

**A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY ON REFUSAL STRATEGIES: HOW DO
TURKISH AND FOREIGN STUDENTS DIFFER IN REFUSING?**

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decades, pragmatic competence, with the raise of communicative competence, has been a topic of interest. Especially, the area of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has gained a prominent importance in examining how pragmatic competence is learned and improved in second or foreign language since it is realized that learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds produce different language items in similar contexts. These language items are generally influenced by the mother tongue of the speaker; however, they are also influenced by the sociocultural and contextual issues.

The aim of this study is to investigate the differences between native speakers of English and Turkish languages in terms of refusal strategies they prefer to use in certain contexts. Besides, the study aims to find out if exposure to foreign/second language promotes the authentic use of target language. For this, three groups of students were identified and compared: Turkish ELT students with experience of target culture (NNE), Turkish ELT students without experience of target culture (NNW) and native speakers of English (NS). Each group consists of 10 participants. Data were collected via a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and semi-structured interviews with the participants. The results indicate that there are significant differences between groups in the use of refusal strategies. It was also observed that cultural differences and exposure to the target culture influence the participants' preferences while refusing.

Key Words: refusal strategies, interlanguage, pragmatics

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, pragmatic competence has been a topic of interest. Especially the area of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) has gained a prominent interest in examining how pragmatic competence is learned and improved in second (L2) or foreign (FL) language (Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2005, 2008; Ishihara and Cohen, 2010; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Martínez Flor et al., 2003; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Tatsuki, 2005). This interest in the area of pragmatics has accelerated with the introduction of communicative competence (Hymes, 1971). Due to the fact that linguistic competence has inadequacies in some areas, Hymes has introduced a new notion of Communicative Competence which more broadly addresses to the issues of both linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence. He claims that mastery of linguistic competence, focusing primarily on formal properties and grammatical structures, does not point to mastery in communication without pragmatic competence. Speakers may be considered fluent and proficient in second language considering their mastery of grammar and vocabulary knowledge, however, they may still be lacking in pragmatic competence which means they are unable to produce socially and culturally appropriate language (Tanck, 2002).

Pragmatic competence can be defined as "...from the point of view of (language) users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (Crystal, 1997, p.30 cited in Ifantidou, 2013, p.94). Pragmatic competence is an essential element for a fluent and proficient L2 knowledge. A lack of pragmatic competence may lead to serious problems for L2 speaker concerning the sociocultural and contextual issues.

Murphy and Neu (1996) claims that a lack of this kind in pragmatic competence can occur while L2 speaker is attempting to perform particular speech acts, which refer to the combination of individual speech acts performed together.

Bayat (2013) claims that “speech acts take part outside the language dimension of communication” (p.219). This means language learners do not only learn the grammatical and vocabulary rules, but they need to master how to use the language appropriately in various context while communicating (ibid). If they do not do so, no matter how proficient in the target language they are, they fail in communicating. This explains why understanding, producing and appropriate use of speech acts are considered crucial in learner’s grammatical and sociocultural knowledge.

In order to achieve their communicative goals, speakers produce a variety of speech acts. These acts include Searle’s seminal broad categories of classification, commissives, declarations, directives, expressives, and representatives. More specific acts such as as apologies, requests, complaints, and refusals are also produced for communication (Kasper and Rose, 2001). Pragmatic competence comes to the stage here, say, while producing an act of refusal, a speaker is expected to say ‘no’ to a request or invitation. However, this does not necessarily have to be directly, it may be indirectly through a facial expression, or providing an excuse instead of saying ‘no’. The act of refusing, especially by a facial or bodily expression or an indirect verbal expression requires a knowledge of pragmatic competence.

There are three types of speech acts for refusing which a speaker is expected to perform. These are a) an expression of regret (e.g., “I’m very sorry.”), (b) a direct refusal (e.g., “I can’t attend your birthday party.”), and (c) an excuse (e.g., “I have an important exam.”) (Chen, 1996).

The cultural backgrounds of people influence the way they interact, interpret and apprehend (Al-Issa, 2003). As people from different cultures communicate, they reflect their cultural norms in their way of interacting. All the speech acts including strategies of refusals presuppose the use of certain strategies depending on the social status, power, age, gender and educational level of the interlocutors (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008). The interlocutors should have adequate background knowledge of each other while communicating in order not to cause a misunderstanding stemming from cultural differences. “Thus, interlocutors should have sufficient knowledge of each others’ background in order to use proper refusal forms, as to alleviate the adverse impacts of direct refusals” (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008, cited in Han and Burgucu-Tazeg l, 2016). Otherwise, problems of miscommunication and misunderstanding may arise.

