

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

THE FACULTY OF ARTS

**THE SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
AND COMPARATIVE CULTURAL STUDIES**

**CROSS-CULTURAL PRAGMATICS: REFUSALS OF REQUESTS
BY AUSTRALIAN NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH AND
VIETNAMESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in TESOL Studies**

November 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Roland Sussex. I am blessed to have known you and to have been accepted as your student in this MA coursework program. From the point of a teacher, an advisor, and a mentor, you are my strongest advocate, who embodies the definition of wisdom and intellect. My professional development has been growing increasingly with your precious guidance and continuous motivation.

I wish to thank Ms Beverly Scott, Ms Lien Tran, and Mr Bruce Duncan for releasing the burden of data collection in Australia and in Vietnam, and for helping me with the hard work of data interpretation.

I extend my special thanks and appreciation to many of my colleagues at the College of Foreign Languages, the University of Danang, Vietnam, who have shared with me an intellectual environment to work with. Your encouragement and support is an invaluable ingredient to my determination to accomplish this project.

I owe my parents and my brother for their continuous support. Their patience and love help me see beyond what sometimes looks like an insurmountable task. Although we are spread out in different corners of the world, you are all constantly in my warm thoughts.

I would also want to extend a special shout-out to all the research participants. Without your valuable opinions and ideas on the questionnaires, the project would not have been accomplished.

I thank all my dear friends for lifting my spirits at each turning point of this exhilarating journey. The joy of friendship has outweighed any stress from working on the manuscript. I count each of you as my special blessings.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEs:	Australian Native Speakers of English
VEs:	Vietnamese Learners of English
NSs:	Native Speakers
NNSs:	Non-native Speakers
SCP:	Simple Concordance Programme
FTA:	Face-threatening Act
DCT:	Discourse Completion Task
SARs:	Speech Acts of Refusals
L1:	First Language
L2:	Second Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates similarities and differences in refusals of requests between Australian native speakers of English (AEs), and Vietnamese learners of English (VEs) using a modified version of the discourse completion task (DCT) developed by Beebe et al. (1990). 40 AEs (20 males and 20 females) and 40 VEs (20 males and 20 females) participated in the study, resulting in 1440 speech acts of refusals. Data were analysed using the Simple Concordance Programme (SCP) and Excel functions to compare the frequency of SARs in selected situations. It was found that the frequency of use of SARs by AEs is different from that by VEs, though they do share some similarities. While AEs share the same number of SARs when they communicate with their interlocutors, VEs are more sensitive to the social status and the social distance of the requesters. In addition, and related to differences in culture, AEs and VEs also differ in the ways they say “NO” to their conversational partners. VEs are apt to express refusals more elaborately. They used more statements of regret, more statements of sympathy, more addressing terms and more reason/excuse/explanations in their refusals than AEs. The excuse/reason/explanations given by VEs reveal their reluctance to express their disinclination to comply, in contrast to the AEs.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

At a summit meeting between President Nixon and the late Prime Minister Sato of Japan in 1969, Nixon asked Sato whether he would agree to curtail Japan's fabric exports to the United States in exchange for the return of Okinawa. Sato answered, "Zensho shimasu", which was literally translated into English as "I'll take a proper step", but in Japanese is usually understood as a rejection. Nixon thought he had received a commitment and was furious when Sato failed to take any effective action. But in fact, Sato did not feel that he had made any commitment, as this kind of statement in Japanese culture is a polite way of refusing (Beebe and Takahashi 1989).

Both the speaker and the hearer failed to communicate. The barrier here is cultural awareness. They are from different cultures, thus have different frames of reference. Failure in communication can cause what we call "culture shock" (Ting-Toomey and Chung 2005; Ward, Bochner and Furnham 2001).

Refusing is one of the central issues of intercultural communication. The act of refusing itself is risky and potentially a generator of tension in intercultural interactions. And as intercultural exchanges grow, as a result of travel, globalization and international interactions, the potential for intercultural miscommunication through misinterpreted refusals is also growing.

Vietnam is a country where intercultural contacts are rapidly increasing, following the introduction of the "renovation process" since 1986. The closed-door policy was terminated. Instead, the Vietnamese government has allowed more foreign companies and partners to invest in most industries in the country to help boost the economy. This process has resulted in increasing interactions between Vietnamese and foreigners, especially from English-speaking countries. Taking into consideration the importance of pragmatic competence and the social setting of Vietnam, the present study is significant in that it aims to help, to some extent, resolve and simplify cross-cultural misunderstanding. We

investigate how culture influences the realization of the speech act of refusal by Australian speakers of English (AEs) and Vietnamese learners of English (VEs).

The need for scientific study of cross-cultural communication has become central in the field of applied linguistics not only for the purposes of language learning and teaching, but also for enhancing cross-cultural understanding. Refusals have been chosen as the topic of the present study. Refusals are important because of their communicatively central place in everyday communication. It is often difficult to reject requests. It is even harder to reject them in a foreign language without risking offending the interlocutor. This involves not only linguistic knowledge, but also pragmatic knowledge. One can have a wide range of vocabulary and a sound knowledge of grammar, but misunderstandings can still arise if we cannot apply pragmatic competence appropriately.

The research will first shed light on how learners think and react when refusing in cross-cultural interactions; second, it will reinterpret current models of intercultural communication in terms of revised theories of interaction in context where refusals occur; third, it will contribute to the understanding of pragmatic aspects in second language acquisition; and finally, it will help learners become more aware of selected patterns of refusing of requests used by AEs and VEs.

In addition, the project also investigates selected cultural differences of expectations, imposition, and politeness related to this speech act in the two languages. It compares Confucian values and respect for the other with non-Confucian ideas concentrating on the individual, two of which are clearly manifested in the manner in which people from the two countries perform the act of refusing.

There are also important applications of this investigation in terms of intercultural understanding, training and teaching, which are of great strategic importance to Vietnamese policies in second language education, and especially English-language teaching.

This research is the first stage of a larger investigation of the nature of refusals of requests in intercultural communication. The goal of the present project is specifically to

conduct a wide-ranging survey of the relevant literature; and to design, implement and test a research instrument to investigate three variables which the literature has identified in other intracultural and intercultural communication acts - social status, social distance and gender. These three factors are observed in cross-cultural interactions between AEs and VEs. The presence of the investigator in Australia has made it possible to collect a substantial data-set, larger than is strictly necessary in a project of the scope of a Master's coursework dissertation. The analysis is designed to identify broad trends in the comparative study of refusals of requests by the two groups of subjects, especially types of refusal acts and patterns which clearly distinguish the two groups of speakers, and the three target variables. More extensive statistical or qualitative - interpretive analysis would have made this study disproportionately large. The results of the analysis within these parameters will enable us to establish the key factors of this domain of intercultural communication, and to support further and more detailed study of the phenomena identified here.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

II. 1. Speech acts

Refusing is a speech act. In order to accomplish their purposes in communication, people are said to perform intended actions while talking. Austin (1962) claims that there is a close link between speech acts and language functions. Accomplishing communicative actions in everyday life requires employing necessary words under appropriate circumstances. In other words, when we say something, we are simultaneously accomplishing a communicative action, that is, we are using words to perform actions in real world contexts. For example, when we say, “Could you please pass the dictionary to me?”, we wish to achieve the goal of having the intended audience help us gain access to the dictionary.

Austin’s main contribution to speech act theory is the axiom that by saying something, we actually do something. A speech act is a unit of speaking and performs different functions in communication. Austin (1962) believes that a single speech act actually contains three separate but related speech acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. Whenever a speaker produces an utterance, they perform a locutionary act. This is simply the act of producing a linguistically well-formed, and thus meaningful, expression. Moreover, we usually do not make utterances without having any purposes. Take the previous example (“Could you please pass the dictionary to me?”). We not only utter that sentence but also intend the listener to pass us a dictionary. This kind of act via utterances which we produce with communicative purpose in mind is generally known as an illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is the function of the utterance that the speaker has in mind, i.e., the communicative purpose that is intended or achieved by the utterance. Another example is the statement “It’s hot in here”. This sentence can have the illocutionary force of a statement, an offer, an explanation, or a request. It might be uttered by someone who is experiencing heat in a crowded room to just comment on the weather. It can also be uttered by a person who intends to open the window so that everyone in the room can enjoy fresh air from outside.

Perlocutionary acts occur when we want a speech act to have an effect when we utter that statement. When saying “Could you please pass me the dictionary?”, the speaker wishes the act of passing the dictionary to be performed: This is its perlocutionary force. The perlocutionary act refers to the hearer’s recognition of and response to the illocutionary act (that is, the hearer may feel amused, annoyed, as a consequence of the speaker’s utterance). Among the three acts, the illocutionary act is regarded as the most important, as it is actually what the speaker wants to achieve through the action of uttering the sentence.

Yule (1996) claims that, of these types of speech acts, the most distinctive one is illocutionary force: “Indeed, the term speech act is generally interpreted quite narrowly to mean only the illocutionary force of an utterance” (p. 49).

Searle (1975) proposes a five-way classification of illocutionary acts, which include:

- representatives: these speech acts constitute assertions carrying true or false values (e.g. statements);
- directives: in these speech acts, there is an effort on the part of the speaker to have the hearer do something (e.g. request, advice);
- commissives: speech acts of this kind create an obligation on the part of the speaker; that is, they commit the speaker to doing something (e.g. promises);
- expressives: these speech acts express an attitude or an inner state of the speaker which says nothing about the world (e.g. apologies, congratulations, compliments);
- declarations: speech acts in which declarative statements are successfully performed and no psychological state is expressed (e.g. an excommunication).

These notions have contributed to the understanding of refusals of requests. They have played a prominent role in shaping the central and focal thoughts for the analysis of refusals in the later parts of the present study.

II.2. Previous studies of speech acts

There have been a number of studies on different speech acts. These include apologies¹, blessings (Burt 2001), complaints (Frescura 1993; Olshtain and Weinbach 1993; Trosborg 1994), compliments (Manes and Wolfson 1981; Nelson and Hall 1999; Yu 1999; Wolfson 1989), disagreements (Beebe and Takahashi 1989; Garcia 1989b), gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986, 1993), invitations (Garcia 1999; Gu 1990; Mao 1994; Wolfson 1981), requests², suggestions (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990; Koike 1996), and refusals³. These studies were reviewed by Jolio Cesar (2002) with some additions later by the researcher.

These studies provide readers with a fuller understanding of speech acts in intra- and cross-cultural communication. Failure to speak appropriately according to the strategies used by native speakers (“NSs”), or the inability to understand “what is meant by what is said”, can result in a communicative or pragmatic failure (Thomas 1983). For a full understanding of what is said and what is meant, non-native speakers (“NNSs”) have to apply not only linguistic knowledge but also pragmatic competence. Each person in each situation selects and uses the kind of language that he/she deems appropriate in each specific conversational situation to fulfil communication purposes and maintain each other’s face (II.4). The studies have in several ways provided a better understanding and a broader pedagogical application for cross-cultural communication.

II.3. Conversation Principle: Cooperation

Means of communication are exploited to keep the conversation progressing smoothly. In any speech act, the conversants have to follow many principles, one of which is “cooperation”. Conversation proceeds on the basis that participants are expected to deal

¹ Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989; Cohen and Olshtain 1981; Cohen and Olshtain 1983; Cohen and Olshtain 1993; Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein 1986; Maeshiba, Yoshigana, Kasper, and Ross 1996; Marquez-Reiter 2000; Trosborg 1987

² Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989; Hill 1997; Marquez-Reiter 2000; Mir-Fernandez 1994; Rinnert and Kobayashi 1999; Rose 1992; Ruziekova 1998; Scarcella 1979; Takahashi 1996; Tateyama 2001; Tokuda 2001; Trosborg 1994; Walters 1979; Wierzbicka 1985

³ Al-Issa 1998; Al-Shalawi 1997; Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1990, 1991; Beckers 1999; Beebe and Cummings 1996; Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Chen 1996; Cramer 1997; Frescura 1997; Garcia 1992, 1999; Gass and Houck 1999; Houck and Gass 1996; Iwata 1999; King and Silver 1993; Kinjo 1987; Kitao 1996, 1997; Kodama 1996; Margalef-Boada 1993; Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary 1998; Ramos 1991; Robinson 1992; Sasaki 1998; Smith 1998; Takahashi and Beebe 1987; Widjaja 1997

considerately with one another. In considering the suitability of participants' moves in conversation, Grice (1975) formulates a broad general principle, the Cooperative Principle: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p.45).

Grice (1975) enumerates the four following maxims, which characterize the Cooperative Principle:

- Maxim of Quantity, or to be brief, which means that you should make your contributions as informative as is required and no more. When we speak to someone, we feel obliged to give them enough details to enable them to understand us. At the same time, we should avoid giving too much information.

- If something is said, there's a reason for it.
- If something is left out, you're already supposed to know it.

- Maxim of Quality, or to be true, which requires you not to say what you believe to be false or for which you lack adequate evidence. Therefore, lying is an obvious violation of the Cooperative Principle.

- If something known to be untrue is said, it is assumed to be intended to mislead, or to indicate ignorance.
- Language can be made arbitrarily complex in this respect: consider irony or sarcasm.

- Maxim of Relation, or to be relevant to the context and to what has been said previously. People who change the subject abruptly are usually considered rude or uncooperative.

- Of the many possible meanings of any language you should select the one relevant to the shared goal.

- Maxim of Manner, or to be clear, which requires you to avoid ambiguity and obscurity. Speakers have to organize their utterances in an orderly manner, that is, to provide information in a way which can be assimilated by the listener.
 - If something seems to be obscure or ambiguous, you are probably misunderstanding it.

Observing the four Maxims helps to sustain conversations. The speech act of refusing, like other speech acts, also requires the above-mentioned maxims to be considered in order to maintain a harmonious conversation. In fact, it is difficult to express a refusal without violating the principles. While people often utilize negotiation rather than direct refusal in their daily relationships, more subtle strategies may be required if the speaker is to convey the intended refusal without hurting the other's feelings.

II.4. The notion of face

Ritual constraints on communication include not only ways of presenting "self" but also the ways in which we give face to others. "Face" is "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown and Levinson 1978, p.66). In everyday discourse, we often defer to interlocutors by avoiding subtle and personal topics, we reassure our partners, and we avoid open disagreement. If we realize that our messages are not clear to the listeners, we highlight important items and mark background information. When we do not understand other persons, we give non-verbal or non-threatening feedback to that effect. By doing so, we are taking the "face" of both ourselves and of the hearers into account.

According to Goffman (1967), there may be several reasons why people want to save their face. They may have become attached to the value on which this face has been built, they may be enjoying the results and the power that their face has created, or they may be nursing higher social aspirations for which they will need this face. Goffman also defines "face work", the way in which people maintain their face. This is done by presenting a consistent image to other people. And one can gain or lose face by improving or spoiling this image. The better that image, the more likely one will be appreciated. People also have to

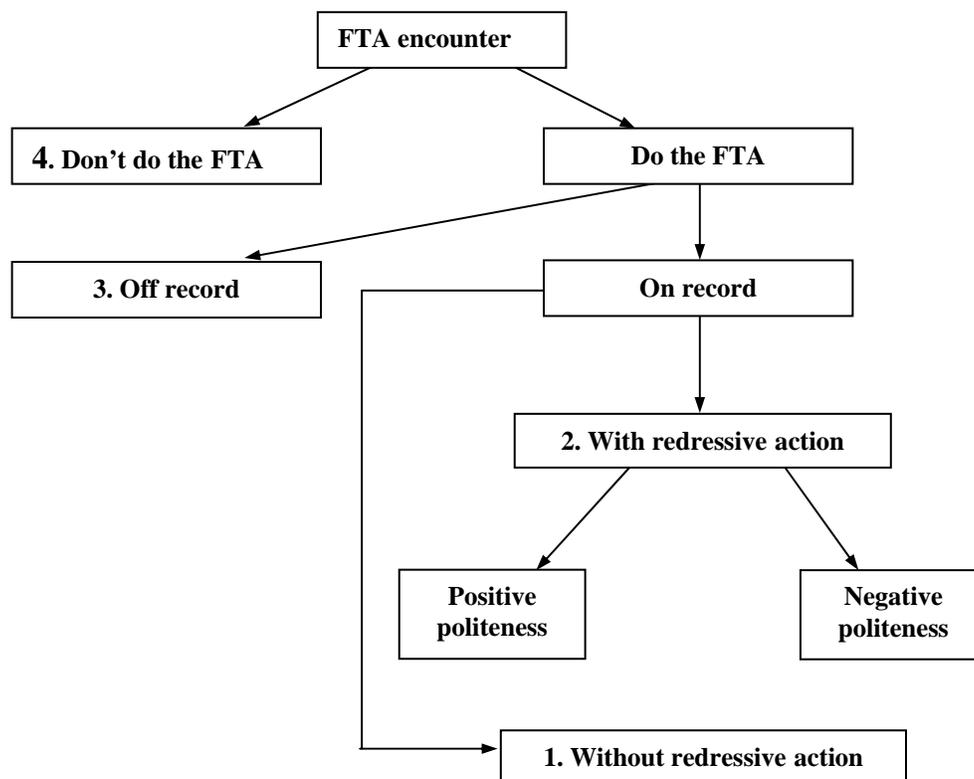
make sure that in the efforts to keep their own face, they do not in any way damage the others' face.

