantics and pragmatics (Chapman 2011, 20).

The relationship or connection between linguistic forms and entities in the world may be considered as the focal concern of the field of semantics. Moreover, in semantic analysis, there is an attempt to set up a relationship between linguistic expressions and "states of affair

in the world" as factual (true) or not (false), despite the producer of the statement or description (Yule 1996, 4).

Pragmatics, however, studies the way utterances produce meaning in situations, that is, when language is in use within a context (Leech 1983, 10; Dascal 1999, 753; Huang 2014, 1). In a similar line, Yule (1996) establishes that pragmatics is the study of speaker meaning and contextual meaning and is also concerned with "how more gets communicated than is said," as well as it is "the study of the expression of relative distance" (Yule 1996, 3). The consideration of pragmatics with 'relative distance' assumes that closeness or distance between speaker and listener, be it physical or social, determines how much shared experience they have, and therefore, how much needs to be said in a conversation. In short, Yule defines pragmatics as "the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms," that is, it considers people's intended meanings, their assumptions, their goals, and the actions they may perform as they speak (Yule 1996, 4).

In the present work, pragmatics will be considered a separate linguistic branch from semantics, as it regards those involved in the communication process and is concerned with contextual meaning, that is, meaning in use. This meaning in use is found when words are more than merely stating something, but one is performing an action by saying them. The acts performed in the process of speaking, namely, speech acts, are fundamental to the field of pragmatics and will be further regarded in section 2.2

## 2.2 Speech Acts

The works of Austin on speech acts, together with those of Paul Grice and his concept of 'implicature,' may be viewed as the "'classical' theories of pragmatics" (Chapman 2011, 56), classical in the sense of being founding, motivating further discussions in the field, either in the form of support or criticism. Also, they set the standards and frameworks for the analysis, and frequently, the terminology used in pragmatics.

The study of Speech Acts is considered of fundamental relevance in the field of pragmatics. Speech Acts, broadly defined as "acts done in the process of speaking" (Sadock 2004, 53), have been the subject of various studies by different scholars throughout the years. In order to better understand this field, it is relevant to consider the founding father of speech act theory, the philosopher J. L. Austin (1962). Austin argued that language philosophers, who have traditionally emphasized language as an instrument to describe things and make statements about how things are out in the world, had a somewhat limited view of language, or, in his

terms, "a descriptive fallacy" (Austin 1962, 3). Austin was concerned about things that one can do with language and not merely its use as a device for describing the world and developed a description of language use as "a series of speech acts," which is known as "speech act theory" (Chapman 2011, 57).

Austin (1962, 6) attempts to show that, under certain circumstances, uttering a sentence is not about describing one's performing of an action or stating that one is doing something, but it indeed corresponds to doing it. As an illustration, he mentions the utterance "I do" in the course of a marriage ceremony, through which the groom takes the bride to be his lawful wedded wife (Austin 1962, 5). In this example, Austin states that the utterance cannot be taken as true or false; neither is it merely describing a situation or informing of something. Thus, the statement "I do" said before the altar during a marriage ceremony does not report on a marriage, but it expresses that the speaker is "indulging in it" (Austin 1962, 6).

In this way, Austin names a sentence or utterance of this type as a 'performative sentence' or 'performative utterance.' The term 'performative' indicates that "the utterance is the performing of an action" and not merely saying something (Austin 1962, 6, 7). Besides, the circumstances in which the words are uttered should also be 'appropriate.' Thus, it is usually necessary for the speaker and other people to perform specific physical or mental actions besides uttering the words.

According to Austin (1962, 47), utterances may be classified into two categories: the performative utterance, which performs an act by being uttered, and the constative utterance or statement, whose nature is to state or say things. Constative utterances may be considered true or false, while performative utterances can be considered either felicitous or non-felicitous (Austin 1962, 14). A performative utterance is felicitous when it is successful, as all the expected conditions are satisfied; that is, the performative is adequately realized in the appropriate circumstances and by the relevant people. Otherwise, it will be regarded as non-felicitous when there is, to some extent, a failure. The doctrine of the things that may be and go wrong in performative utterances is the doctrine of *Infelicities* (Austin 1962, 14).

Austin noted the existence of different types of performatives, which Thomas (1995, 33–42) has tried to systematize and label. Thus, the performatives could be of four types: 'metalinguistic performatives; ritual performatives; 'collaborative performatives; and group performatives. It is essential to point out that these categories may sometimes overlap. Thomas (1995, 43) argues that significant cross-cultural differences may be observed in the performatives' domain and use regarding culturally-specific rituals.

Nevertheless, Austin's performative hypothesis could not be sustained for long, as the idea that only performative verbs could be used to perform actions was not completely precise. Eventually, Austin extended the scope of his hypothesis to include utterances with all verbs, claiming that it was then necessary to differentiate between "the truth-conditional aspect of what a statement is and the action it performs; between the meaning of the speaker's words and their *illocutionary force*" (Thomas 1995, 49).

The action of producing an utterance consists of three related acts known as locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, according to the terminology introduced by Austin (Austin 1962, 108; Yule 1996, 48). This classification is of extreme importance in the field, as the study of these three acts today is commonly termed the study of 'speech acts.' The locutionary act is the equivalent of uttering a sentence with a given sense and reference and is equivalent to 'meaning.' The illocutionary act has to do with the force or the speaker's intention by producing an utterance as informing, warning, or requesting, for example. Every speech act bears at least one illocutionary force, yet most may carry more than one and might be ambivalent (Asher and Simpson 1994, 8:4124). The perlocutionary act is related to what is achieved by pronouncing an utterance, such as persuading, misleading, or convincing the addressee; that is, it has to do with "the effect of the illocution on the hearer" (Thomas 1995, 49; Austin 1962, 108).

Therefore, let us consider the utterance 'It is freezing in here!' as an example. This grammatical combination of words uttered is what constitutes the locution, what is 'actually said.' The speakers' intention with implying 'I am feeling really cold' may be to express a complaint or perform a request to the listener, and therefore, indirectly send the message that an action should be taken, which is the speaker's illocutionary force. Moreover, the effect of such an utterance or the perlocutionary act might be that someone will close the windows or turn on the heating system. However, it is essential to point out that different locutions or even the same locution may have different illocutionary forces depending on the utterance context. Nevertheless, all competent adult speakers of a language are, in most cases, able to predict or understand the intended illocutionary force (Thomas 1995, 50).

The major speech act theorists have commonly overlooked cultural diversity in their studies, leaving it to be considered by posterior empirical investigations. The relationship between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts is significant when considering cross-cultural studies of speech acts. It may be that the hearer (H) fails to discern the intended

illocutionary force of what has been uttered by the speaker (S) (Thomas 1983, 93). Such a misunderstanding may be considered a 'pragmatic failure.' Pragmatic failure may take place when there is any occasion on which H perceived the illocutionary force of S's utterance in a different way than S intended H to have understood it (Thomas 1983, 93–4). Pragmatic failure is an important topic that will be further discussed within subsection 2.2.2.

Sometimes, it may be difficult for speakers to assume that the hearers will understand the intended illocutionary force of their utterance. This matter can be addressed by considering Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (or IFIDs) and felicity conditions (Yule 1996, 49). An IFID is a device that initially and more evidently indicates the illocutionary force of an utterance, for example, a verb in the locution that explicitly names the act being performed. The verb *promise* in "I promise you loyalty" would be a clear IFID. However, speakers may not always perform their speech act explicitly but may describe the act under performance to emphasize their intentions. As an example, one may consider the case of a speaker who had, in vain, attempted to talk to his wife on the phone just by hinting and expressing his wish indirectly, while the person on the other side of the line had continuously misunderstood his attempts. Then, the speaker formulates himself differently and tries one more time, "What I am asking you is: can I please talk to my wife?". In this case, the verb *ask* was explicitly used to draw special attention to the speaker's illocutionary force. Yule (1996, 50) mentions as other IFIDs the word order in an utterance, intonation, and the stress used by the speaker, such as the lowering of the voice while giving a warning or uttering a threat.

Moreover, the utterance must be produced following some conventional conditions to count as having the illocutionary force initially intended. These conditions are called felicity conditions. Felicity conditions are the expected or 'right' circumstances for the performance of a speech act to be admitted as intended (Yule 1996, 50).

Other scholars that succeeded Austin have continued to investigate speech acts within the language philosophy perspective. In Logic and Conversation (1967), the philosopher of language, Paul Grice, was concerned with how the hearer, target of the speech act, processes meaning as one reasons from what is said to what is meant in a conversation. Beyond the direct expressed meaning uttered by the speaker, sometimes utterances may carry additional implied meaning(s). Grice (1975, 43–45), investigating this phenomenon, developed the 'theory of implicature,' in which he attempted to predict and explain conversational implicatures. Implicature may be defined as "(i) the act of meaning or implying one thing by saying

something else, or (ii) the object of that act" (Davis, 2005). They may be determined by the sentence's meaning or the context of the conversation and may be considered conventional or unconventional. As to the function of implicatures, communication, keeping good social relations, and verbal efficiency may be named as a few (Davis, 2005). For Grice, conversation is a collaborative activity and context-bound. It is rational and functions as a sort of 'social contract' where speakers cooperate by designing their utterances under defined norms of talk and, to a large extent, can expect everyone else to do so too, suggesting what Grice designates as the Cooperative Principle (CP) (Grice 1975, 45).

Moreover, Grice considered that a set of consistent general 'rules' would guide people's conversations, known as the Gricean Maxims. Grice categorized them into four types: the Maxim of Quantity, the Maxim of Relevance, the Maxim of Manner, and the Maxim of Quality. The Maxim of Quantity establishes that one must be as informative as one needs to be, but no more. The Maxim of Relevance states that one must keep him/herself relevant to the topic, the question, and so forth when in a conversation. The Maxim of Manner requires that the speaker talks appropriately to whom he/she is talking. Besides, one should avoid ambiguity and set up the words and utterances in a reasonable, understandable order, i.e., in the correct temporal/spatial sequence. Moreover, the Maxim of Quality dictates that one must only say what he/she believes to be true and be prepared to support or confirm what one is claiming (Grice 1975, 45–47). These maxims and principles regulate the interaction and guide the production and interpretation of meaning, and in this sense, the interlocutors share a set of expected behaviors.

John Searle "attempted to systematize and formalize Austin's work" (Thomas 1995, 94). Unlike Grice, who established maxims and principles to explain the functioning of speech acts, but in a similar vein as Austin, Searle sought to describe the functioning of speech acts with a set of rules (Searle 1969, 16). Nonetheless, Searle's works received criticism from some scholars, who claimed that it is not always possible to distinguish between speech acts according to Searle's rules. Moreover, speaking about rules within pragmatics can be complicated, especially when talking about speech acts, which possess such a complex, diverse, and often ambivalent nature (Thomas 1995, 96–107; Leech 1983, 177).

Searle and Grice have had high relevance with their theories, maxims, and principles within the study and development of the field of speech acts. Although I am not investigating maxims and principles, understanding these establishes an essential background for the study

and comprehension of speech acts, the topic under scrutiny in the present study. Nonetheless, it is appropriate to point out that my intention is not to study speech acts from a philosophical point of view but an interpragmatic perspective.

Robin Lakoff (1973, 296–297), when writing about rules of pragmatic competence, established that they could be summarized as (1) be clear and (2) be polite. In situations where the need for clarity and politeness conflict with one another, politeness should take precedence. Moreover, although Grice's formulated rules present a valuable outline, Lakoff argues that they may not be entirely satisfactory. For example, as a potential problem with the maxim of quantity, the author questions how much is too much? Lakoff goes on to claim the need for more rigorous definitions of the notions presented under the maxims. Therefore, in consonance with Lakoff (1973), who alludes to politeness and its importance when discussing pragmatic competence, the following subsection will explore the issue of politeness within pragmatics.

## 2.3 Politeness

The interest in issues of politeness has been documented throughout history. It can be tracked from antiquity, in civilizations such as Ancient Egypt, Greece, India, and China, to this day (Terkourafi 2011; Culpeper, Haugh and Kádár 2017) and its importance may be verified across different cultures. Nevertheless, it was not before the 1970s that politeness received more significant academic attention, as a study field, with the classical works of Lakoff (1973), Leech (1977, 1983), and Brown and Levinson ([1978], 1987), which concentrated on a more systematic investigation of relationships and the avoidance of interpersonal conflicts by considering the use of different linguistic forms and strategies.

Politeness may not only be associated with sociology, but it also presents links to other fields, such as linguistics and anthropology (Brown and Levinson 1987, 2). The object of research of politeness can be considered highly heterogeneous, and within linguistics, specific areas of linguistic structure that convey the speaker's attitudes, which are not explained by semantic means but in a pragmatic way, have received special attention. Linguistic work on speech acts has been relevant in politeness research (Held 1992, 134).

Held (1992, 139) asserts that in the "pragmatic, speech-act theoretic discussions of politeness in language," indirectness constitutes the central focus of interest. Thus, even though Lakoff, Leech and, Brown and Levinson depart from different theoretical and methodological grounds when writing the classical works within the field, their approaches can be seen as performing a convergent change. According to their interpretation of the works of Grice (1975)

and Searle (1975), the identification of indirectness with politeness manifestly became the center of discussions (Held 1992, 139).

Lakoff (1973, 298, 301) proposed and listed, informally, a set consisting of three rules of politeness in conversations: (1) do not impose, (2) give options and (3) make A feel good, that is, be friendly towards the hearer, which, according to her, corresponds to the purpose of all rules of politeness. She claims universality in these rules yet recognizes that habits may vary across cultures (Lakoff 1973, 303, 305).

Leech (1977, 1983) also suggested a conversational maxim approach to politeness. In his early paper in the field, Leech (1977, 9) suggests what he calls the 'Tact Maxim,' an equally or more powerful maxim that would prevail over the Gricean Maxims when there is an evident need for politeness to be maintained. He states that in "socially perilous situations," the Tact Maxim should override the Cooperative Principle, as preserving friendly relationships may be considered a precondition to cooperative behavior among people (Leech 1977, 25). Later, Leech (1983) argues that Grice's Cooperative Principles are regulated by another principle, which he names the Politeness Principle (PP). In this way, what one says to accomplish one's illocutionary goal is regulated by the PP, which implies the desire to maintain a social balance and friendly relations, and such a principle can explain why people are willing to be cooperative in the first place. Without politeness, the communication channel between you and your next would be broken (Leech 1983, 82).

The Politeness Principle (PP) is constituted by six maxims: Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy Maxims. These maxims deal with polite behavior and tend to go in pairs, such as the Generosity Maxim (minimize benefit to self; maximize cost to self), Modesty Maxim (Minimize praise to self; maximize dispraise of self), and Agreement Maxim (minimize disagreement between self and other; maximize agreement between self and other). According to Leech (1983, 81), the PP has a negative and a positive pole. The negative form of the PP is usually formulated as "minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs," while the corresponding positive pole, usually considered of less importance, consists of "maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs." The two poles in the PP may explain why the maxims also tend to go in pairs, comprising a negative and a positive form. Nonetheless, these maxims should not be taken as 'absolute rules,' yet they should be observed to a certain extent to preserve the speaker (Leech 1983, 131–133).

The studies of linguistic politeness and impoliteness have a wide-ranging scope and may include the investigation of simple linguistic features, such as the words *thanks* and *please*, and more complex interaction strategies used by interlocutors in a given context and time. These studies also refer to the way these features and strategies consider the interlocutor's face. According to Archer (2017, 384), the term *face* has its origin in China and became popularized in the West by the sociologist Irving Goffman, who describes face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims (…) [F]ace is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes (…)" (1967, 5).

The notion of face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself," derived from Goffman (1967), is key to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987, 61). Face, which they claim to be highly abstract, comprises two aspects or two specific kinds of related desires: negative face and positive face. Negative face is the preservation of personal rights, i.e., it is the desire not to be impeded in one's actions and to be free from any imposition. On the other hand, positive face involves one's consistent positive self-image and the desire to be ratified, approved, and understood.

Brown and Levinson state that face is "emotionally invested" since it needs to be cared for in interaction as it may be enhanced, maintained, or even lost. In interaction, people tend to cooperate in preserving each other's face, as there is a mutual vulnerability of face and one's face depends on the other's being maintained. According to them, the needs to attend to face in interaction are universal (1987, 13, 61–62).

Considering the notion of face and its universality, Brown, and Levinson (1987, 65–68) strongly argue that there are certain types of speech acts that naturally threaten the face wants of the speaker (S) and/or of the addressee (H), which are designated as Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Some acts may threaten the positive face and others that will threaten the negative face, yet overlap in the classification of FTAs may be found since some FTAs may threaten both negative and positive face, such as interruptions and threats. Moreover, some acts will mainly threaten H's face, others will primarily threaten S's face, while some acts may threaten both H's and S's faces.

In this way, regarding H, some acts like requests, warnings, and advice may threaten his negative face and his desire to act unimpededly; meanwhile, acts such as criticism, accusations, and disagreements may threaten the positive face of H, indicating that S does not care about H's wants and feelings. Furthermore, when we consider S, acts such as expressing gratitude and acceptance of offers may offend S's negative face since S accepts a debt, thus humbling his

face. Conversely, acts like apologies, which indicate regret for performing a prior FTA, and accepting a compliment, which may make S constrained to compliment H in return, can be considered acts that damage S's positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987, 65–68).

People, as rational agents, tend to avoid face-threatening acts altogether or to perform them with the use of specific strategies that will attenuate possible threats (Brown and Levinson 1987, 68–69). In order to accomplish that, the speaker will likely take three factors or wants into consideration before performing an FTA: (1) the want to express the content of the FTA; (2) the wish to be as efficient as possible; and (3) the willingness to preserve H's face at all costs, if (2) is not greater than (3). Brown and Levinson (1987, 69) proposed scheme depicting all possible sets of strategies for performing FTAs is presented in Figure 1:

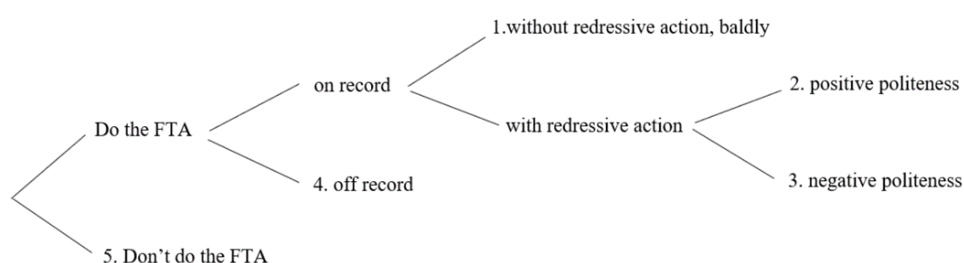


*Figure1*. Possible strategies for doing FTAs.
*Source*: Brown and Levinson 1987, 69, figure 1.

When the speaker performs the FTA on record,  the communicative intention that led S to do the act is unambiguous. For instance, if the speaker says, "I apologize for coming late to the meeting," then he has unequivocally expressed his state of being sorry for lateness to the meeting, and therefore has apologized 'on record.'

By contrast, S may choose to go 'off record' and express his intentions ambiguously, indirectly, giving room for different interpretations of what is said. The preference for this strategy may provide S with the 'benefit' of not being held accountable for one specific intent or act. As an illustration, if S says, "I am so hungry, and I forgot to bring some lunch today," it can be that S is just stating a fact, or it might as well imply that he wants to make H a request to either share his lunch or buy S some food; yet, S cannot be held to have committed to such intent. Examples of off-record strategies may include understatements, rhetorical questions, the use of metaphors and irony, and other kinds of hints that might indicate what the speaker is meaning to communicate without explicitly doing so (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69).

Performing an act 'without redress,' 'baldly,' entails doing it in a straightforward, clear, and concise way. For example, in the case of a request, it is expressed as "Do x!" as in "Open the door!". An act will be performed in this way if S does not fear possible retribution from H, such as in situations where urgency and efficiency are required or in a circumstance where S has an undeniably high power over H (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69).

When S chooses to perform an act in a 'redressive' manner, it means that he is not willing or intending to cause any harm to H's face; on the contrary, he wishes to 'give face' to H, as a way to lessen, as much as possible, any potential face damage caused by the FTA. The redressive action is of two kinds, according to which aspect of face is emphasized: positive politeness or negative politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987, 230–231) claim that a mixture of elements deriving from positive and negative politeness strategies is possible. When this mixture is introduced in one given utterance, it forms a sort of hybrid strategy. At other times, it is possible to mix strategies in a way they do not hybridize. Instead, the speaker and addressee go back and forth between approaching and distancing (Brown and Levinson 1987, 231).

Positive politeness is preoccupied with the positive face of H, that is, the positive self-image that H claims to possess. Through positive politeness, S will indicate that he wants H's wants, including treating H as a member of a group, a friend, a person who has likable and admirable personality traits and wants. In some instances, the expression that at least some of H's wants are also desired by S may minimize a possible face threat. To show that the FTA does not imply a complete depreciation of H's face, S can, for example, convey an admiration of H, in addition to performing the FTA, or S can express that he considers H as an equal.

When it comes to negative politeness, S is determined to partially satisfy H's negative face wants, that is, his fundamental wish to maintain his 'territory' and freedom to act. In this vein, politeness is being attempted by 'avoidance,' and the strategies used by S will indicate that he recognizes and respects H's negative face and that S will not interfere (or only slightly) with H's power to act in freedom. Consequently, negative politeness is marked by formality and restraint. The FTA is counteracted by the use of apologies for interfering, hedging on the illocutionary force of the act, the use of passive and of other 'impersonalizing' and 'softening' mechanisms that will provide H with a way 'out,' allowing him to feel that he is not being pressed to act in a specific way (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69–70).

The fifth strategy pointed out by Brown and Levinson (1987, 72) would be not to do the FTA if the FTA is extremely threatening, and the best solution would be to opt-out and refrain

from offending H. However, S would fail to achieve his communication wants. Thus, this strategy should not be taken into a further discussion in this investigation.

When it comes to choosing which strategy to use when one is about to perform an FTA, certain strategies will offer specific advantages to the detriment of others and thus will be taken into consideration by the speaker. It is essential to point out that depending on how dangerous or extreme the FTA is, S would rationally choose the higher-numbered strategy according to the scheme presented in Figure 1. The higher the strategy, the higher the payoffs and the lower the potential threat to H's face. Therefore, a sequence of the strategies, in a continuum, could be represented in the following list: on record without redress, on record with positive politeness, on record with negative politeness, and off record. Brown and Levinson (1987, 74) mention that it is safer to assume that the addressee would prefer his peace and his freedom to choose and act than to hear the speaker's expressions of admiration and regard. Thus, the strategy of negative politeness would offer less risk to the face than the positive one. Also, considering that S decides to perform the FTA, the choice to go 'off record' would be the safest to S, and it would be regarded as more polite than going 'on record' (Brown and Levinson 1987, 20, 74). However, on the other hand, some disadvantages come with this option: the off-record strategy often leads to ambiguities.

Some scholars, however, have disputed this view that going off record, that is, most indirectly as possible, would be the politest strategy when dealing with FTAs. Blum-Kulka (1987, 136), while studying native speakers' perceptions of politeness and indirectness in Hebrew and English, found out that the speakers have perceived the notions of indirectness and politeness as different from each other. Thus, the most indirect request strategies were not perceived as the politest ones. In Hebrew and English, the highest level of politeness was not due to hints, as in off record, but was achieved by using 'conventional indirectness,' i.e., negatively polite indirect speech acts, such as in 'can you…?' questions. Contrarily, highly indirect strategies can be perceived as lacking politeness as they seem not to show concern for lack of pragmatic clarity, as pointed by Lakoff (1973, 296) as a rule of pragmatic competence (Blum- Kulka 1987, 144).

Also challenging Brown and Lenvinson's (1987) view of indirectness being closely associated with politeness, Grainger and Mills (2016, 6–7) argue that indirectness could be considered just as coercive as a bald on record utterance in particular situations, as refusing a request done in off record could be not acknowledging the politeness of the request. Additionally, indirectness may not be seen as the most polite form in other languages. Neither

is the term' indirectness,' in itself, considered an "agreed-upon term" in all languages since what is regarded as indirect in English may not be considered so in another language. Indirectness has different shades and may be applied or avoided due to distinct purposes in different cultures and languages (Grainger and Mills 2016, 7; Wierzbicka 1991, 88–104).

Three sociological variables are essential to determine the level of seriousness of an FTA: relative power (P) of H over S, the social distance (D) between S and H, and the ranking of imposition (R) that is involved in the performance of a face-threatening act (FTA), in a particular culture. Brown and Levinson (1987, 15, 74) argue that these factors are widespread in many, if not all, cultures.

Brown and Levinson (1987, 76) proposed the following formula to compute the seriousness or weightiness of an FTA:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

In this formula, $W_x$ represents the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA; D(S, H) represents the value that measures the social distance existing between S and H; P (H, S) is the amount of power that H possesses over S, and $R_x$ is a value that quantifies the gradation to which the FTA can be evaluated as an imposition in a given culture. In their view, the summative function shows that all three dimensions (D, P, and R) weigh how serious an FTA is, and therefore, helps establish the level of politeness with which an FTA is to be conveyed (Brown and Levinson 1987, 76).

P and D are considered by Brown and Levinson (1987, 76) as very general social dimensions present in diverse cultures. While D is a symmetrical dimension of "similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purpose of this act (…), P is an asymmetric social dimension of relative power (…)". Finally, R is considered culturally and situationally bound, and there must be a consideration of to what extent the impositions are considered to "interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or approval" (1987, 77).

These sociological variables have been problematized through time by different scholars. Different authors have worked with the concepts of P and D, and different definitions have been presented (Spencer-Oatey 1993; 1996; Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac 2017). Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac (2017) point to the significance of further and thorough investigations of the interplay between individual, cultural, and universal facets of the influence of P and D. Moreover, the authors mention that some scholars have questioned, for example, whether the notion of affect should be seen separately from D or considered as an aspect belonging to it.

The comprehension of the domains of P and D are of extreme importance, and it has been discussed numerous times whether these domains consist of independent variables or are to be considered as 'umbrella terms' for other factors. If P and D are single independent variables, then additional variables, such as gender and affect, should be introduced to describe better particular linguistic politeness cases (Spencer-Oatey and Žegarac 2017, 137–138).

Furthermore, the notion of face as "the key motivating force for 'politeness,'" as presented by Brown and Levinson (1987), has been criticized by Spencer-Oatey (2002, 531). She argues that the notion of negative face overemphasizes individual autonomy, while it fails to consider the interpersonal or social perspective of face, and suggests that it is necessary to consider both sides of one's face, the individual, independent, and social aspects.

Politeness has been studied under different frameworks, and the field has observed a proliferation of models, alternative approaches, and applications. Mainly since the 2000s, there has been a steady number of publications in the area, including a greater interest in impoliteness, and thus, a rather fruitful field (Culpeper, Haugh and Kádár 2017, 2–6). Nonetheless, the classic work of Brown and Levinson (1987) continues to have a notorious weight and value in the field today, and relevant concepts presented by the authors will be used in the present study. Again, it is pertinent to stress that according to their politeness model, the strategies used in off-record may be said to constitute the politest ones when performing face-threatening acts, even though this view has been criticized and contested, as already discussed here. The speaker will avoid responsibility for the act by going off record, as the addressee cannot interpret it in a precise, unequivocal way. This minimization of face threat happens as the speaker relies on indirectness, a topic addressed in more detail in section 2.3

## 2.4 Indirectness

Speakers frequently achieve more in a speech act than the perlocution itself since they can often "mean more than they say" due to the implicature phenomenon, which was already presented in section 2.2. In some cases, the meaning that is further conveyed may be a speech act as well. For example, "You're sitting on my chair" is not merely construed as an informative statement but also as a request that you are supposed to stand up and find a chair for yourself. Implicated speech acts like this are known as indirect speech acts (Green 2013, 956).

While in direct speech acts, locution and illocution often coincide, when it comes to indirect speech acts, locution and illocution often differ from one another. For instance, consider the following dialogue between two students:

(1) Student A: Want to see a movie tonight?

(2) Student B: I must study for an exam.

In his reply, B's answer is not merely the assertion of a fact; the student is performing what would typically constitute a rejection of the invitation proposed by A. Without stating it explicitly, B is saying that he cannot attend the movies or join in the movie night, as B must study for an exam. This example shows that it is not the only function of sentences to state facts when taking language use into account.

Considering a similar dialogue as the one exemplified above, Searle ([1975] 1996, 169–170) questions how can A comprehend that (2) is a refusal to his invitation? It may be understood that the 'primary illocutionary act' performed by B's utterance is to refuse the invitation made by A, and B substantially achieves this through performing a 'secondary illocutionary act,' that is, through the statement that he must prepare for an exam. B performs the secondary illocutionary act by stating a sentence in its literal meaning, and this literal utterance constitutes a performative of his primary illocutionary speech act. Thus, one might say that the secondary illocutionary act is literal, while the primary one is not. In insinuations, hints, and irony, the speaker's utterance and sentence meanings may differ. Searle stresses that a sentence uttered may also mean something more than its literal meaning, i.e., a sentence containing the illocutionary force indicators for one type of illocutionary act can also be performed to utter another illocutionary act. These can be considered cases of indirect speech acts, where one illocutionary act is performed indirectly through the performance of another speech act. Searle clarifies that what is added in a case of indirect speech is not an additional *sentence* meaning but an additional *speaker*'s meaning (Searle [1975] 1996, 168; 174). Except for explicit performatives, Austin and Grice argued that all speech acts may be considered indirect to some extent (Thomas 1995, 94).

Searle ([1975] 1996, 169–170) attempts to explain how A can understand this nonliteral primary illocutionary act when all B utters is the literal secondary illocutionary act. Among the steps mentioned, A considers that B is cooperating in the conversation and is being relevant, according to the Gricean principles of conversational cooperation. Appropriate responses for a proposal would be an acceptance, a refusal, or a postponement, and if B's response was none of these, then B probably means more than what he said, and therefore his primary illocutionary point must be different from the literal one. Considering that studying for an exam and going

to the movies are both activities that usually demand the use of a pretty large amount of time for one evening, A would possibly conclude that the statement of (2) by A means that he probably cannot accept the proposal and his primary illocutionary point would be to refuse the invitation.

The theory of speech acts and the cooperative principles establish a framework for indirect speech acts to be meant and understood. While keeping their literal meaning, they will also gain a conventional one, and some of these forms will become standard idiomatic forms for certain speech acts. Searle claims that for a particular utterance to be considered a plausible indirect speech act, it must be spoken idiomatically. He adds that besides the existing Gricean maxims of conversation, there seems to be a new maxim at work, and this one establishes that one should speak idiomatically, except when there is a reason not to do so (Searle [1975] 1996, 177–178).

Indirectness may be considered a universal phenomenon since it occurs in all natural languages, as far as we know. Even though this phenomenon is not always intentional, pragmatics is only concerned with intentional indirectness. Indirectness may be costly, as it takes a longer time for the speaker to produce it and longer for the hearer to process it. Besides, it may be seen as risky since the addressee may not understand what the speaker has initially intended to express (Thomas 1995, 119–121). In conversations, however, people rely on the hearer's ability to fill in, logically, with all the missing links and assumptions to understand what is being meant by what is said, both explicitly and implicitly (Dascal 1983, 131).

The use of indirectness by people does not reflect the presence of irrationality. On the contrary, it may point to a well-thought-through use of language, which adds unnecessary effort but is intended to avoid negative situations, such as the unpleasantness of hurting someone, at the same time that it may make it possible for the speaker to achieve his/her goals, or even to gain some advantage without having to be direct with the addressee. For Searle, politeness is the primary reason people prefer to express themselves through indirectness (Searle [1975] 1996, 178).

Even though indirectness may be universally observed throughout natural languages, this does not mean that all people use indirectness with the same frequency and manner. Possible factors that might influence the way people use indirectness may be mentioned: the relative power of the speaker over the hearer; the social distance between speaker and hearer; the degree of imposition of X in culture Y; and relative rights and obligations between speaker and hearer. Additionally, how these factors are perceived and evaluated may vary from culture

to culture (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Spencer-Oatey 1993; Thomas 1995). Such factors have been previously considered in section 2.2 Politeness, yet now they will be elaborated and discussed.

When considering the variable power, the speaker tends to use a higher degree of indirectness when speaking to people who have some power or authority over them. These power relations are most evident in hierarchical settings, as in the workplace or the military. In her Ph.D. thesis, Spencer-Oatey (1992 cited in Thomas 1995, 127) describes and discusses different kinds and constituents of power. 'Legitimate power' is the right to request certain things due to his/her role, status, or age. On the other hand, 'referent power' is the power one has over another since this person is admired and the other wants to be like him/her in some sense. Finally, 'expert power' refers to the power related to some knowledge or expertise that a specific person has and that is desired and/or needed by another one. Thomas claims that 'legitimate power,' which is more consciously exercised, is the sort of power that is the most dependent on cross-cultural variation. 'Referent power,' also varies according to the culture considered, is commonly unconsciously exercised, and it is usually the case when considering people who act as role models, teachers, and sports idols. Lastly, 'expert power' is seen as the most transitory type since an expert in a given field would have power over someone who needs this power at a given time. Nevertheless, at the same time, this same expert might need the help of someone who has expertise in an area he/she does not possess (Thomas 1995, 127–128).

Social distance also influences the use of (in)directness. There is a higher chance that a speaker will employ directness with someone that he/she knows well, is related to, or is similar in, for instance, age, social class, and ethnicity. On the other hand, when referring to a stranger or someone with whom the speaker has a different social relationship, indirectness tends to be more frequently employed (Leech 1983, 126; Thomas 1995, 128). It may be difficult, at times, to differentiate the influence caused by power and by social distance. Power and social distance frequently co-occur since people tend to be distant from those in power over them, as in the case of the workplace; nevertheless, this cannot be considered a rule (Thomas 1995, 129).