1.1.Literature Review

A great number of research has been conducted on refusal strategies including the studies of Olshtain and Weinbach (1987), Beebe, et al (1990), Chen (1996), and Murphy and Neu (1996). These scholars worked with Hebrew, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean speakers, respectively. This study will contribute to the literature examining the differences between Turkish and a number of students whose native language is English.

Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) studied the refusal strategies used by American English speakers and Japanese EFL learners. They analyzed the refusals as a formulaic sequence in terms of how they refuse an invitation; (1) an expression of regret, followed by (2) an excuse, and ending with (3) an offer of alternative. They found, in their study that, Japanese of English and native speakers have difference in three areas: the order of the semantic formulae, the frequency of the formulae, and the content of the utterances. American speakers tended to give more detailed responses to the questions, whereas the responses of the Japanese speakers were more simple and undetailed.

Chen (1996) also used the semantic formulae to analyze the speech act of refusals used by American and Chinese speakers of English. She found that direct refusal was not common in

two of the groups. She pointed to a one difference between American and Chinese speakers: expression of regret is used commonly in American refusals, while it was used quite rarely by Chinese speakers since it leads to unpleasant feelings.

In Turkish context, numerous studies were also conducted including Genç and Tekyildiz (2009), Bulut (2003) and Delen and Tavil (2010) in order to examine the refusal strategies of Turkish and native speakers of English. Genç and Tekyildiz (2009) investigated the relationship between learners' use of refusal strategies and the region of their residence (urban or rural). The 101 Turkish EFL students and 50 native speakers of English (NES) were divided into four groups according to the region of their residence. The responses gathered from the participants were analyzed concerning the residential differences. The results indicated no significant difference between four groups in terms of use of refusal strategies. What is remarkable in this study is that, Turkish EFL students often preferred direct strategies while they are using the speech acts of refusals, however, NESs mostly preferred indirect strategies.

Bulut (2003) also conducted a study to determine whether there were any significant differences between the refusal strategies of American English (AE), Turkish (TT) and Turkish English (TE) regarding the most frequently used pragmatic norms. He collected the data through role-playing and a discourse completion task (DCT). The subjects were divided into three groups which are an inter-language group (composed of Turkish EFL learners), American native speakers, and Turkish native speakers. The results indicated that the refusal statements produced by AE' speakers were shorter than TT and TE groups in DCT, however, their responses were longer than other groups in the role-playing. It was also found that all three groups of participants preferred indirect strategies of refusals, and the semantic formulas used by the groups were also similar in cross-cultural context.

Delen and Tavil (2010) also investigated the EFL students' realizations of three speech acts: refusals, requests and complaints. They implemented a DCT to a 90 students from a state university in the Republic of Turkey and revealed that all the students realized the refusal and requesting strategies, however, they were incapable of making efficient complaints. Further, they indicated that, the strategies used by the students were quite limited in number.

1.2. Problem Situation

With the introduction of Communicative Competence by Hymes, the communicational purposes rather than structural and form-based approaches have gained importance in language teaching throughout the world. The increase in cultural diversity, the opportunities for mobility, international trade relations, social networking among the world have motivated the educational authorities to focus on communication-based approaches. Authentic and real-like use of language have been, today, considered more important than producing grammatically faultless language.

The present study aims to find out the differences between Turkish ELT students and native speakers of English in terms of the refusal strategies they produced. In order to unveil whether Turkish ELT students produce native-like language, the questions below were investigated in this paper:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference between Turkish ELT students and native speakers of English in terms of use of refusal strategies?

RQ2: Is there a significant difference between Turkish ELT students with overseas experience and Turkish ELT students without any overseas experience?