II. 5. Face-threatening act

In daily communication, people may give a threat to another individual's self-image, or create a "face-threatening act" (FTA). These acts impede the freedom of actions (negative face), and the wish that one's wants be desired by others (positive face) – by either the speaker, or the addressee, or both. Requests potentially threaten the addressee's face because they may restrict the addressee's freedom to act according to his/her will (Holtgraves 2002, p.40). Refusals, on the other hand, may threaten the addressee's positive face because they may imply that what he/she says is not favoured by the speaker. In an attempt to avoid FTAs, interlocutors use specific strategies to minimize the threat according to a rational assessment of the face risk to participants.

The following figure shows strategies that are chosen when a speaker does an FTA to a listener. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the lower the number preceding the strategies, the higher chance of face threat.

Figure 1. Selection of strategies following an FTA



For example, in terms of refusal speech acts:

1. Without redressive action: means direct refusals, such as “I refuse”.
2. On record (with redressive action): means to refuse explicitly with or without politeness strategy.
3. Off record: means not to refuse explicitly but give a listener a hint so that he or she can infer that the speaker means a refusal.
4. Don't do the FTA: means giving up refusing.

II.6. Politeness Theory

Early work on politeness by Goffman (1967) describes politeness as “the appreciation an individual shows to another through avoidance or presentation of rituals” (p. 77). Lakoff (1973) suggests that if one wants to succeed in communication, the message must be conveyed in a clear manner. Fraser and Nolan (1981) define politeness as a set of constraints of verbal behaviour while Leech (1983) sees it as forms of behaviour aimed at creating and maintaining harmonious interaction. He also considers the Politeness Principle as part of the principles for interpersonal rhetorics. He presents six maxims for the Politeness Principle (Leech 1983, pp. 132-139):

- + **Tact maxim:** *Minimize cost to other. Maximize benefit to other.*
- + **Generosity maxim:** *Minimize benefit to self. Maximize cost to self.*
- + **Approbation maxim:** *Minimize dispraise of other. Maximize dispraise of self.*
- + **Modesty maxim:** *Minimize praise of self. Maximize praise of other.*
- + **Agreement maxim:** *Minimize disagreement between self and other. Maximize agreement between self and other.*
- + **Sympathy maxim:** *Minimize antipathy between self and other. Maximize sympathy between self and other.*

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness, as a form of behaviour, allows communication to take place between potentially aggressive partners. They set out to develop a model of politeness which will have validity across cultures.

The common factor in Lakoff's (1975), Leech's (1983), and Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) approaches is that they all claim, explicitly or implicitly, the universality of their principles for linguistic politeness. The general idea is to understand various strategies for interactive behaviours based on the fact that people engage in rational behaviours to achieve the satisfaction of certain wants.

II.7. Politeness in the Vietnamese language

The culture of Vietnam is greatly influenced by Chinese culture, French civilization, Buddhist philosophy, Christianity and Communism, as well as the ongoing globalization process (Dao 2000; Tran 1998; Jamieson 1991). However, traditional Vietnamese culture is still preserved while accumulating and localizing foreign cultural influences (Ngo 2001; Tran 1998). In modern times, politeness has been well maintained by Vietnamese people. They have learnt additional politeness strategies through interaction with their overseas friends. In social interaction, the Vietnamese value "tinh" (Tran 1998; Tran 2001; Le 2001; Ngo 2001; Truong 2001), which is literally translated into English as "love". Yet the Vietnamese notion of "love" is by no means sexual love between couples. It implies rather that people should act on the grounds of morality than reasonability. Everyday courses of action and lifestyle should be based on this value. In former times, politeness was considered more important than education itself. Students of Confucian culture were taught *tien hoc le, hau hoc van*, or "behave oneself before studying" (*tien*: first, *hoc*: study, *le*: good manners, *hau*: later, *hoc*: study, *van*: knowledge) (Luu 2004).

Confucian morals prescribed respect for the emperor first, then the teacher and father (*quan, su, phu*; *quan*: king, *su*: teacher, *phu*: father). This hierarchy was strictly observed in society and in the family. Placed higher in rank than parents, teachers were considered the forgers of character, instructing their students in literature, philosophy and ethics. The young were also taught that if they respected the old, they would enjoy longevity: *kinh lao dac tho* (*kinh*: respect, *lao*: the old, *dac*: obviously, *tho*: longevity) (Tran 1998).

A Vietnamese smile can be very confusing to an outsider and can cause misunderstandings. In some Oriental countries, a smile can mean sorrow, worry, or embarrassment. In Vietnam, it may indicate a polite, but perhaps sceptical, reaction to something, compliance or toleration of a blunder or misunderstanding, or on occasions it represents submission to a judgment that may be wrong or unfair (Crawford 1966). An example is shown in the following story. A laundress may ruin a favourite shirt and is called in by her employer to be asked about it. She may smile. This does not mean that she thinks it is funny that she burned the shirt, but instead shows acceptance of the fact. If the owner of the shirt loses his temper, she may keep smiling, indicating politeness or patience with superiors.

Vietnamese society is no longer as agriculturally dominated as it once was (Do 2002). It has become industrialized and is subject to increasing globalization. A large percentage of the population has to conform to the norms and patterns of industrial life, with changing lifestyles and ways of thinking. However, there are many innate characteristics that Vietnamese people still observe in their daily life, though it is a hectic lifestyle. One of those unchanged thinking modes is that of indirectness. The Vietnamese seldom use a direct approach in their dealings. To do so indicates a lack of tact or delicacy. Directness is appreciated in the Western world, but not in Vietnam (Crawford 1966).

Moreover, in the Vietnamese culture, when asking such questions as "Are you married?", "How old are you?", "How much do you earn a month?", people simply want to show their concern for others, with no motive other than facilitating and making the distance between communicators closer and friendlier, thus enhancing solidarity. These questions, on the other hand, are considered intrusive to privacy in non-Confucian societies. Marital status, age, income, and religion are matters that people usually refrain from discussing when they are engaged in everyday social conversation, especially with someone that they do not know well enough.

With regard to politeness strategies in refusals, Vietnamese have some social norms that require conversants to be able to refuse in a polite manner. This fact has modified the thinking and behaviours of VEs. Some have successfully become very fluent in English.

Nonetheless, when resorting to different ways of refusing, they tend to be more indirect than their English-speaking counterparts. This study aims to discuss this phenomenon in English language learning and teaching in Vietnamese context.

II.8. Cross-cultural pragmatic transfer

The influence of the first language (L1) in cross-cultural communication (pragmatic transfer) is often evident when “native procedures and linguistic means of speech act performance are transferred to interlanguage communication” (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989, p.10). Transfer occurs in two ways: 1) negative transfer or “interference” occurs where the two languages do not share the same language system, resulting in the production of errors; and 2) positive transfer or “facilitation”, where the two languages share the same language system and the target form is correctly transferred (Gass and Selinker 1994; Odlin 1989). Pragmatic error or failure occurs where speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from the L1 to L2 (Thomas 1983). Thus, cross-cultural study focuses on negative transfer because this is a source of misunderstanding or miscommunication.

Negative transfer is the result of “overgeneralization, simplification, reduction of sociolinguistic or sociopragmatic interlanguage knowledge” (Trosborg 1995, p.55). The effect of negative transfer may be much more serious than an error at the syntactic or phonological level, because it can be interpreted as a representation of personality by the speaker (Gass and Selinker 1994; Richard 1980). In other words, if a non-native speaker uses the target language correctly in terms of phonetics, vocabulary and grammar, but manipulates it improperly in terms of social norms, a native interlocutor might think that he or she is not polite.

II.9. Factors affecting directness and indirectness in human interaction

There are many socio-cultural factors affecting the *directness-indirectness* of utterances. Nguyen (1998) proposes 12 factors that, in his view, may affect the choice of directness and indirectness in communication:

- 1- *Age*: the old tend to be more indirect than the young.

- 2- *Sex*: females prefer indirect expression.
- 3- *Residence*: the rural population tends to use more indirectness than the urban.
- 4- *Mood*: while angry, people tend to use more indirectness.
- 5- *Occupation*: those who study social sciences tend to use more indirectness than those who study natural sciences.
- 6- *Personality*: the extroverted tend to use more directness than the introverted.
- 7- *Topic*: while referring to a sensitive topic, a taboo, people usually opt for indirectness.
- 8- *Place*: when at home, people tend to use more directness than when they are elsewhere.
- 9- *Communicative environment/setting*: when in an informal climate, people tend to express themselves in a direct way.
- 10- *Social distance*: those who have closer relations tend to talk in a more direct way.
- 11- *Time pressure*: when in a hurry, people are likely to use direct expressions.
- 12- *Position*: when in a superior position, people tend to use more directness to their inferiors (p.5).

These factors help to determine the strategies as well as the number of semantic formulae used when speakers perform the act of refusing. A semantic formula may consist of a word, a phrase, or a sentence which meets a given semantic criterion or strategy (Fraser 1981). A semantic formula is described as “the means by which a particular speech act is accomplished, in terms of the primary content of an utterance, such as a reason, an explanation, or an alternative” (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1991, p.48).

II.10. Social Distance, Social Status, and Gender

Social distance is one of the factors that determines politeness behaviours (Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987). The notion of social distance refers to the consideration of “the roles people are taking in relation to one another in a particular situation as well as how well they know each other” (p.126), which means the degree of intimacy between interlocutors. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that politeness increases with social distance. On the other hand, Wolfson (1988) mentions that there is very little solidarity-establishing speech behaviour among strangers and intimates because of the relative pre-

existing familiarity of their relationship, whereas the negotiation of relationships is more likely to happen among friends.

The role of **social status** in communication involves the ability to recognize each other's social position (Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987; Holmes 1995). Holmes (1995) claimed that people with high social status are more prone to receive deferential behaviour, including linguistic deference and negative politeness. Thus those with lower social status are inclined to avoid offending those with higher status and show more respect to them.

Gender and speech behaviour are also seen as two interwoven, interrelated variables (Lakoff 1975; Tannen 1990; Boxer 1993; Holmes 1995). In other words, speech behaviours depend on the gender relationship between interlocutors. Thus refusing people of either the same or the opposite gender requires different linguistic patterns.

The present study will focus on selected factors that govern the way people undertake the act of refusing in their daily conversations. These include social distance (intimate, acquaintance, stranger); social status (low, high, equal); and gender (same gender, opposite gender). We begin with the working hypothesis, based on the literature on communication and speech acts, that these variables play central roles in the choice of strategies used by AEs and VEs.

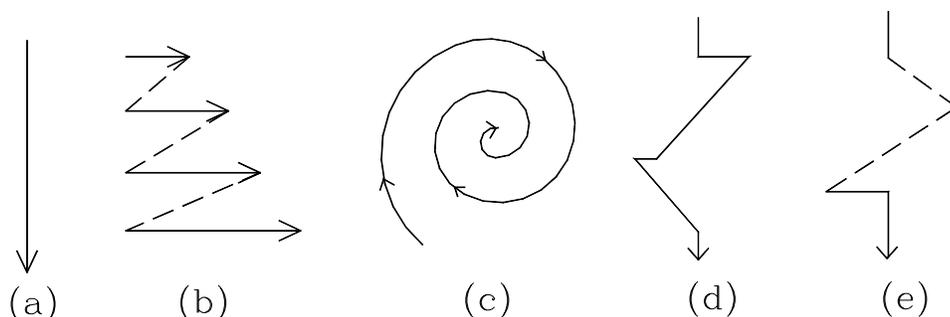
II.11. Directness vs. Indirectness

In his study of 700 essays written by overseas students in the United States, Kaplan (1972) proposes 4 discourse structures that contrast with English hierarchy (Figure a). He concentrates mainly on writing and restricts his study to paragraphs in order to find out what he calls "cultural thought patterns":

- 1- Parallel constructions, with the first idea completed in the second part (Figure b),
- 2- Circularity, with the topic looked at from different tangents (Figure c),
- 3- Freedom to digress and to introduce "extraneous" material (Figure d),
- 4-Similar to (3), but with different lengths, and parenthetical amplifications of subordinate elements (Figure e).

They are respectively illustrated by the following diagrams:

Figure 2: Types of Kaplan's diagrams



Kaplan claims that each diagram represents a certain language or a group of languages. He identifies his discourse types with genetic language types, respectively.

Figure a. English.

Figure b. Semitic.

Figure c. Oriental.

Figure d. Roman.

Figure e. Russian.

In his diagrams, people from English-speaking countries often use direct expressions and thought patterns, and Oriental people in general and the Vietnamese in particular, seem to prefer roundabout and indirect patterns. We will examine the semantic formulae in terms of the directness-indirectness continuum employed by AEs and VEs. Although Kaplan himself does not now subscribe narrowly to his model, it remains influential in the second language teaching and learning environment.

II.12. Speech act realization in refusals

“Refusal” means the speech act of saying “no” (Wierzbicka 1987, p.94), expressing the addressee’s non-acceptance, declining of or disagreeing with a request, invitation, suggestion or offer. More clearly, “refusing means, essentially, saying ‘no, I will not do it’ in response to someone else’s utterance, in which he has conveyed to us that he wants us to do something and that he expects us to do it.” (ibid.). Refusing can be seen as a move that challenges the pragmatic presuppositions of the preceding utterance. This FTA (II.5) leads to

a tendency on the part of the speakers to make use of certain strategies such as indirectness and polite expressions in order to avoid conflict (Brown and Levinson 1987). Thus, the refusal speech act realization is “a major cross-cultural ‘sticking point’ for many non-native speakers” (Beebe et al. 1990, p.56).

In terms of pragmatics, requests and refusals are automatic sequences in the structure of the conversation which are called “adjacency pairs”. “Adjacency pairs” is the term used for certain consecutive speech turns that are closely related (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). They can be described as automatic sequences consisting of a first part and a second part produced by two successive speakers such that the second utterance is identified as related to the first as an expected follow-up. Having uttered the first part, the speaker immediately expects his/her conversational partner to produce a second part of the same pair (Richards et al., 1983). The most common adjacency pairs are greeting-greeting, thanking-response, request-refusal/acceptance, apology-acceptance, and question-answer. Managing adjacency pairs successfully is part of “conversational competence”. By producing an adjacently positioned second part, speakers can show that they can understand what the first speakers aim at and that they are willing to go along with that. The interlocutors can also assert their failure to understand, or disagreement. Otherwise, the first speakers may think that they misunderstand (Scheloff and Sacks 1973, p.298).

We focus here on the adjacency pair of request-refusal. This is an important adjacency pair in that refusing is an FTA (II.5), and therefore demands special attention from the speakers so that the message can be conveyed in a socially acceptable manner. While requests are pre-event acts, refusals are post-event acts. In everyday life, it is not easy to refuse. If you give a flat refusal, it may be interpreted as more than just the refusal itself. In contrast, it can create a feeling of discomfort in both the requester and requestee.

The literature on refusing and speech acts is extensive, particularly in intra-cultural communication. Key contributions are summarized in Table 1:

Table 1: Studies on L1, L2, and L1-L2 Refusals in Numerous Languages, Different Dialects

Study (chronological)	Focus	Data Elicitation Method	Subjects	Findings
Kinjo 1987	Refusing in L1 Japanese and L1 English	Modified role play	N=60 30 American NSs, 30 Japanese NSs	- Wider range of responses in Japanese - Japanese more open and direct
Takahashi and Beebe 1987	Refusing in Japanese L2 EFL and ESL	Discourse Completion Task (DCT)	N=80 20 Japanese EFL, 20 Japanese ESL Controls: 20 Japanese NSs, 20 American NSs	- Transfer exists in both EFL and ESL contexts - L1 influence stronger in EFL contexts
Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz 1990	Refusing in Japanese L2 ESL	DCT	N=60 20 Japanese ESL Controls: 20 Japanese NSs, 20 American NSs	- Pragmatic transfer attested in order, frequency, and content of semantic formulae
Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1991	Rejecting in L1 and L2 during academic advising sessions	Natural data Video	N=39 21 NNSs (different L1 languages) Controls: 18 English NSs	- NNSs sometimes unable to maintain status balance
Ramos 1991	Refusing in L2 Puerto Rican ESL	DCT	N=80 male 20 Puerto Rican ESL-Low Proficiency 20 Puerto Rican ESL-High Proficiency Controls:20 Spanish NSs20 English NSs	- At lower proficiency level, refusals shorter and more direct - At higher proficiency level, responses similar to English NSs
Tickle 1991	Refusing in L1 Japanese	DCT	N= 31 males	- Differences in territory, relationship, status, and function
Garcia 1992	Declining an invitation in L1 Spanish	Open Role Play	N= 20 L1 Peruvian NSs 10 males 10 females	- Stage 1: Deference - Stage 2: Solidarity - Not insisting considered rude; insistence in Stage 2 cultural expectation

Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig 1992	Rejecting in L1 and L2 during academic advising sessions	DCT Natural data	N=63 1) DCT (N=24), 13 NSs, 11 NSs 2) Natural data (N=39), 18 NSs, 21 NSs Controls: L1 English	- DCTs elicited a narrower range of semantic formulae, elevated the number of direct rejections, allowed students to be less polite
Lyuh 1992	Refusing in L1 English and L1 Korean	DCT	N= 605 Phase I: N= 247 67 American NSs , 180 Korean NSs Phase II: N= 358 160 American NSs, 198 Korean NSs	- Koreans reflect collectivism high-context culture, Americans reflect individualistic low context culture - Differences in the use and content of strategies
Robinson 1992	Refusing in L2 ESL	DCT Concurrent verbal reports	N=12 female Japanese ESL Controls: None	- Introspective data provides insight into language processing strategies
Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford 1993	Refusing in L1 and L2	Open questionnaire DCT	N= 32 13 NNS-different L1s Controls: 19 English NSs	- Inclusion of turn in DCT helped participants frame replies
King and Silver 1993	Refusing in L2 English	DCT Telephone data	N=6 L2 intermediate ESL learners Controls: None	- DCTs revealed little effect for instruction on post test - No effect of instruction observed in telephone interactions
Margalef-Boada 1993	Refusing in L2 German as an FL	DCT Role play	N= 116 40 intermediate German Spanish as an FL Controls: 38 German NSs, 38 Spanish/Catalan NSs	- Most commonly used formulae: <i>explanation, regret, direct refusal, and adjuncts</i> - Role play data richer, interactive, and more complex than DCT Data