The size of imposition refers to the request being made: how great is this request? The greater the request, the higher the probability of using indirectness; that is, one would often use a higher degree of indirectness when requesting to borrow someone's car than when borrowing a pen. Brown and Levinson (1987) designate it as 'ranking of imposition.' For them, it is culturally and situationally given and should be measured concerning the degree to which it

may interfere with an agent's positive and negative face wants, that is, that it may be considered an 'imposition' (1987, 76–77).

In addition to these three variables introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987), the relative rights and obligations between the speaker and hearer may also directly influence the use of less or more direct speech acts. It all depends on whether the speaker has the right to make a particular demand or not or whether he must submit. For instance, Thomas (1995, 131) mentions the example of a police officer who, while on duty, has the authority to get someone to move a parked car by merely saying, 'Move this vehicle.' Nevertheless, when this same person is speaking in a private capacity, he would need to be cautious and speak much more indirectly to carry out the same speech act.

For politeness reasons and regard for the other's face, one may make use of indirect strategies. Indirectness may be used when the speaker has competing goals; due to the desire to make one's language more attractive, even if to a lesser extent; to increase the force of one's message, and finally, when the other's face is being 'threatened' (Thomas 1995, 143; Dascal 1983, 163). However, the probability of one's face being threatened may be higher when the interaction occurs under particular circumstances, as with some speech acts. Among the speech acts considered most face-threatening in their nature is the speech act of refusal, which will receive dedicated attention in subsection 2.5.

## 2.5 Speech Act of Refusal

Refusals are among the speech acts that have received more considerable attention and scrutiny (Gass and Houck 1999, 2). The research in the field has fundamentally focused on three different approaches: 1) the realization of a speech act within a particular language; 2) the realization of a speech act cross-linguistically; or 3) the production (and sometimes, recognition) of a speech act in a language by non-native speakers of that language (Gass and Houck 1999, 1).

Refusals are speech acts characterized as responses to other acts, such as requests, invitations, offers, or suggestions instead of acts initiated by the speaker. Moreover, since refusals usually work as second pair parts, extensive planning is limited on the speaker's part (Gass and Houck 1999, 2). Moreover, refusals are usually part of a lengthy sequence that may involve the negotiation of a satisfactory outcome but also displays face-saving strategies to accommodate the unruly and at times' turbulent' nature of the act. Also, since they have a face-threatening nature, "they are often regulated by different cross-cultural face concerns" (Gass

and Houck 1999, 2–3). Due to their nature and high face-threatening risks, the production of the speech act of refusals generally requires specific ability and knowledge of the culture under consideration.

The initiating act starts up the process, and two general kinds of initial responses that are possible by the respondent are to accept or not accept. An accept refers to a sincere acceptance, and therefore an agreement between interlocutors is perceived. However, a non-accept would make the situation more complex, as various options would confront the refuser. A non-accept could be one of three kinds: a straight refusal, a postponement, or an alternative proposal. If the response is of the type non-accept, then the initiator may choose to concur or accept the respondent's non-accept in case the interaction is resolved, and the initial response would serve as the final outcome too. However, if the initiator does not 'accept' the respondent's non-accept, he/she can try to work out a resolution that is more acceptable to him/her. This situation leads to a negotiation between the initiator and the respondent, and in this interaction, they perform linguistic acts aiming to produce a potential and common satisfactory outcome (Gass and Houck 1999, 3–4).

In this process of negotiation, the initiator may recycle the initiating act. Gass and Houck (1999, 4) state that the critical fact about the initiator not accepting the respondent's non-accept is that it will tend to involve the process of negotiation, which may produce various outcomes, depending on the initial response. The final outcome is all about the final solution found in the interaction process and can be an acceptance, which may be complete or contingent, a postponement, an alternative proposal by the respondent, or another refusal. Furthermore, the outcome may not necessarily be mutually satisfactory. Gass and Houck (1999, 5) note that what is comprised in a satisfactory outcome may vary and take different forms in different cultures.

Gass and Houck (1999, 7) propose a model of analysis of the speech act of refusal, which allows us to understand the interaction better. When negotiation is found due to a non-acceptance of the respondent's non-accept, a long process of recycling of the initiating act may take place, but also, more complex interaction may take place, as presented in Figure 2:

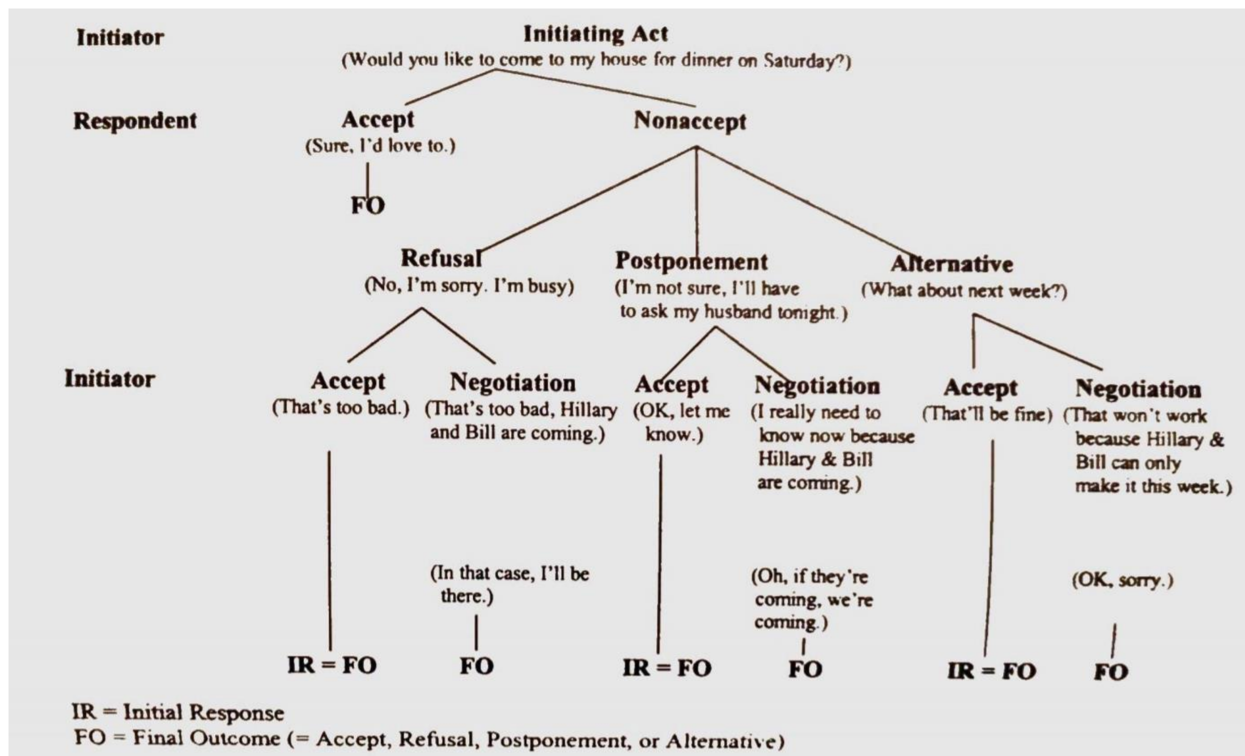

*Figure 2*. Possible refusal trajectories involving negotiation.
*Source*: Gass and Houck 1999, 8, figure 2.

With regards to the categorization of refusal responses, Gass and Houck (1999, 7) argue that it may be challenging to identify some types of refusals, and researchers in the field have dealt with difficulties when attempting to classify the different strategies used, what has led to the emergence of several classifying systems.

One of the difficulties in categorizing is that a difference in the degree of explicitness regarding explicit linguistics signals may be observed in utterances that will perform a particular speech act. The interpretation of the nature of a speech act may come from the presence of specific linguistic features, such as performative verbs or the verb mood (imperative, interrogative, among others). These features are illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), discussed in subsection 2.2. Moreover, the nature of an act may be given according to the semantic content present in the utterance. For instance, the declaration "I need to pick up the kids from school," although it does not present a performative verb and may function as a mere informative statement, may also be interpreted as an indirect refusal to a request to work overtime, due to the utterance's literal semantic content.

Additionally, utterances may differ in their degree of (in)directness, going from a more explicit direct illocutionary force to a more opaque one, more of a hint to the hearer that might take longer and work harder interpreting the speaker's primarily illocutionary point. It is crucial

to mention that even in cases where the utterance is more direct and, for instance, rely on performative verbs, it may still be intended as more than one speech act, as is the case with the following utterance: "I promise I will never borrow your jewels again without asking you first." In this example, despite the performative verb *promise* being present, the hearer may also interpret the utterance as a type of apology. Therefore, the association of an utterance's linguistic features, together with its production context, is of great importance when understanding and identifying a speech act. It is crucial to be especially attentive when working with cross-cultural speech acts, as different cultures may use distinct mechanisms to perform and interpret different speech acts (Gass and Houck 1999, 9).

The context in which the discourse takes place may also indicate the force of an utterance (Gass and Houck 1999, 10). Due to the nature of refusals, behaviors that could have numerous meanings in distinct contexts, such as the case with silence, may be interpreted as a refusal when it comes immediately after a request, invitation, or offer performed by one's interlocutor.

Gass and Houck (1999, 10–19) mention some classification systems that have been used and studies of refusals from the last decades of the twentieth century. For instance, Rubin (1981, 6–9) discusses the challenges of identifying the exact function of an act that could be related to refusing. She presents a list of nine ways of saying *no*, which are claimed to be relatively similar across various cultures, yet the similarity in these 'forms' may not indicate an immediate cross-cultural correspondence in function. Some of the 'common' ways of refusing, as presented by her, one could mention being silent and showing a lack of enthusiasm; hesitation; offering of an alternative; postponement; avoidance; and even giving a general acceptance to an offer, yet not giving any further details (Gass and Houck 1999, 11).

In the 1980s, Beebe and her colleagues developed a system of categorizing and analyzing refusals that became very well-known and has been continuously cited by other scholars (Gass and Houck 1999, 12). Nevertheless, this classificatory system has drawn the most attention in Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) paper. The authors categorize the refusal responses according to semantic formulas (expressions used to perform a refusal) and adjuncts (expressions that go along with the refusal itself, but that alone cannot perform a refusal). However, their source differs from the earlier works since the data in question was collected through a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) from native speakers of Japanese, native speakers of Japanese responding in English, and native speakers of English. In other words, the data used to establish the different categories was based on real use of

language, a clear advantage that can make the categories academically more reliable. Furthermore, the authors classified the refusal responses obtained through their study into semantic formulas, which are expressions used to perform refusals, and adjuncts, expressions that accompany a refusal but cannot perform a refusal by themselves. The semantic formulas and adjuncts used in Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's (1990) classificatory system are listed as follows (Gass and Houck 1999, 13):

Semantic formulas

1. Direct
    a. Performative
    b. Nonperformative statement
2. Indirect
    a. Statement of regret
    b. Wish
    c. Excuse, reason, explanation
    d. Statement of alternative
    e. Set condition for future or past acceptance
    f. Promise of future acceptance
    g. Statement of principle
    h. Statement of philosophy
    i. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor
    j. Acceptance that functions as refusal
    k. Avoidance

Adjuncts

1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement
2. Statement of empathy
3. Pause fillers
4. Gratitude/ appreciation

Due to the very nature of the data collection process by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), identifying the act performed by the respondents was not in question (Gass and Houck 1999, 13). Similarly, I base my data collection process on Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), and their DCT is reproduced, with slight adjustments, as it will be further explained under the appropriate section.

The use of a more constrained format of data collection, depending on a limited number of participants, may be considered as a drawback, since from the moment new data of a broader spectrum (e.g., nationalities, a more extensive sample of situations) is collected, supplementary categories may be needed and proposed. Nonetheless, a more naturalistic approach in data collection might bring difficulties: the lack of transparency of the act performed may cause classification problems, and one might not know if he is indeed dealing with an act of refusal. In such cases, it might be necessary to interview the participants to discuss their responses since an unenthusiastic acceptance can be viewed as a refusal, as well as body language and tone of voice may influence the way an utterance is interpreted in real-life situations (Gass and Houck 1999, 14–15).

The data to study the speech act of refusals may be considered and collected in various ways. Among the methods of data collection used, Gass and Houck (1999) mention discourse completion tasks, role plays, open role-plays, and video data.

While some studies have focused on refusals only in a particular language and culture, others, through different questions, have considered refusal production by non-natives and, to a given extent, focused on pragmatic transfer (Gass and Houck 1999, 16–18), which is the aim of the present study. In the next section, I will present a general characterization of the speech act of refusal in L1 English and L1 BP, and afterward, the way refusals are usually performed in these two languages will be compared. The speech act of refusal being produced by non-natives, that is, in a second language, is the topic that will be dealt with in the next chapter, in section 3.3.

## 2.6 The Speech act of refusal in L1 American English and L1 Brazilian Portuguese

Numerous researchers have studied the speech act of refusal cross-culturally, considering a variety of groups. They have noticed that although refusal strategies are universal, their content and the frequency with which they are used may vary considerably, being culturally bound (Chang 2009, 479).

Most of the literature existing to date on the speech act of refusal has considered the English language, either alone or in the context of a foreign or second language. However, many studies have investigated how different L1 backgrounds English learners perform the speech act of refusal in their native language and English, either EFL or ESL. The data collected by these studies is usually afterward compared to a control group of native speakers of English in

order to investigate how learners perform the speech act in question and how (dis)similar it is to the performance of native speakers of the target language. Additionally, it is usually investigated whether transfer from their L1 may be traced in their performance.

I will disclose some characteristics of L1 American English refusals, such as which strategies are commonly used by native speakers and how these are employed. To achieve it, I will depart from cross-cultural studies on refusals that compare learners from distinct L1s to native speakers of American English.

It has been found that L1 American English refusals tend to be more honest and direct than non-native English refusals. However, direct refusals seem less frequent in situations of equal statuses, such as requests or invitations made by friends, which involve more extended negotiations with extensive elaborations (Beebe and Cummings 1996; Félix-Brasdefer 2003; Moaveni 2014). The use of directness by Americans is generally linked with straightforward responses and brief reasons and with the concepts of accuracy, honesty, and fairness, which embodies an essential value in the U.S. culture. Additionally, there is the support and emphasis of the aspect of face regarding speaker's independence (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Chen 1996; Félix-Brasdefer 2008; Chang 2009; Allami and Naeimi 2011; Moaveni 2014).

When refusing, speakers use specific strategies, consisting of a sequence of semantic formulas, which are related to the main content of an utterance used to accomplish the speech act in question, such as an excuse, an expression of regret, or an apology (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990, 57). Americans displayed a broad range of semantic formulas, such as regrets and excuses, and adjuncts of refusals, such as positive opinions and alternatives. They frequently use the semantic formulas of reason and excuse, which are comparatively less specific than in Chinese but more specific and less formal than in Japanese (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990, 66; Chang 2009, 486).

American speakers have shown a stronger tendency towards assertiveness when interacting with someone higher in status while being tactful and avoiding creating friction in the situation (Félix-Brasdefer 2008, 141). Nonetheless, in another study, Americans have shown less concern about their interlocutors' status and, overall, more interest in clarifying the message they convey (Morkus 2014, 101).

Investigations regarding the speech act of refusals focusing on Brazilian Portuguese (BP) can be considered relatively recent, and their number has increased since the 1990s. Studies in the area will be discussed here, yet it is relevant to argue that much of the current

literature on refusals is of monolingual character (Mendes 1996; Osborne 2010; Andrade 2013; Gripp 2015; Santos 2017). Of the few contrastive studies available considering BP, the ones that will be reviewed here compare the different characteristics and strategies of refusals in BP with the ones in Italian (Bastianetto and Torre 2009; Rocha, Torre, and Mello 2015) and in Mandarin (Guo 2016). However, before considering the studies of L1 BP, I will first look at two refusal studies concerning different South American Spanish varieties from countries sharing geographical borders with Brazil and, overall, cultural closeness. Due to the limited research of L1 BP refusals, it might be worth looking at these groups since the refusal strategies used by those speakers may be comparable to the ones used by Brazilians.

García studied how Venezuelans and Argentinians refused invitations (García 1999; 2007). These were both L1 Spanish monolingual studies. The results indicated that the Venezuelan participants were highly deferential in their responses, with female participants showing a stronger balance between being respectful and friendly. Moreover, the number of strategies used to threaten their own face wants was higher than that used to threaten their interlocutor's. When declining an invitation, Venezuelans considered it essential to justify the refusal, expressing respect and sorrow, or it could be perceived as offensive and disappointing by their interlocutor (García 1999, 427).

The Argentinians favored strategies expressing deference and respect to their interlocutors and used solidarity strategies to solidify their friendly relationship. Like the Venezuelans, they preferred to threaten their own face wants rather than threaten their interlocutor's. Thus, the results indicate that Argentinians and Venezuelans belong to a positive politeness culture, in which the underlying interpersonal connectedness is essential, and relationships that necessitate both 'respect and camaraderie' are the focus rather than the individual needs alone (García 2007, 562).

In Brazil, behaviors and linguistic standards related to refusal forms should be regarded with proper attention (Gripp 2015, 98). To express politeness in everyday interactions, Brazilians do not usually depend on conventional linguistic markers of politeness alone, as *obrigado* ('thank you') or *por favor* ('please'). They have also been shown to rely on other resources such as prosodic and paralinguistic features, such as gestures and intonation (Naiditch 2006, cited in Osborne 2010, 77). This absence of specific conventional semantic markers of politeness appears to be a distinctive feature in the study of refusals to invitations among Brazilian friends (Osborne 2010). In this investigation, the speakers used, as some of their rejection strategies, digression, incomplete refusals, and 'post-closure continuance,' which

means that the interlocutor usually expanded his explanation with personal or further information after the offeror’s closure.

Additionally, personalized justification was a recurrent strategy used among Brazilian friends in Osborne’s (2010) study. It seems that it was expected for the speaker to justify him/herself in a more specific, private way since a simple explanation would be sufficient to save the speaker's positive face. As Osborne (2010, 76) argues, the personal justification "allows the hearer to understand the reason, and it shows him or her that the speaker is being considered." It was likewise noted by Gripp (2015, 136) that the more familiar the interlocutors were with one another, the higher the number of justifications/reasons for the refusal.

Previous studies have reported that native speakers of BP hardly ever opt to answer with a simple "no" when refusing, even in situations where such a reply would be acceptable (Mendes 1996, 36; Bastianetto and Torre 2009, 87; Gripp 2015). Instead, the negative response tends to be mitigated through justifications and circumlocutions, or the refusal is done indirectly, refraining from the use of 'negative wording' altogether. In her corpus analysis, Mendes (1996) ascertains that 84.3% of the refusals observed were performed indirectly, with the negative adverb's omission.

Considering the use of indirectness in the speech act of refusal, Gripp (2015), with a monolingual design, studied and compared two different linguistic varieties in Brazil, with a significant difference in the set of interpersonal values and cultures: the BP spoken by '*cariocas*,' speakers from Rio de Janeiro, and the BP spoken by '*curitibanos*,' speakers from Curitiba, in Southern Brazil. Detailed examination showed a substantial preference for indirect refusal strategies by both groups, associated with mitigation through the use of adjuncts to refusals (Gripp 2015 72, 129-133).

Brazilians tend to value significantly relationships in which there are proximity and familiarity between interlocutors and often are willing to sacrifice their interests to benefit the group or community. Therefore, any form of disagreement would be highly unaccepted, as politeness would function as a 'solidarity expression' (Prado 2001, 91, cited in Gripp 2015, 203).

When considering contrastive refusal studies, the findings regarding the strategies used by L1 BP and L1 Mandarin speakers help us understand cultural differences and put things into perspective. Even though the discussion so far shows that there is a low preference for the use of direct refusals among Brazilians, it has been found that native BP speakers still use more direct refusals than Mandarin speakers. Interestingly, Mandarin speakers sometimes chose the 'silence strategy' when refusing indirectly and occasionally used a 'ritual refusal,' not verified

among BP speakers (Guo 2016, 103−106). The ritual refusal could be a source of discomfort and intercultural misunderstandings due to its paradoxical nature: "the addressee says 'no' directly or indirectly, but in fact, the addressee is willing to accept the initiating act" (Yang 2008, 1049).

When comparing L1 BP and L1 Italian refusals, Brazilians tend to mitigate their refusals more than Italians. The Italians consider hierarchy a vital factor when softening refusals, while Brazilians mitigate negative responses when their interlocutor is older. Thus, age seemed to be a more relevant factor than power hierarchy to the Brazilian participants. Interestingly, while Italians frequently used directness in their replies, Brazilian respondents often used an insincere justification as a refusal strategy. Brazilian participants tend to adjust their level of sincerity in their justifications according to their interlocutor's power, using more false explanations with equal status interlocutors (Bastianetto and Torre 2009, 87−88; Rocha, Torre, and Mello 2015, 77).

Overall, these previous studies' results provide some fundamental insights into the speech act of refusal by L1 American English and L1 BP speakers, which seemingly exhibit some dissimilarities. L1 American English speakers seem to follow a consistent pattern, being less concerned about the interlocutors' status refusals and their refusals tend to be more accurate, genuine, and direct. Differently, L1 BP speakers seek to refrain from dissonances as much as possible, using more indirect refusals, more specific justifications and are even open to occasional feigned excuses to avoid face threat.

# 3 Introduction to Second Language Acquisition and Pragmatic Competence

In a study of refusals by Brazilian English learners, it is necessary to introduce Second Language Acquisition theory, leading to the acquisition of pragmatic competence, which will be done in section 3.1.

In section 3.2, the topics of interlanguage pragmatics, transfer, and pragmatic failure will be addressed in more detail before zooming in on studies of L2 learners' refusals in section 3.3. This section will first review previous cross-cultural refusal studies, emphasizing the case of Brazilian Portuguese. Nevertheless, due to the reduced number of studies that focus on Brazilians L2 refusals to date, the study of other speech acts by Brazilians in L2 English will also be considered, with an eye for general tendencies that could be extended to the way

Brazilians refuse in an L2 context. Finally, a brief overview of the Brazilian culture and social values will be given in section 3.4, as these may affect Brazilians L2 refusals.

## 3.1 Second language acquisition theory and the acquisition of pragmatic competence

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a considerably new field of inquiry, and as a phenomenon, SLA is quite intricate, requiring more than a simple definition (Ellis 2008, 3). According to Ortega (2009, 1–2), the field investigates the ability that human beings have "to learn languages other than the first, during late childhood, adolescence or adulthood, and once the first language or languages have been acquired."

This section will address core notions of the SLA field that are relevant to the present investigation, such as second language (acquisition), interlanguage, transfer, and the second language acquisition of pragmatic competence (Selinker 1972; Ellis 1994; Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008).

It is not uncommon to distinguish between the different languages someone learns as the 'second,' 'third,' 'fourth' language, and so on. However, the term 'second' language (L2) is generally used to refer to any other language learned and spoken by someone in addition to his/her mother tongue or first languages (Ellis 2008, 5; Ortega 2009, 5). In this study, I will use the term L2 in the same way, i.e., to mean any other language acquired after the L1 (L2, L3…).

SLA researchers are interested in investigating and comprehending second language acquisition in both naturalistic and instructed contexts. Acquiring a language naturalistically refers to learning a language socially but informally, in a multicultural setting, whereas instructed L2 acquisition would assume an organized, formal language learning, usually through classroom instruction. Many people combine naturalistic and instructed experiences to learn additional languages (Ortega 2009, 6).

Another distinction often made is that between foreign and second language acquisition. A second language has a social and institutional role in a speech community, such as English learned as a second language in Nigeria and Zambia. Contrastively, as a norm, foreign language acquisition happens when the language considered does not play a vital role in the speech community but is only learned in a classroom environment, as is the case of learning English in Brazil or Japan. This differentiation can be said to be mainly a sociolinguistic one. Nonetheless, it is relevant to point out that in SLA, the term 'second language' or L2 is frequently used as an umbrella term for both learning types (Ellis 2008, 6; Ortega 2009, 6). The

present study does not aim to distinguish among specific learning contexts, and, thus, the term L2 will be used to mean both second and foreign language.

Scholars within SLA investigating learner language attempt to explain L2 competence and L2 development. Competence has to do with the "learners' underlying knowledge of the L2" (Ellis 2008, 6). Still, some have gone beyond only considering the 'linguistic competence' the learner has of the L2, i.e., the knowledge of the L2 grammar. Instead, they have adopted a broader standpoint and considered how L2 learners acquire 'communicative competence,' which refers to L2 grammar and how this system is used in authentic communication (Ellis 2008, 6). In turn, development is related to the processes by which L2 'competence' and the learner's ability to use it may change over time (Ortega 2009, 110).

A crucial term in learner language study within SLA is interlanguage (Selinker 1972). Interlanguage refers to "the language system that each learner constructs at any given point in development," emphasizing development over competence (Ortega 2009, 110). While learning the L2, learners build up mental representations that differ from the target input in the environment around them, and, at the same time, these representations may also differ from those available in their L1 (Ortega 2009, 112, 141). Thus, interlanguage is a natural language marked by systematicity and variability, and it represents a linguistic system based on the output made by the learner in the endeavor to produce a target language norm (Selinker 1972, 214; Ortega 2009, 141).

In the interlanguage study, an essential aspect of being considered is the pragmatic one, which is concerned with how the formal linguistic properties of the learners' interlanguage are used in real communication (Ellis 2008, 159). In acquiring pragmatic competence in an L2, researchers have studied what speakers accomplish when performing utterances regarding (1) interactional acts and (2) speech acts. The former is related to structuring the discourse by ensuring that the transitions between one's utterances run smoothly and coherently. As already established in the previous chapter, the latter is concerned with performing actions through language use in section 2.2 on speech acts. So, the case of interlanguage pragmatics, focusing on speech acts, will be further discussed in section 3.2.

The process of acquiring a second language and the production of the interlanguage tend to be influenced by learner-internal mechanisms. For instance, prior language knowledge can be a significant source of influence on the acquisition of the L2. Such influence is called transfer or crosslinguistic influence. The impact of L1 knowledge on the acquisition of the L2 generally has a subtle and selective character, and it may have positive or negative outcomes in various

areas of the L2, which will be contingent on the learner's L1 background, stage of development, and even proficiency (Ortega 2009, 31). Therefore, understanding the concept of language transfer and how it takes place is of utmost importance since part of the investigation will look into the potentiality of this phenomenon in the L2 English group under investigation.

Transfer might affect the ultimate success of the learner's second language acquisition and the 'stages and sequences' they go through in the process of acquiring proficiency in the L2. When it comes to directionality, transfer can take various orientations. For example, transfer from L1 to L2 is deemed 'forward transfer;' however, when it happens from L2 to L1, it is regarded as 'reverse' or 'backward transfer' (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008: 21−22).

The outcome of transfer is traditionally termed either 'positive transfer' or 'negative transfer.' In negative transfer, aspects of the L1 may contribute to errors in the acquisition or use of the L2. Differences between L1 and L2 may commonly, yet not always, lead to limitations in learning the L2 and perceptible mistakes of 'commission,' which would imply 'doing' something wrong in the L2 (Ortega 2009, 32, 40). These differences may, however, lead to the general avoidance, underproduction (underuse), or overproduction (overuse) of specific structures in the recipient language (Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008, 11−12; Ellis 2008, 357−359). According to Ortega (2009, 40), avoidance can be considered a mistake of omission. Conversely, transfer is positive when the knowledge of the L1, instead of triggering difficulties for the learner, actually causes them to succeed in acquiring or using the L2. Similar patterns and structures between L1−L2 may make it easier for the learner and can positively impact the rate of L2 learning.

An instance of positive transfer could be seen in the case of L1 Norwegian speakers, who would have a rate advantage in learning English as L2 compared to L1 Japanese speakers. It is due to the 'genetic and typological closeness' (Ortega 2009, 42) of Norwegian and English, both Germanic languages in the Indo-European family, thus sharing common typological features. On the other hand, an example of clear negative transfer would be the slowed rate of development and acquisition of L2 English negation for learners with specific L1 backgrounds. For example, it would be the case for learners that speak an L1 where pre-verbal negation is grammatically normative, such as it is the case for Spanish, Greek, and Russian. The negative transfer of their L1 negation pattern would lead to a longer permanence in the pre-verbal negation stage in English, corresponding to a slowed down development in the L2, which requires a post-verbal negation (Ortega 2009, 35).

Evidence has shown that L1−L2 divergences can affect the pace of learners' progress and the rate at which they acquire some structures in the L2, often causing the development in these areas to be decelerated. Nevertheless, differences between L1−L2 may not necessarily lead to learning difficulties or negative transfer; neither will L1-L2 similarities necessarily facilitate the L2 learning. An example showing that differences do not necessarily lead to negative transfer is the case of pronoun placement in English and French (Ortega 2009, 32). English has post-verbal pronoun placement, as in 'I see them,' whereas French has pre-verbal placement, as in 'Je les vois.' Research has revealed that L1 French speakers do not have difficulties with pronoun placement when learning English, yet L1 English learners of French find this difference difficult, and errors such as 'Je vois les' are attested. This outcome is intriguing, considering L1 and L2 differences. It shows that although it might be challenging to learn a particular feature when moving from Lx to Ly, it is not necessarily hard when moving from Ly to Lx. Thus, L1−L2 differences do not always cause negative transfer.

The circumstances that contribute to or constrain transfer from happening are known as transferability constraints (Bou-Franch 1998, 5). Although there is no full consent on which constraints work in pragmatic transfer and to what degree, some conditions have been demonstrated to influence this process. Some of the constraints that can instigate transfer, both of internal and external nature, are: sociolinguistic factors, such as the relationship between speaker-addressee; markedness, i.e., the extent to which some linguistic features are perceived as 'special' or specific to a language in some way, with the general tendency of learners transferring unmarked forms when the corresponding target language form is marked; language distance and psychotypology; developmental factors related to the natural processes that occur during different phases of interlanguage development; length of stay in the L2 speech community; and individual learners' differences, such as personality, working memory, and language aptitude. (Ellis 2008, 383; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1986, 177; Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989, 26-27; Kasper 1992, 220);

It is also relevant to state that transfer may be considered both a conscious and a subconscious process. Sometimes, it is not a subconscious negative transfer happening in communication; but the learner may purposefully choose to remain loyal to his/her L1 cultural patterns and not be acculturated into all the L2 cultural and linguistic patterns. In this way, the sociocultural accommodation to the L2 may be a question of ability and choice (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993, 7, 11; Ellis 2008, 399).

The pragmatic transfer in learners' production that does not lead to a successful outcome may lead to pragmatic failure. These concepts will be closely considered in the following section.

## 3.2 Interlanguage pragmatics, pragmatic transfer, and 'pragmatic failure'

Interlanguage pragmatics is considered an interdisciplinary branch of knowledge belonging to the area of SLA and a subset of the field of pragmatics. Interlanguage pragmatics is understood as the non-native speaker's perception, use, and acquisition of pragmatic patterns in a second language (Kasper 1989, 37; Kasper 1992, 203; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, 3).

The acquisition and performance of speech acts by L2 learners is the face of interlanguage pragmatics that has received the most interest in SLA research, considering both learners' perception and production (Ellis 2008, 160, 198; Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008, 107). Furthermore, from a cross-cultural perspective, it is crucial to observe and investigate the potential influence of the learner's first language and culture on their ability to perform speech acts in a given L2 (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, 10).

Previous studies have often focused on non-native speaker strategies or linguistic choices in the production of speech acts while investigating learner language. However, this positioning towards a product-oriented approach has been considered insufficient by some scholars, who recommend a more thorough, process-oriented approach (Kasper and Dahl 1991, 225; Kasper 1992, 204; Bou-Franch 1998, 5; Bardovi-Harlig 2013, 69). The process-oriented approach tries to pinpoint under which conditions transfer may happen and what can be transferred, all within an acquisitional and developmental perspective and mainly achieved through longitudinal studies. This way, the focus is more on the learning of pragmatic competence rather than its use.

Even though there has been some divergence concerning which orientation to use in interlanguage pragmatics, it does not eliminate the fact that both approaches can result in fruitful research and relevant findings. The process-oriented approach has received special emphasis in the last years, yet the product-oriented approach is still in use and has significantly contributed to the field's knowledge. When using the product-oriented approach, it is essential to apply some restrictions to obtain more valid data. These constraints were already referred to previously at the end of section 3.1. In my investigation, I will follow a mainly product-oriented approach with certain constraints, which will be explained in further detail towards the end of

this section. It will also consider some developmental factors, as the study has a pseudo-longitudinal design, involving L2 learners at two different proficiency levels,

Three main factors seem to influence pragmatic competence acquisition. Firstly, the learner's linguistic competence level is mentioned, as one needs linguistic means to perform speech acts, especially if they are to be produced in native-like ways. Another critical factor is the transfer of rules of acting through language and cultural norms from their L1 to an L2 (Riley 1989, 236−239). The last factor mentioned by Ellis (2008, 197−198) is the 'status of the learner.' Learners usually have a reduced status in communicative events, especially when they have native speakers as their interlocutors, which tends to restrain the range of speech acts they need and will have the opportunity to perform. Still, much is yet unknown about the possible effects of such interactions and situations in the learners' acquisition of pragmatic competence (Ellis 2008, 197).

Pragmatic transfer occurs when "transfer of L1 sociocultural communicative competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation, where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular language function" (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990, 56). Kasper (1992, 207) extends this notion to include all the learners' particular knowledge of cultures and languages apart from the L2 on their L2 pragmatic learning, understanding, and production. In the case of this study, the focus will be given to L1 pragmatic competence leading to interlanguage pragmatics knowledge and use that differs from the L2 target form (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993, 10). Numerous studies have focused on forward negative transfer due to the communicative process's potential risks and success.

