The Realization of the Speech Act of Refusals in an Intercultural Setting:

Ostensible or Genuine?

Fatima Ali

PhD 2024

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Fatima Ali

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Languages, Information and Communications Humanities, Languages and Social Science, Manchester Metropolitan University

2024

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DCT: Discourse Completion Tasks.

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

FPAs: Face-Preserving Acts

FL: Foreign Language.

FSTs: Face-Saving Acts.

FTAs: Face-Threatening Acts.

IAS: Improvised Acted-out Scenarios.

L1: First language.

L2: Second Language.

MMU: Manchester Metropolitan University.

OSAs: Ostensible Speech Acts.

SAT: Speech Acts Theory.

voice and was able to make decisions about my research and could understand where it would take me. Halfway through my data collection, the government announced a national lockdown because of the covid. I was so scared of not being able to collect my data and progress in my study; however, my participants were very supportive and could manage to take part in my study. During my research, I have learned to listen to others' struggles and challenges so that I do not feel alone in my journey. Nonetheless, it was very hard for me at times to stay motivated and ambitious where I sought help a couple of times from others. Those moments of uncertainty were very difficult to overcome, however, my supervisors were always there for me to motivate me listen to my challenges and try all the time to find solutions. The various experiences shared by my participants have helped me in re-considering things that I usually took for granted as well as them acknowledging that they never thought about how they actually behave in a certain context. Finally, I hope that my study will contribute to the overall understanding of the speech acts of refusals in particular and intercultural communication in general.

Abstract

The realization of the speech act of refusals in an intercultural setting: ostensible or genuine?

The study explores the way the speech act of refusals to *offers* and *invitations* is performed in an intercultural setting. The data are derived from a sample of a total number of fourteen (seven Algerian and seven British) students studying at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and focus on the type of refusals (sincere or genuine) students perform in response to *offers* and *invitations*. Additionally, the present study explores the set of cultural scripts both participants draw from when realizing the speech act of refusals. Moreover, it investigates the purpose both groups (Algerian and British) have behind choosing *ostensible* or *genuine* refusals when analysing two modalities, i.e., speech act realization both linguistically, and augmented by facial expressions that participants display when performing refusals. To meet the aims of this research, data was collected via two stages. The first one employs an innovative method I, here, term *improvised acted-out scenarios,* while the second stage employs semi-structured interviews. Data gathered during the first stage was analysed with reference to Isaacs and Clark's (1990) model when a detailed thematic analysis is employed to analyse the semi-structured interviews. The findings demonstrate that the majority of the participants from both groups rely heavily on their cultural scripts when refusing *offers* and *invitations* to maintain *face* and be *polite*, triggering cultural misunderstandings and miscommunications. Findings also confirm the validity of Isaacs Clark's (1990) framework in depicting the type of speech act of refusals performed in response to *offers* and *invitations* where most of the features and properties of ostensible

speech acts are prominent in both Algerian and British participants' responses. Moreover, the study has important pedagogical implications such as calling for re-thinking the notion of intercultural communication and non-verbal communication in teaching, learning, and researching in Higher Education and inside the classroom. These pedagogical implications are beneficial to researchers interested in the teaching of foreign languages.

1   General Introduction

The present study explores the nature and the role of the speech Act of Refusals in intercultural encounters. More specifically, within this thesis, I explore how *refusals* are negotiated and realized in interactions between Algerian and British speakers. Drawing from data gathered at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), UK, the study investigates the type of refusal (either ostensible or genuine) performed by participants and the main features and properties that define them. It also examines the main sociocultural factors behind the participants' use of *ostensible* or *genuine refusals* including the performative scripts which are, themselves, culturally informed. Furthermore, the present study empirically explores the efficacy of Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework in depicting the nature of refusals (*ostensible* or *genuine*) used by both participants and the model's relevance in 2024. Isaacs and Clark's (1990) model was recently redeveloped by Khadim and Al-Hindawi (2017) in their study of the pragmatic functions of ostensible invitations in Iraqi Arabic. They divided the five properties (pretense, mutual recognition, collusion, ambivalence, off-record purpose) introduced by Isaacs and Clark's (1990) into three stages (issuance stage, collusion stage, and recognition stage). What seems to be suggested by them is that this model was still relevant in 2017, and so it is in 2024 drawing from the results obtained in the current study as I demonstrate, below. Drawing from Khadim and Al-Hindawi's (2017) work on Iraqi Arabic *invitations*, I here examine the framework for different forms of speech acts (*refusals*) and in a different variety (English instead of Arabic) produced by two different cultural groups (Algerian and British students at MMU). I follow the same model for analysis as a point of departure and look for areas where it does or does not account for depicting the nature of the speech act performed. This helps to draw on the main properties and features that define both Algerian and British use of ostensible speech acts of refusals. Therefore, the current

study aims to apply Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework on the Speech Act of refusals realized in an intercultural setting (Algerian and British) to allow for analysing such speech acts performed in different cultures not only one particular culture. Overall, Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework brought a basis for researchers in the field of pragmatics and is still relevant and very convincing in the theory by defining the features and properties of ostensible speech acts, specifically, ostensible refusals. Additionally, the current study sheds light on non-verbal factors mainly facial expressions where it aims to incorporate a non-verbal communication component into the intercultural analysis of speech acts in a holistic way, rather than merely linguistically. To this end, the thesis addresses the following questions:

1-   What are the main features and properties that characterise Algerian and British MMU students' ostensible speech act of *refusals* when dealing with *offers* and *invitations* in an intercultural setting?

2-   What are the main social and situational factors behind the Algerian and British MMU students' use of ostensible or genuine *refusals* in inter/cross-cultural contexts?

3-   To what extent does using ostensible or genuine *refusals* affect the face of both Algerian and British MMU students when interacting inter/cross-culturally?

It is worth noting that in this project, I designed the structure to explore both aspects of intercultural and cross-cultural communication (see Chapter Two, section 2.7). That is to say, I aim to investigate how Algerian and British MMU students realise the speech act of refusals in an intercultural setting (intercultural aspect). Furthermore, by comparing the two cultures, I intend to identify the similarities and differences (if any) and ultimately provide valuable insights and a comprehensive understanding of the broader cultural influence on the

participants' communication strategies and preferences (cross-cultural aspect)., i.e. exploring the effect of both participants' cultural background on the way they perceive and handle the speech act of refusals. Overall, my study aims to highlight the significance of understanding how individuals from different cultural backgrounds negotiate meaning and navigate interactions, to gain a systematic comprehension and understanding of the complexities of intercultural communication and their cross-cultural implications.

1.1 Significance of the study

This study is important in two main ways; theoretically, it gives a further explication of the linguistic theory of Speech Acts in general and particularly in pragmatic theory. It extends the scope of intercultural pragmatics which is still considered an under-researched area within pragmatics specifically and within language more generally. The study employs the speech act theory as a means to explain and predict the way speakers of different language communities negotiate r*efusals* drawing from existing research on both British and Algerian cultural scripts on speech acts in general and *refusals* in particular. My study is, therefore, an intercultural exploration of how the speakers not only draw from their scripts but tend to orient themselves toward what they *think of* as their interlocutors' ways of doing things, based on their understanding of their interlocutors' probable scripts. The findings of this study may also contribute to different domains of applied linguistics. In this respect, different aspects of language use in intercultural contexts could be and should be implemented in language teaching programs. In this regard, the study suggests incorporating specific coursework or educational content that addresses both intercultural and cross-cultural communication differences, as well as non-verbal communication into learners' curriculum to provide them with the necessary tools to understand and adapt to the complexity of

communication beyond the linguistic boundaries, and to enhance the understandings and skills of both educators and students in navigating diverse communication dynamics within the academic environment. Therefore, instilling awareness among foreign learners about cultural differences both in verbal and non-verbal aspects can significantly enhance their communicative proficiency. This awareness allows them to navigate different cultural contexts effectively, permitting them to become skilled communicators in contexts where relying solely on their cultural scripts may not be satisfactory. In a similar vein, Hurley (1992) suggests that if EFL learners could learn non-verbal skills, they would effectively communicate in intercultural contexts. He believes that by raising students' awareness of the cultural differences that exist between different cultures, they will modify their behaviours accordingly. He (1992) emphasized the necessity of incorporating nonverbal communication in foreign language classrooms since the aim of foreign language teaching is to enable learners to communicate with people from different cultures. Essentially, integrating those modules into the curriculum might help in nurturing not only the linguistic competence but also the learner's cultural competence enabling them to navigate global communication complexities with more proficiency and confidence (see Chapter Six below). Therefore, going beyond language proficiency to adopt a holistic understanding of how culture impacts communication. Consequently, learners can gain more insights into the ways different cultures express social cues, emotions, and ideas through those educational components. Thus, engaging more effectively and sensitively in various intercultural interactions, and promoting successful communication by mitigating the risk of cultural misunderstanding. To that end, this study contributes to redefining the theory of communication to go beyond the realm of merely linguistic pragmatics by adding non-verbal communication to the study of refusals, therefore constituting an innovative approach to speech act theory.

Methodologically, the present study uses an innovative method of recreating scenarios with actor students, not adopted in previous studies on the speech act of refusals as most of them used Discourse Completion tasks or the like (Al-Eryani, 2007; Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Hassani et al, 2011; Ahangar et al, 2012; Bergson, 2016). Ideally, natural data are the preferred method for observing language use in context, but because of the inability to access these data and having participants' consent to be observed, I rely on what I term as *'improvised, acted-out scenarios'* – situations where each pair of the participants (one Algerian and one British) is provided with one *offer* and one *invitation* to refuse while being video-recorded. These have been used in order to elicit the *refusals* in a closer-authentic way. I theorized that if asked to improvise a *refusal* to a known participant *offer* or *invitation*, in a given setting, then the refuser would draw from their own cultural knowledge and linguistic resources available to them to provide a close approximation of the sort of refusals they would perform in real life settings. After all, Kasper and Rose (2004) point out that such simulated data if elicited with care, provides an alternative for speech act performance in natural contexts. This research also takes a fundamental step into the multimodal, as it takes account of both the verbal and nonverbal cues (facial expressions) participants use while performing the speech act of *refusals*. Grein (2007) claims that one of the best ways to grasp the meaning of an utterance is to consider the nonverbal factors and the speaker's very own perception of the situation along with his/her cognitive skills. Having the improvised acted-out scenarios recorded audio-visually, all verbal and facial expressions of participants involved in the interaction are captured, transcribed, and carefully analysed. In a similar vein, Knapp *et al*. (2014) argue that nonverbal cues represent a critical part of decoding messages in communication and sometimes they give better hints for understanding human communication than the utterance itself. They believe that nonverbal signals can modify or

elaborate on verbal codes and help to decode them more accurately. Mey (2001) claims that the context where the speech acts are uttered as well as the extra linguistic factors (including gestures, intonation, and similar) that accompany the production of any speech act, play a crucial role in defining the pragmatic acts, not the words themselves. To that end, this study, to some extent, contributes to redefining the theory of communication and pushing it well beyond the realm of pure linguistics.

My thesis makes an original contribution to the study of *refusals* interculturally and multimodally and further adds to the sum of human knowledge within this particular space by being the first study that compares the way both British and Algerian speakers realize the speech act of refusals. Refusals and cross-cultural understandings of *offers* and *invitations* are part and parcel of the pragmatic model of speech acts and an integral component of the broad area of research known as intercultural pragmatics which is itself a fundamental element of intercultural communication and intercultural competence. The latter is critically important precisely because British universities, along with many other Western universities in English-language countries are making huge steps to open up their institutions and encourage more international students to enrol to study - students who come with an entirely different set of cultural scripts, the mismatch or misapplication of which may hinder them from communicating effectively in their host institutions and host countries.

The aim of the current study is to explore how seemingly universal aspect of communication as politeness can be conceptualised and linguistically expressed in varied ways across different languages and cultures. This helps English learners more accurately in understanding the cultural implications of the pragmatic strategies and how they refrain from relying solely on their own assumptions about what is considered appropriate and preferable

in social interactions. In other words, it provides them with the opportunity to experience various intercultural scenarios where they can improve their skills, knowledge, and attitudes, and eventually, they become open to others, accept, and respect cultural diversities. Consequently, they become interested in knowing about other cultures in order to avoid judgments and holding false assumptions about others. Therefore, it is crucial for students to embrace a stance of cultural relativity and recognise how problematic it is to make judgments about what constitutes a 'better' or 'worse' aspect of another culture, or that of their own. According to Koutlaki and Eslami (2018) relying on strategically organised reflective tasks plays a significant role in students adopting such a mindset. Also, it will give them the opportunity to apply the skills they learned to real-life situations, moving their experience from understanding the situation to actively acting as intercultural speakers in cross-cultural contexts (Echcharfy, 2019).

1.2   Why conduct this research?

In 2016 after I graduated with my masters, I sat for a national contest in Algeria and successfully succeeded in it to obtain a scholarship to do my Ph.D. in the UK. I spent six months in Canterbury doing a pre-sessional course to familiarise us (almost 100 Algerian laureates) with Academic life in the UK and help us gain the English language requirements to begin our Ph.D. journey. Canterbury was my first experience of life in the UK where I encountered different people from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Before coming to the UK, I had the belief that living in England would highly improve my communication skills and make me a competent English communicator. Consequently, it seemed very challenging in the first few months until I started my real Ph.D. journey at Manchester Metropolitan University and had to move to a city full of even more diverse cultures and nationalities where

my social network kept extending and I faced many instances where I was misunderstood and therefore failed to convey my message. My experiences here and the number of instances where my real intention was misunderstood have (re-) shaped my communicative practices, that is, what is considered socially and culturally appropriate to say so. A good example would probably be the incident that happened to me during my first year here in Manchester, I attended a small welcome party hosted by one of my supervisors, along with some other Arab girls. As the evening drew to a close and we prepared to leave, my supervisor offered us some cake to take home. All of the girls including myself declined the offer and said: "Oh no…We are fine. Thank you!". My supervisor, having an idea about my research, as we have discussed in the previous supervisory meeting, extended the offer several times by saying: "Are you sure" and sarcastically said to me: "Is this a genuine no". Obviously, I had to provide her with some reasons and genuine explanations for my refusal to convince her that my intention was genuine by saying: "I do not really like sweet things, we better ask the other girls to take it". This back-and-forth continued until eventually, we all accepted the offer. Later, my supervisor and I discussed the cultural nuances at play to reflect on the potential miscommunication that would have occurred if she had not known about that cultural difference. That is to say, before discussing this with me, she was not aware that in the Arab culture accepting an offer or an invitation for the first time is considered rude and imposing. From then on, she made sure to ascertain the sincerity of my refusals, understanding that politeness might sometimes mask interlocutors' genuine intentions. This continued throughout our meetings where she used to make sure that my refusal was sincere and that I was not trying to be polite and kind in rejecting her *offers* or *invitations*.

As a researcher who has experienced this, this was fundamentally one of the driving characteristics that encouraged me to conduct this research. Being an international student in an L2 culture is far from what I anticipated before coming to the United Kingdom. Therefore, having worked with participants from the same background (Algerian background) experiencing what is like to be an L1 Arabic speaker in an L2 speaking context when attempting to conduct high-level research in the L2 (English) where discussions, negotiations, *invitations, offers*, and *refusals* going to be part and parcel of their daily life. Hence, having two cultural scripts (Algerian and British) that are comparable but different, both participants of the two groups need to recognize the pattern by which their *offers* and *invitations* are refused, or else a significant intercultural issue may occur as one of a set of the wider intercultural issues around speech act that come up every time, we speak to one another. Therefore, researching a vastly under-researched area is becoming increasingly significant if more international students seek more global outlook and global comparable recognition and connections to their research and research credentials.

Whilst my study concentrates on British English as well as Algerian Arabic cultures, the principle that there is a different cultural script that needs to be negotiated for each speech act fundamentally applies when a participant from any L1 culture is trying to work or otherwise operate within an L2 culture in the L2 language, and therefore has to negotiate what the L2 scripts around any speech act would be. Essentially, it opens the door to an entirely new subset of pragmatics by looking at how Algerian Arabic L1 speakers negotiate *invitations* and *offers* and their *refusals*. Ultimately, discussing refusals in this intercultural setting (Algerian and British) may help to stand as a reference to draw from when dealing with other varieties of English, such as Canadian English, to mention one. Put differently, the fact of involving Algerian speakers and British speakers in the current study does not

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necessarily imply that interacting in other Arabic or English varieties will differ as the fundamental principles remain the same. Hence, my study is making an early claim or start within the exploration of intercultural pragmatics and script negotiation within this emerging space of intercultural pragmatics and therefore adding to the sum of human knowledge.

1.3   Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters structured along the following lines. Chapter One introduces the study, what it encompasses, its significance, and how it is structured. Chapter two is an exploration of speech act theory both in classic and neo-Austinian formats; within this, I look at what a speech act is, its roles and functions in communication, and the expectations, culturally and schematically, for how they operate. I then move to look at what the definition of r*efusals* is as it exists within the literature. I then explore refusals in inter and cross-cultural contexts drawing from the existing research in this particular space. Afterward, I look at how speech acts of refusals are classified into different types of refusals and also what these mean in terms of face-to-face management and face negotiation. Next, I look at the ostensible speech act of refusals and later review some of the recent literature on inter/cross-cultural communication studies of refusal speech acts; this subsequently delves into more detailed examination of the *politeness* theory and the notion of the *face* to later move to a broader discussion of *politeness* and how people negotiate face maintenance or face enhancement even in instances of *offers* and *invitations*.

In the second part of chapter two, I look at nonverbal communication and the difference between cross-cultural and intercultural communication with more focus on the intercultural aspect where I introduce in more detail the notion of cultural script variations that can occur between speech acts and their effect on communication. Within that, I

essentially explore sequence organization, then eventually examine the notion of preference organization in structural formats i.e., this is what culture scripts say is the preference for it. Next, I examine preference organization and discuss how structurally preferred responses may be considered dispreferred in terms of face notion, while structurally dispreferred responses could be considered preferred as they enhance interlocutors' face. I then address sociocultural norms variations and negotiations. Afterward, I talk about cultural misunderstandings and finally conclude the chapter before I move into chapter three.

In the third chapter, I present the data collection tools before delving into improvised scenarios and explaining the rationale for their use over standard questionnaires or Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs), naturally occurring data, and the like. I also address the limitations of the improvised acted out scenarios as a data collection method. Following this, I examine Semi-structured interviews as an additional triangulated data collection method and discuss the strategies for their implementation. Moreover, I explain the study procedure that will be adhered to during the data collection process. Subsequently, I introduce the pilot study, which is primarily conducted with the first pair only (the Algerian participant A1 and the British participant B1).

Following this, I move to the analysis chapter, where I thoroughly examine the themes derived from the semi-structured interviews. The six themes (politeness, cultural expectations, participants own interpretations, being genuine, social status, and context) are analysed in relation to the variables underlying the design of the scenarios and in relation to the cultural influence revealed. Afterward, I move to the fifth chapter where I discuss the findings of the current study. In doing so, I provide a comprehensive understanding of respondents' perspectives regarding the significance of refusals of offers and invitations to

them and how their L1 culture heavily influences both how they produce *refusals* and their expectations of the production of speech acts of refusals. Also, I look at the cultural differences as well as the intercultural challenges they face during communication to ultimately move into the summary and conclusions along with the limitations and recommendations for further studies.

2   Review of the Literature

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I present a summary of the key concepts relevant to my study. I start with defining speech acts along with introducing Searle's (1976) and Austin's (1962) speech act theories. In section 2.3.1, I move about to define the speech act of refusals in inter/cross-cultural contexts and identify their classifications (genuine and ostensible). Afterward, in section 2.3.3, I outline the ostensible speech act, pretense theory, and non-serious use of language. Afterward, I present the studies conducted on the speech act of refusals in section 2.3.4, with a particular focus on inert/cross-cultural refusal studies in section 2.3.4.1, and intra-cultural refusal studies in section 2.3.4.2. Then, in section 2.4, I examine Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and face. In the following section (2.6), I explore the term non-verbal communication, whereas in section 2.7, I move about to define both cross-cultural and intercultural communication and the main similarities and differences that exist between the two. In section 2.7.1, I present the term cultural scripts, then I move to section 2.7.2 and section 2.7.3 where I define sequence organization, preference organization, respectively. Later, I look at first-order/second-order dichotomy in section 2.7.4. Afterwards, I examine the concept of sociocultural norms and the way they govern communication in every culture. Ultimately, in the concluding section, I thoroughly discuss intercultural misunderstandings.

2.2   Speech Acts

Mey (2001:95) defines speech acts as 'verbal actions happening in the world'. Nodoshan (2014), on the other hand, refers to them as a set of linguistic elements particularly designed to create certain effects on the interlocutors and/or the environment where they are produced. Speech acts such as making statements, asking questions, and the numerous like are performed in accordance with certain rules, or as Searle (1969:16) hypothesized,

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'speaking a language is engaging in a rule-governed form of behaviour'. In other words, all linguistic communication carries linguistic acts that are called speech acts, but only if they are produced and issued under certain conditions and with specific kinds of intentions. These intentions are typically adequate for those speech acts and associated only with them. Speakers sometimes produce utterances that denote certain meanings and make their intention ambiguous; this makes it difficult for the hearer to determine the type of speech act being uttered (Isaacs and Clark, 1990). Put differently, it all depends on the speaker's intention behind his/her utterance that he or she may or may not make clear to the hearer.

One of the most challenging speech acts to be performed is *refusals* as they are considered dual face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson,1987) which function as 'a response to an initiating act and are considered a speech act by which a speaker fails to engage in activities proposed by the interlocutor (Chen. *et al*, 1995: 121).

2.2.1   Austin and Searle speech act theory

Austin (1962) made a distinction between '*constatives'* and '*performatives*' for which the truth condition can be recognized, i.e., whether they are to be taken as true or false (e.g., it is snowing outside). The production of these verbs '*constatives*' brings a change in reality. He (ibid) believes that in language there exists a set of verbs that not only describe things but rather do them. In other words, making a statement can be also used to perform an action. Put differently, language cannot be used passively to describe reality; rather it plays a great role in its formation. In a way of establishing the truth value of '*performative*' acts, Austin (1962) introduced his dichotomy of felicitous '*happy*' and infelicitous '*unhappy*'. He (ibid) listed three conditions that must be met for an utterance to be felicitous: first, the appropriateness of both the persons performing the act and the circumstances under which the act is done as well as the conventionality of the act's effect. Secondly, 'the procedure

must be executed correctly and completely' (Klimczak-Pawlak, 2014:68); and thirdly, having a sincere intention to perform the act. Therefore, when an ordinary person says to a couple passing by: 'I hereby announce you a husband and a wife' it is considered unhappy *performative* as the speaker here does not have the authority or the intention to perform the action indicated by their words. Thus, for this act to be *performative*, it should be uttered by the right person under certain circumstances. Hence, having a clear distinction between felicitous and infelicitous *performative* acts is deemed to be interesting in analysing discourse.

When producing an utterance, participants engage in both meaning and force which is composed of three acts (Klimczak-Pawlak, 2014:68). The first act is referred to as '*locutionary act*' which is described with reference to the traditionally recognized linguistic areas of language analysis including phonetics, syntax, and semantics. The second act is called '*illocutionary act*' which refers to the conventional force associated with that utterance in a particular context. The third act is called '*perlocutionary act*' and is associated with the effect this force has on the hearer and how the latter responds to that utterance. In contrast to *illocutionary acts* which are determinate, *Perlocutionary acts* are often considered to be indeterminate and might be unintentional (Klimczak-Pawlak.2014:68). That is to say, '*illocutionary acts*' refer to the intended meaning where the speaker has a specific intention or purpose behind his/her utterance such as questioning, stating, commanding, and the like. On the other hand, the perlocutionary acts are often seen indeterminate as they might be unintentional acts where the speaker might not be aware of the specific effect their words have on the listener. Also, they are more variable and difficult to predict compared to '*perlocutionary acts*' as listeners might have widely varied interpretations and responses.

In a similar vein, Searle (1976) followed Austin's work and attempted to further the study of speech acts and develop the speech act theory in a number of aspects (as cited in Klimczak-Pawlak, 2014:69). One of his major contributions was the classification of the speech act taxonomy into five macro-classes. Searle (1976) represented the five classes of speech act theory on the basis of 'world-to-words' and/or 'words-to-world fit' which are both used to describe our language use. The former is used when the uttered words are used to change or modify the world. The latter, however, is used when we try to illustrate the state of the world using words. In this case, words are not used to change the world but rather match it. Below are Searle's (ibid) five classes with further explanations:

1-*Directives*, in which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something (e.g., requesting); they signify the 'world-to-words fit'.

2- *commissives*, in which the speaker commits themselves to do something (e.g., promising). They represent the 'world-towards fit'. That is to say, the speakers' words are associated with the world in the sense that they aim to make their words match their future actions.

3- *Expressives*, in which the speaker expresses an attitude or a feeling (e.g., apologizing) "there is no fit between words and the world".

4-*Assertives*, in which the speaker utters words that he believes to be true (e.g., describing a state of affairs); they exemplify the 'words-to-world fit'.

5- *Declaratives*, in which the speaker brings about changes in the world simply by the absolute fact of being uttered (e.g., declaring war). This category illustrates both a 'world-to-words fit' and a 'words-to-world fit', as 'the point of a declarative (e.g., declaring war) is to alter the

state of the world ('world-to-words') by stating that the propositional content matches the state of the world ('words-to-world')'.

Searle (1975) produced a significant modification to Austin's theory of speech act concerning felicity conditions where he introduced some general felicity conditions applicable to all speech acts 'depending on how they specify propositional content, preparatory preconditions, conditions on sincerity, and the essential condition' (Levinson 1983: 239). Searle (ibid) introduced a further alteration to Austin's speech act theory in terms of direct and indirect speech acts. He claims that speech acts are 'cases in which one *illocutionary act* is performed indirectly by way of performing another' (Searle 1975: 60). In his words (ibid) indirect speech acts aim not only to produce a concrete meaning but rather convey a concealed one below the surface, in contrast, to direct speech acts where only the literal meaning is communicated by interlocutors. This was later illustrated by Grundy (1995) who stressed the relationship between both the form and the function of the utterance and the directness of speech act. Grundy (ibid) argues that English has three sentence forms (declarative, imperative, and interrogative) that go with a set of matching functions (assertion, order/request, and question). Having the form and the function matched, the utterance's effect is called a direct speech act. However, in the case the form does not match the function, an indirect speech act is supposed to be conveyed (Grundy 1995: 95). Another significant difference between Austin's and Searle's speech act theory is that of the former focuses more on intentions and the latter on the different ways hearers decode and interpret the speaker's intentions, therefore opening new possibilities for the analysis of speech act of refusals realized by participants from different cultural backgrounds. Hence, it seems of

paramount importance to define the concept of refusals and introduce its main classification in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Definition of refusals

Refusals are defined as speech acts belonging to the category of *commissives* due to their nature (Félix-Brasdefer, 2009), that is, they commit the refuser not to comply with what is suggested, offered, or so on. They are 'second pair parts in conversation and belong to the speech act of dissent which represents one type of assertive act or negative expression' (Félix-Brasdefer, 2009:3). Searle and Vandervken (1985) define the speech act of refusal as follows: 'The negative counterparts to acceptances and consents are rejections and refusals. Just as one can accept offers, applications, and invitations, so each of these can be refused or rejected' (as cited in Qusay Abdul Sattar et. *al*, 2011:70). The speech act of refusals is an extremely face-threatening act (FTA) that is most likely to damage the hearer's *face* (see chapter two, section 2.4.1 below) easily as they act in opposition to the wants and desires of the interlocutor and subsequently his/her positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Refusals are considered dual face-threatening acts as they threaten both interlocutors' faces (Hassani *et.al*, 2011). Most people face a very complicated situation when trying to settle refusals in different circumstances (Salehipour Bavarsad *et al*, 2015). Therefore, refusals often require a long-negotiated sequence, and their content and form differ depending on the initiating act (suggestion, offer, request, and invitation). In response to one of these initiating acts, *refusals* are usually considered as a dispreferred response, and acceptance is usually preferred by interlocutors, and therefore, are realized indirectly to avoid contradicting the hearer's expectations (Chen et *al*., 1995). Hence, they require a great deal of pragmatic knowledge and a good understanding of the social variables of the context

where they occur (Jerome Moody, 2011). In a similar vein, Eslami (2005) argues that refusing an initiating act be it an *offer*, a *suggestion*, or the like results in a disruption in harmony in relationships and therefore it should be performed very carefully. In other words, *refusals* are considered to be complicated in form as a dispreferred response to the interlocutor's initiating act that results in offending him/her (Eslami, 2005).

Due to their complex nature, *refusals* often involve some degree of directness and indirectness and usually are negotiated over several turns depending on the age and status of the interlocutors and the cultural context (Sarfo, 2011). According to Sarfo, (ibid), turning down an initiating act demands some sort of empathy especially if the refuser does not know about how a *refusal* is realized in a particular culture, that is, the culture of the one who issues the *offer* or the *invitation*. Overall, *refusals* are considered complex speech acts that necessitate not only long sequences of negotiation but also 'face-saving maneuvers to accommodate the non-compliant nature of the act' (FélixBrasdefer, 2006:2160).

2.3.1   Refusals in inter/cross-cultural contexts

Refusals have been called a "major cross-cultural *sticking point* for many non-native speakers" (Beebe et al., 1990: 56). Therefore, what is considered appropriate *refusal* behaviour may vary across cultures (Beebe et al., 1990: 68). Henceforth, understanding the appropriateness of producing refusals in different cultures requires a certain amount of culture-specific knowledge. Consequently, there is a need to deal with this speech act in an intercultural context, thereby considering the comparative study of the realization of this speech act (refusals) by participants belonging to different cultural backgrounds (Algerians and British students at MMU). Clearly one of the goals of interlocutors is to gain the ability to communicate accurately in inter/cross-cultural settings and to understand and be understood by each other and eventually avoid communication failure.

Therefore, the current study highlights the significance of understanding the realization of the speech act of refusals in English in an intercultural setting and the main socio-cultural norms interlocutors draw from when realising such speech acts. Given the communicatively central role of refusals in everyday communication, they are considered crucial aspects to study. Moreover, they require a high level of appropriateness from interlocutors to reach successful communication and hence avoid misunderstandings (Qusay Abdul Sattar et. *al*, 2011). Accordingly, Al-Kahtani (2005), argues that interlocutors need to know the appropriateness of both the function and the form of the speech act depending on the cultural-linguistic values of a certain culture.

Al-Kahtani (2005) asserts that turning down an initiating act holds a huge significance in various cultures than the actual response, that is, sending and receiving a 'no' message requires some special skills to not offend interlocutors. Al-Kahtani (2005) points out that speech acts are realized in different ways across various cultures while using the same linguistic code (e.g., English). Therefore, these differences may lead to cultural misunderstandings when people from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other as in the case of the present study. Thus, any research on the use of this speech act inter/cross-culturally can significantly contribute to our understanding of the speech community in question. Al-Shalawi (1997) points out that a revealing source of information on the socio-cultural norms and values embedded in cultures can be provided by the speech act of refusals (as cited in Huwari and Al-shboul, 2015: 47). Despite the fact that *refusals* are present in all languages and cultures, they are not realized in the same way (Parvaresh *et al*., 2014). According to them (ibid), refusing an *invitation* is viewed as taboo in certain cultures, making it hard to refuse, whereas in other cultures, it is perfectly acceptable for individuals

to decline invitations without any discomfort. This is due to the threat refusals impose on

interlocutors' faces (Brown and Levinson, 1987). That is to say, when the interlocutor refuses

an invitation or denies doing something to another person, this can be perceived as a threat

to the face (social identity) (see chapter two, section 2.4.1 below) of the interlocutor issuing

the invitation. Hence, *refusals* might be taken by recipients as a sign of *impoliteness* or dislike

and therefore considered to be problematic to perform in inter/cross-cultural contexts (Babai

Shishavan and Sharifian, 2016). The latter argue that interlocutors find it difficult to give a

sufficient *face* to their counterparts concurrently communicating successfully in

formal communication. They (ibid), point out that interlocutors' *faces* might be influenced,

limited, or totally lost because of the governing conditions on how to perform

communication. To illustrate more, it is of paramount importance to define the concepts of

politeness and *face* in the following sections (2.4.1 and 2.5). Many studies have been

conducted to investigate the realization of the speech act of refusals used in different

languages. Therefore, any research that deals with inter/cross-cultural studies of this type of

speech can be comprehensively valuable to widen the scope of inter/cross-cultural

communication. The following section will introduce the two categories of the speech act of

refusals.

2.3.2   The speech act of refusals classification

Babai Shishavan (2014) classified refusals into two main categories: Genuine refusals and

ostensible refusals. Babai Shishavan (ibid) defines genuine refusals as a sincere refusal to

engage in the proposed activity by the interlocutor. Their intentions and implications are

direct and on record. That is to say, they are not intended to deceive the hearer, rather, they

are so clear to be interpreted in the way intended. Genuine refusals are such speech acts for

which participants can be accountable (Nodoshan, 2016), that is, if participants produce

genuine speech acts, they must be ready to take the risk of what they say. Ostensible refusals, on the other hand, are defined by Chen et al. (1995) as speech acts expressed politely to show the speaker's consideration for the hearer when refusing a genuine *invitation* or *offer*. When they are offered, a subsequent acceptance is likely to occur if the initiating act is repeated. Simply, they are speech acts performed non-seriously to fulfil an off-record purpose; their success strongly depends on the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's pretense. To illustrate, let us provide an example of someone's refusal of his friend's *invitation* to dinner. Here, the interlocutor does not want to impose on their friend. They refuse the *invitation* for some unstated purposes that both of them get the intention of. One of these intentions might be the hearer's aim to be kind towards the speaker and not impose on him/her. Unlike genuine refusals, which are considered face-threatening acts (FTAs), ritual refusals are polite, face-saving acts (FSAs). Put differently, genuine refusals are classified (by Brown and Levinson, 1987) as dual face-threatening acts since they threaten both the positive and negative faces of interlocutors if elicited directly. They believe that conversation is more concerned with observing politeness than the exchange of information. Therefore, ostensible refusals are categorized as polite utterances wherein the interlocutor pretends sincerity as a means of demonstrating consideration for the other party (Chen *et al*., 1995). The following section will give a further understanding of the ostensible speech act of refusals.

2.3.3 The ostensible speech act of refusals

Ritual refusals are in fact ostensible speech acts (OSAs) that appear to be genuine (Isaacs and Clark 1990). They are polite speech acts performed in response to genuine offers and invitations in a way of manifesting the speaker's consideration for the hearer (Chen *et al*., 1995). That is to say, by performing ritual refusals participants show consideration for the speaker where the former's intention is to accept the initiating act after

issuing it several times. In doing so, participants aim to convey politeness towards each other (Chen *et al*., 1995). In their study of the Chinese refusals, they (ibid) found that in China it is inappropriate for the invitee or the one receiving an offer to accept for the first time as accepting them immediately will result in a certain imposition on the speaker. According to Chen *et al*., (1995), while realizing ritual refusals, interlocutors provide reasons that are generally derived from considering costs to the addressee, in other words, they are more concerned about not causing too much trouble for him/her and therefore not imposing on him/her. They believe that ostensible refusals occur when the speaker performs a particular speech act that is not intended to be taken seriously by both the speaker and the hearer and both interlocutors are mutually aware of the pretense in sincerity of this speech act. This type of speech act '*ostensible*' is usually used to serve an indirect tacit purpose despite its direct meaning to weigh the sincerity of an initial *offer* or an *invitation* (Chen *et al.,* 1995).

According to Searle (1969), the successful realization of a speech act depends on the fulfilment of some felicity conditions. That is to say, these conditions must be present for the speech act to occur. These conditions are propositional content condition, preparatory condition, sincerity condition, and essential condition. Isaacs and Clark (1990) claim that one or more of the felicity conditions are not fulfilled in the realization of an ostensible speech act. In their study on ostensible invitations and after comparing a number of genuine and ostensible *offers* and *invitations*, they concluded that preparatory conditions are more likely to be violated in ostensible offers and invitations. Isaacs and Clark (1990) introduced five properties and seven features that characterise the ostensible speech act as presented and illustrated below:

Isaacs and Clark's (1990) ostensible properties	1) **Pretense**: A makes a sincere invitation 2) **Mutual recognition**: A and B mutually recognize A's pretense. 3) **Collusion**: B responds appropriately to A's pretense. 4) **Ambivalence**: when asked, "Do you really mean it?" A cannot sincerely answer either "yes" or "No". 5) **Off-record**: A's main purpose is tacit.
Isaacs and Clark's (1990) ostensible speech act features	1) Making the pretense implausible 2) Inviting after the invitations is already solicited 3) Do not motivate the invitation beyond social courtesy 4) Do not insist or persist on the invitation 5) Vague arrangements 6) The use of hedges 7) The use of inappropriate cues

Table 1: **Isaacs and Clark's features and properties of Ostensible Speech Act.**

For example, if A invites B to an event E, and both A and B mutually know that B has an unbreakable prior engagement; B will recognize that A's invitation is an ostensible one. Thus, for an invitation or an offer to be successful, Isaacs and Clark (1990) believe that B must be able to attend E or A must be able to provide B with the thing he/ she offers him/her. Babai Shishavan (2016) asserts that the kind of reasons and explanations interlocutors provide to perform a speech act, as well as the contextual clues, are significant in determining whether a speech act is extended sincerely or not. Accordingly, Chen *et al,* (1995) claim that the reasons and explanations speakers provide for not accepting the initial *offer* or *invitation* are generally derived from their consideration of costs to the inviter/offerer, that is, the refuser provides these reasons to show his/her concern of not causing troubles for the interlocutor and ostensibly refuses the initiating acts despite the fact that he/she is willing to accept it as a sign of politeness which itself indicates the violation of the sincerity condition (Babai Shishavan, 2016). The latter emphasizes the importance of the contextual clues including the social power and distance between interlocutors, their familiarity, the setting of the

conversation, and the ranking of imposition in determining whether a refusal is genuine or ostensible.