RQ3: How do the Turkish and foreign students describe each other considering the act of refusing?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1.Participants

The present study is composed of two groups of students who are all from ELT departments in order to investigate the differences between Turkish ELT students and native speakers of English language in terms of speech acts of refusals and to grasp how the participants from different groups define each other. The total number of participants is 30 including 20 Turkish and 10 foreign students. The foreign students are the participants of Erasmus program. The class levels of participants for this study are ignored since the program they are enrolled in already requires a high level of English proficiency. This study was conducted at the end of the academic term, therefore, both group of students had time to know each other well. 17 of the total number of participants are female, and 13 of the participants are male. However, the gender was not taken as a variable in this study. The nationalities of the participants are given in the Table below:

Table 1: The Nationalities of the Participants

Nationality	Frequency	Percent (%)
Turkish	20	%66.6
Austrian	1	%3.3
Czech	1	%3.3.
Polish	4	%13.3
English	4	%13.3
Total	30	100

Among the non-native speakers of English who are all Turkish, 12 of them stated that they had been to an English-speaking country before. 8 stated they had never been in an English-speaking country. The non-native speakers had been to an English-speaking country for several reasons including attending to a language school, Erasmus and work&travel programs and touristic purposes. One stated to have been raised in USA and one stated his/her father was an embassy personnel.

2.2.Instruments

2.2.1. *Discourse Completion Test (DCT)*

The instruments for this study include a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) with 9 open-ended items to which the participants are required to respond using a refusal strategy. The DCT has been preferred because DCTs allow the researchers have control over the contextual variables that appear in the situational description and which may influence the response of the participant. Secondly, DCTs allow the researcher collect quite large amount of data in a short period of time (Houck and Gass, 1996). However, it is not the easiest instrument to be employed to gather the data since it requires students to concentrate on the situations and provide written responses. Additionally, despite the disadvantages of DCTs, Kasper and Rose (2002) indicate that although not comparable to a face-to-face interaction, it can provide relevant information regarding learners' pragmalinguistic and metapragmatic knowledge on the specific pragmatic feature under study. The DCT implemented in this study was a study prepared by Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2011). They stated, in their study that, they adapted some situations of the DCT

from the studies conducted by King and Silver (1993), Al-Issa (2003), Nguyen (2006) and Duan (2008).

2.2.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

Along with DCT, the native students also participated in a semi-structured interview including questions on their experiences in Turkey. The interview involved questions on their personal experiences in Turkey on refusing (refusals of offers, invitations etc.) The questions are given as such:

- a) Do you think Turkish/foreign students are insistent when you refuse their offers, invitations etc.? Why?
- b) Once a student participating in an Exchange program stated “You can never say no to Turks, that’s because I drank too much tea when I was in Turkey.” Or another student stated “Polish students refused almost every offer or invitation, they like being independent.” Do you think students from other cultures behave differently?
- c) Do you have any specific example or personal experience in which you needed to refuse an offer or invitation, you needed to insist in order to convince someone or you were bothered because the person you were communicating were too insisting?

2.2.3. Data Analysis

For the analysis of the responses in DCTs, a classification scheme was used. The data was transcribed and coded according to the scheme provided by Beebe et al. (1990). The classification categories are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Taxonomy of the Speech Acts of Refusals

I. Direct Refusals	
1.	No!
2.	Negative willingness/ability (e.g., “I won’t / I don’t think so / I can’t”.)
II. Indirect Refusals	
1.	Statement of regret (e.g., “I’m sorry / Sorry! / I apologize / Unfortunately / I beg your pardon)
2.	Wish (e.g., “I wish I could / Honestly, I wish”.)
3.	Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g., “I have a newborn baby”.)
4.	Statement of alternative (e.g., “Ask another friend / You can find someone else to interview”.)
5.	Set condition for acceptance (e.g., “If I guessed, I would not allow the cleaning!”.)
6.	Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g., “It’s not a big deal / Don’t worry! / Never mind”.)
7.	Postponement (e.g., “Maybe later, I can eat it.”)
8.	Topic switch (avoidance) (e.g., “Let’s have a cup of coffee or tea”.)
9.	Repetition (e.g., “In Istanbul! / Dessert! / Extra 3 hours!”.)
10.	Self-defense (e.g., “ You know, I gave my notes to you many times/ before I worked and helped you”.)
11.	Lack of empathy (e.g., “This is not my problem or responsibility!”)
12.	Joke (e.g., “Dessert! I do not want to kill myself”.)
13.	Criticism (e.g., “You have never come to the lesson / You are always absent”.)
III. Adjuncts to Refusals	
1.	Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (e.g., “I would like to / This is a good opportunity / It looks awesome”.)
2.	Statement of empathy (e.g., “I know you have taken pains but / I know this promotion is important”.)
3.	Pause filler (e.g., “Umm / Hmm”.)
4.	Gratitude (“Thank you! / Thanks so much”.)
5.	Getting interlocutor attention (e.g., “Look! I have allowed you to clean my office”.)