The success of the speech acts produced will be contingent on the sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities of the speaker. Speakers and hearers can be considered successful speech act users when they can manage the speech act sets for a particular speech act, within a specific culture, in a language they want to communicate. Sociocultural ability refers to the social aspects involved in producing the speech act and the choice of suitable strategies, according to the culture involved, the age, and social class of the interlocutors, to mention a few aspects. Sociolinguistic ability is related to the speaker being competent to choose appropriate linguistic forms that would be fitting to express a given strategy used in the performance of a particular speech act (Cohen 1996, 22−23).

Nonetheless, misunderstandings may occur in a cross-cultural communication context. This context refers to communication between two or more people who do not share a mutual

cultural and linguistic background. When communication fails for pragmatic reasons, we say that there was pragmatic failure. Thomas (1983, 91) has used the term 'pragmatic failure' to mean "the inability to understand 'what is meant by what is said.'" More specifically, this inability has to do with the hearer (H) not recognizing the intended force of the speaker's utterance when the speaker (S) had anticipated that H would recognize it. As an illustration, H might understand as an order an utterance intended as a request by S (Thomas 1983, 94). Even though some interlanguage pragmatics researchers, such as Riley (1989), have used the designation 'pragmatic error', the term 'failure' seems more adequate to refer to cross-cultural communication misunderstandings due to the very nature of pragmatics, which implies probable but not definite rules. Thus, it may not be possible to state that the pragmatic force of an utterance is erroneous, but rather, one may say that it failed to accomplish the speaker's initial purpose. Pragmatic failure can be considered a significant root of cross-communication breakdown as non-linguists may not readily identify it. As the inability to 'fit pragmatically' into the target language context may be misinterpreted and unjustly attributed to the individual's politeness or hostility instead (Thomas 1983, 96–97).

There are essentially two major types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure is intrinsically related to what is language-specific. It takes place when S assumes the pragmatic force of a particular utterance in the target language to be the same as that of an utterance of a similar form in his/her L1 when the pragmatic force is systematically different. Sociopragmatic failure refers to social conditions allocated to language use. It is based on the distinct cross-cultural insights regarding what may or may not be considered proper linguistic conduct (Thomas 1983, 99). The author uses the term 'sociopragmatic' from Leech (1983, 10–11), which refers to "the sociological interface of pragmatics," allowing for variation in different cultures, language communities, and social contexts.

Pragmalinguistic failure may be frequently attributed to the improper transfer of speech act strategies from L1 to the target language. For instance, an L2 speaker might use an on-record, direct speech act, where native speakers would typically opt for an indirect speech act or off-record politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987).

Sociopragmatic failure may be a considerably more delicate matter. Besides making pragmalinguistic judgments regarding the pragmatic force of an utterance, the speaker will also need to make sociopragmatic judgments about the size of imposition, social distance, and his rights and obligations. These pragmatic assessments may be culture-specific, and it is not

unlikely that a non-native speaker will assess them differently than a native speaker would since sociopragmatic decisions are social before being linguistic (Thomas 1983, 104). The cross-cultural disparities in reckoning social distance or what may be considered an imposition in a given culture, or even knowing when one should withdraw from performing an FTA may lead to sociopragmatic failure. Nonetheless, although differences between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure have been established, they form a continuum where it is impossible to perfectly delimit their boundaries with any degree of certainty (Thomas 1983, 109).

When considering the study of interlanguage pragmatics, it is essential to be aware of some relevant issues. One problem to be noted is the extent to which one can assume, appropriately, that the learners "are targeted on native-speaker norms" (Ellis 2008, 160). Some learners may voluntarily wish to hold on to their L1 pragmatic norms when speaking in the L2. Further, not all 'negative' pragmatic transfer will result in pragmatic failure (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993, 13). Due to transfer or not, non-native communicative styles do not necessarily end in pragmatic failure since difference does not necessarily imply error or failure.

Another challenge is the relationship between linguistic and pragmatic competence, as learners need a certain degree of linguistic competence to perform even an elementary form of a speech act in the L2 (Ellis 2008, 160, 197). However, in cross-cultural studies, a high linguistic proficiency level in a language does not necessarily imply that the learner has the cultural and social knowledge required to partake in communication successfully (Bardovi-Harlig 1999, 686). When considering different levels of proficiency and language transfer, studies have sometimes shown inconclusive outcomes. Some scholars claim, based on investigations of varied types of speech acts, including refusal studies, that more transfer is to be observed when the learner possesses a lower proficiency level (Taylor 1975; Maeshiba et al. 1996; Alonso 2002; Wannaruk 2008; Bu 2012; Lee 2013; Han and Burgucu-Tazegül 2016). Within this perspective, Taylor (1975, 87−88) found that lower proficiency learners relied heavily on their native language knowledge and, thus, on transferring strategies, while intermediate learners presented less transfer but relied more on overgeneralizations.

Contrarily, other scholars have defended the exact opposite: the higher the learner proficiency in the target language, the higher the chances of transfer to occur (Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Hill 1997 cited in Kasper and Rose 2002; Allami and Naeimi 2011). For example, Takahashi and Beebe (1987) investigated native speakers of Japanese divided into groups of ESL and EFL learners and their performance of the act of refusal. Besides, there was a particular

focus on the correlation between different levels of L2 proficiency and the likelihood of language transfer. It was found that pragmatic transfer is not limited to one phase of L2 learning but exists in both lower and higher proficiency levels. However, their study pointed out that higher proficiency learners were more subject to language transfer. This is because they had more linguistic expertise to express themselves more freely, and as pragmatic transfer would require more fluency to come to light, "their fluency gave them the rope to hang themselves with" (Takahashi and Beebe 1987, 153).

Finally, other studies did not obtain findings that strongly supported any of the positions above. The results pointed to some level of L1 transfer in all the considered non-native groups, but the difference in the quantity of transfer between learners in different proficiency levels was not apparent (Martínez-Flor 2003; Chang 2009).

In this investigation, I have chosen to concentrate on the potential forward transfer of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices from L1 BP to L2 English, as it is conceivable that this kind of transfer may also be detected among Brazilian English learners. I will also consider the constraints that may contribute to transfer in these learners' interlanguage pragmatics, particularly sociolinguistic factors, as the elicitation task used for data collection is designed to control different social contexts and diverse types of relationships between speaker and addressee. Besides, I will consider developmental factors as I compare learners at different proficiency levels in the L2. With this last constraint, my study will differ from others in the field since it has been an infrequent factor considered in interlanguage pragmatics studies.

## 3.3 Cross-cultural refusal studies in L2 English and the situation of Brazilian Portuguese

Since the 1980s, many studies have been conducted in the field with an increased interest in the ways non-native speakers select and realize different speech acts, with special attention to comparing native with non-native performance strategies. In addition, various investigations have endeavored to scrutinize the influence of the learner's native language and culture on their speech act performance (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, 9−10). In the present section, I will primarily review studies of the speech act of refusal in L2 English, contemplating different L1s. However, not much emphasis has been given to contrastive studies when considering Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and other languages learned as foreign or second languages. After performing an exhaustive search, a limited number of investigations have been found within the field. Due to the shortage of specific studies on the speech act of refusal considering L1 BP

and L2 English or another L2, I will also look at different previous studies of other speech acts produced by L1 BP learners of English, as some of the more general tendencies and strategies used by Brazilians in the different speech acts might also be present and relevant in the case of refusals.

Cross-cultural refusal studies have shown that culture and cultural habits help to shape the way participants behave, respond, and perform speech acts (Al-Issa 2003, 581). Sociolinguistic rules involving differences in cultural beliefs, such as the appropriateness of direct or indirect communication or the importance of privacy in a given society, may be deemed much more challenging to acquire than those purely relating to linguistic strategies or expressions (Chang 2009, 491).

Among the previous studies in the field, the investigations by Beebe and her colleagues are widely known. For example, Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) investigated the performance of refusals by native speakers of Japanese learning English as L2. The authors found out that the order and the frequency of the semantic formulas used, and the utterances' content differed between Japanese speakers of English and native speakers of English. Although proficient Japanese speakers of English in the United States used the same range of strategies as native speakers, they consistently used them in a different order. Also, social status was essential for Japanese participants, whereas American participants mostly considered how familiar they were with the interlocutor. In this way, the Japanese participants showed a power-oriented strategy preference, and the Americans, a solidarity-oriented one.

Teufel (1996) studied the speech act of refusal crossculturally by focusing on German learners of English as L2 and compared them with two other groups: native speakers of American English and German. She derived her data collection method and taxonomy for analysis from Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), editing and adding changes in the data collection instrument and the basal taxonomy for analysis. The study's results pointed to more straightforwardness in Germans, who were willing to risk confrontation in situations of unfair request or unwelcome suggestions; however, German learners of L2 English tended to display more modulation in their responses consistently. In more neutral situations, Germans allowed social distance and status to influence the levels of politeness used. Meanwhile, Americans were disposed to seek and maintain more harmonious interactions, choosing more routinized responses and emphasizing face-protection. In the present investigation, I will rely on some of the contributions made by Teufel (1996) to Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz's

(1990) taxonomy of refusal strategies, which will be presented in Chapter 3 Research questions, methods, and procedures.

Studies focusing on refusals by Chinese English learners as L2 have consistently demonstrated that Chinese culture is high context and collectivist. High context cultures are usually relational and collectivists, strongly valuing interpersonal relationships. In this way, Chinese culture values solidarity and social interaction. As such, the learners preferred high levels of indirectness and for preserving the face of the interlocutor. Meanwhile, English native speaker groups comprising American participants most valued truthfulness, effectiveness, and accuracy, and therefore, messages expressed directly and clearly (Chen 1996; Chang 2009).

Sadler and Eröz (2002) examined refusals by native speakers of English and by non-native Laos and Turkish speakers of English, with an eye to pragmatic transfer, besides also considering the differences between male and female participants' productions. The results showed that the strategies preferred by Lao and Turkish speakers of English were also commonly chosen by the native speakers of English. One explanation for this similarity in use was the participants' high proficiency level in English and their consequent acquisition of the pragmatic rules of the target language. Han and Burgucu-Tazegül (2016), while studying refusals by English native speakers and Turkish EFL learners at two different proficiency levels, found that all participants produced similar refusal strategies, with a general preference for indirectness. Moreover, pragmatic transfer occurred especially among lower-proficiency learners while both EFL groups gave greater importance to the status of the interlocutor than native English speakers did.

Félix-Brasdefer (2003; 2004; 2008) has carried out various non-native refusal strategies studies. In one of them, he studied the strategies used in refusals of invitations by Spanish native speakers and American learners of Latin American Spanish, at three different levels of social status. The results pointed to L1 pragmatic transfer, and lack of L2 sociocultural knowledge as the American L2 Spanish learners tended to refuse more directly, whereas the Latin American Spanish speakers were more indirect and verbose in their replies (Félix-Brasdefer 2003).

Félix-Brasdefer also investigated the perception of directness and indirectness between Mexicans and Americans in contrastive refusal study, considering different situations of relative power (P) and social distance (D). Overall, the results confirmed previous findings that explanation occurred as the default refusal strategy, in both formal and informal situations, by the two groups under investigation. Nonetheless, differences were found regarding the content and frequency of this strategy and the degree of directness and indirectness when performing

refusals. The Mexican participants considered the differences in social distance and social power when refusing, for instance, a person with higher status or a friend, showing a preference for indirectness with the former but more directness with the latter. Contrastively, the Americans displayed a solid and general preference for directness, with people belonging to equal and a higher social status. These findings lead us to understand that the two groups' perception of directness or indirectness reflects distinct cultural values. The American participants favored the general use of directness, commonly associated with the notions of clarity, honesty, and the primary respect for the speaker's wants, instead of those of the interlocutor (Félix-Brasdefer 2008, 150–157).

Of the few investigations conducted to date on refusals that regard L1 BP speakers learning L2 English, one could point to the studies by Alonso (1995; 2002). In her thorough study of politeness in English as a foreign language in Brazil, Alonso (1995) worked on an extensive comparative investigation of the act of refusal as performed by three groups: L1 English speakers, L1 BP speakers, and Brazilian learners of English as a foreign language (L2 English). Data from her study has conclusively pointed out the similarity of the results produced by L1 BP speakers and L2 English speakers regarding strategies and the percentage of mitigation used, visibly higher than in L1 English. Alonso (1995; 2002) found that L2 English speakers produced longer sentences and used mitigation at an excessive level. Additionally, they used multiple refusals and complete sentences when the preference for elliptical forms would produce a better stylistic and communicative effect also contributed to prolixity in the interlanguage refusals. Dissimilarly, L1 English speakers, produced a wider variety of refusal strategies distributed within different levels of mitigation. On that account, the investigation results indicated syntactic and semantic errors and sociopragmatic and sociolinguistic 'failures,' which strongly evidenced pragmatic interference (Alonso 1995, 297; 309). To support this claim, the author registered that on some occasions, speakers of L2 English chose the same refusal strategies used by L1 BP speakers but not found in L1 English, such as justifying a refusal with physical illness or discomfort; postponement strategy; and rhetorical invitations. The author concluded that making short but not less polite sentences was proof of linguistic competence, which involves grammatical knowledge and being acquainted with the pragmatic rules of the language.

In a contrastive study of the speech act of apology, Affonso (1991) investigated how intermediate and advanced Brazilian learners apologized in English, in different situations with different social status and degrees of familiarity between the interactants.The results, later

compared with those by L1 BP and L1 English speakers, demonstrated while English native speakers showed a preference for using an apology or distracting the hearer's attention from the speaker's responsibility from the offense. In contrast, English learners at both proficiency levels were inclined to explain the situation instead, which was similarly the strategy most used by L1 BP speakers. Affonso (1991, 111) thus argued that there seems to be evidence of a tendency to transfer cultural features from L1 to L2.

Munaretti (2005) comparatively studied the speech act of request in L1 English, L1 BP, and Brazilian L2 English learners in hotel situations. Although the L2 English speakers presented significant similarities to the strategies used by L1 English speakers, such as the clear preference for indirectness, they still made several pragmatic choices in line with those commonly made by L1 BP speakers, sounding less authentic and displaying a tendency of L1 transfer of pragmatic patterns.

When contrasting the speech act of advice by L1 English speakers and Brazilian L2 English learners, Ferreira (2015) found that the learner group chose primarily the modal verb 'should' to advise, while this came as the fourth strategy most used by native speakers. The learners' choice reproduces what the vast amount of English teaching materials in Brazil teach about the function of 'should' as typically used for advice and counseling, focusing on English grammar but not on the pragmatics of the language. Moreover, advanced English learners chose fewer strategies than native speakers, accentuating the need for more pragmatic-oriented foreign language teaching in Brazil (Ferreira 2015, 83-88).

All in all, evidence has indicated that individuals belonging to different socio-cultural backgrounds may have distinct preferences when performing refusals. These may be furthermore affected by the level of proficiency in the L2. Moreover, there is a call for further transfer studies considering learners at different proficiency levels, so more conclusive results may be attained. As I investigate the refusals by Brazilian L2 English learners at different proficiency levels, I hope to add to the field of SLA and the knowledge of pragmatic transfer in general and the knowledge of the development of pragmatic competence among Brazilian English learners more specifically. This knowledge will be helpful to language teachers and relevant in the learning of English as an L2 in Brazil.

## 3.4 A brief overview of the Brazilian culture and social values

Previous research has indicated that different cultures may profoundly affect how people behave linguistically, along with their favored choices to save face in communication. In the

light of this, and considering that there has not been an exhaustive study of the BP language and culture regarding the production of speech acts of refusal, I will attempt to carry out a brief overview of the Brazilian culture and social values in this section. Such information may enhance our comprehension of how these factors influence BP native speakers' communication choices in speech acts.

Brazil is a relatively young nation, yet it possesses quite a complex history and formation. Its Iberian heritage through the Portuguese colonizers that landed on its coast in 1500 blended with the local American inhabitants and with the African slaves brought to work on the land during the colonial era. Later in the 19th century, this blend was further enriched by fusing immigrants from diverse origins, such as Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, who found their new home in Brazil (Carlo et al. 2007, 337). The country's history and the diversity in the composition of its population have greatly affected its cultural makeup, social organization, psychology, and values and, therefore, the way people relate to each other and communicate.

In the words of Holanda (2012), Brazil has given to the world the "cordial man." Visiting foreigners often mention hospitality, generosity, and friendliness as traits of the Brazilian character, which should not be mistaken for civility, but be considered genuine expressions of "an extremely rich and overflowing emotional base" (Holanda 2012, Kindle location 2487). Moreover, in Brazil, there is a general manifest desire to establish intimacy. This can be observed, for instance, in the linguistic realm through the frequent use of diminutives, bringing people and objects closer to the speaker and nearer to their heart; or in the sphere of social relationships, in which, as a rule, people only use and call each other by their given name, tending to omit family names (Holanda 2012, Kindle location from 2508 to 2515).

In many societies, the family institution used to be a key element that helped shape and define their unique cultural characteristics. Today, the central and influencing role of families is still observed, for instance, in some Asian and Latin American societies, as is indisputably the case for Brazil. Familial interdependence, family unity, and connection are strong values, and parents encourage their children to stay physically and psychologically close to the family through continuous social interaction (Carlos et al. 2007, 336; 341−344). The promotion and preservation of positive family relationships are usually made possible through cooperative and prosocial behaviors among the family members. Prosocial behaviors may include altruism and cooperation, which tend to foster trust and positive affect, characteristics of intimate relationships (Carlos et al. 2007, 344).

The high importance given to family and community is an apparent characteristic of collectivism. Even though a given society may not be considered purely individualist or collectivist, but some combination of the two, many Latin American cultures, including Brazil, have a marked collectivist orientation (Triandis 1995, 91; Pearson and Stephan 1998, 78; Carlos et al. 2007, 346; Triandis 2015, 206). Collectivist societies emphasize group harmony over self-interest, valuing good and personalized social relationships, while conflict is carefully avoided (Triandis 1995, 74; Pearson and Stephan 1998, 78). Additionally, in Brazil, social hierarchy seems to be highly valued, suggesting that Brazilians fit in a vertical cultural pattern. Brazilians tend to see themselves as members of an in-group, seemingly accepting differences in status, that is, social hierarchy, which indicates a general, national preference towards a more vertical-collectivist cultural pattern (Torres and Dessen 2009, 186).

On the other hand, individualist cultures tend to emphasize the interest of the self over the interest and harmony of the group, and autonomy, freedom, and creativity are much-valued traits. Individualism is a pattern found mainly in North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand (Triandis 1995, 74; Pearson and Stephan 1998, 78; Triandis 2015, 206).

In the context of interpersonal relationships, collectivists are very concerned about saving their own face and the face of those with whom they are in interaction. Thus, preserving ingroup harmony and being pleasant are essential values (Triandis 1995, 76; Pearson and Stephan 1998, 70).

In communication, collectivists usually express the message indirectly while showing concern for the feelings of the other, and lying may be an accepted practice as long as it saves face or brings some benefit to the ingroup. In contrast, individualists tend to speak their minds, emphasizing clarity, even if it might risk harming their relationship. Therefore, lying is usually considered offensive and breaking the contract (Triandis 1995, 76, 78).

In short, it is possible to claim that the Brazilian culture presents more of a collectivist orientation, emphasizing family and prosocial, community values, the values of the ingroup, from whom Brazilians receive social, emotional, and material support. In this way, there is an intense desire to keep good relationships and ingroup harmony. Furthermore, being categorized as collectivists, Brazilians are concerned for the feelings of their next and tend to save the face of the other, as long as he/she is part of the ingroup, showing a tendency for indirectness in communication.

With these characteristics in mind, the overview of the Brazilian culture and social values might be helpful in the analysis and discussion sections. Furthermore, such knowledge

may be of great assistance in understanding how Brazilians perform the speech act of refusal in their native and second languages. Besides, awareness of this topic can be valuable when comparing Brazilians' refusal strategies with those produced by the American participants (control group), who belong to a different culture and social orientation.

# 4 Research questions, methods, and procedures

The main topic of this investigation concerns the potential pragmatic transfer in the Brazilian L2 English learners' interlanguage. This research topic is motivated by a compelling desire to both understand the way one's first language(s) (L1) and culture shape the way one thinks and acts and how these may be transferred as one learns and speaks an additional language (L2).

In this chapter, I will discuss the research questions around which this investigation is centered, and the methods used in the study. First, in section 4.1, the research questions will be presented, and in section 4.2, the data collection method and the instrument used will be presented thoroughly and justified. Then, section 4.3 will provide complete information on the participants, and section 4.4 will present information on the procedures, such as how the data eliciting task was applied and data collected. Finally, in section 4.5, I will describe detailedly the process of data analysis.

## 4.1 Research questions

The primary purpose of this study is to assess the way Brazilian learners of English perform the speech act of refusals in their L2. Furthermore, I aim to determine whether L1 language transfer is observed in the refusals of learners at different proficiency levels and which role language proficiency may play in transfer. Therefore, the following research questions have been set in order to achieve these goals:

1) How do native speakers of BP express refusals in these situations?
2) How do native speakers of English express refusals in these situations?
3) How do Brazilian learners of L2 English, at different levels (intermediate and advanced), express refusals in English in these situations?
4) According to the participants' performance in the DCT, how do the politeness strategies in refusals produced by L1 BP speakers differ from those used by native speakers of English (control group)? Does the participants' performance point to possible fundamental differences in the corresponding politeness systems?

5) Does pragmatic transfer of politeness strategies in refusals in these specific contexts occur in the interlanguage of Brazilian L2 English learners? If so, what does it look like: is it positive or negative transfer, and to what extent does it happen? If transfer is observable, is it more salient in novice English learners and less present in the language produced by more advanced learners?

## 4.2 The instrument of data collection

In order to answer the research questions initially proposed in this investigation, I gathered language production data from various informants. Considering the practical challenges of collecting "unforeseeable linguistic events" (Sealey 2010, 136; Kasper and Dahl 1991, 245), such as refusals, the data collection needed to be elicited through the use of simulated interactions in which refusals could occur.

The data collection methods commonly used within interlanguage pragmatics can be classified according to the constraints they impose on the data. Kasper and Dahl (1991, 216–217) argue that different data collection type procedures are categorized according to the extent to which the data is predetermined by the instrument and the modality of language use. In Figure 3 below, it is possible to see on the left side of the continuum the procedures that provide information about the participants' perception of different alternative speech act realizations, for instance, the pragmatic meaning they give to a stimulus offered to them. Production procedures are represented from the middle towards the right side of the continuum, usually involving instruments with a high level of control over the participants, such as Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs), closed role-plays, and less controlled instruments such as open role-plays. At the extreme right, it is displayed observational studies with no deliberate constraint over the participants, i.e., naturally occurring data, such as authentic discourse.

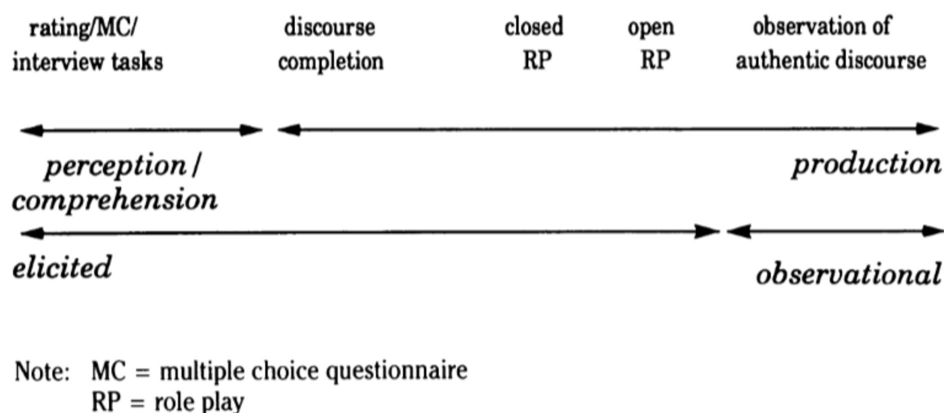


*Figure 3*. Data collection methods related to modality of language use and degree of control.

*Source*: Kasper and Dahl 1991, 217, figure 1.

It is possible to observe in the vast amount of literature written in the area that it has been highly usual to employ elicited data collection methods in interlanguage pragmatic studies instead of naturally occurring data. The most common elicited collection methods used are the discourse completion tasks (DCT) and oral role-plays, which may be open or closed (Kasper and Dahl 1991; Sealey 2010, 3; Martínez-Flor 2013).

In the case of the present study, the DCT was chosen as the data collection method. This choice of method allows the investigator to gather written data from the participants by providing them with a list of real-world contextualized situations with gaps. They were expected to write how they would express refusal under different circumstances (Sealey 2010, 136–137).

The DCT had as its initial aim the promotion of highly controlled settings for investigations. Thus, DCTs are very advantageous to the researcher, as they permit him/her to control variables related to the situation under study, such as the status of interlocutors and the social distance between them. Another positive aspect is that DCTs allow for statistical comparison between the answers from native speakers and learners, including learners in different groups or levels, making it viable to collect cross-linguistic data to be analyzed (Schauer and Adolphs 2006, 131; Ellis 2008, 17).Moreover, if the same task is administered to learners at different levels of language proficiency, it can be used as a tool to determine their level of pragmatic competence (Olshtain and Blum-Kulka 1985, 24).

Nevertheless, the DCT has its disadvantages. A DCT 'simulates' interactions (e.g., requests, invitations, and suggestions) in which refusals are expected to occur. Thus, the more

controlled data collection is a drawback, possibly gathering less 'spontaneous' language production. Ellis (2008, 167) points out further weaknesses to this method: DCTs do not present the interactional aspects of a speech event; they cannot reliably represent opting out behavior; and unless presented in the learner's L1, they are not appropriate for learners with low L2 proficiency.

Despite the drawbacks of DCTs, this method is still considered the most suitable one for the present study. The ideal site for gathering data for this investigation was language schools in Brazil. Considering that schools might set potential restrictions on the data collection process and the unfeasibility of frequent travels to the country to gather supplementing data, using a 'less time-consuming' method was preferable, as is the case with the DCT (Gass and Houck 1999, 26).

As DCTs have been widely used (Ellis 2008, 164), another reason for using this method is that if the task considered is based on one already used; one can compare the subjects and outcomes of the different studies. In light of this, the DCT used here is identical to the one developed and used by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) in their refusals study, with a few alterations. It is a well-set task, followed by a systematic classification of both stimuli according to the refuser's status and the refusal strategies used. The DCT by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) has been used, sometimes with minor adjustments, by other researchers in interlanguage pragmatics, studying learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Chen 1996; Chang 2009; Allami and Naeimi 2011). Furthermore, their data classification framework has been possibly the most used system in refusal studies, sometimes with some adaptations to populations in specific investigations (Beebe and Cummings 1996; Chen 1996; Al-Issa 2003; Félix-Brasdefer 2003; Wannaruk 2008; Chang 2009; Osborne 2010; Allami and Naeimi 2011; Lee 2013; Moaveni 2014), and therefore, the use of this system would make one's findings comparable to those of other researchers (Gass and Houck 1999, 38). Thus, the results obtained here with Brazilian learners of English can be compared to those from Japanese learners' (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990) or other learners of English with different L1s that have been subject to this same DCT and might also be used for future comparative studies.

The DCT by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 69–72) consists of four different stimuli types – offers, invitations, suggestions, and requests – varied according to the status of the refuser, which could be lower, equal, or higher than the addressee’s status (Kasper and Dahl 1991, 224). There are three hypothetical situations for each of the four types of stimuli types,

totalizing 12. One situation from each group of stimuli requires an answer to a person of higher status, one of equal status, and one of lower status. The instructions to the DCT are presented at the beginning of the activity, and even though the answers that will best fit all the different situations will be refusals, the word 'refusal' is not used on the task.

The blank for the participants' reply is followed by a rejoinder, which heavily contributes to the participants' reply to be a refusal since anything apart from that would hardly be sociolinguistically fitting. The situations involve, for instance, refusing the offer of a job promotion, refusing the invitation to a dinner at a friend's house, refusing the suggestion given by a student to change the focus of his language classes at university, or refusing the request for a raise. Each situation corresponds to a task in the DCT: with a short background introduction. Then, a question from a hypothetical interlocutor is presented to the participants, who have a blank to answer.

In the present investigation, this DCT was used as it is in its original form, with only three slight modifications. In situation 3, to keep the 'realism,' the name of the original fancy restaurant in New York, *Lutece*, has been substituted with *Le Bernardin*, a restaurant of similar category in New York City, as the former closed in 2004. Additionally, the questionnaire's layout has been slightly changed, which can be found in Appendix A. Finally, after the DCT, two open-ended questions have been added: the first allows the researcher to understand better what the participants considered when responding to the situations given, while the second offers the participants a space to write their further comments to the task. The English DCT was given to both Brazilian learners of L2 English and native speakers of American English, who were the participants of the control group. The classification of the DCT, considering the stimulus type and the status of the refuser, as given by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 72), can be found in Appendix B.

The Brazilian participants also had to answer the tasks in their L1, so the DCT was translated to BP, however, with a little adaptation. In situation 4, the word 'wives' was substituted with 'spouses' in BP. When the word 'friend' appeared, it was translated to both the masculine and feminine corresponding forms' amigo(a)' in BP to be more gender-neutral. Nevertheless, differently from what has been done in previous studies that also used the DCT by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 69–72), I did not make further adjustments in the task to bring it closer to the geographical reality of Brazilians. Adjustments would have included changing the cities' names in situations 3 (New York) and 11 (Hicktown) to similar-sized locations in Brazil and the restaurant's name in situation 3 to a Brazilian restaurant of a

similar kind. I decided not to make these adjustments, as I considered them minor and thought that leaving the original place names would not negatively interfere with the Brazilian learners' task comprehension and performance.

Considering that one of the aims of the study is to investigate the refusal strategies used by Brazilian learners both in their L1 BP and L2 English, two versions of the task were developed for these participants: the first contains the first half of the situations in English and the other half in Portuguese (see Appendix C). In contrast, the second is organized in reverse order (see Appendix D). So, instead of answering the DCTs in both languages, totalizing 24 situations, each participant only answered half of each questionnaire in each language, keeping the original number of 12 situations for each participant. In the end, both tasks were supposed to have been equally distributed among the Brazilian participants. Furthermore, the task instructions and two open-ended questions at the end of both versions of the DCT for the Brazilian group were written in BP. This was to avoid possible confusion regarding how to answer the task and make the participants feel more comfortable and natural while giving feedback.

The task for the Brazilians was planned in this way since it was ideal that the same participant who answered the DCT in L2 English would also answer it in their L1. The importance of having L1 and L2 data from the same students is that it would allow me to be as certain as possible that any differences found would be due to the language used and not a result of individual differences between the respondents. Furthermore, the main reason for not giving the participants all the situations in both languages is that it might have led them to simply 'translating' the responses they had already provided in the other language or comparing them. The results could therefore have been unnaturally affected. Besides, having the tasks arranged in this way made the activity less time-consuming and less tiring for the subjects.

An additional data type necessary to this investigation was a verbal report from the informants, before the DCT, to provide information on the participants themselves and their backgrounds, such as age, gender, level of English language proficiency, and the amount of time (in years) they had been learning the language. The method to gather this data was the use of a questionnaire (Ellis 2008, 922). For the Brazilian group, the questionnaire containing ten questions was written in BP (Appendix E), and the information conveyed by the participants was considered in the process of obtaining a more balanced sample group. For the control group, the questionnaire was in English and contained only six questions, such as gender, age,

and if they had lived abroad and if they spoke any L2(s) (Appendix F). Here, the intention was to obtain a more balanced sample and possibly fewer interfering variables.

## 4.3 The participants

In this study, there are two groups of participants. The first group subjects are Brazilians, native BP speakers, who are also learners of L2 English. As described in 4.1, they received the task both in their L1 and their L2. The second group is formed by native speakers of American English, who constitute the control group. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991, 225), the canonical design for investigations within interlanguage pragmatics includes L1 control groups, besides learners producing speech acts in their L1 and L2, which is more informative and preferable. It is more informative since it is impossible to assume that native speakers will respond is precisely known. In fact, people do not always behave linguistically in the way prescribed by grammar books. Furthermore, more specific information is necessary to be more certain about how native-like the learners are, what could be caused by their L1 influence, and what might be due to other more universal features. This particular data may be achieved by knowing what learners do in their L1, what they do in their L2, and what native L1 speakers, a control group, would do.

Jarvis (2000) argues for methodological rigor in the study of transfer and for the importance of using a unified framework in order to achieve it. The unified framework proposed would require transfer studies to look at three potential effects of L1 influence, namely: (1) intra-L1-group similarities in learner's IL (interlanguage) performance; (2) inter-L1-group differences in IL performance, and (3) intra-L1-group symmetry between the performance in their L1 and IL. Identifying all the three effects would be ideal when pinpointing a case for L1 influence as convincing, and therefore, would reduce potential confusion caused by a lack of consensus on how one should perform the investigation and treat the results obtained. Although not always attainable, it is a goal one should pursue in this area of inquiry. (Jarvis 2000, 246; 253; 255). In this investigation, I attempt to examine the aforementioned potential effects of L1 influence in line with Jarvis (2000).

The Brazilian participants were students at six accredited language institutes, two language schools in Santos, and four in São Paulo, both in Southeast Brazil. In all six institutes, the students learned English and practiced their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills. This investigation has a total sample size of 60 Brazilian participants, who belong to a specific age group between 20 and 30. No restrictions were made regarding the gender and the socio-

economic and educational backgrounds of the participants. As the Brazilian participants were answering the DCT with half of the questions in BP and half in L2 English, it is possible to claim that, in the end, even though the total number of participants in this group was 60, it would be equivalent to having 30 DTCs in L2 English and 30 DCTs in L1 BP.