Stevens 1993	Refusing in L2 EFL and ESL	DCT	N= 91 subjects 30 Arabic EFL in Cairo, 17 Arabic ESL in U.S. Controls: 10 Americans NSs in Cairo, 13 Americans NSs in U.S., 21 Arabic NSs in Cairo	- L2 learners used inappropriate strategies
Chen, Ye, and Zhang 1995	Refusing in L1 Chinese	DCT	N=100 NSs of Mandarin Chinese	- Stage 1: Substantive refusals; Stage 2: Ritual refusals - Ritual refusals expected behavior - Most frequent substantive refusals: reason, alternative, direct refusals, regret, and dissuade
Morrow 1995	Refusing and complaining in L2	Semi-structured role plays	N= 20 9 females 11 males Controls: L1 English	- With instruction, complaints, and refusals clearer, more polite, and more native-like
Beebe and Cummings 1996	Refusing in L1 English	DCT Natural data (telephone)	N=22 female American NSs	- DCTs do not accurately reflect natural speech - DCTs give a good idea of stereotypical shape of the speech act
Chen 1996	Refusing in L2 EFL	Metapragmatic Judgment Task Questionnaire	N= 232 126 L2 Chinese EFL: 58 males, 68 females Controls: 106 American NSs	- Americans considered truthfulness, directness, clarity, and effectiveness most important - EFL learners more concerned with being indirect, preserving face, and avoiding embarrassment
Kitao 1996	Refusing in L1 British English	DCT	N=40 NSs	- Most common strategy to refuse requests was <i>regret</i> , followed by <i>excuse</i> or <i>reason</i>
Kodama 1996	Refusing in L1 Japanese	DCT Role play	N=16 female NSs	- Subjects more comfortable with DCT format - In DCT, subjects aware of international aspects of conversation: in role play subjects developed conversations through interaction

Widjaja 1997	Date Refusals in English of American females and Taiwanese females	Role plays and retrospective interviews	10 Taiwanese and 10 American female college students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both groups preferred negative politeness strategies. The Taiwanese preferred higher directness in refusing dates - Overgeneralization from Chinese patterns, L1 pragmatic knowledge, and lack of pragmatic knowledge in L2 were factors, along with social distance
Al-Shalawi 1997	Refusing in L1 English and L1 Arabic	DCT	N=100 male NSs 50 Saudi 50 American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both groups used similar semantic formulae; differences observed in use of formulae in each situation - Both groups differed in content of their reasons
Cramer 1997	Refusing in L2 ESL	Open role play	N= 20 10 Japanese ESL: Intermediate and Advanced Controls: 10 Americans NSs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intermediate learners used short expressions with little variation
Frescura 1997	Refusing offer to dinner in L1 Italian	Notebook data	N= 302 NSs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conclusive refusals found with highest frequency, followed by Tactful (e.g. evasive)
Kitao 1997	Refusing in L1 British English	7-point scale	N=75 NSs 51 females 23 males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being clear and effective is considered more important than either avoiding a negative evaluation or avoiding hurting the interlocutor's feelings
Widjaja 1997	Refusing in L2 ESL	Open role plays	N= 20 females 10 Taiwanese ESL Controls: 10 Americans NSs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative politeness strategies preferred - Most common strategies: <i>excuse</i>
Al-Issa 1998	Refusing in L2 EFL	Natural phase observation DCT	N=150 50 Jordanian advanced EFL Controls: 50 Jordanian Arabic NSs 50 American NSs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of pragmatic transfer by EFL group
Nelson, Al Batal, and El Bakary 1998	Refusing in L1 English and L1 Egyptian Arabic	Modified DCT	N=55 NSs 30 Americans 25 Egyptians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Egyptians employed more direct refusal strategies - Order of formulae in Egyptian data revealed more variability

Sasaki 1998	Refusing in L1 English	DCT Closed role play	N=12 Japanese ESL at three English proficiency levels Controls: None	- Method effects observed - Role plays more appropriate for making inferences regarding pragmatic competence
Smith 1998	Refusing in L1 English	Questionnaire Judgment Task	N=160 English NSs	- The type of refusal produced and judged appropriate depends on context
Beckers 1999	Refusing in L1 German and L1 English	DCT	N=400 NSs 200 Americans 200 Germans	- German refusals less direct than American refusals - Differences in content of <i>excuse/explanation</i>
Garcia 1999	Declining an invitation in L1 Spanish	Open role play	N=20 Venezuelan NSs	- Deferential politeness strategies preferred over solidarity politeness - Male-female differences
Gass and Houck 1999	Refusing in L2 ESL	Open role play	N=3 Japanese ESL Controls: None	- Number of turns in the role play indicated need for negotiation - Verbal and non-verbal behavior examined
Iwata 1999	Refusing in L1 Japanese	DCT	N=40 Japanese NSs 20 male, 20 female	- Social status and social distance contribute to perceived difficulty in refusal
Sadler& Eröz 2001	Refusing in L1 English and L2 English	DCT	10 Americans, 10 Lao, 10 Turkish	- All respondents tended to use excuses, explanations, or reasons, with a statement of regret preceding or following the reasons or excuses. - The Turkish and Americans used pause fillers and then statements of gratitude and appreciation, while the Lao respondents used statements of regret, followed by adjuncts. The Turkish refused a bit less than the others. - The four different kinds of refusal situations (requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions) did get different kinds of responses.
Felix-Brasdefer	Declining an invitation in L1 Spanish, L1 English, and L2 Spanish	Open role play Verbal report	N=30 10 L2 advanced learners Controls: 10 L1 Spanish, 10 L1 English	- Americans showed a higher degree of directness in situations of unequal status - High levels of grammatical competence in the L2 do not always correspond to high levels of socio-cultural ability

Among recent studies that have been carried out on the refusal speech act, Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) found that Japanese refuse differently according to the status of interlocutors, while Americans are more affected by the degree of familiarity or the social distance between interlocutors. Japanese display a different frequency of semantic formulae between higher and lower status requesters, while Americans do not. These studies are cross-cultural – in other words, comparative-cultural – rather than intercultural.

There have also been studies of refusals in intercultural and non-native contexts. In the study of native (Americans) and non-native (Koreans, Malay, Chinese, Arabic, Thai, Japanese, Bengali, Spanish, Chichewa, Yoruba) rejections from academic advising sessions, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) found that explanation was used most commonly for rejections by both native and non - native students. However, non-native speakers tend to use more avoidance strategies than natives. Ikoma and Shimura (1994) carried out a study with English as L1 and Japanese as L2. They attempted to investigate pragmatic transfers in the speech act of refusal by American learners of Japanese as a second language. Three groups of subjects participated in the study: American learners of Japanese, American speaking English, and Japanese speaking Japanese. They found that there was no difference between American and Japanese subjects in terms of specificity in excuses. Moreover, Japanese subjects were found not to use more formal-sounding expressions than American subjects. On the other hand, Beckers (1999) found that Americans varied their refusal strategies according to social status (high, low, equal) rather than social distance (stranger, acquaintance, and intimate), while Germans varied their refusal strategies according to social distance, rather than social status. Germans also employed fewer semantic formulae than did Americans in all 18 situations (which are the combinations of the three variables of social distance, social status, and gender).

Felix-Brasdefer (2003) investigated the speech act performance of native speakers of Mexican Spanish, native speakers of American English, and advanced learners of Spanish as a foreign language in refusals in six different situations (two invitations, two requests, and two suggestions) of equal and high status using enhanced

role plays and retrospective verbal reports. Results show that learners differed from the native groups in the frequency, content, and perceptions of refusal strategies. Among the learners, negative pragmatic transfer was found in the frequency, content, and social perceptions of refusal strategies.

A study of socio-cultural transfer and its motivating factors within the realization patterns of the speech act of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners was carried out by Al-Issa (2003). EFL refusal data were collected using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The DCT was then followed by semi-structured interviews. Using semantic formulae as units of analysis, EFL refusal responses were compared with similar data elicited from native speakers of English responding in English and native speakers of Arabic responding in Arabic. The results showed that socio-cultural transfer influenced the EFL learners' selection of semantic formulae, the length of their responses, and the content of the semantic formulae. The cases of transfer were seen to reflect cultural values transferred from Arabic to English.

Research on the Vietnamese speech act of refusal, but specifically restricted to directness/indirectness, includes a study on some cross-cultural differences in refusing a request in English and in Vietnamese (Phan, 2001). She found out that both Anglophone and Vietnamese informants tend to use more indirect refusals than direct ones. Comparing the degree of directness and indirectness of refusals by Anglophone and Vietnamese informants, all the Anglophone informants are more direct than the Vietnamese ones. She made some comparisons and drew some similarities and differences between the two groups. The following are some similarities and differences.

Similarities:

- Both Anglophone and Vietnamese informants tend to use more indirect refusals than direct ones.

- In both Anglophone and Vietnamese cultures, city dwellers are more direct than rural people. Rural people, especially Vietnamese, always exceed the urbanites in the degree of indirectness.

- Informants who do not know any foreign languages are less direct and more indirect than those with knowledge of some foreign languages.

Differences:

- Comparing the degree of directness and indirectness of refusals extended by Anglophone and Vietnamese informants, all the Anglophone informants are more direct than the Vietnamese ones.

- All groups of Vietnamese informants are substantially more indirect than their Anglophone partners.

These above projects have provided some preliminary background and framework, in descriptive, taxonomic and methodological senses, for the study of cross-cultural refusals of requests in the present study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

III.1. Aims and objectives of the research

As we have seen in Chapter II, there is a gap in our understanding of how VEs apply the use of refusal patterns and how cultural influence affects their use of refusal speech acts in contact with other speakers of English. We investigate the strategies for refusal by AEs and VEs. We also examine the influence of the interlocutor's social status, social distance and gender on refusal strategies by both groups.

III.2. Research questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do strategies in refusals of requests differ cross-culturally between AEs and VEs?
2. To what extent do strategies of refusals of requests reflect social status, social distance and gender difference in utterances of AEs and VEs?
3. What are the explanations, implications, and applications of the understanding, including the relation of refusals of requests to the wider issue of politeness?

We begin with three preliminary working hypotheses, based on the literature review of refusals of requests:

- ❖ VEs use more indirect and less direct strategies than AEs.
- ❖ Interlocutor status, especially higher status, has a greater effect on refusals of request strategies used by AEs and VEs.
- ❖ Refusals towards different genders utilize different strategies for both AEs and VEs.

III.3. Population and sampling: Participants

Forty AEs (twenty males and twenty females) and forty VEs (twenty males and twenty females) participated in the study. The Australian participants in the survey come from Queensland, Australia. They belong to many socio-economic backgrounds in the society, from cleaners to teachers. This varied social background was chosen to provide

a cross-sample of Australian speech practice. The Vietnamese participants, in contrast, come from Danang University in central Vietnam. They are students doing English majors at Danang University. They all learn English for varied purposes, such as work, study, promotion.

III.4.Data collection

The study uses a questionnaire in the form of Discourse Completion Task (DCT) based on the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984) for data collection. This has been widely used in pragmatic research: Ikoma and Shimura (1994) in refusals; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) for requests; Banerjee and Carrel (1988) for suggestions. Many findings have been proposed, and significant generalizations have been made on the basis of the data from the DCT. The value of such data is generally recognized, particularly for the purpose of developing “an initial classification of semantic formulae and strategies that will occur in natural speech” (Beebe 1985, p.10). A DCT using written questionnaires is appropriate for the purpose of this study because it has some specific advantages. Wolfson, Marmor and Jones (1989) describe the use of the DCT as an effective means of gathering a large number of data in a relatively short period. A large number of participants can be surveyed with the DCT more easily than role plays, thus making statistical analysis more feasible. Within the time constraints of the present study, this methodology worked well. However, there are some disadvantages when using this type of data. It is not natural speech. It is more accurately described as a record of what subjects think they would say, or perhaps what they want the researcher to think they would say, rather than a record of real behaviour. This might lead to responses that differ from natural speech patterns. This method has also been challenged by scholars who question the difference between participants’ answers and what they actually say in real-life conversations (Rintell and Mitchell 1989). Moreover, the DCT cannot show “the depth of the emotion that affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance” (Beebe and Cummins 1996, p.80). Thus, naturalistic data collection, gathered from role-play or recorded in natural settings, can be expected in future studies to provide a more complete understanding of this refusal speech act. In spite of its short-comings, the DCT can be a useful tool for

providing a preliminary investigation at cultural differences in the performance of refusals of requests.

The methodology used in this research is mainly based on the methodology used by Beckers (1999). This is a well-designed, well-structured means of eliciting the most data with the least time available. In the present study, the DCT is designed in English for AEs and VEs. The questionnaire consists of eighteen refusal situations that vary in terms of social status with three levels: low (L), high (H), and equal (E); social distance with three levels: intimate (I), acquaintance (A), and stranger (S); and gender relationship with two levels: same (S) and opposite (O). All of the questions in the questionnaires are coded, based on the combination of the three variables: social status, social distance, and gender.

There are in total 18 situations dealing with everyday lifestyles. At the beginning of each question, there is a code for the situation concerning the three above variables for easier reference. Each code contains three alphabetical letters. The first letter of the code refers to social status of the participant in relation to that of the addressee (H for High, L for Low, and E for Equal); the second letter of the code refers to social distance of the participant in relation to that of the addressee (I for Intimate, A for Acquaintance, and S for Stranger); and the last letter refers to the gender of the participants (O for Opposite, and S for Same gender). The design of the questionnaires in this way helps to classify the data in terms of social status, social distance and gender. The three variables of social status, social distance, and gender can be represented in the letters in each code. Thus each situation needs to make the comparison at least three times with the combinations of the other variables to elicit the necessary data. For instance, the first situation for a female is “You are a mother of two children. One day you are going shopping with your little daughter. She asks if you can buy an expensive doll for her, “Mum, I love that doll so much. Could you please buy it for me?”. You refuse her request by saying:....”. This situation is coded as LIS, which means the participant is supposed to refuse a person of Lower (L) social status, Intimate (I) to the participant, and of the Same (S) gender. Here the person is her little daughter. Daughter is low in social status in relation to “mother”,

in an intimate relationship, and of the same gender. The questionnaire for females was designed first. Then the questionnaire for males was developed on the basis of the questionnaires for females. Some minor changes in terms of gender had to be made to adjust to the situations. Participants were presented with the 18 situations in which they were requested to perform some actions. Their task was to refuse in all those situations, and write down what they would say in each situation. The participants voluntarily took part in the survey, which took them about 20 minutes to complete. They were provided with all the information related to the study before they joined the survey. They had to sign a consent form and they were able to withdraw at any stage of the study without penalty. They were told that all the answers would be kept strictly confidential.

III.5. Administration of the Questionnaires

A pilot questionnaire was tested with two Australian female students and two Australian male students at the University of Queensland in Australia. The researcher also sent the questionnaires to the Department of English, the College of Foreign Languages, the University of Danang, Vietnam for the pilot study, which involved another two Vietnamese female students and another two Vietnamese male students. The aim of the pilot study was to identify any weaknesses in the questionnaires. Hunt, Sparkman and Wilcox (1982) list some procedures concerning the process of conducting pilot studies. First they pretest the length and layout of the questionnaire, as well as the format and sequence of the questions used. Second, they pretest some individual questions which the researcher feels may be misleading. Third, it pretests data analysis procedures such as coding and tabulating processes. The pilot study proved to be successful. Based on the feedback from the participants, several minor changes were made to the questionnaires. They were then distributed to the participants.

There were 20 Australian female native speakers of English, 20 Australian male native speakers of English, 20 Vietnamese female learners of English and 20 Vietnamese male learners of English participating in the study. In total 80 participants filled in DCTs with 18 situations. The entire number of responses of refusals was $80 \times 18 = 1440$. The Appendix provides some representative, though not exhaustive, examples of the answers

from the questionnaires. The total data set is too extensive to be included in the Appendix.

III.6.Ethical/Human participants concerns

The participants in this study remain anonymous. All were volunteers and at least 18 years of age. The data collection method is DCT, which did not harm the participants in the study physically or mentally. Ethical clearance related to human participants in the study was approved by the Research Committee of the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies, the Faculty of Arts, the University of Queensland.

III.7. Data analysis

The refusal strategies gathered by this study are analysed based on a sequence of semantic formulae (II.9) provided by Beebe and Takahashi (1990). For example, if a respondent refuses a request for buying a robot for a son by saying “I’m sorry, dear. I don’t have enough money. We’ll buy it later when you are a bit older”. This will be analysed as [regret] + [excuse] + [alternative]. In the process of coding, some of the semantic formulae in Beebe and Takahashi (1990) were not found in the data, and were therefore removed from the list of semantic formulae. There were also some semantic formulae which we have added, as they appeared in the data many times.