The second feature of ostensible speech acts is that they are sometimes solicited by the interlocutor, that is, A invites B only after B has solicited the invitation (Isaacs and Clark, 1990). Another feature of ostensible speech acts is that they are not extended beyond social courtesy, that is, when A invites B to an event E, A does not provide further reasons to reinforce B to accept his/her *invitation* or *offer*. Here the initiating action is issued just as a gesture of politeness not to persuade B to accept the *invitation* or *offer* (Babai Shishavan, 2016). However, when the invitation or the offer is genuinely verbalized, A usually provides some reasons and explanations to convince B to accept it. According to (Babai Shishavan, 2016) the same principle applies to ostensible refusals, where they must be delivered in a manner that indicates both interlocutors acknowledge the pretense of sincerity.

One more feature that distinguishes ostensible speech acts from their genuine counterparts is that A does not insist on the invitation. This feature characterizes ostensible speech acts more than genuine ones (Isaacs and Clark, 1990). According to the latter, genuine invitations are offered several times where the speaker insists on the content of the speech act to convince the hearer to accept the invitation. Babai Shishavan (2016) points out that this feature is not applied the same way to refusals as they slightly differ in their characteristic features from invitations. In other words, refusals are a response to an existing act be it an *offer* or an *invitation*. Thus, the refuser cannot insist on refusing if the offer or the invitation is not extended a second or third time. If he/she does so every time, this is more likely to be interpreted as a genuine refusal rather than an ostensible one. Yet, accepting the *offer* or the

invitation after an initial refusal means that the refuser was initiating an ostensible refusal and is willing to accept the initiating act.

Being vague about the arrangement is another feature introduced by Isaacs and Clark (1990) to differentiate between ostensible and genuine speech acts. They (1990) claim that for an *invitation* to be considered genuine, the inviter should provide sufficient details about the arrangement and the setting and do not leave it vague and unspecified. This feature too is more likely associated with ostensible rather than genuine speech acts. Simply put, a genuine invitation should fulfil certain conditions to be considered one, that is, the inviter usually provides specific details regarding the time and place of the event. Accordingly, Babai Shishavan (2016) asserts that the same is true for ostensible refusals which are expected to be vaguer than their genuine counterparts. Here, giving insufficient details makes it clearer for the speaker to determine whether a refusal is genuine or ostensible one, i.e., the refuser makes his intention undetectable by the hearer whether he/she really wants to refuse the initiating act or not.

Using hedges is another feature introduced by Isaacs and Clark (1990) to distinguish between ostensible and genuine speech acts. According to them (ibid), this feature is more associated with ostensible rather than genuine speech acts. (Nikula 1997; Fraser 2010) defines hedging expressions as' a rhetorical strategy which is used to reduce the force of a verbal message by making it more tentative and vague' (as cited in Babai Shishavan, (2016): 67). In their study of ostensible invitations, Isaacs and Clark (1990) assert that interlocutors use the hedging expressions more than twice as frequently in the realization of ostensible invitations compared with genuine ones. Likewise (Babai Shishava, 2016) in his study on

Persian refusals found that ritual refusals are realized with the use of many hedging expressions in comparison to genuine refusals.

Isaacs and Clark's (1990) last feature for distinguishing ostensible from genuine speech acts is that ostensible speech acts are conveyed with inappropriate verbal and physical cues compared to genuine speech acts. In other words, ostensible speech acts are typically realised in a manner that involves inconsistency between the verbal message and the non-verbal communication strategies used to deliver this message including body language, facial expressions, and the like (Babai Shishavan,2016). According to the latter, this discrepancy between what is said and what is conveyed non-verbally signals the insincerity of the speech act uttered, that is, the speaker is not fully committed to what he/she actually performed. In view of that, Isaacs and Clark (1990) state that this feature is more associated with ostensible speech acts rather than genuine ones. Babai Shishavan (2016) claims that for a refusal to be considered an ostensible one, it is not necessary to meet all the above-mentioned features. The same case is true for ostensible invitations. This, however, strongly depends on the context where the initiating action is delivered, which makes it easier for the interlocutor to decide on the sincerity of the refusal (Babai Shishavan, 2016). In the following section, I will present a selection of the intra-cultural and inter/cross-cultural studies conducted on the speech act of refusals across various languages and cultures.

2.3.4   Studying the speech acts of refusals

Numerous empirical studies on speech acts have been conducted over the past few years to examine the realization of refusals in different languages, cultures, and contexts (e.g. Beebe *et al*., 1990; Ramos, 1991; Morrow, 1995; Chen, 1996; Liao and Bresnahan, 1996; Al-Shalawi, 1997; Al-Issa, 1998; Nelson *et al*., 2002; Henstock, 2003; Al- Kahtani, 2005; Minh Phuong,

2006; Keshavarz et. al, 2006; El-Eryani, 2007; Abdul Sattar *et al*., 2009; Allami and Naeimi, 2011; Ghazanfari et al., 2012; Farnia and Wu, 2012; Guo, 2012; Shishavan, 2016; Al-shaboul and Huwari, 2016; Su, 2020; Benhouya and Rabab'ah, 2022). The main purpose of studying speech acts is to understand the dynamics of communication and explore the similarities and differences in interactions carried out across various languages and cultures. In the following paragraphs, I review some of the studies on the speech acts of refusals with a particular focus on their realisation in inter/cross-cultural contexts, which is the focus of the present study (see chapter two, section 2.7 for further details). I also argue that, although speech acts of refusals have been widely researched and analysed, there is still room for further investigations of the realisation of the speech act of refusals (ostensible or genuine) interlocutors use when dealing with *offers* and *invitations* in intercultural settings. The following will provide a brief overview of studies conducted on the speech act of refusals in different cultural and linguistic speech communities.

2.3.4.1   Inter/cross-cultural Refusal Studies

In their seminal study, Beebe *et al*. (1990) investigated the differences in refusal strategies among Japanese speakers, Japanese English speakers, and American English speakers. In fact, this study is considered a landmark since most of the following cross-cultural studies on the speech act of refusal used Beebe's *et al*. (1990) framework. The results of the study indicated that there are significant differences between Japanese and Americans in the sequence, frequency, and content of the semantic formulas used in refusals. Beebe *et al*. (1990) found that Japanese refusals change based on the social status of the other interlocutors, whilst Americans are more influenced by the level of familiarity or the social distance that exists between them and their counterparts. As per Beebe *et al*. (1990), the Japanese did not express apologies or regrets when refusing individuals of lower status compared to the

Americans who paid closer attention to the social distance. Also, they found that the Japanese offered unspecified excuses in comparison with Americans who provided more specific reasons for their refusals.

In a similar study, Liao and Bresnahan (1996) compared refusal strategies between American and Chinese male and female students. They concluded that both male and female groups were more likely to refuse their teachers' requests easily than to refuse their friends or families. Also, they found that women used a greater variety of strategies compared to men when refusing individuals of higher social status. Likewise, Guo (2012) examined both Chinese and American refusal speech acts from the perspectives of cross-cultural communication using a modified version of the discourse completion test originally developed by Beebe *et al.* (1990). The findings indicated that while there are more similarities than differences between the Americans and Chinese in terms of refusal strategies, both groups generally preferred indirect refusal strategies over direct ones, with a preference for statements of alternatives, reasons, and expressions of regret. Nevertheless, American participants tended to use a higher percentage of direct strategies compared to their Chinese counterparts on average. Guo (2012) attributed the differences found to the cultural distinctions between the Chinese and the American culture.

In another study, Minh Phuong (2006) examined the similarities and differences in refusal of requests between Australian native speakers of English and Vietnamese learners of English use. The findings revealed that while there are some similarities, the frequency of the speech act realisation use differs between Australians and Vietnamese. Also, the study indicated that Australians tended to use a consistent number of speech act realisations when communicating with their interlocutors, whereas Vietnamese showed greater sensitivity to the social status and the social distance of the requesters. Furthermore, the study revealed

that cultural differences impact the way in which both groups realise the speech act of refusals where Vietnamese tended to employ more elaborate refusal strategies compared to their Australian counterparts. Minh Phuong (2006) concluded that Vietnamese strategies indicated their reluctance to directly express their unwillingness to comply, in contrast to the Australians.

In their study, Farnia and Wu (2012) investigated the pragmatic behaviour of refusals to invitations by Chinese and Malaysian university students. They aimed to explore the students' perceptions regarding the cognitive processes, the language of thought, as well as the perception of insistence after declining an invitation. Data were collected from forty Chinese international students and forty Malaysian students through a written discourse completion task followed by an immediate structured post-interview. Results of the study revealed that both Chinese and Malaysian respondents employed similar types of refusal strategies when declining the invitation; however, there was a variation in terms of the number of strategies (their frequency) used across the scenarios. Ghazanfari et al. (2012) examined the speech act of refusals performed by native Persian and English with respect to linguistic devices. They analysed refusal utterances with respect to both semantic formulas and gender differences. Results of the study showed that Persian speakers demonstrated a high frequency of employing excuses compared to their English counterparts. However, they used less regret strategies, and non-performative statements, and displayed a lack of enthusiasm as well, compared to the English participants. The findings revealed that there are differences between the two languages with regard to the refusal utterances and gender.

In a study conducted by Chen (1996), a set of semantic formulas was employed to examine the speech act of refusals (refusing *requests*, *invitations*, *offers*, and *suggestions*)

among American and Chinese speakers of English. Chen (1996) noted that direct refusals were not a common strategy for any of the subjects regardless of their language and background. Chen's (1996) study also revealed that while American speakers often employed expressions of regret in their refusal speech, Chinese speakers typically did not use regret expressions, which could potentially result in unpleasant emotions between speakers in an American context.

In a similar vein, Alghamdi and Alqarni (2019) compared the refusal strategies used by female students from Saudi Arabia and America in response to invitations and requests. Their aim was to provide new insights into the actual usage of the language by native speakers, rather than depending solely on theoretical assumptions. They investigated both the content of the semantic formulas and their frequencies based on the social status of their counterparts. They proposed that the cultural norms and values of their interlocutors are reflected in their speech acts. The current study had the same motive, that is, negotiating the norms and values used by both Algerian and British students in realising the speech act of refusals (ostensible or genuine). Furthermore, providing some insights into the way participants themselves would define the relationship between politeness and linguistic behaviours. Consequently, leading to a broader spectrum of behaviour labels beyond simply polite and impolite when providing judgments with respect to the appropriateness of the social interactants' relational work.

Moreover, a significant body of cross-cultural and learner-centred Arabic refusal studies has been examined, offering insights into the differences that exist between Arabic and American English refusal patterns. Al-shalawi (1997) examined refusals in Saudi Arabic and American English, highlighting Saudi's preference for family-oriented expressions of

regrets and excuses, as opposed to the Americans' tendency towards directness and clarity of their explanations. In their study, Al-Ghamdi and Alrefaee (2020) investigated the refusal strategies used by Yemeni Arabic speakers and American English speakers to uncover potential cross-cultural similarities and differences, with a special focus on the social status influence on communication. The findings of the study revealed cross-cultural differences between the two groups where Yemenis tended to use more direct refusal strategies compared to their American counterparts, especially when declining individuals of equal or lower social status. Also, there was a significant difference in the frequency of certain refusal strategies, with some strategies being more evident in one group only. Remarkably, the distinctive use of the name of God among the Yemeni speakers. Moreover, the choice of the refusal strategies used by both Yemenis and Americans was significantly impacted by the social status of the interlocutors where Yemenis predominantly employed alternative strategies when rejecting offers of higher social status. However, the same strategy was used by Americans across all interactions. Nevertheless, direct strategies were mostly used by Yemenis when dealing with individuals of equal social status in comparison to Americans who employed more gratitude adjunct strategies and excuses.

Nelson (2002) conducted a comparative analytical study of refusals between Egyptian Arabic and American English, revealing that Egyptian refusals are remarkably more direct especially in interactions among friends, while expressions of gratitude were commonly employed in the American dataset. Similarly, Al-Issa (1998) explored refusals in Jordanian Arabic and American English, noting Jordanian's use of more elaborate and indirect refusals, particularly in interactions with individuals of higher *social status*, often accompanied by frequent use of religious expressions. El-Aryani (2007) examined the refusal speech act between Yemeni Arabic and American English, noting Yemeni refusals' tendency to

indirectness compared with their American counterparts. Al-Shaboul and Huwari (2016) examined the similarities and differences in the speech act of refusals between Jordanian Arabic and American English using an adapted version of the discourse completion task. Data were analysed in terms of semantic formulaic sequences and classified based on Al-Issa's (1998) classification of refusal strategies. Results of the study revealed that both groups of participants preferred indirect strategies, followed by adjunct strategies and then direct ones. Nevertheless, Jordanian participants tended to use more indirect strategies compared with their American counterparts who preferred direct strategies.

In his study, Al-Kahtani (2005) demonstrated differences among Americans, Arabs, and the Japanese in the way they realise the speech act of refusals while using the same linguistic code (i.e. English) with respect to the three dimensions of semantic formulae: the order, the frequency, and the content of semantic formulae. However, he reported instances where the three cultural groups exhibited similar responses across certain situations. The aim of the study was to highlight the speech act realisation across different cultures and the challenges faced by second language learners when dealing with speech acts in the target language. Results of the study indicated that when the refuser held higher status than the refusee, both Americans and Japanese participants were similar in the order of semantic formulas as they expressed gratitude first, followed by self-defence for Americans and explanation for the majority of Japanese. However, Arab participants did not express gratitude at all in their responses. When dealing with someone socially equal, both American and Arab participants were found to be similarly direct in comparison with the Japanese participants who often provided explanations as indirect refusals. Overall, the study highlighted differences among the three groups in the ways they realised the speech act of refusal with respect to the three dimensions of semantics formulas mentioned earlier. These

studies underlined key features of Arabic communication style, such as frequent use of religious expressions, verbosity, preference for indirect strategies when interacting with higher status individuals and relying on formulaic expressions and proverbs.

2.3.4.2 Intracultural Refusal Studies

Abdul Sattar et *al*. (2009) investigated the preferred semantic formulas employed in rejecting suggestions in Iraqi Arabic using a written completion task consisting of three different situations to elicit the refusals. The findings of the study revealed that Iraqi participants commonly employed specific patterns of indirect refusals when rejecting the suggestions. Typically, initiating their refusals with a "no" followed by an explanation. In essence, Iraqi participants tended to mitigate their refusals by providing explanations, excuses, and other indirect strategies. Regarding the social status of the interlocutors, the participants used semantic formulas like apology, future acceptance, and agreement when refusing a higher social status (such as a professor). On the contrary, strategies like repetition and negative opinion are employed when refusing an equal status (such as a classmate); and strategies including attack, criticism, and principle were used when dealing with a lower status (such as a student).

Shishavan (2016) examined Persian genuine and ostensible refusals to offers and invitations. Data was collected through ethnographic observations and analysed using a modified version of Isaacs and Clark's framework (1990). Furthermore, Shishavan conducted focus group interviews to investigate the cultural schemas and sociocultural norms underlying ostensible refusal in the Persian context. The study results indicated that despite the fact that the features of ostensible speech acts proposed by Isaacs and Clark (1990) are present in the study, they were not sufficient to distinguish between genuine and ostensible refusals in Persian. Also, the focus group interviews highlighted the complexity of ostensible refusals In

Persian due to the strong impact of the two cultural aspects of tă'ărof (ritual politeness) and ru-dar-băyesti (respectful distance) that predominantly exist in the Persian culture, which are mainly used in adherence to politeness norms and the face-saving of both the speaker and the hearer's faces. Therefore, the speaker's concern is to maintain positive rapport through the pretense of sincerity in the ostensible refusals.

In another study, Su (2020) investigated the distinguishing pragmalinguistic features of genuine and ostensible refusals in Mandarin invitational and offering interactions, as well as the sociopragmatic factors influencing ostensible refusals. The resulting conversations represented four discourse patterns identified in existing literature (single-cycle acceptance, refusal-before acceptance, single-cycle refusal, multi-cycle refusal), focusing on aspects of position, orientation, justification, and modification of the initial refusals. Su (2020) found that in scenarios involving a professor or a friend, genuine refusals are often mitigated, delayed, and speaker-oriented offering justification linked to external factors. On the opposite, ostensible refusals are immediately delivered, concise; and can be hearer-oriented addressing the initiator's intention or acknowledging the cost of the *offer* or the *invitation*, or speaker-oriented with justifications based on vague reasons or personal feelings. Also, the study indicated that the interplay of factors such as the initiating speech acts, the motivations behind the initiating acts as well as power relation that exists between interlocutors influence the use of ostensible refusals. Benbouya and Rabab'ah (2022) investigated the refusal strategies used in Algerian spoken Arabic in response to *offers* using an oral discourse completion task, which included six hypothetical scenarios representing three social statuses (High-low, Equal-equal, and Low-high). The findings of the study indicated the Algerian participants' preference to use indirect refusal strategies in their responses to offers from all

three different social statuses. Furthermore, they noted that the most frequently used strategy by the participants across all statuses was *negative willingness/ability.*

Looking at the considerable body of literature, much of the research has been done on the realisation of the speech acts of refusals focusing on English and languages like Chinese, Mexican, Japanese, Arabic, and so on. Also, the findings of the previous studies reviewed above are largely consistent. Furthermore, it can be seen that all the previous studies mentioned the use of a written completion task with the exception of very few which employed oral data (e.g., Benbouya and Rabab'ah, 2022) or ethnographic observation (Shishavan, 2016). Hence, the current study will use an innovative data collection method to uncover new aspects and perspectives of the realisation of the speech acts of refusals in an intercultural setting (Algerian and British) and, therefore, contribute to a deeper understanding of the speech acts particularly and pragmatics in general. Although there was some research on the Algerian realisation of the speech act of refusals (e.g., Benbouya and Rabab'ah,2022), to the best of the researcher's smattering knowledge, no systematic study has been done to compare the realisation of the speech act of refusals between English and Algerian students. Consequently, I intend to hopefully address this gap in the literature through the current study and add empirical findings in terms of the realisation of the speech act of refusals in intercultural settings. The following section will be devoted to the definition of politeness theory and the notion of face.

2.4   Politeness theory and the notion of the face

2.4.1   The notion of the face
Before I embark on studying and showing what *politeness* means, an account of the *face* seems necessary for the understanding of politeness. Central to the model of *politeness* is the concept of *face*. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that every member of society has a face

which is defined as the public self- image that every member of society wants to claim for himself. It is defined by Goffman (1967: 12) as 'the actions were taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with a face'; he also maintains that facework ''serves to counteract 'incidents', that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face''. Brown and Levinson (1987) distinguish between two aspects of *face*: positive and negative; positive face refers to 'the want of every member that his wants to be desirable to at least some others' (62); that is, a member's desire that his wants or actions be thought of as desirable, to be liked, approved of, or to have a positive image appreciated by other members of society. Negative face, on the other hand, is defined as ''the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others'' (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 62), i.e. individual's wants to have freedom of action, the desire to be unimpeded, imposed upon. It 'represents the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition' (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61). Therefore, during the process of communication, one major condition that helps to achieve the desired goal of an utterance is observing the maintenance of face, which is related to how people interact and perceive each other in their daily lives (Koutlaki, 2002).

Following Goffman's description of *face*, every rational person in society is concerned, to some extent, with how other members of society perceive him/her, therefore, they attempt to maintain or project their identity or public self-image. Hence, to lose face is to suffer a socially diminished self-image. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that in all interactions, participants may encounter instances that carry the possibility of face-threat; therefore, polite behaviour stands as a strategy to redress that threat by mitigating it.

2.4.2   Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)

According to Alaoui (2011), speech acts that do not support the facial wants of the speaker and those of the hearer inherently threaten their face-wants; this threat, however, can be redressed by the use of politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987:65) defined face-threatening as per two parameters: '(1) Whose face is being threatened (the speaker's or the addressee's), and (2) Which type of face is being threatened (positive- or negative- face)'. Acts that threaten the addressee's positive face refer to those acts which do not support the addressee's positive face or self-image (e.g., criticisms, interruptions, accusations); whereas acts such as offers and promises threaten the addressee's negative face as they include instances where the speaker has to accept or reject a future act of the speaker. Examples of Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs, for short) to the speaker's negative face include accepting a thank-you, making promises, and accepting an offer or apology. Some of the examples of Face-Threatening Acts that are threatening to the speaker's positive face may include apologies, confessions, acceptance of compliments, and the like.

When using some speech acts, interlocutors employ certain strategies to minimize face threats (Tsuda, 1993). The selection of those strategies highly depends on the way speakers weigh up the face-threatening acts. Acts that damage the interlocutor's face as refusals, threats, criticisms, and many others by running contrary to the hearer's wishes are referred to by Brown and Levinson (1987) as FTAs. Other acts including solidarity, affection, recognition, and the like, on the contrary, are called Face-Preserving Acts (FPAs), which preserve the interlocutor's face (see Sarfo, 2011).

2.5   Politeness

Politeness theory was introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987) on the assumption that many speech acts including requests, offers, compliments, and the like are considered face-

threatening in nature. Politeness is referred to as the strategic conflict-avoidance that constructs cooperative social interactions (Watts, 2003). It is seen as a common social phenomenon that plays a significant role in conducting human communication and social activities (Nasrullah Mohammed and Fadhil Abbas, 2015). It is considered a form of social interaction that is governed by socio-cultural norms of every society (see chapter two, section 2.7.5), and which can be manifested and understood through communicative and non-communicative acts (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006; Alaoui, 2011). Brown and Levinson (1987) introduced a universal model of linguistic politeness and claimed that is realized by means of different strategies across cultures.

Politeness in the way participants in interaction address each other is considered a code of behaviour that they have to adhere to and is regarded as an important part of social conventions in all cultures no matter how different they are. What needs to be stressed, though, is that the kind and amount of politeness to be applied to a certain speech act is highly dependent on the weightiness of the speech act. Put differently, three social variables are to be considered while speakers calculate the weight of their speech acts: the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, the power difference between the two, and the social ranking of the speech act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). All over, politeness strategies are used to avoid conflicts between participants involved in the interaction, therefore, participants often tend to mitigate disagreements and exaggerate agreements. Yet, one should point out that, despite the common features of politeness in some languages, the use of politeness does alter from one culture to another, therefore, in this respect, politeness can be said to be a culture-specific norm (Alaoui, 2011). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), whenever a speaker decides to produce an act that may potentially threaten the hearer or the speaker's *face*, the speaker opts for a politeness strategy in order to minimize the risk of

such threat. They (ibid) claim that both the notion of *face* and the individual's social interaction oriented to it is universal and argue that everyone has similar face wants.

In their theory of politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) identify four politeness strategies that deal with face threat: Bald-on-record strategy that does not recognize the face wants of the hearer and provides him/her with no efforts to mitigate the threat caused to the hearer's face. Negative politeness is concerned with the sort of assumptions a speaker imposes on the hearer while acknowledging the latter's face wants. On the other hand, positive politeness refers to the hearer's desire and wants to be respected. It is often realized by showing concern for the hearer's face. The last strategy, however, is employed in an indirect way. It shows little or no threat to the hearer's face, i.e., it seeks to recognize his/her respect and dignity. In order to clear the confusion that might result from the use of the terms 'positive' and 'negative', i.e., thinking of positive politeness as something good and negative politeness as something bad, Scollon and Scollon (2001) have examined the notions of positive and negative taking into account both individual and group needs. They used the term involvement which is realized by a set of strategies such as claiming in-group membership, showing that the speaker is closely connected to the hearer, mainly paying attention to others (see Félix-Brasdefer, 2006).

When looking at refusals as a social act usually performed by two or more participants, all the above-mentioned theories including face and politeness offer a basis upon which this study is conducted. As we cannot rule out face, FTA, or FPA when discussing such a concept; that is, when discussing politeness, it is crucial to consider these concepts in order to better understand how individuals navigate social interactions while showing respect to each other's face needs. Therefore, all these theories provide a solid foundation for the study of the speech

act of refusals since face threat is involved at any time a refusal is delivered (Sarfo, 2011). In the following, I will define both nonverbal communication and socio-cultural norms and then discuss the intercultural misunderstanding that occurs when people of two different cultures interact with each other to further support my arguments.

2.6   Non-verbal communication

Nonverbal communication is a significant component of human communication (Shi and Fan, 2010). It is defined as 'interaction without language' (Naidu et al., 2018: 1). It refers to the wordless ideas and information transmitted either purposefully or randomly between people (see Tripathy, 2017), and plays a significant role in building a successful interaction with people. The latter, however, depends on the mutual ability of both interlocutors involved in interaction to understand nonverbal communication. Chi (2016) advocates that people belonging to different cultural groups are aware of the language differences of different cultures but are less likely aware of the nonverbal disparity between cultures. Nonverbal Cues can be delivered by means of gestures, time, space, distance, eye contact, and other body movements. Tripathy (2017) argues that the significance of nonverbal communication is basically viewed when people from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. While there has been a significant amount of research on various forms of speech acts realizations in inter/cross-cultural research from *invitations* (Eslami, 2005); *offers* (Grainger et al., 2015); *suggestions* (Heidari-Shahreza, 2014); *refusals* (Alhaidari, 2009; Farnia and Wu, 2012); *requests* (Sattar and Farnia, 2014; Nugroho and Rekha, 2020), very few if any, explore in any great depth the non-verbal or multimodal aspect of speech act realization and speech act responses. Therefore, the whole area of multimodal or non-verbal is ultimately less researched, hence, the current study, being conducted with people from two different

cultures, aims to focus on this area and give further insights into intercultural non-verbal communication.

During the process of communication, participants largely rely on the nonverbal cues of the other interlocutors to interpret and decode verbal messages (Damnet, 2008). It is assumed that intercultural communication success is highly related to having a good proficiency level in the language. Yet, many studies on inter/cross-cultural communication (Hasler et al., 2014; Kaushal, 2014; Naidu et al., 2018; Shi and Fan, 2010; Teichuan, 2016; Tripathy, 2017) indicate that intercultural misunderstanding is largely caused by the misuse and misinterpretation of nonverbal communication. Nevertheless, understanding nonverbal communication is also significant. Thus, nonverbal communication has become an important area of study in intercultural communication. Therefore, the current study will demonstrate the relationship between nonverbal communication and speech act theory in connection with face theory (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It will identify the importance of understanding and using nonverbal communication in intercultural contexts and hopes to suggest incorporating nonverbal communication skills into English language programs to enable students to communicate effectively. Now, I will look at cross-cultural and intercultural communication along with defining the cultural scripts and socio-cultural norms.

2.7   Inter/cross-cultural communication

According to Kislowicz (2014), cross-cultural communication refers to the shared meanings across cultural boundaries which does not necessarily imply agreement but rather shows respect for other partners and more awareness of their cultural notions. Likewise, Liang and Wang (2022) defined cross-cultural communication as a comparative study of the ways native speakers perceive linguistically appropriate manners to express gratitude in two different

cultures which significantly contributes to developing better models of communicative competence related to any speech act. However, having to deal with different codes and conventions that might not be valid in the other culture, participants encounter many problems compared with communicating within the realms of one's own culture. Thus, those who are engaging in cross-cultural settings must learn how to deal with the multiple ways of seeing similar issues as well as the disagreement that they may encounter when dealing with interlocutors of different cultural backgrounds (Kislowicz, 2014). Correspondingly, Ling and Wang (2022) claimed that people living in different cultural backgrounds have different personality characteristics, thinking, and lifestyles, and therefore their cultural norms may be similar or far from other parties. Consequently, the encoding and decoding of information is not necessarily shared by groups or individuals from different contexts. Therefore, the more countries show equal integration and the more they can identify with each other, the less contradiction and disagreement may occur.

To this end, in order to explore the distinction or variation in meaning between intercultural and cross-cultural pragmatics, it is imperative to delve into the rich literature that addresses the communication patterns used by interlocutors, predominantly in the context of the speech act of refusals. Different scholars in the field studied how cultural differences affect the pragmatic strategies employed by participants in realising the speech act of refusal in cross-cultural settings (Nelson et al, 2002; Çiftçi, 2012; Guo, 2012; Al-Ghamdi and Alrefaee, 2020) shedding the light on the cultural variation in the way interlocutors realise and interpret refusals in relation to politeness conventions that exist in every culture offering various valuable understandings into the pragmatic strategies used during the process of refusing others. Therefore, drawing attention to the need to focus more on the huge impact culture has on the realisation of the speech act of refusals. On the other

hand, various studies have been conducted on intercultural pragmatics including the current one (Fujiwara, 2004; Farnia and Qusay, 2010; Farnia and Wu, 2012; Al-Shboul et al. 2012; Eshreteh, 2015; Cahyo et al, 2023). Here, it is crucial to emphasise that despite the fact that both participants of the current study (Algerian and British) are interacting in an intercultural setting, in the second stage of my data collection (semi-structured interviews) they will be given the opportunity to reflect not only on their behaviour in this specific context but also on how they apply their cultural norms in a broader sense, therefore, shedding light on the cross-cultural aspect as well. Consequently, the data collected from this study encompasses both intercultural and cross-cultural aspects. It is intercultural due to the interaction between participants from different cultural backgrounds (Algerian and British) within a specific context. Also, it is cross-cultural because participants reflect on their own cultures during the semi-structured interviews outside that specific intercultural context in which they improvise the scenarios.

In contrast to cross-cultural communication, intercultural communication involves the way people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with each other (Chi, 2016). Spencer-Oatey (2006) describes the phenomenon as: "Intercultural communication is concerned with communication between people from different sociocultural groups. It focuses on the role played by cultural–level factors (in contrast to individual and universal factors) and explores their influence on the communication process" (p. 2537). It primarily takes place in settings where individuals of various cultures interact with each other. For instance, it can involve students studying abroad engaging with local students as the current study or perhaps with their university or the workplace staff and the like. It is referred to as the systematic study of exactly what happens when cross-cultural interactions and contacts take place (Farnia, 2012). That is to say, when the message producer and the message receiver

belong to different cultures as the case in the current study (Algerian and British). Overall, Cross-cultural studies involve comparison between cultures, such as comparing English strategies for starting conversations with German ones; while intercultural studies focus typically on communication between individuals who speak different languages, have different ethnic backgrounds, and/or have different nationalities as the case of examining conversations between English and German students (Spencer-Otey, 2006). Therefore, in order to achieve successful communication, participants of both cultures require an awareness and knowledge of the meaning of a particular speech act within a given cultural context. In a similar vein, Gamsriegler (2005) argued that the cultural background hugely impacts the process of communication as the latter involves the interlocutor's perception, interpretation as well as evaluation of the other interlocutor's social behaviour. That is to say, any single meaning attached to a certain behaviour is widely influenced by those cultural backgrounds. According to Gamsriegler (ibid), interlocutors belonging to two different cultures will not only communicate in distinct ways rather experience the situation differently as well.

Intercultural communication involves speakers from different cultural backgrounds and social groups, using different mother tongues (Tunde, 2016), and sharing both verbal and nonverbal information (Kaushal, 2014). Kaushal (2014) argues that successful interactions in intercultural settings depend upon the understanding of both verbal and nonverbal messages since two-thirds of communication takes place through nonverbal means. According to Kaushal (ibid), when people receive unclear or unambiguous verbal messages, they usually tend to rely upon the nonverbal cues that accompany the verbal ones. Therefore, the possibility of disagreement and misunderstandings, as regards non-verbal communication, is

high due to the cultural differences that exist between cultures (Chi, 2016; Damnet, 2008; Lustig and Koester, 2000; Samman, 2009; Shi and Fan, 2010; Tiechaun, 2016; Tripathy, 2017). However, learners make great efforts to improve their vocabulary and neglect nonverbal cues. Therefore, it is important to raise their awareness of the necessity of improvising both verbal and nonverbal skills in the process of learning intercultural communication. Similarly, Chin (2016) emphasized the responsiveness of learning nonverbal communication because of its effectiveness in intercultural communication. Now, I move to discuss the notion of cultural scripts, sequence organisation, preference organisation, first-order/second-order dichotomy, and sociocultural norms, respectively.

2.7.1 Cultural scripts

Cultural scripts refer to 'representations of cultural norms which are widely held in a given society and are reflected in the language' (Wierzbicka, 2007:56); that it, the norms of interaction, interpretation, and widely shared assumptions about how and why it is good or bad to speak in a certain situation (Goddard, 2012). They are cognitive to society and culture that allows us to study the way individuals speak, think, and do things in a unified framework (Wierzbicka, 2004). They combine an interest in the distinctiveness and particularity of cultures with the acknowledgment and affirmation of shared human universals. In particular, cultural scripts can be referred to as a set of codified common sayings, phrases, proverbs, and clichés that reflect hypotheses about what people based on the observation of what they do, i.e., things that people frequently say they think and do (Wierzbicka, 1994).

Furthermore, Wierzbicka (1994) claimed that cultural scripts constitute the unspoken 'cultural grammar' including (common sayings, proverbs, common socialization routines, and the like) which are quite specific and associated with the things people can or cannot say, things people can or cannot do, and whether it is good or not to say or do those things in that

particular culture. In other words, they refer to people's ideas, thoughts, norms, and assumptions which are, by and large, considered to be tacit although they might from time-to-time surface clear messages. Respectively, in order to understand the cultural scripts of a certain culture, we should comprehend the ways of speaking in that alien culture to us where interlocutors interact in their proper cultural context.

According to Goddard (2012), not all members of a given speech community necessarily agree with or conform to such shared understandings and individuals are not essentially aware of them in normal interaction. Yet, they are considered as an interpretative backdrop to everyday interaction which plays a great deal in capturing and representing the perspectives of cultural insiders. They are a combination of highly constrained simple words and grammatical patterns, such as 'this someone is someone like me', 'many people think like this', and the like. For ordinary speakers, cultural scripts should represent something that is conceptually real; that is, no technical terms are to be found, and words that have to appear that they lack their semantic equivalent in other languages are not allowed to be used (Goddard, 2012).

According to Wierzbicka (1994), understanding the speaking characteristics of a certain cultural group is very challenging to describe let alone explained unless we succeed in identifying and articulating its cultural scripts. Wierzbicka (1994) argued that even though different cultural ethnic and social groups share the same language, they still operate differently in terms of cultural norms and scripts. For instance, Arabic is considered a basic lexico-grammatical code in different cultures around the world; yet, not all Arabs agree on the same cultural norms when it comes to realising a certain speech act as refusals in the current study. Correspondingly, Goddard (2004) argued that despite the fact that people are aware of the complexity of the overall configuration of cultural scripts as well as the

uniqueness of particular cultures, they still naturally expect that certain cultural scripts recur in various cultures. Cultural scripts refer to a powerful technique for expressing the cultural values, norms, and practices which are accessible to both cultural insiders and outsiders in a very clear and precise way. Simply put, they refer to the expressive, constrained, and flexible set of words and grammatical patterns that are tightly formulated and available for people with different equivalents in all languages (Goddard and Wierzbicka, 2004). Therefore, different ways of speaking, thinking, and behaving in different societies are linked with the different sets of conventional local cultural norms that exist in that particular society. This conventional metalanguage consists of an open-ended set of technical and semi-technical terms including politeness, formality, face, and the like (Goddard, 1997). According to the latter, these cultural scripts stand as a powerful method that states rules for speaking and aims to draw generalizations about discourse with particular attention to the differences that exist between cultures. These cultural scripts which are framed in independently established lexical universals cannot eliminate the inaccuracy and imprecision, in themselves, but they can help in eliminating one source of it, namely, the huge reliance on vague and complex technical and semi-technical terms (Goddard, 1997).

Those cultural norms are referred to as statements of people's expectations, thoughts, and assumptions that shape the ways they understand new theories and their decisions on appropriate practices which they are often unaware of. They are derived from our cultural surroundings and transmitted via different sources such as family at first place, schools, media, state, and so on and therefore they tend to guide the way we perceive others' behaviours as well as the way we communicate with them (Wierzbicka,1994). Consequently, understanding those cultural patterns that underlie human behaviours allows us to appreciate the rich diversity in different parts of the world and potentially avoid intercultural

misunderstandings when dealing with people of different cultural backgrounds. That is to say, people with different cultural patterns may encounter communication difficulties and breakdowns when interacting in intercultural settings just because they fail to understand each other's cultural scripts as speakers may differ in the way they describe particular concepts and the number of words they use for that.

It is probably more accurate to say, however, that comparison of cultures based on the cultural scripts can be taken from a culture-neutral point of view, and, ultimately, can be regarded as free of any ethnocentric bias. In other words, it is worth mentioning that in intercultural communication, the different cultural norms should be formulated in a way that makes it easy to compare them; that is, make them explicitly formulated in an unbiased way in different societies. Also, it is essential to formulate them in an accessible way generally by using non-technical terms. As those cultural norms can be formulated in lexical universals, this makes them easy to compare across different cultures (Wierzbicka, 1994). Accordingly, the fact of translating them from one language to another and being accessible to speak certifies their culture-independent character as well as their universality.