Direct refusals include phrases such as “No!”, “I can’t!” and “I refuse!”. Indirect refusals are indirect strategies to be used to minimize the offense to the hearer. Indirect refusals include statements of excuses, postponements, regrets or providing other alternatives. The adjuncts to refusals involve the positive opinion or expressions of sympathy or gratitude of the interlocutor to the hearer.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. The Evaluation of Data Gathered via DCT

3.1.1. The Evaluation of situations on an individual basis

After the evaluation of the responses of participants as a whole, the responses given to each situation by all three groups will be provided and inter-group comparisons will be made. Table 3, given below, discusses the responses given to Situation 1:

Table 3: Evaluation of Situation 1

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>I. Direct Refusals</i>						
1. No!						
2. Negative will/ ability	2	%10	2	%6	2	%9
<i>II. Indirect Refusals</i>						
1. Regret	4	%20	6	%18	7	%31
2. Wish			2	%6	1	%4.5
3. Excuse, Reason	9	%45	12	%36	10	%45
4. Alternative			2	%6	-	-
5. Setting Condition	5	%25	1	%3	-	-
<i>III. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
1. Positive Op.	-	-	6	%18	2	%9
2. Empathy	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Pause Filler	-	-	1	%3	-	-
4. Gratitude	-	-	1	%3	-	-
5. Getting attention	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	20		33		22	

Situation 1 includes a relation of power which is between a university professor and a student. The professor asks his student for help and the student needs to refuse him/her on various reasons as the study necessitates.

When the responses of the students from all three groups are considered, it can be concluded that NS group used limited number of strategies when compared to NSE and NNW groups. NS group preferred to keep their responses short and more direct, however, especially NSW group used various strategies and longer responses. It is observed from the Situation 1 that NS group has the tendency to give the reason for refusing easily, however, NSE and NNW groups preferred to make detailed explanations for refusing which increases the number of excuses. In terms of use of adjuncts, the NSE group seems to have come first, whereas, NS group used none.

Considering intensifiers, in Situation 1, only NSE group used several intensifiers such as “really, deeply and very” and only one students used an intensifier in NS group. NNW group used no intensifier.

Table 4: Evaluation of Situation 2

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>IV. Direct Refusals</i>						
3. No!						
4. Negative will/ ability	1	%9	1	%4.3	-	-
<i>V. Indirect Refusals</i>						
6. Regret	3	%27	7	%30.4	4	%17
7. Wish	-		-	-	-	-
8. Excuse,Reason	5	%45	8	%34.7	4	%17
9. Alternative	2	%18	3	%13	3	%13
10. Lack of Empathy	-		1	%4.3	3	%13
<i>VI. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
6. Pause Filler	-		2	%8.6	1	%4.3
TOTAL	11		23		15	

Situation 2 occurs in a market where the shopper has only 50 Euro note, however, the shop assistant says that s/he is short of coins and asks for exact amount of money. This situation is also has a power relation, but this time the responder is the higher.

When the responses of the participants are considered, it is observed that NS group did not use a broad number of strategies, whereas the NSE and NNW groups tended to apply wide range of strategies. It is observed that NS group preferred to make excuse and provide alternatives or regrets. They used no pause filler such as “Aww!” or “Oh!”. The most frequently used strategy for NS and NSE groups is “statement of excuse, reason and explanation” with the highest percentage, and “statement of regret” is nip and tuck with “statement of excuse, reason and explanation” in NNW group.

It should be mentioned here that NSE and NNW groups have showed intolerance against this situation, on the other hand, NSE group seemed quite tolerable. One participant from NNW group responded “If I had cash, I would not give you a 50 euro note”; another responded “I mean do i look like an idiot? I would give you a euro if I had one smart ass” whereas NS and NSE groups tended to focus on explaining they are also short of coins.

Table 5: Evaluation of Situation 3

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>VII. Direct Refusals</i>						
5. No!						
6. Negative will/ ability	1	%7.6	-	-	-	-
<i>VIII. Indirect Refusals</i>						
11. Regret	5	%38.4	6	%28.5	7	%33.3
12. Wish	-		2	%9.5	1	%7.6
13. Excuse,Reason	5	%38.4	9	%42.8	9	%42.8
14. Alternative	1	%7.6	2	%9.5	2	%9.5
15. Postponement	1	%7.6	1	%4.7	2	%9.5
16. Topic Switch	-		1	%4.7	-	-
<i>IX. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
7. Pause Filler	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	13		21		21	

In situation 3, an hypothetical first-year student asks to interview with the participant for a project they conduct. The participant has no time, therefore, s/he has to refuse it. No power-relation is observed in this situation.