Classification of Refusals by Beebe & Takahashi (1990, pp. 72-73)

- I. Direct:
 - A. Performative
 - B. Non-performative statement
 - 1. “No”
 - 2. Negative willingness ability
- II. Indirect
 - A. Statement of regret
 - B. Wish
 - C. Excuse/reason/explanation
 - D. Statement of alternative

1. I can do X instead of Y
 2. Why don't you do X instead of Y
- 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
1. Threat/statement of negative consequences to the requester
 2. Guilt trip
 3. Criticize the request/requester, etc.
 4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request.
 5. Let interlocutor off the hook
 6. Self defence
- J. Acceptance that functions as a refusal
1. Unspecific or indefinite reply
 2. Lack of enthusiasm
- K. Avoidance
1. Nonverbal
 2. Verbal
 - a. Topic switch
 - b. Joke
 - c. Repetition of part of request, etc.
 - d. Postponement
 - e. Hedging
 - f. Ellipsis
 - g. Hint

Adjuncts to Refusals

1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement
2. Statement of empathy

3. Gratitude/appreciation

The researcher worked with an Australian native speaker of English to check the meaning of each sentence. This provided a cross-check on the researchers' choice and the use of codes. In a study of this scope, it is not necessary to have fully independent rater checks, and this process of consultation was sufficient to confirm the validity of the investigator's choice of coding. In a more extensive study, it would be necessary to use a fully independent rater. Some sentences may carry more than one semantic formula. Thus both researchers had to cooperate with each other to agree on which semantic formula that sentence should carry. Thus the validity and reliability of the obtained results was satisfactory.

As the focus of the study is speech acts of refusals (SARs), the semantic formulae obtained in the questionnaires will be classified into different SARs. Each SAR was then assigned a code to simplify the concordance process. The following is the number of SARs that were found in the data (For more explanations, III.8).

List of SARs

I. Direct

- A. Performative (QQIA)
- B. Non-performative statement
 - 1. "No" (QQIB1)
 - 2. Negative willingness ability (QQIB2)

II. Indirect

- A. Statement of regret (QQIIA)
- B. Statement of wish (QQIIB)
- C. Excuse/reason/explanation (QQIIC)
- D. Statement of alternative (QQIID)
- E. Set condition for future or past acceptance (QQIIE)
- F. Promise of future acceptance (QQIIF)

- G. Statement of principle (QQIIG)
- H. Rhetorical question * (QQIIH)
- I. Threat/statement of negative consequences (QQIII)
- J. Restatement * (QQIIJ)
- K. Unwillingness/insistence * (QQIIK)
- L. Postponement (QQIIL)

III. Adjuncts to Refusals

- A. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (QQIIIA)
- B. Statement of empathy (QQIIIB)
- C. Addressing terms (QQIIIC)

(Those with * are not in the list from Beebe and Takahashi (1990), and have been added for the purposes of the present investigation to handle different aspects of the data.)

The frequency of SARs for each situation was calculated in order to compare the differences in refusal strategies across the two cultures. The Simple Concordance Program (SCP) version 4.0.7 developed by Alan Reed was used to count the frequency of the SARs. This program was retrieved from <http://www.textworld.com/scp/>. It was used in accordance with the methodology for text research recommended by Sussex (2006). SCP was designed to calculate the frequency of words or phrases in English in combination with the “kwic” (key word in context) function. There is no English word that begins with the prefix QQ, so Sussex (2006) suggested prefixing the labels with QQ to differentiate them from other words in English. (For a full list of codes, III.8). For example, if a person writes in a particular situation: “I’m sorry, I have another appointment at that time. But I am free on Tuesday at 3pm. You can come if you want”, the sentence will be coded like this: “I’m sorry QQIIA, I have another appointment at that time QQIIC. But I am free on Tuesday at 3pm. You can come if you want QQIID”.

The SCP helps researchers to calculate the distribution of the codes. Thus we can determine the frequency of each SAR. For example, in order to count the number of

statements of regret, the researcher just selects the code QQIA, which is the code for the SAR of *statement of regret*.

The data on the frequencies of SARs found with the SCP were entered into tables in an Excel worksheet with 18 different situations. The researcher performed calculations in Excel to examine the number of SARs in different contexts. For example, to investigate the social status with three levels (High, Equal, Low) of AEs, the researcher identified the codes of the situations with H (for High), E (for Equal), and L (for Low). For High social status, the following codes of situations would be required: HAO, HSS, HSO, HAS, HIS, HIO. These situations all begin with the letter H, which stands for High, as the first letter of the code represents the social status. The same sets of combinations occur with Equal social status (ESO, EAS, EAO, EIS, ESS, EIO) and Low social status (LIS, LSS, LAO, LIO, LSO, LAS). Then a comparison of the number of SARs was made among the three levels (High, Equal, Low) of this variable. The same procedure was applied to social distance (the second letter of the code of the situations) and gender (the third letter of the codes of the situations).

III.8. Explanations for coding semantic formulae

a. Direct

A. Performative (QQIA)

According to Leech (1983), performatives are “self-naming utterances, in which the performative verb usually refers to the act in which the speaker is involved at the moment of speech” (p.215).

For example: *I refuse to cancel the class.*

B. Non-performative statement

1. “No” (QQIB1)

In this strategy, refusals are performed by a flat “no” with no internal modification. The word “No” is a direct way of refusal. Saying “No” to someone is an FTA (II.5). It is usually followed by language softeners, except in a few cases, when people are extremely direct.

For example: *No, I don't want to.*

2. Negative willingness ability (QQIB2)

This category includes some expressions which contain negations. Negation can be expressed by the negative particle “Not”, or by using any word that semantically negates a proposition.

For example: *I can't lend you my car.*

b. Indirect

Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) state that the indirect verbal style “refers to verbal messages that camouflage and conceal speakers’ true intentions in terms of their wants, needs, and goals in the discourse situation” (p.100). The indirect continuum consists of the following strategies:

A. Statement of regret (QQIIA)

The words “sorry”, “regret” mean that someone has made a mistake, and feels bad about that. Statements that contain these words are classified as regret/apology.

For example: *I'm sorry that I don't have enough money to lend you.*

B. Statement of wish (QQIIB)

In this category, the respondent indirectly refuses the request by indicating a wish.

For example: *I wish I can do it for you.*

C. Excuse/reason/explanation (QQIIC)

The respondent indirectly refuses the request by indicating some reasons, which may be general or specific.

For example: *I have an important meeting tonight.*

D. Statement of alternative (QQIID)

While the respondent cannot adhere to the request, s/he suggests an alternative in which the request can be fulfilled. Chen, Ye, and Zhang (1995) observed that alternatives are used to “soften the threatening power of refusals” (133).

For example: *What about you asking Belinda to do it for you?*

E. Set condition for future or past acceptance (QQIIE)

By using a hypothetical condition as a reason for refusing, the speaker aims to direct the refusal to a situation when it is better if the requester has asked in advance.

For example: *I would be happy to change it for you, if I were not too busy this weekend.*

F. Promise of future acceptance (QQIIF)

In some situations, the refusal may contain a promise that the requests will be accomplished at later time, when there are favourable conditions for its completion.

For example: *I'll buy it for you on your next birthday.*

G. Statement of principle (QQIIG)

In this category, the respondent indicates a statement which s/he has followed for a long time. Thus if they comply with the request at that time, they might violate the principle.

For example: *I never lend money to strangers.*

H. Rhetorical question (QQIIH)

Some people want to express what they think about a request by asking a rhetorical question.

For example: *Why do you want to spend that much when you don't have it?*

I. Threat/statement of negative consequences (QQIII)

The respondent attempts to dissuade the interlocutor by making some threats that may have a negative impact on the speakers if the respondent agrees to perform the task.

For example: *If you don't see me then, you will miss out.*

J. Restatement (QQIJ)

The respondent wants to repeat part of the request in an attempt to ask the requester to do the task.

For example: *I've scheduled the test for a particular day and you must be there.*

K. Unwillingness/insistence (QQIK)

The person requested is unwilling to comply with the request, and he/she shows this unwillingness by a statement illustrated in the example below.

For example: *I don't have that kind of money.*

L. Postponement (QQIL)

The hearer wishes to postpone what is requested to a later time, but without giving a specific time. This can be considered as a phatic refusal.

For example: *Not today.*

III. Adjuncts to Refusals

These strategies include adjuncts which function as extra modifications to protect the speaker's positive face.

A. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (QQIIIA)

For example: *I'd love to help.*

B. Statement of empathy (QQIIIB)

For example: *I realize you are in a difficult situation.*

C. Addressing terms (QQIIIC)

For example: Sir, Ma'am

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

IV.1. Preliminary results

The frequency of each SAR in each situation was calculated in the following tables. We will explore the idea that the more SARs, the attention and care paid to the expression of refusal.

Table 2: Summary: Use of SARs by AEs

Codes	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO	TOTAL
QQIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
QQIB1	13	8	3	6	11	5	10	6	9	13	5	4	4	1	5	4	3	2	112
QQIB2	10	13	11	11	10	11	3	6	4	7	12	5	11	10	5	1	8	12	150
QQIIA	11	23	24	28	12	32	21	13	22	18	23	28	22	19	30	0	18	23	367
QQIIB	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	7
QQIIC	22	2	30	32	26	30	37	19	34	5	33	4	24	21	34	21	16	37	427
QQIID	8	9	4	12	11	3	13	10	10	14	14	11	4	7	2	0	9	3	144
QQIIE	3	0	1	1	8	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	21
QQIIF	5	1	2	3	5	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	3	0	6	33
QQIIG	1	25	7	1	1	2	1	5	0	26	3	31	2	7	2	3	5	0	117
QQIIH	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	4	0	12
QQIII	1	4	1	5	0	1	1	0	0	4	0	1	5	1	0	1	2	2	29
QQIIJ	1	3	18	1	2	0	0	6	0	0	1	7	1	3	1	1	18	0	63
QQIIK	2	1	1	4	2	1	0	4	0	1	0	1	6	9	3	3	1	0	39
QQIIL	8	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	14	2	2	32
QQIIIA	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	11	0	0	10	1	6	2	5	0	0	5	49
QQIIB	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
QQIIC	16	1	2	1	3	0	2	0	0	12	6	17	2	2	4	15	2	3	88
Total	102	95	105	107	96	91	91	77	83	100	112	110	89	87	97	68	88	96	

Table 2 shows that AEs used the most SARs with situations 11 and 12. They uttered more SARs in situation 11 (EIS) with 112 SARs and situation 12 (HSO) with 110 SARs). In situation 11, “a friend of the same gender asks you to pick him/her up at the airport. He/She says “I do not know the area well. Can you come and pick me up around 1pm next Monday? I would really appreciate your help”. In situation 12, “You are one of the check-in staff at an airport. A passenger of the opposite gender asks if he/she can take some food on to the airplane, but this is not allowed by the airline policy”.

The two situations in which AEs utilized the fewest SARs of the semantic formulae are situation 8 (LSO) with 77 SARs, and situation 16 (HIS) with 68 SARs. In situation 8, “You are on holiday in Hawaii, and you meet a taxi driver of the opposite gender. He/She has shown you around the city while you were in his taxi. He even tried to contact a friend of yours with his/her mobile for you. In the end, he/she asks for double the taxi fare in recognition of his extra services”. In situation 16, “You are a ten year old girl. Your mother wants you to turn off the TV and study for tomorrow’s lesson. She says, “Andy/Julia, stop all the rubbish on TV now. Do your homework immediately”.

Table 3: Summary: Use of SARs by VEs

	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO	TOTAL	
QQIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
QQIB1	2	1	2	1	5	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	21
QQIB2	4	14	8	7	5	3	6	6	2	4	9	6	5	2	3	2	11	6	0	103
QQIIA	10	30	28	31	11	33	30	20	24	22	25	35	27	25	26	0	26	31	0	434
QQIIB	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	8
QQIIC	23	14	22	34	26	34	34	22	29	5	34	4	30	40	37	25	27	35	0	475
QQIID	7	3	1	3	7	5	8	0	3	9	8	1	2	3	1	0	1	5	0	67
QQIIE	7	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
QQIIF	7	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	10	0	4	0	28
QQIIG	0	9	4	0	0	1	1	4	2	14	2	24	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	65
QQIIH	3	1	1	0	4	0	2	3	1	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	21
QQIII	1	2	0	0	4	2	1	2	0	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
QQIIJ	3	7	8	0	5	1	0	4	3	10	0	2	1	0	0	2	10	0	0	56
QQIIK	2	3	3	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	4	0	0	0	22
QQIIL	4	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	1	0	22
QQIIIA	1	0	0	6	0	2	4	8	0	0	4	0	4	2	0	0	1	2	0	34
QQIIB	1	3	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	15
QQIIC	26	2	3	7	21	0	0	3	1	13	2	12	3	2	0	29	0	13	0	137
Total	101	90	84	92	94	82	89	81	70	83	87	88	84	76	74	84	82	98	0	1539

Two situations when Vietnamese participants used the largest number of SARs are situations 1 (LIS) with 101 SARs and 18 (HIO) with 98 SARs. In situation 1, “You are a father/mother of two children. One day a little son/daughter asks if you can buy an expensive robot/doll for him/her “Dad/Mum, I love that robot/doll so much. Could you please buy it for me?”. In situation 18, “You are an assistant to a male/female Professor. At the end of the office hours, you are going to leave. The Professor asks if you can stay with him/her and help him/her with some papers”.

Two situations where VEs utilized the fewest SARs are situation 9 (EAO) with 70 SARs, and situation 15 (ESS) with 74 SARs. In situation 9, “You are in a German course. A classmate of the opposite gender asks if he/she can borrow your dictionary for a while. He/She says “I left my dictionary at home. Could you please lend me yours for a few minutes?” In situation 15, “You are a student at a University. You are about to go home in your car. A female student, who you do not know before, approaches and asks you for a lift home, saying that she and you live in the same area of the city”.

Table 4: Differences between AEs and VEs in terms of number of SARs

Situations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Codes	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO
AEs	102	95	105	107	96	91	91	77	83
VEs	101	90	84	92	94	82	89	81	70
Difference (AEs-VEs)	1	5	21	15	2	9	2	-4	13

Situations	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Codes	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO
AEs	100	112	110	89	87	97	68	88	96
VEs	83	87	88	84	76	74	84	82	98
Difference (AEs-VEs)	17	25	22	5	11	23	-16	6	-2

Comparing the differences between the investigated groups, there are two striking features. AEs and VEs shared nearly the same number of SARs when they refused in situation 1 (LIS) with 102 SARs for AEs and 101 SARs for VEs. In this situation, “You are a father/mother of two children. One day a little son/daughter asks if you can buy an

expensive robot/doll for him/her “Dad/Mum, I love that robot/doll so much. Could you please buy it for me?”. The biggest difference between the two groups of people is found in situation 11 (EIS) with 112 SARs for AEs and 87 SARs for VEs. In situation 11, “Your friend of the same gender asks you to pick him/her up at the airport. He/She says “I do not know the area well. Can you come and pick me up around 1pm next Monday? I would really appreciate your help”.

Figure 3: SARs for AEs - VEs

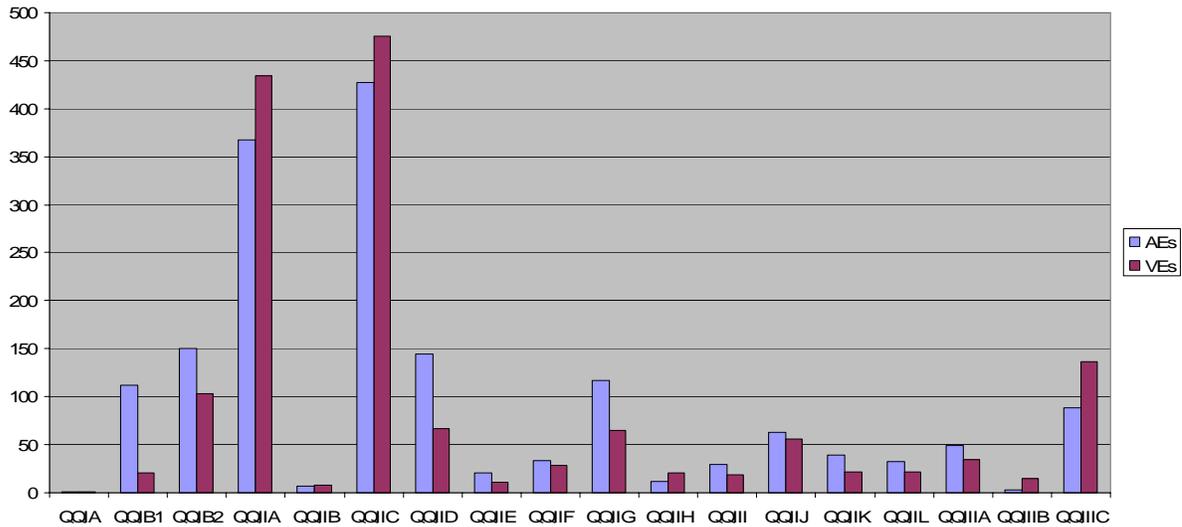


Table 5: Comparisons of SARs by AEs and VEs

SARs	Codes	AEs	VEs
Direct performative	QQIA	1	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	112	21
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	150	103
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	367	434
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	7	8
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	427	475
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	144	67
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	21	11
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	33	28
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	117	65
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	12	21
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	29	19
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	63	56
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	39	22
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	32	22
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	49	34
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	3	15
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	88	137

Figure 3 shows that overall AEs utilized more SARs in their refusals than VEs. In nearly all categories of semantic refusals, in fact in 11 out of 18, AEs had higher numbers of SARs than VEs. The three categories of SARs in which VEs have higher frequency of use are QQIIA, QQIIB and QQIIC, which are *statement of regret*, *excuse/reason/explanation*, and *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term*. AEs used 367 SARs of *statement of regret*, as against 434 for VEs. The second SAR where AEs outnumbered the VEs in terms of the frequency of use is *excuse/reason/explanation*. In this category, AEs utilized 427, while the number for VEs is 475. In *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* we find the biggest difference among the three categories (AEs 88, VEs is 137, or about 1.5 times higher than the other group).