Table 1 provides information on how the Brazilian participants, who are the same for L1 BP and L2 English, are divided in further detail within the main subgroups' intermediate' and 'advanced' learners of L2 English. It also presents numbers considering the two DCT versions for the group, which were distributed within each subgroup as evenly as possible, and the DCT format used by the participants.

Table 1. Brazilian participants distribution regarding L2 English proficiency and DCT format.

| | DCT v. 1 (ENG-BP) | DCT v.2 (BP-ENG) |
|---|---|---|
| | **INTERMEDIATE** | |
| Pre-Intermediate | 1 | 1 |
| Intermediate | 3 | 10 |
| High-Intermediate | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 8 | 15 |
| | **ADVANCED** | |
| Advanced | 9 | 10 |
| High-Advanced/Fluent | 7 | 11 |
| Total | 16 | 21 |
| | **DCT Format** | |
| Paper based | 19 | 20 |
| *Nettskjema* | 5 | 16 |
| Total | 24 | 36 |
| **Total number of participants: 60** | | |

Concerning their level of proficiency in L2 English, the participants are divided into two main groups: intermediate and advanced learners of English. I attempted to get as balanced groups as possible. However, the number of participants belonging to the advanced group was higher, totalizing 37 students, approximately 62% of all participants, while the number of intermediate students participating was 23. Moreover, while there was a request and attempt to equally distribute the DCT versions, which regards the order in which the situations in BP and English are displayed, more participants were answering to the second version of the DCT in both the intermediate and advanced subgroups: a total of 36 students answered DCT version 2, that is, 60% of all participants, in contrast with 24 (40%) who answered the first version. Thus, although it is a drawback not to have fully comparable groups both concerning the proficiency levels and the DCT versions used, in terms of numbers, it is still possible to consider the participant groups reasonably well distributed. Thus, this study's findings are ultimately likely to be relevant and contribute to this field of research.

As mentioned, an English version of the DCT was also given to a control group of native speakers of American English. In order to get volunteers for the control group, initial contact was personally made with students at a theological seminary in the Midwestern USA. Some of the contacted students volunteered to answer the DCT and invited friends and acquaintances to participate in the study. The total number of participants for the control group is 30, belonging to the same age group as the Brazilians, between 20 and 30 years old.

## 4.4 Procedures

In this section, the procedures regarding applying the DCTs and the tasks that would eventually be disregarded in the study will be further explained.

First, a pilot test was performed with the two versions of the DCT for the Brazilian group and the background questionnaire in BP. They were sent to three Brazilian acquaintances within the age range considered for the study and L2 English learners at different proficiency levels. They were asked to answer the DCT and questionnaire, measure the time they took to complete the activity, and give detailed feedback on the translation of the task to BP and its overall presentation. Through their answers and feedback, it was possible to make some linguistic adjustments to the translation of the original DCT to BP and to improve the background questionnaire, making it more straightforward for the participants. It was highly relevant to know the time they took to perform the whole activity, as it gave an idea of the average time needed for it, which ranged from 35 to 40 minutes. The average time necessary to perform the activity was essential information required by the language schools where the study was to be conducted.

Several accredited language institutes in Southeast Brazil were contacted via e-mail in the fall of 2019, and six institutes agreed to participate. I requested the schools, if possible, to invite students from different language proficiency levels to participate in the study. I then arranged a visit to each of them in October to personally talk to the groups of students who agreed to volunteer for the investigation, briefly explain the activity and let them fill in the DCTs and questionnaires in the classrooms. The students were encouraged to answer as naturally as possible, as they would have done in real life. They were also asked to perform the activity without help from peers or teachers, yet they could ask about unknown vocabulary.

Due to time restrictions for my trip to Brazil, and as it was the preferred format by one of the schools, I also used a digital form of the BP DCTs. The digital form of the DCTs was made using the University of Oslo' *Nettskjema*', a user-friendly tool provided by the university

for designing and conducting online surveys. It can be used for collecting sensitive data and it has a high degree of security and privacy. The participants could answer the questionnaire by clicking on a link and typing their answers while remaining anonymous. As the DCT for Brazilian participants had two versions, two online DCTs were created, and the schools were asked to try to share both versions of the task as equally as possible between the students.

The DCT used for the control group was entirely in digital format, also through the University of Oslo's '*Nettskjema*' system. The students were presented with the link to the DCT and background questionnaire. Some of the students volunteered to share it with friends and acquaintances. The online DCTs and questionnaires were designed so that the participants could not leave blank answers. Even though the online DCTs had an initial short explanation of how to perform the task, it was, for evident reasons, not possible to control the way the participants answered them or, for instance, whether they requested assistance from someone or not.

All the data used for this study were collected throughout the fall of 2019. At the end of the data gathering process, some of the DTCs had to be disregarded for various reasons. For instance, when visiting the language schools in Brazil, some of the groups that agreed to participate in the study had students from a very varied age range studying together, from teenagers to older adults. In order to avoid causing anyone to feel constrained, all students were welcome to participate, but some DTCs were excluded due to the age constraint here. In addition, some of the digital DCTs answered by Brazilians and American participants were also eliminated due to age.

Furthermore, some of the Brazilian subjects that answered the paper DCT did not complete all the essential background information in the questionnaire, such as age or language proficiency level, and therefore needed to be disregarded in the end.

In the process of preliminary data analysis, it was observed that a few participants intriguingly answered with an acceptance, apparently genuine, in one or two of the situations of the DCT, even though, overall, they seemed to have understood the tasks well and refused in all other situations. These DCTs were still considered for the investigation, and there will be an attempt to understand why, in certain situations, some subjects chose to accept, or, to some extent, struggled to refuse.

The next section describes the analysis of the data collected for this investigation.

## 4.5 Data analysis

The present study has a pseudo-longitudinal design, since the data is collected at one point in time, yet, from two populations of Brazilians belonging to different levels in their development and acquisition of English. This design allows inferences regarding diachronic development to be drawn across the sample, namely, how language changes or, in this case, how the L2 speech acts are performed at different proficiency levels (Rasinger 2013, 40).

This investigation corresponds mainly to a qualitative type of study since its main interest lies in understanding how a phenomenon (refusals in specific situations) occurs among the different groups and if differences could be verified. Nevertheless, there is also a quantitative aspect of this research, as it is relevant to consider the types and the frequency of the different refusal strategies used by the individuals belonging to each group.

The responses given in the different DCTs were mainly classified following the taxonomy of the different types of refusals as presented in the study by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 72–73), with some variation. The refusals here were analyzed as consisting of a sequence of 'semantic formulas' (see Appendix G for a complete list). For instance, if a participant refused a request by their boss to work extra hours in the evening by saying "I'm sorry, I need to pick up the kids at school today. But I can come earlier tomorrow and help to finish up this work," it would be coded as [expression of regret] [excuse] [offer of alternative]. Initial remarks that alone could not function as a refusal, were named as 'adjuncts', as done by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 57). If, for example, a subject said, "That's a good idea…" before he/she presented an excuse (e.g., "but I will be away that weekend"), his/her initial comment would be classified as an adjunct expressing positive opinion. Yet, without the excuse presented, such an expression of positive opinion could be understood as an acceptance rather than a refusal.

As presented in section 4.1, some previous studies have also followed the taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), usually with minor adjustments, according to the reality of the data collected in their studies. For instance, Al-Issa (2003, 599–600) in his study of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners found new categories based on the corpus of his investigation, such as *reprimand* (e.g., "You should attend classes too"), *sarcasm* (e.g., "I forgot I am your servant!"), *return favor* (e.g., "I'll pay for you and me" ) and *define relation* (e.g., "Okay my dear professor but…"), among a few others. Teufel (1996), in her cross-cultural study of refusal strategies by Germans, Americans, and German learners of L2 English, adapted the taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) by

either disintegrating or collapsing existing categories, taking out a few ones and adding new ones. For instance, for nonperformative direct refusals, Teufel separated negative ability from negative willingness, since there is difference in the potential degree of face threat between these two (1996, 96) and added the category ‘Imperative telling interlocutor to rescind the suggestion, request, offer, etc., used as an indirect refusal (1996, 100), as her German data included this type of response.

As I analyzed the data, the need for adaptation to the taxonomy in use was evident. Therefore, when needed and fitting, I used or adapted some of the various changes pointed out by Teufel (1996), and also new categories proposed by Al-Issa (2003) and Moaveni (2014), according to the particularities of my data set. Discovering possible new categories and adjusting existing ones are part of the aim of qualitative studies, which need to open to acknowledging the finding of something new.

Regarding this investigation’s data makeup, the categories that were changed or added to the basal taxonomy adopted in the analysis are described next.

**Refusal strategies**

**Division of existing categories**

Nonperformative direct refusals: Similar to Teufel (1996, 96), I considered negative ability and negative willingness different in the degree of the potential face threat caused by these two categories, so the initial category was broken into ‘negative willingness’ and ‘negative ability.’ In addition, a third category, the opaque ‘negative ability/willingness’, was also considered.

Criticism, insult/attack, and negative opinion: I divided it into criticism of the interlocutor/ of the eliciting speech act (offer, suggestion, etc.), insult/attack, and negative opinion as three different subcategories under what I label here ‘non-redressive strategies,’ as their function is not to redress, but rather, criticize or show negative feelings. Following Teufel (1996), there is a significant difference, in terms of risk of face threat, between the criticism of a suggestion, for instance, and insulting the interlocutor. I also kept the category of negative feeling/opinon, as from the basal taxonomy, but now as ‘negative opinion.’ The main difference between criticism of the eliciting speech act and negative opnion is that the former either criticizes the fact that act was perfomed (suggestion, request, etc.) or its content, such as in “That’s a terrible idea!” whereas the latter states a negative view or feeling about what was said without criticizing the eliciting act in itself, seen in “I don’t really like this restaurant.”

**Adaptation of existing categories**

Threat or Statement of negative consequences to the interlocutor and/or to the speaker: this adaptation from Teufel (1996) reflected responses in my data, as in some contexts, negative consequences were not only referring to the interlocutor but could also affect the speaker/refuser.

Conditional future acceptance: this category was added along with the original 'promise of future acceptance,' as some cases in the data would be better described as a conditional acceptance, e.g., "Only if you are covering the bill."

**Added categories**

'Diminishing the value of the requested object' or 'diminish the value of broken object': These categories were initially taken from Teufel (1996, 100) but had their names slightly adapted. They also describe various responses found in the data, notably from L1 BP and L2 English.

Elaboration: The strategy elaboration, also taken from Teufel (1996), refers to the information continuing or explaining the preceding utterance/strategy, being an 'elaboration' of the previous one. This category is usually associated with excuses.

**Adjuncts to refusals**

Adjuncts to refusals were a more prolific arena, as the initial taxonomy was quite limited or more generalizing. Here they have been extended, mainly based on Teufel's (1996) contributions, except for greetings, appealers, vocatives, and time frame limitation.

Statement of agreement: an agreeing expression, e.g., "I agree…"

Forewarns: a statement preparing the interlocutor for the unpleasant speech act of refusal that comes in the sequence, e.g., "I've talked to my wife about it and…"

Admonition: as in "Be more careful next time."

Superiority over addressee: although seldom, this category was found in the data. Through this adjunct, the speaker establishes his/her status as superior to the hearer, e.g., "I am the teacher, not you…".

Downgraders: as established by Teufel, it includes "several devices that lessen the impact of an FTA, such as politeness markers and "play-downs," syntactic devices such as the use of

negation, interrogative, and modal" (1996, 463); e.g., "Please, …"; "*I am afraid that* I can't…" "*Unfortunately*, I won't be able…."; "*I don't think* I can make it…"; "I *may not be able*…".

Downtoners: these devices were suggested as similar to downgraders as they mitigate the utterances, but they differ from the latter in the sense that they are "filler words," "with no real meaning in the sense of mitigating an FTA outside of context" (Teufel 1996, 463); e.g., "you know..."; "I mean…", "you see." In this study, downtoners also included laughter, e.g., " … I don't think I ever will be *aha*"

Intensifiers: devices adding "emphasis and/or urgency to an utterance, without affecting the degree of face-threat" (Teufel 1996, 463); e.g. "I am *really* sorry…";

Greetings: like in Moaveni (2014, 41), e.g., "Hi!..."; "Good morning!..."

Appealers: based on the CCSARP coding manual, appealers include both speaker and hearer in the activity and refer to elements used by the speaker whenever he or she feels the need to appeal to the hearer's caring understanding, for corroboration while showing concern for the address's opinion or desires, leading to negotiation, as it may signal a turn- availability (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989: 283); e.g., "…What do you think?"; "…,is it ok?".

Vocatives: Different from Al-Issa's (2003, 585) formula of 'define the relationship,' here I use the category 'vocatives.' Instead of only referring to individuals of a higher social status, vocative is a term of address that may be used to either show deference, as in the case of honorifics, or titles, e.g., 'sir,' 'boss;' or to convey 'in-group' memberships, such as the solidarity forms 'mate,' 'fella,' and endearment terms, as 'dear,' both cases found in the data. It also includes proper names, e.g., "Zé…", "Mr X…" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 107; 178–183).

Time frame limitation: adverbials or expressions related to time to politely set into perspective an impossibility, are named "time frame limitation" as my contribution. As a lexical downgrader, it mitigates the impact of the FTA, by internally modifying the refusal. Moreover, since many participants repeatedly used this type of strategy and in different situations, a time frame limitation to refusal showed itself thus to be a specially relevant category to be added (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989: 283). E.g., "I can't afford to give you a raise *right now*."; "…my schedule is full that night".

**Non-refusals**

These strategies were labeled to understand which acts, other than refusals, were performed by the participants. These were taken from Teufel's adaption (1996).

Acceptance: Even though not the main focus of this study, some participants chose to accept a specific illocutionary act instead of refusing it, e.g., "Ok!"; "Sure."

Limitation of acceptance: similar to acceptance, but with some limitation; e.g., "Ok, b*ut just a little piece*."

Request for information: the refuser chooses to negotiate and request for further information in order to make a decision about the eliciting speech act, e.g., "Can you provide me with examples justifying an increase in pay?"

All DCTs' responses were classified according to the new adapted classification of refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals (see Appendix G). Then, the refusal strategies and adjuncts were classified, and their frequencies calculated, being later converted to percentages (relative frequency (rf)). For each strategy type, (rf) was calculated concerning the number of total strategies used within a group.

Finally, the situations were grouped following each stimuli type, and then the use of indirectness, the type, and frequency of refusal strategies and adjuncts used were compared between the native speakers and those with the L2 English learners. When excuses were adopted as a high-frequency refusal strategy within a particular context, their contents were further examined and compared among the groups.

Furthermore, considering Brown and Levinson's (1987) extensive classification and explanation of numerous strategies within the positive and negative politeness realms, I seek to apply this same approach, whenever fitting, as I refer to the refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals used by the participants in the present study. I will also consider Leech's (1983) notion of cost-benefit to the speaker and the hearer when analyzing the different situations. The detailed data analysis and results are discussed in Chapter 4.

# 5 Data analysis: results and discussion

The present chapter will consider the data analysis and comprise the results and their subsequent discussion. The participants' answers to the DCT were analyzed and coded within a given range of strategies, and the same was true concerning the adjuncts to refusals. The data analysis was

mainly guided by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), with some modifications when needed, as presented in chapter 4.

In section 5.1, I will discuss my first three research questions: how L1 BP speakers, L1 English speakers, and Brazilian learners of English express refusals in the 12 situations considered in the DCT. The discussion of these three research questions will lead to section 5.2 and the consideration of my fourth research question. It regards how politeness strategies in refusals produced by L1 BP speakers differ from native English speakers and whether the results point to possible fundamental differences in their politeness systems.

Section 5.3 will look at research questions numbers five and six: it will focus on whether pragmatic transfer of politeness strategies in refusals in these specific contexts occur in the interlanguage of L1 BP speakers acquiring L2 English. If so, the transfer observed will be further described and classified. Additionally, this section will elucidate whether transfer is more salient in the language produced by novice English learners and less present in the language produced by more advanced learners. All research questions were presented in chapter 4 Methods, section 4.1. The discussion and inferences of the findings in section 5.3 will lead to chapter 6 Conclusions.

## 5.1 The expression of refusals by native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese, native speakers of English, and Brazilian learners of English

In this section, I will examine closely the answers produced by the participants in each group for each of the 12 DCT situations. The results are organized according to the types of stimuli (request, invitation, offer, suggestion) and the refuser's status relative to the interlocutor (lower, equal, higher) rather than following the order of the situations as they appear in the DCT. All three situations for each stimuli type will be presented and discussed together. The situation titles from Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 72) will be used (see Appendix B).

The strategies used by all groups and their frequencies will be presented together in tables, one for each situation. In the tables, the direct and indirect refusal strategies are presented separately. The tables display the absolute frequencies followed by the relative frequency (rf) values, within parenthesis, for each strategy type.

The presentation of the adjuncts to refusals follows in separate tables, specific to each situation. The indirect refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals used once or used more than once, but just present in one of the groups studied, will be described under the category ‘Other.’ The category ‘Other’ will collapse all the smaller values and the strategies or adjuncts contained

in it will be presented in the discussion for each situation. Other not refusals strategies, such as acceptance or request for further information, are presented and discussed in the text.

In some instances, I will provide examples from the DCTs to illustrate the content of the participants' answers. When examples are in L1 BP, I will only provide the English translation. The examples from L2 English DCTs will be quoted *ipsis verbis*; in case of spelling or grammar mistakes in the L2, these will not be corrected, as it is not the focus of this study.

Regarding the number of participants and DCT versions, it is essential to reiterate that for the L1 BP group, DCT version 2 (BP-ENG) was used to collect the participants' responses to situations 1 to 6. In contrast, DCT version 1 (ENG-BP) was used to collect the participants' responses to situations 7 to 12. Even though the total number of respondents in the L1 BP group is 60, the number of participants answering the DCT version 1 (24) was lower than the number of those responding to DCT version 2 (36), as it was not possible to distribute these two versions entirely evenly, as previously explained in Chapter 3. Moreover, there are also differences in the number of participants within the subgroups of L2 English: for situations 1 to 6, there are six participants in the intermediate level and 18 participants in the advanced level, totaling 24 participants. For situations 7 to 12, there are 11 participants in the intermediate level and 25 in the advanced level, a total of 36 participants.

### 5.1.1 Refusals of Requests

In the present section, I present and discuss the results for the situations involving refusals of requests.

In requests, the illocutionary function is competitive, as the illocutionary goal competes with the social one. Therefore, requests can threaten the negative face needs of both parties involved in the speech act, and they tend to have a high imposition on the hearer and enforce costs on the requester. Moreover, there is an impending risk of jeopardizing their relationship in case of a refusal.

The situations in the DCT involving requests are 1, 2, and 12. However, they will be presented following the refuser's status relative to the interlocutor (lower, equal, higher). Table 2 presents the refusal strategies, and table 2.1 shows the adjunct types used for situation 12. Table 3 displays the refusal strategies and, table 3.1, the adjuncts used for situation 2, while tables 4 and 4.1 refer, respectively, to the refusal strategies and adjuncts used in situation 1. Below, the adjunct tables immediately follow the strategy tables corresponding to each

situation. Even though the presentation might look heavy, it facilitates examining the results and their posterior discussion.

Table 2. Strategies used in refusals of request, refuser status lower (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 12: 'Stay late at night'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **16 (30.2%)** | **7 (10.7%)** | **5 (25.0%)** | **9 (14.8%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | 1 (1.9%) | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | – | 1 (1.5%) | – | – |
| | Negative ability | 15 (28.3%) | 4 (6.1%) | 4 (20.0%) | 9 (14.8%) |
| | Negative willingness | – | 1 (1.5%) | 1 (5.0%) | – |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | 1 (1.5%) | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **37 (69.8%)** | **58 (89.3%)** | **15 (75.0%)** | **52 (85.2%)** |
| | Regret | 10 (18.9%) | 11 (17.0%) | 7 (35.0%) | 16 (26.2%) |
| | Excuse | 20 (37.7%) | 26 (40.0%) | 6 (30.0%) | 22 (36.0%) |
| | Wish | 1 (1.9%) | 2 (3.1%) | – | 1 (1.6%) |
| | Alternative | 2 (3.8%) | 4 (6.1%) | – | 5 (8.2%) |
| | Hedging | 1 (1.9%) | 2 (3.1%) | 1 (5.0%) | – |
| | Promise of future acceptance | – | 2 (3.1%) | – | 1 (1.6%) |
| | Conditional future acceptance | – | 1 (1.5%) | – | 1 (1.6%) |
| | Elaboration | 3 (5.6%) | 7 (10.7%) | 1 (5.0%) | 3 (5.0%) |
| | Other | – | 3 (4.7%) | – | 3 (5.0%) |

Table 2.1. Adjuncts to refusals of request, refuser status lower (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 1 | 2 | – | – |
| Downgrader | 6 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Intensifier | 2 | 4 | – | 6 |
| Vocative | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Time frame limitation | 8 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| Other | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 24 (0.45) | 20 (0.30) | 7 (0.35) | 19 (0.32) |

Table 3. Strategies used in refusals of request, refuser status equal (raw and relative frequencies).

| **Situation 2: 'Borrow class notes'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **17 (24.3%)** | **12 (19.3%)** | **3 (21.4%)** | **6 (14.6%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | 5 (7.1%) | 6 (9.7%) | 1 (7.1%) | 3 (7.3%) |
| | Negative ability | 11 (15.8%) | 2 (3.2%) | 2 (14.3%) | 2 (4.9%) |
| | Negative willingness | 1 (1.4%) | 3 (4.8%) | – | 1 (2.4%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | 1 (1.6%) | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **53 (75.7%)** | **50 (80.6%)** | **11 (78.6%)** | **35 (85.4%)** |
| | Regret | 13 (18.5%) | 14 (22.6%) | 2 (14.3%) | 13 (31.8%) |
| | Excuse | 26 (37.1%) | 17 (27.4%) | 4 (28.7%) | 7 (17.1%) |
| | Guilt trip | 2 (2.9%) | 8 (13.0%) | 1 (7.1%) | 1 (2.4%) |
| | Alternative | 3 (4.3%) | 3 (4.8%) | – | 1 (2.4%) |
| | Criticism to interlocutor | 2 (2.9%) | 4 (6.4%) | 1 (7.1%) | 5 (12.2%) |
| | Diminish value of requested object | 4 (5.7%) | 1 (1.6%) | – | 1 (2.4%) |
| | Elaboration | 2 (2.9%) | 2 (3.2%) | 1 (7.1%) | 2 (4.9%) |
| | Other | 1 (1.4%) | 1 (1.6%) | 2 (14.3%) | 5 (12.2%) |

Table 3.1. Adjuncts to refusals of request, refuser status equal (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| Adjunct type | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG INTER | L2 ENG ADV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive opinion | 3 | 2 | – | – |
| Forewarn | 2 | 1 | – | – |
| Downgrader | 8 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Downtoner | 2 | 1 | – | 1 |
| Intensifier | – | 2 | – | 1 |
| Vocative | 2 | 3 | – | 3 |
| Time frame limitation | 5 | 2 | – | 3 |
| Other | 1 | – | 1 | – |
| Total | 23 (0.32) | 13 (0.20) | 2 (0.14) | 10 (0.24) |

Table 4. Strategies used in refusals of request, refuser status higher (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 1: 'Request raise'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **24 (34.8 %)** | **16 (32.0%)** | **6 (50.0%)** | **16 (48.5%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | – | – | – | – |
| | Negative ability | 24 (34.8%) | 16 (32.0%) | 5 (41.7%) | 15 (45.4%) |
| | Negative willingness | – | – | – | 1 (3.0%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | – | 1 (8.3%) | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **45 (65.2%)** | **34 (68.0%)** | **6 (50.0%)** | **17 (51.5%)** |
| | Regret | 5 (7.2%) | 10 (20.0%) | 2 (16.7%) | 9 (27.3%) |
| | Excuse | 19 (27.6%) | 10 (20.0%) | 2 (16.7%) | 5 (15.1%) |
| | Wish | 2 (2.9%) | 3 (6.0%) | – | – |
| | Postponement | 8 (11.6%) | 5 (10.0%) | 1 (8.3%) | 1 (3.0%) |
| | Request for empathy | 2 (2.9%) | 2 (4.0%) | 1 (8.3%) | 2 (6.1%) |
| | Elaboration | 7 (10.1%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | 1 (3.0%) |
| | Other | 2 (2.9%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | – |

Table 4.1. Adjuncts to refusals of request, refuser status higher (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| Adjunct type | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG INTER | L2 ENG ADV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive opinion | 13 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 7 | 5 | – | 3 |
| Downgrader | 11 | 12 | 1 | 3 |
| Intensifier | 5 | 2 | – | – |
| Vocative | 1 | 3 | 2 | – |
| Time frame limitation | 10 | 11 | 4 | – |
| Statement of empathy | 7 | 3 | 1 | – |
| Statement of agreement | – | 2 | – | 2 |
| Other | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 55 (0.79) | 48 (0.96) | 12 (1.00) | 17 (0.51) |

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show that in refusals of requests, both the L1 BP and L1 English groups prefer using indirectness in their refusals. However, the L1 English group uses slightly more indirect strategies than the L1 BP group in all three situations. The L1 English group is most indirect when the refuser status is lower, while the L1 BP group is most indirect when refuser status is equal.

When considering the L2 English group, the learners likewise show an overall preference for indirectness. However, when the refuser status is higher, both the intermediate and the advanced learners favor more directness than the native groups. Like the L1 BP group,

the intermediate group is most indirect when the refuser status is equal. In contrast, the advanced group presented the same level of indirectness for both lower and equal statuses.

Regarding the overall indirectness levels, however, there are no significant differences between the groups. The high face-threatening nature of requests could explain the high preference for indirectness in all three situations by both native groups. In refusing a request, the speaker is not giving benefit but increasing cost to the hearer, and therefore is considered less polite (Leech 1983).

The most frequent direct strategy used by the native groups is negative ability in all three situations. The L2 English learners likewise preferred negative ability, but when the refuser status was unequal. However, when the status was equal, advanced learners preferred a direct 'no' more while the intermediate learners used negative ability more frequently.

The most frequent indirect strategy used by all groups is excuse and regret. When the refuser status is lower, the advanced learners, like both native groups, show a higher preference for excuse, while the intermediate learners favor regret, seen in situation 12 (S12). When the status is equal, the opposite trend is seen, and then the intermediate learners are more in line with the native groups' preference for excuse. With a higher refuser status, in S1, the intermediate learners show a similar pattern to the L1 English one: both groups equally use regret and excuse strategies. The advanced learners, though, like in S2, prefer the strategy regret in S1 too

Both native groups use most adjuncts when the refuser status is higher, but fewer with the other two status. The more direct they are, the more adjuncts they seem to use instead. They appear to mainly use downgraders and time frame limitation to make their refusals less severe. The learner groups seem to follow a similar trend, as they also increase the number of adjuncts when the level of directness increases. Downgraders seem to be the common recurring adjunct for the L2 English group.

#### *5.1.1.1 'Stay late at night'*

In situation 12, there is power asymmetry between the participant and their interlocutor (employee/boss), and the relative rights and obligations between the speaker and hearer seem to influence indirectness levels (Thomas 1995). Social distance also influences the use of (in)directness here, as power and social distance frequently co-occur, as in the workplace scenario. With the interlocutor having more power and social distance, the weightiness of the FTA increases.

Additionally, the greater the request, the higher the probability of using indirectness. Working overtime at night can be considered a great request, especially when the employee wants to leave work (as of the DCT description of the situation). Nevertheless, the request is still made, and it might reveal the high need and importance of the work to be finished. A refusal here may threaten the boss's negative face, as the speaker "does not intend to avoid impeding the hearer's freedom of action" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 65). The use of 'conventionalized indirectness' seems to be an appropriate option towards partially redressing the interlocutor's negative face, and his/her want to "maintain claims of territory and self-determination" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 70).

The L1 English group used the highest level of indirectness (89.3%) in situation 12, while the L1 BP group used more direct refusal strategies. The most frequent direct strategy for both native groups was negative ability, as in "…I *can't* stay today…" (L2 English advanced 17 v.1). However, it was used almost five times as often by the L1 BP group as by the L1 English group. When comparing the different types of direct refusal strategies in a continuum of 'severeness,' negative ability seems to be the most risk-free. An explanation of this would be that the reasoning behind the refusal does not lie in an explained rejection or pure unwillingness but in the speaker's lack of ability to conform and accept the act. Therefore, it seems more difficult to refute or judge one's claim of being unable. This way, negative ability seems preferable, as it seems less direct and threatens less the interlocutor's face.

In their answers, all participants tended to combine different refusal strategies and adjuncts, using positive and negative politeness strategies with the intent to save the boss's face. Here, both native groups used a similar number of the indirect refusal strategies regret, as in "*I'm sorry*, but unfortunately, I can't today" (L1 BP 8 v.2) and hedging, as in "*I don't know*, I think I should probably be heading home" (L1 English 2), which are considered negative politeness strategies, with the reluctance to impinge on the hearer's negative face (Brown and Levinson 1987, 145, 187). Additionally, both groups use the positive politeness strategy excuse very often, as in "… tonight is my son's birthday" (L1 BP 24 v.2) and the L1 English, also used other positive politeness strategies of promise of future acceptance, as in "I'll be ready tomorrow to wrap this up" (L1 English 16), and conditional future acceptance, in "…If it's okay, I can finish it up in the morning." (L1 English 14) (Brown and Levinson 1987, 125; 145).

It is important to highlight that the indirect refusal strategy of hegding is used in the same way as in the proposed taxonomy by Beebe, Takahashi and and Uliss-Weltz (1990), and even though it may be a fuzzy term, it is used here to refer to a word or phrase used to express

caution or indecisiveness about the eliciting speech act rather than certainty or determination (Lakoff, 1972), and functions as a negative politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987, 145).

Moreover, the classification of excuses or reasons as either positive or negative politeness may be argued to be ‘fluid’ and, on some occasions, blurred. Excuses may be classified as positive politeness strategies, as stated by Brown and Levinson (1987, 128), as the speaker does not distance him/herself from the hearer but hopes to lead the hearer to see the reasonableness of the FTA through explaining or justifying the cause, in this case, the necessity for a refusal. Brown and Levinson also present the case of ‘give an overwhelming reason’ as negative politeness, but this seems to carry a rather exaggerated, compelling reason for doing the FTA; otherwise, the speaker would not even consider infringing on the hearer’s negative face (Brown and Levinson 1987, 189). As a rule, the cases of excuse found in the present study sound honest and, at times, specific but do not contain the overwhelming aspect mentioned by Brown and Levinson. Therefore, I choose to classify the cases of excuse here as positive politeness.

Both native groups used ‘family commitments’ and ‘other plans’ as the most common excuse for not accepting the boss’s request to work overtime. However, the L1 BP group’s answers due to ‘family’ seemed more varied than the L1 English group. The former often presented excuses such as “…today is my grandmother’s birthday” (L1 BP 25 v.2), “…I need to take my mother to her hydro gymnastics” (L1 BP  12 v.2), or “I need to pick up my son at school” (L1 BP 2 v.2). In contrast, the excuses in the latter group frequently involved dinner arrangements: the need of being home for dinner with wife/family, as in “…I have diner plans with my wife” (L1 English 9). Moreover, the ‘other plans’ for the L1 BP group were often more specified than in the L1 English group, such as watching a TV program, “…I need to watch a replay of that series with six friends…” (L1 BP 16 v.2). The choice for more detailed excuses conforms with previous studies regarding the trends in the use of justifications by the native speakers of BP, which may help save face in refusals (Mendes 1996; Bastianetto and Torre 2009; Osborne 2010, Gripp 2015).

In the L2 English group, the advanced learners also used a high level of indirectness. The L2 English group also has a strong preference for negative ability when refusing directly. Both intermediate and advanced learners use more directness than the L1 English group, but less than the L1 BP, being in between them. Like the natives, the L2 English group displayed a high use of the positive politeness strategy excuse and the negative politeness strategy regret.

Nonetheless, the advanced learners presented more variation in strategy choices, often using alternatives too, as in " …can we finish it tomorrow morning?" (L2 English advanced 21 v.1), and presenting cases of the positive politeness strategies of promise of future acceptance and conditional future acceptance, as the L1 English group did. Considering the content of the excuses, the L2 English group also expressed more justifications due to family reasons, and they were more similar to the L1 BP speakers in their more detailed justifications, as in "I have a doctor appointment" (L2 English advanced 18 v.1), and "…I have to pick jup my wife at her office" (L2 English advanced 34 v.1). Between the learners, the excuses seemed more detailed in the advanced group.

In the other category of indirect refusal strategies, we find postponement (2) and repetition of part of request (1) for L1 English; negative consequence to the speaker (1), negative consequence to the interlocutor (1), and repetition of part of request (1) for L2 English advanced.

All groups use adjuncts in situation 12. Of the native groups, the L1 BP uses more adjuncts, possibly to make their less indirect refusals less severe. Time frame limitation is the most frequent adjunct used by both native groups, as in "*…this is not a good night* for that" (L1 English 22). The L1 BP group also uses downgraders quite often. The learner groups often used downgraders, as in "Boss, *unfortunately* I can not stay…" (L2 English intermediate 1 v.1) and time frame limitation, as in "I can't stay *tonight…*" (L2 English intermediate 36 v.1). At the same time, the advanced learners also presented a high frequency of intensifiers, as in "I'm *so* sorry for that but…" (L2 English advanced 28 v.1), closer to the frequency observed in L1 English.

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts, we find downtoners (3), an appealer, and a statement of agreement for the L1 BP group. For L1 English, there was one pause filler and one statement of agreement; for L2 English intermediate, there was one case of pause filler, and for L2 English advanced, there were forewarns (2).

Except for the L2 English advanced group, all groups had (a) case(s) of 'Other strategies,' although these were infrequent. After all, the instructions were supposed to lead the participants to formulate refusals. In general the participants that used other strategies seemd to have understood the task well.

