

## **Iraqi EFL University Students' Strategies of Refusing Others**

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### **I. Introduction**

#### **١.١ The problem**

Whenever we enter into a conversation, we often form an attitude towards others' personality, style, and viewpoints. This is done through the way they use language. One of the important ways in this regard is how to say 'no' indirectly when we are unwilling to accept others' speech. Tactful means to refuse others' suggestions, invitations, offers...etc. are vital to keep our relations with others on good terms. Hence comes the significance of studying the speech act of refusal.

As for the Iraqi EFL university students, the use of the speech act of refusal has not, to the best of our knowledge, been studied independently and thoroughly. Accordingly, there is a need to answer the following questions:

١. What are the strategies Iraqi FEL university students employ to perform the speech act of refusal?
٢. To what extent is their employment appropriate in relation to the context in which they are involved?

#### **١.٢. Aims of the study**

The present study attempts to reach the following aims:

١. Identifying the strategies Iraqi EFL university students use to refuse others.
٢. Investigating these students' ability to use these strategies appropriately in relation to the context (i. e.) whether or not they are able to appreciate the contextual factors of the situation involved.

#### **١.٣. The Hypotheses**

The study hypothesizes that:

١. Iraqi EFL university students will use direct refusal strategies more frequently than the indirect ones.
٢. These students will not be able to appreciate the contextual factors of the situation involved.

#### **١.٤. The Procedures**

To fulfill the aims of the study, the following procedures will be adopted:

١. Presenting a theoretical background about the speech act of refusal to familiarize the reader with the subject.
٢. Developing a model for refusal strategies to be used in analyzing the data of the empirical work.

٣. Conducting a test by means of a written questionnaire to collect data about the strategies Iraqi FEL university students employ to perform the speech act of refusal.
٤. Analyzing the findings of the empirical work in light of the model developed for this reason.
٥. Coming out with conclusions and some pedagogical recommendations.

#### ١. ٥. The Limitations

In this study, the following limitations will be observed:

١. Refusals can be realized by various linguistic and nonlinguistic strategies. The present study focuses only on the linguistic strategies, overlooking the prosodic features since the test uses a written questionnaire.
٢. The sample of the empirical work will comprise undergraduate fourth-year students randomly chosen from the Department of English of the College of Education/Saffey el-Deen el-Hilli, University of Babylon.

#### ١. ٦. Significance of the study

The findings of this study are hoped and expected to be of some pedagogical significance for EFL teachers, students as well as syllabus designers as it sheds light on the manners of avoiding refusing others' rudely. Besides, studying the pragmatic performance of EFL students might be of some value to those interested in EFL studies.

### ٢. The Theoretical Background

#### ٢. ١. Speech Act Theory

A speech act is an action performed by means of language, such as requesting something, complaining about something, or refusing something. According to Austin (١٩٦٢), a speech act is a functional unit in communication. It is an act that a speaker performs when making an utterance. Phonetically, an utterance is a unit of speech bounded by silence. In dialogue, each turn by a speaker may be considered an utterance. Linguists sometimes use the term utterance to simply refer to a unit of speech under study. The corresponding unit in written language is a text of paragraphs that represents an extended unit of speech. Linguists used the term "utterance" to distinguish it from the traditionally known term "sentence" whereby the latter was used by structuralists to refer to the linguistic form devoid of its context. Utterance came into use to usher a new approach to the analysis of linguistic expressions on the basis of their functions in the context in which they are used.

Utterances that we produce carry three kinds of meaning. The first kind is the locutionary meaning, which is the literal meaning of the utterance. The second kind of meaning is the illocutionary meaning, which is the function that the utterance performs in the social context. The third type of meaning is called perlocutionary meaning that refers to the result of the effect

produced by the utterance in that given context on the listeners (Austin ١٩٦٢).