2.7.2 Sequence Organization

Sequence organization refers to the ways conversationalists link turns to each other as a coherent series of interrelated communicative actions (Mazeland, 2006); that is, how participants accomplish and coordinate an interactional spoken activity in an ordered series of turns to effectuate interactional projects. For example, a verbal answer followed by a question is considered as a sequence, criticism and its reply is considered a sequence, a request and the decision that is made about it is also considered a sequence, and so on and so forth. It is a set of constructional practices that allow participants in conversations to determine the speaking transitions and their relevance in accordance with a structured set of

interactional options. Schegloff (2007) states that participants overwhelmingly categorize their talk in action pairs referred to as 'Adjacency pairs' as question-answer pairs. These pairs are usually delivered by two different speakers where the first pair part production is considered as an appropriate initiation tool for turn allocation while a change in speaker is required following the first pair part in a type-governed manner; that is, every single first pair part requires an appropriate second pair part. For example, a question requires an answer, an invitation or an offer requires an acceptance or a refusal, and a greeting entails a return greeting, and so on. Furthermore, there exists a specific relation between question-answer pairs (Schegloff, 2007), for example, a where-question needs a location answer, and a when-question requires a time answer, and the like. Very roughly the point is that, when the speaker of an utterance in a talk delivers an utterance as the first part of a particular adjacency pair, the hearer at talk should appropriately deliver an utterance that may count as the second pair part of the same pair. For example, if the hearer receives a question, he/she should deliver a response to that question. Here, the question is considered as the first pair part of a question/answer pair, while the answer is treated as the second pair part of the same pair. Complaints, offers, invitations, requests, and many other speech acts establish similar expectations, that is, they require to be continued with a fitting type of second pair part in the next turn. In other words, in any particular type of adjacency pair, utterances that are analysable as the first pair part establish a normative expectation of what should be done by the recipient in the next turn. Thus, delivering a second pair part in response to a first pair part is considered conditionally relevant, while its absence is noticeable and accountable. It thus appears that participants in talk do not just simply count utterances as isolated actions, but rather as moves in contextually situated social arrangements; that is, they do not rely only on rules that are independent of and external to interaction to attribute meanings to

utterances (Mazeland, 2006). It is probably more accurate to say, however, that participants in the talk may encounter both agreeing and disagreeing second assessments. Disagreeing with assessments is considered more delicate compared to agreeing with assessments as the latter is usually seen as a less preferred type of next action than its agreeing alternative.

According to Teng and Sinwongsuwat (2015), in responding to any first pair part, participants have the choice of two possible answers, be it preferred or dispreferred, as the absence of an answer signals rudeness and lack of attention. Generally, preferred answers are common and most likely to occur. For example, if a speaker delivers an invitation, acceptances are preferred over dispreferred responses (refusals) as they align with the social convention of politeness and cooperation. However, a rejection or hesitation is considered a dispreferred response as they can create social discomfort and ultimately require additional politeness strategies to mitigate their potential threats to the interlocuters' faces. Here, relevant parties need to account for the absence of a preferred answer if it is noticeable. Differently put, after initiating the first pair-part, the second pair-part needs to be delivered, if not, it may remain relevant and accountable and appear later; otherwise, its absence requires to be accounted for.

According to Schegloff (1995), disagreements are regarded as dispreferred and marked second pair parts while agreements are considered preferred and unmarked. He (ibid) states that dispreferred second pair parts are usually mitigated, delayed, hidden away, and hesitantly produced. Preferred second-pair parts, however, are frequently delivered frankly in a concise mode without any delay. It should be evident, then, that in order to adjust the preference structure of the preceding first pair part, participants may initiate repair on the first pair part in insertion sequences to prevent the likeliness of a dispreferred second pair

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part, or at least delay its delivery (Mazeland, 2006). In a similar vein, Flöck and Geluykens (2018) claim that not all alternative second pair parts are equal in status, i.e., participants may use either preferred or dispreferred second pair parts. Here, the second pair of parts serves as a powerful monitoring method to check whether speakers' intentions are identified correctly or not (Flöck and Geluykens, 2018). Now, we move to the definition of preference organisation.

2.7.3   Preference organization

Schegloff (2007) refers to preference as the systematic structural asymmetries, i.e., the features of responding turn rather than the psychological state of individuals producing them; that is, speakers' desires, motives, and so forth. It is about the structural features of turn design which participants in talk-in-interaction use to infer certain kinds of action. Thus, it is concerned with the structure rather than the dispositional relationship between alternative, non-equivalent courses of action. In other words, preference and dispreference are related to the socio/interactional feature of sequences rather than the psychological ones.

Interactants are usually encouraged to produce affiliative actions instead of disaffiliation to help advance social solidarity. Here, they are provided with different alternatives that display different alignments towards the action they respond to; that is, the sequence in which a set of actions are present to them to deliver relevant alternative possible responses; for example, invitations and offers can be either rejected or accepted, requests can either be granted or denied (see Heritage, 1984; Schegloff, 2007; Whitehead, 2015). Very roughly the point is, participants' responses demonstrate recurrent orientations to their asymmetrical character where preferred responses (acceptance, agreement, and so on) are delivered straightforwardly without delay while dispreferred ones (denial, disagreement, rejection, and the like) are mitigated, delayed, and generally produced with accounts

(Schegloff, 2007). In a similar vein, Whitehead (2015) states that dispreferred turn shapes have a significant consequence as they provide either party with opportunities to prevent their occurrence or for speakers to revise or back down from their prior actions to permit preferred responses to be delivered instead. Nevertheless, Schegloff (2007) notes that during the course of conflicts, for example, where disaffiliations do occur, the production of dispreferred responses in a preferred shape can lead to the display of strong disaffiliation. Additionally, he (ibid) sheds light on the possibility of having multiple preferences, i.e., where an utterance makes both particular preferred and dispreferred responses relevantly, and sometimes serves as a vehicle to trigger other distinct actions, which also makes both preferred and dispreferred responses relevant (Schegloff, 2007).   In some cases, however, the preferred response for one aspect of the utterance can serve as a dispreferred response for the other. For example, an agreement is considered a preferred response to assessments; while the latter can serve also as a vehicle to trigger an action, as compliments for which disagreements are the preferred response which makes it difficult for responders to choose what sets of practices to employ (Whitehead, 2015).

Duran and Sert's (2019) work casts a further shadow on sequence-responding and sequence-initiating actions. According to them (ibid), preferred and dispreferred second pair parts are produced as a response to a preceding turn in accordance with conditional relevance. This identifies the production of many practices. Preferred turns are considered affiliative, face-affirming usually delivered without delay, mitigation, or account while dispreferred turns are considered as disaffiliation, face-threatening generally produced with qualification, delay, and accounts (Schegloff, 2007). The latter states that interactants during conversation employ different sets of design features in the two alternatives as they perform differently in interaction, i.e., face-saving action and disaffiliation action (see Duran and Sert,

2019). It is safe to conclude that, as these features of preference organizations minimize the likelihood of dispreferred actions and maximize the likelihood of preferred ones, they play a great role in maintaining 'face' and preserving social solidarity between members of society (see Chapter Two, section 2.4.1).

According to Bilmes (2014), the set of delays, mitigations, and accounts that accompany dispreferred responses are called dispreferred markers. They play a significant role in encouraging the speaker to produce a preferred response if he/she anticipates that a dispreferred response is coming; that is, speakers may add these markers to the first pair part or alter it in a such way as to make it the preferred one. In the same vein, Pomerantz and Heritage (2012) argue that the main idea that lies behind a preference is that speakers follow a set of implicit principles when acting and reacting in different interactional circumstances.

Bilmes (2014) claims that participants pay proper attention to their personal choices while delivering their responses, i.e., whether and to what extent to be polite or not. Here, their manifest choice is determined by their preference where they opt for various techniques to avoid dispreferred responses, expressing reluctance to be impolite or unobliging. Thus, for the sake of showing politeness, individuals use dispreference markers that reflect their personal psychology and choices, for example, 'I would rather not say this, but, for some reason, I feel that I have to' (Bilmes, 2014). Differently put, politeness stands as the main reason behind employing those markers in cases of the production of uninvited responses such as rejections, disagreements, and the like. Thus far, I think it is safe to say that researchers have been primarily concerned about how to produce and format utterances and responses.

Refusals are considered as a second pair part of the adjacency pair with the preceding first pair part of offers, invitations, and requests (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973). They are

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commonly seen as disaffiliation that threatens social solidarity (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973),

and therefore, sequentially formatted and organized as dispreferred second pair-part (see Al

Gahtani and Roever, 2018). In a similar vein, Schegloff (2007) maintains that refusals can be

delayed or avoided by employing sequentially through inter-turn delays and gaps, the use of

ostensible repair initiation, inserting expansions, explanations, accounts, mitigation, and the

like. In the following section, I discuss the notion of First-order and Second-order Dichotomy.

2.7.4   First-order/ second-order dichotomy

There are fundamentally several ways of going about politeness research. First-order

(emic/participants' perspective) politeness which refers to an ethnographic approach to

perceptions of socially appropriate behaviour or 'etiquette' as it is called by non-academics

(Grainger, 2011). They are judgments about behaviour, such as polite, impolite, rude,

and polished made by the social interactants themselves (Bousfield, 2010). According to

Bousfield (ibid), social actors arrive at these judgments based on knowledge about the norms

negotiated in their particular discursive practices. In other words, dealing with lay-person's

understanding of the concepts, therefore, participants oriented. Second-order

(researcher/theorist's perspective) politeness, on the other hand, is a technical term within

linguistic theory that is about relational face-work and has nothing to do with the common

meaning of politeness at all (Locher and Watts, 2005). It is analyst-driven, not data-driven,

and can be considered both empirically and theoretically rigorous (Grainger, 2011). Similarly,

Locher and Watts (2005) state that there is no place in politeness research for second-order,

technical notion of politeness as they privilege the analyst's perspective and do not pay

proper attention to the hearer's perceptions of what is and is not considered 'polite' in a

naturally occurring interaction. Locher and Watts (2005) refer to the significance of

discursiveness in favouring the first-order approach over the second-order approach as the

former allows members of the same discursive community to negotiate and renegotiate the norms of that particular community, therefore, to a large degree, sharing same expectations about relational work. Likewise, Grainger (2011) claims that this meta-pragmatic discourse can give some insights into the way participants themselves would define the relationship between politeness and linguistic behaviour (as the case in the current study). Therefore, leading to more diverse labelling of behaviour than simply polite or impolite when it comes to giving judgments with respect to the appropriateness of relational work of social interactants.

Along the same lines, Locher and Bousfield (2008) argue that the second-order approach uses concepts and considers them on a theoretical basis. They (ibid) claim that these theories do not disregard first-order notions, rather, they are necessarily informed by them in the first place. Therefore, shifting the focus from examining how lay speakers conceptualize and evaluate politeness to producing it, that is, how politeness is produced and understood by users as opposed to theoretically imposed notions by researchers (see Eelen, 2001). In a similar vein, Grainger (2013) highlights the significance of the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation and evaluation as first-order concepts. Grainger (ibid) believes that the participants' intention is real when they recognize it, claim it, and make moral judgments about it. Despite the fact that intention is significant in everyday interpersonal interactions, making assumptions about intention on the analyst's part is not methodologically defensible, especially in interpersonal pragmatics where context is taken to be part of the meaning (Grainger, 2013). Therefore, challenging Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness in terms of their politeness which is not applicable to all Western interactional situations, let alone other cultures. Consequently, behaviours that might be considered polite/impolite from the perspective of the researcher should, in fact, be examined in accordance with the norms of

the respective discursive practice in mind as those norms are socially negotiated by members (see Haugh et al., 2015). In this regard, Locher and Bousfield (2008) highlighted the irrelevance of whether or not a member of a discursive practice is in agreement that a particular utterance is perceived as polite or not.

To this end, Bousfield (2010) argues that researchers should view utterances from the perspective of the lay users themselves in line with their socially agreed norms that exist in their communities of practice as there are no concrete absolutes semantically stable meanings in all contexts. Therefore, entailing a certain amount of relativity individuals might have their own interpretations and do not necessarily always agree on the same evaluation of a certain utterance. Grainger (2011) argues that the first-order interpretation of politeness in intercultural communication enhances the second-order analysis as it shows how the meaning is constructed not only how it is achieved interactionally. Grainger (ibid) highlights the significance of first-order interpretation in pointing out areas of misunderstanding, confusion, and misattribution of the intention between speakers with different socio-cultural backgrounds. Therefore, having a blend of both first-order and second-order analysis in intercultural communication studies and not favouring one over the other is deemed to be valuable. That is, following an interactional approach which is largely a development of the first-order approach and associated with it which also values the technical, theoretical second-order approach. The interactional approach treats politeness as an interactional, social achievement where both the hearer's interpretation and the speaker's intention are simultaneously relevant leading to a very rich analysis of interactional data instead of focusing merely on one of them (Grainger, 2011). Along the same lines, Juliane and Kadar (2023) highlight the insignificance of the binary first-order and second-order distinction in politeness research due to their simplistic nature and their problematic methodological divide as well as

their failure to capture all the relevant perspectives of politeness. Therefore, researchers do not impose their second-order analytic concepts on their data as they only reflect their own understandings and not necessarily the interactants themselves. The following section presents the socio-cultural norms concept.

2.7.5 Socio-cultural norms

Expressing oneself across cultures without words i.e., nonverbally seems to be much more difficult than communicating verbally (Tripathy, 2017). This is due to the cultural norms regarding the appropriateness of different body language and paralinguistic factors that exist in every culture (see Shi and Fan, 2010). That is to say, what may be accepted in one culture may not be accepted in the other. Tiechuan (2016) emphasizes the significant influence of cultural values and norms on nonverbal communication in intercultural communication. He (2016) argues that cultural norms can determine the appropriateness of nonverbal behaviours. In a similar vein, Samman (2009) stresses the relationship that exists between cultural expectations and the individual's specific culture. He (ibid) believes that nonverbal communication is guided by a set of rules that dictate both the cost and suitability of actions. Those rules are 'greatly influenced by culture and social norms, and most often learned by observing others when and where the use of cues is acceptable' (as cited in Samman, 2009:7). According to Samman (2009), gestures can either have a universal meaning or be culture-specific, i.e., what may be accepted as perfectly normal in one culture, may not in the other; sometimes it makes participants confused about the meaning conveyed or may be seen as an offense. Similarly, Lustig and Koester (2000) suggest that different social contexts might create extremely different rules that dictate the appropriateness and effectiveness of nonverbal behaviour. Misunderstanding those rules leads to serious problems and conflicts in communication (cited in Shi and Fan, 2010). The current research

studies the extent to which both verbal and nonverbal cues that take place during communication between Algerian learners of English as a foreign language and British postgraduate students at MMU affect the flow of communication in an intercultural setting. Damnet (2008) believes that problems of miscommunication are less likely to occur if participants share the same culture; however, the fact of belonging to different cultures where different conventions and norms exist, raises the possibility of miscommunication's occurrence.

Societal rules and standards about behaviours of a certain culture create a firm expectation that interlocutors rely on in all aspects of communication, where the majority of our communication cues are derived from the culture we belong to (Damnet, 2008; Chin, 2016). Chin (2016) suggests that the degree of difference between cultures can affect the kind of interpretation and expectation participants have during communication, i.e., when differences are relatively huge, this will lead to dissimilar expectations and interpretations. Thus, I theorize that misunderstandings may be observable in the present study as the participants belong to two different cultures. These I term, here, intercultural misunderstandings. It is about individuals' perceptions of their own culture in comparison to others. According the Echcharfy (2019), the ethnocentric perspective speakers hold results in the most common communicative problems where they tend to perceive their own culture as superior and consider it as a valid reference to other cultures while overlooking cultural diversity and differences. And, therefore, they end up judging individuals from other cultures based on stereotypes and misconceptions. Echcharfy (2019) claims that due to the lack of effective teaching methods, students often tend to accept everything they are taught and take it for granted without any evaluation or verification of the phenomenon. Therefore,

speakers cannot function effectively and appropriately without sufficient knowledge and understanding. That is to say, how individuals of their own culture and others, as well as the skills required to act appropriately in intercultural interactions to promote and maintain relationships. In the following section, I discuss intercultural non-verbal communication.

2.8   Intercultural non-verbal communication

Several definitions of the concept of intercultural communication have been provided in the literature. The study of intercultural communication helps us understand how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with each other (Chi, 2016). It involves speakers from different cultural backgrounds and social groups, using different mother tongues (Tunde, 2016), sharing both verbal and nonverbal information (Kaushal, 2014). It is defined as the study of how people from different cultural backgrounds communicate with each other (Chi, 2016). It is often viewed as a complex and dynamic process, which needs to be understood effectively. It is reasonable to assume that misunderstandings may be created by misinterpretation and misperception when people are involved in communication across cultures, that is, interculturally or cross-culturally. Therefore, understanding the differences between distinct cultural groups will help to improve interaction. Thus, it is interesting to ponder the effect of the cultural guidelines that are well-established in every culture. To study intercultural communication, we usually start by understanding the meaning of both 'culture' and 'communication' as well. Communication includes both verbal and non-verbal communication. Generally, it is assumed that we communicate using language, which seems to have the most informative content and can easily be employed without the use of many channels (Norris, 2004). In this case, however, words can be either spoken or written. Thus, verbal communication includes both written and spoken language. It should be noted,

however, that it is important to use language sufficiently in both forms (written and spoken) so that communication is effectively accomplished. If for some reason, the speaker fails to communicate cross-culturally, several communication breakdowns are likely to be seen. Differently put, each culture has its way of interpreting the meaning of the message conveyed by the interlocutor (Chi, 2016) as communication differs from one culture to another. Thus, as I will clearly discuss in the following sections, the knowledge of the differences that exist between cultures plays a significant role in intercultural communication. Those differences in interpretation are most likely related to the cultural patterns, the coding of both verbal and non-verbal, the relationships between members involved in the communication process, and the different social perceptions they hold (Chi, 2016). According to Sibuyi (2011), non-verbal communication is highly influenced by the culture it is associated with, like the other forms of communication. In other words, the cultural display rules play a significant role in dictating the attitudes, responsiveness, and the communicators' perspectives; thus far, culture cannot be taken for granted when it comes to non-verbal communication. Therefore, dissimilar expectations and misinterpretations are likely to occur if the degree of differences between cultures is relatively large. Very roughly, the point is that the information exchange process seems to be much more difficult when it comes to intercultural communication, and people belonging to a totally distinct culture may experience difficulties in making themselves understood by each other. Consequently, they may run the risk of not achieving their communicative goals as well as maintaining solid relationships with others.

Previously, language was considered the central channel in interaction, and non-verbal channels were merely considered subordinate to it; that is, significant interest was devoted to verbal communication while much valuable work could be done on both (see Hinde, 1972,

Knapp, 1980; Norris, 2004). Thus, it is safe to say that a significant part of the process of human communication has often been undervalued or overlooked in comparison to verbal communication as the former plays a significant role in conveying the speakers' attitudes, emotions and intentions which highly influence the interpretation of the message conveyed. In communication, non-verbal channels are used as part of the communication process, whether it is conscious or not, a great deal of the messages or the meaning is conveyed non-verbally. Norris (2004) believes that positioning language at the centre limits the understanding of the complexity of interaction. Hence, both verbal and non-verbal communication are, in fact, linked together. It is reasonable to assume that understanding the relationship that exists between the two would better prepare us for communicating across cultures without any difficulties. Therefore, in the current study, I step away from the centrality of language in interaction and focus on both the verbal and non-verbal channels in communication.

Kaushal (2014) argues that successful interactions in intercultural settings depend upon the understanding of both verbal and nonverbal messages since two-thirds of communication takes place through nonverbal means. According to Kaushal (ibid), when people receive ambiguous verbal messages, they usually tend to rely upon the nonverbal cues that accompany the verbal ones. Therefore, the possibility of disagreement and misunderstandings, as regards non-verbal communication, is high due to the cultural differences that exist between cultures (Chi, 2016; Damnet, 2008; Lustig and Koester, 2000; Samman, 2009; Shi and Fan, 2010; Tiechaun, 2016; Tripathy, 2017). However, learners make great efforts to improve their vocabulary and neglect nonverbal cues. Therefore, it is important to raise their awareness of the necessity of improvising both verbal and nonverbal

skills in the process of learning intercultural communication. Similarly, Chin (2016) emphasized the responsiveness of learning nonverbal communication because of its effectiveness in intercultural communication. The current study intends to examine the role of nonverbal cues in the context of intercultural communication where Algerian learners of English as a foreign language and British postgraduate students realize the speech act of refusals and find out the importance of integrating nonverbal communication into the theory of speech act.

One of the major challenges that interlocutors face while interacting with each other in an intercultural setting is the cross-cultural misunderstanding of what is meant in another culture. Thus, it would be reasonable to assume that several issues should be taken into consideration while performing a given communicative act in order not to sound impolite, rude, or offensive to the other interlocutors in the host culture. This includes thanking, refusing, requesting, offering, and the like, which participants perform daily. These communicative acts vary across cultures and their performance is subject to cultural variations. Therefore, to achieve successful intercultural communication, interlocutors need to know the meaning of a particular speech act in a given culture. Consequently, it is the lack of research on the interaction between Algerian non-native speakers of English and British students that has motivated this study; to gain a deeper understanding of the way participants from the two cultures realize the speech act of refusals in an intercultural setting and the cultural norms they draw from when dealing with such speech act. Therefore, I aim to provide a clear understanding of the main similarities and differences, if any, between the two groups in response to *invitations* and *offers.* According to Farnia and Wu (2012), intercultural communication studies provide speakers with plenty of understanding of a novel

culture and any communicative failure caused by their pragmatic incompetence which may lead to breakdowns in intercultural communication. This prompts me to discuss the notion of intercultural misunderstandings in the following section.

2.8.1   Intercultural misunderstandings

Intercultural misunderstandings may lead to serious problems or even conflicts if someone cannot function appropriately in another culture (Tunde, 2016); it can be a disappointing experience and sometimes even physically or mentally stressful for a person who does not truly understand the communication. Simply put, if participants from different cultural backgrounds engage in an intercultural context and are not aware of each other's norms and rules of communication, this may create misunderstandings and misinterpretations. For example, a worse language problem might be related to the use of idioms that are not culturally shared as a single idiom could be interpreted differently depending on the context and the set of connotations it carries (Tunde, 2016). Therefore, we should understand both the message and the culture of the other part of the communication as what may be considered a polite and friendly gesture in one culture may be considered impolite and inappropriate in another (Kaushal, 2014). Hence, to have effective communication between people from different cultures, it is highly important to be aware of the nonverbal communication aspects that differ from one culture to another (Tripathy, 2017).

Furthermore, Renunathan Naidu *et al*. (2018) argue that misinterpretations may occur if participants perceive the elicited translations from cultures incorrectly, especially, when the nonverbal behaviours do not match the verbal ones (Chin, 2016). Therefore, nonverbal misinterpretations and miscommunications are important aspects of intercultural communication that need to be addressed to overcome cultural breakdowns and conflicts. In a similar vein, Sharifian (2011) argues that the common cultural backgrounds shared by the

members of a certain cultural group allow them to interpret the world in somehow similar ways. According to him, these cultural conceptualizations which are developed through everyday interactions enable members of the group to think in one mind. Further, he claims that the fact that individuals share these conceptualizations equally across a particular cultural group does not essentially guarantee that they equally share the same cultural schemas. Rather, these cultural conceptualizations are heterogeneously distributed in the minds of the individuals of a cultural group (Sharifian, 2011). He (ibid) concludes that whilst these cultural conceptualizations are significantly important in facilitating communication within a cultural group, drawing on them in intercultural communication may hinder successful communication. Similarly, Qusay Abdul Sattar et, *al* (2011) highlight the significance of community-specific rules in governing the realization of the speech act of refusals. They (ibid) claim that serious communication problems may be raised if one of these rules is violated or ignored and therefore widening the social distance that exists between interlocutors. Finally, this study further supports the importance of understanding speech acts across cultures and the fact that understanding, or lack thereof, can either hinder or strengthen communication exchanges between cultures. Fear of not fitting in socially may affect non-native speakers of English to communicate with native speakers of English or those no-natives who are linguistically competent in it. It is now well documented that interlocutors reflect on the different socio-cultural norms available in their culture in realizing speech acts. Therefore, an investigation of the realization of the speech act of refusals by participants from different cultural groups holding different socio-cultural norms can be useful in reducing inter/cross-cultural misunderstandings and helping speakers handle intercultural communication more efficiently.

Each culture has a set of cultural norms surrounding different types of expression and communication strategies, including gestures, eye contact, pitch, and other non-verbal elements of communication that can enhance the ability of L2 learners to communicate effectively. That is to say, by developing proficiency in these areas, they can avoid the use of inappropriate conversational strategies or gestures that unintentionally undermine their intended message (Harris, 2003). According to Harris (ibid), an effective program component would need to provide learners with adequate pragmalinguistic tools and prepare them to analyse the sociopragmatic expectations within the target/host language context. In other words, proposing several possible approaches for learners to develop pragmatic competence in the target language as making them aware of the distinct restrictions and the sociopragmatic conventions that govern the use of those pragmalinguistic resources, even when they may appear to be the same in the native language and the target language. Despite the fact that some gestures may be universal as suggested by McNeil (1985), many others are culture-specific and therefore should be treated accordingly in the learning process the same as other linguistic peculiarities of the target language (L2).

In this regard, Harris (2003) argues that if verbal and non-verbal components cannot be treated separately, the message embedded becomes fragmented, and therefore the listener does not receive a complete representation of the speaker's communication intention. Specifically, highlighting the relationship between culture and language from the perspective of intercultural and cross-cultural pragmatics and the various implications of this relationship for developing intercultural communication proficiency within the language classroom setting. It is worth noting, however, that learners studying a language for intercultural communication purposes need to develop an awareness of how different cultural

conceptualisations may lead to varied implementations of language use strategies (Koutlani and Eslami, 2018). To that end, the current study focuses on both verbal and non-verbal cues in an intercultural setting and hopes to give further suggestions to minimize intercultural misunderstandings (see chapter six below).

2.9 Summary

The chapter shed light on the key concepts related to my study. It began with defining the speech act of refusals (genuine and ostensible). Then, I presented Austin and Searle's speech act theory. After that, I defined the concept of refusals, refusals in inter/cross-cultural contexts, and the speech act of refusals classification. Afterward, I presented the studies conducted on the speech act of refusals with a particular focus on inert/cross-cultural refusal studies, and intra-cultural refusal studies in section. Following that, I provided a detailed introduction to the notion of politeness theory with a special focus on the notion of 'face' and Face-Threatening Acts (FTAS). Next, I moved to the second section of the chapter where I defined non-verbal communication and presented the notion of cross-cultural and intercultural communication and the main points assigned to them. Later, I discussed the concept of cultural scripts, sequence organization, preference organization, first-order/second-order dichotomy along with socio-cultural norms. Then, I concluded with intercultural non-verbal communication and intercultural misunderstandings. In the following chapter, I discuss the methodology, research methods used in the data collection and the study procedure followed to collect the data.

3   The methodology

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I engage with the study design and methodology. In section 3.2, I describe the methodology. In section 3.2.1, I address the ethical considerations. Afterwards, I introduce the data collection tools in section 3.3. I discuss in detail Improvised Acted-out Scenarios and Semi-structured Interviews in section 3.3.1 and section 3.3.2, respectively. To move to the study procedure in section 3.4 and piloting in section 3.5. After that, I present a thematic analysis in section 3.6. Finally, I summarise the chapter in section 3.7.

In the present study, and in order to answer the above-asked research questions, both improvised acted-out scenarios and semi-structured interviews are used (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 below) to highlight the main features and properties that define the speech act of refusals realized by both groups taking part in the current study (Algerian and British participants), improvised acted-out scenarios are used to collect data and therefore answer the first research question. The same method is used to capture the facial expressions employed by both participants when realizing the speech act of refusals. However, the rest of the research questions (numbers 2 and 3) were mainly interrogated and responded to during the second phase of my data collection using semi-structured interviews (See section 3.3.2 below). In the following section the methodology, the research methods used in the study, the ethical considerations along with a detailed discussion of the study procedure and piloting are provided.

3.2   Methodology

Barbour (1998) claims that relying on a combination of two methods to collect data for pragmatic purposes is useful to get a more complete view of the study i.e., using two or more

methods means we can compensate for the shortcomings inherent in any single approach, and hence shed further light on a certain phenomenon. Similarly, Barbour (ibid) goes on to suggest that relying on one method in isolation will present an incomplete view of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, in order to flesh out aspects identified by each method, the current study seeks to combine the two qualitative tools: Improvised acted-out scenarios and Semi-structured interviews to compare and contrast the findings obtained from each one in isolation. Hence, looking at the same problem under study from different angles, and analysing data obtained from multiple sources, will provide further understanding and generate a sophisticated analysis. In spite of the limited number of participants engaged in generating data in qualitative research, data obtained tend to be rich, detailed, and heavily contextualized compared with quantitative tools (*Levitt et al.,* 2018). In a similar vein, Mertens (2015) claims that in order to make sense of or interpret the phenomenon under study, it is of great importance to rely on qualitative data, so that to gain a fuller understanding of the realities constructed by people in different contexts. Therefore, to enrich the present study's credibility, provide intensive analyses, and achieve a deep understanding of the realization of the speech act of refusals in an intercultural setting, using qualitative tools to collect data deemed to be of use.

The vast majority of quantitative methodologies provide results with inadequate answers to the complexity of the questions asked in the research (Shishavana and Sharifian, 2016). Thus, qualitative methods are considered effective methods to explore areas to make it possible to better understand the research questions and therefore generate hypotheses from different scientific procedures suitable for the context and objectives of the study. Similarly, Lachal *et al.,* (2019, p.3) claim that qualitative methods generate diversified and rich

data that meet the study objectives. While quantitative methods collect numerous data, they are not as informative about the complex phenomenon involved as qualitative methods.

Hu and Fan (2011) assert that different methods are preferred by scholars conducting intercultural research with different academic backgrounds. They (ibid) mention that qualitative methods (interviews and observation) are generally adopted to collect first-hand, holistic data to reveal problems that may appear in intercultural communication. They believe that there is no fixed pattern for the research methods in conducting intercultural communication studies. Therefore, traditional quantitative and qualitative methods applied in social sciences are still applied in intercultural communication. Hu and Fan (2011) state that in intercultural studies researchers are required to observe how people with different cultural backgrounds interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, to obtain meaningful results and interpretations relevant to their field of study. Therefore, conducting qualitative research will result in holistic, natural data.

3.2.1 Ethical considerations

In terms of ethical aspects discussed earlier, ethical approval was secured from the Manchester Metropolitan University Academic Ethics Committee. Both participants of each group were provided with an information sheet and a consent form, ensuring ethical guidelines were adhered to during the research process, promoting ethical and sustainable research practices. Thus, because the present study does not address sensitive topics such as mental health, religion, or sexuality, ethical considerations were not raised from the initial planning and design stage to data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

3.3 Data collection tools

Due to the intercultural orientation of the current study, it is necessary to gather data from both sets of participants (Algerian and British) while interacting. Nevertheless, data from the

present study is gathered by means of multi-qualitative methods: Improvised acted-out scenarios as a means of data collection and Semi-structured Interviews.

3.3.1   Improvised acted-out scenarios

Despite the fact that natural data has proved to be the best source for analysing interactions, they do suffer from at least two limitations: first of which is contextual variables that are difficult to be controlled for; secondly, some speech acts are not predicted when to occur (see Bella, 2014, p. 40). Therefore, in order to provide a basis of control to attempt to address both of these shortcomings, *improvised acted scenarios* are selected in the current study as data collection tools. I believe they may be the closest possible alternative to natural data, which may permit getting over the shortcomings of naturalistic data collection; as well as allow the researcher to design contexts and roles that elicit speech acts relevant to the study under investigation. Many researchers (Kasper, 2000; Golato, 2003; Félix-Brasdefer, 2006) have relied on role plays in conducting their research seeking to gain data close to the natural ones. They believe that using role plays enables the researcher to have a complete conversational interaction where different variables, such as gender and age, are controlled. Also, they give the researcher some hints on what is appropriate/ inappropriate in language use. Hence, in order to obtain valid results that reflect real life, I rely on *improvised acted-out scenarios*. In doing so, participants are given the space to act out the scenes as they would behave in natural situations without being given any instructions on how to act. Both Algerian participants and British participants improvise the scenarios in front of the camera with not too much time to think about their responses as it is the case with other research methods (DCTs, to mention one).

Due to the difficulty of accessing real-life recordings and the ethical considerations associated with them, I am adopting another data collection method, which may provide data

closer to the natural one. In addition, because of the time limits, looking for natural data arising out of real-world scenarios might take hundreds of hours before actually getting enough tokens of data. Furthermore, having to deal with refusals (which are potentially *face-threatening* acts) can be ethically questionable and challenging. Consequently, students are going to act out the scenarios, as they would do in real life. Frost and Yarrow (2007:1) defined improvisation as a particular mode of performance activity in which key characteristics of 'performance' can be precisely located.' Ultimately, however, acting is about human behaviour, as well as, what they feel and think while doing, i.e., performing (Alberts, 1997). This method is useful in eliciting data from played scenarios where more elaboration is included compared to Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs). The latter is defined as the most vastly data collection tool in cross-cultural pragmatics which generates a large sufficient data of various speech acts (Ogierman,2018). They allow for culture-specific patterns' examinations drawing from a large quantity of data that can be translated into different languages and distributed to so many respondents (ibid); however, they do not permit the researcher to gather pragmatic failures that are usually found in oral conversations, i.e., the distribution of turns among participants as well as other features (e.g., hesitation, reformulation, repetition, and other non-verbal signals) that may have pragmatic significance (Beebe and Cummings, 1996). Therefore, improvised acted-out scenarios may help to demonstrate features and properties of Algerian and British ostensible speech act of refusals and make it easy to capture both verbal and nonverbal cues (facial expressions) both participants (Algerian and British) employ while interacting with each other. Likewise, Busso and Narayanan (2008) emphasize the use of improvisation as an effective tool for eliciting naturalistic behaviour. They argue that improvised performances resemble real-life decision-making. Therefore, this method is a good way to collect naturally occurring data, which

although elicited to some extent, bears a closer resemblance to natural data than the established DCTs (or the like). To this end, I risk basing my entire understanding of how people perform refusals, or any speech act based on their written representations, or hypothetical conversations they have never experienced before. Therefore, I use *improvised acted-out scenarios*, which more closely resemble real-life interactions and may result in more dynamic and interactive conversations comparable to real-life situations. I hypothesize that this offers participants the opportunity to avoid the writing constraints, as they will not have enough time to consider their responses.

I should acknowledge that despite the valuable data that could be gathered using the improvised acted-out scenarios as a data collection tool, there will be a lack of authenticity of the real-life intercultural interactions as participants may not genuinely engage or react as they would do in real-life encounters. Also, I should highlight my awareness that participants may be biased when interacting with each other, that is, not all participants may possess the skills to feel at ease with improvisation, therefore introducing the potential for bias in their answers and, subsequently, to the overall dataset gathered. Another point to mention is the ethical considerations that might be attached to it as not all participants will be happy to be video recorded. That is to say, participants may feel pressured when they are asked to improvise which eventually will impact their responses and the results of the study. Furthermore, I should refer to the generalizability of the results obtained from using the improvised acted-out scenarios as the nature of the scenarios might not capture the exact nature of the real-world intercultural interactions. Simply put, they may not exactly represent the complexity of the speech act under study (The speech act of refusals) as some of the cultural nuances might be overlooked and not appropriately covered. In this regard, I want to

emphasize that I have no intention of making broad generalizations based on the results obtained from the current study.

A written description of the scenario to be improvised and acted out is provided for participants followed by an incomplete dialog that prompts the need for improvisation in their own way, i.e., what they would say in a particular situation (e.g., refusing an *invitation* to a friend's birthday party). Therefore, multi-turn interactions are elicited, which can be considered closer to being representative of real-life interactions than single-turn interactions are, as is the case for DCTs. Beebe and Cummings (1996) believe that DCTs' format (unlimited in nature) encourages participants to write more than required and sometimes not even what they would say in real-life situations. Therefore, it results in a huge amount of unnecessary data in a relatively short period of time. Morkus (2014) believes that naturally occurring data can be the best tool for investigating speech acts in a single language or culture, however, since it allows for controlling social variables, it cannot be used in comparative cross-cultural speech act studies. Therefore, there is a need to use another alternative that does allow for cross-cultural comparison at the same time does not suffer from the DCTs' limitations. Role plays seemed to be the best alternative for DCTs as they can generate the data required in a quicker time and with controlled variables. It is believed that they elicit oral data in a way that is similar to or closer to natural data (Morkus, 2014). But one needs to acknowledge that even role plays are not authentic. Therefore, in an effort to strengthen the validity of data, my research is employing another form of role-play which is not an overly restrictive way, i.e. It does not give instructions to participants on how to act. I am basically providing them with the context, and they improvise the scenes in their own way (see Appendix 4).

In the current study, participants are provided with a situation where one needs to initiate the *offer* or the *invitation* and the other rejects it. I acknowledge that it is not natural,

but it nevertheless boosts the benefits; that is, while improvising people have to rely on their schematic knowledge (which is culturally dependent on how they have acted in their own home cultures up to these particular lines in their *offers* and *refusals*). Hence, essentially, when improvising any role-play situation, participants draw from their own experiences and patterns of understanding which are learned from other members of their culture (e.g., parents and peer groups), and are transmitted from one generation to another. Thus, even though it is not strictly authentic, it nevertheless mirrors what respondents from different cultures would prototypically use. Therefore, as participants rely on their own experiences which are culturally based, usable near authentic data is obtained. It is worth mentioning, however, that I am not interested in the number of participants (seven participants from each group), rather, I am actually interested in gaining insights into how culture affects communication, how individuals of each culture act under certain scenarios, and how they react to each other. Consequently, in many ways, this method is closer to naturally occurring data as the researcher keeps control over the social variables and therefore gains data not far from real-life situations. More importantly, this method allows for the examination of the speech act of refusals at the discourse level (Morkus, 2014); that is, it is useful to understand how refusals are strategically distributed over a number of communicative turns to achieve successful communication.

3.3.2 Interviews as a data collection method

Interviewing is one of the most common data collection methods used in qualitative research to collect data as well as to gain knowledge from individuals through conversations (Hofisi et al., 2014). It is a systematic way of talking and listening where participants get involved in the conversation to talk about their views and discuss their perceptions and interpretations of a given situation. Even though they have different forms and styles, it is important to note,

however, that there is no single interview style that can suit every occasion, or all respondents as different types of interviewing fit different situations (Fontana and Frey, 2005).

Three fundamental types of interviews have been identified in the literature: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Gill *et al.*, 2008). Structured interviews refer to a verbally administered questionnaire where a set of predetermined questions are asked to respondents, with no scope of follow-up questions that require further elaboration, i.e., little or no variation exists. Even though they are relatively easy and quick to administer, by their very nature, they are of little use in in-depth studies as they allow for limited responses (Gill *et al.*, 2008). Unstructured interviews have a high chance of the researcher's bias (they may affect the participants' responses), and misunderstandings are very likely to occur and hard to rule out. Although unstructured interviews can ensure that important issues cannot be left, there is a high possibility of the respondents conveying irrelevant data to the researcher.