A distinguishing feature of the above chart is that there are three distinct groups of SARs. The first group is QQIIA (*statement of regret*) and QQIIC (*excuse/explanation/reason*), with around 400 responses in each type of SAR for each cluster of participants. Table 5 also shows the overall refusals of AEs and VEs in terms of SARs. The most striking feature of the table is the number of *statement of regret* (367 SARs from AEs and 434 SARs from VEs) and the number of *excuse/reason/explanation* (427 SARs from AEs and 475 SARs from VEs). These two SARs played a crucial role in refusal structures of AEs and VEs, though there are some differences in the relative percentages of use of the two structures.

The second group includes QQIB1 (direct “NO”), QQIB2 (negative willingness ability), QQIID (statement of alternative), QQIIG (statement of principle), and QQIIC (*adjuncts to refusals-addressing term*), in which there were approximately 100 responses of refusals in each type of SAR in each cluster of participants. The last group of SARs where the participants utilized no more than 50 for each SAR for each cluster of participants included QQIA (*direct performative*), QQIIB (*statement of wish*), QQIIE (*set condition for future/past acceptance*), QQIIF (*promise of future acceptance*), QQIHH (*rhetorical question*), QQIII (*threat or statement of negative consequences*), QQIHK (*unwillingness/doubt*), QQIIL (*postponement*), QQIIIA (*statement of positive opinion/feeling/agreement*), and QQIIBB (*statement of empathy*).

The three most striking differences between the two groups of subjects involve the three SARs: *statement of alternative*, *statement of principle* and *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term*. In *statement of alternative*, AEs utilized 144 SARs, while VEs employed 67 SARs. In *statement of principle*, AEs made use of 117 SARs whereas VEs used only half as many (67). In *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term*, AEs employed 88 SARs, which VEs used twice as many (137 SARs).

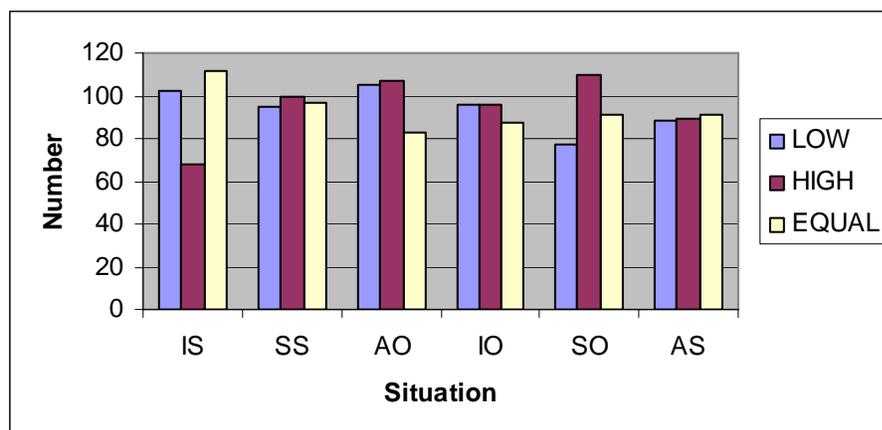
Furthermore, the use of “NO” in direct, non-performative sentences is an important feature. Whereas AEs utilized 112 SARs containing the word “NO”, VEs recorded just one-sixth of this number (21). And in *adjuncts to refusals-statement of empathy*, AEs used only 3 SARs of this category out of more than 700 hundred total responses from the questionnaires, while VEs used of 15 SARs. The numbers in this category are too small for confident analysis, except in the fact that they are so low in contrast to other SARs.

IV.2.Data by social status, social distance, and gender of AEs and VEs:

IV.2.1.Social status:

The following chart is for both female and male participants in the study. The variable of social status was investigated with three levels: low, high and equal status.

Figure 4: AEs by social status (by interlocutors)



IS: Intimate Same gender

IO: Intimate Opposite gender

SS: Stranger Same gender

SO: Stranger Opposite gender

AO: Acquaintance Opposite gender

AS: Acquaintance Same gender

Figure 4 shows that AEs use the same number of SARs for refusals to people of low, equal, and high social statuses in the groups of strangers of same gender and acquaintances of the same gender, though with a lower number of SARs for acquaintances of the same gender. The two biggest differences among those groups of responses are found in the intimates of same gender group, and strangers of the opposite gender group. Whereas in the group of intimates of the same gender, refusals to people of high status required the fewest SARs, the group of stranger of the opposite gender employed the most SARs when dealing with people of high status.

Table 6: AEs by social status (by SARs)

SARs - AEs	Codes	LOW	EQUAL	HIGH
Direct performative	QQIA	1	0	0
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	44	35	33
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	58	45	47
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	101	147	119
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	3	3	1
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	115	189	123
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	51	49	44
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	12	7	2
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	13	8	12
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	39	15	63
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	5	4	3
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	8	3	18
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	48	5	10
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	11	13	15
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	12	4	16
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	16	19	14
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	2	1	0
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	24	14	50

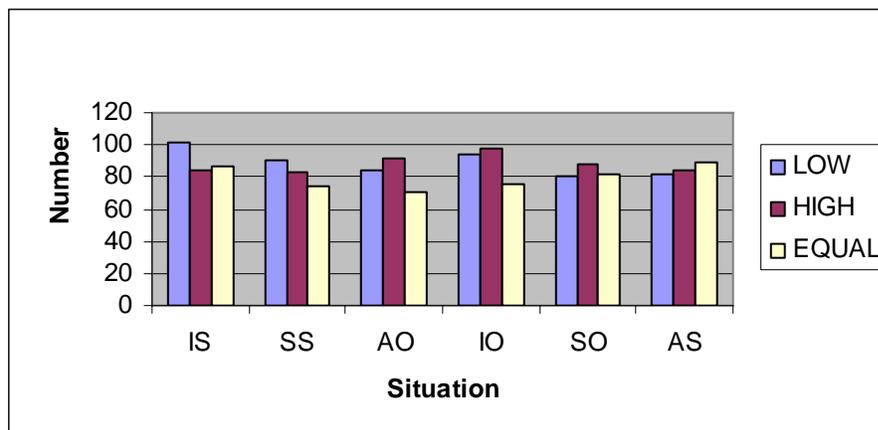
Table 6 shows the number of SARs that AEs employed according to social status. There are a few differences in the ways AEs utilized SARs in their refusal conversations

with people in different status. AEs employed more SARs of *excuse/reason/explanation* for people of equal status rather than the other two groups: 189 for people of equal status, and 115 and 123 SARs respectively to refuse low and high status people. The situation is similar for the *statement of regret*. AEs employed more SARs of regret to people of equal status than to people of low (101) and high (119) status.

A distinguishing feature of the table is the number of SARs of *statement of principle*. Australians used more SARs of *statement of principle* to refuse people of high status (63) compared to refusals to people of low status and equal status (39 and 15 respectively). With regard to *restatement*, Australians employed a higher number of SARs of this category to people of low status than to people of equal and high status. Whereas refusals to people of low status occupied 48 SARs, the number of SARs of this category is only one tenth (5) and one fifth (10) of the previous figure for refusals to people of equal and high statuses respectively.

There were 50 SARs of *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* to refuse people of high status, whereas the number for refusals to low status was just 24 SARs, and 14 for refusals to equal status.

Figure 5: VEs by social status (by interlocutors)



IS: Intimate Same gender

IO: Intimate Opposite gender

SS: Stranger Same gender

SO: Stranger Opposite gender

AO: Acquaintance Opposite gender

AS: Acquaintance Same gender

Figure 5 indicates that VEs made use of the most SARs when they refused intimates of same gender and intimates of opposite gender. For the former group, VEs employed the highest number of SARs to refuse people of low status. This is the highest number of SARs found for the VEs. On the other hand, strangers of opposite gender and acquaintances of same gender of three social statuses received nearly the same number of SARs from the VEs, with approximately 80 SARs in each category.

Table 7: VEs by social status (by SARs)

SARs-VEs	Codes	LOW	EQUAL	HIGH
Direct performative	QQIA	1	0	0
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	16	1	4
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	48	25	30
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	125	163	146
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	2	5	1
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	134	208	133
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	19	28	20
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	9	1	1
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	12	2	14
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	18	8	39
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	12	4	5
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	9	3	7
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	37	4	15
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	13	2	7
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	7	3	12
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	10	12	12
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	5	4	6
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	55	5	77

Table 7 shows the number of SARs for each category of SAR used by Vietnamese participants when they refused their conversation partners in terms of three levels of social status. Among the differences between the three social statuses, the most distinctive is the direct, non-performative “NO”. While refusals to people of low status

occupies 16 SARs for this category, the numbers of SARs for refusals to people of equal and high status are 1 and 4 respectively, which is low compared to the other group. These numbers are small and should be treated with caution. Another difference among these SARs is that refusals to people of equal status accounted for 208 SARs of *excuse/reason/explanation*. These numbers for refusals to people of low and high status are only 134 and 133 respectively.

There were 37 SARs of *restatement* to people of low status, while the figures for refusals to equal and high status were only 4 and 15 respectively. Finally, with the use of *adjuncts to refusals-addressing terms* when refusing, people of high status received the most SARs of category with (77), whereas the numbers for refusals of low and equal status are 55 and 5 respectively. It is noticeable that the number of SARs of *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* for people of equal status is extremely low in comparison with the other two groups.

Table 8: AEs and VEs by social status (by interlocutors)

Social status	LOW		HIGH		EQUAL	
	AUS	VN	AUS	VN	AUS	VN
IS	102	101	68	84	112	87
SS	95	90	100	83	97	74
AO	105	84	107	92	83	70
IO	96	94	96	98	87	76
SO	77	81	110	88	91	82
AS	88	82	89	84	91	89
Total	563	532	570	529	561	478

IS: Intimate Same gender

IO: IO: Intimate Opposite gender

SS: Stranger Same gender

SO: Stranger Opposite gender

AO: Acquaintance Opposite gender

AS: Acquaintance Same gender

Table 8 shows the number of SARs used by AEs and VEs by social status. In groups, AEs and VEs utilized similar numbers of SARs in their refusals. The groups that show different patterns of SARs are used with acquaintances of opposite gender of low status (105 SARs for AEs and 84 SARs for VEs), and acquaintances of opposite gender at high status (107 SARs for AEs and 92 SARs for VEs). The third group of people that

received different numbers of responses from AEs and VEs is strangers of the opposite gender (110 SARs for the former cluster and 88 SARs for the latter cluster). Finally, intimates of same gender of equal status record 112 SARs for AEs and 87 SARs for VEs.

Overall, AEs utilized nearly the same number of SARs across the three levels of social status (563, 570, and 561). Therefore, AEs do not have clear preferences by social status. VEs, on the other hand, varied the total number of semantic formulae when they refused different people from different social status, with distinctive behaviours to people of equal status. The three figures for the low, high and equal statuses are 532, 529 and 478 respectively.

Table 9: AEs-VEs by social distance (by SARs)

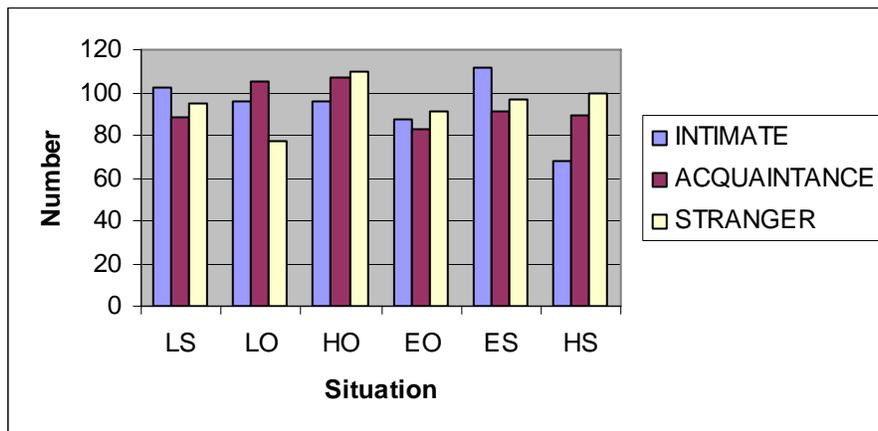
SARs	Codes	LOW		EQUAL		HIGH	
		AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs
Direct performative	QQIA	1	1	0	0	0	0
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	44	16	35	1	33	4
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	58	48	45	25	47	30
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	101	125	147	163	119	146
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	3	2	3	5	1	1
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	115	134	189	208	123	133
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	51	19	49	28	44	20
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	12	9	7	1	2	1
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	13	12	8	2	12	14
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	39	18	15	8	63	39
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	5	12	4	4	3	5
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	8	9	3	3	18	7
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	48	37	5	4	10	15
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	11	13	13	2	15	7
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	12	7	4	3	16	12
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	16	10	19	12	14	12
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	2	5	1	4	0	6
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	24	55	14	5	50	77

Table 9 describes the number of SARs across the three levels of social status. A comparison between the two groups showed that AEs employed a much larger number of the word “NO” in their refusals than VEs. The number of the word “NO” in their refusals for AEs is 5 times higher than that for VEs

With regard to *statement of alternative*, AEs employed roughly three times more statements of this kind than VEs across three levels of social status. For example, while AEs employed 51 SARs of *statement of alternative* when they refused people of low status, the figure for VEs is only 19 statements. The same situation was found in the *statement of principle*, where AEs utilized approximately 3 times more SARs than VEs.

IV.2.2.Social distance

Figure 6: AEs by social distance (by interlocutors)



LS: Low social status Same gender

EO: Equal social status Opposite gender

LO: Low social status Opposite gender

ES: Equal social status Same gender

HO: High social status Opposite gender

HS: High social status Same gender

Figure 6 illustrates different patterns in responses of refusals to people in terms of social distance by AEs. For people of equal status and of opposite gender, there was little difference between the three groups of intimates, acquaintances, and strangers. There are approximately 90 SARs for each group. On the other hand, the most fluctuating patterns in terms of the number of SARs were found in refusals of AEs to people of high status

and of same gender. The highest number of SARs was found in the refusals to people of high status and of opposite gender, and the lowest in the refusals to people of high status and of same gender.

Table 10: AEs by social distance (by SARs)

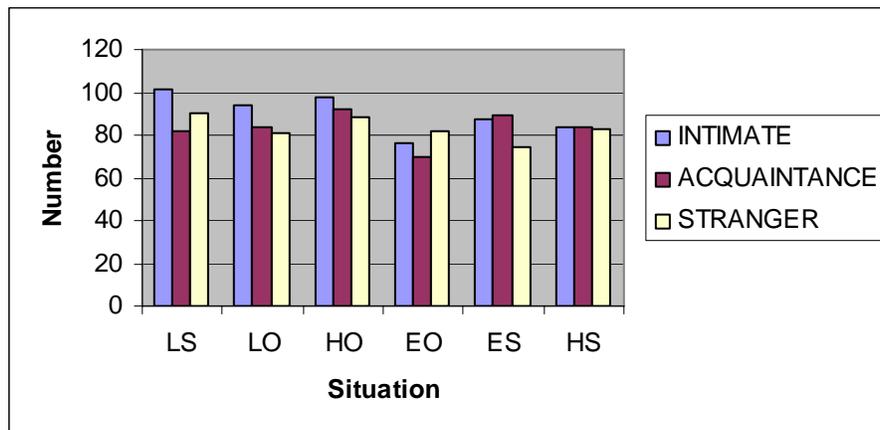
SARs-AEs	Codes	INTIMATE	ACQUAINTANCE	STRANGER
Direct performative	QQIA	0	0	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	36	35	41
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	55	48	47
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	88	135	144
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	2	2	3
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	160	173	94
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	43	52	49
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	17	3	1
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	22	7	4
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	15	16	86
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	4	5	3
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	5	14	10
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	8	38	17
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	16	12	11
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	25	4	3
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	20	9	20
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	0	1	2
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	45	9	34

Table 10 describes the number of SARs categorized on the three levels of social distance. AEs used the most SARs of *statement of regret* to refuse strangers (144 statements), while the respective figures for intimates and acquaintances are 88 and 135. In contrast, the number of *excuse/reason/explanation* that AEs used to refuse strangers accounts for the lowest figure (94 SARs), while for intimates and acquaintances, the numbers are nearly double, at 160 phrases and 173 phrases respectively.

AEs also utilized the most SARs of *set condition for future/past acceptance* when they refused intimates, in this case are usually their children, with 17 SARs, whereas refusals to acquaintances and strangers account for only 3 and 1 SARs respectively. Conversely, AEs employed the highest number of SARs of *statement of principle* when they refused strangers (with 86 SARs). Intimates and acquaintances account for only one fifth of the above figure (15 and 16 SARs respectively).

With regard to SARs of *postponement*, AEs used the highest number of SARs (25 SARs) to refuse intimates, while the figures for refusals to acquaintances and strangers were very low(4 and 3 SARs respectively). Finally, AEs used a high number of *adjuncts to refusals-addressing terms* when they refused intimates and strangers (45 and 34 phrases respectively). On the other hand, the number of *adjuncts to refusasl-addressing term* that AEs employed to refuse acquaintances is very limited (9).