Searle (١٩٧٩:٥٩) has introduced the notion of 'indirect speech act' which in his account is meant to be, more particularly, an indirect 'illocutionary' act. He describes indirect speech acts as the acts in which the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer. An account of such act, it follows, will require such things as an analysis of mutually shared background information about the conversation, as well as of rationality and linguistic conventions.

### **٢,٢ The Notion of "Face"**

Face is usually defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. As such, it is the self-image that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction (Yule, ١٩٩٩: ١٣٤). Face has two aspects: positive, the want of every person that his wants be desired to at least some others; and negative, the want of every person that his actions be unimpeded by others (Brown and Levinson, ١٩٧٨:٦٦). In general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction, such cooperation is based on the mutual vulnerability of face (ibid).

#### **٢,٢,١. *Face-threat***

Face-threat is a term used to refer to cases when we say something that represents a risk to damage another person's self-image. For example, if we order someone to do something (*Give me that paper!*), we are acting under the assumption that we have more social power than the ordered person. Therefore, if we do not actually have that social power, face will be threatened both positively (underestimation of other) and negatively (impeding other's freedom of action). If, on the other hand, we have that social power, only the negative face will be threatened (Yule, ١٩٩٩: ١٣٤).

As such, the speech act of refusal basically threatens the positive face since it declines others' wants, desires, demands...etc. and sometimes it threatens the negative face when it confines someone's freedom of action. Consequently, refusals, as sensitive and high-risk, can provide much insight into one's pragmatics. To perform refusals is highly indicative of one's nonnative pragmatic competence (Cohen and Julie: ١٩٩٥).

#### **٢,٢,٢. *Saving face***

Because of the critical role face plays in interaction, it is essential that interlocutors work hard to prevent, or at least lessen, its damage. One of the tactful ways people use in this respect is the indirect speech acts which have the privilege of expressing (a) awareness and estimation of other's face by the explicit meaning they put forward; and (b) delivering the intended message of the speaker. Consider the following example:

(١) Situation: Sara, an employee, refuses her boss' offer to give her a lift home:

Sara: Oh! Honestly I appreciate it, but I'm not going home right now. I've planned to make some shopping in downtown. Thanks.

In this example, Sara refuses her boss' offer yet she does not use "no" or any equivalent expression saving in this way her boss' positive face via:

- a) Expressing her appreciation to the offer,
- b) Giving reason why she is not going home, and
- c) Thanking her boss.

## ٢.٣ The Speech Act of refusal

The speech act of refusal occurs when a speaker directly or indirectly declines a request, invitation, offer, suggestion, ...etc. Refusal is a highly face-threatening act to the listeners because it contradicts their expectations, and is habitually realized through indirect strategies. Consequently, the speech act of refusal requires a high level of pragmatic competence. Chen (١٩٩٦) used semantic formula to analyze speech act sets of refusal (refusing requests, invitations, offers and suggestions), and concluded that direct refusal as using "no" was not a common strategy for any of the subjects, regardless of their language background. For example, an expression of regret, common in Americans' refusals, was generally produced by the Chinese speakers, which might lead to unpleasant feelings between speakers in an American context. To refuse is to respond negatively to an offer, request, invitation... etc. How to refuse is more important in many cases than the answer itself. Therefore, sending and receiving a message of 'no' is a task that needs special skills. The interlocutor must know when, to whom, and how to use the appropriate way to refuse. The speech act and its social elements depend on each group and their cultural linguistic values. Those skills are very important to be acquired since the "inability to say 'no' clearly has led many nonnative speakers to offend their interlocutors" (Romas, ١٩٩١).

Although investigations into the speech act of refusal have been limited, some significant studies have been conducted. Al-Shalawi (١٩٩٧) investigates the semantic formulas used by

Arabic and American male undergraduate students performing refusals, the result of his investigation reveals that Arabs and Americans use similar semantic formulas in refusing offers, requests, invitation, and suggestions. These results of Al-Shalawi's (ibid) study shows that there are no significant differences between Arabs and Americans except in the employment of direct 'no' which is used by Arabs much more frequently than Americans. They, however, differ in the number of semantic formulas used in each situation and in the context of their explanations that reflect some values of Arab and American cultures. The choices of semantic formulas reflect the different characteristics of each culture. Americans are more straightforward and concerned about the clarity of their explanations than Arabs.