When the responses of the participants are considered, it is observed that NS group has used least number of strategies and NNE and NNW groups used equally higher number of

strategies. The most frequently used strategy is “statement of regret” and “statement of excuse, reason and explanation” for all groups.

Unlike situation 2, participants of all groups seem to help the person asking to interview, therefore, although they have no time to help, they tended to help them stating alternatives and applying postponement strategy saying “I’ll send you a friend of mine!” (NS); can we have this interview some other time?” (NNE) and “I’m sorry I don’t have time right now. Please catch me later” (NNW). One interesting response is received from the participant of NNW, which is “I can help him/her quickly”, although the participant is asked to refuse the offer for the study.

Table 6: Evaluation of Situation 4

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>X. Direct Refusals</i>						
7. No!	4	%28.5	-		-	-
8. Negative will/ ability	1	%7.1	2	%9	-	-
<i>XI. Indirect Refusals</i>						
17. Regret	1	%7.1	6	%27	8	%42.1
18. Wish			1	%4.5	-	-
19. Excuse,Reason	6	%42.8	9	%40.9	4	%21
20. Alternative	1	%7.1	1	%4.5	4	%21
21. Let off the hook	-		1	%4.5	-	-
22. Lack of Empathy	-		1	%4.5	3	15.7
<i>XII. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
8. Statement of Empathy	-	-	1	%4.5	-	-
9. Gratitude	1	%7.1	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	14		22		19	

In situation 4, the respondent is waiting in the queue to buy a cinema ticket to see the latest film by his/her favorite actor. After queuing more than one hour, a stranger explains how eager he/she drove 200 km on purpose to come to see the film and asks the participant to see a different one. There is no power relation in this situation.

When the responses of the participants are taken into consideration, it is observed that NS group tended to use direct refusals more than NNE and NNW groups. The second most frequent strategy for NS and NNE groups is statement of excuse and reason. No direct refusal is observed in NNW group, however, the strategies indicating lack of empathy is seen only in this group.

What should be discussed about NNW group is the intolerable answers they produced such as “Sorry mam but this is the most bullshit excuse I have ever heard”, whereas one participant from NNE stated “I am sorry. I cannot accept your offer. I want to watch this film because my favorite actor plays role in that film” and one from NS stated “I’m sorry madam I understand your situation, but I want to see this movie as much as you do”.

Table 7: Evaluation of Situation 5

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XIII. Direct Refusals</i>						
9. No!	-	-	-	-	-	-
10. Negative will/ ability	-	-	1	%5.2	-	-
<i>XIV. Indirect Refusals</i>						
23. Regret	2	%18	5	%26.3	7	%41.1
24. Wish						
25. Excuse,Reason	5	%45.4	8	%42	9	%52.9
26. Alternative	2	%18	3	%15.7	-	
27. Set cond for accep	1	%9				
28. Topic Swith	-		1	%5.2	-	
29. Lack of Empathy	-		1	%5.2	-	

A Cross-Cultural Study On Refusal Strategies: How Do Turkish And Foreign Students Differ In Refusing?

30. Joke	1	%9	-	1	%5.8
<i>XV. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>					
TOTAL	11		19	17	

In Situation 5, a student is asking to the respondent for a dictionary in the translation exam. The questioner is the friend of the respondent.

The responses given indicate that statement of excuse and explanation is the most frequently used strategy and it is followed by statement of regret in all groups. There is not a consistency in the other strategy; most of the strategies are used only once. One respondent preferred to use a direct refusal in this situation.

Two participants seemed to have misunderstood the situation because they accepted giving their dictionaries, although they were asked to refuse in the problem situation.

2 respondent from NS and 3 respondents from NNE stated alternatives saying “Sorry but I need to use the dictionary to translate the texts as well, maybe someone else has a spare one?” (NS) and “Sorry I need it at the moment. You have to ask someone else” (NNE) but no alternative was provided in NNW.

Two participants responded joking to the offer saying “Yes of course!” (NS) and “Dude come on you know how much I like this dictionary. I can’t just give it away. There is an emotional bond between us now” (NNW). One student from NNW referred to a personal situation saying “No way dude madam Aysegul is getting angry when we come without dictionary”.