Semi-structured interviews are considered to be the most dominant and highly used data collection within social sciences (Bradford & Cullen, 2012). They consist of several key questions, themes, and issues to be covered related to the main areas in the study which allow for exploring subjective viewpoints and gathering in-depth data (Flick, 2009). Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized interviews frequently used in qualitative analysis. That is, their flexibility allows for the discovery and elaboration of information that may not have previously been thought of, and which may be very relevant to the research. They take the form of a dialogue where the discussion is centred upon a carefully chosen problem or a task to give the respondents the opportunity to talk about it. Semi-structured interviews are used to explore participants' experiences, realities, and meanings which are informed by their

assumptions, ideas, and discourse (Braun and Clarke, 2006). They allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to be flexible and to deviate by engaging in a certain idea in more detail. That is, additional questions can be asked some of which may be questions that have not been anticipated at the beginning of the interview. Semi-structured interviews provide respondents with a great deal of scope and offer participants the possibility to investigate the underlying responses as well as modify them. In other words, semi-structured interviews are a powerful tool to capture how people make meaning of their own experiences in a flexible way. Semi-structured interviews answer target specific areas of the probe where all questions are asked in the same order to all participants and systematically analysed item by item. Answers to the open-ended questions provided by participants depend on their wishes and they have all the right not to give answers if they do not desire to. These answers are probed by the researcher; their flexibility and framework together constitute the semi-structured aspect of this method (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are comparable in nature as they allow the researcher to compare participants' responses, and they may be transferred to numerical quantified data too.

In semi-structured interviews, researchers are free from adhering to a detailed interview guide compared to structured interviews (Kajornboon, 2004). Thus, establishing a conversational style by the focus on the predetermined subjects. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to dig deeper into the given situation and not limit themselves only to the interview guide. Also, they can be reworded, and further explanations can be provided to respondents if required. According to Choak (2012), following a certain schedule in conducting semi-structured interviews provides guidance on how to run the interview, but also allows for significant themes to be developed throughout the interview resembling a flowing conversation (see Evans and Lewis, 2018). Typically, scheduling an

interview enables the interviewer to tackle a specific topic and allows the respondents to discuss issues applicable to them and to provide answers on their own terms (Choak, 2012).

Data derived from semi-structured interviews cannot be obtained using unstructured interviews as the latter does not control the participant's response. They cannot be obtained using structured questionnaires, literature analysis, or observations too. One of their drawbacks, however, is that the lack of experience of the researcher may weaken their ability to prompt questions which, therefore, leads to missing gathering some relevant data.

3.3.2.1 Creating semi-structured interviews

Researchers have to select the appropriate data collection method for addressing the needs of their research questions. It is their responsibility to decide and choose the right method and ask questions that elicit valid responses from respondents. Trained interviewers ask questions that have dual goals, i.e., they motivate the respondents to provide precise and full replies while avoiding all sorts of subjectivity and bias. Well-designed questions by properly trained interviewers can conduct good interviews and therefore can help greatly in achieving the study goals.

Preparation before the actual interview is deemed to be necessary. It is called the researcher's preparation stage. This includes the following: a clear idea of what to be asked, an idea of the estimated length of the interview, whether to be recorded or just taking notes, and an idea of where and when, and how the interviews will take place (Gillham, 2000). The researcher needs to have some abilities such as being a good listener, being non-judgmental, and having a good memory. The order of questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview. The interviewer follows the guide, but there is always the possibility of adding some questions. Therefore, the wording of the questions and their order

are left for the interviewer's direction, that is, he/she asks the questions which are deemed to be appropriate using the best words to provide clarification if the answer is not clear. Therefore, prompting the respondent to elaborate further if necessary.

In order to prepare an interview schedule, the researcher needs to know enough about the main topic under investigation, and its main components including its boundaries. Also, he/she needs to know the categories of the topics and the questions stems. According to McIntosh and Morse (2015), the more knowledge the researcher has before outlining the interview and the more significant questions to be asked, the more precisely can the aspects be covered. The interviewer's knowledge about and familiarity with the nature of the study determine the structure of the interview questions (Sharma, 2010). Hence, conducting a good literature review to ascertain what is known about the studied phenomenon is of great importance (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). This familiarity with the phenomenon is not derived from the literature only; it may be obtained from the researcher's experience, intuition, and observation (ibid). In semi-structured interviews, interviewers spend considerable time probing responses and encourage participants to give more details and clarification (Harris Gavin and Brown, 2010). According to them (ibid), the interview's task is to provide respondents with contexts where they can ask for clarifications, elaborate on their own ideas, and explain their opinions using their own words. Thus, the interviewer plays a great role in manipulating the interviewee's responses, i.e., probing within the participant's initial responses through conveying equivalence of meaning to all participants with the exact phrasing of questions. Interviewers are allowed to diverge from the script by asking semi-structured questions. Therefore, granting some variability to the researcher within the limits of the intended replicability of the schedule. It is worth mentioning, however, that by asking questions and sharing their own personal experience with respondents while conducting the

interview, interviewers make themselves part of the interviewing process, that is, being involved in the interview process by working with the data, selecting what is relevant, describing it, and analysing it (Hofisi et al., 2017). The following is an explanation of the purpose behind asking the different questions (Appendix 4) in the semi-structured interview:

The opening questions are mainly asked to make the participants feel more comfortable and most importantly to know how long they have been living in the UK to later reflect on the effect of the duration they stay in the host culture on the way they realise the speech act of refusal specifically and how they communicate in general. Moving to the introductory questions where participants are asked about when they should decline an *offer* or an *invitation* and how comfortable they find this as well as their reaction to refusals. Those questions are mainly designed to trace any *face work* participants engage with when eliciting or receiving *refusals*. The transition questions are asked to reflect on the type of refusals (genuine or ostensible) participants employ when declining their interlocutors' *offers* or *invitations* and the main reasons for them choosing to rely on a certain type instead of the other which leads to the last question of whether they would rely on their cultural norms when interacting in an intercultural setting. Both questions two and three are generated to highlight the main reasons behind the participants' use of *ostensible* or *genuine* refusals in response to *offers* and *invitations* and their relationship with *face* (if any). In this regard, questions like the following are asked in the semi-structured interviews:

When receiving an *invitation* or an *offer*, do you find it easy or difficult to refuse it? If yes, why?

Here, I should acknowledge the bias inherent in this question (i.e., assuming the difficulty in refusing *offers* and *invitations* and therefore orienting the participants to respond

accordingly). In this case, participants provide their own responses and elaborate more if further explanation seems to be needed where I ask additional questions to clearly understand their responses. The same thing with the second research question which is designed to know about the social or cultural factors that participants rely on when refusing others' *invitations* or *offers* (if any). The following is a description of both the study procedure and the research methods used in the current study.

3.4 Study Procedure

In preparation for the recordings of the current study, I design some scenarios (see Appendix 05). The scenarios are a combination of three *offers* and three *invitations*; every participant from both groups (Algerian and British) was tasked with declining an *offer* or an *invitation* initiated by their counterpart in the improvised acted-out scenarios. I use three *invitations*/*offers* each with a different social status: low to high social status as in the case of a student refusing their tutor's *offer* to purchase the book; equal social status as in the case of a friend declining their friend's *invitation* to a movie night; and high to low social status as in the case of the boss rejecting his employee's *invitation*. To conduct this study, seven Algerian and seven British MMU students were ethically recruited (the ethical consideration of this study is particularly relevant to section 3.2.1 of this chapter). This study has used a mixture of purposeful and convenience sampling:

Purposeful sampling is a technique broadly used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). It is used to focus on individuals with particular characteristics who will better be able to communicate their experiences and opinions in an articulated and expressive manner and ultimately assist with the relevant research (Etikan, *et al.*, 2016). As the current study is comparative in nature (to compare the realization of the

speech act of refusals of Algerian and British MMU students in an intercultural setting),

participants are recruited from the same university (Manchester Metropolitan University).

The Algerian group consists of seven Ph.D. students only, whereas the British group is a

combination of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. This is due to the issues faced

in having access to participants. Therefore, all participants with all these criteria (which are

consistent with the study aims and assumptions), are recruited. Thus, the sample selected for

the current study provides a further understanding of intercultural communication between

participants from different cultures (Algerian and British) with the expectation that each

participant will provide unique and rich information of value to the current study.

Furthermore, postgraduate students were recruited as there was no access to the

undergraduate Algerian population at MMU. The main reason behind using this method is to

collect data from subjects who are readily available at a given time (Etikan, *et al.*, 2015). The

latter argue that this method emphasizes generalizing the results to the whole population

from which the sample was drawn. Hence, I have combined both purposeful and convenience

sampling methods to recruit participants for the current research. Participants were asked to

perform the scenarios (three offers and three invitations) (see Appendix 4). A sample

scenario is given below:

Participant A is visiting his friend participant B's house after a long time of not seeing

each other. Participant B seems so happy that participant A is visiting. Participant B

prepares a big meal for participant A with traditional food. At the end of the meal,

participant A feels so full, but participant B offers him/her more dessert. Participant

A actually cannot have extra food and ultimately refuses participant B's offer.

As part of the data collection process, participants are paired. Every pair (one Algerian and one British; depending on their availability) is asked to imagine the scene and try to act it out. To do so, I provide each pair with a copy of the speech act be it an *offer* or an *invitation*. After having the scenario, the participants decide which one of them is adopting the role of the first participant or the second one (see Appendix 4 below). Put differently, if Participant A1 chooses to initiate the *offer*, the refusal is realized by Participant B1 then they switch roles where Participant B1 initiates the *invitation* and Participant A1 refuses it. No specific guidelines on how to act are provided to the participants so as not to affect the way they improvise the scenarios. The participants were asked to improvise and act as naturally as they could. The scenarios are recorded using two HD cameras; each one records one participant. Data collection is organized as follows:

- To collect data for the present study, an invitation for participants was posted on the MMU Facebook page; there were also posters and flyers on the university boards.

- Once participants volunteered to take part in the study, an appropriate time and date were chosen, and rooms were booked for the data collection to take place.

- On the day of the data collection, participants were provided with a detailed sheet with the aims of the study and a consent form to sign. In the participant information sheet, I ensured all technical terms were explained to make it clear for my participants, for instance using the term ritual instead of ostensible as I assumed not all participants would be familiar with it.

- Participants were asked to act out a number of scenarios and later engage in semi-structured interviews.

- The total number of 14 participants was divided into seven pairs; each pair comprised one Algerian and one British. Thus, the final sample included seven groups. Each pair was asked to act out the videotaped scenarios consisting of one *offer* and one *invitation*.

- Each pair did the exercise in a private room, witnessed just by the researcher in order to ensure that they were comfortable. All interactions took place in a quiet room.

- Participants were given some time before I started videotaping the scenarios to make them feel comfortable and give them the opportunity to get acquainted with the exercise.

- Once I finished recording each pair, I started interviewing them separately at different times. This aimed to ask participants to reflect on their selection of refusals, the manner in which they phrased them, and the socio-cultural factors that affected their choices (if any).

- Each interview lasted for 15-20 minutes.

- The interviews took place straight after the acted-out scenarios just to make sure participants can recall the way they improvised the scenarios reflect on them and effectively engage with the research questions asked.

- I ensured that all data collected from the participants remained confidential in anonymized documents. It is identifiable to the researcher; pseudonyms and codes are used within the study so as not to reveal participants' identities. All participants' information is organized, and their identities are not recoverable from the data. As such, each individual is given a pseudonym or a code, i.e. A1 for Algerian participant one and B1 for British participant one, and so on and so forth. A total number of 26 scenarios (14 offers and 12 invitations) was collected using the improvised acted-out scenarios (see section 4.3 below). Here, I should state that some of the pairs of my participants (excluding the first pair of piloting) were requested to improvise more scenarios compared to the rest of the pairs of my participants. After collecting data from pairs number two, three, four, and six, I realised that I was not

getting enough data. Therefore, both pairs number five and seven were requested to improvise three *offers* and three *invitations* instead of one *offer* and one *invitation*. This was mainly done to confirm enough data is gathered and, consequently, achieving valid results.

3.5 Pilot study

In the current study, and in order to examine both data collection methods' efficiency, a pilot study with one Algerian and one British participant was conducted. The pair (participant A1 and Participant B1) are provided with a total number of six different scenarios (three *offers* and three *invitations*) to improvise-act them. Afterward, each of the participants is also interviewed individually to test whether all the questions asked in the semi-structured interviews are clear, and if any further amendments are required before proceeding with the rest of the data collection. After the pilot study was conducted, the only change that was deemed to be necessary was using two HD cameras instead of one only. This was mainly used, however, for the purpose of each participant (A1 and B1) to video-record individually not to miss anything during the whole interaction. In regard to the semi-structured interviews, no adjustments or rephrasing to the questions asked were needed as all were clear for both participants.

3.6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is defined as the process of identifying themes and patterns within spoken or interactional data (Evans, 2018). It is considered a hugely popular analytic method and the most widely used qualitative approach to analysing interviews. They are independent of epistemology persuasion or any theoretical approach, which makes them useful to researchers who place their work within either constructionist or realistic paradigms (Braun

and Clarke, 2006). Evans (2018) argues that it is a useful tool that enables the researcher to examine the meanings people attach to their civic participation and the significance it has on their lives, from a constructionist methodological position. It also helps in examining how those constructions might reflect participants' realities of their lived experiences (ibid). Therefore, thematic analysis helps in making meaning out of what people experience in their lives, how they construct their social worlds through meaning-making, and how these experiences will be informed by their material contexts and experiences.

The Thematic analysis begins at the stage of data collection and continues throughout the process of transcribing and interpreting and analysing it. Reading and re-reading transcripts occur throughout to help the researcher remind themselves of the research questions which in return helps in guiding the researcher to think about the data and what is considered worthy of a theme (Evans, 2018). Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that a theme should signify something important about the data in relation to the research questions. Put differently, it should represent some patterned responses within the dataset. According to them (ibid), a theme may appear more than once across the dataset, however, this does not automatically indicate its importance over other themes that have few instances. Similarly, Evans (2018) claims that in qualitative analysis, the significance of a theme is mostly reflected in the extent to which it relates to the theoretical section of the research, that is, whether it helps in answering the research questions or not.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is mainly used to identify, analyse, and report patterns within the dataset. Therefore, in the current study, a thorough thematic analysis is chosen to provide an insightful analysis of the interviews and answer research question number two. Jugder (2016) claims that thematic analysis complements the

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research questions as they facilitate the interview data investigation and help in providing

sufficient information and checking the consistency of data with the research questions.

Hence, the researcher should be consistent throughout the process of determining themes

from the data.

The next step is to identify themes in the interview data collected. Braun and Clarke

(2006) claim that a theme refers to some level of patterned meaning or response within the

data set which captures key ideas about the data in relation to the research questions.

Accordingly, Bazeley (2009) asserts that a full significance of themes can only be reached

when they are linked to create a coordinate explanatory model or picture following a

'describe, compare, relate' formula in reporting the results. Braun and Clarke (2006) claim

that themes within the dataset can be identified in two different ways: 'bottom-up' or what

is referred to as an inductive way, or 'top-down' way (deductive or theoretical way). The

inductive way's primary purpose is to allow the research findings to emerge from the most

frequent, significant, and dominant themes in raw data without being imposed by the

structured methodology (Thomas, 2003). In contrast, the deductive approach is mainly

related   to   the   methodology   framework.

That is to say, a predetermined framework or a structure is mainly used to analyse the data

where the researcher imposes their own framework or theories on the data and uses them in

the analysis.

Thomas (ibid) claims that using an inductive approach helps in shortening varied

extensive data into a summary format; establishing a clear connection between the summary

findings and the research objectives; and developing a new theory about the underlying

processes that are evident in the dataset. However, both approaches are interactive in some

way as there might be themes influenced by the theoretical structure of the research (see Jugder, 2016).

The data collected through interviews with participants from both groups were transcribed and coded to be reduced into themes through the process of coding and representing the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of identifying themes starts with familiarising oneself with the data collected, coding, developing a theme, and finally, revision. Therefore, in the current study, I take the following steps in the treatment of my data. Firstly, I start familiarising myself with my data by listening to the recordings a couple of times so as not to miss any detail; transcribing the data; assigning preliminary codes to the data in order to describe the content associated with it; searching for patterned responses or themes across the different interviews by crosschecking the codes; reviewing the assigned themes to define and name them and finally, produce my own report.

3.7   Conclusion

As discussed earlier, in this chapter, I introduced the methodology, the ethical considerations, and the research methods employed to collect data (improvised acted-out scenarios and semi-structured interviews). Afterward, I addressed the data collection tools in detail. Then, I presented the study procedure which was followed to collect the data. Later, I moved to the pilot study. Subsequently, I progressed to talk about thematic analysis in depth before I concluded the chapter. Now, I proceed to the following chapter where a detailed analysis of the data collected is outlined below:

4 Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the main themes derived from the semi-structured interviews. In section 4.2.1. I present the first theme which is politeness. In the following section 4.2.2. I talk about cultural expectations in section 4.2.3. I move to talk about participants' own understandings as a significant theme. Subsequently, I introduce another theme that is referred to as social status in section 4.2.4. Then I talk about being genuine and context as themes in sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6, respectively. Later, I move to the analysis of the tabulated data gathered using the improvised acted-out scenarios in section 4.3, to finally conclude the chapter in section 4.4.

4.2 Semi-structured Interview Analysis

4.2.1 Politeness:

When asked if she ever *refused* an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to accept it and the reason behind that, the British participant B2 claims that:

> (34) [*Umm, yeah, because **I just felt like it was the polite** thing to do to turn it down. Do you know what I mean? so that is why I refused it*].

As regards her answer, *politeness* is always present in dealing with refusals, that is, she tries all the time to be polite as much as she could not to offend others. By saying that: "I just felt like it was the polite thing to do" participant B2 is refereeing to the sociocultural norms that exist in her culture. She does not clearly mention the word cultural norms, but she is claiming that turning down an *invitation* or *offer* is considered inappropriate in her culture. Also, in response to the opposite situation, that is, whether she accepted an *offer* or an *invitation*

despite her inner desire to refuse it and the reason why, the British participant B2 asserts that:

(35) [*Yeah, it is the same reason **I do not want to offend them**. Yeah. So, I thought I would like to make them feel better*].

Again, participant B2 is stressing the importance of being polite and not offending her interlocutors. To her, making others feel better is important as she cares about their feeling. Here, it is evident that the British participant B2 is reflecting her cultural norms where accepting the *offer* or the *invitation* is mostly related to being polite and not hurting others' feelings even though that is against her willingness. Relatedly, when asked when she thinks she should refuse an *offer* or an *invitation*, the British participant B2 answers:

(30) [*I think you should refuse it if you are not comfortable with it. But if I feel that if the other person is really persistent and they keep pushing, you should probably accept **it because you might offend them***].

Here, the British participant B2's answer indirectly underlines the significance of culture in the way she refuses *offers or invitations*. At first, she claims she should refuse it if that is uncomfortable for her as a person then she refers to the social imposition of accepting an initiating act after several insistence to not offend others and eventually save both interlocutors' face. Therefore, she is highlighting the relationship between politeness and culture. As a response to whether she feels uncomfortable when she refuses to *accept* an *offer* or an *invitation* and the reason behind that, the British participant B2 adds:

(31) [*Yeah. Uhm, because I just feel like it's a bit of an **awkward situation** when you say no…like it puts the other person, like, as I said before, **you could offend them.** So, in that, **it's just an awkward situation** between you too both*].

In conjunction with what she said, taking the interlocutors' feelings into considerations is the main thing to do, that is, being comfortable and not feeling offended is highly important to her. Here, again, the British participant B2 keeps referring to the significance of investing in the face of both interlocutors and avoiding threats. She considers rejecting others' *invitations* or *offers* as socially inappropriate behaviour that puts both interlocutors in an awkward situation. Therefore, this underlines her adherence to the sociocultural norms related to the way members of her society deal with refusal speech acts.

Likewise, when asked if she feels annoyed or disrespected when she receives a *refusal* and the reason why A6 asserts that:

> (85) [*Well, it depends. Yeah. It depends on the way that I received this refusal. Okay, the person that I received but **it depends on the way I receive the refusal and the person too.** It depends on the way most of the time Yeah if it is polite if it is like mentioning an argument why sorry. even if they do not have a reason but if they do not just want to come or to accept this offer, it could be acceptable or okay*].

To her, even if getting her *offers* or *invitations* rejected by someone does not really matter than the way they do it; it is all about being polite despite not providing an excuse for not accepting. Also, the Algerian participant A6 here refers to the *social status* her interlocutor holds in her deciding on the way how to refuse their *offers* or *invitations.* That is to say, it is not only the relationship that she shares with her interlocutors that influences her reaction to the way her offers or invitations get rejected, but rather the types of reasons and apologies employed too. In a similar vein, when she (A6) was asked whether she feels comfortable when she *refuses* to accept an invitation or an offer, she asserts:

(20) [*Yeah. I always feel uncomfortable because I feel that I **do not like to upset people** and I feel that **they will get a bad impression on me, or they feel offended**. Because I feel **I am being rude to refuse them**…Yeah, that is why I rarely refuse it if I do not like it, but **I prefer that I feel uncomfortable rather than someone else***].

According to her response, rejecting interlocutors' *offers* and *invitations* is challenging and puts her in an uncomfortable situation as she cares about their feelings and does not want to upset them. This suggests the emotional investment in the management of *face*, which is supported by the respondent's own words **"…that they will get a bad impression of me…",** which suggests an explicit concern for what theorists have termed as *'face management'* under Goffman's (1995) presentation of self in everyday life. Here, the Algerian participant A6 demonstrates her awareness of the potential face threat if she declines her interlocutors' *offers* or *invitations* and eventually orients her words to how they will present herself in face-construction terms. This highlights the importance of investing in each other's faces when dealing with refusals to maintain social harmony and relationships among individuals. These communication rules are obviously present in all cultures and participants reflect on them in their daily life communication. Again, stressing the strong relationship between politeness and culture and how politeness is a crucial component in the communication process. Relatedly, when asked whether she relies on her *cultural background* when interacting with people from other cultures, A6 asserts that:

(90) [*Not necessarily! sometimes **rely on my Algerian background**. actually, since I am from a different culture, diversity, cultural diversities and within the same culture There are so many differences. So, I always, like to have a standard in refusing**. I use politeness. To be polite**].*

Here, despite the fact that the Algerian participant A6 claims that she sometimes relies on her cultural background when interacting with people from other cultures, she is clearly demonstrating her awareness of the cultural disparities in dealing with refusals and emphasising the importance of relying on politeness when dealing with such speech acts. Thus, politeness remains always a key in inter/cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, one interesting point to highlight here is that she referred to the differences within the same culture too. This means that the way people deal with the speech act of refusals might not necessarily be the same even within the same cultural context. Therefore, it is always related to the interlocutor's own interpretations of what is considered appropriate or not to follow or use in a particular culture. This is evident in so many examples provided by some of the participants of both groups (Algerian and British) in the present study where they claimed that they usually behave as per what they consider right or wrong and not necessarily follow what is set for them to abide by socially and culturally.

Relatedly when the British participant B7 was asked whether she finds it easy or difficult to refuse an *offer* or an *invitation* and the reason why, she asserts that:

> (118) [*I find it difficult to refuse Just because I do not know I suppose I just want **to be nice and polite**].

Here, the British participant B7 highlights the difficulty of rejecting others' *invitations* and *offers.* This reflects on her awareness of the potential threat refusals may cause to both her and her interlocutors' faces. It is worth mentioning here that despite the fact that the British interlocutor is not familiar with both face-saving and face-threatening. She maintains that being polite is her main concern where she assumes that delivering her refusals politely

appears to be less complex. Once again, this validates the aforementioned point of participants' huge reliance on politeness when dealing with the speech act of refusals.

In a similar vein when asked whether she finds it easy or difficult to *refuse* an offer or an invitation, the British participant B2 responds:

(36) [*I do find it difficult to refuse because **I do not want to break the next person's heart.** I do not want to like… what is the word? I do not want to put them in that situation where **it's just my awkwardness***].

As per her claims, the British participant B2 considers rejecting her interlocutors' *offers* or *invitations* inappropriate when both participants are put in an awkward situation. Here, the British participant is indirectly referring to the cultural norms that she relies on when interacting with people. This reinforces the idea that every single member of society has a set of rules and norms they refer to in their daily life communication, one of which is politeness. However, as mentioned earlier, not all members of the same culture would necessarily stick to the same rules. In a similar vein, when asked whether she feels uncomfortable when refusing *offers* and *invitations*, the Algerian participant A3 claims that:

(40) [*Yeah, I do feel uncomfortable because…Well, if someone invited to you, they obviously want you to be there. So, if you say no then you are refusing their company or their food or whatever they are offering. **Yeah, it is a bit awkward and embarrassing. So yes. Uncomfortable***].

Here, the Algerian participant A3 stresses the idea that rejecting *offers* and *invitations* can induce feelings of embarrassment and discomfort, this leads individuals to be more inclined to accept simply to avoid being awkward. In this regard, the Algerian participant A3 is referring to the social norms that govern the way participants deal with the speech act of

refusals in particular and communication in general. These norms dictate individuals how to behave in certain situations. However, as mentioned previously, it always remains a personal choice whether to abide by those rules or not as well as how to apply them differs from one member to the other. Nevertheless, when the Algerian participant A3 was asked whether she accepted an invitation or an offer despite her desire to refuse it, she replies:

(24) [*Yeah. A lot! Because I am afraid that our **people will be annoyed**. Sometimes you invite for example, back home, they invite you to a party or family gathering, I do not feel comfortable there, **but I have to accept** it and go on sit with them and **give fake smiles** to people and afford what they are saying. Because you feel like if you refuse, **you will upset everyone around you**. It is just one hour to hour I can endure it*].

Add to her previous claims, being polite is a significant thing to consider when she refuses or accepts *invitations* and *offers*. Hence, as per what she said, there are some emotional costs to the participants attributed to her being polite at times. That is to say, despite the fact that she is not always happy to accept the *offer* or the *invitation*, she sometimes finds herself agreeing to things she does not want to just not upset the other interlocutor. This shows that as an individual, she is fully aware that declining others' *invitations* or *offers* is considered socially inappropriate. Therefore, *saving face* and being *polite* is one of the main things to be considered in the current study. In a similar vein, when the British participant B7 was asked whether she feels uncomfortable when she refuses to accept an *invitation* or an *offer*, she claims that:

(113) [*Uhm, yes, it depends on what it is. But I hate not, I hate not being there for something. You know what I mean if someone is having an event, okay. And I really want to go but I am just can't be there for some reason, or I have got another thing on*

*that day, then **I feel bad** because I'm just like, ah, can't come to that. So that is and I do feel a **bit uncomfortable**. Because, probably, they really want you to go there*].

Here the British participant B7 indirectly confirms the previous participants' claims on how much they care about others' feelings. Similarly, she finds it hard to reject others' *offers* or *invitations* as she believes that turning down someone's *invitation* is not appropriate. However, it is worth mentioning that despite the fact that participants keep referring to politeness when dealing with the speech act of refusals, some of them related that with saving their public image while others cared more about their interlocutors' self-image. That is to say, politeness is interpreted and seen differently by individuals.

In a similar vein, when asked to what extent it is important for her to be genuine while *refusing* offers and invitations, the Algerian participant A2 claims that:

> *(22)* [*I think it is not about being genuine**, it is about being polite**. You have to the maximum **phrase your sentence** that you care about the feeling of the other person that you are refusing their invitation*].

Here, the Algerian participant A2 clearly refers to the significance of being polite over being genuine. To her, the refusal should be phrased in a way that shows caring of others' feelings, therefore, relying on politeness whenever faced with a similar situation. This highlights the idea that the Algerian participant A2 is associating being polite with the type of strategies she uses when declining the *offer* or the *invitation*. That is to say, providing further reasons and explanations indicates how much she cares about her interlocutors' feelings. It is worth noting here that the Algerian participant A2 is referring to her interlocutors' faces only and does not refer to her image. Therefore, she cares more about saving others' faces than hers.

Respectively, the British participant B2 when asked whether she feels annoyed or disrespected when she receives a refusal from someone, she maintains that:

(32) [*Uhm, I don't because **I don't want to like to be forcing someone to do something they don't want to do**, or they don't want to accept*].

Here, too, the British participant B2 participant keeps referring to not imposing on her interlocutors and putting them at ease. Thus, saving the face of both interlocutors and accepting others' responses matters more to her. Here, we should highlight that the British participant B2 considers receiving a refusal to her *offers* or *invitations* is socially appropriate; while insisting on her interlocutors to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* is not right. In this case, the British participant B2 is reflecting on her cultural norms of what is socially acceptable or not. This, however, completely contradicts what is socially agreed on to be the norm in the Algerian context where insisting on the interlocutor several times to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* is seen as perfectly normal and socially encouraged, indeed. Thus, different cultures adhere to distinct sets of norms dictating to people what is deemed to be appropriate or inappropriate to observe. Correspondingly, when the Algerian participant A5 was asked about how comfortable she would feel rejecting others' offers or invitations, she states that:

(56) [*Yes, generally yes, it's really hard because I think I am a nice person, and I don't like **to hurt people's feelings**… Yeah I do and then when I refuse it kind of makes **me feel very uncomfortable** to refuse an offer or an invitation like that because I just **don't want to be rude or offend the person** or something like that*].

With respect to her answer, being kind to people and not offending their feelings is a significant thing to consider when rejecting their *offers* and *invitations*. She argues that she feels uncomfortable refusing just because she does not want to sound rude; therefore, being

polite seems to be a priority for her. As per her claims, the Algerian participant is referring to investing in both interlocutors' faces not only hers. That is to say, she mentiones that she cared about their face as well as her self-image (I don't want to be rude); she does not want to be seen as a rude person. This confirms my previous argument that when reflecting on their social norms in interaction, participants do not essentially apply those norms in the same way, or at least they do not interpret them alike.

In a similar vein, Nevertheless, while directing the talk toward how she feels when she refuses an *offer* or an *invitation*, the Algerian participant A1 asserts that:

(2)   *[So, to be honest, like, okay, the situation is uncomfortable but that **depends on the person. If I know the person, I will feel more uncomfortable refusing.** But if I do not know the person, **I will feel like it is okay.** Like, I can just like tell them it is okay. Like, I cannot make it.''*

She further states that:

*(3) [If like, let us say, I do not know, or maybe if like it is one of **my supervisors**, probably, **I would feel uncomfortable** doing the refusals to them.]*

Here the Algerian participant A1 refers to the social distance that exists between the two interlocutors involved in a certain conversation (see Brown & Levinson, 1987). The three social variables that affect interlocutors' way of realising the speech act are explained in detail in chapter two as mentioned earlier. Here, the participant clearly states that if she receives an *invitation* or an *offer* from a stranger or someone who is socially close to her, she would not be bothered declining it without feeling uncomfortable, in contrast to when it is received from someone she knows very well as in the case of declining an *invitation* or an *offer* of one

of her supervisors. Therefore, the closeness of the two interlocutors and the social status they both hold have a great effect on the way *offers* and *invitations* are declined.

To sum up, based on the participants' responses from both groups (Algerian and British), declining *offers* and *invitations* is considered a complex thing to do. However, in order to maintain social harmony and not harm each other's faces, interlocutors tend to employ politeness strategies. In doing so, they draw from their own cultural norms and behave according to what is considered appropriate or not. Yet, as mentioned above, not all participants abide by the same rules even though they belong to the same culture. That is to say, the way they treat politeness and how to apply it remains personal and not necessarily shared by every single member of that particular culture. This is evident in the participants' responses throughout the study. This is due to the different interpretations they have for what is considered acceptable or not in a certain context. A good example would be the reinitiation of acts after getting refused. In the Arab culture in general and Algeria in particular, insisting on the addressee to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* is considered a sign of kindness and courtesy. That is to say, the more you insist on the person to accept the initiating act, the more courteous and well-mannered you appear; however, not extending the *offer-refusal* or the *invitation-refusal* several times (At least three turns) might signal that you are not quite genuine about it. On the opposite, the British participants in the present study demonstrated that insisting is more imposing on their interlocutors and consider it as a face-threat. Yet, there are always exceptions in the sense that members of the same culture (Algerian) would find insisting as a threat to their self-image as well as to their interlocutors' faces.

4.2.2   Cultural expectations

As concerns her accepting an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to decline it and the reason behind that; the Algerian participant A6 replies:

> (88) [*it happens, yeah, it happens a lot of times, sometimes you cannot refuse certain types of invitations especially as an Algerian. **It happens with families,** if you are not accepting for example, an invitation for a wedding or a celebration. So, **you will be judged,** it may raise so many problems just for not accepting the offer*].

Regarding her answer, adhering to the social norms that exist in the Algerian society forces her sometimes to accept others' *offers* or *invitations* despite her desire not to do so due to societal expectations. By saying: "you will be judged" she is referring to the other members of her society; that is, to her, refusing such *invitations* may lead to judgment and potential and social repercussions, as it is often seen as rude and disrespectful. This highlights her awareness of what is considered as an appropriate behaviour or not and she acts accordingly. Hence, emphasizing the prominence of the social norms that are prevalent in every culture which in turn dictate people how to act in a particular situation. This is not always the case for every member of that particular society as it depends too on the *weightiness* of the act itself, that is, declining an *invitation* to a co-worker's birthday party is not the same as declining a relative's wedding *invitation*. It is about the social ranking of the *weightiness* of the act (See Brown and Levinson, 1987).

In a similar vein, the Algerian participant A7 emphasises the importance of trying to integrate oneself into the other culture rather than sticking to their own culture just in a way to make them comfortable. This, however, indicates how much she cares about others' feelings. Also, she mentions that she usually finds the urge to learn about others' cultures before interacting

with them by doing some searches. This underlines her caring nature as a person who does not want to offend others mistakenly on one hand, and not to be embarrassed on the other hand. Therefore, investing in both interlocutors' faces. It is worth noting here that what the Algerian participant A7 is referring to (the urge to learn about others' culture) is highly important for individuals who are aiming to improve their communication competence (see chapter six below). The following is her answer to what if she does not know much about the others' cultures:

(107) [*I just ask, for instance, let us say, if you are dealing with someone from different cultural backgrounds, and He's inviting you, let's say we're talking about invitations and offers for something, and you don't know how do they do it? in that culture, I mean, refusing and … would you like to think about it? Or would you make efforts to, I do not know about it? For instance, you do not like to make yourself in an embarrassing situation. Would you like to care about it? For example, if I am invited, so if this happened to me before someone invited me to a party, but they did not understand I do not go to these places. So, I just explained it like, this is me, okay. These are my principles, and I cannot do that…Yeah, they, I mean it. I mean, **you have to stick to your own principles sometimes.** But most of the time **if we talk about something normal l**ike I cannot find an example now. But anything like if I am going somewhere, okay too, for example, somewhere. If I am invited to a place that is full of a group of people from one country**, I will try to search on YouTube**, for example, what they do to celebrate this thing…I Search. Yes, exactly**. I try to familiarise myself.** YouTube is my source for everything*].

In her statement, the Algerian participant A7 notes that while she strives to uphold her own principles and norms when faced with *offers* and *invitations*, she often finds it necessary to acquaint herself with the cultural norms of the specific context in order to act appropriately. One thing to highlight here is that her refusal is contingent upon the surrounding circumstances and context. This further emphasises how culture influences interpersonal communication. It is reasonable to assert that individuals are typically aware of the cultural variations that exist, however, whether they adhere to them is ultimately a matter of personal preference. Correspondingly, the decision to learn about different cultures in order to act accordingly remains also a personal choice where not all individuals would be interested in doing so. Indeed, as previously stated, demonstrating familiarity with a particular culture can significantly enhance interlocutors' communication success. That is, they become better equipped to navigate interactions more efficiently as it enables them to anticipate potential misunderstandings and eventually adjust their communication approach; accordingly, as well as demonstrate respect for the cultural variations of their interlocutors. Furthermore, demonstrating familiarity with other cultures suggests interest in building rapport with others and conveying a sense of empathy and openness. Subsequently, promoting intercultural competence to enable individuals to engage respectfully and confidently with people from different cultural backgrounds, increasing mutual understanding, and facilitating collaboration across borders. In other words, the more awareness individuals establish with a particular culture, the more proficient they become in developing meaningful connections and achieving successful communication. Relatedly, when asked whether she would rely on her cultural background when interacting with people from other cultures, the British participant B4 asserts that:

(53) [*No, I just **stick to mine***].

Here, the British participant B4's statement highlights her adherence to her own cultural norms when interacting with people from other cultures. This demonstrates participant B4's awareness of the cultural variations of communication. While she remains grounded in her own cultural norms and values, she also acknowledges the need to navigate situations respectfully and carefully especially when interacting with people from diverse cultural backgrounds with their own distinct sets of cultural norms. In doing so, she is acknowledging the significance of cultural values and norms in shaping her responses and therefore underlining intercultural communication complexity and the significance of individuals balancing their personal desires with the cultural expectations prevalent in a certain context. Nevertheless, she stresses her awareness of the significant role of politeness in mitigating the threat of her refusals. This is evidently stated in her answer about the cultural norms that she would rely on when interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds where she (B4) asserts that:

(54) [*I try to **be polite***].

Her statement clearly demonstrates her intention to maintain politeness and therefore highlights her awareness of the significance of polite behaviour in intercultural communication. It also suggests that she is mindful of the potential impact of her actions on other individuals where she needs to maintain respectful and considerate conduct regardless of the cultural variations. Likewise, the British participant B7 emphasises the importance of respecting others' space and alone time to focus on themselves, therefore, not being stressed out by thinking about how to turn down an *invitation* or an *offer* if they want to. According to

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her, not imposing on the other interlocutors matters more than being genuine where she claims that:

(115) [*Uhm, I used to, like, basically, I used to always say yes to things. But and I usually do like kind of... like saying the reason why if I cannot if I definitely cannot make something then I usually say why. You know. but sometimes, like**, I understand that people are not feeling safe to feel stressed and just need some time alone.** Or, like, you know, like if they feel down just need some time alone. I Understand, like, people make excuses not to go. So, I think and kind of that is, that is something I have been doing more like saying I have got to do this, I have got to do. I really arranged some time alone because time alone is important to recharge. Yeah, so nowadays, add more saying no, I am not feeling it today or, you know...*].