### ٢, ٣, ٢ *Refusal Strategies*

In order to reduce the threat to the interlocutor's face, people often use different strategies in refusing. In the following sections an attempt is made to shed light on the strategies usually used in the speech act of refusal in English:

#### ٢, ٣, ٢, ١ *Direct Refusals*

Generally, English native speakers infrequently use direct refusals. This is because people on the whole get furious and hurt about being bluntly and rudely rejected. Direct refusals in many cases break the relationship even between close friends. In expressing direct refusals, nonetheless, English native speakers generally use the following strategies (Yang, ٢٠٠٨: ١٠٤٤):

١. *Using denying words* such as refusal verbs (e. g. *I refuse; I disagree*) are hardly ever used.

The use of the word "no" occurs only rarely in English.

٢. *Expressing unwillingness or inability* occur only rarely (e. g. *I don't want to... ; I can't...*).

In general, it is better *not* to use direct refusals and to choose instead other, less hurting and more indirect, ways of refusing others.

#### ٢, ٣, ٢, ٢ *Indirect Refusal Strategies*

There are a number of strategies English native speakers use to avoid direct refusal which might cause unnecessary consequences. These strategies are:

##### ١. *Giving reasons*

Giving reasons is more common than any other indirect strategy of refusal (Beebe et al, ١٩٩٠: ٦٤). When we are asked to do something or to go to someplace and we are unwilling to accept this proposal, we might think of some reasons to justify our refusal. For instance, we might be invited to a party in the evening, we'd love to go with them, but we've promised our parents to go out for supper. In this case, we have to turn down the invitation saying for example:

(٢) It's really nice of you, but I've promised my parents to accompany them tonight.

So, it's a pity not to be able to join you.

The advantage of saying something like that is that you would not let others feel embarrassed or humiliated (Yang, ٢٠٠٨: ١٠٤٥). Although they might be disappointed that we did not join them, yet; they would feel we are a polite and wise person and they would invite us again if there is any other chance.

### ٢. *Making reparation:*

As everyone feels, refusing others is such a guilty thing because we feel sorry that we might fall short of others' expectations. How can we say "no" to others without avoiding such a situation? To solve this problem, we can make some reparation for them when turning others down. By giving reparation when declining others, we can offset the regrets of turning others down. For example, if classmates ask one of them to be their chairman in a session but no one has the inclination to be acting this role, something like the following is quite possibly said:

*(3) I'm glad that you say that and it's really an honor to me. But I have many things to do; perhaps I can't do this job so well. Maybe you can ask someone else; whom I believe can do a great job, too!*

### ٣. *Using elders' speeches*

People would usually accept the suggestion, advice, or proposal given by the elders. Thus, the way to refuse others by using elders' words is useful. It is generally persuasive to begin a refusal with what "parents" or "teachers" think or believe is right. We can therefore decline others' by saying: "My mom says that..." "My teachers suggest that..."

For instance, someone, who is invited to a party, is requested to stay longer might say:

*(٤) My parents say that it's not safe to go there at night and I have curfew. They tell me that I would be in trouble if I don't get home before nine o'clock.*

Take another situation as example, one of our friends asks us to go shopping after school, but we have lots of homework to do. We can tell him or her:

*(5) I'm afraid I can't because my teacher said that we should get our assignments done by tomorrow.*

By appropriately using elders' speeches as the shield, we can refuse others easily and not put ourselves in an awkward situation.

### ٤. *Employing the fuzziness of language*

In fact, saying "no" to others plainly makes everyone embarrassed. But if we can make good use of the fuzziness of language, we can give a hint to others that we do not want to do what people ask us to. In that way, the one who asks will understand our inner feeling and they would not ask us the same question again. Thus, we can avoid the awkward situation of

confronting our interlocutor with the unwanted direct “no” answer. It is also a nice way to refuse others since we do not state our refusal openly.