There was one instance of an acceptance in L1 BP, in "*I can continue*" (L1 BP 20 v.2) and one in L1 English, in "*Ok, I can do that*" (L1 English12). There was also one request for information: "How much of it needs to be done?" (L1 English 8). Although this particular

participant seemed to have understood the task well, he still chose to accept and request information in other situations as well. In his verbal report to the DCT, the participant stated that he tried to provide honest, real-life answers to the situations, usually involving a 'negotiation' instead of a straightaway refusal. Finally, the L2 English intermediate group also had an example of acceptance, seen in "Of course, I'll stay"( L2 English intermediate 4 v. 1).

As this investigation focuses on refusals rather than other speech acts, I will not thoroughly discuss the cases of 'Other strategies' in the next situations.

##### *5.1.1.2 'Borrow class notes'*

In situation 2, there is no power asymmetry between the participant and their interlocutor (classmate/classmate), but there is a relative social distance between them, as they are not friends. When referring to non-intimate or someone with whom the speaker has a different social relationship, indirectness tends to be more frequently preferred (Leech 1983, 126; Thomas 1995, 128).

The size of imposition in this context seems to be relatively high, as both students will have the same exam, and therefore, both would need the notes to study. Borrowing the notes would mean not having them to study, and therefore a high imposition on the participant's negative face. While not borrowing the notes would threaten the interlocutors' face and mean a high cost to them. These aspects counted together would suggest the need for greater indirectness. Another aggravation in this situation, as described in the DCT, is that the classmate frequently misses a class and then asks the classmate (participant) for the lecture notes. This aggravation may cause the participant feel taken advantage of and may directly influence his/her willingness to cooperate and save face.

Both native groups preferred using indirectness, slightly higher in the L1 English group. The L2 English group also presented a preference for high indirectness here. When using direct refusals, the L1 BP group prefers negative ability, whereas the L1 English group tends to use more direct "no", as in "*No*, I need to study them myself" (L1 English 12) and negative willingness, as in "Honestly, I kind of want to keep them to myself this time…" (L1 English 16) and thus, seems to prefer more direct, 'confronting' refusal strategies. This claim seems to be supported by the L1 English group's frequent use of the indirect refusal strategies guilt trip, as in "…you need to start coming to class more often" (L1 English 5), and criticism to interlocutor, as in "Dude, you ask to borrow my notes every time…" (L1 English 15) compared to the L1 BP speakers. These indirect refusal strategies threaten the positive-face want of their

classmate, showing a negative evaluation of some aspect of their positive face through disagreement (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66), and are labeled as 'non-redressive strategies' here.

Excuse was the indirect refusal strategy most frequently used by both native groups, yet slightly more preferred by the L1 BP group, as in "…I forgot my notebook with all my notes" (L1 BP 27 v.1). The L1 BP group also uses the indirect refusal strategy 'diminish value of the requested object,' as in seen in "...I don't think my notes from last class are so good…" (L1 BP 29 v.1) , which is in line with the Modesty Maxim to maximize dispraise of self (Leech 1983, 136). Whether true or false modesty is meant is not possible to affirm. However, the strategy has the benefit of 'politely' trying to dissuade the requester's wants and at the same time preserve their face by threatening the speaker's own positive face (self-humiliation) (Brown and Levinson 1987, 68).

Furthermore, the L2 English group similarly preferred a higher level of indirectness in their refusals, yet with some differences between the two learner groups. The intermediate learners favored excuses, followed by the strategy regret, whereas the advanced learners showed the opposite pattern of preference. Thus, in this regard, the intermediate learners were closer to the native groups. Moreover, the advanced learner group had a high use of criticism to the interlocutor, comparable to the L1 English group.

In the 'Other' category in indirect refusals, we find lack of enthusiasm (acceptance as a refusal) (1), set condition for future acceptance (1) and negative opinion (3) for L2 English advanced; lack of enthusiasm (1) and criticism to SA (1) for L2 English intermediate; criticism to SA (1) for L1 English; and negative consequence to the interlocutor (1) to L1 BP. In the 'Other' category of adjuncts, we find greeting (1) for the L1 BP group; and pause filler (1) for L2 English intermediate group.

Considering the use of adjuncts, the intermediate learners used the fewest adjuncts here, but the advanced learners used adjuncts slightly more often than the L1 English group. However, it is the L1 BP group that has the most adjuncts in situation 2. The most frequent adjuncts for the native groups were downgraders and time frame limitation. The only common adjunct to both intermediate and advanced learners was downgraders. The advanced learners, however, also used time frame limitation and vocatives, as in "… sorry *dude*" (L2 English advanced 5 v.2), quite often.

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts, we find greeting (1) for the L1 BP group and pause filler (1) for L2 English intermediate group.

Of all groups, only L1 English presented the use of 'Other strategies.' Acceptance was the other strategy used by the group, with two cases, even though the participants seemed to have overall understood the activity well.

##### *5.1.1.3 'Request raise'*

Like in situation 12, situation 1 is a workplace context of power asymmetry (employee/boss), with high social distance, and thus, one would initially expect a higher use of indirectness. However, now the participant is the boss and has more authoritative power over their interlocutor. Therefore, the employee's request for a raise may make it a weightier FTA on the participant's side, as it represents an imposition that might have a high cost for the boss, threatening their negative face. Nonetheless, the refusal of a raise request may also significantly threaten the employee's negative and positive face, as it would fail to consider their possible economic strifes and needs and face wants for praise and recognition. According to the cost-benefit scale proposed by Leech (1983, 107–8), the higher the cost to 'h,' the more indirect one tends to be. Going in the opposite direction of Leech's proposed parameters for the Tact Maxim, we would have that the higher the power of the speaker concerning the hearer, and the greater the horizontal distance of the speaker from the hearer, the lesser the need for indirectness (Leech 1983, 127). In this situation, the negative side of the Tact Maxim 'minimize the cost to 'h' does not seem to be thoroughly considered here by the employee (Leech 1983, 109). Therefore, the participants would possibly consider both sides while performing their refusal.

The results show that both the L1 BP and L1 English groups prefer less indirectness, with the L1 BP group being slightly more direct. The only direct refusal strategy used by both native groups was negative ability, which seems to impose a lesser risk to the interlocutor's face than the other direct refusal strategies, as previously discussed regarding situation 12. The L2 English group showed the least preference for indirectness here, with the intermediate learner group being the most direct of all groups, closely followed by the advanced learners. When refusing directly, the learners only used negative ability, similar to the native groups, as in "I'm sorry, we *can't* increase your payment now" (L2 English advanced 2 v.2).

Regarding indirect refusal strategies, both native groups most frequently used the positive politeness strategy excuse, although slightly more often by the L1 BP group, who also elaborated more on their excuses, as in "…we are going through a financially difficult phase and were are even cutting down on expenses" (L1 BP 1 v.1). Also, both native groups often used the negative politeness strategy regret, yet the L1 English speakers used it more. Moreover,

both native groups made similar use of the strategy request for empathy, used to save the speakers' positive face as one requests their interlocutor's comprehension and cooperation, as in "…I hope you can understand" (L1 BP 16 v.1)

The L2 English group showed similar preferences when refusing indirectly. The intermediate learners equally preferred using excuses and regret. In contrast, in an opposite trend to the native groups, the advanced learners favored first the use of the negative politeness strategy regret while also using excuses quite often. They also opted for the strategies postponement and request for empathy.

In the 'Other' category in indirect refusals, we find statement of principle (1) and alternative (1) for L1 BP; and hedging (1) and negative opinion (1) for the L1 English group.

Of the three situations, both native groups mainly used adjuncts in situation 1, which seems to be affected by their higher use of directness. The L1 BP speakers still used more adjuncts than the L1 English speakers, possibly linked to their higher preference for directness. Both groups used quite often downgraders and time frame limitation to soften their replies. However, the L1 BP group showed a higher preference for the adjuncts of positive opinion, as in "You are one of our best employees…" (L1 BP 9 v.1) and statement of empathy, as in "I understand…" (L1 BP 10 v.1). These adjuncts work as giving 'gifts' to the hearer. In this case, the gifts refer to human relation wants: the wants to be cared about and listened to, and thus, the speaker can satisfy some of the hearer's positive-face wants.

In the same line, the L2 English group used more adjuncts here in situation 1. The intermediate learners presented the highest rate for adjunct use, closer to the values for L1 English, whereas the advanced learners were more comparable to the L1 BP group. The intermediate learners used the positive politeness strategies of positive opinion and statement of empathy while the advanced learners used more positive politeness through positive opinion, gratitude/appreciation, as in "…I'm very happy with your work …" (L2 English advanced 3 v.2), statement of agreement, as in "Yes, you are right…" (L2 English intermediate 15, v.2) and appealers, as in "…How do you feel about it?" (L2 English advanced 3 v.2 )

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts contains forewarn (1) for the L1 BP group; forewarn (1) and pause filler (3) for the L1 English group; forewarn (1) for the L2 English intermediate group; and appealer (1) and statement of agreement (2) for the L2 English advanced.

There were two cases of 'Other strategies,' and both were 'request for information' in the L1 English group.

### 5.1.2 Refusals of offers

The speech acts of requests and offers can be considered polar opposites. Contrarily to requests, in offers, the illocutionary function is "convivial." The illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal, and it is essentially "courteous," where politeness has a more positive facet(Leech 1983, 104 – 5). Offers tend to be performed in the interest of someone other than the speaker. Nonetheless, when perceived as unwanted or onerous by the recipient, they can threaten their positive and negative face wants. At the same time, refusals of offers can also cause inherent face threat to those offering, thus threatening the relationship between the parties involved.

The situations in the DCT involving offers are 7, 9, and 11. As situation 9 requires the participants to provide two answers to the dialogue, the different refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals used in this situation are separated and presented in two different tables. Table 5 presents the refusal strategies, and table 5.1 the adjunct types used for situation 11. Table 6 displays the refusal strategies and, table 6.1, the adjuncts used for the first part of situation 9, while tables 7 and 7.1 refer, respectively, to the refusal strategies and adjuncts used in the second part. Finally, tables 8 and 8.1 present the strategies and adjuncts used for situation 7.

Table 5. Strategies used in refusals of offer, refuser status lower (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 11: ' Promotion with move to small town'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **18 (45.0%)** | **19 (38.8%)** | **7 (43.8%)** | **20 (40.0%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | 2 (5.0%) | 1 (2.1%) | – | 5 (10.0%) |
| Non-performative | "No" | 1 (2.5%) | 1 (2.1%) | 1 (6.2%) | – |
| | Negative ability | 8 (20.5%) | 6 (12.2%) | 3 (18.8%) | 9 (18.0%) |
| | Negative willingness | 6 (15.0%) | 8 (16.3%) | 3 (18.8%) | 5 (10.0%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | 1 (2.5%) | 3 (6.1%) | – | 1 ,,(2.0%) |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **22 (55.0%)** | **30 (61.2%)** | **9 (56.2%)** | **30 (60.0%)** |
| | Regret | 2 (5.0%) | – | 2 (12.5%) | 2 (4.0%) |
| | Excuse | 8 (20.0%) | 16 (32.6%) | 4 (25.0%) | 12 (24.0%) |
| | Alternative | – | 1 (2.1%) | – | 3 (6.0%) |
| | Criticism to SA | – | 1 (2.1%) | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Hedging | 2 (5.0%) | 3 (6.1%) | 1 (6.2%) | 2 (4.0%) |
| | Negative opinion | 2 (5.0%) | 1 (2.1%) | 2 (12.5%) | 2 (4.0%) |
| | Postponement | 1 (2.5%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | – |
| | Wish | 2 (5.0%) | – | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Elaboration | 2 (5.0%) | 5 (10.1%) | – | 7 (14.0%) |
| | Other | 3 (7.5%) | 1 (2.1%) | – | – |

Table 5.1. Adjuncts to refusals of offer, refuser status lower (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 14 | 17 | 5 | 22 |
| Downgrader | 5 | 8 | 1 | 10 |
| Forewarn | – | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Intensifier | 9 | 7 | 2 | 10 |
| Pause filler | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Vocative | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Time frame limitation | 7 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| Other | 1 | – | – | 2 |
| Total | 41 (1.02) | 53 (1.08) | 19 (1.18) | 58 (1.16) |

Table 6. Strategies used in refusals of offer, refuser status equal (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 9.1: ‘Piece of cake’ (part 1)** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **15 (51.8%)** | **30 (60.0%)** | **8 (72.7%)** | **20 (60.5%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | “No” | 13 (44.8%) | 23 (46.0%) | 8 (72.7%) | 15 (45.4%) |
| | Negative ability | 1 (3.5%) | 3 (6.0%) | – | 5 (15.1%) |
| | Negative willingness | 1 (3.5%) | 4 (8.0%) | – | – |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | – | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **14 (48.2%)** | **20 (40.0%)** | **3 (27.3%)** | **13 (39.5%)** |
| | Regret | 1 (3.5%) | – | – | 1 (3.1%) |
| | Excuse | 10 (34.4%) | 19 (38.0%) | 3 (27.3%) | 12 (36.4%) |
| | Elaboration | 1 (3.5%) | 1 (2.0%) | – | – |
| | Other | 2 (6.8%) | – | – | – |

Table 6.1. Adjuncts to refusals of offer, refuser status equal (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | – | 2 | – | 2 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 17 | 18 | 8 | 16 |
| Downgrader | – | 1 | – | 2 |
| Intensifier | 2 | – | – | 1 |
| Vocative | 1 | 1 | – | – |
| Pause filler | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | – | 1 |
| Total | 23 (0.79) | 28 (0.56) | 9 (0.81) | 26 (0.78) |

Table 7. Strategies used in refusals of offer, refuser status equal (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 9.2: ‘Piece of cake’ (part 2)** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **8 (38.1%)** | **19 (55.8%)** | **3 (50.0%)** | **7 (28.0%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | “No” | 6 (28.5%) | 16 (47.1%) | 3 (50.0%) | 4 (16.0%) |
| | Negative ability | 1 (4.8%) | 2 (5.8%) | – | 2 (8.0%) |
| | Negative willingness | 1 (4.8%) | – | – | 1 (4.0%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | 1 (2.9%) | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **13 (61.9%)** | **15 (44.2%)** | **3 (50.0%)** | **18 (72.0%)** |
| | Regret | – | – | – | – |
| | Excuse | 6 (28.5%) | 9 (26.5%) | 3 (50.0%) | 11 (44.0%) |
| | Alternative | 1 (4.8%) | – | – | 1 (4.0%) |
| | Lack of enthusiasm | 2 (9.5%) | 3 (8.9%) | | 2 (8.0%) |
| | Negative consequence to the speaker | 2 (9.5%) | 2 (5.9%) | – | 1 (4.0%) |
| | Silence | 1 (4.8%) | – | – | 1 (4.0%) |
| | Other | 1 (4.8%) | 1 (2.9%) | – | 2 (8.0%) |

Table 7.1. Adjuncts to refusals of offer, refuser status equal (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 5 | 8 | 3 | 8 |
| Downgrader | 1 | 1 | – | – |
| Downtoner | – | 1 | – | 1 |
| Forewarn | 1 | – | – | 1 |
| Intensifier | 3 | 7 | 3 | 5 |
| Pause filler | 2 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| Other | – | – | – | 1 |
| Total | 13 (0.65) | 28 (0.82) | 8 (1.33) | 19 (0.76) |

Table 8. Strategies used in refusals of offer, refuser status higher (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 7: ‘Pay for broken vase’** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | – | **4 (5.0%)** | **3 (12.5%)** | **2 (3.5%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | “No” | – | 4 (5.0%) | 3 (12.5%) | 2 (3.5%) |
| | Negative ability | – | – | – | – |
| | Negative willingness | – | – | – | – |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | – | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **56 (100.0%)** | **75 (95.0%)** | **21 (87.5%)** | **55 (96.5%)** |
| | Regret | – | – | – | – |
| | Excuse | 1 (1.8%) | – | 1 (4.2%) | 1 (1.8%) |
| | Alternative | 4 (7.1%) | 6 (7.8%) | 2 (8.3%) | 4 (7.0%) |
| | Diminish value of broken object | 9 (16.1%) | 9 (10.4%) | 2 (8.3%) | 4 (7.0%) |
| | Guilt trip | 1 (1.8%) | – | 1 (4.2%) | 1 (1.8%) |
| | Off the hook | 29 (51.8%) | 35 (45.4%) | 12 (50.0%) | 30 (52.6%) |
| | Statement of philosophy | 4 (7.1%) | 12 (15.6%) | – | 6 (10.5%) |
| | Elaboration | 7 (12.5%) | 13 (18.2%) | 3 (12.5%) | 8 (14.0%) |
| | Other | 1 (1.8%) | – | – | 1 (1.8%) |

Table 8.1. Adjuncts to refusals of offer, refuser status higher (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| Adjunct type | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | INTER | ADV |
| Positive opinion | 1 | – | – | 1 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | – | 2 | – | 2 |
| Downgrader | 2 | 3 | – | 2 |
| Intensifier | – | 6 | – | 1 |
| Admonition | 2 | – | – | 2 |
| Pause filler | 1 | 7 | – | 3 |
| Vocative | 1 | – | 1 | 3 |
| Statement of empathy | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Other | 1 | – | – | – |
| Total | 9 (0.16) | 22 (0.27) | 4 (0.16) | 19 (0.33) |

The three situations involving offers were very different, considering their size of imposition. This aspect does not seem to have been appropriately controlled in the situations, and it is playing a significant role in the refusals: the situation of the broken China vase (S7) seems to impose a higher face-threat than the job promotion (S11) and the cake (S9) situations. Thus, it is not only about the differences in the refuser status, and this factor seems to influence the outcomes of all groups.

In refusals of offers, both the L1 English and the L1 BP groups are most indirect when the refuser status is higher. This same pattern was found for the L2 English group. Additionally, both native groups are most direct when the refuser status is equal, which holds true for the L2 English learners. In this way, all groups seem to have a general, comparable attitude regarding indirectness and refuser status. This trend is distinct from the one observed in refusals of requests.

In these particular situations, L1 English speakers were slightly more indirect than L1 BP speakers when refuser status was lower. Regarding the learner groups, the advanced learners were generally more indirect than the intermediate learners, with all refuser statuses. However, overall, there were no striking differences between the groups concerning indirectness levels.

All groups' overall most frequent direct strategy is a direct “no,” except for situation 11, with lower refuser status, where negative ability and willingness were preferred, yet at different rates by the different groups.

The most frequent indirect strategy used by all groups was excuse. Regarding the native groups, the L1 English group used it more often than L1 BP when the refuser status was lower and equal. In contrast, only L1 BP speakers used the strategy excuse in the case of higher status. In refusals of offers, the strategy regret was uncommon among the groups. The L1 BP speakers and the learners used the strategy regret when the refuser status was lower, and only the L1 BP

speakers and advanced learners used it when status was equal. No cases of regret were found for the L1 English speakers in the three situations.

Both native groups and the L2 English learners used the least adjuncts when they were most indirect, in situation 7, although this pattern does not seem to hold between the other two refuser statuses regarding indirectness. However, the use of adjuncts to refusals seems to happen in an inverse correlation with the refuser status for the native groups and the L2 English learners; that is, the lower the refuser status, the more adjuncts were used.

The common adjuncts used by all groups in the refusals of offers when the refuser status was lower or equal were gratitude/appreciation and pause filler. The common adjunct used when the refuser status was higher was the statement of empathy.

##### *5.1.2.1 'Promotion with move to a small town'*

In situation 11, there is power asymmetry (employee/boss) and high social distance between the interlocutors, increasing the FTA's weightiness and may influence indirectness.

Although the boss's offer could seem attractive at first, since it involves a raise and a promotion, which please the employee's positive face wants, it also involves moving. This requirement could threaten the employee's negative face, being aggravated by the unwillingness to move, as is the case, confirmed by the DCT description. Therefore, even though an offer act is usually done in the interest of others, its nature could additionally pose high imposition on the addressee. On the other hand, a refusal here may threaten the boss's positive and negative face, as it would neither seek agreement and cooperation with the interlocutor's wants nor redress the negative face wants of territory claim and self-determination on how to run his business or allocate personnel.

All groups were generally more direct here, and of the native groups, the L1 English speakers used more indirectness than L1 BP, a similar pattern to the one found in situation 12, when refuser status was lower. So, the L1 BP group used more direct refusal strategies, with a higher preference for negative ability, while this time, the L1 English group used more negative willingness, as in "…I am not open to moving."(L1 English 20) . So, it seems that although L1 English speakers are overall more indirect, they tend to be relatively more 'straightforward' in their direct refusals, focusing on their lack of want rather than on the lack of ability to accept the act.

Considering the L2 English learners, the advanced learners were more indirect than the intermediate learners, with the former showing a similar trend to the L1 English group, and the

latter, to L1 BP speakers. Nevertheless, like the L1 BP speakers, the advanced learners preferred more negative ability in direct refusals. In contrast, the intermediate learners showed an equal preference for negative ability and negative willingness, and in this last, they were more similar to the L1 English pattern.

Both native groups generally used a similar number of indirect refusal strategies with comparable frequency. Only the L1 BP group used the negative politeness strategy regret, while both groups similarly used hedging, as in "…I'm not sure if I can accept the proposal" (L1 BP 14 v.2) and postponement, as in "…I'll need to chat with my wife and think it over" (L1 English 25). The positive politeness strategy excuse was used often; however, more preferred by the L1 English group. In the L2 English group, the advanced students used a wider range of indirect refusal strategies than the intermediate learners. Like the L1 BP group, the L2 English learners also used the negative politeness strategy of regret, with a slightly higher rate among intermediate learners. Excuses were also the most common strategy among the learners.

For both L1 BP and L2 English intermediate groups, 25% of the excuses were mainly due to family reasons, as in "…I have a family that relies on me here" (L1 BP 23 v.2). In the L1 English group, 43.7% of excuses were family-related, and 6.2% were due to family and friends. As for the L2 English advanced group, 58.3% of excuses were family-related, as in "…I have my family here and they need me" (L2 English advanced 19 v.1) and 16.6%, due to family and friends. In this way, advanced learners were more similar to the native English group in their content of excuses in this context.

Still, in indirect refusal strategies, both native groups used the strategy negative opinion. In contrast, the L1 BP speakers additionally used the strategies 'attack to the interlocutor' and self-defense (in 'Other'), while L1 English speakers also used the strategy criticism to the eliciting speech act. The L2 English learners also used negative opinion, as in "…I don't like the idea of moving to another city" (L2 English advanced 20 v.1), and the advanced learners additionally used criticism to the eliciting speech act, as the L1 English group, as in "…but that's a big change for me now…" (L2 English advanced 3 v.1). These strategies were all used to express negative thoughts towards the offer made or its consequences, threatening the hearer's positive face. Another relatively frequent indirect strategy for all groups was the negative politeness strategy of hedging.

The 'Other' category of indirect refusal strategies contained attack to the interlocutor (1), self-defense (1), wish (1), and repetition of part of offer (1) for L1 BP group; and request for empathy (1) for L1 English group.

Both native groups used adjuncts in situation 11, but the L1 English speakers used them slightly more. The L1 BP and L1 English groups had the highest preference for the positive politeness strategy in gratitude/appreciation, often associated with intensifiers in L1 BP (89%) but less in L1 English (43%). They also used downgraders and time frame limitation to soften their refusals. The L2 English learners presented a very similar rate of adjunct use, which was more comparable to the L1 English group. The intermediate learners displayed the highest rate of adjunct use. They also showed a greater preference for the positive politeness strategy of gratitude/appreciation, as in "oh, thank you so much…" (L2 English intermediate 30 v.1) while using less time frame imitation when compared to the native groups. Intensifiers were often associated with gratitude/appreciation (80%), similar to what was found in the L1 BP group.

As of adjuncts, in the 'Other' category, we find appealer (1) for the L1 BP group; and downtoner (1) and greeting (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

The only case of 'Other strategies' was by the intermediate learner group. The combination of gratitude and positive opinion used by one participant may be interpreted as an acceptance, as seen in "Wow, thanks boss, I am very glad" (L2 English intermediate 4 v.1). In her verbal report, the participant claimed to be easily convinced by others.

#### *5.1.2.2 'Piece of cake'*

Situation 9 was divided into two parts as it required the participants to answer the friend offering cake twice, yet I will discuss the results found for the two parts here. In this situation there is no power asymmetry nor social distance between interlocutors, as they are friends. Thus, there is a higher likelihood that a speaker would employ directness here (Leech 1983, 126; Thomas 1995, 128).

The size of imposition in this situation can be considered relatively small, as what is offered is an extra piece of cake, and the one offering is a friend. Therefore, the offer is initially meant for the participant's benefit. Nevertheless, it might constitute some imposition if the participant has eaten enough and is satisfied, or is on a diet, for example, but is still weaker than in situation 11 and the one in situation 7, which will be discussed next. A refusal, however, may still threaten the friend's face.

The findings show that situation 9 is where both native groups used more directness, as expected for this scenario. The L1 BP group, however, was relatively less direct than the L1 English group, especially after the friend's insistence (second part). Also, both groups used a similar number of adjuncts here. The L2 English learners, in a similar vein, also used more

directness in this context, which was especially true for the intermediate learners, who, considering both parts of situation 9, presented the highest directness level of all groups.

The primary direct refusal strategy used by L1 BP and L1 English speakers, in both parts of situation 9, was a direct "no." The L1 English speakers additionally used negative willingness. However, the direct refusals with "no" were rarely done bald on record and tended to be softened by the speakers, as in "Oh no thank you…" (L1 English 4). In part 1, mitigation was mainly done through expressions of gratitude (100% for L1 BP and 70% for L1 English) or an excuse (31% for L1 BP and 61% for L1 English), both positive politeness strategies. In part 2, 51% of the L1 English groups' answers contained direct "no," and half were mitigated with gratitude or excuses. On the other hand, only 21% of the answers by the L1 BP group contained a direct "no," and expressions of gratitude mainly mitigated these.

Correspondingly, the L2 English learners favored a direct 'no' when refusing directly, both in parts 1 and 2 of situation 9. The advanced learners also indicated a high preference for negative ability in part 1 of this situation. Like the native groups, the learners rarely used 'no' bald on record but softened it. In part 1, the learners mostly softened it with an expression of gratitude (87% for intermediate learners and 73% for advanced learners). In part 2, 27% of the intermediate learners' answers contained a 'no,' mostly mitigated with gratitude and positive opinion expressions. In contrast, 16% of the advanced learners' responses had a direct 'no,' of which only half were mitigated with expressions of gratitude. So, in part 1, the advanced learners displayed an equivalent level of mitigation found for the L1 English group, while the intermediate learners were closer to the L1 BP speakers. In part 2, however, the learners seemed to follow a similar trend as found for the L1 BP group.

Concerning indirect refusal strategies, the second part of situation 9 presented more variation in the strategy types chosen by all groups. Overall, the most frequent indirect refusal strategies for both native groups were excuse, lack of enthusiasm (acceptance as a refusal), as in "We, if you insist" (L1 English 14), and negative consequences to the speaker, as in "…I fell like I'll become sick if I eat too much…" (L1 BP 25 v.2). Lack of enthusiasm, even though a refusal, constitutes an apparent acceptance and the desire to avoid disagreement with the hearer. However, if the unwillingness in the acceptance shows, it may also bring forth a lack of redress towards the interlocutor's positive face and potentially produce the opposite effect. The use of negative consequences to the speaker is a way to offend the interlocutor's positive face through criticism and may even cause them to feel guilty for the offer.

The most common indirect refusal strategy found for the L2 English learners was excuse, as in "I've had enough" (L2 English advanced 13 v.1), which was the only indirect strategy used by the intermediate learners. However, the advanced learner group also often used lack of enthusiasm (acceptance as a refusal) in part 2 of situation 9.

Additionally, only the L1 BP and L2 English advanced groups used the negative politeness strategy regret, tried to save positive face through offering an alternative, as in "…I'm taking this piece home" (L2 English advanced 21 v.1) and used silence as a response. Silence was chosen to answer a second, insisting offer, which follows an initial indirect refusal for the first part. The speaker possibly chose a non-verbal response to soften or even avoid threatening the friend's face again. In this case, instead of interpreting it as not doing the FTA, silence can be connected to off-record politeness as a significant manifestation of indirectness. Therefore, silence might be understood as saying nothing yet meaning something: an actual confirmation of the first refusal. When going off record, the interlocutor is left to decide how to interpret it (Brown and Levinson 1987, 211). Therefore, choosing silence may seem to be a risky approach, as one may consider it more offensive than an unpreferred yet verbal refusal.

The 'Other' category of indirect refusal strategies for situation 9 part 1 contains repetition of part of offer (1) and negative opinion (1) for the L1 BP group; and the strategy elaboration (1) for the L1 English group. The 'Other' category of indirect strategies for part 2 contains negative opinion (1) for the L1 BP group; elaboration (1) for the L1 English group; attack to the interlocutor (1) and guilt trip (1) for the L2 English advanced learners.

The native and learner groups preferred adjuncts in situation 9 were expressions of gratitude/appreciation and pause fillers, the latter mainly used by the L1 English speakers, but most times here they were associated with acceptances, as in "Oh alright you convinced me." (L1 English 6). Intensifiers were also often used to mitigate, particularly in the second part, usually associated with a direct "no," and at times, with an excuse in the native groups. Contrastingly, the learners mostly used intensifiers with excuses. The rate of adjunct use by the learners was more comparable to the one displayed by the L1 BP group in part 1 of situation 9. In the second part, the native groups presented very similar rates, and the advanced learners used them slightly less often than the native groups.

The 'Other' category of adjuncts for situation 9 part 1 contains time frame limitation (1) for L1 BP; intensifier (2) for L1 English; and downtoner (1) for L2 English advanced group. As for part 2, it contains time frame limitation (1) for L2 English advanced group.

For the second part of situation 9, all groups chose to use ‘Other strategies’: acceptance (4 for L1 BP; 4 for L1 English; 3 for L2 English intermediate, and 1 for L2 English advanced) and limitation of acceptance (4 for L1 BP; 3 for L1 English; 3 for L2 English intermediate, and 5 for L2 English advanced). Thus, the second part of situation 9, of all situations in the DCT, is where most acceptances are observed. One possible explanation is that the participants were requested to provide two answers in the situation, and the second reply was after a friend’s insistence. Moreover, the element offered was just an extra ‘little’ piece of cake, which would not present a very high weight of imposition on the participant compared to other situations. Overall, the participants who used acceptance in situation 9 understood the task instructions and seldom presented other acceptance cases throughout the DCT.

#### *5.1.2.3 ‘Pay for broken vase’*

In situation 7, power asymmetry and high social distance (boss/cleaning lady) may influence indirectness. Cases of a closer relationship with a domestic worker may exist, though, especially in the case of a long-term helper. This type of relationship with an employee of the domestic arena can be culturally and even contextually bound. Nevertheless, even though a more affective relationship between boss and employee may exist, the actual social distance continues to hold.

Like in situation 1, the participant is the one with more authoritative power. The high value of the broken china may make it a weighty FTA, with high cost for the boss. The cleaning lady is willing to pay for the damage; however, this solution could pose an even higher imposition on her, considering her socioeconomic situation and having three children to support. This context is complex, and it might therefore interfere with the participants' refusal choices.

Table 8 exhibits that situation 7 is where all groups used the most indirectness of all refusals of offers. It is the only case where the L1 BP group uses 100% of indirectness. All groups used few adjuncts to refusals here, though, which may not have been imperative due to the high level of indirectness.

Only the L1 English speakers and the L2 English learners used direct refusals, with the sole strategy direct ‘no.’ Unlike the two previous situations, the most frequent indirect refusal strategy used here was ‘leave the interlocutor off the hook’ as in “…You don't need to pay for that” (L2 English intermediate 2 v.2), and “I would never let you to pay for the vase…” (L2 English advanced 21 v.1). All groups used the strategy alternative similarly. The L1 English

group had more cases of statement of philosophy, while the L1 BP group seemed to prefer the strategy 'diminish the value of broken object,' as in "…it was old and old-fashioned"(L1 BP 5 v.1)). The L2 English learners used the strategy 'diminish the value of broken object' less than the native groups. Only the advanced learners presented statements of philosophy, at a rate in between the L1 BP and the L1 English groups. The strategy excuse was used scarcely and only by L1 BP speakers and the L2 English learners.

These indirect refusal strategies seem to hold positive politeness values, as they were used to 'diminish' the size or importance of the damage caused with 'diminish the value of broken object,' and therefore diminish the cost to the hearer; or take away the focus of the blame from the subject, as in the statement of philosophy "Accidents happen" (L1 English 2). Finally, the most used strategy, 'off the hook,' may function as 'giving gifts to the hearer.' Contrarily to being 'punished,' the cleaning lady has some of her positive-face wants to be satisfied, as the boss exempts from the debt and shows understanding and concern for her situation (Brown and Levinson 1987, 129).

In the 'Other' category in indirect refusal strategies, we find joke (1) for the L1 BP group; guilt trip (1) for L2 English intermediate group; and guilt trip (1) and wish (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

Interestingly, only the L1 BP speakers and the learners chose to guilt-trip the cleaning lady, as in "That vase was really important for me, but…" (L1 BP 15 v.2) which works as an offense to her positive face. In contrast, the statement "what a pity…this three-thousand-year vase from the I-Ching dynasty broke…I'm glad it was fake!" (L1 BP 16 v.2) by an L1 BP participant may sound like a relief to her. Initially sounding like a guilt trip, its humourous end makes it function as the strategy off the hook. Joke is considered a positive politeness technique since it puts the hearer " at ease." Moreover, positive politeness is the core of "'familiar' and 'joking' behavior" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 124, 129).