One student from NNE group refused using a combination of Explanation+Swith Topic Strategy saying “I was about to look for something. This text seems very complicated”.

Table 8: Evaluation of Situation 6

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XVI. Direct Refusals</i>						
11. No!						
12. Negative will/ ability	3	%20	3	%13	4	%18
<i>XVII. Indirect Refusals</i>						
31. Regret	3	%20	3	%13	6	%27
32. Wish						
33. Excuse,Reason	5	%33	10	%43.4	9	%40
34. Alternative	1	%6				
35. Postponement	3	%20	7	%30	3	%13.6
<i>XVIII. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
TOTAL	15		23		22	

In Situation 6, the cousin of the respondent asks for help about his/her assignment, however, the respondent should study for his/her final exam. So, the respondent needs to refuse his/her cousin using a refusal strategy.

The responses indicate no variety in the types of strategies preferred for all groups. All th participants stated regret for not helping explaining they have a final exam and offered helping another day or time. Only one participant from NS offered an alternative saying “I can't I'm sorry, I have a final exam tomorrow and it's really important, maybe someone else can help you?”.

The most frequent strategies are statement of regret, statement of explanation and excuses and postponement in this study. The mostly preferred combination is regret+ explanation+ postponement.

Table 9: Evaluation of Situation 7

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%

<i>XIX. Direct Refusals</i>						
13. No!						
14. Negative will/ ability	3	%27.2	2	%9.5	-	
<i>XX. Indirect Refusals</i>						
36. Regret	4	%36.3	8	%38	7	%36.8
37. Wish						
38. Excuse,Reason	5	%45.4	10	%47.6	8	%42.1
39. Alternative	2	%18	-		2	%10.5
40. Postponement	-		1		1	
<i>XXI. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
1. State of positive opinion	-	-	-	-	1	%5.2
2. Statement of empathy	-	-	1	%4.7	-	-
3. Pause filler	-	-	1	%4.7	-	-
TOTAL	11		21		19	

In situation 7, one of the professors asks the participants to help him/her carrying books and papers to the office, however, the participant is in a hurry and has to refuse his professor.

The responses gathered indicate that there is no significant difference in the preference of the strategies among the groups. Nearly all the participants stated regret and explanation. In terms of directness and indirectness, NS and NNE groups used direct methods but NNW group did not use any. 2 respondent from NS and 2 from NNW offered alternative solutions.

As the adjuncts are considered, each strategy is preferred once in each group.

It was quite catchy that one participant from NS stated ‘‘I cannot help you I have a diarrhea and I have to go I you know for what’’. One participant from NNW used intensifier ‘very’ when providing statement of regret (very sorry).

Table 10: Evaluation of Situation 8

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XXII. Direct Refusals</i>						
15. No!	-	-	1		-	-
16. Negative will/ ability	2		5		5	
<i>XXIII. Indirect Refusals</i>						
41. Regret	3		4		5	
42. Wish						
43. Excuse,Reason	5		8		9	
<i>XXIV. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
TOTAL	10		18		19	

In Situation 9, the participant is hypothetically a graduate student researching at the university. A student comes in his/her office and asks to sign a paper on political issues.

As the responses gathered from all groups are evaluated, no significant difference is observed among the groups. Almost all the participants stated regret and explanation for not signing. 2 participants from NS, 6 students from NSE and 5 students from NNW preferred refusing directly.

Table 11: Evaluation of Situation 9

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XXV. Direct Refusals</i>						
17. No!	-	-	-	-	-	-
18. Negative will/ ability	3	%21.4	1	%5.2	2	%11.7
<i>XXVI. Indirect Refusals</i>						
44. Regret	5	%35.7	5	%26.3	4	%23.5
45. Excuse,Reason	5	%35.7	10	%52.6	9	%52.9
46. Statement of Alternative	1	%7.1	3	%15.7	2	%11.7

<i>XXVII. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>			
TOTAL	14	19	17

In situation 9, the respondent is in the university cafeteria finishing his/her lunch. Another student leaves his/her belonging and asks the respondent to watch over them till they come back. However, the respondent should go to the class and needs to refuse.

As the responses of the participants are considered, it is seen that NS group preferred direct refusals whereas NSE and NNW groups tended to be more indirect. Statement of excuse and explanation comes second in NSE and NNW groups. In NS group, on the other hand, statement of regret and statement of excuse, explanation and reason have the same amount of weight on percentages.