Suppose that someone asks us out to a party tonight but we really do not want to go, how can we refuse? Something like the following could probably be said:

(5) *Mum... I can't definitely tell you whether I'm free or not tonight. But it seems like I have my own schedule at that time already.*

In the same way, if we are asked to lend someone money, but we know that he or she will never give the money back, we can tell them that we are not sure whether we have enough money to lend them, besides; if they want to borrow the money from us, maybe they have to wait at least four weeks. In this way, they would not venture asking money from us.

### **٥. Bringing up positive doubts**

To bring up doubts is another way to decline others. Its advantage is that we can make the asker falls into thinking repeatedly and thoughtfully. For example, if we are asked to go shopping. Our friends say there are things on sale. We do not like going; however, we are baseless to do so. On this occasion, bringing up the doubts could be useful.

(6) *-I'm going to the mall this weekend. How about joining me? There is a sale!*

*- Are you sure it's cheaper than usual or it's just a claptrap?*

That is not a malicious answer for sure. On the opposite side, we could remind our friends to think twice before making a decision. Bringing up doubts is, therefore, a gracious way to decline others.

### **٦. Ridicule ourselves as a decline**

We might hope we could make the turndown occasion more flexible. Then, it is the useful and moderate usage to say no by ridiculing yourself.

If someone asks us to play basketball, deep in our minds, we feel it is quite hot outside. We might ridicule ourselves and say:

(7) *Come on! You know I'm a pygmy. How could you play that sport with me? And look at the fatal sun, I'm black enough to become a charcoal, I don't think it would be a bright choice for me—black pygmy!*

Then, both of us might laugh happily. And at the meanwhile, you do refuse the invitation successfully.

Some friends might want to ask us out, but we might feel uncomfortable going out with them. In this case, we could say:

(8) *Are you kidding me? I'm a weak jokes teller. I'm afraid that I might ruin the entire joyful atmospheres when all of you have a great time*

*together. So, in my opinion, I think I'd better keep away from this activity.*

By taking advantage of this usage, we could make our interlocutors laugh instead of getting disappointed. The situation would be complete in both respects: performing a successful refusal and keeping harmony with others.

#### ٧. *Using some proverbs*

In some cases, using proverbs or famous sayings is an effective way of refusing others. Proverbs can be regarded as the concentrated wisdom of peoples' history, culture and education and are used for thousands of years so their rationality can be accepted and grasped easily by others. On the other hand, others cannot argue about their validity and will accept them whether willingly or not. For example, if someone asks his friend for money something like the following can be said:

*(9) I really want to lend you money but I really don't have some right now; besides, as the old saying runs, 'A ready way to lose a friend is to lend him money.' I don't want to lose you, my dear. So forgive me.*

It is said that when hearing these terms, most people certainly realize what we mean and may give up asking us again. These proverbs may be used to discourage others, so they really have some amazing power. Moreover, because proverbs are expressed by succinct sentences, everyone can understand them without explaining.

From above, the feature of using proverbs to say "no" is that you can make a conclusion in a clean-cut way. Instead of thinking up a great number of reasons and weak excuses, using proverbs can be more understandable and powerful to let others know our intentions. Since the meanings of proverbs can be easily understood, people will not get angry on hearing our refusal.

٨. **Statement of Principle** This strategy could be used when we want to express our viewpoints that might be the opposite of others. For example:

*(10) I don't believe in dieting.*

*(11) I'm not interested in such topics.*

By using this strategy we can convince others that these are our principles and there is no chance to change them.