The L1 English speakers used slightly more often adjuncts to refusals than the L1 BP speakers. Both native groups used downgraders, pause fillers, and statements of empathy, but the L1 English groups used them more often. Pause fillers can be considered a negative politeness strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987, 169). On the other hand, the L2 English learners showed differences: the intermediate learners used fewer adjuncts than the advanced learners, at the same rate as the L1 BP speakers. However, the advanced learners used them the most of all groups. The intermediate learners used only vocative and statement of empathy. In contrast,

the advanced learners presented the most variation in adjunct types of all groups, using statements of empathy, vocative, and pause fillers more often.

Except for admonition, as in "…Please just be more careful in the future" (L2 English advanced 16 v.1) and pause fillers, the adjuncts used by all the groups may be considered positive politeness strategies, showing gratitude and care for the interlocutor. The refusal here, i.e., not accepting the payment for the broken vase, actually constitutes a positive action towards the cleaning lady given her circumstances, almost as a way to protect her.

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts, we find appealer (1) for the L1 BP group. There were no cases of 'Other' strategies in situation 7.

All groups showed a preference for positive politeness strategies for situation 7. Nevertheless, differently from the L1 English speaker, the L1 BP speakers, and the L2 English advanced learners chose to use the strategy guilt trip and the adjunct admonition, which function as criticism, accusation, and reprimand, insulting the cleaning lady's positive face. Brazilians often carry a rather 'intimate relationship' with their house workers, affectionately considering maids as 'part of the family.' However, at the same time, the treatment that such a worker can receive may not be considered as the result of a relationship of positive affect (Harris, 2007, 64 – 5). The use of these contradictory strategies seems to align with the aforementioned behavioral pattern and might have been done deliberately, with a specific desired outcome: to show consideration and affection without disregarding the existing distinct social and power relations.

### 5.1.3 Refusals of invitations

The speech act of invitation can threaten both the invitee's face wants and the inviter's, depending on how the former replies. Like an offer, an invitation can carry benefits to the hearer, yet, it may also function as a request. As such, it may affect the hearer's freedom of action and constitute an imposition (Brown and Levinson 1987, 129). Declining an invitation, though, may threaten the interlocutor's positive face wants to be desirable and ratified. Therefore, there is an imminent risk to the interlocutors' relationship in case of refusals, and appropriate politeness strategies should be considered to mitigate any affront that the rejection may provoke.

The situations in the DCT involving offers are 3, 4, and 10. Table 9 presents the refusal strategies, and table 9.1 the adjunct types used for situation 4. Table 10 displays the refusal

strategies, and table 10.1, the adjuncts used for situation 10, and tables 11 and 11.1 present the strategies and adjuncts used for situation 3.

Table 9. Strategies used in refusals of invitation, refuser status lower (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 4: 'Boss's party'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **5 (7.3%)** | **8 (15.1%)** | **2 (16.7%)** | **8 (22.2%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | − | − | − | − |
| Non-performative | "No" | − | − | − | 1 (2.8%) |
| | Negative ability | 5 (7.3%) | 7 (13.2%) | 2 (16.7%) | 7 (19.4%) |
| | Negative willingness | − | − | − | − |
| | Negative ability/willingness | − | 1 (1.9%) | − | − |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **63 (92.7%)** | **45 (84.9%)** | **10 (83.3%)** | **28 (77.8%)** |
| | Regret | 14 (20.5%) | 11 (20.7%) | 3 (25.0%) | 8 (22.2%) |
| | Excuse | 32 (47.0%) | 23 (43.4%) | 5 (41.7%) | 15 (41.7%) |
| | Postponement | 2 (3.0%) | 3 (5.7%) | 1 (8.3%) | − |
| | Negative opinion | 1 (1.5%) | 1 (1.9%) | − | 1 (2.8%) |
| | Wish | 3 (4.4%) | 2 (3.8%) | − | 1 (2.8%) |
| | Elaboration | 6 (8.8%) | 4 (7.5%) | 1 (8.3%) | 3 (8.3%) |
| | Other | 5 (7.3%) | 1 (1.9%) | − | − |

Table 9.1. Adjuncts to refusals of invitation, refuser status lower (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy, for totals)

| | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 4 | 11 | 3 | 2 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 9 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Downgrader | 11 | 12 | 1 | 3 |
| Intensifier | 2 | 1 | − | 3 |
| Vocative | 5 | 2 | − | 1 |
| Time frame limitation | 17 | 11 | 1 | 8 |
| Pause filler | − | 2 | − | 2 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | − | − |
| Total | 50 (1.36) | 45 (0.84) | 7 (0.58) | 23 (0.66) |

Table 10. Strategies used in refusals of invitation, refuser status equal (raw and relative frequencies)

| Situation 10: 'Dinner at friend's house' | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
| | | | | INTER | ADV |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **13 (28.9%)** | **9 (16.0%)** | **6 (35.2%)** | **12 (20.7%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | 1 (2.2%) | – | 3 (17.6%) | 1 (1.7%) |
| | Negative ability | 9 (20.0%) | 9 (16.0%) | 3 (17.6%) | 11 (19.0%) |
| | Negative willingness | 2 (4.5%) | – | – | – |
| | Negative ability/willingness | 1 (2.2%) | – | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **32 (71.1%)** | **47 (84.0%)** | **11 (64.8%)** | **46 (79.3%)** |
| | Regret | 4 (8.8%) | 13 (23.2%) | 3 (17.6%) | 14 (24.2%) |
| | Excuse | 22 (48.9%) | 22 (39.2%) | 6 (35.2%) | 24 (41.3%) |
| | Hedging | – | 2 (3.6%) | – | 1 (1.7%) |
| | Postponement | 2 (4.5%) | 2 (3.6%) | – | 1 (1.7%) |
| | Wish | 1 (2.2%) | 3 (5.4%) | – | – |
| | Alternative | 1 (2.2%) | – | – | 1 (1.7%) |
| | Promise of future acceptance | – | 1 (1.8%) | 1 (6.0%) | – |
| | Repetition of part of invitation | – | 1 (1.8%) | – | 1 (1.7%) |
| | Elaboration | 2 (4.5%) | 2 (3.6%) | 1 (6.0%) | 4 (7.0%) |
| | Other | – | 1 (1.8%) | – | – |

Table 10.1. Adjuncts to refusals of invitation, refuser status equal (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 1 | 5 | – | 4 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 8 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Downgrader | 4 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Downtoner | 4 | 2 | 1 | – |
| Vocative | – | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Time frame limitation | 12 | 10 | 4 | 12 |
| Pause filler | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Intensifier | 3 | 1 | – | 1 |
| Appealer | 2 | – | 1 | – |
| Other | 1 | – | – | – |
| Total | 36 (0.80) | 31 (0.58) | 15 (0.88) | 35 (0.60) |

Table 11. Strategies used in refusals of invitation, refuser status higher (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 3: 'Fancy restaurant (bribe)'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **14 (25.5%)** | **16 (30.2%)** | **4 (28.5%)** | **11 (36.6%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | 2 (3.8%) | – | 1 (3.3%) |
| Non-performative | "No" | 1 (1.8%) | 2 (3.8%) | 1 (7.0%) | 2 (6.6%) |
| | Negative ability | 10 (18.2%) | 8 (15.0%) | 3 (21.5%) | 7 (23.3%) |
| | Negative willingness | 1 (1.8%) | 3 (5.7%) | – | 1 (3.3%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | 2 (3.7%) | 1 (1.9%) | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **41 (74.5%)** | **37 (69.8%)** | **10 (71.5%)** | **19 (63.4%)** |
| | Regret | 5 (9.0%) | 12 (22.6%) | 3 (21.5%) | 3 (10.0%) |
| | Excuse | 21 (38.2%) | 17 (32.0%) | 3 (21.5%) | 9 (30.0%) |
| | Alternative | 8 (14.5 %) | – | 3 (21.5%) | 1 (3.3%) |
| | Postponement | 2 (3.7%) | 5 (9.5%) | – | 2 (6.7%) |
| | Elaboration | 1 (1.8%) | 1 (1.9%) | 1 (7.0%) | 2 (6.7%) |
| | Other | 4 (7.3%) | 2 (3.8%) | – | 2 (6.7%) |

Table 11.1. Adjuncts to refusals of invitation, refuser status higher (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 8 | 6 | – | 2 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 11 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Downgrader | 9 | 6 | – | 6 |
| Appealer | 2 | – | – | 1 |
| Forewarn | 1 | 1 | – | – |
| Vocative | 1 | – | 1 | – |
| Time frame limitation | 10 | 14 | 2 | 12 |
| Other | 4 | – | – | – |
| Total | 46 (0.83) | 31 (0.58) | 6 (0.42) | 26 (0.86) |

When comparing to refusals of requests, the L1 English speakers follow a similar trend in the use of indirectness here; that is, the higher the refuser status, the less indirect. The L1 BP speakers, though, presented mixed results. Here, the number of adjuncts used and its relationship with the degree of indirectness seem to follow an opposite trend to the one found in refusals of requests. Both native groups used more adjuncts the more indirect they were.

Some differences regarding the use of indirectness and the different refuser statuses were found for the L2 English group and between the different proficiency levels, yet were not significant nor systematic. Moreover, contrarily to the pattern observed for the native groups, the L2 English learners used more adjuncts the more direct they were.

The most frequent direct and indirect refusal strategies used by all groups and with all refuser statuses were, respectively, negative ability and excuse. The L1 BP group was the one that used more varied types of direct refusals when refuser status was equal, and the L1 English group, when refuser status was higher. Regarding indirect refusal strategies, there was more variation in the strategy types used for both native groups and the advanced learners when refuser status was equal. The intermediate learners had the slightest variation in strategy types in all three situations.

Overall, the L1 BP group used more adjuncts than the L1 English group with all refuser statuses. Both groups used downgraders and time frame limitation frequently. Moreover, they often used the positive politeness strategies of positive opinion, and gratitude/appreciation, as in with a slight distinction in preference between them, as the L1 BP speakers seemed to opt for gratitude/appreciation over positive opinion, while the L1 English speakers did the opposite.

The L2 English learners presented different preferences: the intermediate learners used more adjuncts when refuser status was equal, whereas the advanced learners used them more often when the status was higher. However, these distinct preferences are consistent with the fact that both groups used the most mitigation through adjuncts when they were most direct. The positive politeness strategy of gratitude was often used by the L2 English group, whereas the advanced learners also used time frame limitation frequently and pause fillers, the latter at a similar rate to the L1 English speakers.

#### *5.1.3.1 'Boss's party'*

In situation 4, there is power asymmetry and high social distance (employee/boss), with the participant having less authoritative power concerning the interlocutor. The boss's invitation to a party may, in itself, constitute imposition. In this particular case, there are additional aspects that increase the weightiness of the FTA: the fact the party takes place on a Sunday, a free day to rest and to attend to private matters; short notice, as the employee might already have other plans or commitments; and that the presence of the employee's spouse is also requested at the party, considering he/she might have prior engagements or is simply unwilling to join. However, a refusal to the party invitation might threaten the boss's positive face wants to be approved and liked, and negative face want not to be imposed, especially when he states to expect all his top executives to join. The boss's expectation seems to decrease the degree of optionality the employee could have to refrain from the invitation, increasing imposition on the participant's side (Leech 1983, 109).

Both native groups presented the highest level of indirectness when refusing invitations in situation 4, but the L1 BP group still was more indirect. The intermediate learners also followed this trend, while the advanced learners had a slightly lower level of indirectness. When employing direct refusals, both native groups only chose negative ability. Rarely used alone, negative ability was combined with indirect strategies and adjuncts to mitigate its potential threat (80% for L1 BP and 92% for L1 English). In the category of indirect refusals, the most frequent strategy adopted by both native groups was the positive politeness strategy of excuse,

as in "…next Sunday is the wedding of a big friend of mine and I'll be the maid of honor…" (L1 BP 9 v.1) and "… I have a prior engagement" (L1 English 11), followed by the negative politeness strategy of regret, which was considerably less frequent though.

The L2 English learners also preferred negative ability as a direct refusal strategy, which was always mitigated with indirect refusal strategies. When refusing indirectly, the learners favored the strategies excuse and regret, both at similar rates to the L1 English group.

In the 'Other' category, we find set condition for future acceptance (1), promise (1), repetition of part of SA (1), topic switch (1), and alternative (1) for L1 BP; and self-defense (1) for L1 English.

All groups added adjuncts to their refusals in this situation, and regarding the native groups, the L1 BP seemed to favor its use above L1 English. Both groups used time frame limitation and downgraders, , as in "*I think* I won't be able …" (L1 BP 36 v.1), quite frequently. The L1 BP speakers also preferred to use the positive politeness strategy of gratitude/appreciation, as in "Thank you very much for the invitation, but…" (L1 BP 1 v.1), while the L1 English speakers opted more often for positive opinion, as in "I would love to go, but…" (L1 English 10). Pause fillers were only used by the L1 English speakers. The L2 English learners used fewer adjuncts overall, with a frequency closer to the one presented by the L1 English group. They favored using gratitude/appreciation and positive opinion, and the advanced learners also often used time frame limitation, as in "…but unfortunately *this weekend* I…" (L2 English 8 v.2), comparably to the L1 English speakers.

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts, we find greeting (1) and downtoner (1)for the L1 BP group; and statement of agreement (2) for the L1 English group.

At last, there were a few cases of 'Other strategies' for situation 4. In the L1 BP group, an acceptance was seen in "All well, boss, we will go!" (L1 BP 4 v.2). In the L1 English group, there were two cases of requests for information, one of which was preceded by acceptance. Both participants seemed to have understood the task. Finally, there was also one case of acceptance in the L2 English intermediate learner group.

#### *5.1.3.2 'Dinner at a friend's house'*

In situation 10, the participant and their interlocutor are equals as friends, with no weightiness due to power asymmetry or social distance. Therefore, the friend's invitation to dinner could be considered a beneficial offer, pleasing rather than offending the hearer's face. However, the DCT's description discloses that the participant detests the friend's spouse, which aggravates

the invitation's context and weightiness. However, a rejection of the invitation could threaten the friend’s face.

Considering the present context and the status of the parties involved, one could expect a similar preference for more directness, as seen in situation 9. However, the findings point to the preference for a higher level of indirectness for both native groups here, even though the adjuncts' frequency seems comparable to situation 9. The weightiness of the act could explain a higher indirectness: refusing an invitation to attend a dinner at a friend’s house probably carries more risk than refusing an extra piece of cake. There seems to be more work and investment involved in preparing to host a dinner party. Additionally, one strong reason behind the refusal would be that the participant does not get along with the friend’s spouse. However, stating this blatantly, bald on record would undoubtedly put the existing friendship in jeopardy. To avoid it and not let the real reason for the refusal show, more face work seems necessary, and one may choose more indirectness as a safer path.

Both native groups chose to refuse the invitation more indirectly. When refusing directly, the strategy most often used by both groups was negative ability. Negative ability was the only direct refusal strategy used by the L1 English speakers, whereas the L1 BP speakers presented more variation in strategy types, including direct “no” and negative willingness. On the other hand, when refusing indirectly, the strategies used by L1 English speakers were more varied. The most common indirect strategy for both groups was excuse, as in “Sorry, I have to go to church” (L1 BP 23 v.1) mainly by the L1 BP speakers. L1 English speakers also frequently used the negative politeness strategy of regret, as in “I'm sorry I can't, I have a family dinner that night” (L1 English 13) more than twice as often as the L1 BP group did. Both groups also showed concern for the interlocutor’s positive face through the strategy wish.

The L2 English learners behaved slightly differently regarding the level of indirectness preferred and the refusal strategies used. The intermediate learners used the lowest level of indirectness in this situation, while the advanced learners patterned more closely with the L1 English speakers. The direct refusal strategies negative ability and direct “no” were equally preferred by the intermediate learners, while the advanced learners, as the native groups, favored negative ability, as in “…I won’t be able to make it on Sunday….” (L2 English intermediate 15 v.2). In indirect refusals, in the same manner, as the native groups, the learners displayed a similar preference for excuses, as in “I'd love to, unfortunately, we are meeting with my husband's parents that evening…” (L2 English advanced 16 v.2) and expressions of regret, as in “I am really sorry, but I won’t be there…” (L2 English advanced 13 v.2), both in a closer

proportion to the L1 English group. In the L2 English group, the advanced learners showed more variation in the indirect refusal strategy types used, sharing with the native English speakers the choice for hedging and repetition of part of request.

In the 'Other' category of indirect refusal strategies, we find criticism of the eliciting speech act (1) for the L1 English group.

Of the native groups, the L1 BP group used adjuncts to mitigate their refusals more often. The most common adjuncts were gratitude/appreciation and time frame limitation. Like in situation 4, the L1 BP speakers prefer the positive politeness strategy of gratitude/appreciation, while the L1 English speakers favor expressions of positive opinion. Only the L1 BP group uses the adjunct appealer to negotiate and show concern for seeking an agreement with the interlocutor. Thus, both groups seem to favor more positive politeness strategies.

In the learner group, the intermediate students used more adjuncts than the advanced learners; hence the former was more comparable to the L1 BP group and the latter to the L1 English group. The learners also seemed to favor the positive politeness strategy of gratitude/appreciation and the adjunct of time frame limitation. The advanced learners favored the positive politeness strategy of positive opinion, as in "…I hope you will enjoy the party!" (L2 English advanced 22 v.2) and pause fillers similarly to the L1 English speakers.

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts, we find forewarn (1) for the L1 BP group.

For situation 10, there were no cases of 'Other' strategies.

#### *5.1.3.3 'Fancy restaurant (bribe)'*

In situation 3, there is power asymmetry and social distance between interlocutors (salesman/president of a company). In this case, the participant is the one with more authoritative power. The salesman has tried to sell his firm's products to the president of a printing company (the participant). However, now the salesman invites the president to one of the most expensive restaurants in New York to firm up a contract. This invitation is described in the DCT as a bribe. Therefore, the imposition in this situation seems to be weightier on the president's side, as the invitation seems to threaten his negative face regarding his freedom to act and not to be imposed. The request to firm up a contract with a bribe intensifies the threat and increases imposition upon the hearer. A refusal, however, could impose threat to the salesman's face.

Both native groups use more directness in the present context, yet the L1 English group uses it more and presented more direct refusal strategy types. Regarding the direct strategies, negative ability was used most often, as in "I'd love to, but I think *I won't be able* to go…"(L1 BP 30 v.1). When refusing indirectly, both groups used more excuses. The L1 English group, as in situation 10, used more the negative politeness strategy of regret than the L1 BP group. Alternatively, the L1 BP speakers used the strategy alternative frequently, whereas no cases were found for the L1 English speakers. Both groups presented the slightest variation in indirect strategy types used in this situation compared to the others in refusals of invitations.

The L2 English learners used similar levels of indirectness as did the native groups, with the advanced groups being the less indirect of all. When refusing directly, the learners also preferred negative ability, while the advanced learners showed more variation in the strategies used, as the native groups. Both learner groups presented cases of direct "no" at higher rates than the native groups, as in "Not in the moment. Sorry!" (L2 English intermediate 12 v.2). Furthermore, similarly to the L1 English group, the advanced learners also presented cases of performatives. In the indirect refusals category, the intermediate learners used excuse, as in "…I already have set a date with a friend" (L2 English advanced 3 v.2), alternatives, as in "…what about meeting in (random bar)…?" (L2 English advanced 10 v.2) and expressions of regret at equal rates. In contrast, the advanced learners seemed to prefer excuses, as did the native groups.

In the 'Other' category of indirect refusal strategies, we find lack of enthusiasm (1), negative opinion (1), and hedging (2) for the L1 BP group; conditional future acceptance (1) and criticism to the eliciting speech act (1) for the L1 English group; and negative opinion (1) and wish (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

All groups used adjuncts to refusals here, but of the native groups, the L1 BP speakers used them more. Both groups appeared to use downgraders, time frame limitation, and positive opinion quite often. The L1 BP group made more use of gratitude/appreciation than the L1 English, and also made use of appealers when L1 English speakers did not; both considered positive politeness strategies.

The L2 English intermediate learners used the fewest adjuncts of all but closer to the L1 English group in frequency, whereas the advanced learners used the most adjuncts of all, displaying a frequency closer to the L1 BP. The most common adjuncts among learners were the positive politeness strategy of gratitude/appreciation and time frame limitation. The advanced learners also used downgraders quite often.

The ‘Other’ category in adjuncts was just present for the L1 BP group, and we find greeting (1), downtoner (2), and pause filler (1).

For situation 3, there were a few cases of ‘Other’ strategies: two acceptances for L1 BP and two cases of request of information, while one case of request for information was found in the L1 English group.

#### 5.1.4 Refusals of suggestions

Suggestions, similarly to advice, can be considered a directive speech act, as, through them, one attempts to get the hearer to do something (Leech 1983, 106). Thus, suggestions resemble requests, nevertheless carrying less imposition than the latter, especially when considering its degree of optionality (Leech 1983, 123). Also, they can be viewed as offering the speaker a ‘favor,’ a beneficial idea or piece of advice, but with seemingly more imposition than a mere offer. Considering the speech acts involved in the DCT, suggestions may be comparable to invitations in that they may likewise fit between the speech acts of requests and offers.

However, a suggestion can be considered an FTA as the speaker is somehow imposing by ‘invading’ the hearer’s space and not avoiding impending their freedom of action, offending his/her negative face. Otherwise, rejecting a suggestion may threaten the positive face of the one proposing it, and their desire to have their wants as desirable (Brown and Levinson 1987, 62), and again, a may bring an impending threat to the relationship between the interlocutors.

The situations in the DCT involving suggestions are 5, 6, and 8. Table 12 presents the refusal strategies and table 12.1 the adjunct types used for situation 6. Table 13 displays the refusal strategies and table 13.1, the adjuncts used for situation 5, and tables 14 and 14.1 present the strategies and adjuncts used for situation 8.

Table 12. Strategies used in refusals of suggestion, refuser status lower (raw and relative frequencies) –

| **Situation 6: 'Write little reminders'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refulsals** | | **1 (1.7%)** | **1 (2.6%)** | **3 (30.0%)** | **1 (4.2%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | – | – | – | – |
| | Negative ability | – | 1 (2.6%) | 3 (30.0%) | **1 (4.2%)** |
| | Negative willingness | 1 (1.7%) | – | – | – |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | – | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **60 (98.3%)** | **38 (97.4%)** | **7 (70.0%)** | **23 (95.8%)** |
| | Regret | 1 (1.7%) | – | 1 (10.0%) | – |
| | Excuse | 7 (11.4%) | 4 (10.2%) | 2 (20.0%) | 3 (12.5%) |
| | Alternative | 8 (13.1%) | 2 (5.1%) | 1 (10.0%) | 8 (33.3%) |
| | Criticism to SA | 2 (3.2%) | 10 (25.6%) | – | 1 (4.2%) |
| | Negative opinion | 8 (13.1%) | 3 (7.7%) | 1 (10.0%) | 4 (16.6%) |
| | Hedging | 3 (4.9%) | 1 (2.6%) | 1 (10.0%) | – |
| | Joke | 1 (1.7%) | – | 1 (10.0%) | – |
| | Lack of enthusiasm | 1 (1.7%) | 1 (2.6%) | – | – |
| | Promise of future acceptance | 1 (1.7%) | – | – | 1 (4.2%) |
| | Self-defense | 19 (31.1%) | 7 (18.0%) | – | 4 (16.6%) |
| | Elaboration | 7 (11.4%) | 6 (15.4%) | – | 1 (4.2%) |
| | Other | 2 (3.2%) | 4 (10.2%) | – | 1 (4.2%) |

Table 12.1. Adjuncts to refusals of suggestion, refuser status lower (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adjunct type** | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| Positive opinion | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 11 | 8 | 1 | 6 |
| Downgrader | 2 | – | 1 | 3 |
| Pause filler | 2 | 3 | – | 1 |
| Statement of agreement | 6 | 3 | – | 2 |
| Other | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 24 (0.40) | 20 (0.51) | 4 (0.40) | 16 (0.66) |

Table 13. Strategies used in refusals of suggestion, refuser status equal (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 5: 'Try a new diet'** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **L1 BP** | **L1 ENG** | **L2 ENG** | |
| | | | | **INTER** | **ADV** |
| **Direct refusals** | | **7 (12.5%)** | **5 (10.9%)** | **1 (7.7%)** | **5 (17.8%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | – | 1 (2.2%) | 1 (7.2%) | 3 (10.7%) |
| | Negative ability | 7 (12.5%) | 1 (2.2%) | – | – |
| | Negative willingness | – | 3 (6.5%) | – | 2 (7.1%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | – | – | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **49 (87.5%)** | **41 (89.1%)** | **12 (92.3%)** | **23 (82.2%)** |
| | Regret | – | – | 2 (15.4%) | 1 (3.6%) |
| | Excuse | 5 (9.0%) | 2 (4.4%) | 4 (30.7%) | 3 (10.7%) |
| | Alternative | 6 (10.7%) | 5 (10.9%) | – | 5 (17.8%) |
| | Criticism to interlocutor | 1 (1.7%) | 1 (2.2%) | – | – |
| | Negative opinion | 17 (30.3%) | 9 (19.6%) | 3 (23.1%) | 8 (28.6%) |
| | Criticism to SA | 7 (12.5%) | 10 (21.7%) | – | 2 (7.1%) |
| | Hedging | 3 (5.3%) | 5 (10.9%) | – | 1 (3.6%) |
| | Statement of principle | – | 1 (2.2%) | 1 (7.7%) | 1 (3.6%) |
| | Attack to interlocutor | – | – | 1 (7.7%) | 1 (3.6%) |
| | Topic switch | – | 1 (2.2%) | 1 (7.7%) | – |
| | Elaboration | 5 (9.0%) | 3 (6.5%) | – | 1 (3.6%) |
| | Other | 5 (9.0%) | 4 (8.6%) | – | – |

Table 13.1. Adjuncts to refusals of suggestion, refuser status equal (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| Adjunct type | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | INTER | ADV |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 2 | 4 | – | 4 |
| Downgrader | 1 | 4 | – | 1 |
| Downtoner | 2 | 4 | – | – |
| Intensifier | 2 | 4 | – | – |
| Vocative | 1 | – | 1 | 1 |
| Pause filler | 1 | 4 | – | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | – | – |
| Total | 10 (0.17) | 22 (0.47) | 1 (0.07) | 7 (0.25) |

Table 14. Strategies used in refusals of suggestion, refuser status higher (raw and relative frequencies)

| **Situation 8: 'More conversation in a foreign language class'** | | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | INTER | ADV |
| **Direct refusals** | | **4 (9.5%)** | **4 (7.8%)** | **1 (7.7%)** | **3 (5.8%)** |
| Performative | I refuse, I decline | – | – | – | – |
| Non-performative | "No" | – | 1 (2.0%) | 1 (7.7%) | – |
| | Negative ability | 2 (4.7%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | 2 (3.8%) |
| | Negative willingness | 2 (4.7%) | 1 (2.0%) | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Negative ability/willingness | – | – | | – |
| **Indirect refusals** | | **38 (90.5%)** | **47 (92.2%)** | **12 (92.3%)** | **49 (94.2%)** |
| | Excuse | 16 (38.1%) | 14 (27.3%) | 6 (46.1%) | 20 (38.3%) |
| | Alternative | 4 (9.5%) | 5 (9.8%) | – | 2 (3.8%) |
| | Postponement | 2 (4.7%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | 4 (7.6%) |
| | Criticism to interlocutor | 1 (2.4%) | 3 (5.8%) | 1 (7.7%) | – |
| | Criticism to SA | 2 (4.7%) | 5 (9.8%) | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Hedging | 1 (2.4%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Lack of enthusiasm | 1 (2.4%) | – | 1 (7.7%) | – |
| | Negative consequence to interlocutor | – | – | 1 (7.7%) | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Negative opinion | 1 (2.4%) | | – | 2 (3.8%) |
| | Conditional future acceptance | – | 1 (2.0%) | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Promise of future acceptance | 2 (4.7%) | 2 (4.0%) | – | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Self-defense | 3 (7.2%) | 6 (11.7%) | 2 (15.4%) | 1 (2.0%) |
| | Statement of principle | – | 1 (2.0%) | – | 2 (3.8%) |
| | Elaboration | 3 (7.2%) | 5 (9.8%) | 1 (7.7%) | 7 (13.4%) |
| | Other | 2 (4.7%) | 1 (2.0%) | – | 6 (11.5%) |

Table 14.1. Adjuncts to refusals of suggestion, refuser status higher (raw numbers and frequency per refusal strategy for totals)

| Adjunct type | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | INTER | ADV |
| Positive opinion | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Gratitude/appreciation | 3 | 8 | 1 | 6 |
| Downgrader | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Appealer | – | 1 | – | 2 |
| Time frame limitation | 2 | – | 1 | 5 |
| Greeting | 1 | – | – | 1 |
| Pause filler | 1 | 1 | – | – |
| Statement of empathy | 2 | – | – | 3 |
| Statement of agreement | 2 | – | 1 | 1 |
| Other | 2 | – | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 17 (0.40) | 14 (0.29) | 6 (0.46) | 26 (0.50) |

Parallel to what was observed in invitations, the L1 English and the L1 BP groups use a high level of indirectness in these three situations. In suggestions, however, these groups have the most indirect refusals concerning each refuser status, except for when the refuser status is

higher for the L1 BP group, as the group was still more indirect in situation 7. Additionally, the native groups here display very similar values regarding the degree of indirectness in each situation. These are also the situations among those with the fewest adjuncts.

Unlike the other refusal sets, excuse and regret were not the most frequent indirect refusal strategies for all groups throughout these three situations. There is no uniformity among all the groups in using a specific strategy in a similar frequency in all three refusals of suggestions. There is some variance of typical strategies for each situation, and also, the different groups seemed to favor some particular strategies differently. For the native groups, an excuse was the most frequent indirect strategy when refuser status was higher. In contrast, they often preferred the indirect strategies of negative opinion and criticism to the eliciting speech act with the other two statuses. The L2 English group presented some dissimilarities between the two proficiency groups. When the refuser status was lower, the intermediate learners showed a high preference for negative ability, while the advanced learners favored alternatives. When the status was equal, the intermediate learners favored excuse, and the advanced learners followed a similar trend as the native groups and favored negative opinion. However, when the refuser status was higher, the L2 English learners aligned with the native groups and preferred excuses.

The common adjuncts to all groups in refusals of suggestions when the refuser status was lower or higher were gratitude/appreciation and positive opinion. There is no common adjunct to all groups when the refuser status is equal; nevertheless, the native groups frequently used gratitude/appreciation, downtoners, and intensifiers. The learners commonly used the adjunct vocative, but the advanced learners preferred expressions of gratitude.

The L1 BP group and the L2 English advanced learners seemingly used more adjuncts the more indirect they were, whereas the L1 English group and the intermediate learners did not present a clear pattern relating to the indirectness levels and use of adjuncts.

#### *5.1.4.1 'Write little reminders'*

In situation 6, there is power asymmetry and high social distance (employee/boss), with the participant having less authoritative power. In this context, the boss walks over to the employee and suggests he/she should try and get better organized, as the latter was trying to find a report on a messy desk. This advice with a tone of criticism is followed by the particular suggestion of writing little reminders to remember things more easily. The suggestion may bring about a beneficial outcome to the hearer but seems to make a weighty FTA. A suggestion coming from the boss may in itself constitute an imposition concerning the employee's freedom to act as

he/she chooses, mainly when it may be interpreted as a criticism or disapproval of one's organizing methods or abilities. Therefore, it may threaten both the positive and the negative faces of the hearer. Notwithstanding, refusing such a suggestion may also threaten the boss's face and potentially impact the working relationship, and thus should be done in a redressive way.

Here, both native groups opt for a similarly high level of indirectness, the highest for both groups when the refuser status is lower. When using direct refusals, the L1 English speakers prefer negative ability, while the L1 BP speakers were slightly more blunt by using negative willingness. When refusing indirectly, the native groups shared many common strategies, yet with differences in preference. The L1 English group favored criticism of the eliciting speech act, as in "Yeah, but then the notes will just become a new mess" (L1 English 2), and self-defense; meanwhile, the L1 BP speakers openly preferred the self-defense strategy above all but also often used negative opinion, as in "I don't like little reminders" (L1 BP 31 v.1) and alternatives, as in "I prefer doing things my own way…" (L1 BP 7 v.1). Unlike the L1 English speakers, the L1 BP group also used the negative politeness strategy of regret and the positive politeness strategies of joke and promise of future acceptance.

The L2 English advanced learners followed a similar trend observed for the native groups and displayed a high indirectness level, the highest when the refuser status is lower. Differently, the intermediate learners used the lowest level of indirectness of all groups in this situation. When refusing directly, both learner groups preferred using negative ability as L1 English speakers, yet the intermediate learners used it very frequently, almost six times as often as the advanced learners. Regarding indirect strategies, the intermediate learners favored using excuses, while the advanced learners used alternatives more often, as in "…I still prefer to trust in my memory" (L2 English advanced 13 v.2). The advanced learners also used self-defense, as in "…I understand my mess" (L2 English advanced 18 v.2), frequently, comparable to the L1 BP group and negative opinion, at a similar rate as the L1 English speakers.

Overall, both native groups and the L2 English group seemed to prefer positive politeness strategies. At the same time, they also used strategies that, instead of saving, threatened the hearer's positive face as they showed a lack of concern towards the addressee's wants, and that in some way, they did not want the hearer's wants. These strategies were negative opinion, as in criticism of the eliciting speech act, and self-defense, as, through it, the speaker argues in favor of him/herself while contradicting or disagreeing with the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66). When considered together, though, these strategies were slightly more representative

in the L1 English group. This antithetical combination of strategies was similarly observed in all groups in the refusals of offers when the refuser status was lower, possibly to find a balance between the speaker's and the hearer's wants. Here, it may be to simultaneously defend the boss's positive face and show appreciation for his advice; simultaneously, the employee wants to establish him/herself as capable, defend his/her preferences, and his/her freedom to act unimpeded.