3.1.2. The overall evaluation of the situations

After the evaluation of the responses given to the situations singly, the overall evaluations will be presented in order to better understand the differences between the groups.

Table 12: Evaluation of Directness/Indirectness

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XXVIII. Direct Refusals</i>						
19. No!	4	%20				
20. Negative will/ ability	16	%80	17	%100	13	%100
TOTAL	20		17		13	

Table 12 indicates that NS used more direct strategies of refusals when compared to NSE and NNW groups. NSE used 17 direct refusal strategies and NNW used 13, whereas the number is 20 in NS group.

Table 13: Evaluation Indirect Refusals

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XXIX. Indirect Refusals</i>						
	100	%83	170	%85	154	%90
TOTAL amount of all strategies	120		199		171	

Table 13 indicates that the indirectness is highest in NNW group, higher than NS in NNW group and lowest in NS group. It is inferred from the results that native speakers of English prefer using more direct strategies when refusing and participants with overseas experience also seem to have use more direct strategies. It can be stated that, as the native speakers' preferences are taken as a basement, participant who have been to the target culture previously have developed more native-like strategies for refusing.

Table 14: Evaluation of Adjuncts

	NS		NSE		NNW	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>XXX. Adjuncts to Refusals</i>						
	1	%0.8	13	%6.5	4	%2.3
TOTAL	120		199		171	

As Table 14 indicates, the use of adjuncts is considerably higher in NSE and NS has the lowest rate of adjuncts used. This may be stemming from the understanding of interculturality that NSE group has developed with exposure to the target culture. NSE group, comparing to NNW group, seem to have developed more tolerance against unexpected situations and people,

and it may be the result of their experiences and enhanced horizons through other people and other cultures.

3.2. The Evaluation of Data Gathered Via Semi-Structures

The data gathered from interviews will be examined under three titles, as suggested in the interview, in order to make it easy to comprehend.

Firstly, the foreign students are asked whether they find Turkish people insistent when they refused their offers. Among 10 participants, 7 stated that they find Turkish people too much insistent, especially when they are refused. A Polish participant commented “I think Turkish students hate it when you refuse their offers because in Turkish culture, it is not nice to say no for invitations”. Another Polish participant defined being insistent as “the characteristic feature of Turkish nation”. A Turkish participant who raised in USA and whose native language is English said when she first came to the Turkey, she was sick of being asked about an invitation over and over.

When foreign students are asked to comment on the roles of cultural differences on people behaviors, they all agreed that culture is an essential determinant of our behaviors. A Turkish participant whose mother tongue is English stated “I believe other cultures like their independence more, whereas here in Turkey most people like to work in groups and pairs”. An English participant also commented accordingly, saying “As far as I observe in three months, feeling independent means feeling insecure in Turkey. People feel more secure when they are together”.

Lastly, the foreign students were asked if they have personal experiences in which they needed to refuse an offer or invitation or they were bothered because they have to communicate with an insisting person, and the Polish girl stated, sighing, “I had to refuse a date cause guy was too insisting. I felt very uncomfortable”. An English participant narrated a personal experience:

“I have had many problems like this while living in Istanbul from the people that hand out leaflets. I've had many times where I've had to run to a certain place because I was late, and I remember one keeping me waiting for about 15 minutes because he was doing a poll and I insisted that I was in a hurry and didn't have time, but then gave up and did the poll because I didn't have the energy anymore to argue with him”.

When Turkish participants are asked whether they find the foreign students insisting, almost all of them answered “no”. One Turkish students stated “Foreign students are not used to being refused, therefore, they feel offended when you refuse them”. Two of the Turkish participants said that they find foreign students more polite than Turks. One Turkish participant stated “they want to hang out very often, so we have to refuse them”.

In terms of how culture influences people’s behavior, all of the Turkish participants agreed that people’s personalities are affected by the culture they live in. But all of the students stated “it is good to be different parts of a whole”.

When their personal experiences on insistency and refusing, one Turkish students, adding even he was exposed to insistency although he is a Turk, stated:

“I was offered a candy by one of my professors, I said no but he just kept insisting to make me eat a candy that I do not want to eat. I think he asked me to eat the candy at least 6 times in 3 minutes”.