٩. **White Lie** Sometimes, when we are asked to do something or to go to someplace and we are unwilling to comply; we might think of some other *unreal* reasons to say no. That is, we will resort to giving *white lies*, the intention of which is not to *negatively* deceive others but, on the contrary, we want to make them feel good when refused. For instance, when you are invited to go to the movies after school and, to be honest, you have nothing to do but deep in your mind



you really don't want to go. You might say:

(12) *Yes, we would love to, but we have an appointment with the dentist in thirty minutes, so we have to say no.*

## 1.1. Suggestion of willingness or postponement

One of the viable ways to refuse is to give the reason behind refusing accompanied by a suggestion for reparation in the near future. For example, invited to dinner tonight you are really busy and cannot go so saying something like the following will do:

(13) *I really want to go with you, but unfortunately, I have something more important things to do at that time. Maybe next Wednesday we can have dinner together, it will be my treat!*

This sounds much more polite than merely saying *no* since we reserve our interlocutor's positive face. In other words, when we want to refuse, we cannot merely say *no* courteously we have to show others our good intention, too.

## 3: The Empirical work

**3. 1. The Sample** The sample of the empirical work comprises forty fourth-year students randomly chosen from the Department of English, College of Education/ Saffey edDeen Al-Hilli, University of Babylon during the academic year (2010-2011). They are native speakers of Iraqi Arabic who have similar EFL background and their age ranges between twenty and twenty-two years old. The ratio of the sample to the whole population is 30%.

**3. 2. The questionnaire** The questionnaire of this study consists of ten situations of various contexts. The factors of familiarity, relative power, and age are taken into consideration in these situations. For each situation, the students are supplied with explanations about a situation. Then, they asked to write their reactions to the situation in which they are supposed to be involved. Though, in some situations, they were not explicitly asked to refuse, the description of the situation makes it clear that they have to refuse. The contexts are divided into four types of categories; request, invitation, offer and suggestion. In addition, the contexts give the subjects different statuses; higher, equal, and lower.

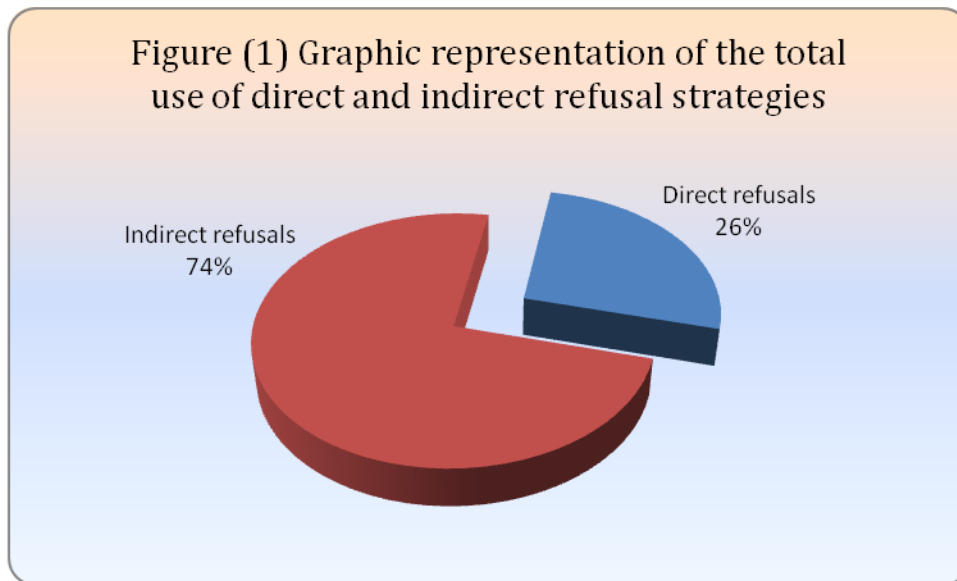
## 3.3 Results and discussions

**3. 3. 1. The total results** The data are analyzed according to the model developed in section 2.3.2. and a discussion for each situation is made. In order to verify the first hypothesis of this study, the responses are first viewed as direct and indirect, a process which produced Table (1) below.

| Strategies        | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Direct refusals   | 83        | 26,26 %    |
| Indirect refusals | 233       | 73,74 %    |
| Total             | 316       | 100 %      |

Table (١) The total use of direct and indirect strategies

As this table shows, the percentage of the students' use the direct strategies is only ٢٦,٢٦% while it is ٧٣,٧٤% for the indirect ones, a finding which refutes the first hypothesis of the study. The results of Table (١) are graphically represents in Figure (١).