Figure 7: VEs by social distance (by interlocutors)



LS: Low social status Same gender

EO: Equal social status Opposite gender

LO: Low social status Opposite gender

ES: Equal social status Same gender

HO: High social status Opposite gender

HS: High social status Same gender

Figure 7 describes the number of SARs found in refusals used by VEs. The three groups of people that received nearly equal numbers of SARs among the three types of social distance are people of low status and of opposite gender, people of high status and of opposite gender, people of high status and same gender.

Table 11: VEs by social distance (by SARs)

SARs-VEs	Codes	INTIMATE	ACQUAINTANCE	STRANGER
Direct performative	QQIA	0	0	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	8	8	5
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	28	39	36
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	102	166	166
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	2	4	2
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	183	176	116
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	30	18	19
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	8	2	1
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	25	2	1
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	2	9	54
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	7	7	7
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	5	4	10
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	10	22	24
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	6	6	10
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	18	4	0
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	9	15	10
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	4	5	6
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	93	14	30

Table 11 describes the number of SARs that VEs employed categorized according to social distance. There are some variations in the number of the following SARs. In *statement of regret*, VEs used the same number of SARs when they refused acquaintances and strangers (166 SARs each), whereas the number of SARs of refusals to intimates is only two-thirds of this figure. As to *excuse/reason/explanation*, VEs utilized more SARs of this category when they refused intimates and acquaintances rather strangers. The first two groups recorded 183 and 176 SARs of *excuse/ reason/ explanation* each, whereas the last group just had two-thirds of that figure (116).

VEs employed many more SARs of *promise of future acceptance* when they refused intimates than the other two groups. VEs used up to 25 SARs to refuse this group

of people whereas the other two groups just recorded 1 and 2 SARs respectively.

Statement of principle reverses these results. VEs used 54 SARs of this kind to refuse strangers, while they just employed 2 and 9 SARs of this kind to refuse intimates and acquaintances respectively.

VEs used 18 statements of *postponement* to refuse intimates, while they just utilized 4 statements of this kind with acquaintances, and none with strangers. And finally, VEs used a large number of *adjuncts to refusals- addressing term* to refuse intimates (93 phrases), whereas they just employed one fifth and one third of the above figure to refuse acquaintances (14) and strangers (30) respectively.

Table 12: AEs-VEs by social distance (by interlocutors)

Social distance	INTIMATE		ACQUAINTANCE		STRANGER	
	AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs
LS	102	101	88	82	95	90
LO	96	94	105	84	77	81
HO	96	98	107	92	110	88
EO	87	76	83	70	91	82
ES	112	87	91	89	97	74
HS	68	84	89	84	100	83
Total	561	540	563	501	570	498

LS: Low social status Same gender

EO: Equal social status Opposite gender

LO: Low social status Opposite gender

ES: Equal social status Same gender

HO: High social status Opposite gender

HS: High social status Same gender

Table 12 describes the number of SARs in terms of social distance for AEs and VEs. There are four groups of subjects whose refusals are different according to the variable of social distance of intimates, acquaintances, and strangers. The first group is refusals to people of equal status and of same gender. Whereas AEs employed 112 SARs for this category of refusals, the number for VEs is 87. The second group is refusals to people of low status and of opposite gender. While AEs utilized 105 SARs in their refusals to this category of people, VEs used 84 SARs. The last group of note is the group of subjects of high status and of opposite gender. The number of SARs that AEs used

when dealing with this category of people is 110, while the number for VEs is 88. In the remaining categories, AEs and VEs all have the same number of SARs in their refusals.

Overall, AEs used nearly the same number of SARs when they communicated with the three groups: intimates, acquaintances, and strangers. The number is between 561 and 570. On the other hand, VEs employed a higher number of SARs when they refused intimates. Whereas VEs utilized 540 SARs to refuse intimates, the figures for acquaintances and strangers are 501 and 498 respectively. Overall, the number of SARs used by AEs is slightly higher than by VEs.

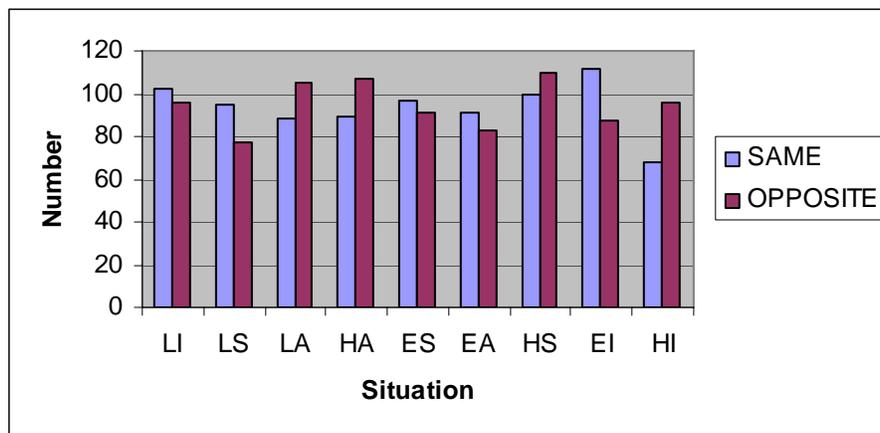
Table 13: AEs-VEs by social distance (by SARs)

SARs	Codes	INTIMATE		ACQUAINTANCE		STRANGER	
		AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs
Direct performative	QQIA	0	0	0	0	1	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	36	8	35	8	41	5
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	55	28	48	39	47	36
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	88	102	135	166	144	166
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	2	2	2	4	3	2
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	160	183	173	176	94	116
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	43	30	52	18	49	19
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	17	8	3	2	1	1
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	22	25	7	2	4	1
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	15	2	16	9	86	54
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	4	7	5	7	3	7
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	5	5	14	4	10	10
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	8	10	38	22	17	24
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	16	6	12	6	11	10
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	25	18	4	4	3	0
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	20	9	9	15	20	10
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	0	4	1	5	2	6
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	45	93	9	14	34	30

Table 13 illustrates the number of SARs across social distances among the two groups. A distinguishing feature of the table is the frequency of the word “NO” in refusal sentences across the three levels of social distance. AEs employed approximately five times more instances of “NO” than VEs, who are less used to the direct performative use of saying “NO”. Another difference between the two groups of speakers is the use of *statement of principle*, which AEs used three times more than VEs. Finally, AEs utilized more than twice as many *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* in their refusals in comparison to VEs.

IV.2.3. Gender

Figure 8: AEs by gender (by interlocutors)



LI: Low social status Intimate

ES: Equal social status Stranger

LS: Low social status Stranger

EA: Equal social status Acquaintance

LA: Low social status Acquaintance

HS: High social status Stranger

HA: High social status Acquaintance

EI: Equal social status Intimate

HI: High social status Intimate

Figure 8 presents data relating to SARs used by AEs in terms of gender. The most striking feature is the situation when AEs refused strangers of high status. When dealing with these groups of people, AEs employed the highest number of SARs in their refusals for both same and opposite genders. The two groups which show a large difference between the two groups of same and opposite genders are intimates of equal status and

intimates of high status. The group of intimates of equal status used more SARs towards people of the same gender than towards people of the opposite gender, but the reverse is true for intimates of high status. This means that within the group of intimates of high status, people of the same gender of the subjects received refusals with fewer SARs than those of the opposite gender.

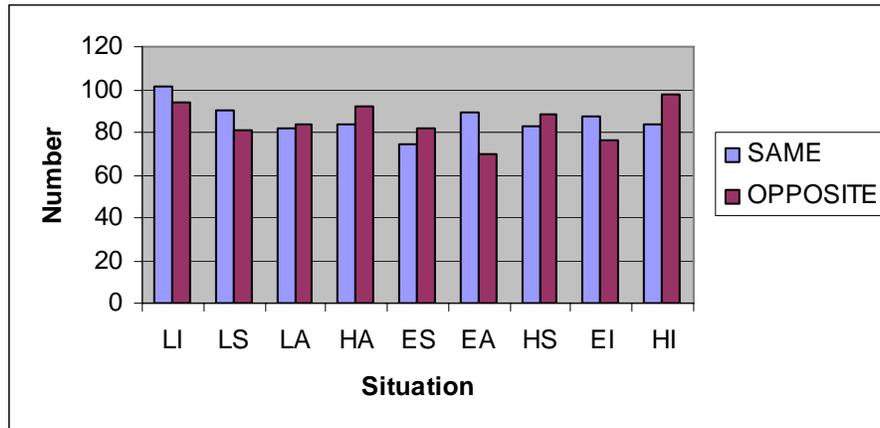
Table 14: AEs by gender (by SARs)

SARs-AEs	Codes	SAME	OPPOSITE
Direct performative	QQIA	0	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	65	47
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	70	80
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	166	201
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	4	3
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	194	233
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	73	71
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	7	14
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	11	22
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	68	49
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	10	2
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	18	11
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	26	37
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	17	22
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	26	6
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/agreement	QQIIIA	25	24
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	2	1
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	60	28

Table 14 presents the number of SARs categorized by gender difference. AEs used more *statements of regret* and more statements of *excuse/reason/ explanation* when they refused people of the opposite gender than when they refused people of the same gender. Refusals to the opposite gender numbered 201 and 233 statements of these two types, but the same gender group showed 166 and 194 respectively.

On the other hand, AEs employed 4 times more statements of *postponement* (26 versus 6) and 2 times more *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* (60 versus 28) when they communicated with people of the same gender than to people of the opposite gender.

Figure 9: VEs by gender (by interlocutors)



LI: Low social status Intimate

ES: Equal social status Stranger

LS: Low social status Stranger

EA: Equal social status Acquaintance

LA: Low social status Acquaintance

HS: High social status Stranger

HA: High social status Acquaintance

EI: Equal social status Intimate

HI: High social status Intimate

Figure 9 shows the patterns of refusals by VEs in terms of the relationship of gender between the requester and the refuser. The two groups of people who experienced the highest number of SARs from VEs are intimates of low status and intimates of high status. Nevertheless, there were different patterns for people of different genders. For the group of intimates of low status, VEs employed more SARs towards people of the same gender than towards people of different gender. On the other hand, in the group of intimates of high status, subjects of the same gender as the respondents received fewer SARs than people of the opposite gender.

Table 15: VEs by gender (by SARs)

SARs-VEs	Codes	SAME	OPPOSITE
Direct performative	QQIA	0	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	9	12
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	58	45
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	196	238
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	4	4
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	229	246
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	39	28
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	9	2
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	19	9
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	30	35
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	12	9
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	8	11
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	33	23
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	13	9
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	15	7
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	14	20
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	11	4
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	75	62

Table 15 describes the number of SARs that VEs used, categorized by the gender relationship of the two persons involved in the conversation. VEs utilized 238 *statements of regret* when they refused people of the opposite gender, while the figure for refusals to people of the same gender is 196 statements, or approximately 80% of the previously mentioned figure. Another difference between the two groups is that VEs employed more *promise of future acceptance* when they refused people of the same gender, whereas they employed only half as many when they refused people of the opposite gender (19 versus 9). Finally, VEs utilized *statements of empathy* three times more frequently when they refused people of the same gender than when they refused the other group, i.e. the opposite gender (11 versus 4), although these smaller numbers are less conclusive than those with larger numbers of SARs.

Table 16: AEs-VEs by gender (by interlocutors)

Gender relationship Participants	SAME		OPPOSITE	
	AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs
LI	102	101	96	94
LS	95	90	77	81
LA	88	82	105	84
HA	89	84	107	92
ES	97	74	91	82
EA	91	89	83	70
HS	100	83	110	88
EI	112	87	87	76
HI	68	84	96	98
Total	842	774	852	765

LI: Low social status Intimate HA: High social status Acquaintance
 ES: Equal social status Stranger EA: Equal social status Acquaintance
 HS: High social status Stranger EI: Equal social status Intimate
 LS: Low social status Stranger LA: Low social status Acquaintance
 HI: High social status Intimate

Table 16 shows the number of the SARs which VEs used in terms of the genders of the respondents in comparison with the requesters. AEs used more SARs to refuse partners of the opposite gender, whereas the reverse is true for VEs. The highest differences among the AEs and the VEs are in the groups of responses to strangers of equal status and same gender. Whereas AEs had 97 SARs for this type of refusals, VEs recorded only 74 SARs. The second group where AEs and VEs showed a difference is with strangers of high status and opposite gender. For this category, AEs used 110 SARs when making refusals, while VEs had 88 SARs. The third category of differences in the two groups of AEs and VEs is intimates of the same gender and of equal status. AEs had 112 against VEs' 87.

Table 16 also describes the total number of SARs that AEs and VEs utilized in terms of the relationship with the participants. Overall, AEs employed more SARs than their Vietnamese counterparts. In both cases, with same or opposite gender conversation partners, AEs utilized more SARs than VEs. AEs utilized more SARs when they refused

conversational partners of the opposite gender than that of the same gender. In contrast, VEs employed more SARs when they refused subjects of the same gender.

Table 17: AEs-VEs by gender (by SARs)

SARs	Codes	SAME		OPPOSITE	
		AEs	VEs	AEs	VEs
Direct performative	QQIA	0	0	1	1
Direct non- performative: NO	QQIB1	65	9	47	12
Direct non- performative: Negative willingness ability	QQIB2	70	58	80	45
Indirect-Statement of regret	QQIIA	166	196	201	238
Indirect-Statement of wish	QQIIB	4	4	3	4
Indirect-Excuse/reason/explanation	QQIIC	194	229	233	246
Indirect-Statement of alternative	QQIID	73	39	71	28
Indirect-Set condition for future/past acceptance	QQIIE	7	9	14	2
Indirect-Promise of future acceptance	QQIIF	11	19	22	9
Indirect- Statement of principle	QQIIG	68	30	49	35
Indirect- Rhetorical question	QQIIH	10	12	2	9
Indirect-Threat/statement of negative consequences	QQIII	18	8	11	11
Indirect-Restatement	QQIIJ	26	33	37	23
Indirect-Unwillingness/Doubt	QQIIK	17	13	22	9
Indirect-Postponement	QQIIL	26	15	6	7
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of positive opinion/feeling/ agreement	QQIIIA	25	14	24	20
Adjuncts to refusals-Statement of empathy	QQIIIB	2	11	1	4
Adjuncts to refusals- Addressing term	QQIIIC	60	75	28	62

Table 17 describes the number of SARs used by the two groups. AEs utilized more “NO” and more *statements of alternative* in their refusals than VEs. While AEs employed more SARs of these kinds when they refused people of the same gender than to people of the opposite gender, the reverse situation is true for VEs, which means they refused people of the opposite gender with much more “NO” and more *statements of alternative* than to people of the same gender.

A similar situation can be observed between the two groups for *statement of regret* (AEs: 60 for same versus 75 for opposite; VEs: 28 for same versus 62 for opposite) and *excuse/reason/explanation* (AEs: 194 for same versus 229 for opposite; VEs: 233 for same versus 246 for opposite). A comparison among the groups shows that for these types of SARs, both AEs and VEs employed fewer SARs of these categories when they communicated with people of the same gender than with people of the opposite gender.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

V.1. Discussion

We are now in the position to draw together the different patterns of refusal behaviours from the point of view of both the three variables and the SARs codes.

V.1.1. General discussion

Several broad tendencies emerge from the analysis of Chapter IV. First, VEs employed more *statements of regret* than AEs. Therefore, it can be said that VEs are apt to express refusals with care. They took time to show their regrets when they refused to show that they were unwilling to say “NO”. Vietnam belongs to Asian culture, where the value of face-saving acts should be carefully observed. This suggests that VEs felt sorry for what they refused. They definitely did not want their conversation partners to feel humiliated. Some phrases that can be listed to the category of statements of regret are “I’m sorry...”, “I’m afraid that...”

With regard to *excuse/reason/explanation*, VEs employed more SARs than AEs. This is further proof of what has been claimed as the value of face in the two cultures. For VEs, though speaking in English, refusals reflected traditional Vietnamese culture, in which people tend to be more careful about the way they refuse. In other words, to avoid disappointing their interlocutors they gave a variety of reasons in order to provide a rationale for the refusal.

A closer consideration of the data suggests that the excuse/reason/explanations used by AEs reflect their actual disinclinations to perform the requests. The reasons that VEs employed to refuse their conversation partners include: “I don’t think we live in the same area” when requested to give someone a lift home, or “This is a non-smoking area” when asked if a passenger can smoke. VEs did not explicitly imply disinclinations to comply. AEs resorted to reasons like “I can’t make exceptions for you – as then I would for everyone” when asked if a tutor can change the date for an exam, or “Unfortunately I

have no time to reschedule your appointment” when requested if a person can change the appointment time.

Adjuncts to refusals-statement of empathy are also relevant. While AEs utilized only 3 SARs in statements of empathy, VEs employed 5 times more. The most popular phrases are “What a pity”, and “I see that... (difficult situation)”. As Vietnamese culture values “love” and “sympathy” (II.7), VEs tend to use more SARs of empathy to express their refusals. Lastly, a category in which there exists a difference between AEs and VEs is *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term*. Whereas AEs employed 88 phrases of this category, VEs utilized 137. This once again emphasizes that VEs valued “affection” in the way they refused than AEs. When people refused, they used many addressing terms like “dear”, “Prof.”. One aim of addressing terms is to show that you care for someone, that you show respect for them. It is a common practice in Vietnam to address someone with their names, to show that you know the person well, and that you really feel for them, care for them.