Turkish students also complained about how insistent some people are in Turkey including the salesperson, customer services and friends. However, some students admit it is not a weird situation to complain about and mentioned:

“I cannot understand why foreign students are bothered cause we are insisting. Once I brought some pişmaniye (some sort of cotton candy) to my foreign friends, first they didn't want to eat it, but I insist. Then they accepted to eat and they like it very much”.

3.3. Results

After the evaluation of responses given by three groups of native and non-native speakers, the results of the study indicate that the use of refusal strategies are quite high for all groups, however, the number of frequently-used strategies is very limited- to five or six- including direct refusals and a few indirect refusals.

It is observed, considering the results, that the use of direct refusals is higher in NS group compared to the other groups. This means native speakers of English tend to be more direct while communicating. The use of the strategy “statement of explanation, reason and excuse” (e.g. I have an exam, I have to catch the bus) is high among all the groups, but slightly higher in NNE and NNW groups, respectively. This may be stemming from a cultural difference between the target and native cultures. In the target culture of English language, it seems people do not feel as much responsibility as Turkish people which causes them to make explanations. In Turkish culture, culture-specifically, family and relative bonds are stronger and more people than the target culture feel the right to ask questions to individuals, this may be resulting in making more explanations.

The difference between NNE and NNW groups, in terms of use of the strategy “statement of explanation, reason and excuse” may also stem from the fact that NNE group participants are familiar with the target culture and they are aware that intercultural communication is open to misunderstandings.

In terms of tolerance, NS and NNE groups seemed more tolerable in some situations like being short of coins in a market or a friend asking for your dictionary in the exam. This may be also resulting from the fact that cultural familiarity and exposition to the target culture requires being more tolerable. NNW group seemed less tolerant in such situations.

Especially in situations with power relations, the participants in NNW group seemed less tolerant, however, they are more tolerant while talking to a friend. As is known, interculturality and having intercultural relationships help individuals enhance their horizons through world and makes people more tolerant, understanding and easy to communicate. NNW group consist of participants with no experience of overseas, and it may stem from their still being stuck to cultural bonds.

When the use of refusal strategies considered, it can be seen that NS group uses less complicated sentences generally including one or two refusal strategies (Statement of regret+ explanation/ statement of explanation+ providing alternative etc.). The NNE and NNW groups used more complicated sentences consisting of 3-4 strategies. Their sentences often seemed to have included the repetition of the same strategy (e.g. Statement of regret+explanation+postponement+explanation).

The lack of empathy is also observed in NNW group, most probably stemming from the cultural reasons mentioned previously.

Limited number of intensifiers were used in the study and the participants of NS and NNE groups have uttered these intensifiers; no intensifiers were observed in NNW group. This means

authentic use of language and exposition to the target culture improves quite alike language with native speakers of English.

3.4. Implications of the Study

The findings of the study indicate that students with experiences of mobility programs such as Erasmus or Work&Travel, or participants who have lived in an English-speaking country for a while produce more native-like language while they are refusing. Actually, similar strategies are used in all groups, say, explanation, regret and providing alternative frequently, however, the frequency of the strategies and sentence structures differ in groups. NNE and NNW participants tended to use more complicated and indirect sentences compared to NNE group which preferred to be more direct while refusing.

The intolerance in some certain situations increased as the exposition to the target culture decreased and this may be stemming from cultural bonds and reasons. Therefore, it is found that tolerance might be contributed with exposition to the target culture. So, in order to increase produce authentic language with near-native structures, mobility programs and opportunities for experiencing other cultures can be promoted.

In terms of the insisting behaviors of the Turkish students, more exposition to the target culture should be provided in order realize the differences and grasp how to behave accordingly.

4. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

It is clear that although practical and easy-to-implement, DCT as a data collection tool can be considered a limitation since the the responses might be somehow different from natural responses given in a natural setting. Besides, the situations provided in DCT may not be familiar to the participants and this may be a limitation.

The retrospective interview may be useful with the participants after the implementation of DCT in order to understand their reasons for choosing the strategy of refusals they have selected in DCT.

Another limitation may be the cultural diversity of native speaker group. This diversity result in questions about the different linguistic background of the participants. For example, their choice of refusal strategy may be affected by their native culture, say Polish, rather than English language. Therefore, a future study can include native speakers of English from same geographical area in order to better understand if the differences between groups originate from cultural background or linguistic background.

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A Cross-Cultural Study On Refusal Strategies: How Do Turkish And Foreign Students Differ In Refusing?

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