### ٣. ٥. ٢. The detailed results

Below is an analysis of the results according to the situations:

١. In situation one, the subject is invited by his friend to a party at his friend's house but he has promised to have supper with his parents at the same night. In such a situation, the subjects are expected to use indirect refusal of some type accompanied by the reason of his refusal. Sixteen students used the indirect strategy of elders' speech like, '*I would love to, but my parents always say it is not good to stay out late*'. This strategy is supposed to be the most suitable one to turn down the invitation of the friend. Twenty-one of them prefer to give reasons with some reparations, like; '*I am so sorry, I would love to but I am so busy*'. The use of these strategies is also appropriate for such situation,
٢. In the second situation, the subjects are supposed to refuse the suggestion of their professor to have a course in research methods before starting writing the paper. Sixteen students used the strategy of giving reason, but only five of them used the strategy of reparation which is supposed to be a main strategy to refuse the interlocutor's speech because the subjects are of lower status than the professor. The other twenty students used direct or unsuitable ways to refuse this suggestion, like; '*No, I don't need it*' or '*I disagree. I want to have my own plan.*' Such responses, of course, represent the students' lack of pragmatic competence since most of them use direct strategies with interlocutors of higher ranks
٣. In the third situation, both of the interlocutors are of equal status. The subject is asked by his classmate to go with him to the movies after school. The subject has nothing to do but he does not want to go to the movies. To refuse this situation most of the strategies could be appropriate to use. This situation, nevertheless, is made to test whether the subjects would

be able to give indirect refusal or they would prefer to give a direct refusal. Twenty students use indirect strategies such as white lies, reasons, elder's speech. While thirteen of them refuse this situation using direct ways, like; *'I can't go with you'*.

٤. In the fourth situation, the subjects are supposed to refuse giving their phone number to their classmates; the situation supposes that the subject already has a phone. Ten students use the strategy of presenting some reparations like, *'Sorry, I don't use phones a lot, but I promise to keep in touch with you.'* While five of them preferred using the white lie strategy, like; *'I have no phone'*. Five of them tend to use the strategy of the fuzziness of language like *'I don't remember my number'* or *'My phone is always switched off'*. They use such strategies because the situation in which they are involved in obliges them to do so in order to escape the uncomfortable situation. Fifteen students preferred to use the direct strategy like, *'I can't give my phone number to you'*. And only three of them give the reason why they cannot give it.
٥. The fifth situation assumes that the subjects have to refuse lending their friends some money because they do not want to (not because they do not have it). Twenty students refuse using the strategy of reparation which is a suitable strategy to refuse this situation like. *'I am sorry, I would like to lend you but I have to pay for the rent. I will give you money as soon as I can later on.'* Fifteen of them give reasons why they do not want to *'I'm sorry, I believe that lending money makes problems.'* Ten of them used the white lie strategy like: *'I forgot my wallet at my brother's house'*.
٦. In sixth situation the subjects are supposed to have lots of work to do but their friends suggest to go shopping after school. In this situation, both of the interlocutors are of equal status and they are supposed to be close friends. Therefore, to decline the suggestion of the friend the subjects need to use two strategies together. They have to give a reason and to make some reparations. Fifteen of them used the two strategies together, like *'I have lots of work to do. I can go with you some other day.'* While ten of them think that it is enough to present reasons alone.
٧. In the seventh situation, the subjects who are supposed to be teachers, are higher in status than their interlocutors who are their students. Thirteen subjects use direct refusals to refuse the request of their students to postponed the exam to the next week. The subjects realized that they have the power to use direct refusal in such a situation. On the other hand, ten of them tended to give reasons with some reparations which are not needed to be used in this situation, taking into account that it is the students' duty to sit for the exam in the scheduled time.
٨. The eighth situation involves the subject who is supposed to be a clerk and his boss. The subject is asked to do a job which is not his responsibility. Although in this situation the

subjects are lower in status than the boss but most of them use direct refusal which is not the appropriate way to refuse in this situation. Seventeen of them present a regret with statements that could be realized obviously as a direct refusal like, ‘ *Sorry, I am not responsible for that*’.