In this statement, the British participant B7 reflects on her past tendency to always accept *invitations*, however, she is now finding it more comfortable to decline others if needed. She is expressing her habit of providing explanations and reasons when declining *invitations* when she is unable to attend which demonstrates her sense of consideration and accountability for others. Furthermore, she acknowledges the fact that sometimes people may reject *invitations* due to them being stressed or preferring to stay alone. This denotes her understanding and empathy towards other interlocutors' needs. Thus, suggesting that providing excuses to avoid social situations can be a coping mechanism for some people. Overall, the British participant B7 is showing a shift in her attitude to social interactions where she is demonstrating a mindful and balanced approach that considers both her own needs as well as the needs of others; that is, investing in both interlocutors' faces. To her, this can be achieved by setting

behavioural boundaries while also showing understanding toward others' needs. With relevance to whether she has ever refused an *offer* or an *invitation* despite her inner desire to accept it and the reason behind that, the British participant B4 states that:

(50) [*Yeah, I think I have done this before. Like my parents said I could not go... Something like that*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B4's response highlights the impact of cultural norms on her decision-making when declining *offers* or *invitations*. Despite her claims that she is brought up and raised in the UK, she acknowledges that her actions are not solely based on the British cultural norms; rather, she reflects too on her parents' cultural background. This explains the complex relationship between individuals' identity and their cultural upbringing; that is to say, while participant B4 may identify as British, her actions and behaviours are shaped by the cultural expectations and values instilled by her parents' heritage. Thus, demonstrating the cultural influences in shaping individuals' behaviours and decision on what is considered socially and culturally appropriate or not. This suggests a sense of commitment and loyalty to her parents' culture, emphasising the multifaceted nature of identity and the complex dynamics of navigating cultural expectations. Overall, exemplifying how different individuals may negotiate and navigate various cultural impacts in their everyday interactions, therefore, highlights the intricacy of identity and the interconnection of cultural norms.

In a similar vein, when asked if she feels annoyed or disrespected when she receives a *refusal* and the reason why, the Algerian participant A7 asserts that:

(102) [*I would say it depends on the situation. Generally, when someone refuses food Mm-hmm. Yeah. Because my pleasure is to prepare food for a group of people to share*

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*and stuff. **So, if I invite someone for food, and they tend to refuse, I will not like it, but something else. I do not think I will.** So, if you make efforts, for instance, like he feels like you did a great thing for them, and then you just refuse to use it. So yeah, you feel disappointed maybe!]*

As to her, refusing *offers* like food is considered to be a disappointment rather than disrespect. This reflects her desire to share her creations and initiates a sense of hospitality and warmth through food. In this regard, the Algerian participant A7 clearly states that instead of blaming others for not accepting her *offer,* she simply feels sorry for herself for making so many efforts in vain. Thus, she does not take it personally. That is, she is stating that her reaction is based on the situation, therefore, proposing a sophisticated approach to interpreting and understanding refusals. Also, it is worth mentioning here that the Algerian participant A7 clearly refers to the *weightiness* of politeness which is prioritised and interpreted differently. According to her, refusing an *offer* or an *invitation* related to food would be more disappointing than refusing another thing. Therefore, the politeness *weightiness* remains subjective and highly dependent on the context where the *offer/invitation* takes place, that is, it hugely defers across cultures and social situations. To this end, different people use various mechanisms and strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts and sustain social harmony in communication in order to avoid challenging the person's autonomy as well as the social inclusion and connection with others. Correspondingly, when asked when she thinks she should refuse an *invitation* or *offer*, the Algerian participant A7 claims that:

(100) [*I think when **I am more comfortable** about doing something or accepting that invitation or offer so I will simply refuse it*].

The Algerian participant's statement highlights a different perspective on refusals where she stresses her own comfort as the main factor in deciding whether to reject an *offer* or an *invitation*. Thus, prioritising her personal boundaries and emotions over the potential impact of her refusals of the addressee. Moreover, her response suggests that the degree of cultural autonomy, wherein the social norms to prioritise others' feelings in social interactions may prevail in favour of individual freedom. This perspective sheds light on the various cultural norms and values surrounding the speech act of refusals, stressing the importance of considering individual differences when interpreting a certain social behaviour.

Likewise, when asked if she has ever refused an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to accept it and the reason why, the Algerian participant A7 replies:

(104) [*Yeah, I will say it again, he is European, not he. He and she both were Europeans. They tend to invite me a lot for coffee, while my comfort zone or the thing I enjoy doing is just to walk in. And if I go for coffee with these people, you know, it means they will pay for me. I mean, they are inviting me. Okay. **So, I will find it. I will find myself obliged to invite them again for another meeting to pay.** Okay. So yeah, this is so generally, I mean, it happened a couple of times when I refuse some invitations for coffee. Okay, just because I had the idea that these people will pay for me, which is something I do not like**. I will be obliged to meet these people again, for like payment***].

As regards her answer, accepting others' *offers* or *invitations* for a certain event like a coffee chat is considered to be a bit embarrassing as she feels the need to invite them back. Here, the Algerian participant indirectly refers to the social obligations that exist in her own culture where people tend to invite others back considering it as a social rule when interacting with

each other. That is, her accepting the *invitation* would imply a social obligation to reciprocate the gesture in the future, consequently resulting in a cycle of obligatory social commitments. Therefore, her reluctance to accept these *invitations* arises from a discomfort with the implied expectation of reciprocity. This stresses her desire to preserve autonomy and avoid the feeling of being obligated by the social expectations set by other's acts of generosity and kindness. Respectively, with relevance to whether she relies on her cultural background when she interacts with people from other different cultural backgrounds, the British participant B5 claims that:

(79) [*I take into consideration, but I also feel that **I would be quite ignorant of their cultural norms if that makes sense.** If I were meeting somebody new country, I would not know, necessarily, but I think what once I knew, I can give an example. For instance, I remember being in Morocco, and I was traveling, and I read in a book that in Morocco, it is polite to offer food if you are eating it in public before you eat it yourself. And I did not know that. So, I did that before I ate food. So, I offered it to the people in the carriage. **And it also said you must offer it three times. So, yes, I offered it three times.** I had chocolate and bread. And before I ate it myself, I offered it to everyone in the carriage, which was really great because **it was polite in that culture.** And it was something that…Yeah, so it was interesting because I had not realized **because in Britain, eating in public is fine. But in Morocco, it was impolite to eat without offering.** So that was something that was really interesting. **So, instead of using my cultural norms, I did the culture that I was in cultural norms before doing** that. So that was an example I can think of specifically when I was in a different country. And I looked I first did the cultural norms, **not my own because it would be impolite**].*

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 points out the importance of trying to fit into the host culture rather than relying on her own culture. That is, navigating the cultural norms when in a different cultural context. Despite her unawareness of the cultural norms of Moroccans, the British participant B5 learned about it prior to her travel and made an effort to adhere to their social norms while traveling. In this regard, the speaker's response highlights her inclination to adapt to the cultural norms rather than relying solely on her British cultural background. Thus, reflecting her openness to learn and respect the cultural variations as well as recognise the significance of observing local norms of politeness and social respect. Consequently, demonstrating the speaker's considerate and thoughtful approach to cross-cultural communication. She further states that she usually askes about what is considered to be the norms in the other cultures before visiting by claiming:

> (80) [*Yeah, totally. I totally. So, I think if I knew the knowledge and culture, then I would definitely do is like being, you know, I have friends who have lots of friends, my best friend's German, for instance, I have another close friend, who's French. And another close friend is Turkish. So, I think when I am in those spaces, I ask my friends before so that I know if I were you know if I am visiting family of theirs, you know, **I ask if I should bring presents or what is the norm, I spent Christmas with a French family. So, I have to ask before what the norm is...** You know, like any, you know, German or whatever you are doing*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B4 reflects on her proactive strategy of familiarising herself and respecting cultural norms before engaging with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. She emphasises the significance of seeking advice from friends to effectively navigate different cultural environments. This demonstrates the speaker's recognition of the

importance of cultural sensitivity and her willingness to actively educate herself and adapt to others' behaviours to show respect for various cultures. Therefore, promoting understanding and appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives. She further states that:

(81) [*I just think they are really interesting questions. Because I think part of what is interesting about you asking me is that* **I do not really think about this at all.** *And nobody really, we never reflect on this, I think enough in our society, because I think, you know, we come from a society which is nervous, very problematic, because it has got this very kind of Imperial colonial history essentially. And actually, that is really problematic because it kind of makes us think that we are Like, British culture is like, you know how we are is the norm, like you said, but it is not the norm. And I think that is really problematic because it is making me think of how we do things as the norm and as part of our society. And it is much more, I think it is much more interesting to think about these small interactions because they tell you a lot about people and are very interesting. And I think what is really nice about your research, and really interesting is that I do not think I have ever reflected on this. I think it is really interesting, I would just say that it is really interesting for me to have to reflect on it. Because I think in our culture, we are not encouraged to reflect on it enough. Does that make sense? Why would we not?* **I think in British society, we are always taught to be polite, without interrogating what that is. We take for granted what politeness is. And I think that other cultures can be polite, but we do not perceive it as I do not know. It is just, it is just like, Western superlight is this universal thing, but politeness is very different in different cultures.** *And I think it is really important to Yeah. See us as cultural and to understand to be Yeah, just think about that aspect. A lot of it. as I*

can see sometimes, I see British people abroad and doing that. And it is like, yeah, it is

just funny, like, that kind of thing can be actually a bit problematic. So, it does not

really respect].

Here the speaker acknowledges the problematic notion that the British culture is often perceived as the norm highlighting the urge to reconsider this perspective through recognizing the complexity of cultural interactions and practices, particularly in the British society which is shaped by its imperial and colonial history. Moreover, the British participant B4 highlights the significance of understanding the cultural disparities, particularly in the realm of politeness and societal standards. She critiqued the Western-centric view that politeness is universally understood and emphasised the importance of recognizing and appreciating the nuances of social interactions. Her statement reinforces the idea that politeness is not universal as claimed by previous scholars (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and it all depends on the interlocutors' interpretation of what is appropriate or not in a particular context. In summary, the participant's reflections highlight the significance of cultural awareness and the need to question ingrained assumptions about cultural values and norms. That is, promoting a conscientious and thoughtful approach to cross-cultural interactions, highlighting the diversity and complexity of human behaviour across various cultural settings. In the following statement when she was asked if she has ever accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to refuse it and the reason behind it, the British participant B5 asserts that:

(105) [*Yeah. Sometimes when you keep saying no, no, like, I am refusing an invitation*

or an offer from somebody like there will come sometime when you find yourself

obliged to say, I do not think I can. No, no, I think you are clear. So, when you keep

refusing people's offers and invitations, there must be a time there will come a time

when, **when you will feel obliged to accept their invitation though You don't want to**

go but out of respect*, you know…*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 reflects on the impact of consistent refusal of

invitations or *offers* that eventually results in feeling obliged to accept, even if one does not

truly wish to participate. This implies that continuous refusals might establish a social

expectation or pressure to eventually agree, out of a sense of respect or politeness towards

the person extending the *invitation* or the *offer*. This insight highlights the complex balance

between asserting individual autonomy and adhering to societal expectations. While the

British participant B5 acknowledges the importance of showing respect to others and

maintaining harmonious relationships, she reflects too on the potential discomfort or internal

conflict that may result from feeling the obligation to accept *offers* or *invitations* against the

interlocutor's own desire. To sum up, the participant's reflection offers valuable insights into

the multifaceted nature of social interactions and the subtle navigation of interpersonal

boundaries. Differently put, it emphasises the significance of taking into account the broader

social context and the implications of refusals in sustaining positive relationships, all while

recognising the importance of upholding individuals' autonomy and personal preferences.

Respectively, when asked whether she offers food when she is eating in front of someone,

she replies:

(82) [*No, it is horrible it is so rude. And* **it is so embarrassing***. It is funny because I*

remember going to a talk by a Nigerian author. And in Nigeria, it is very rude to eat in

public when you are walking down the street. And it was really funny because she was

giving a talk, and a Nigerian was in the audience. He asked she said, you know, what

is it like to come to this country and sitting eating in public she is like, yeah, it is really

shocking because people have to get used to it because I think eating is a good

example. Because here, I think eating because we have had so much industrialization,

for instance, because we have had like 250 years of industrialization, we lost that

maybe the connection of sitting down and having a meal and all this stuff. So, it is a

kind of, it is a cultural thing as well, is that so much industrialization, but it is strange

because it is a very different culture around food, which is really different. And I

remember finding it in Morocco...I think it is great. No, I just think it is really interesting

because no one's taught me about it].

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 shares her perspective on eating in public, deeming it impolite and embarrassing. She reflects on the influence of industrialisation on societal attitudes regarding eating. She finds it interesting to observe the diverse cultural perspectives around food, as demonstrated by her experience in Morocco. However, as she stated before, as an individual, she tries always to fit into the other culture and does not rely on her own culture when dealing with people of different cultural backgrounds. Overall, the British participant B5 expresses her captivation of the cultural differences especially since she has not previously encountered such teachings. This prompts reflection on how cultural norms differ across various societies, shedding light on the complexities of cultural diversity and its implications for individuals' everyday practices. In a similar vein, when asked whether she would rely on her cultural norms while interacting with interlocutors of other cultural backgrounds, the Algerian participant A6 claims that:

(26) [*Yeah, because your cultural background affects your interaction with people. For*

example, in our culture, if someone is refusing for the first time, maybe they are just

*refusing like in our culture, **they are refusing because they do not want to impose [on] you**. So, you have to ask a second time maybe they will revise their minds and they will find out that it's fine for you. So, they accept. I will give you an example of an instance that happened with a Saudi woman. The lady invited us to her house and while we were in her house, just a few minutes after reaching her house, she told me Do you want juice? I told her no. She repeated for the second time, and I said no, again. And for the third time, I told her no, I don't want to drink anything. And at the end, she offered me juice for the fourth time**, so I had to drink it even though deep inside I did not want to** as the juice was very cold and outside the weather was cold too*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A6 reflects on the cultural background influence on interpersonal interactions, particularly regarding the refusal of *offers* and *invitations*. She illustrates her point by providing the example of the Saudi woman inviting her to her house. The speaker notes that in the Algerian culture, it is common for interlocutors to reject an *offer* initially as a polite gesture, with the expectation that the *offer* will be extended again. She describes the incident of her declining the Saudi woman's persistent *offer* despite the Algerian participant's initial refusal. Here, the genuine intention of the participant was mistakenly interpreted as a hesitation by the host and therefore considered as a manner of just being polite and not tending to impose on the host. Even though both participants to some extent belong to the same culture (Arab culture), the host could not infer her guest's intention. Despite not wanting to have the juice, the speaker eventually accepted it on the fourth *offer*, adhering to cultural norms (see chapter two, section 2.7.5). This incident highlights the significance of understanding cultural norms and their influence on social interactions. It demonstrates how individuals from different cultural backgrounds may

interpret and respond to *offers* and *invitations* differently, highlighting the necessity for cultural awareness and sensitivity in cross-cultural communication. When I told her that maybe the lady was insisting on you because she shares the same Arab culture as we do, the Algerian participant A6 asserts that:

(27) [*Yeah, but **I expected her to accept my refusal after the third time because this is the norm.** If you give someone another chance, and they still refuse means it is literally no, a genuine one*].

In relation to the Algerian participant A6's claims, she had some expectations about her interlocutor's reaction towards her refusals. She assumed that by rejecting the *offer* multiple times (roughly three times in the Algerian culture), her interlocutor would eventually understand her intention. Here, I shall refer to sequence organization (see chapter two, section 2.7.2) where both the first part and second part engage in a sequence of offer-refusal, offer-refusal, and offer-acceptance in reference to what is considered the norm in their culture (Arab culture). At this point, the Algerian participant's A6 refusal was not considered genuine even though she kept declining it so many times, and she ended up accepting it despite her inner desire not to do so. This incident, however, happened in a context where both interlocutors share almost the same cultural norms (Arab cultural norms); which means they both should be aware of that sequence. Here, we can safely conclude that even sometimes belonging to the same culture and sharing the same cultural background does not prevent cultural miscommunication from occurring. Besides, every so often participants violate the norms and create a certain order as per their will; that is to say, they may insist so many times on their interlocutors to accept their *offer* or *invitation* by making so many *offer-refusal* sequences, as well as they, may just go against the norm and accept the *offer* or the *invitation* from the first attempt without further insistence from the other party. So, it is more

or less a personal preference. Relatedly, when asked about which cultural norms affect her refusals, the Algerian participant A6 replies:

(28) [*Yeah, I think the language affects your way of refusal, for example, in English is restricted. The phrases that you use in order to be polite when you're refusing people. Okay, but in Arabic, you have to use other words, alternatives. Yeah. And you tend... I think,* **if I'm refusing an invitation in Arabic, I will tend to make a long sentence**. *So, I will explain thoroughly why I am refusing and, um, I mean, no harm for refusing what they are offering*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A6 reflects on the impact of language on how refusals are expressed and conveyed, drawing from a comparison between English and Arabic. According to her, while English offers limited polite phrases for declining, Arabic provides broader options and encourages more elaborate explanations when declining *invitations* or *offers*. she asserts that refusing using her native language (Arabic) is relatively easier than using English, this is due to the extended vocabulary that she has in her first language. The speaker notes that when refusing in Arabic, she tends to construct longer sentences to provide a thorough explanation for her decision. This practice aligns with the cultural expectations in Arabic-speaking communities, where politeness often involves providing context and justification for refusals in comparison to the British culture where refusals tend to be more concise and straightforward due to the linguistic restrictions. Nonetheless, regardless of the language she uses, the Algerian participant A6 claims that her intention is never to offend others when declining their *offers* or *invitations*. Overall, the Algerian participant A6's observation highlights the intricate interplay between linguistic and cultural factors in shaping communication norms, emphasising the significance of grasping these nuances for successful cross-cultural interactions. Furthermore, when she was asked whether

she adjusts herself to the other culture when interacting with people of different cultures, the Algerian participant A6 claims that:

(29) [*Yeah, for example, based on what you watch on YouTube and things. **So, if you are interacting with another one, in another culture, you don't have to insist if they say no, they mean it, if you are interacting with Arabs or Muslims, maybe, you have to switch back to your own culture**. Because I think they will feel annoyed if you repeat your request or they may even consider you a stupid person*].

Here the Algerian participant A6 discusses how media utilization, particularly YouTube influences the way individuals interact across different cultures. She suggests that individuals should recognise and show respect to the cultural differences in communication. In this sense, the Algerian participant A6 further claims that refusing people from cultures where refusal is customary, it is crucial to respect their initial response without further insistence, as persisting after an initial refusal may be perceived as impolite or disrespectful compared to when interacting with individuals from Arab or Muslim cultures. In other words, the Algerian participant A6 clearly mentions that imposing on people might be interpreted differently depending on the interlocutor you are dealing with. That is, what is considered as a sign of courtesy in one culture might noticeably be understood as an imposition and consequently a threat to both interlocutors' faces. This observation highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and adaptability in navigating cross-cultural interactions, acknowledging the various social norms and expectations dominant in various cultural contexts. Correspondingly, when asked about the social and cultural norms that she might think affect her refusals, the Algerian participant A3 asserts that:

(45) [*I think so, yeah. Because I mean, the English generally, if they want something, **they will say yes from the very first time**. But if they do not want it, they do not want*

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*it. So, if you insist on them**. It will be the opposite of being nice**. So, it was an Algerian*

***I would insist because it's rude not to insist**, but with an English, I will not insist*

*because **I know it is rude to do so… I am just trying to fit in**].*

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A3 highlights the significant cultural differences between the Algerian and British cultures in dealing with refusals. According to her, while persistence or insistence in many cultures including Algerian might be seen as a sign of respect and politeness; in English culture, there is always an emphasis on being polite and accepting the initial response without further pressure if declined. Therefore, as regards her answer, considering other cultural backgrounds is very important in interacting with people of different cultures; that is, trying not to offend them. Her insight regarding English generally being more direct in their communication, where they tend to value sincerity and clarity in expression, aligns with a commonly held view. On the contrary, cultures such as Algeria might place more emphasis on prioritising indirect refusals and harmony, which could lead to persistence in certain situations. Therefore, recognising and adapting these cultural norm differences can significantly help in enhancing social interactions and therefore mitigate communication misunderstanding. In other words, demonstrating an awareness that insistence might be perceived differently across cultures shows individuals' readiness to adapt their behaviour to align with the norms of the culture being engaged with. Thus, it is of paramount importance to show this awareness and adapt it in intercultural settings as it can contribute to more respectful and smoother communication. In a similar vein, the Algerian participant A1 maintains that:

*(8) [you know, like, **I felt so embarrassed of saying, No, no, no, no**. While I really want*

this thing? So finally, I accepted. Like she said, do you want something? I was like, yes.

Water. you, see? so this was, very embarrassing because I wanted but I refused. Yeah.

Just like inclining that He might just get water for me. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Because usually in our culture, if you refuse something, you would just like bring something with you for me, even if I refuse.]

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 reflects on her experience where she felt embarrassed about continuously refusing something she truly wanted. Eventually, she accepted the *offer*, demonstrating her discomfort with the initial refusal and the whole situation. She reflects on her cultural background where declining an *offer* does not always indicate genuine intention. Instead, she highlights that this is part of the norm for the offerer to persist and bring the item regardless. Thus, showing how cultural expectations of politeness and consideration for others' desires, even though it is not directly stated. Her observation sheds lights on the intricate nature of communication and social dynamics within her cultural framework. Differently put, it emphasises how cultural norms and expectations can shape individuals' behaviours and perceptions, potentially leading to miscommunication and misunderstandings during interactions across different cultures.

Relatedly, when asked whether she relies on her own cultural norms while interacting with participants from different cultures (British participants in the current study), the Algerian participant A1 replies:

*(16) [I feel like I am putting like, the other person who is from another culture in an uncomfortable zone. So, I stopped doing this, like maybe three months after my arrival. **So, I just realized that no is no**. So, I would not like to impose, or push them too hard to accept my offer or my invitation.]*

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 reflects on her understanding of the cultural differences in communication and social norms. She refers to her unawareness of the potential discomfort caused by her persisting on others to accept her *offers* or *invitations* after receiving initial refusals from individuals of other cultures. However, after staying for a couple of months in the UK, the Algerian participant A 1 stated that she became more aware of the directness in English communication, where a "no" is considered definitive and no further insistence is required. Her acknowledgment of this cultural difference signifies a shift in her behaviour and mindset in the sense that she is now prioritising respecting others' boundaries and preferences as well as understanding that pushing someone to accept her *offer* or *invitation* can be intrusive or uncomfortable for the other interlocutor. Therefore, highlighting the speaker's cultural sensitivity and adaptation. Here, the Algerian participant A1's claims emphasise the significant effect culture can have on individuals when they start adjusting their behaviours according to what is considered appropriate in the host culture. However, this is not always the case for all the participants where some of them in the present study claim that they stick to their own culture when dealing with interlocutors of other cultural backgrounds. In this regard, the Algerian participant A1 is demonstrating her willingness to learn and adjust her behaviour based on her newfound understanding in order to nurture more respectful and harmonious interactions with people from various cultural backgrounds. Following the same point, and as a further comment she has about the whole discussion we had, the Algerian participant A1 states that:

(17) *[Sometimes, like it is just like, I mean, I do not want someone to offend me by just like saying no, in an angry way, because I was just like, imposing. So, it is always better*

*to like to contextualize yourself or put yourself in a context. **So, try to get rid of some***

cultural backgrounds.]

In the excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 emphasises the significance of considering the cultural background and context in communication to avoid unintentionally causing discomfort or offense to the other interlocutors, in the sense that insisting on others to accept her *offers* or *invitations* might attribute to feeling imposed upon. Therefore, to her, it is preferable to contextualise oneself and understand the cultural norms and expectations involved better than eliciting negative reactions and ultimately threatening both interlocutors' faces. By stressing the need to "get rid of some cultural backgrounds", the Algerian participant A1 seems to advocate a certain level of flexibility and openness in communication, where she acknowledges the significant influence of cultural differences on the perception and reactions of certain speech acts. She also claims that by understanding those cultural disparities, individuals can engage in interactions more respectfully and effectively. Overall, the Algerian participant A1 is highlighting the significance of empathy, awareness, and adaptation in intercultural communication, that is, considering context and showing awareness of cultural differences. In doing so, individuals can mitigate communication misunderstandings and ultimately promote more positive and harmonious interactions across various cultural boundaries. The Algerian participant A1 further adds:

> (18) [*When I go to Algeria, then I start to act weird. **And I am in between**, like, I feel*
>
> *like I am having portions of each culture. I am not fully integrated into this culture, And*
>
> *I feel myself also getting away from our culture and some sort of thing. So, it is a bit*
>
> *confusing.]*

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 highlights her challenge between cultural identity and the sense of belonging when she navigates between two different cultures. She demonstrates a feeling of being out of place or weird as she termed when visiting her own culture (Algeria), indicating a cut-off between her cultural norms and experiences there. According to her, this sense of shift results in her feeling she is caught between two worlds, neither integrated into the current culture yet not entirely aligned with her cultural norms and values. The speaker's claim of having "portions of each culture" demonstrates her experience of overlapping between two cultural identities where different cultural norms exist; in the sense that she finds herself adopting certain cultural norms and behaviours from each culture, leading to a blending of her two identities. Nevertheless, this confusion can result in feelings of detachment or disorientation from her original culture (Algerian), as she perceives herself drifting away from accustomed practices and values. Overall, the speaker conveys a sense of ambiguity and confusion regarding her cultural identity and highlights the complexity of navigating different cultural contexts where individuals neither feel integrated into the host culture nor entirely connected to their own culture. Thus, emphasising the nuances and challenges of cultural identities in this globalised world where people often tend to negotiate various cultural impacts altogether. In a similar vein, in response to whether she has ever accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to refuse it and the reason why, the Algerian participant A5 asserts that:

(61) [*Yes, so many times. Because generally, I am a very introverted person, I like to stay by myself. **But there is this social pressure** on attending social events, or going to parties, going to restaurants with people, and eat with them. Do you know this social thing?... And they feel like I do not want to go but people sometimes insist on me, you*

*know. Come on it's going to be fun you should come, and even **I refuse at the beginning***

them insisting will eventually make me go even if I really do not want to because I

***do not want to be rude, I do not want to hurt them.** At the same time, it is good to do*

*what all other people are doing, **it is like pressure on you from what society considers***

***norm** or something like that but so many times I refuse, I think it is because of my*

personality because as I said am a nice person and it is really hard for me to refuse].

Here, the Algerian participant A5 claims that despite her not being aware of what is considered to be appropriate or not as a *refusal*, that is, the etiquette of declining others' *invitations* or *offers*, she usually focuses on being polite and not hurting others' feelings. The speaker expresses her conflict between the social pressure to attend events and social gatherings and her introverted nature as an individual, where she mentiones that the pressure to conform to societal expectations often results in feelings of discomfort and obligations. She claims that she usually avoids declining her interlocutors' *offers* or invitations so as not to hurt their feelings while she tends to be kind to them; however, in doing so, she ends up finding herself in certain circumstances that are purely against her character (being an introvert). In this regard, she states despite the fact that the persistence of others might be well-intentioned, it can ultimately result in the interlocutors' reluctance to agree, even if they sincerely do not want to attend, out of fear of appearing rude or hurting others' feelings (socially judged).

Hence, and in accordance with what was mentioned earlier, being *polite* and caring for people's feelings remain crucial in everyday communication. As to her, rejecting *offers* or *invitations* requires efforts where she needs to be more thoughtful and careful of her word's choice and therefore being always polite and not rude. All this demonstrates that politeness

is not just a social lubricant but is also a set of constraints on behaviours both locally and globally. She also emphasizes the importance of having prior knowledge of the host culture so that she acts accordingly. Therefore, considering others' cultures and aiming to reach successful communication as what is acceptable in one culture might not be in the other. In other words, as per the results of the current study, insisting on the interlocutor to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* several times is considered a sign of courtesy in the Algerian culture whereas it is identified as an imposition on the interlocutors and as a face-threat to British people. Additionally, the Algerian participant A5 claims that being polite when refusing others matters more than the excuses that they provide for doing so. Likewise, she stresses the importance of the way her being refused kindly despite the absence of any sort of clarification or explanation as to why they were declining her *offer* or *invitation*. In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A5 touches upon the societal pressure to abide by the cultural norms and expectations, feeling forced to engage in social activities simply because others are doing so (see chapter two, section 2.7.5). In summary, the Algerian participant A5 in this case is wrestling with balancing her introverted nature as an individual, the societal pressure to conform, and her desire to maintain positive relationships with others. Again, this internal conflict illustrates the difficulties in navigating social expectations and social interactions while staying authentic to oneself. In a similar vein, the British participant B6 claims that providing reasons for her refusals is very important to her. She states that she would feel less uncomfortable rejecting others' *offers* or *invitations* if she supported her refusals with genuine reasons for doing so. According to her, stating the reason why she is refusing indirectly indicates her consideration of her interlocutors' feelings. This is supported by her statement when she was asked whether she finds it easy or difficult to decline an *offer* or an *invitation*, the British participant B6 replies:

(62) [*Uhm, it is difficult to refuse, yes. Uhm… I mean if you accept, then you just say yes, but when you say no you usually have to provide a reason you should explain yourself why you are saying no.* **so it is more difficult because it requires more thinking, more consideration, and more choice of words and stuff like that**].

In this statement, the British participant B6 highlights the challenges in declining others' *invitations*. She points out while accepting something is straightforward with a simple "yes", refusing requires more effort. This stresses the complexity of the speech act of refusals and the social threat attached to it. According to her, rejecting an initiating act often requires providing reasons and explanations which adds to the complexity of the response. In other words, demonstrating more careful thought, consideration, and selection of the words (strategies used) if necessary. She emphasises the significance of both the mental and emotional effort interlocutors involve in refusing compared to accepting. Accordingly, she illustrates her use of those strategies as a means of communicating her rationale and preventing offense or misunderstandings when interacting with others. Ultimately, she is referring to navigating the social norms and expectations while expressing herself respectfully and clearly across cultures. Overall, the speaker's observation highlights the intricacies of refusal speech acts and the cognitive effort needed to navigate social interactions efficiently. Furthermore, it reflects her awareness of the importance of communication in managing social relationships while respecting personal boundaries. Again, another clear manifestation of the cultural expectations that is present in every culture. In a similar vein, the Algerian participant A5 stresses the difficulty of declining *offers* and *invitations* where more consideration and good choice of words are required not to cause emotional harm to the

interlocutors. When asked whether she would rely on her cultural background when interacting with people from different cultures, the Algerian participant A5 claims that:

(63) [*Uhm, I mostly, I think... the thing is that **I am not very aware of the difference between the cultures and how they refuse and how they accept, what they consider rude or offending or something like that, so I do mostly rely on my cultural background in refusing things I usually do them the way I would do in my own culture.** And if there was any misunderstanding or anything, then, I will explain it later on... you know. Saying that this is how we do things, but generally because **I am very considerate of people's feelings** my culture does not really get in the way or never causes me misunderstanding because I do care about people's feelings. I do consider what I am saying to them and how I am saying it regardless of their cultural background, I guess!*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A5 acknowledges her unawareness of the cultural differences in handling refusals and acceptance. As a result, she claims that she often tends to rely on her own cultural background when dealing with refusals, assuming that the approach she is following aligns with what is appropriate in other cultures. Furthermore, she highlights that she tends to explain and clarify her actions, which are largely based on her cultural norms, if any offense or misunderstandings occur. In this regard, the Algerian participant A5 emphasizes the importance of relying on her own cultural background when dealing with people from different cultures rather than trying to assume what is suitable or acceptable in the other culture; however, she maintains too that due to her character (being a considerate person), she does not usually face problems refusing others even though not knowing what is considered the norm or etiquette to them. Also, the Algerian participant A 5

emphasises her consideration for other people's feelings, stating that less cultural misunderstandings will occur if she relies on her cultural background as she believes she genuinely cares about how her words and actions affect others' feelings. According to her, the main focus in the conversation is to be *polite*; therefore, *politeness* (see chapter two, section 2.5) matters more than what is considered to be the norm in whatever culture. However, what is considered to be *polite* in one culture might not be in the other, hence, misunderstandings are highly likely to occur. Accordingly, to avoid so, participants need to familiarise themselves with the host's culture to prevent cultural misunderstandings. Likewise, and most importantly, they need to be fully aware of their own norms. Thus, regardless of the cultural disparities, participant A5 claims that she attempts to communicate with respect and empathy to avoid cultural misconduct. In essence, the Algerian participant A5's approach to navigating the speech act of refusals reflects her consideration and concern for others. In this regard, while she might not be fully aware of those cultural differences, her intention to always prioritise kindness and understanding contributes to more respectful and smoother communication across various cultures. Participant A5 further states that:

> (64) [***It's Algerian societal and cultural norms***, *I guess! I am trying to think about it. It is really hard because I am not really aware or critical about it. You know… when people say... I think in Algeria we are more direct than in the UK*].

In this excerpt, The Algerian participant A5 reflects on the Algerian societal and cultural values, acknowledging a perceived disparity in directness between the Algerian and British communication styles. She states the challenges in critically analysing those social norms, indicating a lack of awareness in her understanding of cultural differences. In this regard, the speaker's mention of the Algerian directness in comparison to the perceived indirectness in

the UK culture implies a border observation about the communications patterns. This seems to suggest that, to her, the Algerian culture values directness and explicit communication, while the British culture tends towards more nuanced and indirect expressions. Nevertheless, her lack of critical examination and uncertainty reflect her hesitancy to fully delve into the complexities of cultural differences. This suggests that she might be aware of the surface-level distinctions but has not deeply explored the underlying implications or reasons for those differences. Overall, the Algerian participant A5 highlights the significance of critical analysis and self-reflection in grasping cultural norms and communication patterns. Moreover, it implies an awareness of the disparities but also emphasises the need for further exploration and understanding of cultural differences. Yet, when she was asked how she could be direct when she does not want to hurt people's feelings, the Algerian participant A5 replies:

(65) [*I think because of my personality as an individual, but generally in Algeria, for instance, **I would expect someone to be more direct when refusing my offer than someone in the UK.** Do you know what I mean? Like for instance, if I invite or offer someone and they say just no, then I do not expect them to kind of really justify or be nice about it or something like that. I think in the UK it is something different; if I tell a British person, I think they will be less direct in refusing me. So, I think in terms of how the others refuse my offers, this is where culture plays a huge role, but I refuse others; **it just has to do with my personality as an individual regardless of which culture is that person from***].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A5 reflects on expectations regarding how *offers* are refused in different cultural contexts, particularly comparing the Algerian and UK culture. She indicates that in her own culture (Algerian), she anticipates that people use direct refusals

without many reasons or elaboration in comparison to the UK where she expects less direct approach with more consideration when declining an *offer*. According to her, those differences in refusals are mainly related to cultural norms, implying that cultural background impacts how individuals often respond to *offers*. The speaker (A5) emphasises the significance of culture in shaping communication expectations and patterns, specifically in terms of *refusals*. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that individuals' personality plays a significant role in how they decline *offers*, regardless of the cultural background of the other interlocutor. This implies that participants' personal inclination towards what is considered direct or indirect impacts on the way they refuse *offers* and *invitations*, indicating that individuals' characteristics act together with cultural norms in shaping communication behaviour. In essence, the Algerian participant A5's statement underlines the interplay between cultural expectations and individual personality in refusals dynamics. It highlights the complexity of communication and the multifaceted factors that influence interpersonal interactions across cultural boundaries. Likewise, when asked about the reason why she did not insist on her interlocutors when she was offering and inviting her; the Algerian participant A5 keeps referring to being polite to others as a priority. According to her, all that matters is the way people she interacts with feel around her. She states that:

(67) [*It is because I do not like it when people insist on me because sometimes when the person is nice and you insist on them, they would say yes because they are nice but deep inside, they do not want to. And also, **I was a bit aware of the fact that she was British, and I do not think they like people insisting on them.** Generally, when we are in the office and stuff like that, if I say no to a British person, they will not insist on me*

and if I would offer something for instance to my friend or anything and they say no; if

I insist, I feel like I am annoying them, so I do not like to re-insist].

In this statement, the Algerian participant A5 discusses her reluctance to insist on others, particularly in the context of declining an *offer* or an *invitation*. She expresses her discomfort with pressuring others to accept something, assuming that even if their interlocutor accepts the *offer* or the *invitation* after persistence, they may not sincerely want to. In this regard, the Algerian participant A5's reluctance stems from her personal displeasure of being pressured to accept something that does not align with her real desires. Additionally, she highlights the significance of taking the cultural background of the person she is interacting with, noting that she is aware that they belong to an entirely different culture (British). Her claims suggest the perception that British people may not appreciate persistence, based on her observation in professional settings where her British colleagues tend to accept a refusal without further insistence. Furthermore, the Algerian participant A5 acknowledges her concern about imposing on her interlocutors by insisting after they decline her initiating act. Accordingly, she expresses her desire to prevent causing them any discomfort or imposition, indicating her consideration for their preferences and feelings. Overall, the speaker's approach signals a combination of cultural awareness, personal values, and sensitivity for others' feelings. Therefore, prioritising the respect of others' preferences and boundaries. While being aware of the cultural differences and their potential effect of social interactions.