In the 'Other' category in indirect refusal strategies, we find statement of philosophy (1) and statement of principle (1) for the L1 BP group; criticism to the interlocutor (1) and postponement (3) for the L1 English group; and negative consequence to the speaker (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

In this situation, the L1 English group used adjuncts more often than the L1 BP group. Both groups used pause fillers, and the positive politeness strategies of positive opinion and gratitude/appreciation, again, with the L1 English preferring positive opinion and the L1 BP group favoring gratitude. Additionally, the L1 BP speakers used statements of agreement, also considered a positive politeness strategy, more often than the L1 English speakers.

The L2 English advanced learners used the most adjuncts of all groups, and intermediate learners used adjuncts at the same rate as the L1 BP group. The L2 English learners used downgraders and the positive politeness strategies of gratitude/appreciation and positive opinion.

In the 'Other' category of adjuncts to refusals, we find vocative (2) for the L1 BP group; downtoner (2), and forewarn (1) for the L1 English group; time frame limitation (1) for the L2 English intermediate group and appealer (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

For situation six, there were a few cases of other strategies: two acceptances in L1 English, one acceptance in L1 BP, and one acceptance in L2 English advanced. No cases were found for the intermediate learners. In general, the participants who have chosen to accept here seemed to have understood the task well.

#### *5.1.4.2 'Try a new diet'*

In situation 5, there is no power asymmetry nor social distance between the interlocutors, as they are described as friends. In this scenario, the friend offered the participant a snack initially rejected due to weight gain concerns. Then the friend suggested that the participant try a new diet about which he/she had mentioned. The friend's advice seems to be for the hearer's benefit; nonetheless, it may still represent an imposition on the participant's face wants. A refusal,

however, may also threaten the friend's positive face, but possibly to a lesser extent in this context, as the suggestion constitutes a lesser cost to the friend but supposedly a greater benefit to the participant.

In this situation, both native groups prefer more directness, as expected in a close relationship. The advanced learners also followed this trend, while the intermediate learners opted for more indirectness here. When refusing directly, the L1 BP speakers only used the strategy of negative ability, as in "I can't adapt to diets" (L1 BP 4 v.1), whereas the L1 English speakers preferred negative willingness, but also used negative ability and direct 'no.', as in "Nah, I'm not really into many of the fad diets…" (L1 English 21). So, the L1 BP group could be considered "more redressive" in their direct rejections here. Otherwise, when turning down the suggestion indirectly, both native groups highly preferred strategies that show little redress towards their interlocutor's positive face. Both groups used the strategies negative opinion, as in "I am not really for diets" (L1 BP  32 v.1) and criticism to the eliciting speech act, but the L1 BP speakers favored the former while the L1 English speakers the latter. In a similar vein, although infrequently, these groups also used the strategy criticism of the interlocutor, and the L1 BP speakers additionally used self-defense (in 'Other').

Nonetheless, the L1 BP and L1 English speakers also used redressive indirect refusal strategies, such as the positive politeness strategies of excuse and alternative and the negative politeness strategy of hedging. Interestingly, the L1 BP group used the positive politeness strategy of joke again while refusing, as noted in situations 6  ('write little reminders') and 7 ('broken vase') but not found for the L1 English group. The L1 English speakers seemed to prefer some 'avoidance' strategies as postponement, unspecific reply (in 'Other'), and topic switch.

The L2 English learners preferred using a direct "no" when refusing directly, as in "Thanks, but I guess I have to say no…" (L2 English advanced 25 v.2), and the advanced learners also used negative willingness quite often. Thus, similarly to the L1 English speakers, the learners were less redressive in their direct refusals here. However, in their indirect refusals, the intermediate learners clearly preferred excuses, negative opinion, and regret. In contrast, the advanced learners opted more often for negative opinion, as in "I don't trust in these magical methods to lose weight" (L2 English advanced 9 v.2), and alternatives "Thanks, but I already started a diet" (L2 English advanced 23 v.2). In this way, the intermediate learners seemed to be more concerned with the interlocutor's positive and also negative face needs; while, the advanced learners seemed to save more the interlocutor's positive face. At the same time, the

learners presented cases of the strategies negative opinion, attack to the interlocutor, and criticism to the eliciting speech act, which show a lack of redress towards the addressee's positive face. Thus, like in situation 6, there seems to be a search for a balance between speaker's and addressee's face needs again.

The other category in indirect refusals contains self-defense (3), joke (2), and set condition for future acceptance (1) for the L1 BP group; and postponement (1) and unspecific reply (1) for the L1 English group.

Furthermore, the L1 English speakers used more adjuncts than the L1 BP speakers in this scenario. Both native groups often used gratitude/appreciation, downtoners, and intensifiers. Intensifiers were combined with negative ability in the L1 BP group but with criticism to the eliciting speech act in the L1 English group. On their turn, the L2 English learners used fewer adjuncts here, at a closer rate to the L1 BP group. The only case of adjuncts for the intermediate learners was a vocative, while the advanced learners preferred expressions of gratitude/appreciation.

The other category in adjunct to refusals contains positive opinion (1) for the L1 BP group; intensifier (1) and time frame limitation (1) for the L1 English group; and forewarn (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

There are no cases of other strategies than refusals in situation 5.

#### *5.1.4.3 'More conversation in a foreign language class'*

In situation 8, there is power asymmetry and high social distance (student/teacher), factors that increase the weightiness of the FTA. The participant, as a teacher at the university, is the one with more power. In this context, it is the middle of the term when a student speaks with the teacher, suggesting more focus on practice in conversation instead of grammar. Here, asking the teacher, in the middle of the semester, to change the focus of the class may entail a demand with a big imposition and offend the teacher's negative face. Likewise, the teacher may interpret the student's indirect suggestion as a form of negative criticism, showing a lack of redress for the teacher's positive face. However, a refusal may put the teacher/student relationship at risk and threaten the interlocutor's positive face, as the teacher would fail to attend to the student's needs and desires to be ratified and understood (Brown and Levinson 1987, 62; 103).

In this context, both native groups use a high, similar level of indirectness, but the L1 English group is still slightly more indirect. The L1 English speakers show a higher preference for the use of negative ability when refusing directly. The L1 BP group, though, uses both

negative ability, as in “I can’t change my class planning” (L1 BP 2 v.1) and negative willingness frequently often. When refusing indirectly, both groups favor using the positive politeness strategy of excuse, although they also often use the strategy alternative. Again, as seen in situations 5 and 6, both native groups here use strategies that attack the interlocutor’s positive face, yet, the L1 English group used them more often. The strategies used were criticism to the interlocutor “, criticism of the eliciting speech act, as in “I think it's best to get the basics nailed down first...” (L1 English 7) and the strategy of self-defense.

The L2 English learners also favored a higher use of indirectness. In direct refusals, the intermediate learners favored a direct “no” while the advanced students preferred negative ability. In indirect refusals, both learner groups preferred using the positive politeness of excuse, as in “grammar is important” (L2 English intermediate 35 v.1) similarly to the native groups. The intermediate learners also used self-defense quite frequently, while the advanced learners used more elaborations on their excuses. Otherwise, the advanced students presented more variation in indirect refusal strategy choice than intermediate learners.

Once again the learners, like the native groups, used strategies that demonstrate less redress for the interlocutor’s positive face, with the advanced learners using them more often. Some of the strategies used by the learners were criticism to the eliciting speech act, criticism to the interlocutor, negative consequence to interlocutor, and negative opinion.

In the Other category in indirect refusal strategies, we find joke (1) for the L1 BP group; set condition for past acceptance (1) in the L1 English group; and regret (2), request for empathy (1), unspecific reply (1), and insults (2) for the L2 English advanced group.

All groups used adjuncts to their refusals in situation 8, but the L2 English learners used them slightly more often. Both native groups frequently used the positive politeness strategy of gratitude/appreciation, but the L1 English speakers used them more. On the other hand, the L1 BP speakers presented other adjuncts, such as the positive politeness strategies of statements of empathy and statements of agreement, which claim common ground and comprehension of the interlocutor’s needs. Likewise, the L2 English learners preferred positive politeness strategies, such as positive opinion, gratitude/appreciation, and statement of agreement. The advanced learners overall used more adjuncts than the intermediate learners.

In the other category in adjuncts to refusals, we find superiority over addressee (1) for the L1 BP group, downtoner (1) for the L2 English intermediate group, and vocative (1) for the L2 English advanced group.

The only cases of other strategies are in the intermediate learner group, and they are two acceptances. One possible explanation for the acceptances here is that both participants are English language students themselves, and they seem to agree with the possibility of practicing more their conversational skills in the classroom. Moreover, in the general Brazilian context, the classroom is the only place many will have the chance to practice their English orally.

### 5.1.5 Number of strategies in the refusal situations

While refusing the speech acts proposed to them, both the native groups and the L2 English learners produced sequences using different strategies at varying lengths. The number of strategies used by a group may be affected by other factors previously described, such as the situation type, level of indirectness, refuser status, number of adjuncts used, and even the degree of imposition. Table 15 presents the range and the mean number of strategies used by each group in all refusal situations.

Table 15. Number of strategies used by each group in the refusals of requests, offers, invitations, and suggestions (range and mean score)

| DCT item | Refuser status | Situation | Number of strategies | L1 BP | L1 ENG | L2 ENG | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | INTER | ADV |
| **Refusals of requests** | | | | | | | |
| # 12 | Lower | Stay late at night | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 2.29 | 2.16 | 1.90 | 2.52 |
| # 2 | Equal | Borrow class notes | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 2.00 | 2.30 | 2.33 | 2.30 |
| # 1 | Higher | Request raise | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 4 | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 |
| | | | Mean | 1.91 | 1.76 | 2.00 | 1.94 |
| **Refusals of offers** | | | | | | | |
| # 11 | Lower | Promotion with move to small town | Range | 1 – 3 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 2 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 1.62 | 1.70 | 1.63 | 2.20 |
| # 9 | Equal | Piece of cake (part 1) | Range | 1 – 2 | 1 – 4 | 1 – 2 | 1 – 2 |
| | | | Mean | 1.25 | 1.66 | 1.36 | 1.32 |
| | | Piece of cake (part 2) | Range | 1 – 3 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 2 | 1 – 3 |
| | | | Mean | 1.20 | 1.46 | 1.18 | 1.24 |
| # 7 | Higher | Pay for broken vase | Range | 1 – 5 | 1 – 5 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 8 |
| | | | Mean | 2.45 | 2.36 | 2.36 | 2.28 |
| **Refusals of invitations** | | | | | | | |
| # 4 | Lower | Boss's party | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 1.91 | 1.76 | 2.16 | 2.05 |
| # 10 | Equal | Dinner at friend's house | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 2.00 | 1.46 | 1.54 | 2.16 |
| # 3 | Higher | Fancy restaurant (bribe) | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 | 2 – 4 | 1 – 5 |
| | | | Mean | 1.58 | 1.83 | 2.33 | 1.66 |
| **Refusals of suggestions** | | | | | | | |
| # 6 | Lower | Write little reminders | Range | 1 – 6 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 2 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 1.75 | 1.56 | 1.66 | 1.38 |
| # 5 | Equal | Try a new diet | Range | 1 – 4 | 1 – 3 | 2 – 3 | 1 –5 |
| | | | Mean | 1.61 | 1.63 | 2.33 | 1.66 |
| # 8 | Higher | More conversation in foreign language class | Range | 1 – 3 | 1 – 3 | 1 – 2 | 1 – 4 |
| | | | Mean | 1.66 | 1.63 | 1.36 | 1.96 |

When observing the results found for the native groups, the number of strategies used in refusing requests is higher than for the other refusal types for both groups. There is also a high number of strategies used in situation 7 ('broken vase').

In section 4.1.2, requests have been presented as FTAs, carrying a high degree of imposition. Due to its threatening nature, speakers would show more consideration when refusing a request and preferably act in line with the Tact Maxim, minimizing costs to the hearer and avoiding discord (Leech 1983). The increase in the number of strategies may be interpreted as a sign of deference and more consideration towards the interlocutor's face needs. More and different strategy types together may augment the politeness degree as they would likely shield more thoroughly the potential threats or impositions provoked by refusals, as long as the different strategies combined are indeed redressive of the hearer's face needs.

Additionally, situation 7 presents a high imposition on the side of the cleaning lady and, therefore, seems to require much face work. Again, using multiple strategies associated with the high level of indirectness could mitigate the threat and redress the interlocutor's face more adequately.

The refusals of suggestions are when the participants generally used fewer strategies, resulting in shorter sequences. The nature of suggestions and the rejection of which could be considered less face-threatening and may explain the fewer strategies used, mainly when they are associated with a high level of indirectness, as is the case. It seems like the more frequent use of one aspect compensates for the lesser use of the other, not requiring both high indirectness and multiple mitigation strategies when the threat is not as significant.

Along with similarities, some differences were found between the native groups. Overall, in 7 of the 12 situations, the L1 BP group displayed a higher mean number of strategies used than the L1 English group. However, even though it is not a very significant number, the fact that the L1 BP group used more strategies when the refuser status was lower or higher may point to a trend. This difference in tendency between the groups indicates that other factors could be at play, such as the perception and acceptance of power differences and social hierarchy in the given cultures and should be further examined.

The L2 English learners generally combined various strategies in their refusals yet did not present significant differences in relation to the native groups. However, like the native groups, the L2 English learners used more strategies when refusing requests and the cleaning lady's offer in situation 7 and used fewer strategies when refusing suggestions.

## 5.2 Comparison of native speakers' politeness strategies and their politeness systems

The fourth research question in this study concerns how the politeness strategies in refusals differ between L1 BP and L1 English speakers and whether the findings indicate potential fundamental differences in their politeness systems.

Throughout section 4.1, the way native Brazilian Portuguese speakers and native English speakers refuse different requests, offers, invitations, and suggestions was analyzed and discussed. More similarities than differences have been found regarding how L1 BP speakers and L1 English speakers perform refusals. This finding seems to be a positive statement in favor of the L1 BP learners of English. However, some broad differences between the two groups have been observed, and they mainly have to do with the speakers' preferences for either positive or negative politeness. These differences will be further discussed and presented in this section.

Essentially, both native groups presented similar preferences for overall higher use of indirectness. Although there are some differences in its use, there do not seem to be considerable, systematic distinctions in the level of indirectness between the different situations and interlocutor statuses. When performing direct refusals, the direct strategies were mainly mitigated with the combination of at least one indirect strategy or adjunct to refusal in both groups. However, the L1 BP speakers primarily preferred refusing with negative ability, which seems to be less risky and, in a way, more redressive. In contrast, the L1 English speakers mainly favored a direct 'no,' which tends to be considered more 'direct' and less redressive. In general, both native groups were more direct when refusing friends. The L1 English speakers also preferred being more direct when they had more authoritative power over their interlocutors.

The L1 BP and the L1 English groups used a similar overall number of strategies in their refusals. Both groups seemed to use more strategies while refusing requests but fewer strategies when refusing suggestions. The use of more strategies in refusals of requests may be related to the stimuli type representing a higher FTA. However, even though there was not a striking difference in the actual mean values, there was still some difference in preference for more strategies related to the interlocutor status. In 7 of the 12 situations, the L1 BP speakers used more strategies than the L1 English group when refusing someone with unequal status,

indicating they were more verbose when there was power asymmetry between interlocutors. This difference in tendencies may point to differences in their politeness systems.

Longer sequences with the combination of various strategies, could in principle, stand as more redressive. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 143), it seems that when a speaker invests more effort in facework, he is perceived as striving more to satisfy the hearer's face wants. So, the L1 BP speakers' recurrent preference for more elaborate answers when talking to a different status interlocutor than equals may be perceived as more 'polite' towards those of a different social hierarchy, wanting to show deference and consideration towards them. This distinction in preference may point to cross-cultural differences between the groups, as Brazilians show a vertical-collectivistic orientation (Torres and Dessen 2009, 186), accepting more social status and power differences, and differing from the American sociocultural values of social equality and less power distance.

Next, both native groups displayed a significant preference for indirect strategies, which varied throughout the DCT situations; however, some were recurrent for both groups. Both groups combined strategies to preserve both the negative and positive face needs of their interlocutors at different rates. The results show that both native groups primarily prefer positive politeness strategies, present in all 12 situations. Nonetheless, the L1 BP speakers showed an overall higher preference for positive politeness strategies than the L1 English group. Excuse was both groups' chief indirect refusal strategy, followed by alternatives and then the less frequent strategy of wish; all these considered expressions of positive politeness.

Otherwise, the L1 English speakers favored more negative politeness strategies than the L1 BP speakers. Therefore, the Americans seemed more balanced in using positive-negative politeness strategies, showing more deference towards their interlocutor's negative face than the L1 BP group. The most common indirect strategies of a negative politeness character by both groups were regret and hedging. Regret was the primary negative politeness used by the natives, yet its use varied between the groups. The L1 BP group used regret, at very low rates, in a few situations the L1 English group did not, namely in S6 ('write little reminders') as in "I'm sorry, it doesn't work for me" (L1 BP 23 v.1); S9('piece of cake'), as in "I am sorry, but I don't like and don't feel well in ingesting so much sugar" (L1 BP 10 v.2); and S11 ('promotion with move to small town'), as in "…I'm sorry for the refusal, but it's not possible now" (L1 BP 3 v.2). When Americans and Brazilians used regret in the same situations, they presented similar rates in situations S12 ('stay late at night') and S4 ('boss's party'), while in all the remaining cases, the L1 English group used regret considerably more often than the L1 BP

group. Therefore, of the native groups, the Americans favored more the use of the negative politeness strategy of regret.

One interesting difference between the groups is that, besides generally using the strategy excuse more frequently than the L1 English speakers, the L1 BP speakers were occasionally more specific in the content of their justifications. For example, in the contexts of S8 ('more conversation in foreign language class'), S4 ('boss's party'), S11 ('promotion with move to small town'), and S12 ('stay late at night'), the L1 BP group provided more specific and varied reasons while justifying their refusals. However, it was when refusing their boss, in request, offer, and invitation that they mostly offered personal, specific excuses for their inability to comply, mainly concerning the family arena, as in "…I'd like to think more, as I also have to consider my family that lives here" (L1 BP 20 v.2, S11)[1]; the need to "…pick up my sister at school" (L1 BP 19 v.2)., or even the planned birth of a child, in "…I have C-section planned for this date" (L1 BP 18 v.1, S4). Sometimes, the excuse was related to feeling unwell or tired, as in "…my day was exhausting and I am beat…" (L1 BP 14 v.2, S12), or even having other plans, such as a trip, "…I will travel with my wife to the Caribbean…" (L1 BP 24 v.1, S4).

The L1 English speakers' responses were generally more unspecifi.c, as in "Sorry, but I have other things I need to do this evening" (L1 English 19, S12) or "Sorry, I have things I have to do at home tonight" (L1 English 24, S12). When the excuses were more personal, they were less varied, being mainly related to the family realm, and even so, tended to be comparatively less detailed than in L1 BP. Some examples regarding family or family plans can be seen in "Unfortunately I would have to move away from my friends and family, and I can't do that to them" (L1 English 30, S11), "… I already have family plans" (L1 English 27, S4), "…I've got family to get home to…" (L1 English 24, S12), "…we have another commitment for my family, that I cannot miss" (L1 English 20, S4), "I'm sorry I promised my wife I'd be home for dinner" (L1 English 6, S12), and "I'm sorry, but my wife has dinner waiting"(L1 English 11, S12). Another excuse was having 'other plans,' usually unspecific, as in "I'm sorry, but I already have plans" (L1 English 22, S4), and "…I have a prior engagement that I need to get to" (L1 English 7, S12).

There was also a higher tendency of blaming 'a third party' for their refusal in the case of situation 8 among Brazilians, as half of the excuses were related to the curriculum's

[1] Following the DCT number the examples have been extracted from, S stands for the situation they refer to. So S11 indicates 'Situation 11.' This coding will be used for examples in sections 4.2 and 4.3.

rigidness, such as in '…we have everything planned until the end of the term' (L1 BP 7 v.2, S8) and '…our class time is limited and does not allow for more conversation practice' (L1 BP 10 v.2, S8).

A preference here for more specificity in excuses seems to agree with previous monolingual BP refusal studies. Moreover, it seems to be related to the idea that more specific and private justifications may help save face (Affonso, 1991; Osborne 2010). Nonetheless, the results here differed from previous L1 BP studies' findings, in which instead of being verbose and providing more personalized justifications among familiar interlocutors, the Brazilian participants in this study chose to be more verbose and specific in situations with power asymmetry and more social distance, especially when speaking to their boss (Osborne 2010; Gripp 2015).

In six situations, both native groups showed a higher preference for intrinsically less redressive strategies, which may rather be experienced as an attack on the interlocutor's positive face instead. Although sometimes bald on record, the speakers combined these less redressive or 'depreciative' strategies with others that displayed more face concern in a paradoxical but complementary movement. This combination may be considered a way of balancing and satisfying both the speaker's and the hearer's face needs in those particular contexts. These strategies were used in S2 ('borrow class notes'), S4 ('boss's party'), S11 ('promotion with move'), all the cases involving suggestions (S6, S5, and S8), and only by the L1 BP speaker in S7 ('pay for broken vase').

The L1 English group seemed to be slightly less redressive in their refusals when using these criticism strategies, whereas the L1 BP speakers favored juxtaposing criticism with more facework. The main strategies used by the speakers in this category were negative opinion and criticism of the eliciting speech act, with the L1 BP tending to favor the former, whereas the L1 English speakers more often preferred the latter. Some examples of negative opinion can be seen in "I don't feel comfortable about leaving this city" (L1 BP 9 v.2, S11), "I'm not really comfortable with moving towns. I like it here." (L1 English 23, S11); and of criticism to the eliciting speech act, in "I don't need little notes on my desk to further clutter things up…"(L1 English 14, S6), "…I don't know very well if I believe in diets like this…" (L1 BP 29 v.1, S5).

In the opposite direction, the L1 BP speakers used more 'diminish value of requested object,' and 'diminish value of broken object,' such as in "it's ok, it was only an old vase" (L1 BP 24 v.2) than the L1 English speakers, strategies that imply self-humiliation and thus threaten the speaker's positive face. Similar results were found in monolingual refusal studies

considering Argentinians and Venezuelans, who also favored threatening their own face wants rather than their interlocutors' to mitigate the FTA. These nations share similar cultural values with the Brazilians, showing a higher value for group harmony and camaraderie (García 1999; 2007).

The native groups often used adjuncts to refusals, and overall, there were not considerable, systematic differences between their frequencies. Both the L1 BP and L1 English speakers mainly used adjuncts that express positive politeness, such as gratitude/appreciation and positive opinion, and the adjuncts of time frame limitation and downgraders. Examples of these adjuncts have been provided throughout section 4.1. The Brazilians usually favored expressions of gratitude and downgraders, while the Americans preferred expressions of positive opinion and time frame limitation. Moreover, the L1 English speakers presented more cases of the negative politeness strategy of pause fillers. Thus, in broad lines, the L1 BP speakers showed a higher preference for positive politeness adjuncts, while the L1 English group again displayed a more balanced use of positive-negative politeness by using more negative politeness strategies than the L1 BP group.

To illustrate some of the distinct traits and tendencies within each native group, we can, for instance, look at situation 2. With a particular imposition from the classmate's request, this was the situation where the Americans used the fewest adjuncts. Although refusing more indirectly, the speakers combined generally less mitigation through adjuncts with less redressive facework strategies, such as guilt trip, seen in "…Maybe if you fail this exam you'd learn something for once" (L1 English 15) or "…You can't keep skipping and relying on others to pick up your slack." (L1 English 21), and criticism to the interlocutor, seen in "…You need to be more responsible and take initiative in your life" (L1 English 30). This blend may suggest less concern for their interlocutor's positive and negative face wants while seeking to preserve more their own negative face.

Nevertheless, there seemed to be a circumstantial need for the Brazilians to attend more to the other's face needs in this exact scenario. They showed more concern for the classmate's face through fewer criticism strategies than the L1 English group but threatened their own positive face by using more the strategy 'diminish value of requested object,' such as in "My notes are very messy, and you won't understand anything" (L1 BP 36, v.1), and more downgraders than the Americans, as in "*Unfortunately*, I will need them to study…" (L1 BP 20, v.1) or "…*unfortunately* I forgot my notebook with all my notes…" (L1 BP 27, v.1). The findings agree with the American individualistic orientation that emphasizes freedom and

concern for the self over the other, whereas the highlighted desire for cooperation, sense of camaraderie between ingroup members, and harmony over self-interest, found for the Brazilians point to a typical collectivistic orientation (Triandis 1995, 74; Pearson and Stephan 1998, 78).

Overall, there was a solidarity-oriented strategy preference among L1 BP speakers, with more positive politeness and relatively lesser use of negative politeness, which is in line with the social concept of collectivism. Furthermore, like the Chinese (Chang 2009), who have a collectivist orientation, Brazilians also tended to use excuses with more specificity than the Americans. More personal, specific excuses would allow the hearer to better understand the reason for the refusal while revealing consideration from the speaker, typical of positive politeness. Also, a higher preference for self-humiliation and threat to the speaker's own positive face than found in the L1 English group further suggest that Brazilians, like other Latin Americans, belong to a positive politeness culture, where respect and solidarity are more fundamental than the individual needs alone, with a stronger emphasis on group harmony over self-interest and the valuing of good social relationships (Triandis 1995; García 1997; Pearson and Stephan 1998; Félix-Brasdefer 2003; Carlos et al. 2007; García 2007; Triandis 2015).

On the other hand, the L1 English group presented more negative politeness than the L1 BP group, both in refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals. The results point towards conformity with cultures leaning towards individualism, as is the case of the United States, emphasizing the values of autonomy and freedom, and thus, the aspect of face that regards the speaker's independence. However, with presenting more negative politeness than Brazilians, the L1 English group seemed to care for their interlocutors' positive and negative face needs in a more balanced way. Furthermore, when using the positive politeness strategy of excuse, the Americans gave more straightforward, general reasons, which aligns with the concepts of accuracy and fairness of the American culture (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Triandis 1995; Chen 1996; Pearson and Stephan 1998; Félix-Brasdefer 2008; Chang 2009; Allami and Naeimi 2011; Moaveni 2014; Triandis 2015).

When Americans are compared, for example, to the Japanese people and Germans, and their cultures, as in the studies by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) and Teufel (1996), respectively, the Americans seem to better conform to a positive politeness culture. Nonetheless, the findings are different when the American culture is compared with the Brazilian, where positive politeness trends are predominant. Unlike the results found in these other studies, the Americans here seem to be more straightforward and venturing more in

confrontation when facing unfair requests or unwelcome suggestions. Accordingly, the L1 English group must then be readjusted in the comparative scale.

Everything considered, the results point to general similarities in the way refusals are expressed in L1 BP and L1 English. However, some broad differences were found concerning the preferences for positive versus negative politeness by the native groups while performing refusals. Whereas the Brazilians seemed to display a higher collectivistic orientation and the prevailing preference for positive politeness, the Americans demonstrated more individualistic traits, tending towards the negative end of the spectrum of politeness.

## 5.3 Refusals in the interlanguage of Brazilian learners of L2 English

In the present section, I will discuss the results found for the L2 English learners presented in section 4.1 while looking for possible pragmatic transfer of politeness strategies in their interlanguage refusals. If an indication of transfer is suggested, it will be further described and classified. In that case, I additionally aim to expound on whether transfer is more prominent in the interlanguage of novice learners but less present in the interlanguage of advanced learners.

As a rule, both learner groups presented many similarities with the patterns found for the L1 English group, which seems to be a positive sign of the acquisition and development of pragmatic competence in the target language. Nonetheless, the learner groups also patterned with some of the tendencies found for the L1 BP group. In acquiring a second language, the learners' output interlanguage may often be influenced by learner-internal mechanisms. Prior language knowledge is likely to be a relevant source of influence on the acquisition of the L2, which is termed as transfer. Similarities found in the results by the L1 BP and L2 English groups may suggest transfer of, at least, some of these similar pragmatic features in both proficiency level learners' interlanguage, at different degrees.

Broadly, the findings suggest the L2 English group showed an overall preference for higher indirectness levels, which agrees with the native groups' results. The advanced learners favored a higher level of indirectness than the intermediate learners in 8 of the 12 situations. However, the L2 English intermediate group showed itself to be slightly more direct than the L1 English speakers. It is relevant to state that although there are some differences in the use of indirectness by the learners, again, there do not seem to be considerable, systematic distinctions in the level of indirectness between the different situations and interlocutor statuses.

It is while refusing suggestions that the L2 English learners show more similarities towards the native groups and also between themselves concerning the high preference for

indirectness. Interestingly, however, the way the intermediate learners use indirectness related to the refuser status in this stimuli type differs from all other groups. They inverted the typical pattern found for the other groups by using the most indirectness when the refuser status was equal or higher but the least indirectness when the refuser status was lower. In contrast, the other groups favored using the most indirectness when the refuser status was lower and the least indirectness when refuser status was equal.

The different proficiency learners in the L2 English group mostly used a similar number of refusal strategies and adjuncts in their refusals. There are some differences going in either direction, but they are not very systematic in correlation with the various situation types and refuser statuses. Furthermore, the learners' number of strategies and frequency of adjuncts compared to the native groups were generally very similar, with some differences in values, but again, not very significant and unsystematic.

Both learner groups used the most adjuncts when refusing an offer. The intermediate learners presented the most adjuncts when refusing the friend's offer in S9 ('piece of cake'). In contrast, the advanced learners used the highest rate when refusing the boss's offer in S11 ('promotion with move to a small town'), similar to the L1 English group. The lowest frequency of adjuncts for the intermediate learners was found when refusing the cleaning lady's offer in S7 ('pay for broken vase'), which was the situation with the fewest adjuncts for the L1 BP group. The advanced learners, in contrast, used the fewest adjuncts while mitigating their refusal of the classmate's request in S2 ('borrow class notes'), again like the L1 English group. The cases in which the advanced learners use the least and the most adjuncts coincide with those by the L1 English group, suggesting the advanced learners seem to be more aware of the sociopragmatic tendencies of adjunct use in L1 English or, at least, are more felicitous in this aspect.

Similar to findings for L1 BP and L1 English groups, some broad differences between the two learner groups have been observed, mainly regarding the learners' preferences for positive versus negative politeness when it comes to the use of refusal strategies and adjuncts. Sometimes, similarities found in the L1 BP group output and the learners' interlanguage seemed to suggest negative transfer, in which features of the L1 may contribute to errors in the use of the L2. Thus, differences between L1 and the target language may lead to limitations in learning the L2 and perceptible mistakes or pragmatic failures. In practice, these differences may lead to the general avoidance, underuse, or overuse of particular structures in the recipient language,

resulting in pragmatic knowledge and use divergent from the L2 target form (Thomas, 1983; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993; Ellis, 2008; Jarvis and Pavlenko 2008; Ortega 2009).

When refusing directly, the L2 English group also chose to mainly mitigate their refusals with indirect strategies or adjuncts to refusals. Both intermediate and advanced learners favored using negative ability above all, as in "Thank you to invite me, but *I can't go.*" (L2 English intermediate 2 v.2, S10) or "…I *won't be able to* give you the pay raise you want…" (L2 English advanced 16 v.1, S12), which was their leading direct refusal choice in eight situations. This main option is also corresponding to the L1 BP group's preferred direct refusal strategy. A direct 'no' came as a second option, representing the favored direct strategy in four situations, with its highest frequency for both groups in refusing a friend's offer in S9 ('piece of cake'). Performatives were scarce and only used by the advanced learners, who used them in the same situations and with comparable frequencies as the L1 English speakers.

While using indirect refusal strategies, like the natives, the L2 English group also tended to combine strategies to preserve their interlocutor's negative and positive face wants at different rates. Similarly to the natives, the learners showed a higher overall preference for positive politeness strategies, using them often in 10 of the 12 situations. Both the intermediate and the advanced learners presented overall similar rates of positive politeness strategies; however, the advanced group showed more variation in the strategy types, likely due to their higher L2 proficiency and more extensive linguistic repertoire. Compared to the native groups, the intermediate students used positive politeness strategies slightly more like the L1 BP group than the advanced learners regarding strategy types and frequencies.

The most recurrent positive politeness strategy for both learner groups was excuse, present in all 12 situations. In fact, the strategy excuse was used by the intermediate learners with the highest frequency of all groups but still more comparable to the L1 BP group. One could look at different possibilities to try and explain this phenomenon. One possible explanation for this could be an overall narrower range of indirect refusal strategy types found for the intermediate group, likely due to a lower L2 proficiency. This likely results in less variation and more frequent use of the same known strategies, sometimes leading to 'overuse.' Another possible explanation could be the transfer of this feature from L1 BP, in which was also very frequent. However, excuses were also the most common positive politeness strategy in L1 English, so its frequent use by the intermediate learners could also be explained as an attempt to sound target-like, yet 'overdone,' which would be an expected developmental stage as they are still learning about the target language norms and adapting to it.

The L2 English learners were rather specific in some of their excuses, more than the English native speakers. This preference for elaborate, more personal reasons is seemingly linked to the notion that more detailed justifications may avoid face loss, as discussed in previous L1 BP studies (Affonso, 1991; Osborne 2010; Gripp 2015). However, the advanced learners seemed to be more specific and verbose in their excuses than intermediate learners, possibly because of their higher proficiency in the L2.