٩. In the ninth situation, a friend asks the subject to lend him his car but the subject know that this friend is a reckless person and he might hit the car. The subjects’ answers differ in using most of the strategies involved in this study; namely, they used the strategies of reparations, reasons, positive doubts and the use of fuzziness of language while eight of them used direct ways to refuse this request. Some of the responses are as follows:

- *I can’t give you the car now maybe later on.*
- *Yes, why not but the problem is that my car is old and you will not be able to drive it.*

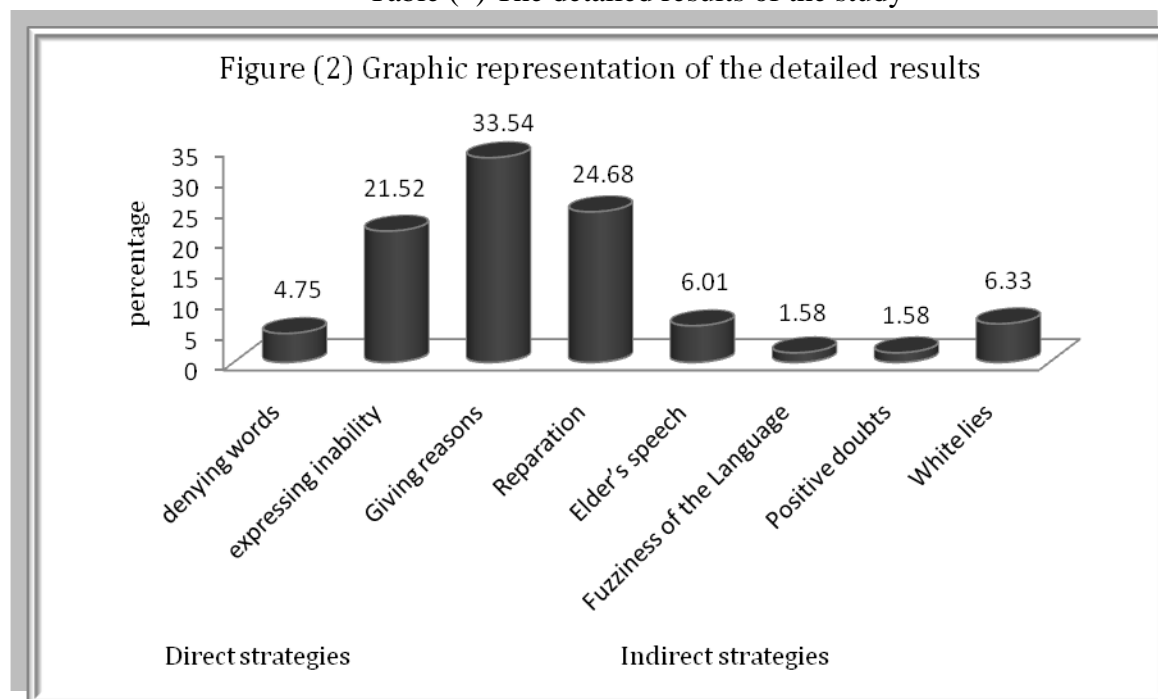
١٠. In the last situation, the subject is asked by his roommate to let him wear his coat but the subject does not like giving it. Ten of the subjects use a direct way to refuse the request. Seven of them used reasons and reparations together to get rid of the embarrassed situation like, ‘*I am so sorry but it is dirty.*’ Five other students use positive doubts which could be the most appropriate way for this situation like: ‘*I think its colour doesn’t suit you*’ or ‘*It might be small sized for you.*’

The detailed analysis above reveals that our students have not employed all the indirect strategies mentioned in ٢. ٣. ٤. ٥. above. Four indirect strategies; namely, ridicule self as a decline, using some proverbs, statement of principle, and suggestion of willingness or postponement. The strategies used by our students are stated in Table (١) below.