4.2.3 Respondents' own interpretation
In response to whether she feels annoyed or disrespected when she receives a refusal, the Algerian participant A2 states that:

(21) [*No, it depends on the way they refuse my invitation. Yeah, sometimes I feel it is*

*their right to refuse what I offer Yeah, but **I think the way they say it will affect my***

feelings toward them or towards the refusal. Because sometimes you feel that is rude and there are some people, they refuse you, but you still feel happy about it, and you accept their refusal. It is about the way they frame their sentences, in our culture before refusing someone's invitation or offer, you have to provide a good reason for doing so. For example, the facial expression and the tone of speaking; this is what differs and what makes it rude, for example, sometimes you make efforts to get things ready and invite wholeheartedly, and they just say no without even apologizing for not coming or accepting your offer].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A2 highlights the significance of communication and showing respect in social interactions, particularly when refusing *offers* and *invitations.* According to her, the way an individual rejects an *invitation* or an *offer* can greatly impact how their counterparts perceive the *refusal* and their feelings towards them. The Algerian participant A2 justifies the other interlocutor's *refusal* of her *offer* or *invitation* by claiming that she cares about their feelings; therefore, she is expressing her concerns about what others may think of her *refusals* despite the fact that refusals might sound disrespectful or impolite. In many cultures, including the Algerian culture, there is a social expectation for individuals to offer a valid reason and explanation when issuing a refusal to an *offer* or an *invitation.* To her, this social expectation often derives from individuals' desire for mutual respect and understanding. To this end, receiving a refusal without providing an explanation or without showing appreciation for the *invitation* or the *offer* may result in feelings of being rude and disrespectful especially when the inviter puts effort into extending the *invitation/offer*. Participant A2 further claims that her interlocutors' facial expressions, their voice tone, and overall conduct when declining an *invitation* also play a crucial role in how the refusal is received and interpreted. To her, using a considerate and polite tone can soften

the impact of the refusal, while a harsh or poor tone can be perceived as disrespectful and ultimately causes hurt to the inviter. On the other hand, declining an *invitation* with kindness, and sincerity, and perhaps even providing an alternative or an expression of gratitude for the *invitation* can promote a sense of goodwill and understanding between both interlocutors. Thus, even though the *invitation* or the *offer* is not accepted, the way in which it is declined can leave a good impression and therefore save both interlocutors' faces. Hence, it is all about the interlocutor's reaction towards the refusal and how they interpret others' intentions as opposed to what is theorized. With regard to her claims, what is considered face-threatening or impolite is totally associated with her interpretation of the *refusal* itself and the way it is framed and delivered, as well as, with reference to the context the scene takes place. This, however, provides significant reasoning for the importance of the speaker's claiming and the way they understand, theorize, and conceptualize the *refusal* itself rather than relying on what is considered to be polite or face-threatening by those second-order researchers (see Brown and Levinson, 1987). To this end, it is of paramount importance for individuals to be thoughtful and mindful of how they communicate their refusals and to take into account the feelings of the person who is extending the *offer* or the *invitation.* In showing respect, and empathy, and being clear about their communication, they can maintain positive relationships and social interactions. In a similar vein, when asked if staying in the UK for a long time has affected her as a reflection of what I have noticed from her answers in the improvised acted-out scenarios, the Algerian participant A7 claims that:

> (109) [*I tell you something. Before I came here, I had in mind that this is a cultural study. It is about culture. So, when I was reading those scenarios, the small dialogues let us say scripts, I was trying to think first who I am here am I the professor or the students Am I the one who is offering or refusing? Then I tried to show our culture*

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*because you are here to see the code. So, I was representing myself. But I try I tried to imagine myself that Professor that student but according to my culture, what would I do? if you noticed at some point **when the script says here you have equal status, I also touched her shoulder, which is something that I do not do, but I wanted to represent myself by this.** And I did that on purpose, because I know I am being like, I am representing myself here*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A7 expresses her careful consideration and thoughtfulness in the way she approached the situation by reflecting on her own cultural background and adding more authenticity and depth to her representations. It is interesting how the participant has consciously chosen to represent herself in a way to allow for exploring different perspectives and aspects; that is, considering the impact of social norms and values in shaping individuals' behaviour in various contexts. The Algerian participant A7 refers to some personal cultural practices as touching the shoulder of her interlocutor even though she states that this is not something that she typically does, demonstrating her willingness to bridge the cultural gap and represent a more authentic portrayal of herself. This adds the layer of the difficulty of the representations and helps others understand the complexity of cultural expression and identity. According to her, touching someone's shoulders while interacting with her interlocutor was mainly a sort of showing kindness and being comfortable around her. She does that just to represent her true behaviour when she deals with people of the same *social status* as her. In this sense, despite her knowing the awkwardness that may appear to be to the second interlocutor, she does that. This, however, indicates her consideration of others' reactions at the same time her awareness of the cultural difference that exists between her and the other British participant. In doing so, she continues to confirm the importance of the cultural expectations every individual has about a certain culture and

their significant impact on intercultural communication. Overall, her approach highlights a high level of awareness and sensitivity to cultural dynamics. Differently put, by incorporating her cultural background into the way she improvised the scenarios, the Algerian participant A7 contributes valuable insights into the complexities of intercultural communication and interaction. The following explains her point very clearly, where she claims that she always tries to adjust herself to others' culture and behave accordingly:

(110) [*Exactly. This is my own. So, I was going to say, I just forgot about it. Yeah. And I told you this, the thing we just acted, I was something as it was an exception, because, I had in mind that I have to represent me in my culture, and what would I do in that situation? But now, if I take into consideration how would I act away from this context or with other British people or European or anyone from different cultural backgrounds, **I will act in the way that people would expect me to act, and I will adapt to their culture.** And I know they do not like when someone insists on them. So, I would just offer something only once, maybe twice at some sort**, but I will not insist Of course***… and this is something I was thinking about before coming to the UK, I used to watch a lot on YouTube, like, what people have a lot of social experiments, let's say to see the real-life of the people I avoided reading articles because some people they might be subjective saying their own opinion, but I want **to do real social experiments just to see and to observe how people react in some situations***, what they prefer, what they don't like, you know, and since day one I came here, I was acting and behaving according to that*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A7 expresses her thoughtful approach and deep level of consideration in navigating cultural differences and cultural interactions, both within her own culture and when interacting with individuals from other cultural backgrounds. She

demonstrates how she would act based on cultural expectations outside of her own culture, indicating a remarkable thoughtfulness and adaptability to the intricacies of different social settings. Here, the Algerian participant A7 explains how she sometimes tries to fit within the other culture and not necessarily abide by her own culture when dealing with people of different cultural backgrounds. She states that learning about a certain culture and trying to observe contextual situations help her communicate effectively as she familiarises herself with what is expected to be appropriate behaviour. Therefore, it is safe to say that the participants' own interpretations about what is expected to be appropriate or not is highly related to culture. That is, culture plays a great role in dictating whether a certain behaviour is considered right or wrong and it is not up to the interlocutor's personal interpretations only. Hence, we are always abiding by certain rules that exist in society even though they might not match what we really believe is appropriate, believing that by sticking to them we do not risk being misunderstood and ultimately not breaking the flow of communication. The speaker's awareness of the significance of not imposing on others and being overly insistent, especially in cultures where persistence may be perceived negatively, shows her genuine willingness to respect and adapt to the preferences and customs of those she interacts with. This level of adaptability is crucial for creating positive relationships and nurturing effective communication across cultural boundaries. In this regard, the Algerian participant A7's interest in observing real-life experiences and social experiments, rather than relying solely on her subjective opinions and articles, reflects her sincere desire to understand and learn from different cultural perspectives. Therefore, demonstrating a proactive approach to cultural learning and exploration which is invaluable for gaining insights into individuals' behaviours, preferences, and social norms of different communities. To sum up, the interlocutor's willingness to learn and adapt to other cultural differences, combined with her

mindful approach how to navigate social interactions in various cultural contexts, reflects her dedication and commitment to effective cross-cultural communication and understanding. She further states that:

> *(111) [Yeah. Yeah, I prepared myself yeah. Like what I just came into the room? Generally, also, generally, I do not hug people as a way of greeting I just say hi from a distance, but Here I just hugged her at the beginning I did not know what to do. **But I told her I had in mind I am coming here to present myself**; I was even going to kiss her on the cheeks like we generally do but what to do and then I found myself I am hugging her so that was awkward but ok. Still, some people are happy to do it. Even if they are brits but they hug each other, same as Pakistani Indian people, rather than kissing cheeks. It is purely Algerian, Arab culture. Yeah. So yeah].*

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A7 reveals her keen awareness of cultural differences in her interactions, particularly when greeting people. She demonstrates that the experience of hugging someone upon entering the room contradicts how she usually greets people from with a social distance, which initially felt awkward for her. This illustrates her intention to adhere to the customary greetings of her culture, where potentially kissing on the cheeks is common practice. This highlights her desire to maintain familiar customs despite the cultural context she is interacting. Nevertheless, her uncertainty about the situation resulted in the unexpected gesture of a hug. This reinforces the different interpretations and expectations every individual has on how to act in a certain context. Here the Algerian participant is to some extent aware of how her behaviour is going to be interpreted by her interlocutor, therefore, she tries not to purely rely on her own culture rather she shows some awareness of the misinterpretation that might occur if she acts inappropriately. It is fascinating to note how cultural practices regarding physical greetings differ across various communities. She

demonstrates that despite the fact that hugging may not be the typical greeting in the Algerian culture, she notes that it is accepted by some individuals, including British and those of South Asian origin, indicating the diversity of cultural expressions even within particular cultural contexts. The participant's reflection on those cultural differences underscores the sensitivity and complexity of navigating cultural corms, especially in culturally diverse contexts. Despite expressing her initial discomfort and awkwardness, the Algerian participant A7 reveals her openness to embracing and adapting new cultural practices, demonstrating her respectful engagement with different cultural traditions and norms. Ultimately, her experience highlights the significance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in social interactions, as well as emphasising the enriching aspect of cultural diversity in interpersonal dynamics. Likewise, in response to whether she relies on her cultural norms while interacting with interlocutors of other cultural backgrounds, the British participant B6 states that:

(98) [*I think I am probably a little bit different here because I was born and raised in the Netherlands,* **which is a much more direct culture versus England, which is a much more polite culture.** *But my parents are British and my family's British. I have lived here for seven years now. So, I have also taken a lot of, you know, British culture onboard in terms of my personality, but also because I study intercultural communication, I think that I am probably a little bit better than the average person at communicating with people from other cultures. Okay, so I understand, I think I am much more aware of other cultures, behaviours and differences, and attributing if I think to myself like that strange instinct. You know, the average person might think like, oh, that was rude or whatever, to me*. ***I am going like, no, actually, it is probably***

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because it's, there's a cultural clash there and they're not trying to be rude, or whatever].

In this excerpt, the British participant B6 reflects on her unique background, being born and raised in the Netherlands, and now living in England for seven years. This blend has surely shaped her approach to communication and understanding of cultural dynamics. According to her, the Netherlands is considered a direct culture in comparison with the English culture which she perceives as more polite. The British participant B6 reflects on the influence of the English culture which has undoubtedly left its mark on her personality as an individual and on her communication style, through her family and the extended time she spent in the country. Additionally, she notes that her study on intercultural communication has further deepened her awareness of cultural differences and behaviours, and therefore allows her to view and interpret situations through cultural lens, demonstrating what may be perceived as rude or disrespectful to some people could merely be a result of cultural clashes rather than intentional disrespect. In other words, she highlights the significance of being aware of others' cultures to prevent communication misunderstandings. Also, she reinforces the idea that different individuals hold different interpretations and expectations of what is like to be appropriate behaviour in a certain context. The participant's analogy of cultural differences being similar to a "strange instinct" reflects a level of awareness and openness to understanding different perspectives. She demonstrates that instead of jumping to conclusions and forming judgments, she approaches interactions with a nuanced understanding and ultimately fosters more effective communication and positive relationships across cultures.

Overall, the participant's diverse background along with her education in intercultural communication has provided her with invaluable insights and skills, enabling her to navigate cultural variations with more understanding, empathy, and respect. Therefore, and as mentioned earlier, introducing intercultural communication modules into the teaching curriculum is deemed to be necessary so that people will familiarise themselves with the cultural differences that exist and their significant effect in improving everyday communication. Likewise, it is safe to say that living in a different culture for a certain period of time without having to learn about it prior to arriving there may affect people's personality and character and, therefore, the way they interact with each other.

4.2.4 Social status

In response to whether she feels uncomfortable refusing to accept an *offer* or an *invitation*, the Algerian participant A6 replies:

(84) [*It is not all the time, but I feel uncomfortable because yeah, sometimes the one who offers you this invitation might seem not friendly, but so liking to accept your refusal or your acceptance. But sometimes I feel that* **I am obliged to accept because of this the person in front of me or the person sending this invitation has sort of a strange position** *or I feel that this person can be hurt if I refuse the invitation*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A6 describes how she sometimes feels uncomfortable and awkward *declining* an *invitation*, even if the person extending the *invitation* does not particularly insist or seem to be friendly. Her discomfort might arise from her sense of obligation to accept due to the interlocutor's position or her concern of potentially hurting their feelings. Here, the Algerian participant A6 is highlighting the social norms that often imply an unspoken expectation to accept *invitations* as a form of reciprocity or *politeness*. To

her, even if she does not necessarily want to accept, refusing her interlocutor's *invitation* might feel like violating those unspoken agreements and ultimately breaking the social contract. In her mentioning being hesitant to refuse *invitations*, the Algerian participant A6 is demonstrating her concern about hurting her interlocutor's feelings. This could stem from her perceived authority or position or merely her desire to prevent offending or disappointing others. To this end, refusing others' *offers* or *invitations* can sometimes feel confrontational and assertive, particularly if the person offering or inviting seems eager for acceptance. Thus, this discomfort with maintaining own desires and preferences might make it challenging and harder to decline others kindly and politely. Overall, it is of paramount importance to accept or decline others' *invitations* or *offers* politely, especially when this does not align with their availability or interests. Moreover, expressing gratitude for the *offer* or the *invitation* while respectfully rejecting it can unlikely cause offense to others if done carefully, consequently helping to practice setting boundaries to feel more comfortable asserting individual's preferences without feeling the guilt or obligation to do so. Likewise, when asked which cultural norms she thinks affect her refusals, the British participant B6 asserts that:

> (99) [Well, British politeness for sure. I think what I think when you're refusing something, depending on who it's with, of course, like **if it's just a friend or if it's just my husband, um, but I think that if you're refusing, say, for example, if my supervisor asked me to do something, and I was really busy, I would say something along the lines of, no, I can't do this right now.** I am really sorry, but I will make sure I'll get Do it next week as soon as I can you downplay you know, how it's going to affect them. I try and make it up in another way. Yeah. **I think that is a very English thing to do social difference thing effect.** Yeah, yeah, definitely social. Like power, distance power does

*affect the social status and would affect you if you are in a job. But for the most part, I think that yeah, it is **I am kind of in this in-between zone where sometimes I will take on that English politeness, but other times my Dutch directness comes out more.**So, for example, my train was delayed. Yeah. Not too late. Sorry, it was overbooked. So, my start my seat was taken, last done. And most of the people like half the time was standing. Yeah. And in those situations, like, I do not think that is acceptable. And whereas English people might just be like, okay, you know, it is fine. I got really annoyed. I said, like, I have refused to pay for this journey. Like, you need to give me a refund. Yeah. Now, because I think that that is something that is kind of in-between India, where it is because it has been an imposition on me. I feel like I have the right to then say no, yeah. Yeah*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B6 delves into the cultural differences between British politeness and Dutch directness, especially in contexts of *power* dynamics and social interactions. She describes how she navigates those cultural disparities in various contexts as in the case of declining requests from superiors or handling daily life inconveniences like an overbooked train situation. According to her, in situations where she needs to decline a request, she usually employs British politeness by expressing regret and offering alternative solutions or timeframes to soften the impact of her *refusal* and preserve social harmony. Nevertheless, the British participant B6 acknowledges that she sometimes employs her Dutch directness, particularly when she feels strongly about the issue. In the context of the train delay, the British participant B6 highlights her response as differing from what she perceives as a more passive reaction from an English person. In this regard, the British participant B6 claims that her assertiveness reflects her Dutch cultural background, where being direct and

standing for oneself rights is considered more common. In accordance with her response, the British participant B6 refers to politeness as a major thing to consider while refusing others' *invitations* and *offers.* She points out too that both the *social status* and the *social power* that her interlocutor holds affect her refusals. She also highlights the fact that she relies on both her Dutch and British culture depending on the context, therefore, not sticking to one cultural background only when dealing with people.

In summary, the British speaker b6 reflects on the way she navigates between the two cultural norms, sometimes she employs British politeness to maintain social harmony, while at other times she displays Dutch directness to assert herself and directly address issues. Therefore, both *politeness* and *social status* remain key points to refer to in the current study as they significantly affect the way interlocutors realise the speech act of refusals in different cultural settings. In a similar vein, when asked whether she finds it easy or difficult to refuse *offers* or *invitations*, the Algerian participant A7 claims that:

(105) [*It depends on the people. Again, yeah, **it depends on Yeah. On the social status*** ***between me and people***, *to be honest, some people when they invite me or offer something, and I do not want to that I do not want to go for that. I do not even text back. Okay. Like, as if I did not even see your text or why you are asking for you know, okay, because I do not feel comfortable about doing that so just and ignoring rather than putting yourself in a difficult situation…I do not like to oblige myself. But I will see the text for example, later, I tend to apologize like I was saying, I did not see Oh, I was busy Something like that, giving another excuse after some time*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A7 discusses the approach she employs to decline *offers* or *invitations* based on her relationship with the people involved and the social

contexts. She notes that her refusal usually depends on her familiarity with the person and the *social status* they hold. Furthermore, she claims that when faced with situations where she receives an *offer* or an *invitation* she does not wish to accept, she often prefers to ignore the message altogether to avoid the uncomfortable situations and the potential pressure of having to refuse directly and ultimately, avoids the feeling of being obliged to accept. Nevertheless, she tends to apologise and provide excuses for her delayed response such as being busy with other tasks if she eventually sees the message. This, however, suggests that rejecting others' *invitations* or *offers* in the form of a text where you are not facing the person seems to be a lot easier than doing it face-to-face. According to her, this enables her to gracefully refuse the *offer* or the *invitation* without having to explicitly state her *refusal*. In essence, the Algerian participant A7's approach demonstrates her willingness to prioritise smooth social interactions while maintaining her comfort levels and her own personal boundaries. Correspondingly, she aims to avoid confrontations whenever possible in order to address the situation more politely if needed. Similarly, in response to whether she feels uncomfortable when refusing an *offer* or an *invitation*, the British participant B5 asserts that:

> (71) [*It depends on the offer… if it is a friend or you know, depends on work and friendship. I think it is very different. So, if it is an obligation for work, it depends a lot on if I think that I can fulfil what is required of me.* **With friends. It is more complicated, obviously, because you feel obligations to friends.** *Out of loyalty out of love out of care. I think it is very different*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 discusses how her response to *offers* and *invitations* depends on the nature of the relationship she shares with the person initiating it. In this regard, she reflects on the differences between *offers* which involve friendship and the ones

which are work-related. According to her, when it comes to work-related *offers*, her decision depends on how confident she is in fulfilling the requirements efficiently, indicating a pragmatic approach based on her ability to meet professional expectations and prior commitments. In contrast, when dealing with *offers* from friends, the British participant B5 perceives the situation as more complex where she expresses a sense of obligation to friends driven by emotions like love, care, and loyalty. To her, those emotional connections add a layer of complexity to her decision- making process, adding more depth compared to purely professional scenarios. Overall, the participant's response to *offers* is shaped by the context and the specific relationship involved. Whilst she prioritises reasonable considerations in work-related *offers*, more sensitivity and thoughtfulness are involved when dealing with friend-related *offers*. Simply put, rejecting *offers* and *invitations* from someone closer to her like a friend is more complicated than a stranger; therefore, the closeness between the two participants plays a huge role in communication. Thus, it always remains personal where every individual sees politeness from their perspectives and reacts accordingly and it is not something universal as stated by previous scholars (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987).

Here, we notice that opposite to the previous claims by the other participants of both groups, this participant considers declining a friend's *offer* or an *invitation* more challenging than that of someone socially distant from her. This demonstrates that even the *social distance* and *social hierarchy* that exist within a certain society are treated differently by the members of that society. Furthermore, in accordance with her answer to whether she feels annoyed or disrespected when receiving a *refusal* and the reason behind that, the British participant B5 claims that the way she receives the *refusal* and how it is framed as well as the tone along with the *social status* of her interlocutor are really critical in her considering it disrespectful or not; that is, and in agreement to what is mentioned earlier, the *social status*

of the interlocutor is key in communication and is worth mentioning as a theme in the current study. The same, when asked the opposite, that is, if she has ever accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to decline it the reason behind that, the British participant B5 asserts:

> (75) [*Oh, gosh! lots probably. Just, I think, you know, I think my whole life has been like those for various reasons. Until I realized that I could say no, I think, you know, I sometimes think that…I think lots of things really…* **depend on the context because** *I feel like things like friendship, friends, and stuff or family obligations, you would feel like that a lot, you know? I say, yes, I do not really want to, you know, maybe a family member is quite common, but you feel obligated to do that. So, it just depends on context, in my sense, like, it depends on Yeah,* **depends on what the context is.** *There are just so many in a way.]*

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 reflects on the numerous instances in her life where she has felt compelled to accept various things, possibly due to personal obligations or societal norms and expectations. She denotes that her past experiences have been marked by an inclination to agree until she later realised the power of saying "no" to others. In this regard, she acknowledges the significance of context in determining her responses in different situations. Particularly, she notes that in relationships involving friends or family, she more often finds herself agreeing to things hesitantly due to the sense of duty and obligation, which appears to be a common occurrence for her. She reinforces her previous claims that the closer she is to the person the more challenging for her to decline their *invitations* or *offers*. In conclusion, the British participant B5 highlights the importance of considering the context and the circumstances in which *offers* are made before deciding

whether to accept or refuse them. Furthermore, she stresses the necessity of being able to say no as a means of maintaining personal boundaries and prioritising her own well-being as a person. She further supports her claims with the following:

(76) [*Well, actually, interestingly,* **I said yes to doing a conference paper for my supervisor, which I do not really want to do**, *but I have said yes because I feel that it will please her. And I have respect for her. And so, I have said yes, because I respect her… Yeah, I think more kind of thinking that. More feeling like, it would be a waste if I did not, if as well. So, feeling like actually is probably quite a good thing for me to do... So, not so much politeness. But I think more like Actually, I do not want to do it by No, it is good for me*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 uncovers an instance where she agreed to write a conference paper for her supervisor despite her reluctance to do so. She explains her decision by her desire to please her supervisor and out of respect too. However, she acknowledges that her choice was not solely driven by politeness or obligation, but also for her personal benefit. In essence, the participant's decision to accept the conference paper illustrates a complex blend of factors, including awareness of potential gains, respect for their supervisor, and a desire to please them. In this regard, while showing respect and politeness play a significant role, the interlocutor's decision eventually reflects her thoughtful evaluation of the situation and its potential outcomes. In respect to whether she finds it easy or difficult to *refuse* an *offer* or an *invitation* and the reason why, the British participant B5 maintains that:

(77) [*find it easy to accept? But then I think part of my style is that in a way, I kind of know that I can give excuses if I do not want to. Later on, does that make sense? Which is kind of quite what my friends are describing this is a good word is flaky, which is like*

*you know this word flaky is like when you are quite flaky when you say yes. But then you do not have you sometimes do not fulfill it. And that is called flakiness being quite flaky. So, I do not have problems as a terrible person. But this is the truth. You know, I say yes, often, but sometimes. I am quiet I kind of think I am quite flexible. I do not know. But maybe that is what we were asking. It is kind of conflicted about saying yes or no, and often seek advice, actually, for things like, like, career things or work things often ask other people's advice Because I am not sure. I have got better at that. But it has taken me a while to be able to say yes or no, straightaway. Yeah… **So, it is more or less about the relationship you share with your interlocutor, as we said before, so if it is someone, your boss or your supervisor is not the same as your friend.** So yeah].*

In this excerpt, the British participant B5 talks about her tendency to initially accept *offers* or *invitations* easily, while she acknowledges that they may provide excuses and explanations later if she decides not to follow through. She uses the term "flaky" that her friends have described her within the sense that she always agrees to something and does not fulfil her commitments later. Furthermore, the British participant B5 keeps referring to the *social status* of her interlocutor and its effect on the way she communicates with them. She points out that the context and *weightiness* of the act itself play a significant role in the way she declines them. To her, declining minor things is not considered a challenging task compared with major things where she seeks assistance. Still, the relationship that she shares with her interlocutor remains key in the way she rejects their *offers* or *invitations*. Therefore, in this case, both the *weightiness* of the act or the overall context when the speech act is delivered along with the *social status* of the interlocutors are the main factors to consider while realising the speech act of refusals. Despite this, the British participant B5 does not consider herself a

terrible person in this regard, but rather someone who might struggle with taking decisions. She reflects on her flexibility in agreeing to things while acknowledging a conflict within herself as a person about her decisiveness to say *yes* or *no* outright. Thus, looking for advice from others when it comes to work-related matters or career has become a practice for her. It is worth mentioning though that, while it has taken her time to become more comfortable with making prompt decisions, the British participant B5 emphasises the significance of considering the relationship dynamics with her counterparts when declining *offers* or *invitations*. Ultimately, the participant's approach to accepting or refusing *offers* or *invitations* seems to be influenced by her willingness to maintain flexibility and effectively navigate social interactions. Likewise, when the Algerian participant A2 was asked whether she had accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner intention to refuse it, she states:

> *(9) [**When someone of higher status** asks me like**, let us say, do something, or go**
> **somewhere. So, I feel kind of embarrassed of saying no,** only if, like, I am having*
> *something like, you know, very serious, I would say no, like, I cannot make it. But*
> *otherwise, I will say yes. Even if I am not feeling comfortable to do it.]*

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A2 describes her hesitant feeling to refuse individuals of *higher status* as she finds it embarrassing unless she provides a significant reason for her *refusal*. However, she mentions that despite her being uncomfortable, in most cases, she tends to agree to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* in order to maintain positive relationships and prevent potential harm to her interlocutors' feelings. In other words, she reflects on the pressure to adhere to the expectations and the social norms associated with hierarchical relationships. Here, the participant's willingness to prioritise others' comfort over hers implies her tendency towards adapting behaviour, even at the expense of her own comfort and

personal preferences. In this regard, the participant's approach may stem from her desire to avoid conflicts and navigate the complexities of social hierarchy as well as preserve a positive public image, that is, saving both interlocutors' *faces* and ultimately maintaining social harmony. Overall, the participant A2's inclination to say *yes* even in situations when she is not comfortable highlights the intricate dynamics of social hierarchy and the complexities of asserting oneself in similar contexts. In a similar vein, with regards to her feeling uncomfortable when she refuses to accept an *offer* or an *invitation* and the reason why, the Algerian participant A7 states that:

(101) [*I think it depends on the person. If someone is really, close to me, okay. I think it is okay to say no, like, I am not very much into doing that.* ***But when the person is like, he is not that close to me, I will try to find some excuses*** *to explain why I cannot make it so, yeah*].

In this excerpt. The Algerian participant A7 indicates that her willingness to accept an *offer* or an *invitation* depends on the relationship with her interlocutor who is initiating them. According to her, she may feel comfortable straightforwardly declining someone very close to her by simply stating her lack of interest in participating without any hesitation. In contrast, when dealing with less familiar friends, she tends to resort to providing excuses and explanations to avoid the commitment. This distinction implies that the Algerian participant A7 values openness and honesty in her interactions with friends and acquaintances, feeling confident and secure enough to express her feelings without any fear of being judged. On the contrary, she prefers to avoid potential conflict and discomfort with less intimate connections, by providing excuses and explanations to her refusals. In summary, the participant's approach demonstrates her awareness and understanding of social dynamics

and her ability to adjust herself to navigate different relationships with more sensitivity and consideration. To this extent, she claims that she prioritises maintaining authenticity in her interactions while also managing social expectations and fostering harmony, based on the level of the closeness of the relationship. In a similar vein, when directing the talk towards whether the participant finds it easy or difficult to refuse an offer or an invitation, the Algerian participant A 1 claims that:

> (10) [Well, sometimes, I found it very difficult and like, very, very difficult. And again, **that depends on the distance between me and the person**. Otherwise, as I told you, if the person is just like, not too close to me, I would like just like refuse. Okay, so as easy. Yeah, it is very easy for me, but if the person like I know, like, I really struggle to say no. Or if I say no, I would like to provide a bunch of explanations.]

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 acknowledges the difficulty of declining others' *offers* and *invitations*, particularly when dealing with individuals she has close relationships with. That is, if the individual is not very close, participant A1 finds refusing relatively easy and straightforward without much hesitation. In contrast, when faced with the need to decline someone they are socially close to, the Algerian participant A1 claims that she experiences more difficulty and challenge. Accordingly, she asserts that she internally struggles with refusing as she feels the need to offer more explanations and reasons for her refusal. In this regard, the participant's tendency to provide explanations reflects her desire to justify her decision and ultimately maintain social harmony, even when declining others' *invitations* or *offers*. Again, this shows how much the *social hierarchy* impacts the way interlocutors frame their refusals where the more distant the person is the more explanation the participant provides so as not to sound rude and hurt them. Overall, the participant's willingness to reject

offers or *invitations* is influenced by the level of *social hierarchy* between her and her counterparts. Relatedly, when asked about which cultural norms the participant thinks affect her production of refusals, the Algerian participant A1 replies:

> *(11) [When I was in Algeria, **I always felt like my culture affects me saying yes or no to people as refusing an offer for food. For instance, if they keep insisting on me, even knowing what they are offering is not good for my health And I just eat it not to embarrass them.]***

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 highlights the cultural value placed on *politeness* and hospitability in different societies, including Algeria. She reflects on the way *offers* are refused in Algeria where it can be seen as disrespectful and impolite to decline food offerings. In this regard, she provides an example of her accepting a food offer despite her awareness that it was not good for her health, illustrating her desire to adhere to social norms and maintain positive relationships by not causing embarrassment to her interlocutor. Furthermore, her experience highlights the complex interplay between her cultural background and her personal desires, reflecting the complexities individuals face when interacting in intercultural settings where different norms and personal boundaries exist. She further adds:

> *(12) [But gradually that happens. I started to notice, for instance, in the office, whenever I am giving them something, they say no. You know, like, **no in our culture needs another invitation. And then No, it needs another invitation.** Then I asked one of my colleagues and he said like, (participant A1's name) in British culture **No, is no, it does not mean something else. However, in our culture, it does.** Yeah. So right from that moment, I do invite them, or I do offer the things but if they say no, I do not do*

*yeah. And I am doing the same. **Like I start to acquire this**, if you have seen me in the scenarios, when she was offering me something **I was genuinely saying no**, yeah.]*

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 reflects on the shift in her understanding of cultural differences, specifically regarding the way she perceives and interprets the word "no", which was derived from her continuous observation of her colleagues' refusal of *offers*. She later learned that in the British culture, "no" is straightforward and definitive, whilst in her culture (Algerian) a *refusal* might require further persistence or offering. Consequently, her observation prompted her to start adjusting her behaviour accordingly, where she began accepting her colleagues' initial refusal without further insistence or imposition. In other words, the Algerian participant A1 after encountering several instances where she received a refusal from her British colleagues, she started adjusting herself to their culture and not imposing on them to accept her *offer* or *invitation* even though she is clearly aware that this is not the norm in her own culture. In doing so, she acknowledges and adapts to the cultural norms of her workplace. As a result, when she is offered something herself, she now feels less pressured to decline genuinely without feeling the need to accept out of politeness. This shift in the participant's behaviour demonstrates her increased awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences, allowing her to navigate social interactions more efficiently while respecting both her cultural background as well as the cultural norms of her interlocutors. This shows the efforts participants make sometimes to integrate into a certain culture and prevent cultural misunderstandings.

The cultural adjustment may vary from one individual to another, according to the data some of the participants claim that they started straight away after they arrived in the UK in contrast to others where the learning process occurred after several years of being here

in the UK. Also, it is worth noting that the Algerian participant A1 refers to the use of ostensible speech act of refusal when she says: **[No, is no, it does not mean something else. However, in our culture, it does]**. This indicates that she is aware that there is a certain act we use to express our insincere intention when refusing others, but she does not refer to it as *ostensible*. This underlines the significance of introducing similar terms to people trying to learn about a certain culture and raise their awareness of the effect it might have on their communication. That is, the more familiarity with those codes the more successful communication they will achieve.   In the same regard, and in response to the same question, the Algerian participant A1 asserts that:

> (14) [So, it is kind of **I developed that attitude**, or I developed that a new habit of refusing or accepting. Yeah. **I am adjusting myself to the context I am living in**. And I got it as a habit to the point that when I go back to Algeria, like people are starting to notice that I am acting differently.]

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 reflects on how she has developed a new habit of accepting or declining *offers* based on the cultural norms of her current environment. She explains that she consciously adapted her behaviour to align with those norms, to the point where it has become a habit for her. This confirms her previous statements of adjusting herself to the host culture. Here it is worth mentioning, however, as to her, the cultural effect might be carried even when she is interacting with her interlocutors back home. Her claim reinforces the idea that different individuals react to cultural differences in a diverse manner and the cultural impact the society has on them differs from one person to another. In this regard, she mentions that upon returning to Algeria, her changed behaviour became noticeable to those around her and that she is acting differently. This observation highlights

how deeply the Algerian participant A1 has internalized and incorporated the cultural practices of her current surroundings into her daily life interactions. Overall, the interlocutor's experience reflects the fluidity and dynamic nature of cultural adaptation and how individuals can consciously adjust their behaviour to fit into various cultural contexts. She further states that:

> (15) [But to a certain extent, yeah, I started, like, for instance, like, generally, I do not want this and **even the person keeps insisting, yeah, I will do like, No, no**, yeah, I will if like, they offer us something that I like, for instance, dates, I would just like, Oh, I do not need any other invitation. I grab it. But if I really do not want to, I will say no, yeah. And I really mean it, it is not like, like, **it is not the same in our culture when I say no while I want that thing.** If I am saying no means that a genuine no.]

Here, the Algerian participant A1 discusses how she gradually became more assertive in responding to *offers* and *invitations*, particularly where she genuinely does not want something. In this regard, she highlights her ability to decline others despite persistent insistence from them, clearly expressing her disinterest by repeatedly saying "no". Nevertheless, she maintains that when she is offered something that she genuinely likes, such as dates, she eagerly accepts it without further hesitation, denoting an exception to her assertiveness, which reflects her genuine enthusiasm for certain offerings. Furthermore, the Algerian participant A1 highlights the sincerity of her *refusals*, stressing that when she says "no", she genuinely means it, regardless of what the cultural norms or expectations may suggest. In this regard, her honesty and authenticity responses reflect her commitment to being a straightforward and honest person in her interactions, even if she does not adhere to cultural norms. In summary, her evolving approach to dealing with *offers* and *invitations*

shows a growing assertiveness and sincerity in her communication, rooted in her genuine desire to express her personal preferences more respectfully and clearly, regardless of cultural norms and expectations. Likewise, in response to whether she feels annoyed or disrespected when she receives a refusal, the Algerian participant A3 states that:

(41) [*Well, also depends on the situation. **If someone is dear to me and I really want them to be there to do something for me and they say no,** I will be like…. **so, I would at least demand an explanation.** So, if it was like… if I was convinced of their explanation, fine. But if it is someone I always I care for them*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A3 claims that her response to someone declining her *offer* or *invitation* depends on the situation, specifically the *closeness* of their relationship with that person. According to her, if the person is important to her and their presence is crucial, she would feel compelled to understand the reason for their refusal. In such instances, she argues that she would at least expect them to provide a reason or explanation for their refusal. Her expectation is mostly driven by her care and concern for the other person, as she wants to ensure that they have a valid reason behind their refusal. According to her, if her interlocutor's explanation is understandable and convincing, she would accept it without issue. On the other hand, if the person holds significant importance to the speaker and she deeply cares for and refuses her *offer* or *invitation* without providing a satisfactory explanation, she claims that she may feel upset or disappointed. In such instances, she argues that she may seek further clarification or try to express her feelings to better understand their refusal. Overall, the participant's reaction to someone declining her *offers* or *invitations* reflects her emotional investment in social relationships and her desire for transparent communication, particularly when dealing with those she cherishes.

Nevertheless, when asked if she has ever accepted an offer or an invitation despite her inner desire to decline it, the Algerian participant A3 asserts that:

(44) [Yes, I have, yeah. Uhm, **because of that the person that asked I could not say no to that person**…Yeah, I just want to run away by I could not say no].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A3 reflects on situations where it was challenging for her to decline, despite her desire to say "no". She attributes that difficulty to the significant importance of the person who made the *offer/invitation*, which made it challenging for her to refuse. Here, the Algerian participant A3 claims that despite her strong desire to decline, she felt unable to do so due to the dynamics of her relationship with that individual, which played a significant role in her decision-making process. In this regard, the participant's hesitation to say "no" suggests that her desire to avoid potential conflicts and maintain positive relationships compensated for her needs and preferences in that particular situation. Her reaction could stem from various factors, including fear of disappointing her interlocutor, feelings of social obligations, or her desire to preserve harmony in the relationship. Overall, the Algerian participant A3's experience highlights the complex interplay between personal preferences and boundaries and relational dynamics, in the sense that the nature of the relationship can significantly influence individuals' ability to assert themselves and refuse *offers* or *invitations*.

4.2.5 Being genuine

In response to what extent, it is important for her to be genuine while *refusing offers* and *invitations*, the British participant B2 claims that:

(33) [*That is really important for me because I don't want to offend the other person. So, I think **it is really important to be genuine you***].