Like the L1 BP group, the learners tended to be more specific and personalized in their excuses while refusing S8 ('more conversation in foreign language class'), S4 ('boss's party'), S11 ('promotion with move to small town') and S12 ('stay late at night'), which were situations where all groups overall refused with a high rate of excuses. The learners also gave more specific justifications when refusing their boss, mainly related to the family realm, such as "…I think I'll decline, my entire family lives here" (L2 English advanced 28 v.1, S11) and "…I have my family and friends here" (L2 English advanced 26 v.1, S11); family plans, such as in "…I will dinner of my husband" (L2 English intermediate 27 v.1, S12), "…next Sunday is my mother party…" (L2 English intermediate 20 v.2, S4), "…My daughter has a performance in school and I can't miss it…" (L2 English advanced 24, v.1, S12); and sickness in the family or having to take care of a family member, seen in " …My wife has been a little ill…" (L2 English advanced 25 v.2, S4), "…my wife is in the hospital…" (L2 English advanced 17 v.2, S4), and "…My wife's mother is a bit old, and there is nobody else that could take of her…" (L2 English advanced 21 v.1, S11). It may also concern other plans, like attending English classes, seen in "…I'll be late for my English class at 7 p.m.…" (L2 English advanced 21 v.1, S12). Sometimes, the excuse was related to unwellness or feeling ill, "…I am very tired and my headache is killing me…" (L2 English advanced 26 v.1, S12). Similar to the L1 BP group, there was a common tendency among learners in situation 8 to attribute the refusal to the curriculum's lack of flexibility seen in "…I have to follow the syllabus" (L2 English advanced 13 v.1) or "…Unfortunately, I am required to follow a curriculum…" (L2 English advanced 15 v.1).

Therefore, the content of the L2 English excuses in these situations may have been influenced by the usual preference for more specificity found in L1 BP excuses, bringing the interlocutor closer to the speaker, typical of positive politeness. This way, the results suggest L1 sociopragmatic transfer and align with Alonso's (1995) findings regarding refusals by Brazilian L2 English learners. Alonso registered that sometimes the learners preferred the same refusal strategies used by L1 BP speakers, but that were not present in L1 English. These

strategies included justifying a refusal with physical illness or discomfort or placing the refusal in someone else's hands.

When considering negative politeness in the L2 English group, the intermediate learners generally favored it more than the advanced learners and were more target-like. On their turn, the advanced learners tended to use negative politeness strategies less frequently and more like the L1 BP group. The learner groups often used the negative politeness strategies of regret and hedgings, yet the latter less frequently. The intermediate group used both regret and hedgings with a higher frequency than the advanced learners.

Regret was the most common negative politeness strategy for the L2 English group, used in nine situations. The advanced learners used more regret than the L1 groups, and this could be because of the learners' perception that regret is a frequent strategy in the target language, which according to the findings in this study, is a rightful perception. However, in the endeavor to sound more like the English native speakers, yet still adapting to the target language pragmatic norms, the learners ended up overusing this particular feature, leading to pragmalinguistic failure. Situation 2 is an instance of a scenario in which advanced learners seemingly overused regret, as in "I'm sorry, but I'll need them to study for the test" (L2 English advanced 1 v.2). They also used regret in S5, as in "Sorry, but I don't like any diet" (L2 English intermediate 15 v.2); S9, in "I'm sorry, I just feel so full" (L2 English advanced 16 v.1); and S11, as in "…but I can't move now. I'm sorry" (L2 English intermediate 35 v.1), where the L1 English speakers used no cases of regret. The intermediate learners, on their turn, used more regret than the L1 BP group but less than the English native speakers in the six common situations where they used the strategy, which may suggest the acquisition of this strategy in the target language rules is still in progress.

Similar to the native groups, the L2 English group presented cases of less redressive strategies that attacked their interlocutor's positive face. The intermediate learners used these strategies in six cases, a comparable number of situations to the L1 English group, but with an overall lower frequency. The advanced learners used them in seven situations, in the same cases as the L1 BP group, but with lower rates than the native groups. Both learner groups presented more cases of these criticism strategies when refusing suggestions and tended to use them with less mitigation when the refuser status was equal. We see cases of these criticism strategies in situation 2, such as in "Oh, no! Ask another goofy boy" (L2 English intermediate 16 v.2) and "No, you are a bad student, and this is not my problem. Sorry dude." (L2 English advanced 5 v.2); in situation 4, as in "I don't like to mix my personal and professional lives" (L2 English

advanced 7 v.2); in situation 5, in “I am allergic to diets you idiot” (L2 English advanced 17 v.2); in situation 6, “Thank you, but I’ll have my own organization method” (L2 English advanced 24 v.2); in situation 8, in “I am the teacher, not you” (L2 English advanced 18 v.1) and “This is my way for teach. Practice by yourself” (L2 English intermediate 23, v.1); and in situation 11, in “Oh, no, I don’t want to go” (L2 English intermediate 27 v.1). Oftentimes, the advanced group seemed to be slightly more offensive in their refusals than the intermediate learners, comparatively presenting more cases of these strategies either bald on record or associated with other less redressive strategies. In this way, the advanced group was more similar to the L1 English speakers, while the intermediate learners, more like the L1 BP group.

The most common strategy among the learners when attacking their interlocutor’s positive face was negative opinion, as with the L1 BP group. The advanced learners also frequently used criticism to the eliciting speech act, as the L1 English group. Now, particularly considering S7 (‘pay for broken vase’), the L2 English group, in like manner to the L1 BP group, favored the use of the less redressive strategy of guilt trip, such as in “ …Although the vase was really important to me…” (L2 English advanced 6 v.1), and sometimes, the adjunct of admonition towards the cleaning lady, seen in “…Please just be more careful in the future” (L2 English advanced 16 v.1), which were not found for the L1 English group. This common preference suggests a possible transfer of these less redressive strategies, constituting a pragmalinguistic failure. It may also imply a sociopragmatic ‘inadequacy,’ more in line with the Brazilian ethos regarding personal and power relations with domestic workers, but seemingly different to the American culture in this aspect.

The L2 English group also often used adjuncts to refusals. Overall, the most frequent adjuncts used by both groups were downgraders, used in all 12 situations by the advanced learners, and in eight by the intermediate learners. Furthermore, the learners showed a high preference for the positive politeness strategies of gratitude/appreciation and positive opinion. The advanced learners used positive opinion in various situations, with frequencies more similar to those found for L1 English. The intermediate learners used it much less often and more like the L1 BP group. The adjunct of time frame limitation was likewise common among the two learner groups, who pattern more like the L1 BP speakers in their use rate. Furthermore, both groups used the negative politeness strategy of pause fillers, with the advanced learners being more target-like regarding the frequency and context of use. In contrast, pause fillers were infrequent among the intermediate learners, who used this adjunct more like the L1 BP speakers.

Thus, both learner groups used strategies similar to the L1 BP group at the strategy level, such as negative ability in direct refusals, specific excuses, and the adjunct of time frame limitation. They also displayed a higher preference for the less redressive strategy of negative opinion above any other. In the advanced group, transfer of lesser use of negative politeness in refusal strategies is evidenced, being more like the L1 BP group than target-like. Furthermore, the advanced learners tend to use more specific, private excuses, as the L1 BP speakers. On the other hand, the intermediate learners tended to use positive politeness more typically like in BP, both concerning strategy types and their frequencies, and tend to be similar to the L1 BP group in their choices of adjunct types and frequencies. Additionally, they use fewer less-redressive strategies than the L1 English speakers, as does the L1 BP group. Although to a lesser rate than the advanced students, the intermediate learners were also more specific in their excuses, as the Brazilians.

These pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic choices by the L2 English group that differ from L1 English preferences may be due to various possible reasons. However, L1 negative transfer is likely at play in both learner groups. In this way, more than the proficiency level in the target language, the learners' cultural background may be considered more decisive and influential in performing refusal speech acts, as is the case of the present study (Asmali 2013, 113).

In different circumstances, however, the similarities found between the L1 BP and the L2 English groups indicate successful outcomes instead of mistakes in the learners' interlanguage, indicating possible positive transfer (Ortega 2009). The preference for similar patterns in both their native and target language may make it easier for the learners, positively impacting the rate of achieving L2 pragmatic competence. In the present study, this seems to be the case of similar patterns between L1−L2, such as the overall preference for positive politeness and the relatively high preference for the positive politeness strategy of excuse and the negative politeness strategy of regret by both native groups. These patterns were also favored in the learners' interlanguage.

Overall, the L2 English group presents a higher preference for positive politeness, as displayed by both native groups, and shows many instances of target-like pragmatic choices in their refusals. However, the learners share some common preferences with the L1 BP group, suggesting L1 negative transfer in both proficiency levels, resulting in mistakenly underusing or overusing such structures in the learners' interlanguage. Comparatively, however, the results evidence more visible transfer among the intermediate learners. In a way, more transfer could

be expected in less proficient learners, as they are still going through various developmental stages in acquiring their L2, relying more heavily on their native language knowledge and, therefore, transferring more pragmatic features from it.

However, it may be difficult to quantify the L1 interference of the negative kind precisely in this study, as the transfer suggested in L2 English seems to be contemplating different pragmatic features, occasionally at different degrees. It is also important to remember that transfer may be considered both a conscious and a subconscious process, and sometimes, the learners may choose to remain loyal to their L1 cultural patterns purposefully. Thus, their accommodation to the target norms is about ability and choice (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Ellis 2008). Moreover, sometimes differences in the learners' outcomes that are not target-like may be due to other reasons. For example, little self-confidence in the foreign language or a limited L2 linguistic repertoire may affect the learners' production in the L2. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge or familiarity with the sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic rules in the target language may lead to less authenticity in the L2 (Alonso 1995; Chang 2009). Still, the fact that L1 negative transfer is suggested in the speech act of refusal by Brazilian L2 English learners highlights the need for a broader exposition to contextual L2 English learning and a more pragmatic-oriented foreign/second language teaching in Brazil.

# 6 Conclusion

The present investigation regarded the way Brazilian learners of L2 English performed the speech act of refusal at two different proficiency levels, while it also looked at the refusals performed by L1 BP and L1 English speakers. Refusals have a very complex nature, and as an FTA, it demands tactful negotiation from the participants involved. Accordingly, performing speech acts in a second language is challenging, requiring adequate knowledge and familiarity with the different sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic norms in the target language. (Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz, 1990).

The research questions set to lead this investigation were five, and the first three asked how L1 BP speakers, L1 English speakers, and Brazilian L2 English speakers, respectively, refused the requests, offers, suggestions, and invitations in the DCT used in the study. The results presented for the three initial questions were crucial as they would prepare the ground for the other research questions. The fourth question concerned a comparison of how Brazilians and Americans perform their refusals, looking for fundamental differences in their politeness

systems. The final question was related to L2 English refusals by the Brazilians, considering the potentiality of L1 pragmatic transfer in their interlanguage. If transfer were suggested, I would investigate whether it was more visible in the performance of novice learners than in the performance of advanced learners

Overall, the findings pointed to more similarities than differences in how all the groups performed refusals, which is good news for Brazilian learners of English. The native groups' performance, as a rule, tended to show common similar tendencies concerning their choices for indirectness levels, number of strategies, and number of adjuncts used in their refusals. Some differences in either direction were observed, yet they were rather unsystematic. However, a difference in how Brazilians favored slightly longer sequences than the Americans when refusing some situations with unequal status interlocutors could point to differences in redress and facework in contexts of power difference or social hierarchy and should be further investigated.

A more apparent distinction between L1 English and L1 BP speakers was found in the use of specific refusal strategies and adjuncts and concerned their preference for positive versus negative politeness. Both native groups favored the use of positive politeness strategies primarily, yet the Brazilians used these more, which is typical of societies with collectivist tendencies, like the Brazilian one. In contrast, the Americans showed a more balanced concern for their interlocutor's positive and negative faces, demonstrating a higher preference for negative politeness strategies than the Brazilians. This finding aligns with the American sociocultural values tending towards freedom and self-interest, typical of negative politeness and commonly found in individualistic-oriented societies.

Now, concerning the Brazilian L2 English learners, the results point to general similarities with both native groups. However, the learner groups shared some common tendencies with the L1 BP group, which made them less target-like in some aspects, resulting in underuse or overuse of some pragmatic features in their interlanguage. Thus, L1 negative transfer was suggested at both proficiency levels but with more visible transfer among the intermediate learners. The intermediate learners were more similar with the L1 BP group in their use and frequency of positive politeness strategies, both in refusal strategies and adjuncts, including fewer criticism strategies and high use of specific excuses. The finding of more negative transfer among novice learners agrees with previous investigations on various L2 speech acts (Taylor 1975; Maeshiba et al. 1996; Alonso 2002; Wannaruk 2008; Bu 2012; Lee 2013; Han and Burgucu-Tazegül 2016). Thus, the findings suggest the need for more

quantitative and qualitative exposure of the learners to authentic, contextualized use of the L2 in various situations for better understanding and accommodation to the L2 pragmatic norms.

However, this investigation presented some shortcomings, such as the uneven distribution of participants in the two L2 proficiency levels due to the way data was collected and time constraints. As a result, more intermediate learners would be needed for a more comprehensive understanding of the refusals by this L2 group. Moreover, a general larger population for all groups would allow for statistical significance tests to be run.

Further contrastive studies are vital to advance knowledge about pragmatic transfer in refusals, and particularly about Brazilian learners of L2 English at different proficiency levels. It would also enrich the field to look at the studied groups' preferred order of semantic formulas and adjuncts to check for differences in the typical patterns. Furthermore, future studies could consider how speakers attempt negotiation in their refusals or how different emotions such as frustration, disdain, or empathy could be linguistically expressed in cross-cultural refusals.

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# 8 Appendix A: English version of the Discourse Completion Task

## Discourse Completion Task

Your answer is anonymous – do **not** write your name on this task.

Please read the following 12 situations. After each situation you will be asked to write a response in the blank after "you". Respond as you would in actual conversation.

1. You are the owner of a bookstore. One of the best workers asks to speak to you in private.

   *Worker:* As you know, I've been here just a little over a year now, and I know you've been pleased with my work. I really enjoy working here, but to be quite honest, I really need an increase in pay.

   **You:**

   Worker: Then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

2. You are a junior in college. You attend classes regularly and take good notes. Your classmate often misses classes and asks you for the lecture notes.

   *Classmate:* Oh man! We have an exam tomorrow, but I don't have the notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes again?

   **You:**

   Classmate: O.K., then I guess I'll have to ask somebody else.

3. You are the president of the printing company. A salesman from a printing machine company invites you to one of the most expensive restaurants in New York.

   *Salesman:* We have met several times to discuss your purchase of my company's products. I was wondering if you would like to be my guest at Le Bernardin (restaurant) in order to firm up a contract.

   **You:**

   *Salesman*: Perhaps another time.

4. **You are a top executive at a very large accounting firm. One day the boss calls you into his office.**

   **Boss: Next Sunday, my wife and I are having a little party. I know it's short notice, but I am hoping all my top executives will be there with their spouses. What do you say?**

   **You:**

   *Boss:* That's too bad. I was hoping everyone would be there.

5. **You're at a friend's house watching TV He/she offers you a snack.**

   **You: Thanks, but no thanks. I've been eating like a pig and I feel just terrible. My clothes don't even fit me.**

   **Friend: Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?**

   **You:**

   *Friend:* You should try it anyway.

6. **You're at your desk trying to find a report that your boss just asked for. While you're searching through the mess on your desk, your boss walks over.**

   **Boss: You know, maybe you should try to organize yourself better. I always write myself little notes to remind me of things. Perhaps you should give it a try!**

   **You:**

   *Boss:* Well, it's an idea anyway.

7. You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you.

   *Cleaning lady:* Oh, I'm really sorry! I had an awful accident. While I was cleaning I bumped into the table and your china vase fell and broke. I feel just terrible about it. I'll pay for it.

   *You:* (Knowing that the cleaning lady is supporting three children.)

   **You:**

   *Cleaning lady:* No, I'd feel better if I paid for it.

8. You're a language teacher at a university. It is just about the middle of the term now and one of your students asks to speak to you.

   *Student:* Ah, excuse me, some of the students were talking after class recently and we kind of feel that the class would be better if you could give us more practice in conversation and less on grammar.

   **You:**

   *Student:* O.K., it was only a suggestion.

9. You are at a friend's house for lunch.

   *Friend:* How about another piece of cake?

   **You:**

   *Friend:* Come on, just a little piece?

   **You:**

10. A friend invites you to dinner, but you really can't stand this friend's husband/wife.

    *Friend:* How about coming over for dinner Sunday night? We're having a small dinner party.

    **You:**

    *Friend:* O.K., maybe another time.

11. You've been working in an advertising agency now for some time. The boss offers you a raise and promotion, but it involves moving. You don't want to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office.

    *Boss:* I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new offices in Hicktown. It's a great town – only three hours from here by plane. And, a nice raise comes with the position.

    **You:**

    *Boss:* Well, maybe you should give it some more thought before turning it down.

12. You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave work.

    *Boss:* If you don't mind, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two tonight so that we can finish up with this work.

    **You:**

    *Boss:* That's too bad. I was hoping you could stay.

**Considering this task:**

1. What did you take into consideration when choosing the answers to the situations above?

2. If you have any other comments on anything in the task, please write them here.

Thank you very much for your participation! ☺

# 9 Appendix B: Classification of the Discourse Completion Task (DCT).

**Stimulus according to Status of Refuser**

| Stimulus type | Refuser Status (relative to interlocutor) | DCT item | Situation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Request | Lower | #12 | Stay late at night |
| | Equal | #2 | Borrow class notes |
| | Higher | #1 | Request raise |
| Invitation | Lower | #4 | Boss's party |
| | Equal | #10 | Dinner at friend's house |
| | Higher | #3 | Fancy restaurant (bribe) |
| Offer | Lower | #11 | Promotion with move to small town |
| | Equal | #9 | Piece of cake |
| | Higher | #7 | Pay for broken vase |
| Suggestion | Lower | #6 | Write little reminders |
| | Equal | #5 | Try a new diet |
| | Higher | #8 | More conversation in foreign language class |

From: Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 72).

# 10 Appendix C: English-BP version of the Discourse Completion Task

## Discourse Completion Task

**Instruções**
*Sua resposta é anônima – **não** escreva seu nome nesta atividade.*
Por favor, leia as 12 situações a seguir. Para cada situação, você deverá escrever uma resposta no espaço em branco após "***Você***" / "***You***". Imagine que você estivesse nessas situações e responda como faria em uma conversa real. Escreva sua resposta em inglês nas situações 1 a 6, e em português nas situações 7 a 12.

**1.** You are the owner of a bookstore. One of the best workers asks to speak to you in private.
*Worker:* As you know, I've been here just a little over a year now, and I know you've been pleased with my work. I really enjoy working here, but to be quite honest, I really need an increase in pay.

***You****:*

*Worker:* Then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

**2.** You are a junior in college. You attend classes regularly and take good notes. Your classmate often misses classes and asks you for the lecture notes.

*Classmate:* Oh God! We have an exam tomorrow, but I don't have the notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes again?

***You****:*

*Classmate:* O.K., then I guess I'll have to ask somebody else.

**3.** You are the president of the printing company. A salesman from a printing machine company invites you to one of the most expensive restaurants in New York.
*Salesman:* We have met several times to discuss your purchase of my company's products. I was wondering if you would like to be my guest at *Le Bernardin* (restaurant) in order to firm up a contract.

***You****:*

*Salesman:* Perhaps another time.

**4.** You are a top executive at a very large accounting firm. One day the boss calls you into his office. *Boss:* Next Sunday, my wife and I are having a little party. I know it's short notice, but I am hoping all my top executives will be there with their spouses. What do you say?

***You****:*

*Boss:* That's too bad. I was hoping everyone would be there.

**5.** You're at a friend's house watching TV He/she offers you a snack.
*You:* Thanks, but no thanks. I've been eating like a pig and I feel just terrible. My clothes don't even fit me.
*Friend*: Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?

***You**:*

*Friend:* You should try it anyway.

**6.** You're at your desk trying to find a report that your boss just asked for. While you're searching through the mess on your desk, your boss walks over.
*Boss:* You know, maybe you should try to organize yourself better. I always write myself little notes to remind me of things. Perhaps you should give it a try!

***You**:*

*Boss:* Well, it's an idea anyway.

**7.** Você chega em casa e percebe que sua faxineira está extremamente chateada. Ela corre até você.
*Faxineira:* Ai, não! Me perdoe! Aconteceu um acidente terrível. Enquanto eu estava limpando, eu esbarrei na mesa e seu vaso de porcelana caiu e quebrou. Eu me sinto péssima. Eu vou pagar por isso.

*Você:* (sabendo que a sua faxineira tem três filhos para criar)
***Você**:*

*Faxineira:* Não, eu me sentiria melhor se eu pagasse por isso.

**8.**Você é um(a) professor(a) de línguas em uma universidade. Agora é por volta do meio do semestre e um de seus alunos pede para falar com você.
*Aluno:* Ah, com licença. Recentemente, alguns dos alunos estavam conservando depois da aula e nós sentimos que a aula seria melhor se o senhor(a) pudesse nos dar mais prática em conversação e menos gramática.

***Você**:*

*Aluno:* Tudo bem, era apenas uma sugestão.

**9.** Você está na casa de um amigo para o almoço.
*Amigo:* Que tal mais um pedaço de bolo?

***Você**:*

*Amigo:* Fala sério! Só um pedacinho?

***Você**:*

**10.** Um(a) amigo(a) convida você para jantar, porém você realmente não suporta a mulher/ o marido deste(a) amigo(a).
*Amigo(a):* Que tal jantar conosco domingo à noite? Faremos um pequeno jantar.

***Você:***

*Amigo(a):* O.k., quem sabe uma outra vez.

**11.** Você tem trabalhado em uma agência de publicidade já há algum tempo. Seu chefe oferece-lhe um aumento e promoção, mas isto significa ter de ser transferido(a). Você não quer ir. Hoje o seu chefe chama você em seu escritório.
*Chefe:* Eu gostaria de lhe oferecer uma posição executiva em nossos novos escritórios em Hicktown. É uma grande cidade – apenas a 3 horas daqui de avião. E um bom aumento vem com a posição.

***Você:***

*Chefe:* Bem, talvez você devesse pensar um pouco mais sobre isso antes de recusar a oferta.

**12.** Você está no escritório em uma reunião com seu chefe. Está chegando ao fim do expediente e você quer ir embora.
*Chefe:* Se você não se importa, eu gostaria que você permanecesse uma ou duas horas extras esta noite para que consigamos finalizar esse trabalho.

***Você:***

*Chefe:* Que pena. Esperava que você pudesse ficar.

**Considerando esta atividade:**

1. O que você levou em consideração ao escolher as respostas para as situações acima?

2. Se você tem algum comentário que gostaria de fazer a respeito da atividade, por favor escreva aqui:

Muito obrigada por sua participação! ☺

# 11 Appendix D: BP-English version of the Discourse Completion Task

## Discourse Completion Task

**Instruções**
*Sua resposta é anônima – **não** escreva seu nome nesta atividade.*
Por favor, leia as 12 situações a seguir. Para cada situação, você deverá escrever uma resposta no espaço em branco após "***Você***" / "***You***". Imagine que você estivesse nessas situações e responda como faria em uma conversa real. Escreva sua resposta em português nas situações 1 a 6, e em inglês nas situações 7 a 12.

**1.** Você é o dono de uma livraria. Um de seus melhores funcionários pede para conversar com você em privado.
*Funcionário:* Como o(a) sr(a). sabe, eu estou aqui há pouco mais de um ano, e sei que tem se agradado do meu trabalho. Eu realmente aprecio trabalhar aqui, porém, para ser sincero, eu preciso muito de um aumento de salário.

***Você:***

*Funcionário:* Então creio que deverei procurar um novo trabalho.

**2.** Você está no terceiro ano da faculdade. Você costuma frequentar às aulas e fazer boas anotações. Seu colega de classe frequentemente falta às aulas e pede suas anotações das aulas e palestras.
*Colega de classe:* Nossa! Nós temos um exame amanhã, mas eu não tenho as anotações da semana passada. Desculpa por perguntar isso, mas você poderia me emprestar suas anotações de novo?

***Você:***

*Colega de casse:* Tudo bem, então acho que vou ter que pedir para outra pessoa.

**3.** Você é o presidente de uma empresa gráfica. Um vendedor de uma companhia de impressoras convida você para um dos mais caros restaurantes em Nova Iorque.
*Vendedor:* Nós nos encontramos várias vezes para discutir a sua compra dos produtos da minha companhia. Estava pensando se você gostaria de ser meu convidado no *Le Bernardin* (luxuoso restaurante) para firmarmos um contrato.

***Você:***

*Vendedor:* Talvez em uma outra ocasião.

**4.** Você tem o cargo executivo mais elevado em uma grande empresa de contabilidade. Um dia o seu chefe pede para que você compareça ao seu escritório.
*Chefe:* No próximo domingo, minha esposa e eu daremos uma pequena festa. Sei que é meio de última hora, mas eu espero que todos os meus principais executivos estejam lá com seus/suas esposos(as). O que você diz?
***Você:***

*Chefe:* É uma pena. Estava esperando que todos estivessem lá.

**5.** Você está na casa de um amigo assistindo TV. Ele(a) oferece a você um petisco.
Você: Obrigado(a), mas não posso. Tenho comido com exagero e estou me sentindo horrível agora. Minhas roupas nem me servem mais.

*Amigo:* Ei, por que você não tenta fazer aquela nova dieta que tanto tenho falado?

***Você:***

*Amigo:* Você deveria tentar mesmo assim.

**6.** Você está na sua mesa tentando encontrar o relatório que o seu chefe acabou de pedir. Enquanto você está procurando no meio da bagunça em sua mesa, seu chefe se aproxima.
*Chefe:* Sabe, talvez você devesse tentar se organizar melhor. Eu sempre escrevo pequenas anotações para mim mesmo para me lembrar das coisas. Talvez você devesse tentar isso também!

***Você:***

*Chefe:* Bem, de qualquer maneira, é uma ideia.

**7.** You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you.
*Cleaning lady:* Oh God, I'm sorry! I had an awful accident. While I was cleaning I bumped into the table and your china vase fell and broke. I feel just terrible about it. I'll pay for it.
*You:* (Knowing that the cleaning lady is supporting three children.)

***You:***

*Cleaning lady:* No, I'd feel better if I paid for it.

**8.** You're a language teacher at a university. It is just about the middle of the term now and one of your students asks to speak to you.
*Student:* Ah, excuse me, some of the students were talking after class recently and we kind of feel that the class would be better if you could give us more practice in conversation and less on grammar.
***You:***

*Student:* O.K., it was only a suggestion.

**9.** You are at a friend's house for lunch.
*Friend:* How about another piece of cake?

***You:***

*Friend:* Come on, just a little piece?

***You:***

**10.** A friend invites you to dinner, but you really can't stand this friend's husband/wife.

*Friend:* How about coming over for dinner Sunday night? We're having a small dinner party.

***You**:*

*Friend:* O.K., maybe another time.

**11.** You've been working in an advertising agency now for some time. The boss offers you a raise and promotion, but it involves moving. You don't want to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office.
*Boss:* I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new offices in Hicktown. It's a great town – only three hours from here by plane. And, a nice raise comes with the position.

***You**:*

*Boss:* Well, maybe you should give it some more thought before turning it down.

**12.** You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave work.
*Boss:* If you don't mind, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two tonight so that we can finish up with this work.

***You**:*

*Boss:* That's too bad. I was hoping you could stay.

**Considerando esta atividade:**

1. O que você levou em consideração ao escolher as respostas para as situações acima?

2. Se você tem algum comentário que gostaria de fazer a respeito da atividade, por favor escreva aqui:

Muito obrigada por sua participação! ☺

# 12 Appendix E: Pre-verbal report for information on the participant's background (BP version)

**Questionário de pesquisa**

***Sua resposta é anônima. Por favor, não escreva seu nome neste questionário.***

**1**. Sexo: □M □ F

**2**. Idade:

**3.** Língua materna (primeira língua(s)):

**4.** Além de sua primeira língua, você fala outra(s) língua(s)? Se sim, qual (quais)?

**5.** Há quanto você estuda inglês? (Por favor, marque uma resposta.)

□ (a) há menos de um ano
□ (b) 1-2 anos
□ (c) 3-5 anos
□ (d) 5-10 anos
□ (e) há mais de 10 ano

**6.** Qual o seu nível de proficiência em inglês? Você fez algum teste de nivelamento de inglês recentemente?

7. Qual é o curso que você está fazendo atualmente (nível)?

**8.** Você já estudou inglês no exterior? Se sim, quando, onde, e por quanto tempo? (Por favor, seja o mais específico possível)

**9.** Você já viajou para/ou morou em um país onde a língua nativa é o inglês?
□ Sim □Não
Se sim, qual/quais país(es)? Por quanto tempo permaneceu lá? (Por favor, seja o mais específico possível)

**10**. Você já viajou para/ou morou em um país onde o inglês não é a língua nativa, mas no qual você precisou usar o inglês para se comunicar?
□ Sim □Não
Se sim, qual/quais país(es)? Por quanto tempo permaneceu lá? (Por favor, seja o mais específico possível)

Muito obrigada! ☺

# 13 Appendix F: Pre-verbal report for information on the participant's background (English version)

**Research in Second Language Acquisition – MA in English Language, University of Oslo**

***Questionnaire***

1. Your gender: □Male □ Female

2. Age:

3. Your mother tongue (first language(s)):

4. Besides your first language, do you speak any other language(s)?
□ Yes □No

If yes, what language(s)? And in what level of proficiency?

6. Have you ever lived abroad?
□ Yes □No

If yes, where and how long did you stay in this country/these countries? (Please, be as precise as you can).

Thank you! ☺

# 14 Appendix G:

# Classification of refusal strategies and adjuncts

*Adapted version of the Classification of Refusals by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990, 72–73).

I- Direct

A. Performative (e.g., "I refuse")

B. Nonperformative statement

1. "No"
2. Negative ability (e.g., "I can't", "I won't be able to…")
3. Negative willingness (e.g.,"I don't want to move…")
4. Negative willingness/ ability (e.g.,"That won't work")

II- Indirect

A. Statement of regret (e.g., "I' sorry…"; "I feel terrible…")

B. Wish (e.g., "I wish I could help you…")

C. Excuse (e.g., "My children will be home that night."; "I have a headache.")

D. Statement of alternative

1. I can do X instead of Y (e.g., "I'd rather…"; "I'd prefer…")
2. Why don't you do X instead of Y (e.g., "Why don't you ask someone else?")

E. Set condition for future or past acceptance (e.g., "If you had asked me earlier, I would have…")

F. Future acceptance

1. Promise of future acceptance (e.g., "I'll do it next time"; "I promise I'll…" or "Next time I'll…" – using "will" of promise or "promise")
2. Conditional future acceptance (e.g., "Only if you are covering the bill.")

G. Statement of principle (e.g., "I never do business with friends")

H. Statement of philosophy (e.g., "One can't be too careful.")

I. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester or interlocutor (e.g., "I won't be any fun tonight" to refuse an invitation; "it won't be of any help to you…")
2. Guilt trip (e.g., waitress to customers who want to sit a while "I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.")
3. Criticism or non-redressive strategies
   - 3.1. Criticism of the interlocutor/ of the eliciting speech act (offer, suggestion) etc. (e.g., That's a terrible idea!")
   - 3.2. Insult/attack (e.g., "Who do you think you are?")
   - 3.3. Negative opinion (e.g., "I think this restaurant is too expensive")
4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request (e.g., "…I hope you can understand that")

5. Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g., "Don't worry about it." "That's okay." "You don't have to.")
6. Self-defence (e.g., "I'm trying my best." "I understand my own mess.")
7. 'Diminish the value of the requested object' or 'diminish the value of broken object' (e.g. "It was an old vase anyways.")

J. Acceptance that functions as a refusal
   1. Unspecific or indefinite reply
   2. Lack of enthusiasm (e.g., "…well, if you insist…")

K. Avoidance
   1. Nonverbal
      a. Silence
      b. Hesitation
      c. Do nothing
      d. Physical departure
   2. Verbal
      a. Topic switch
      b. Joke
      c. Repetition of part of request, etc. (e.g., "Monday?")
      d. Postponement (e.g., "I'll think about it")
      e. Hedging (e.g., "Gee, I don't know." "I'm not sure.")

L. Elaboration: information continuing or explaining the preceding utterance/strategy, particularly used with excuses (e.g. "…I am going to travel. My family lives in another town and it will be my sister's wedding…")

## Adjuncts to refusals

1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement ("That's a good idea…"; "I'd love to…")
2. Statement of empathy (e.g., "I realize you are in a difficult situation.")
3. Pause fillers (e.g., "uhh"; "well"; "oh"; "uhm")
4. Gratitude/appreciation.
5. Statement of agreement (e.g., "I agree…")
6. Forewarns: a statement preparing the interlocutor for the unpleasant speech act of refusal (e.g., "I've talked to my wife about it and…")
7. Admonition (e.g., " Be more careful next time.")
8. Superiority over addressee: ( e.g., "I am the teacher, not you")
9. Downgraders: (e.g.,"Please,…"; "*I am afraid that* I can't…" "*Unfortunately*, I won't be able….."; "*I don't think* I can make it…"; "I *may not be able*…")
10. Downtoners: (e.g., "you know.."; "I mean…", "you see.", also laughter, as in " … I don't think I ever will be *aha*")
11. Intensifiers: (e.g. "I am r*eally* sorry…"; "thank you *very much*!")

12. Greetings: (e.g.,“Hi!...”; “Good morning!...”)
13. Appealers: (e.g., “…What do you say?”; “…,is it ok?”).
14. Vocatives (e.g., “sir…”, “boss,” “dear…;” “Zé…”, “Mr X…” ).
15. Time frame limitation (e..g., “I can't afford to give you a raise *right now*.”; “…my schedule is full *that night.*”)

Non-refusals

1. Acceptance (e.g., “Ok!”; “Sure.’’)
2. Limitation of acceptance (e.g., “Ok, b*ut just a little piece*.”)
3. Request for information (e.g., “Can you provide me with examples justifying an increase in pay?”)