On the other hand, Australians tend to be rather direct in their refusals. For the SARs of *unwillingness/doubt*, the number is higher for AEs (32) than for VEs (22). AEs also employed a higher number of “NO” phrases in their responses to requests. Here the difference between the two groups is unequivocal. While VEs utilized only 21 “NO” phrases in their refusals, the number for AEs is five times higher (112). This sharp difference shows that AEs are much more direct than VEs. Saying “NO” is a direct non-performative act, only slightly less confronting than the explicit performative “I refuse”. Vietnam is a highly structured and traditional society. Etiquette and harmony are very important. "Saving face" is a key concept. The Vietnamese are anxious to avoid unpleasantness and confrontation. They try to avoid saying "No." Instead, say, "This could be very difficult," to allow conversation partners to save face. Directly saying “NO” is a serious FTA (II.5). AEs, when refusing by directly saying “NO”, tend to offer more statements of alternatives than their VEs counterparts. This can be interpreted in terms of Confucianism: that “when communicating, those that follow Confucian

philosophy would be concerned with status relationships (Samovar and Porter 2001, p.112).

Finally, in the category of *statement of principle* AEs utilized 117 SARs compared to the VEs' 65. This reflects the greater readiness on the part of Australian subjects to refer to social principles like law and order. In Vietnam, in contrast, there is a greater tendency to act on the basis of social harmony and "tinh" (II.7). This is why refusals for VEs require many more *excuse/reason/explanation* rather than *statement of principle*. The situation is reverse for AEs.

V.1.2. Discussion of social status

AEs shared the same amount of SARs when they dealt with people of the three social status groups. And the reverse is found in the Vietnamese context. In a nutshell, AEs actually did not care much about the social status of the person when they said "NO". Vietnamese people, in contrast, experienced some differences when they refused people of different social status. They were sensitive to the status of requesters.

AEs employed more SARs of *excuse/reason/explanation* to people of equal status than to the other two groups. So did VEs. This might be seen as a common characteristic of the two cultures: people in both cultures are cautious when they consider how to explain the reasons to their conversational partners of equal status.

AEs employed a higher number of SARs of *restatement* to people of low status than to people of equal or high status. The same situation is found in the Vietnamese data. Both AEs and VEs were therefore more assertive to people of lower status, who in the questionnaire for this study, were usually their children. When asked to perform a request, both AEs and VEs reiterated what should be done in order that their children would obey.

The final distinguishing feature between AEs and VEs in terms of social status is *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term*. AEs used a larger number of addressing terms to

people of high status than to the other two groups. The same situation is seen in Vietnamese refusals. VEs and AEs both have high respect for people of high status. They used addressing terms to show that they cared for their conversational partners, and to make them feel less disappointed when their requests were rejected.

V.1.3. Discussion of social distance

AEs differ from VEs in that AEs employed nearly the same amount of SARs for the three groups of people in terms of social distance, but VEs employed higher figures for intimates. This might be because VEs were very careful when they refused their intimates. The culture of Vietnam places a high value on intimacy between friends and relatives. The desire to achieve harmony between the self and the non-self remains an essential preoccupation of the Vietnamese in interpersonal relations. Thus VE participants tend to use more SARs in their refusals to intimates.

AEs used the least statements of *excuse/reason/explanation* in their refusals to strangers when compared with intimates and acquaintances. The situation is the same for VEs. In Australian and Vietnamese perceptions, strangers are considered to be distanced. So they do not care for them as much as for their intimates and acquaintances, who will be in longer-term relationships with them. On the other hand, both AEs and VEs used the highest number of *statements of principle* when they refused strangers. Principles are considered established regulations that are valid over an extended period of time. When employing *statements of principle*, the participants wanted to emphasize that they were not going to change their principles to perform the requests. This situation applied mostly with strangers.

And finally, VEs and AEs both used more *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* when they refused intimates than the other two groups. However, VEs employed more than twice as many addressing terms when compared to AEs. VEs used 93 addressing terms, whereas the corresponding figure for AEs is 45. VEs are more inclined to take explicit steps to make their intimates feel better after their refusals. In other words, VEs

devoted more attention to saving face for their conversational partners than AEs in regard to the use of addressing terms.

V.1.4. Discussion of gender

Both AEs and VEs used more *statements of regret* when they refused people of the opposite gender. This suggests that both Australian and Vietnamese people are more likely to be sensitive to the opposite gender, and so show more statements of regret to their conversational partners.

AEs utilized more “NO” phrases, and *more statements of alternative* in their refusals than VEs. While AEs employed more SARs of these kinds when they refused people of same gender than to people of opposite gender, the reverse situation is true for VEs, which means they refused people of the opposite gender with many more “NO” phrases and *more statements of alternative* than to people of the same gender. This correlates with the common impression that Australians are more direct than Vietnamese in their refusals. And Australians tend to offer more *statements of alternative* as well.

V. 2. Conclusions:

Based on questionnaire data asking what individuals would do, refusals of AEs are different from those of VEs, though they do share some similarities. Parallel to the differences in culture, AEs and VEs also differ in the ways they say “NO” to their conversational partners. VEs are apt to express refusals with caution and/or care. VEs used more *statements of regret*, *more statements of sympathy*, *more adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* and *more reasons/excuses/explanations* in their refusals. In addition, the *excuses/reasons/explanations* given by AEs are more related to their readiness to reveal their disinclinations to comply in contrast to VEs. AEs are more direct in the ways they refuse: AEs employed more “NO” phrases, *more statements of principles*, and *more statements of unwillingness/doubt* than VEs.

AEs and VEs show the same number of SARs when they communicate with people of the three social statuses and social distances, but VEs are more sensitive to the social statuses and social distances of the requesters. The gender of conversational partners is relevant: both AEs and VEs used more *statements of regret* when they refused people of opposite gender than of the same gender: opposite-gender refusals require more elaboration and more care.

Students learning English should be aware that direct refusals are generally acceptable among Australians. Thus they should not feel hurt when facing this situation. Without explicit knowledge about other cultures, communicators are prone to misinterpret the intentions of the interlocutors with different cultural backgrounds. Knowledge about diversity in sociolinguistic behaviours helps learners to regard the differences as differences, not as inferiority. A lack of understanding of sociolinguistic diversity in other cultures can lead to serious cross-cultural misunderstanding.

V.3. Limitations

V.3.1. Participants

The fact that participants for this study were all volunteers may have some effects on the data collection and analysis. Schumacher and McMillan (1993) noted that ...volunteers tend to be better educated, of higher social class, more intelligent, more sociable, more unconventional, less authoritarian, less conforming, more altruistic, and more extroverted than non volunteers (p. 160).

V.3.2. Methodology

Due to the methodology of written data elicitation, other factors such as prosody (intonation, tone, stress), non-verbal gestures and facial expressions were not observed. There is also a limitation in the fact that written data do not have time constraints: participants can correct their answers. As a result the answers may differ from what participants really say in real-life situations. Thus naturalistic data collection, from role-plays or recordings made in natural settings, would be desirable as both a complement and as a self-standing methodology in more extensive studies.

And finally, this study concentrated on social status, social distance, and gender as the three focal variables. Other potentially relevant factors, such as the time spent to learn English, or the degree of imposition of the requests, were specifically not investigated and left for later research.

V.4. Recommendations for future research

Focusing on the cross-cultural study of refusals of requests, the present thesis is explicitly restricted in scope. There remain many interesting aspects which merit further research, including:

- ◆ Investigation of the effects of non-verbal communication in cross-cultural refusals.
- ◆ Study of teaching materials for stimulating students' interest in cross-cultural communication.

V.5. Implications

According to Raines (1999), language is the most typical, the most representative and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are simply not separable; one cannot fully understand the nature of either language or culture unless they are seen as inseparable. It follows that second language learning is often second culture learning (Brown 1989).

The results of the present study demonstrate that refusing in an L2 is a complex task because it requires the acquisition of the socio-cultural values of the target culture. In order to effectively communicate in the L2, the learner needs to acquire the socio-cultural strategies used most frequently by NSs, and the rules for their appropriate implementation. We can therefore make the following pedagogical recommendations for L2 instruction:

- To develop pragmatic ability in the FL classroom, language instructors should design contextualized, task-based activities which expose learners to different types of pragmatic input and prompt learners to produce appropriate output;

- To successfully perform a speech act, language instructors should teach language forms and functions contextually in communicative oral activities in both formal and informal situations in order to develop the learners' sociolinguistic ability in an L2.

- Both socio-cultural and sociolinguistic information should be incorporated into the language curriculum and language textbooks. Specifically, students should be taught how to perform different speech acts in an L2 in different situations of social status, social distance, and with reference to the gender relation between the speakers and interlocutors.

FitzGerald (1999) argues that we as teachers should not forget that we are preparing our students not only for the domestic workplace and society. Our world is shrinking and the possibility of our students working abroad, or even at home with foreigners is much greater than before. Our students are very likely to need to communicate with both native and non-native speakers of English

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APPENDIX

Codes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO
QQIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIB1	11	4	1	2	7	1	4	2	5	8	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	1
QQIB2	3	6	8	6	6	7	2	3	1	2	5	2	6	5	4	1	6	6
QQIIA	6	10	11	13	4	18	11	8	10	7	10	17	12	8	16	0	8	12
QQIIB	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
QQIIC	14	2	11	17	13	13	19	13	17	4	16	3	14	11	17	12	11	18
QQIID	4	7	3	6	5	2	6	4	5	8	8	8	1	1	0	0	5	2
QQIIE	1	0	0	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
QQIIF	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	5
QQIIG	0	12	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	12	3	16	1	3	1	2	1	0
QQIIH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
QQIII	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	1
QQIIJ	0	2	9	1	2	0	0	5	0	0	1	5	0	1	1	1	7	0
QQIIK	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0
QQIIL	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0
QQIII1	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	4	0	0	7	1	5	2	5	0	0	2
QQIII2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIII3	8	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	8	0	2	0	9	0	2

Table 1. Summary: Use of SARs by female AEs

Codes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO
QQIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIB1	11	4	1	2	7	1	4	2	5	8	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	1
QQIB2	3	6	8	6	6	7	2	3	1	2	5	2	6	5	4	1	6	6
QQIIA	6	10	11	13	4	18	11	8	10	7	10	17	12	8	16	0	8	12
QQIIB	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
QQIIC	14	2	11	17	13	13	19	13	17	4	16	3	14	11	17	12	11	18
QQIID	4	7	3	6	5	2	6	4	5	8	8	8	1	1	0	0	5	2
QQIIE	1	0	0	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
QQIIF	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	5
QQIIG	0	12	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	12	3	16	1	3	1	2	1	0
QQIIH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
QQIII	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	1
QQIIJ	0	2	9	1	2	0	0	5	0	0	1	5	0	1	1	1	7	0
QQIIK	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0
QQIIL	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0
QQIII1	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	4	0	0	7	1	5	2	5	0	0	2
QQIII2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIII3	8	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	8	0	2	0	9	0	2

Table 2. Summary: Use of SARs by male AEs

Codes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO
QQIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIB1	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
QQIB2	2	8	6	1	4	1	5	4	2	0	6	2	4	0	2	0	5	5
QQIIA	6	16	16	16	7	16	18	12	13	14	8	20	15	13	13	0	13	16
QQIIB	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0
QQIIC	10	9	10	17	17	19	18	11	14	2	17	2	17	21	18	9	13	18
QQIID	4	2	1	3	6	4	5	0	1	5	3	1	0	3	0	0	0	2
QQIIE	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
QQIIF	4	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	8	0	1
QQIIG	0	6	3	0	0	1	1	2	1	7	1	14	0	0	2	0	1	0
QQIIH	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
QQIII	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
QQIIJ	1	3	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	0	2	1	0	0	1	5	0
QQIIK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
QQIIL	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1
QQIII1	1	0	0	4	0	2	2	5	0	0	4	0	2	1	0	0	1	1
QQIII2	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIII3	11	2	2	3	13	0	0	3	0	8	2	7	2	2	0	14	0	9

Table 3. Summary: Use of SARs by female VEs

Codes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	LIS	LSS	LAO	HAO	LIO	ESO	EAS	LSO	EAO	HSS	EIS	HSO	HAS	EIO	ESS	HIS	LAS	HIO
QQIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIB1	11	4	1	2	7	1	4	2	5	8	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	1
QQIB2	3	6	8	6	6	7	2	3	1	2	5	2	6	5	4	1	6	6
QQIIA	6	10	11	13	4	18	11	8	10	7	10	17	12	8	16	0	8	12
QQIIB	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
QQIIC	14	2	11	17	13	13	19	13	17	4	16	3	14	11	17	12	11	18
QQIID	4	7	3	6	5	2	6	4	5	8	8	8	1	1	0	0	5	2
QQIIE	1	0	0	1	6	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
QQIIF	3	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	5
QQIIG	0	12	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	12	3	16	1	3	1	2	1	0
QQIIH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
QQIII	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	2	1
QQIIJ	0	2	9	1	2	0	0	5	0	0	1	5	0	1	1	1	7	0
QQIIK	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0
QQIIL	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0
QQIII1	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	4	0	0	7	1	5	2	5	0	0	2
QQIII2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QQIII3	8	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	8	0	2	0	9	0	2

Table 4. Summary: Use of SARs by male VEs

CONSENT FORM

Principal investigator: NGUYEN Thi Minh Phuong.

Project description:

This is dissertation submitted for SLAT 7853 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts of TESOL Studies, the University of Queensland. The purpose of this study is to investigate the cross-cultural differences between Vietnamese learners of English and native Australian speakers of English in speech act realizations of refusals of requests for better understanding of cross cultural communication.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate, you will fill out the questionnaire. It will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. On the questionnaires, you will fill in several communicative situations in which an individual is requesting that you do something for or with him/her. Imagine that you do NOT want to comply with their request. Please respond as you would in a real conversation.

Study withdrawal:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw anytime without penalty.

Confidentiality: You will not be asked to identify yourself in any way. The data will be used for research purposes only. All your responses will be strictly confidential, stored on a password-protected computer, accessible only to research staff.

If you are interested in the results of this research, feel free to contact me after 15 December 2006 at:

NGUYEN Thi Minh Phuong
12/52 Sisley st, St Lucia
QLD 4067 Australia
Mobile: (+61) 421 648 353
Email: phuongbridim@gmail.com

Authorization: I have read and understood the foregoing description of the above study. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I am 18 years of age or older. I agree to participate and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please PRINT name clearly _____

INFORMATION SHEET

Principal investigator: NGUYEN Thi Minh Phuong.

Project description:

This is a dissertation submitted for SLAT 7853 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts of TESOL Studies, the University of Queensland. The purpose of this study is to investigate the cross-cultural differences between Vietnamese learners of English and native Australian speakers of English in speech act realizations of refusals of requests for better understanding of cross cultural communication.

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QLD 4067 Australia
Mobile: (+61) 421 648 353
Email: phuongbridim@gmail.com

FEMALE

18 situations in 3 variables:

Social status: Low (L), Equal (E), High (H)

Social distance: Stranger (S), Acquaintance (A), Intimate (I)

Gender: Same (S), Opposite (O).

1. LIS You are a mother of two children. One day you are going shopping with your little daughter. She asks if you can buy an expensive doll for her “Mum, I love that doll so much. Could you please buy it for me? *You refuse her request by saying:*

2. LSS You are a tutor for a subject at University. You have scheduled a test on the first date of next month, and one of your female students asks if she could take the test one day earlier so that she can go on holiday with her family, as they have bought tickets on the date of the test. *You refuse her request by saying:*

3. LAO You are a teacher at a high school. One of your male students has made an appointment to see you for a consultation at 2pm next Monday. However, he calls and says he cannot come on that date and asks for an alternative date for the consultation. *You refuse his request by saying:*

4. HAO You are one of the staff in a multinational company. Your male boss asks if he can borrow your car for a few days. He says “Could you please lend me your car for one week? My car has broken down again, and I know that you’ve two cars now”. *You refuse his request by saying:*

5. LIO You are driving your son to his school. He asks you to take him to the stadium to watch an important football match after school. *You refuse his request by saying:*

6. ESO You are a worker at a processing company. A male colleague asks you to give him a lift, saying that he is your husband’s friend, though you do not know him before. *You refuse his request by saying:*

7. EAS A female classmate asks if she can borrow your notes as she could not come to the lecture last week. She says “Oh no, we have an exam tomorrow, but I don’t have the notes from last week. Could I borrow yours?” *You refuse her request by saying:*

8. LSO You are on holiday in Hawaii, and you meet a male taxi driver. He has shown you around the city while you were in his taxi. He even tried to contact a friend of yours with

his mobile phone for you. In the end, he asks for double the taxi fare in recognition of his extra services. *You refuse his request by saying:*

9. EAO You are in a German course. A male classmate asks if he can borrow your dictionary for a while. He says “I left my dictionary at home. Could you please lend me yours for a few minutes?” *You refuse his request by saying:*

10. HSS: You are a receptionist in a three star hotel. A female guest asks if she can smoke in a non smoking area. *You refuse her request by saying:*

11. EIS Your female friend asks you to pick her up at the airport. She says “I do not know the area well. Can you come and pick me up around 1pm next Monday? I would really appreciate your help”. *You refuse her request by saying:*

12. HSO You are one of the check-in staff at an airport. A male passenger asks if he can take some food on to the airplane, but this is not allowed by the airline policy. *You refuse his request by saying:*

13. HAS You are a student in a Business Studies class. One of your female lecturers asks you to pick her up every day from her home, saying that her house is near yours. *You refuse her request by saying:*

14. EIO A male friend of yours asks to borrow some money. He says “Can I borrow 200 bucks? I need that money to buy a present for my mother’s birthday.” *You refuse his request by saying:*

15. ESS You are a student at a University. You are about to go home in your car. A female student, who you do not know before, approaches and asks you for a lift home, saying that she and you live in the same area of the city. *You refuse her request by saying:*

16. HIS You are a ten year old girl. Your mother wants you to turn off the TV and study for tomorrow’s lesson. She says “Julia, stop all the rubbish on TV now. Do your homework immediately”. *You refuse her request by saying:*

17. LAS You are a manager of a company. One of your female staff has made an appointment to see you for a consultation at 9 am next Wednesday. However, the

colleague calls and says she cannot come on that date and asks for an alternative date for the consultation. *You refuse her request by saying:*

18. HIO You are an assistant to a male Professor. At the end of the office hours, you are going to leave. The Professor asks if you can stay with him and help him with some papers. *You refuse his request by saying:*

MALE

18 situations in 3 variables:

Social status: Low (L), Equal (E), High (H)

Social distance: Stranger (S), Acquaintance (A), Intimate (I)

Gender: Same (S), Opposite (O).