In this excerpt, the British participant B2 reflects on the significance of being genuine in her interactions, where she expresses her true intentions and feelings and ultimately avoids misunderstandings or unintentional offense to her interlocutors when declining their *offers* or *invitations*. Similarly, when asked to what extent it is important for her to be genuine while refusing others' *invitations* and *offers*, the Algerian participant A3 maintains that:

> (42) [It is really important, very important! So, you find **it really important to be genuine**…Yeah, of course. Yeah. Genuine in anything, not only refusing a person's offer or an invitation].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A3 reflects on the significance of being genuine not only in declining others' *offers* or *refusals*, but rather in every aspect of her behaviour and interactions in order to cultivate integrity, authenticity, and build trust within oneself and in relationships in general. In this regard, being genuine means aligning someone's behaviour with their values and norms to act in accordance with their true selves instead of pretending to be someone else. In a similar vein when asked to which extent it is important for her to be genuine while refusing an *offer* or an *invitation*, the British participant B6 asserts that:

> (94) [*Yeah, I think **it is important to always be genuine**. I would not lie about not wanting to go somewhere. Or you know, but I might just say, you know, I am not feeling very well. I am not in the mood. But I would always be genuinely feeling like that. At that moment. I would not say you know, like, I am not feeling well, but secretly, because I want to just go home*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B6 reflects on the significant role of being honest with others in communication, particularly when expressing feelings about social engagements. According to her, sincerity entails straightforwardly expressing desires and emotions, even if

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it means turning down *offers* or *invitations* or showing disinterest in particular social activities. Consequently, demonstrating self-respect and promoting transparent and open communication, nurturing empathy, and understanding in our relationships while enabling others to recognise our preferences and boundaries. Despite the fact of her claim that she does not feel uncomfortable rejecting *offers* or *invitations*, the British participant B6 clearly states above that she provides reasons for her refusal; therefore, indirectly, considering her interlocutors' feelings and being *polite*. In connection to what extent is it important for her to be genuine when refusing *offers* and *invitations*, the Algerian participant A5 claims that:

(58) [*It is very important because **you do not want to give a generic excuse** and the person knows that you are lying and then you just do not want to be there, so I try to keep …well you cannot be genuine 100%. Yeah, it is very important because you do not want to come across as a liar ... I mean I think you cannot be 100% genuine all the time because sometimes you just do not feel like going but you cannot say it. Personally, I cannot say it to the person I just cannot go, or I am not in the mood to go. **So, I try to find another excuse, but it should be as genuine as possible** just like for instance I am not feeling well you know seems better that I am not in the mood. Do you know what I mean? So, I think it is very important to stay genuine because if the other person gets to know or feels like you are lying, they would be offended because you are lying….*]

In this statement, the Algerian participant A5 reflects on how to maintain the balance between being sincere and navigating social interactions sensitively and diplomatically. In this regard, she mentions that there are times she may not feel comfortable expressing her true feelings in a direct way, yet she still wants to maintain honesty in navigating those scenarios

to preserve respect in relationships and avoid coming across as dishonest. According to her, finding a genuine excuse can be challenging, however, even if it is not the exact reason, striving for honesty remains crucial for maintaining respect and trust in relationships. As regards her answer, being genuine when declining others' *invitations* or *offers* is very important not to make the other interlocutors feel offended or hurt. She states that her choice of words should be sensible as in the case of replacing the excuse of "not in the mood" by rather a genuine one and more acceptable like "I am not feeling well". Consequently, staying true to oneself while also considering others' emotions and perspectives. In other words, finding a balance between diplomacy and honesty in communication helps in navigating social interactions more effectively, promoting understanding and respect in our day-to-day communication. For her, it is a matter of playing with words and not necessarily being genuine as she states:

> (59) [*... Yeah,* **so you just play in words**, *so you will not be lying but you will not be 100% genuine as well. It is like a spectrum, and you are somewhere in the middle*]*.*

According to her, navigating the spectrum between sincerity and diplomacy often means striking a middle ground where she can express herself genuinely without causing discomfort or offense. While employing carefully chosen words may not denote genuineness, it helps maintain truthfulness in communication while showing respect for others' social norms and feelings. Therefore, navigating this spectrum can involve various factors, including the context of the situation, the potential impact of the word's choice on others, and the type of relationship shared between interlocutors. Thus, it is about being true to oneself while also being thoughtful of others' perspectives and emotions. In a similar vein, in response to the

question of whether she feels annoyed or disrespected when she receives a refusal from someone and the reason why, the Algerian participant A1 states that:

*(4) [Actually, no. Uhm that depends, however, on the way they refuse, if somebody is just refusing by saying no, I would feel that rude so like, **if you do not explain, why are you refusing I will feel like, like, that was not a good thing to invite them, and they do not want to get close to me.** But if the person says like, you know, like, you cannot see this from his facial expression. It is like, I really want to, but I cannot I mean, you can feel the regret of refusing, you can feel it so this way, I would not get offended but if you just like say, no, I cannot make it. Like I would feel offended.*]

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 highlights the significance of how someone declines her *offers* or *invitations* in the way she perceives and interprets their response. According to her, a blunt "no" without any consideration or explanation can be seen as rude and disrespectful, leaving the impression that the person is disinterested in engaging with her further. On the other hand, declining her *offers* or *invitations* with a more nuanced response, expressing regret, and providing explanations can mitigate the refusal and convey a sense of consideration and respect. She further claims that in similar circumstances, even if her interlocutors do not accept the *offer* or *invitation*, their regret and sincerity can make it easier for her to accept the refusal without feeling offended. Additionally, she reflects on the significance of nonverbal cues, like body language or facial expressions in perceiving the refusal, that is, if someone appears to be genuinely apologetic and regretful, this can mitigate any potential offense caused. Hence, highlighting the importance of referring to both verbal and nonverbal cues when interpreting interlocutors' intentions when dealing with the speech act of refusals (see chapter two, section 2.6). Ultimately, how refusals are communicated or

declined is just as important as the message itself, in the sense that being mindful of other's feelings along with conveying our response respectfully can help maintain positive relationships, even when rejecting *offers* or *invitations*. Similarly, when asked to what extent she needs to be genuine or ostensible while refusing an *offer* or an *invitation*, the Algerian participant A1 asserts that:

(5) [*I would say genuine. **If I have a reason, I will go directly.** If I do not have a reason. It is just a personal thing. Yeah, probably I would opt for indirect options. But usually, I go direct.*]

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 describes a balance between being direct and showing consideration in communication. According to her, being straightforward and honest is important, particularly when she has a clear purpose behind her refusal where she prefers to address things directly. Nevertheless, she tends to opt for indirect approaches when she does not have a specific reason or when it is more of a personal matter. This might be driven by her desire to navigate those situations with more sensitivity and consideration or perhaps she believes an indirect approach seems to be more appropriate in that specific context. Overall, the Algerian participant A1 reflects on her willingness to adapt herself and be considerate of both her own intentions and the contexts she is engaging in. In a similar vein, in response to whether she would rely on her cultural norms when interacting with interlocutors of other cultures, the British participant B7 maintains that:

(119) [*Well, **it depends**. Like I have two cultural norms, I think...I am English, but I am also Jamaican. My grandparents are Jamaicans and have got their own norms*].

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In this excerpt, the British participant B7 describes the way she navigates between two cultural backgrounds, English and Jamaican, each with its own sets of values and norms. She reflects on the concrete influence of her grandparents' Jamaican cultural perspectives and practices on her. In this regard, she demonstrates that she finds herself balancing between two cultural identities across different aspects of life, including social interactions, communication styles, and cultural values, prompting her to adjust to different situations based on which cultural framework she feels most fitting and appropriate. This cultural duality can broaden the interlocutor's perspectives and make her more flexible in various social environments, leading to a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversities as she navigates both Jamaican and English norms in her daily life. Furthermore, in the following statement when asked about the norms she would rely on while interacting with people from different cultures, the British participant B7 states that:

> (120) [*I feel like British people do not do that do not adapt to other people's culture and norms. And like, it is very sad when like, yeah, sorry, sorry. And maybe that is because my grandparents are from a different culture, So I'm one empathetic to that but like, I feel like, I am much rather if I am going to one of my friend's house, my Pakistani friend, for instance, if I go to their house, or their parents' house,* **I'm going to be innate, try to bring my own cultural norms. And I do not want to rely on British norms either, because everyone else tries to adopt British norms.** *And really, maybe we should, the British should be adopted to everyone else's norms. yeah, that is how I do so that kind of adapt*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B7 expresses her disappointment with the lack of cultural adaptation among British people. According to her, when visiting people with

different cultural backgrounds, she prefers to bring her own cultural norms instead of relying

solely on the British ones. In this regard, she claims that people mostly tend to adopt British

norms in an intercultural communication setting instead of imposing their own norms. This

reflects her desire to maintain and embrace diversity rather than adhere to a dominant

cultural set of norms (British). Moreover, she suggests that the British society could benefit

from adopting and respecting others' cultural norms, instead of expecting everyone else to

conform to British norms. Her perspective highlights the significance of showing mutual

respect, and understanding, as well as accepting cultural differences in nurturing a more

harmonious and inclusive society. This, however, entails that people often have different

expectations regarding social interactions. As mentioned before, different individuals

interpret and employ cultural norms differently, not always adhering to societal standards

present to them.

4.2.6 Context
In connection to whether she finds it difficult or easy to decline an *offer* or an *invitation*, the

British participant B4 asserts that:

> (52) [***Depends on the situation***. *Yeah, it should be on the situation, like, if it is like an*
>
> *event, an important event and I have to refuse it then I feel a bit guilty. Because there*
>
> *might be important to them, that might hurt their feelings*]*.*

In this excerpt, the British participant B4 explains that her reaction to a certain situation can

vary depending on the context. In other words, the *weightiness* of the act itself and the

amount of hurt associated with it in that particular culture. For instance, if she declines an

invitation to an important event, she might experience some guilt in understanding how

significant the event is for the person, where declining could potentially upset them and hurt

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their feelings. This awareness of the impact of her actions on others' feelings demonstrates her empathy and sensitivity to interpersonal relationships. In a similar vein, when asked about when she thinks she should refuse an *offer* or an *invitation*, the Algerian participant A1 claims that:

(1) [*Um, I think **I would refuse in cases where there is no option for me like to accept,** let us say, for instance, if I have something urgent or if I have already a meeting, during these hours with somebody else, so I would definitely refuse without giving it a second thought.*]

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A1 demonstrates that in situations where she has prior commitments or urgent matters, she declines *invitations* and *offers* more comfortably without hesitation as she sees no alternative but to decline. She further illustrates by saying that it is more practical and necessary to decline if she had already scheduled a meeting during the same time period. Her approach seems straightforwardly guided by practical considerations, in the sense that when she is faced with conflicting obligations, she prioritises more immediate ones without dwelling on whether to decline or not. Consequently, allowing herself to manage time efficiently and respect her existing commitments. Relatedly, when asked whether staying in the UK has affected her way of refusing others' *offers* and *invitations*, the Algerian participant A5 states that:

(69) [*Yeah, definitely! I think there are so many things. I now, generally, find myself talking very little. I am not sure… there is a combination of so many things, but I think being here away from my family, staying alone for so long and also, I think generally people here do not like to talk too much, you know... they barely talk anyway. **So, I started adapting myself to that and I think also I now if I ask a question, I like the***

person to answer me to the point; do not give me details, just tell me yes or no. I do not need details and stuff like that. I think this is really British. I am not 100% sure, but it is. So, it is just something that sometimes the details will not affect or add anything to my life, so I do not need to hear them].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A5 reflects on how her communication style has changed, especially since being away from her family and adjusting to a culture where individuals tend to be more reserved in conversation, such as Britain. According to her, being in this environment has impacted her way of communicating where she became more concise and direct in dealing with people. Furthermore, she mentions that she prefers straightforward answers to questions, without providing unnecessary details. This preference of inclining towards conciseness and efficiency aligns with what she perceives as British cultural characteristics. According to her, offering excessive details does not add much value to her understanding, therefore she prefers to skip them. The Algerian participant A5's adaptation in her communication style signals her ability to adapt to various cultural norms and settings. Furthermore, it highlights her appreciation for clarity and efficiency in communication, prioritising what is important for her to know or understand in a particular situation. This, however, confirms the effect cultures have on individuals and the way they interact with each other. According to her claims, the Algerian participant A5 is hugely affected by the British individualistic culture where she believes that going direct when dealing with people and not providing any sort of details and explanations is something normal. In this regard, she considers the British culture as a straightforward culture where no efforts are required to convey the message as compared to her own Algerian culture. Relatedly, when asked when she thinks she should refuse an *offer* or an *invitation*, the Algerian participant A3 replies:

(39) [*Well, it depends on the situation. Uh, yeah. So,* **if it is something, I'm not comfortable with or against my religion or my principles,** *I would refuse it, otherwise, I just accept*].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A3 explains how her decisions about refusing an *offer* or an *invitation* highly depend on her comfort level and alignment with her religious beliefs and personal principles. She indicates that if the situation does not conflict with her values, she is more likely to accept, however, if the situation makes her feel uncomfortable, she will decline it. Her approach reflects a concrete balance between adhering to her own values and being open to new opportunities and experiences, which suggests maintaining integrity and not compromising on her own principles. Similarly, when she was asked whether she has ever refused an *invitation* or on *offer* despite her inner desire to accept it and the reason behind that, she asserts that:

(43) [*I think so, yeah. I cannot think of anything, but I think it has happened. I mean, there are so many things I want to do. I am supposed to be doing it, so I cannot. Yeah, yeah, it did happen*. **It was against religion**, *so I had to refuse, yeah*].

Apropos her answer, the Algerian participant A3 reflects on a situation where she had to decline an opportunity or an activity because it conflicted with her religious beliefs. Despite her desire to participate, her religious commitments required her to refuse. The Algerian participant A3's experience highlights the significance of staying true to her religious beliefs even when facing appealing opportunities, demonstrating her dedication to upholding her values and beliefs, even if sacrificing certain desires or experiences. In a similar vein, when asked when she should refuse an *offer* or an *invitation*, the Algerian participant A2 maintains that:

(19) [*Well, sometimes because of the timing.* ***Sometimes the situations, something that is not appropriate for me****, for example, if it's, for example, as a Muslim from Algeria, I cannot go on an invitation for example, to a party where there is wine or* ***something that is not appropriate for my culture****. I have to consider the timing of the or what they are inviting me and the cultural context.* ***What if…this is with or against my own principles***].

In this excerpt, the Algerian participant A2 explains how different factors, like cultural considerations and timing, influence the way she declines *invitations* or *offers*. She mentions that being a Muslim from Algeria, some events may not align with her cultural or religious beliefs, such as attending parties where alcohol is served. In similar instances, the Algerian participant A2 claims that she carefully assesses whether attending would contradict her cultural norms or personal principles. Her approach emphasises the importance of respecting her own cultural background and principles while navigating social interactions. In this regard, she mentions prioritising her cultural identity and values, even if it means declining *offers* or *invitations* that may not align with her religious beliefs.

Likewise, when asked the opposite, that is, whether she has ever accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to refuse it and the reason behind that, the British participant B4 claims that:

(51) [*I had no other solution apart from accepting it*].

In this excerpt, the British participant B4 refers to the social obligations to accept *offers* and *invitations*, demonstrating that in certain circumstances, external factors or obligations can leave individuals obligated to accept even if this does not align with their own beliefs or desires. This might be due to the societal expectations that constrain people's choices.
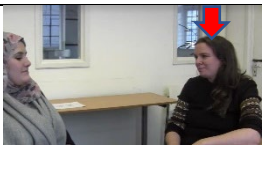
4.3   Tabulated data Analysis

Scene No 1: Equal social status/ same distance At the end of the meal, you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you cannot.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	-	0:04	Genuine offer	would you like some desert?	-	-
	1	0:07	Ostensible refusal	Um. Not really... I feel full	Convincingly smiling	
	2	0:11	Re-offer	Are you sure? I am going to have some	Relaxed facial features and direct eye contact	
	3	0:13	Ostensible refusal	Um no, I am sure. Yeah... That is fine	Smiling and no eye contact	

Table 2: Participant A1 and B1's interaction of an offer scene (Equal social status)

In this scene, after finishing their meal, the British participant (B1) offers her interlocutor (A1) some dessert. With a convincing smile on her face, the Algerian participant (A1) declines (B1)'s *offer* by saying: 'Um. Not really... I feel full'. Here, the Algerian participant (A1) provides a reason for her refusal that is mostly derived from her considering the costs to her addressee, i.e., not imposing on her interlocutor and therefore not causing too much trouble for her. Also, at this point, we can perceive that her refusal aims to weigh the sincerity of her interlocutor's *offer*, i.e., whether she is genuine about her *offer* or not. Therefore, according to Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework, she is not genuine in her refusal, and she is just pretending to be so. Another property of ostensible speech act (mutual recognition) is distinguished in this sequence where the British participant B1 recognises the pretense of her

interlocutor and subsequently re-initiated her *offer* for the second time by saying: "Are you sure? I am going to have some" to make sure her interlocutor is genuine about her refusal as well with direct eye contact and very relaxed facial features. Here, the British participant (B1) does not extend beyond social courtesy, that is, she does not provide further reasons to reinforce her interlocutor (A1) to accept her *offer* to show her pretense of sincerity. Consequently, The Algerian Participant (A1) declines the *offer* for the second time by saying: 'Um no, I am sure. Yeah… That is fine' with no direct eye contact and a smile on her face. Here, even though both participants are mutually aware of each other's pretense, the British participant (B1) does not insist on her interlocutor further and therefore gives an end to the *offer-refusal* sequence. It is worth mentioning, however, that there is also a clear discrepancy between the Algerian participant's (A1) verbal cues and what is conveyed non-verbally. That is evident, especially, in her first refusal where she seems hesitant about her refusal and gives the impression to her offeror that she might accept it if further insisted on her. According to Shishavan (2016), this signals the insincerity of the utterance, and that the interlocutor is not fully committed to what they perform physically, that is, the use of inappropriate cues.

In this *offer-refusal* scenario, all the five properties of Isaacs and Clark's (1990) ostensible speech act (pretense, mutual recognition, collusion, ambivalence, and off-record) are present along with one feature (the use of inappropriate cues). That is when saying: "Um. Not really... I feel full" the Algerian participant A1 is pretending sincerity and her intention is recognised by the British participant who eventually colludes with and responds appropriately by saying: "Are you sure? I am going to have some" just to assure her interlocutor's refusal is genuine and that she sincerely does not want the dessert. As a response to this, the Algerian

participant A1 issues a tacit refusal for the second time with inappropriate non-verbal cues.

Therefore, in this case, her both refusals are classified as ostensible.

Scene N0 2: Equal social status ask your close friend to join you for a movie in the evening.	Shot N0:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	-	0:21	Genuine offer	Do you want to come up with me to see a film tonight?	-	-
	4	0:28	Ostensible refusal	Um…Actually, I would love to, but I don't really want to go anywhere. I just want to….	Tightened facial features, smiling and direct eye contact	
	5	0:30	Re-invite	You sure? maybe you feel better if you get out	Relaxed facial features, direct eye contact with minimum blinks	
	6	0:33	Genuine refusal	No, I'm sure I think I'm not going	Smiling, intermittent eye contact and frequent blinks	
	-	0:36	Re-invite	Ok. That's great. Do you want to go another time may be? Let me know	-	-

	-	0:41	Genuine acceptance	Yeah, I'll definitely let you know by next week or may be by the weekend but not tomorrow.	-	-
	-	0:44		Ok. Alright. Hope you will feel better.	-	-

Table 3: Participant A1 and B1's interaction of an invitation scene (Equal social status)

In this scene, the British participant B1 invites her interlocutor to join a film. The Algerian Participant A1 with a tightened facial expressions and a smile on her face declines the *invitation* by saying: "Uhm…Actually, I really would love to, but I don't really want to go anywhere". Here, the British Participant B1, does not take her refusal genuinely and re-initiates the *invitation* for the second time by saying: "You sure? Maybe you feel better if you go out". Nevertheless, the Algerian participant A1 carries on rejecting the idea of going out by saying: "No, I'm sure I think I'm not going". Here, the *invitation-refusal* sequence does not end at this point; rather, the British participant B1 accepts Participant A1's genuine refusal and tries to invite her for another time in the future by saying: 'Ok. That's great! Do you want to go another time maybe? Let me know''. Subsequently, the Algerian Participant A1 ends up accepting the *invitation* by saying: 'Yeah. I will definitely let you know by next week or maybe by the weekend but not tomorrow'. Then, the *invitation-refusal* sequence ends with both participants A1 and B1 agreeing to re-arrange the *invitation* for another time in the near future.

In this scene, despite the fact that the British Participant B1 receives a genuine refusal from the Algerian Participant A1, she re-initiates the *invitation* for the third time and extends

the *invitation-refusal* sequence further. One reason for that might be her liking the company of someone on the movie night and the other reason might be related to her interpretation of her interlocutor's facial expressions when realizing the refusal. As we can see from the image, when declining the *invitation* for the second time, the Algerian participant A1 uses intermittent eye contact with her interlocutor as well as frequent blinks which might denote her being hesitant about her decision. Therefore, another *invitation* is initiated by the British participant B1 for the future depending on the availability of her interlocutor, and consequently get her interlocutor's approval to meet the next week. This, however, reinforces the significance of non-verbal communication in our everyday communication (see Chapter Two, section 2.6).

In this sequence, despite the fact that The Algerian participant (A1) provides a reason for not accepting to join her friend (B1) for the movie, her facial expression shows that she is not sure about her response. This might be because the British participant (B1)'s *invitation* was delivered without sufficient details such as the exact timing, the place, the name of the movie, and so on. As per Isaacs and Clarck (1990) providing insufficient details about the *invitation* denotes whether it is genuine or ostensible. Therefore, in this case, the British participant's (B1) intention is undetectable whether it is genuine or ostensible which itself makes the participant's (A1) intention to refuse unclear too. In other words, the Algerian participant (A1) is not sure that her interlocutor's *invitation* is genuine, therefore, she provides an ostensible response as well in order to assess the sincerity of her interlocutor's intention. Likewise, in her second refusal, saying 'No, I think I am not going' which signals that she is not certain about her refusal as well. Consequently, her intention was recognized by her interlocutor as an insincere refusal. However, instead of insisting on the same *invitation*, the British participant (B1) accepts the refusal and re-initiates the *invitation* for a different

time. This highlights the significance of the mutual awareness of the pretense of both participants when it comes to realizing any speech act. In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, as per Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework, the Algerian participant A1's first refusal is ostensible as it incorporates different properties of the ostensible speech act in comparison with her second refusal which is considered genuine.

Scene No 3: High-low social status	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
Adopting the role of a student, please offer your tutor a cup of coffee.	7	0:59	Genuine offer	I've just got a cup of coffee. Do you want some? Do you want me to get you one? --------	Relaxed facial features, mild smile and direct eye contact	
	-	1:02	Genuine refusal	Uh, no, I'm fine. Thank you. I have just had some tea. I am ok. Thanks a lot.	-	-
	-	1:04	Re-offer	Ok. Um... are you sure?	-	-
	8	1:06	Genuine refusal	Yeah, yeah...I know... I've just had a drink. Thank you --------	Relaxed facial features, mild smile and direct eye contact	

	-	1:07	Genuine Acceptance	ok	-	-

Table 4: Participant A1 and B1's interaction of an offer scene (High-low social status)

The sequence *offer- refusal* starts with the Algerian Participant (A1) offering her interlocutor a cup of coffee after getting herself one. The Algerian participant A1 says: "I have just got a cup of coffee. Do you want some? Do you want me to get you one?" Participant B1 declines the *offer* by saying: "Uhm, no, I am fine. Thank you. I have just had some tea. I am ok. Thanks a lot". Here, despite the fact that the British Participant (B1) offers a genuine reason for her declining the *offer* of her interlocutor, along with being thankful; the Algerian participant (A1), makes sure whether the refusal is genuine by saying: "Ok, uhm… are you sure?" With very relaxed facial features, a smile, and direct eye contact, the British participant (B1) confirms her refusal by saying: "Yeah, yeah… I know… I have just had a drink. Thank you…." Consequently, the Algerian participant A1 accepts the refusal and does not offer further. Therefore, the *offer-refusal* sequence ends at that point with both parties being happy and satisfied with each other's answers. In this scene, the British participant B1 rejects the *offer* of her interlocutor for the first time by providing the reason why and by being grateful to her interlocutor. However, the Algerian participant (A1) does not take the refusal genuinely and re-initiates the *offer* for the second time just to make sure her interlocutor truly does not want to have the coffee. Here, the British participant B1 rejects the *offer* for the second time providing the same excuse (having a drink previously). This time, however, the participant seems to be relying not only on her interlocutor's verbal answer but rather on her very relaxed facial features and direct eye contact when saying no to her. In this sequence, it is noticeable, however, as per Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework that both participant (B1)'s first and

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second refusal are genuine as she provides adequate reasons for her refusal along with appropriate physical cues that match her verbal ones. In other words, none of the ostensible features or properties is present in this sequence. Thus, participant (B1)'s intention is clear from her first refusal that she is genuinely declining the *offer* and does not require further insisting. Nevertheless, the Algerian participant (A1) re-initiated the *offer* for the second time. This signifies the difference that exists between interlocutors in the way they interpret speech acts and evaluate them due to the different cultural backgrounds that they belong to.

Scene No 4: High-low social status Adopting the role of the employee, please initiate the invitation of	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/screenshot
	9	1:18	Genuine invitation	Are you free anytime? like by chance on the next Saturday?	Relaxed facial features, mild smile, direct eye contact and hand movement	
	10	1:23	ostensible refusal	Next Saturday! Uh, I don't think I am. Why? What's happening?	Direct eye contact with emphatic eye blink	

birth day part y.	11	1:27	Genuine invitation	OH... it's my birthday. I would like to invite you over.	Relaxed facial features and direct eye contact	
	12	1:32	Genuine refusal	Oh...that's... oh, such a shame! Sorry, my parents are visiting that weekend. So, I have to be home. Happy birthday, anyway!	Direct eye contact with frequent emphatic blinks	
	-	1:34		Oh. I am sorry!	-	-

Table 5: Participant A1 and B1's interaction of an invitation scene (High-low social status)

Here, the Algerian participant A1 initiates the *invitation* to her birthday party with direct eye

contact and some hand movements along with a mild smile. She says: "Are you free anytime?

Like by chance the next Saturday?" The British participant B1, with direct eye contact and an

empathic eye blink, replies: "Next Saturday! Uh, I don't think I am. Why? What's happening?"

Here, the Algerian participant A1 in response to Participant B1's question replies by re-

initiating the *invitation* once again saying: "Oh… it's my birthday. I would like to invite you over". The British participant (B1) replies: "Oh… that's… such a shame! Sorry, my parents are visiting that weekend. So, I have to be home. Happy birthday, anyway!" Then again, the Algerian participant A 1 ends the sequence of *invitation-refusal* by taking Participant B1's refusal genuinely and, therefore, not offering her once again by just saying: "Oh. I am sorry!".

In this scene, the Algerian participant A1 invites only two times and does not insist further on her interlocutor to attend her birthday party. The British participant (B1) provides a very genuine reason for her not accepting her interlocutor's *invitation* (her parents visiting home) which is considered by the Algerian Participant (A1) a sufficient reason not to insist more on her interlocutor despite the fact that the British Participant (B1) is frequently blinking when saying no to her which is previously considered to be a sign of hesitance by the interlocutor to say no. In this sequence, due to the fact that the Algerian participant (A1) does not provide sufficient details about her *invitation*, the British participant (B1) first refusal is considered ostensible as she is not sure about her interlocutor's intention. This is evident in her facial expression where she seems not too sure about her refusal. Using inappropriate non-verbal cues in conveying her refusal denotes the insincerity of her intention. The former is considered one of the features of ostensible speech acts introduced in Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework. However, in her second refusal after having a clear idea about the *invitation* she still declines it with both matching verbal and non-verbal cues along with stating a valid reason for her not being able to attend the party (parents' visit). Subsequently, her genuine intention to refuse is detected by the Algerian participant A1 who does not extend the *invitation-refusal* sequence further.

Scene No 5: low-high social status Adopting the role of professor, please make the offer of purchasing the book.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screen shot
	13	1:51	Raising the issue	Oh… no, no… I have just realised I forgot my wallet, so I am just going to have to leave this	No eye contact	
	14	1:53	Genuine offer	Oh… don't worry about that. I can pay it for you	Relaxed facial features and direct eye contact	
	15	1:54	Genuine refusal	Oh… no, no… I cannot let you do that	Intermittent eye contact and hand movement	
	-	1:58	Re-offer	No, seriously! I can pay it, then you just pay me back.	-	-
		2:01	Genuine refusal	Oh, no. I can't …um that's so kind of you. Thank you! I'm just going to leave it for now though. I can come back and get it another time	-	-
	-	2:05	Re-offer	Are you sure?	-	-

	16	2:06	Genuine refusal	Yeah, yeah… thank you though. That's really kind of you	Relaxed facial features and minimum eye contact	

Table 6: Participant A1 and B1's interaction of an offer scene (Low-high social status)

Scene 05 starts with the British participant (B1) raising the issue of her forgetting the wallet and therefore not being able to pay for the book. Without direct eye contact with her interlocutor, the British Participant B1 says: "Oh, no, no… I have just realized I forgot my wallet, so I am just going to have to leave this". Here, the Algerian participant (A1) with relaxed facial features and direct eye contact initiates her offer to pay for the book by saying: "Oh… don't worry about that. I can pay for it for you. In response to that, the British participant B1 says: "oh, no, no…. I cannot let you do that" that too with intermittent eye contact and supporting hand movement of her refusal. As a consequence, the Algerian participant (A1) confirms her true will to pay for the book by saying: "No, seriously! I can pay it, then you just pay me back". After that, the British participant (B1) carries on declining the *offer* of her professor to pay for the book despite the fact that the Algerian participant (A1) makes sure that she can pay her back later. The British participant (B1) states: 'Oh, no. I can't…Uhm, that's so kind of you. Thank you! I am just going to leave it for now though. I can come back and get it another time'. Here, the Algerian participant (A1) asks her interlocutor again whether she is sure of her decision not to purchase the book by saying: "Are you sure?". In response to that, the British participant B1 said: "Yeah, yeah… Thank you though". That's really kind of you' and ends the sequence of *offer- refusal* with minimum eye contact and being grateful for her interlocutor's kindness and care.

In the sequence, the British participant's (B1) first refusal is genuine as her utterance is supported by her hand movement and facial expressions to show her interlocutor that she does not want her to pay for the book. Despite the fact that both participants are mutually aware of the sincerity of participant (B1)'s refusal, the Algerian participant (A1) re-initiates the *offer* for the second time. This explains the cultural differences in the way refusals are dealt with by members of different societies.   To confirm her sincerity in not accepting the *offer*, the British participant (B1) provides further reasons and explanations when performing her refusal to convince her interlocutor that she genuinely does not want her to purchase the book for her. Yet, the Algerian participant (A1) extends her *offer* for the third time to make sure of the possibility of her interlocutor to change her mind and accept the *offer*. In this scenario, none of the properties or features of Isaacs and Clark's (1990) ostensible speech act are present which means that the British participant's refusals are genuine, however, her sincere intention is not detected by her Algeria interlocutor who re-initiates the *offer* three times despite her receiving very convincing reasons of the refusal. The first refusal of participant (B1) is enough to determine her sincerity of not wanting participant (A1) to purchase the book, but due to both participants coming from two different cultures with totally different socio-cultural norms, the *offer-refusal* is extended for several turns.

Scene NO: 06	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
Low to high social status. Adopting the role of a professor, please initiate an invitation to your students to celebrate the success of the project.	-	2:15	Genuine invitation	All is great with the job! You have done very well with me. So, please with the work you put in we are having a big lunch to celebrate the project. Uh…you have to come …um... I'm going to do it today.	-	-
	17	2:31	Ostensible refusal	Yeah. Really happy for the overall achievement, but I am afraid that I cannot make it today	Tightened facial features, smile and direct eye contact	

	18	2:35	Re-invite	Oh, no (A1)! You have to come… you are such a big integral part in finishing it… You need to be there	Relaxed facial features and hand movement	
	19	2:39	Ostensible refusal	Yeah. I know, but I have … like… something very important	Intermittent eye contact with frequent blinks	
	-	2:43	-	Oh… can't you move it?	-	-
	-	2:45	Ostensible refusal	No. I can't.	-	-
	-	2:46	Re-initiating the invitation	Oh, such a shame. I really want you to be there.	-	-
	-	2:49	apologies	I'm sorry about that.	-	-
		2:50	Future planning	Ok. ok may we can get all together another time then, but we will be seeing you.	-	-
		2:52	Promise of future acceptance	Yeah. Definitely! We will!	-	-

Table 7: Participant A1 and B1's interaction of an invitation scene (Low to high status)

Scene 06 starts with the British participant (B1) adopting the role of a professor inviting her interlocutor A1 (the student) to celebrate the success of the project by saying: "All is great with the job! You have done very well with me. So, please with the work you put in we are having a big lunch to celebrate the project. Uh…you have to come …um... I'm going to do it today". With tightened facial features and direct eye contact participant (A1) replies: "Yeah. Really happy about the overall achievement, but I am afraid that I cannot make it today". The *invitation- refusal* does not end there as the British participant (B1) re-initiates the *invitation* once again to convince her interlocutor to accept and join the celebration. She tries to highlight the importance of her interlocutor in the success of the project, therefore, her significant presence in the celebration by saying: "Oh, No (participant A1's name)! You have to come… you are such a big integral part in finishing it… You need to be there". Here, the British participant (B1) tries to integrate some body movements in her way of convincing her interlocutor as hand movements. Despite the fact of her receiving the *invitation* for the second time, the Algerian participant (A1), with intermittent eye contact with her interlocutor, insists on not coming by saying: "Yeah. I know, but I have … like... something very important". The *invitation-refusal* sequence does not end at that point and participant (B1) seems very interested to have her student at the party. After participant (B1) realizes that her interlocutor might be genuine about their refusal and that she truly seems not able to make it anyway; she tries to start to look for another way to convince her interlocutor by asking her whether she is able to move her commitments to a different day by saying: 'Oh… can't you move it?' Here, the Algerian participant (A1) keeps refusing the *invitation* and her answer this time is direct without any excuses compared to the previous instances where she

provided reasons for her refusal. The Algerian participant (A1) replies: "No. I can't". The

British participant (B1) extends her invitation-refusal sequence in an indirect way where her

apology is very clear by stating: "Oh, such a shame. I really want you to be there". The Algerian

participant (A1) after realizing her interlocutor's genuine desire to have her at the party

initiates an apology by saying: "I am sorry about that". Consequently, participant B1 accepts

her interlocutor's refusal and takes it genuinely. She states: "Ok. ok, maybe we can get all

together another time then, but we will be seeing you". And, finally, the *invitation-refusal*

sequence ends with the Algerian participant's (A1) promise of future acceptance of the *offer*

where she states: 'Yeah. Definitely! We will!'.

In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, the Algeria participant (A1)'s first refusal is

considered ostensible due to the fact that her verbal cues do not match her facial expressions.

According to Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework, using inappropriate non-verbal cues when

conveying a verbal message denotes the insincerity of the speech act where it signals that the

interlocutor is not fully committed to what they are saying verbally. Therefore, in the first

instance, the Algerian refusal is initiating an ostensible refusal of the *invitation*. Also, her

refusal is not accompanied by valid reasons or explanations as to why she is not able to attend

the party. The same applies to her second refusal when she does not keep constant eye

contact with her interlocutor (B1) and she is very vague about her reasons for declining the

invitation where she says: 'Yeah, I know, but I have something very important'. Not providing

sufficient reasons and explanations while performing her refusal is also another feature of

not being genuine about the refusal. Here, participant (B1) recognizes her interlocutor's

insincerity of her refusal therefore she re-initiates the *invitation* in the form of a suggestion

to move it to another day. Yet, the Algerian participant (A1) declines the *invitation* genuinely

by making a promise to attend in the future giving an end to the *invitation-refusal* sequence.

It is worth noting, however, in this scene that the British participant B1 extends the *invitation-refusal* sequence for several turns instead of what is considered the norm in the British culture. This suggests that the ostensible speech act of refusals is present in not only the Algerian culture however not all people are aware of its existence and how to deal with it. In this case, the use of inappropriate non-verbal cues along with not providing valid reasons for the refusal explains the reason for the British participant's extending the *invitation-refusal* for several turns; therefore, highlighting the significant role of non-verbal communication in our daily life conversations (see Chapter Two, section 2.6).
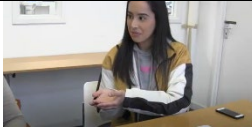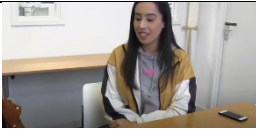
Scene No 7: Equal social status/ same distance	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
At the end of the meal, you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you cannot.	1	0:03	Genuine offer	Would like a cup of coffee?	Direct eye contact with hand gesture	
	2	0:05	Genuine refusal	I would like to, but I am afraid, I am busy at the moment. So, I cannot. Maybe will do it later.	Frequent eye blinks with constant hand movement	
	4	0:14	Acceptance and no further insistence	Ok	-	-

Table 8: Participant A2 and B2's interaction of an offer scene (Equal social status)

Scene 07 starts with the British participant (B2) offering her interlocutors a cup of coffee by saying: 'Would you like a cup of coffee' while maintaining direct eye contact and moving her hands towards her counterpart. With frequent eye blinks and constant hand movement participant A2 declines the *offer* by stating: "I would like to, but I am afraid, I am busy at the moment, so, I cannot" and follows her refusal by offering an alternate suggestion by saying: "Maybe will do it later" accompanied by a mild smile. By agreeing to Participant (A2)'s suggestion, the British participant (B2) ends the *offer-refusal* sequence. Here, no further insistence is seen from the British participant (B2) on her interlocutor.

In this sequence, the Algerian participant (A2)'s response indicates her inability to accept the *offer* where she provides a reason for her being busy as well as the possibility for future arrangements. Here, the Algerian participant realizes the speech act of refusal by keeping direct eye contact with her interlocutor which denotes her commitment to what she is saying. Therefore, signalling a closer relation between her utterance and her physical cues. Thus, delivering a genuine refusal. Consequently, her sincere intention is detected by her interlocutor and no further insistence takes place.