Although the subjects use the indirect strategies more than the direct ones, the analysis above shows that, generally speaking, their employment of the indirect strategies has not been quite successful. They sometimes use an indirect strategy when the direct is more appropriate (e. g. in situation ٧). This finding validates the second hypothesis of this study.

| Strategies       |                           | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Direct refusal   | denying words             | ١٥        | ٤,٧٥       |
|                  | expressing inability      | ٦٨        | ٢١,٥٢      |
| Indirect refusal | Giving reasons            | ١٠٦       | ٣٣,٥٤      |
|                  | Reparation                | ٧٨        | ٢٤,٦٨      |
|                  | Elder’s speech            | ١٩        | ٦,٠١       |
|                  | Fuzziness of the Language | ٥         | ١,٥٨       |
|                  | Positive doubts           | ٥         | ١,٥٨       |
|                  | White lies                | ٢٠        | ٦,٣٣       |
| Total            |                           | ٣١٦       | ١٠٠ %      |

Table (٧) The detailed results of the study



## ٤. Conclusions and Pedagogical Recommendation

### ٤. ١. Conclusions

The conclusions arrived at in this study are:

١. Students should not only know the strategies of refusals but the most important is that they have to know where and when to employ each strategy in its suitable context of the situation involved in that target language.
٢. Generally speaking, the findings of the study show that Iraqi EFL university students' performance is good concerning the use of indirect ways of refusing others' speech but it is clear that they have developed insufficient awareness of the suitable ways to refuse a person of higher status.
٣. Most of the students tended to use the strategy of giving reason and the strategy of reparation more than the other strategies to refuse most of the situation. While no one of them employs the strategies of using proverbs, ridiculing the situation, or criticizing the interlocutor.

### ٤. ٢. Pedagogical Recommendations

Speech acts reflect the cultural norms and values that are possessed by the native speakers of the target language. Differences like these might cause misunderstanding or pragmatic failure. Therefore, to avoid this problem, it is important for EFL teachers to help students develop their knowledge of appropriate use of speech acts in the target language. In this regard, it is preferred that the syllabus in the department includes "Pragmatic" intensively focusing on the speech act theory and the importance of the target language.

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#### Appendix The Questionnaire

**Imagine yourself in the situations described below and try to react as spontaneously as possible (do not think). Please, use direct speech:**

١. You are invited by your friend to a party at his place in the evening. You would like to go but you have promised your parents to go out with them for supper. How would you refuse the invitation?
٢. You are in a meeting with your professor to plan your graduation paper, the professor says to you:  
- It seems to me that you need to take a course in research methods. So I would strongly suggest that you take this course before you start writing your paper.  
You think that you do not need that course since you have studied it previously. What are you going to say to reject his suggestion?
٣. Your classmate invites you to go with him to the movies after school. You have nothing to do but deep in your mind you really do not want to go. Refuse his invitation.
٤. One of your classmates asks you to give him your phone number. You are not willing to give it to him. What would you say to him?
٥. One of your friends asks you to lend him some money but you do not have money or you really do not want to lend him. What would you say to him?
٦. One of your friends suggests that you go shopping with him after work but you have lots of things to do. What would you say to him?
٧. You are a teacher and your students ask you to postpone the exam to next week but you do not want to. What would you say to them?
٨. You are a clerk and your boss asks you to do a job that you think is not your responsibility. What would you say to him?
٩. Your friend asks you to lend him your car but you know that he is reckless and he might hit it so you refuse. What would you say to him?
١٠. Your roommate asks you to lend him your coat to wear it in a party he is invited to but you really do not like the idea of lending clothes. What would you say to him?