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You refuse his request by saying:

2. LSS You are a tutor for a subject at University. You have scheduled a test on the first date of next month, and one of your male students asks if he could take the test one day earlier so that he can go on holiday with his family, as they have bought tickets on the date of the test. *You refuse his request by saying:*

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You refuse her request by saying:

4. HAO You are one of the staff in a multinational company. Your female boss asks if she can borrow your car for a few days. She says “Could you please lend me your car for one week? My car has broken down again, and I know that you’ve two cars now”.

You refuse her request by saying:

5. LIO You are driving your daughter to her school. She asks you to take her to a convention centre for attending a fashion show after school. *You refuse her request by saying:*

6. ESO You are a worker at a processing company. A female colleague asks you to give her a lift, saying that she is your wife’s friend, though you do not know her before. *You refuse her request by saying:*

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8. LSO You are on holiday in Hawaii, and you meet a female taxi driver. She has shown you around the city while you were in his taxi. She even tried to contact a friend of yours with her mobile phone for you. In the end, she asks for double the taxi fare in recognition of the extra services. *You refuse her request by saying:*

9. EAO You are in a German course. A female classmate asks if she can borrow your dictionary for a while. She says “I left my dictionary at home. Could you please lend me yours for a few minutes?” *You refuse her request by saying:*

10. HSS: You are a receptionist in a three star hotel. A male guest asks if he can smoke in a non smoking area. *You refuse his request by saying:*

11. EIS Your male friend asks you to pick him up at the airport. He says “I do not know the area well. Can you come and pick me up around 1pm next Monday? I would really appreciate your help”. *You refuse his request by saying:*

12. HSO You are one of the check-in staff at an airport. A female passenger asks if she can take some food on to the airplane, but this is not allowed by the airline policy. *You refuse her request by saying:*

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14. EIO A female friend of yours asks to borrow some money. She says “Can I borrow 200 bucks? I need that money to buy a present for my mother’s birthday.” *You refuse her request by saying:*

15. ESS You are a student at a University. You are about to go home in your car. A male student, who you do not know before, approaches and asks you for a lift home, saying that he and you live in the same area of the city. *You refuse his request by saying:*

16. HIS You are a ten year old boy. Your father wants you to turn off the TV and study for tomorrow’s lesson. He says “Andy, stop all the rubbish on TV now. Do your homework immediately”. *You refuse his request by saying:*

17. LAS You are a manager of a company. One of your male staff has made an appointment to see you for a consultation at 9 am next Wednesday. However, the colleague calls and says he cannot come on that date and asks for an alternative date for the consultation. *You refuse his request by saying:*

18. HIO You are an assistant to a female Professor. At the end of the office hours, you are going to leave. The Professor asks if you can stay with her and help her with some papers. *You refuse her request by saying:*

ANSWERS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRES

(Two answers to the questionnaires are randomly chosen from each group of participants. As the Appendix has space limit, the whole data set can not be incorporated into this section. For further information, please contact the researchers).

Australian female native speakers of English (AF)

AF1:

1. LIS. Darling, I would buy this doll for you, if you really needed. Maybe you can start saving for it, if you want it very much.
2. LSS. Sorry, it's not possible, as all students must sit the exam on the scheduled date. I can't make exceptions for you – as then I would for everyone.
3. LAO. What a shame. Unfortunately I have no time to reschedule your appointment.
4. HAO. I'm sorry. I don't trust anyone to drive my car. As I wouldn't want to deal with any burden, as result of crash, etc.
5. LIO. Maybe we could have-If you had planned, and given me more notice.
6. ESO. I'm sorry. I don't feel particularly comfortable giving you a ride today. Maybe another time.
7. EAS. Sorry. You won't be able to read my messy handwriting, maybe you are better to ask someone else.
8. LSO. I've been mistaken. I'm terribly sorry. I only have enough money on me to pay the regular fare.
9. EAO. I need mine at the moment, it's no good at home, is it?
10. HSS. No way. You must think of other people's health!
11. EIS. Unfortunately, I am working.
12. HSO. I am sorry, sir. That's forbidden on the plane.
13. HAS. I can't really be relied. As I always have things to attend to before classes.
14. EIO. That's a lot of money for me to have. Let alone lend to a friend.
15. ESS. Sorry, I'd love to, but I am off to work now.
16. HIS. I have been studying all day. It's important to give my mind a rest.
17. LAS. Unfortunately, I can't fit you in for another. I'm fully booked.
18. HIO. Are you cracking on to me, Professor. You do realize I have a family at home, waiting for their dinner.

AF2

1. LIS. I don't think you need another doll; not just yet. Perhaps we can wait until Christmas or your birthday. I thought the one you have now is so dear to you and such fun!
2. LSS. I would think that it is a matter of priority if you can't have both things. What's more important to you? Your holiday with family or finishing your test first?
3. LAO. Appointment are meant to be kept unless there is a serious matter intervening! You would understand that it's not easy to reschedule.

4. HAO. I bought the second car, because I know that I can't rely on my old one which is playing up. You won't want the responsibility of having to attend my unreliable car, would you?
5. LIO. It's good that you're interested in football and I would take you there if not for the appointment I have at the same afternoon.
6. ESO. I would help out if I can, but I have such a tight schedule myself and I am running late.
7. EAS. Seeing the exam is on tomorrow, I need the notes myself. I am not sure if we have time to photocopy them either!
8. LSO. I am really surprised by the amount you asked. We didn't agree to that at all.
9. EAO. Not now. If you could wait till I finish with it.
10. HSS. I don't think it's wise to infringe upon the no smoking rule in this area. You may like to go outside where the smokers are.
11. EIS. If only you give me more notice to organize my schedule today. As it is, I really am double-booked. Next time then.
12. HSO. Food is strictly forbidden in the airplane. We should observe that rule.
13. HAS. It would be nice to pool some days, but I know that would be difficult to arrange that everyday. I am often late as it is.
14. EIO. I am sorry that I had some bad experience in the past, and I decided that I should be neither a lender nor a borrower.
15. ESS. I am sorry that I can't oblige as I am not going straight home. There are quite a few things I need to do before heading home!
16. HIS. It will be good for me to switch off from homework for a short time. I can be more efficient when I turn to study homework with a fresh mind!
17. LAS. Appointment are meant to be kept unless there is a serious matter intervening! You would understand that it's not easy to reschedule.
18. HIO. Would it matter if we do that tomorrow as I have to rush to an appointment now. I can definitely help tomorrow.

Australian male native speakers of English (AM)

AM3

1. LIS. It is very expensive. Perhaps you can put it on your Christmas list or ask for it for your birthday.
2. LSS. That is impossible as it would compromise the integrity of the test. Perhaps you can take the test on the Internet.
3. LAO. I am sorry but this is the only time I have free.
4. HAO. I am sorry but my family will need that car during that time but I can give you a lift to a good hire car from I know of.
5. LIO. I am sorry, darling, but I just don't have time, but why don't you catch public transport. Perhaps I will be able to bring you home. Give me a call.
6. ESO. I am sorry, but I am pressed for time, and your house is out of my way.
7. EAS. Hang on. I need the notes to study for the exam. Why don't you check the Internet and see if the notes from last week are posted there?

8. LSO. Thank you for all your trouble and the lovely time you have shown me. Here is the agreed fare plus a reasonable tip.
9. EAO. Sorry, I need to use it just now. Maybe ask one of the others or wait until I have finished.
10. HSS. Sorry, this is the non-smoking area. You will have to go outside to smoke.
11. EIS. Sorry, mate. I will be busy. The sky train is really easy. And public transport here is excellent.
12. HSO. I'm sorry, Miss/Madam. You can't take food on the plane. It's against airline policy.
13. HAS. Sorry, sir I don't take the responsibility of getting you to class on time.
14. EIO. \$200. That's a lot of money. You should spend what you can afford. I am sure she would be just as grateful with a simpler gift. It's the thought that counts.
15. ESS. Sorry, mate. I am not going straight home tonight.
16. HIS. Can't I just watch till the end of this show. It's really exciting.
17. LAS. I am sorry, but that is the only time I have free to see you.
18. HIO. I am sorry, Professor, but I have an urgent appointment that I simply must attend. Perhaps we can sort it out tomorrow.

AM4

1. LIS. Not today, we'll think about it.
2. LSS. The university won't allow "holiday" as a reason. I'm sorry, but I can't change that.
3. LAO. I'm sorry, but I'm busy for the rest of the week. 2pm Monday is the only time we can meet.
4. HAO. I'm sorry, but I wouldn't feel comfortable lending my case something happens.
5. LIO. No, I'm tired. You can go another time.
6. ESO. Look. I'm sorry, but I have already made other plans.
7. EAS. I'm sorry, I can't lend you my notes. I need them for myself.
8. LSO. I appreciate what you have done for me, but I really think I should say the normal fare.
9. EAO. I can't. I'm sorry, but I need to use it.
10. HSS. I'm sorry, this is a non-smoking area, you will have to go somewhere else.
11. EIS. I can't next Monday because I have other things on.
12. HSO. I'm sorry, but due to airline policy, you are not allowed to take on food, you will have to leave it in your bag.
13. HAS. I'm sorry, but I don't always leave at the same time. It just wouldn't be really suitable.
14. EIO. I'd lend you the money if I had it. But I'm short myself, sorry.
15. ESS. Sorry, but I'm not going straight home.
16. HIS. Can I just watch until the end of this programme?
17. LAS. I'm sorry that is the only time I can see you. Can you rearrange your other appointment?
18. HIO. I'm really sorry, but I have to go.

Vietnamese female native speakers of English (VF)

VF5

1. LIS. I'm sorry, dear. I'm afraid that doll's so expensive that I can't afford it. You can buy anything cheaper, dear.
2. LSS. Oh, I'm very sorry. I'm very busy these days. So I'm afraid that I can't finish scheduling earlier.
3. LAO. I'm afraid that I can't have any free days. Therefore, the date for the consultation can't be changed. Sorry about that.
4. HAO. Sorry, but my husband's car has been broken down. Could you please borrow other people?
5. LIO. I'm sorry, son. After school, you have to visit your grandmother. She's sick very seriously. Therefore, maybe you can't go to the stadium.
6. ESO. I'm sorry. I'm afraid my car has broken down, and I have to go home by bus now. So could you please ask others?
7. EAS. I'm sorry. I'm afraid that I have left my notes at home today. So could you please borrow Lan's?
8. LSO. Oh, I'm afraid I can't do it. You have told me the real fare, but you now double it. So I'm sorry I can't do it.
9. EAO. Sorry, I'm afraid that I have lost my dictionary.
10. HSS. I'm sorry, Ma'am. I'm afraid you can't smoke here, because it is a non-smoking area.
11. EIS. I'm very sorry, but I'll be very busy at that time. Oh, why don't you ask Lan? She'll be free tomorrow.
12. HSO. Sorry, sir, I'm afraid taking food on to the airplane is not allowed.
13. HAS. Sorry, but I don't have a car.
14. EIO. Sorry, but I have run out of money.
15. ESS. I'm sorry, but I also have to pick my friend up.
16. HIS. Mama, I have studied all lessons and this is a very interesting programme. Let's watch it with me.
17. LAS. Sorry, I'm afraid that I have been busy these days, so I can't change the date of the consultations.
18. HIO. I'm sorry, Profesor. I have to go to my friend's birthday party now.

VF6

1. LIS. Darling, I will buy it for you if you get good marks.
2. LSS. I'm sorry, I can't accept your command.
3. LAO. Sorry, I have little free time. So I don't wanna change our appointment.
4. HAO. I'm sorry. My family will go on picnic next week. We need to use our cars.
5. LIO. Sorry, we must come back home to prepare a party for your father's birthday. Your father and I will take you to the stadium next time.
6. ESO. Sorry, I have to pick up my son at school now.
7. EAS. Sorry, I need to use it for my exams.
8. LSO. Sorry, I didn't ask you to do that.
9. EAO. Sorry, I need to use it for my exercise.

10. HSS. Sorry, you know that this is a non-smoking area.
11. EIS. Sorry, I have to go to school at that time. I can't help you.
12. HSO. Sorry, I can't accept your requirements because this is not allowed by the airline policy.
13. HAS. Sorry, I can't help you, because I usually go with my friends.
14. EIO. Sorry, now, I don't have enough money.
15. ESS. Sorry, I must go to the market to buy something for my dinner.
16. HIS. I will do it after this TV programme.
17. LAS. No, that is the only time I am free.
18. HIO. Sorry, today is my son's birthday. I have to go home early to prepare something.

Vietnamese male learners of English (VM)

VM7

1. LIS. Oh, my son. Now I'm busy. Next month, I'll take you around to buy it.
2. LSS. Sorry I can't. I have a test on that date.
3. LAO. What a pity! I'm only free on Monday. After that date, I'll be away on business.
4. HAO. It's a pity. My brother has just borrowed it for his holiday.
5. LIO. Oh, no, we have to pick up your mum at that time.
6. ESO. I'm very sorry. My boss is ringing me for a meeting.
7. EAS. I'm terribly sorry. I have learnt nothing, and I'm having a test tomorrow, too.
8. LSO. Thanks for your help, but I don't have much money to pay.
9. EAO. Sorry, I'm using it now.
10. HSS. Sorry, sir. You shouldn't smoke here as it is our hotel's rule.
11. EIS. What a pity! I have an important appointment with my boss. However, my friend will take you there.
12. HSO. Sorry, ma'a. We don't allow bringing food onto the plane.
13. HAS. What a pity. I usually don't go home after school. I often have appointments with friends.
14. EIO. I'm very sorry. I've forgotten my wallet at home.
15. ESS. What a pity. I have an appointment with my girlfriend there.
16. HIS. Oh no, Dad. Please let me watch until the end of the film.
17. LAS. Oh, no, we have prepared it carefully. You should come.
18. HIO. What a pity, sir. I have to pick up my parents now. They have just phoned me.

VM8

1. LIS. I've run out of money, son.
2. LSS. Sorry, but I'm afraid you have to change the tickets.
3. LAO. I'm just free on Monday. Sorry about that.
4. HAO. Sorry, sir. Both of them have already been taken to the garage to be serviced.
5. LIO. You don't go to English class tonight, do you?
6. ESO. I'm afraid we don't live in the same area.

7. EAS. Sorry, but I need them to revise for exams, too.
8. LSO. Sorry, but I think it was your pleasure to help.
9. EAO. Sorry, but I'm using it.
10. HSS. This is the non-smoking area, sir.
11. EIS. Sorry, but I'm not here next Monday. I'll be sitting on the train.
12. HSO. Taking food onto the airplane is forbidden, Ma'am.
13. HAS. I'm sorry, but I have to take the children to school before class.
14. EIO. I only have 50 bucks left. So I can't help you.
15. ESS. Sorry, but I'm busy now.
16. HIS. Please, Daddy. I promise to study hard after watching it.
17. LAS. I'm be sitting on the plane next Thursday. Sorry I can't help you out.
18. HIO. I'm visiting my relative tonight. Let me do it for you tomorrow.

DATA AFTER THE CODING PROCESS WITH THE QQ CODES

(This coding part is randomly extracted from the whole data after the coding process. As the Appendix has space limit, the whole data set can not be incorporated into this section. For further information, please contact the researchers).

AF3

1. LIS. No QQIB1, dear QQIIC. Not today. QQIIL Today we're shopping for food.
QQIIC
2. LSS. I'm afraid QQIIA that everyone has to take the test on the same day QQIJJ.
3. LAO. No, QQIB1 that's the only time QQIJJ. I've scheduled you for that time QQIJJ.
4. HAO. No, QQIB1 hiring cars is not too expensive these days. QQIID
5. LIO. No. QQIB1
6. ESO. Sorry, QQIIA I have something else tonight on the way home. QQIIC
7. EAS. Sorry, QQIIA I need them myself. QQIIC
8. LSO. No. QQIB1
9. EAO. No. QQIB1 Last time I did that, I couldn't get it back. QQIIC
10. HSS. No, QQIB1 it's against company's policy. QQIIG
11. EIS. Sorry, QQIIA I can't. QQIB2 I'm already committed. QQIIC
12. HSO. Sorry, QQIIA sir QQIIC. It's against company's policy. QQIIG
13. HAS. It's not always convenient because I don't always leave at the same time.
QQIIC
14. EIO. No, QQIB1 I don't have it. QQIIC
15. ESS. Sorry, QQIIA I'm going somewhere else on the way home. QQIIC
16. HIS. Just to the end of this show, QQIIL Mum QQIIC!
17. LAS. My diary is full. QQIIC That's the only time I have QQIJJ.
18. HIO. I have an appointment this evening, QQIIC so I can't. QQIB2