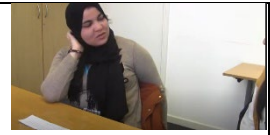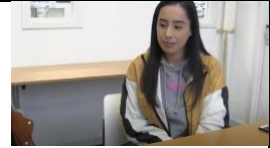| Scene No 8: Equal social status / same distance	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
status / same distance	5	0:06	Genuine offer	Now, I think it's time for desserts. Do you want to have one?	-	-
At the end of the meal, you feel	6	0:10	Genuine refusal	No, I am sorry. I am really full. Thank you, though!	Breaking the eye contact with mild smile	

so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you cannot.	7	0:12	Re-offering	Are you sure! You will regret it...	Constant smile with head resting on hand	
	8	0:14	Genuine refusal	I am sorry. I am really full! Thank you again!	Breaking eye contact with restricted smile	
	9	0:17	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence.	That's fine. Maybe you will accept it next time		

Table 9: Participant A2 and B2's interaction of an offer scene (Equal social status)

In this *offer-refusal* sequence, the Algerian participant initiates the *offer* of some dessert after finishing their meal by saying: 'Now, I think it's time for desserts. Do you want to have one?' Her *offer* is declined by the British participant B2 where she states: "No, I am sorry. I am really full. Thank you, though!" With breaking eye contact and a mild smile. Here, the sequence is extended further where the Algerian participant A2 re-initiates her *offer* by stating: 'Are you sure! You will regret it...' while keeping a constant smile on her face. Her *offer*, however, is rejected for the second time by the British participant B2 saying: 'I am sorry. I am really full! Thank you again!' Participant B2's refusal is finally accepted by her interlocutor where she says: "That's fine. Maybe you will accept it next time" giving an end to the *offer-refusal* sequence where no further insistence is provided. Here, it is worth noting. However, compared to the previous scene (07), the *offer-refusal* is extended by the Algerian participant A2 two times. This denotes the differences in the way both participants realize the speech act

of refusal. This is explained above in the Algerian participant A2's answers in the semi-structured interviews analysis where she refers to the strong affect her culture has on the way she approaches and handles the speech act of refusals.

In this sequence, the British participant B2 politely declines the *offer* of her interlocutor by expressing her gratitude and the reason for her refusal (being full). Here, the British participant's genuine intention is not detected by her interlocutor (A2) who tries to insist on her to accept the *offer* for the second time. Again, the British participant B2 indirectly refuses the *offer* by expressing both her appreciation and apology for not being able to partake in the dessert. In this scenario, it is clear that participants from different cultures do not necessarily interpret politeness in the same way, and this might cause confusion and misunderstandings in intercultural settings. In other words, being polite does not always indicate the insincerity of the speech act where participants can politely perform a refusal and still be genuine in their intention.

Scene No 09: High-low social status Adopting the role of a stude	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	1	0:55	Genuine offer	I was in student lounge. I bought you a cup of coffee with me. Would like to have some?	-	-

nt, please offer your tutor a cup of coffee.	2	1:01	Genuine refusal	No. Thank you! I have just had a cup of tea. So, I am not really in need of another one	Direct eye contact with mild smile and frequent head nods	
	3	1:06	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Ok. Ok. That's fine	Slightly breaking the eye contact with constant smile	

Table 10: Participant A3 and B3's interaction of an offer scene (High-low social status)

This sequence starts off with the Algerian participant A3, adopting the role of a tutor, offering her British interlocutor B3 a cup of coffee by saying: 'I was in the student lounge. I bought you a cup of coffee with me. Would like to have some?' with direct eye contact, mild smile, and frequent head nods, the British participant B3 declines the *offer* by stating: 'No. Thank you! I have just had a cup of tea. So, I am not really in need of another one' With a constant smile and slight eye contact the Algerian participant A3 ends the *offer-refusal* sequence by saying: 'Ok. Ok. That's fine' and does not initiate the *offer* further. It is worth mentioning here that the British participant does not use a direct refusal; rather, she accompanies her rejection by providing two reasons for her rejection. That is, the British participant (B3) declines the *offer* by saying 'NO' followed by gratitude and a reason for not accepting the *offer* (I have just had a cup of tea). In this *offer-refusal* sequence, the reason, and the explanation the British participant B3 provides in performing her refusal denote that the latter is sincerely extended. Additionally, the non-verbal cues she is conveying support her utterance and imply that she

genuinely does not want to accept the *offer*. Consequently, her intention is detected by her

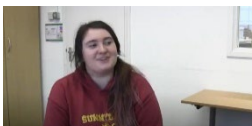interlocutor (A3) and no further insistence is provided.

Scene No 10: low-high social status Adopting the role of a professor, please initiate an invitation to your students to celebrate the success of the project.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	4	0:04	Genuine invitation	Would you like to go to the lunch with all the students to celebrate this completion of the project?	Direct eye contact with mild smile	
	5	0:10	Ostensible refusal	That is very sweet, but I am really sorry that I cannot attend for this celebration. I do really apologise for you	Direct eye contact and constant smiling	
	6	0:20	Future planning	Ok. Let me know if we can have lunch together…	Direct eye contact with mild smile and slight head nod	-
	7	0:27	Genuine refusal	I am really sorry to miss this opportunity, but I have other jobs to do…	Direct eye contact and constant smiling	

Table 11: Participant A3 and B3's interaction of an invitation scene (Equal social status)

In this sequence, adopting the role of the professor, with direct eye contact and a mild smile, the British participant B3 invites her Algerian interlocutor for lunch by saying: 'Would you like to go to the lunch with all the students to celebrate this completion of the project?' the Algerian participant (A3) responds: 'That is very sweet, but I am really sorry that I cannot attend for this celebration. I do really apologize for you' Here, the Algerian participant A3 structures her refusal in a combination of appreciation of the *invitation*, and an apology but does not provide a reason for her refusal. According to Isaacs and Clark (1990), contextual cues are very significant in determining whether the speech act is extended sincerely or not. Therefore, her refusal is ostensible as the reasons and explanations she provides for refusal are not very convincing. However, her insincere intention is not detected by the British interlocutor B3 who does not insist on her further to accept the invitation and consequently replies: 'Ok. Let me know if we can have lunch together…' At this point, the Algerian participant repeats her apology for missing the event accompanied by a reason why (having other jobs to do). This ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence where no further insistence is issued.

Here, the Algerian participant (A3) genuinely declines the *invitation* by expressing her gratitude, and regret for not being able to accept it along with the reason why not accepting it (having other jobs to do) with a clear intention that she is not looking for any further insistence. Subsequently, the British participant B3 perceives her interlocutor's intention and does not insist on her; rather, she expresses her willingness to have lunch in the future. It is worth noting, in this *invitation-refusal* sequence, despite the fact that the Algerian participant's first refusal is not genuine due to the fact of not providing valid reasons as mentioned earlier, the British participant's second *invitation* is not ostensible. That is to say, she is not clearly intending to insist on her interlocutor where she gives vague arrangements

and not sufficient details of her *invitation* to be accepted. This, again, as per Isaacs and Clark'

(1990) framework, denotes that the speech act is not genuine. Therefore, the Algerian

participant detects the insincerity of her interlocutor and responds; accordingly, that is,

declining the *invitation* for the second time, however, this time with valid reasons.

Scene No 11: low-high social status Adopting the role of profes sor, please make the offer of purch asing the book.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	1	0:03	Genuine offer	Would you like me to get the book for you as you don't have your wallet with you?	Direct eye contact with mild smile	
	2	0:09	Ostensible refusal	No. Thank you so much for that. It is really nice of you, but I can't really accept it	Intermittent eye contact with restricted smile	
	3	0:14	Re-offering	Are you sure?	Direct eye contact with mild smile	
	4	0:15	ostensible refusal	Yeah. I am sure! I Can't I am sorry! I can't do that	Minimum eye contact with constricted facial expressions	
	5		-	All right! Ok!	-	-

Table 12: Participant A4 and B4's interaction of an offer scene (low-high social status)

In this scenario, adopting the role of the professor, with direct eye contact and a smile the British participant B4 offers to purchase the book for her Algerian participant A4 (the student) by saying; 'Would you like me to get the book for you as you don't have your wallet with you?' The Algerian participant A4 declines the *offer* by stating: 'No. Thank you so much for that. It is really nice of you, but I can't really accept it' with intermittent eye contact and a restricted smile. Her refusal is later followed by another *offer* from the British participant (B4) to make sure her interlocutor's refusal was genuine. With less eye contact and restricted facial expressions, the Algerian participant (A4) replies saying: 'Yeah. I am sure! I Can't I am sorry! I can't do that' By this, we reach the end of the *offer-refusal* sequence where the British participant (B4) finally accepts the refusal and does not insist more on her interlocutor.

It is evident that both refusals of the Algerian participant (A4) are not genuine. Her first refusal is a combination of a rejection, a gratitude, and another rejection. Here, the Algerian participant (A4) does not keep eye contact with her interlocutor when refusing the *offer* and her facial expressions show that she is not genuinely rejecting it, rather she is trying not to impose on her interlocutor and therefore might require further insistence from her. This is one of the properties of Isaacs and Clark's (1990) ostensible speech act where the interlocutor pretends sincerity not to impose and cause any trouble to the addressee. Her pretense of sincerity seems to be recognized by the British participant (B4) and the latter proceeds to re-initiate the *offer* for the second time. Again, without providing any explanation or reason, the Algerian participant (A4) declines the *offer* for the second time. Still, her facial expressions and the minimum eye contact she is keeping with her interlocutor (B4) indicate that she is not sincere about her answer and might need further insistence. That is to say, the inappropriate non-verbal cues she is conveying denote that she is not fully committed to what she is verbally saying, which is itself, again, another feature of the ostensible speech act

(Isaaca and Clark, 1990). Nevertheless, the *offer-refusal* sequence ends with the British participant (B4) taking her Algerian interlocutor's refusal genuinely and not extending her *offer* for another time. This, however, conveys the differences in cultural expectations when it comes to realizing the speech act of refusal in an intercultural setting where individuals interpret politeness differently.

Scene N0 12: Equal social status ask your close friend to join you for a movie in the evening.	Shot N0:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	6	0:36	Genuine invitation	Would you like to go to the movie with me tonight?	Direct eye contact with plain facial expressions	
	7	0:40	Genuine refusal	Oh no sorry! I just… I am really tired… I am just not feeling it	Direct eye contact with tightened facial expressions	
	8	0:45	Re-inviting	Come on! You are going to change … like you know…	-	-
	9	0:48	Genuine refusal	I am just tired. I need an early rest.	Direct eye contact with restricted smile	
	10	0:52	Re-inviting	We can do it together as it may improve your mood. Come on! Think about it again…	Direct eye contact with convincing smile	

	11	0:57	Indirect refusal	Maybe another day sorry.	-	-
	12	1:02	-	Ok, then!	-	-

Table 13: Participant A4 and B4's interaction of an invitation scene (Equal social status)

This sequence starts with the Algerian participant A4 inviting her British interlocutor B4 to a movie night by saying: 'Would you like to go to the movie with me tonight?' with straight eye contact and plain facial expressions. The British participant B4 with tightened facial expressions declines her interlocutor's *invitation* by apologising and then providing an excuse for her refusal. She states: 'Oh no sorry! I just… I am really tired… I am just not feeling it'. In response to this, the Algerian participant A4 tries to convince her interlocutor by re-initiating the *invitation* for the second time where she says: 'Come on! You are going to change…like you know…' The British participant with a direct eye contact and a restricted smile rejected the *invitation* by providing the reason of her being tired and needing to rest. Despite the refusal for the second time and the reason provided, with direct eye contact the Algerian participant A4 re-initiates the *invitation* for the third time by saying: 'We can do it together as it may improve your mood. Come on! Think about it again…' For the third time, the British participant B4 refuses the *invitation* with another apology by saying: 'Maybe another day, sorry'. Here, the Algerian participant A4 accepts the refusal and, therefore, gives an end to the *invitation-refusal* sequence that is extended for several turns.

In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, the British participant (B4) performs the refusal genuinely throughout the whole conversation with her interlocutor. In her first refusal, she genuinely declines the *invitation* by providing a valid reason that she is really tired and does not feel like going to the movie. Here, the British participant (B4)'s refusal does not serve an

indirect meaning, that is, she is not considered to be polite or not causing trouble to her interlocutor as suggested by Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework. Also, her facial expressions align with what she is saying when she keeps a constant direct eye contact with her interlocutor, that is, matching non-verbal cues. However, her sincere intention does not seem to be detectable by the Algerian participant (A4) as the latter continues to try to convince her to accept the *invitation*. Yet again, the British participant (B4) declines the *invitation* providing the same reason for her being tired and needing to rest. Another *invitation* is initiated for the third time by the Algerian participant (A4) before she accepts her interlocutor's refusal. This highlights the significance of the cultural expectations every individual holds about realising the speech act of refusal. The Algerian participant coming from a cultural background where insisting on the interlocutor to accept an *invitation* is interpreted as a sign of kindness and caring does not necessarily align with the British participant's cultural norms where imposing on the addressee to accept something is considered a face-threatening to both interlocutors.

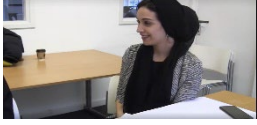| Scene No 13: Equal social status ask your close friend to join you for a movie in the	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	1	0:13	Genuine invitation	Do you want to go to the cinema?	Direct eye contact	
	2	0:19	Ostensible refusal	Uhm…can we leave it another time please? I have done some work today?	Emphatic eye blink	

eveni ng.	-	0:24	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	That is fine		-
	3	0:25	-	Thank you!	Mild smile	

Table 14: Participant A5 and B5's interaction of an invitation scene (Equal social status)

This sequence begins with the British participant (B5) inviting her Algerian interlocutor (A5) to go to the cinema by saying: Do you want to go to the cinema? With an emphatic eye blink (A5) declines the *invitation* by saying: Uhm…can we leave it another time, please? I have done some work today'. Here, the Algerian participant (A5) does not refuse her interlocutor's *invitation* directly using a 'NO'; instead, she requests her interlocutor to leave the *invitation* for another day and follows it with her excuse of having some work to do. In this scenario, the British participant (B5) without any further elaboration or initiation of the *invitation*, ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence by accepting the refusal by saying: 'That's fine' with a gentle smile on her face. Consequently, the Algerian participant (A5) shows her gratitude towards her interlocutor's understanding by saying: 'Thank you!' Giving an end to the *invitation-refusal* sequence. In this sequence, the Algerian participant A5 declines the *invitation* politely without outright refusal. Instead of directly saying 'NO' she requests to postpone or reschedule the event by providing a reason for her refusal. Here, relying on her facial expression, we can notice that she is hesitant about declining the *invitation* as there is a clear discrepancy between what she is saying and what is conveyed non-verbally in her facial expressions which is itself a feature of the ostensible speech act presented by Isaacs and Clark (1990). The reason provided by the Algerian participant A5 shows that it is derived from her being polite and her

not aiming to cause any trouble for her interlocutor (participant B5). However, the pretense of her sincerity is not recognised by the British participant B5 where the latter does not insist further on her and gives an end to *the invitation-refusal* sequence.

Scene N0 14: Equal social status/ same distance At the end of the meal, you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you cannot.	Shot N0:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	4	1:14	Genuine offer	So, it is good to see you. Let me get some more dessert. You need to have some desert	Few emphatic eye blinks	
	5	1:18	genuine refusal	Uhm...I am feeling full right now. I cannot, I'm sorry	Hand movement and tightened facial expressions	
	-	-	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Thank you!	-	-

Table 15: Participant A5 and B5's interaction of an offer scene (Equal social status)

In this sequence, after finishing their meal, with emphatic eyes blinking the British participant (B5) offers her Algerian interlocutor (A5) some dessert by saying: 'So, it is good to see you. Let me get some more dessert. You need to have some dessert'. Hesitantly, the Algerian participant (A5) declines the *offer* providing the reason for her feeling full by saying: 'Uhm...I am feeling full right now. I cannot, I'm sorry'. Here the Algerian participant (A5) combines her refusal with her hand both up to her chest to show her appreciation and gratitude along with tightened facial expressions that express her regret for not accepting the *offer*. In response

to this, the British participant (B5) acknowledges her interlocutor's apology and responds saying: 'Thank you!' To give an end to the *offer-refusal* sequence. In this scenario, the Algerian participant A5 genuinely refuses the *offer* by providing a reason for her being full. She demonstrates that she is unable to accept the *offer* with an apology to add a polite tone to her refusal. Her facial expressions show that she is reluctant to comply with the *offer*. This denotes the sincerity of her intention that was quickly detected by her interlocutor B5. The latter accepts Participant A5's response and ultimately ends the scenario without any further insistence on her interlocutor.
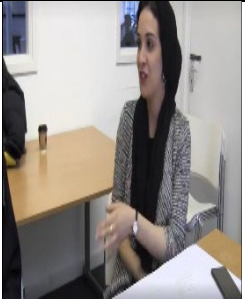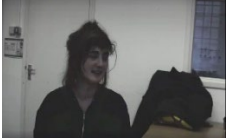
Scene No 15: High-low social status	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
Adopting the role of a student, please offer your tutor a cup of coffee.	-	-	Genuine offer	Oh... do you want to have a coffee too?	-	-
	6	2:28	Genuine refusal	Uhm... no, I am fine for now. Thank you so much. If you just came a bit earlier. Maybe I wish. I just had a cup of tea.	Hand movement and mild constant smile	
	7	2:37	-	Ok. No worries. Cool!	Affirmatively nodding head with emphatic eye blinks	

Table 16: Participant A5 and B5's interaction of an offer scene (High-low social status)

In this scenario, the British participant (B5) asks her Algerian interlocutor (A5) if she wants to have a coffee with her by saying: 'Oh… do you want to have a coffee too?' With a slight hand movement and mild constant smile, the Algerian participant (A5) declines the *offer* by saying: 'Uhm... no, I am fine for now. Thank you so much. If you just came a bit earlier. Maybe I wish. I just had a cup of tea'. Here, the Algerian participant (A5) tentatively rejects the coffee and follows her refusal by gratitude for the *offer* and a clear reason for her just having a cup of tea. She accompanies her refusal with a constant mild smile and hand movement. Here, the smile might denote her kindness and politeness towards her interlocutor to not hurt her feelings by rejecting her *offer*. Therefore, the participant (A5) is confirming here that even declining others' *offers* or *invitations* which is considered rude, might be mitigated by being nice to the other interlocutor (showing a simple smile in this situation). Ultimately, the British participant (B5) accepts the refusal by saying: 'Ok. No worries. Cool!' and that too with an emphatic eye blink that might denote her being upset and considerate at the same time. This gives an end to the *offer-refusal* sequence and no further offering is initiated by the British participant (B5).

In this scenario, the Algerian participant A5 does not provide a direct and explicit refusal to her interlocutor's *offer*, rather she shows her appreciation and gratitude for the *offer* with a polite expression of contentment and satisfaction for the moment. In this case, as suggested by Isaacs and Clark (1990), the kind of explanation and reason the Algerian participant A5 provides for her interlocutor B5 indicates that her refusal is genuine and that she truly does not want to have the coffee. Consequently, her intention (A5) is understood by the British participant (B5) where she does not extend her *offer* for another time to give an end to the offer-refusal sequence.
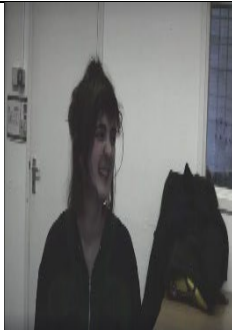
Scene No 16: High-low social status Adopting the role of the employee, please initiate the invitation	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/screenshot
	8	2:51	Genuine invitation	Hello, Uhm... my birthday is next Saturday. Do you want to come to my party? I'm going to have a party at my home, and I would love you to come over.	Hand movement, raising eyebrows intermittently	
	9	3:08	Ostensible refusal	Oh, ok. Uhm... yeah, I'm not sure. I am really sorry I just need to check with my dairy. I need to check if I am busy or not as I have got commitments in weekend. I will check first and get back to you	Stretched facial expressions	
	-	-	-	I wish you a happy birthday	-	-
	-	-	-	Thank you!	-	-

Table 17: Participant A5 and B5's interaction of an invitation scene (High-low social status)

This scenario starts with the Algerian participant (A5) inviting her British interlocutor (B5) to her birthday. Here, with an intermittent eyebrow-raising and a slight hand movement the Algerian participant (A5) says: 'Hello, Uhm... my birthday is next Saturday. Do you want to come to my party? I'm going to have a party at my home, and I would love you to come over.' She asks her interlocutor whether she wants to come to her birthday party that is taking place

at her home. In this instance, the Algerian participant (A5) checks if her interlocutor is willing to come instead of inviting her directly and ends her *invitation* by showing her that she would appreciate her coming to the party. In response to this, the British participant (B5) says: 'Oh, ok. Uhm… yeah, I'm not sure. I am really sorry I just need to check with my dairy. I need to check if I am busy or not as I have got commitments on the weekend. I will check first and get back to you.' Here, the British participant (B5) does not refuse her interlocutor's *invitation* directly, instead, she chooses to provide a couple of reasons for her refusal with the possibility of changing her mind in the future with some stretched facial expressions. After that, with her appreciation and gratitude, the British participant (B5) ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence.

In this scenario, the British participant's refusal is not direct, and she expresses uncertainty about her availability. She does not decline the *invitation* and her tentative response indicates that she is not immediately sure about her schedule and commitments. Her hesitation and ambiguity about the refusal denote that she is not genuine which is ultimately expressed through her facial expressions. Yet, her insincere intention is not detected by the Algerian participant (A5) resulting in an end to the *invitation-refusal* sequence where no further insistence is provided. In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, as per Isaacs and Clark' (1990) framework, the British participant's refusal is ostensible, where she is hesitant about saying no to her interlocutor and chooses to provide an indirect explanation as to why she is not accepting the *invitation*. However, her pretense is not recognised by the Algerian interlocutor who does not collude and respond appropriately to the speech act. The Algerian participant A5 instead of re-initiating the *invitation* for the second time to confirm the sincerity of her interlocutor, immediately ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence and does not insist even for a second time. This, however, contradicts what is socially agreed on in the

culture where she comes from. That is to say, being an Algerian, it is considered unusual to not insist on the addressee to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* at least two to three times in a sequence. Nevertheless, this emphasizes that not every individual of the same culture necessarily abides by the rules of communication to sound polite; rather, different individuals treat politeness and what is socially appropriate as per their own interpretations and understanding.
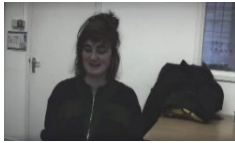
Scene No 17: low-high social status Adopting the role of professor, please make the offer of purchasing the book.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
		0:58	Genuine offer	Oh, do you want me to buy this for you?	Hand movement and mild smile)	
		-	Genuine refusal	No... no... no... no way.	-	-
		-	-	Ok. You sure?	-	-
		-	Genuine refusal	No... no... no... that is too much. that is too much	No eye contact	
-	-	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Ok. Ok.	-	-	-

Table 18: Participant A5 and B5's interaction of an offer scene (Low-high social status)

This *offer-refusal* sequence begins with the Algerian participant (A5) offering her British interlocutor (B5) to pay for the book after she realizes that she is interested in the book and

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not carrying her wallet. The Algerian participant's *offer* is expressed with a mild smile along with moving her hands towards the interlocutor in a way to show her real intention to purchase the book by saying: 'Oh, do you want me to buy this for you?' In response to that, the British participant B5 replies: 'No... no... no... no way.' Here, we can see that the British participant (B5) repeatedly said a direct no to reject the *offer* and did not provide any reason for her refusal. Straight after that, the Algerian participant (A5) re-initiates the *offer* to make sure that her interlocutor genuinely does not want her to pay for the book. Without any eye contact, the British participant (B5), refuses the *offer* for the second time by saying: 'No... no... no... that is too much. that is too much'. In this *offer-refusal* sequence, the British participant's first response is a clear and emphatic refusal. Her repetition of the word 'No' several times along with the use of the phrase 'No way' strongly demonstrates her firm rejection of the *offer* and that she is genuine about her response. Yet, her sincerity is not detectable by her Algerian interlocutor (A5) where the latter extends the sequence by asking for confirmation about the British participant's response. Here, the British participant (B5) emphatically and firmly declines the *offer*, expressing a strong and clear negative stance which denotes her genuine intention to refuse the invitation and, therefore, succeeding in conveying her intention to her interlocutor (A5). Subsequently, the Algerian Participant ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence and does not further insist on her interlocutor to accept it.

It is worth mentioning here that as opposed to the previous scene (17), despite the fact the British participant's first response is a direct refusal, the Algerian participant questions the sincerity of her interlocutor and asks her if she is sure about her answer. This can be interpreted in two ways: one of which is the inappropriate non-verbal cues employed by the British participant when declining the *invitation* or the *social hierarchy* that exists between the two interlocutors. In other words, in the previous scene(17) the Algerian

participant role is an employee initiating the *invitation* to her boss where she might see that

insisting on her interlocutor is imposing and causing trouble to them; whilst, in the second

scene (*offer-refusal*), her adopting the role of the professor, she might think that her student

is shy to accept the *offer* and therefore re-initiates it for the second time despite receiving a

direct refusal from the first time. Thus, the two different social statuses that she improvised

impact the way she deals with the same speech act (refusals). This highlights the significance

of the *social status* as a variable in the way individuals interact with each other.

Scene No 18: low-high social status Adopting the role of a professor , please initiate an invitation to your students to celebrate the success of the project.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
		2.05	Genuine invitation	Oh, we have done a great job, and I was thinking to go have lunch with the other students. Are you interested in joining?	Constantly smiling with direct eye contact	
		2:13	Genuine refusal	Oh. Eh... I cannot today. I am really sorry. But this sounds to be nice. Thank you for inviting me. But yeah, I just can't explain.	Smiling and direct eye contact	

				Ok. Ok. No problem.	-	-

Table 19: Participant A5 and B5's interaction of an invitation scene (Low-high social status)

In this interaction, the Algerian participant (A5) invites her interlocutor to celebrate the success of the project by saying: 'Oh, we have done a great job, and I was thinking to go have lunch with the other students. Are you interested in joining? In response to that, the British participant (B5) states that: 'Oh. Eh... I cannot today. I am really sorry. But this sounds to be nice. Thank you for inviting me. But yeah, I just can't explain.' Here the British participant (B5) first declines the *invitation* and then apologizes for not accepting it and later shows her gratitude to her interlocutor for the *invitation* ending her statement with another excuse. After that, the Algerian participant (A5) accepts the refusal by saying: 'Ok. Ok. No problem.' Giving an end to this *invitation-refusal* sequence without any further insistence on her interlocutor.

In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, the British participant's refusal is indirect and not explicit. Her overall tone along with the indication of her not being able to provide a clear reason for her refusal suggests her inability to accept the *invitation*. Despite the fact that she does not mention the reason for her inability to attend the event, she still appreciates her gratitude for the *invitation* along with her apologies. Here, the British participant's intention is performed with appropriate physical cues that make it easier for her counterpart (A5) to recognize her genuine intention (see Isaacs and Clark, 1990). Thus, the latter does not re-initiate the *invitation* for another time and straightaway ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence. In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, the same participant A5 adopting the same role as the previous scene (a professor) that is socially higher than the role of her addressee (the

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student) does not insist on her interlocutor to accept the *invitation*; rather, she accepts the refusal from the first time without further imposing. This could be interpreted by the act itself, that is, offering to purchase a book to a student who seems very interested to buy it does require more insistence in comparison to attending a project celebration party where it remains optional for the student to attend or not. Therefore, the weightiness of the speech act itself in a certain society or culture plays a great role in the way individuals deals with it.

Scene No 19: Equal social status/ same distance	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
At the end of the meal, you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you cannot.	1	0:02	Genuine offer	Do you fancy another slice of cheesecake?	No eye contact with a smile	
	2	0:03	Genuine refusal	No. Thank you. The food was great, but I am really full. Thank you so much. Maybe another time	Minimum eye contact with hand movement	
	3	0:06	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Alright! No worries! I will have another slice	No eye contact with a laughter	

Table 20: Participant A6 and B6's interaction of an offer scene (Equal social status)

This interaction begins with the British participant B6 with no eye contact and a smile offering her Algerian interlocutor (A6) a dessert by saying: 'Do you fancy another slice of cheesecake?' in response to this, the Algerian participant A6 declines the *offer* by keeping a minimum eye contact and a slight raise of her hand. She (A6) states: 'No. Thank you. The food was great, but I am really full. Thank you so much. Maybe another time' Here, participant A6 starts her refusal statement with a 'No' followed by a combination of gratitude and a possibility of future acceptance. It is worth mentioning here that the Algerian participant does not provide any reason for her rejection of the *offer*. The *offer-refusal* sequence does not extend beyond that where the British participant (B6) accepts her interlocutor's refusal by saying: 'Alright! No worries! I will have another slice'.

In this *offer-refusal* sequence, the Algerian participant's refusal is genuine. She declines the *offer* by expressing her gratitude and complimenting the meal. Despite the discrepancy between her utterance and her facial expressions that might denote the pretense of her sincerity her intention, which is considered a prominent feature of the ostensible speech act (Isaacs and Clark, 1990); the Algerian A6's refusal is perceived as a genuine one by the British participant B6 and therefore she does not extend her *offer* for the second time. Put differently, the inappropriateness between what is conveyed verbally and the movement of her hands along with not keeping eye contact demonstrates that there is a possibility that the refusal is insincere and the Algerian participant A6's intention is just to be polite and not impose on her interlocutor rather than meaning it. Yet, British participant B6 does not extend her *offer* further and accepts her interlocutor's refusal. This stresses the significance of the cultural variations that exist between cultures where different individuals interpret the speech act of refusals in several ways. Also, this emphasises the importance of understanding

the ostensible speech act as this can be valuable in different fields like linguistics, communication studies, in particular, and the philosophy of language in general.
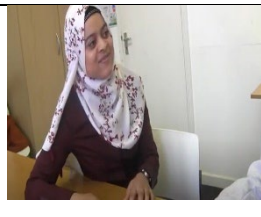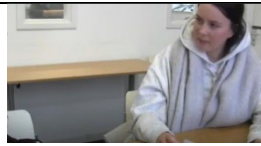
Scene No 20: Equal social status/ same distance ask your close friend to join you for a movie in the evening.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	4	0:22	Genuine invitation	Hey (Participant B6' name), Magnificent is coming up today. Would you like to come to see the film with me?	Tightened facial expression with hand movement	
	5	0:28	Ostensible refusal	Oh no! I am not feeling very well. Sorry! Can we try going another time?	No eye contact with Plain facial expressions	
	6	0:34	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Yeah, sure!	Direct eye contact with mild smile	
	7	0:36	Genuine refusal	Sorry! Can we try going another time? Is that alright?	Quick direct eye contact with plain facial expressions	

Table 21: Participant A6 and B6's interaction of an invitation scene (Equal social status)

With tightened facial expressions and slight hand movements, scene 20 starts with the Algerian participant A6 inviting her friend (participant B6) for a movie night by saying: 'Hey (participant B's name), Magnificent is coming up today. Would you like to come to see the

film with me?' Here, the British participant B6 declines the *invitation* with a 'No', a reason for not accepting the *invitation*, an apology, and a suggestion to reschedule another time. It is obvious from the screenshots that there is a discrepancy between the facial expressions displayed by the British participant and what she is expressing verbally. The latter is considered by Isaacs and Clark (1990) as a feature of ostensible speech act where the interlocutor conveys inappropriate non-verbal cues which denote that they are not fully committed to what they are actually performing.   That is, in the first refusal no eye contact is maintained with the Algerian participant A6 when declining the *invitation* compared to the second refusal where quick direct contact is established with the Algerian interlocutor (A6). In her first refusal, the British participant B6 rejects the *invitation* by providing a reason that she is not feeling well, and she suggests another alternative by proposing to try going another time. Here, the refusal is not a flat-out rejection, but rather a polite one with the participant's willingness to reschedule. In her second refusal, the British participant B6 politely expresses her regret of not being able to accept the *invitation* followed by an unspecified reason and a proposition for another time while seeking confirmation from her interlocutor.

In this scene, it is worth noting that the Algerian participant A6 does not insist on her interlocutor to accept the *invitation* and accepts the refusal from the first time. This is not what is socially agreed on in the Algerian culture where the *offer-refusal* and *invitation-refusal* extends several times before finally accepting the addressee's refusal. Thus, we should emphasise that members of the same culture navigate the same speech act in different ways, and they do not necessarily abide by what is socially agreed to be the norms.

Scene No 21: Equal social status / same distance	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
At the end of the meal, you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you cannot.	1	3:06	Genuine offer	Well, you know…generally after couscous we eat that dessert. You need to try it too. It's so good.	-	-
	2	3:12	Ostensible refusal	You know what! I am so full of the couscous.	-	-
	3	3:14	Re-offer	Come on I am sure u will like it. Just try it	-	-
	4	3:18	Genuine refusal	If I had room in my stomach… I do not know… Sometimes I want dessert, sometimes I do not want dessert this just what used to happen.	Tightened facial expressions and no eye contact	

	5	3:31	Re-offering	You know what? I will keep it in the fridge for you so later you have to try it... like... come on I prepared this one for you. I am so happy that you are coming.	-	-
	6	3:41	Genuine refusal	I mean... thanks. if you want to eat it then. Please, feel free to eat it. Your choice then!	-	
	7	3:45	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Ok. thank you. If not now, I will prepare it for you later. I am sure you will like it.	-	-

Table 22: Participant A7 and B7's interaction of an offer scene (Equal social status)

This sequence begins with the Algerian participant A7 offering her British interlocutor a dessert by saying: 'Well, you know…generally after couscous we eat that dessert. You need to try it too. It's so good'. The British participant B7 declines the *offer* by saying: 'Good. You know what! I am so full of the couscous'. This is followed by another *offer* from Algerian participant A7 to convince her interlocutor to accept by stating: 'Come on I am sure you will like it. Just try it' In response to this, with tightened facial expressions and no eye contact, the

British participant issues another refusal: 'If I had room in my stomach… I do not know… Sometimes I want dessert, sometimes I do not want dessert this just what used to happen'. This does not end the *offer-refusal* sequence where she says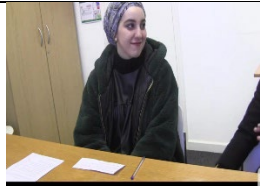: 'You know what? I will keep it in the fridge for you so later you have to try it… like... come on I prepared this one for you. I am so happy that you are coming' Here, the British participant B7 expresses her gratitude for the *offer* and declines it for the third time. At this point, the Algerian participant A7 accepts the refusal of her interlocutor and ends the *offer-refusal* scenario.

In this sequence, the British participant B7 does not reject the *offer* explicitly, rather she provides a reason for her not being able to accept it which is not considered by the Algerian participant A7 as a valid excuse to reject her *offer*. In this regard, Isaacs and Clark (1990) claim that the kind of reasons and explanations interlocutors provide to perform the speech act as well as the contextual clues, are significant in determining whether a speech act is extended sincerely or not. Consequently, the British participant's insincere intention is clearly understood by the Algerian participant, therefore, she re-initiates her *offer* and insists on accepting it. As a result, the British participant rejects the *offer* for the second time with a certain degree of openness and flexibility. The lack of clarity in her rejection along with the inappropriate facial expressions indicate that she is not genuine about her refusal (Isaacs and Clark, 1990) resulting in the mutual awareness of both participants of each other's pretense of their sincerity. Therefore, the Algerian participant A7 re-initiates her *offer* for the third time to convince her interlocutor to accept. The British participant continues rejecting the *offer* for the third time in a polite way accompanied by the use of appropriate non-verbal cues that signal her sincerity in not being able to accept the *offer*. Consequently, the Algerian participant A7 accepts her rejection with some future suggestions for a similar *offer* giving an end to the *offer-refusal* sequence.

Scene N0 22: Equal social status ask your close friend to join you for a movie in the evening.	Shot N0:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	8	3:58	Ostensible invitation	Hey, you look a bit down. Do you want to go to see a movie?	-	-
	9	4:00	Ostensible refusal	Yeah, I am becoming moody these days. You know, I am not in my best mood.	Direct eye contact and a mild smile	
	10	4:06	-	Is that a, no?	-	-
	11	4:10	Ostensible refusal	I do not think I can come. You know, I am not very much into movies, but we will keep it for later.	-	-
	12	4;17	Re-invitation	I mean for change, but…get out of the house…	-	-

	13	4:29	ostensible refusal-	Oh really! I do not know I do not feel good. Just leave it for next week maybe.	--	-
	14	4:35	-	Alright!	-	-

Table 23: Participant A7 and B7's interaction of an invitation scene (Equal social status)

In this interaction, the British participant B7 invites her interlocutor for a movie by saying: 'Hey, you look a bit down. Do you want to go to see a movie?' with direct eye contact and a mild smile the Algerian participant A7 responds: 'Yeah, I am becoming moody these days. You know, I am not in my best mood'. Her refusal is a combination of two reasons instead of a direct refusal. As per Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework, the Algerian participant's refusal is not genuine due to the invalid reason and explanation she provides for her refusal. This confuses her interlocutor, where she asks: 'is that a no'. After this, the Algerian participant A7 provides her reasons for declining the *invitation* by stating: 'I do not think I can come. You know, I am not very much into movies, but we will keep it for later'. The British participant B7 tries further to convince her interlocutor to accept the *invitation* by saying: 'I mean for change, but…get out of the house…' Yet, the Algerian participant A7 declines for the third time to finally ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence.

In this sequence, the Algerian participant's first refusal is not clear, and her intention is undetectable. She declines the *invitation* in an indirect way that makes it obvious for her interlocutor (B7) to recognize that she is not genuinely declining the *invitation*, rather she is just trying to be polite and consider the costs to her addressee which is itself one of the

features of ostensible speech act (Isaacs and Clark, 1990). This is due to the fact that the British participant's *invitation* is delivered without sufficient details that determine its sincerity, as well. In order to clear her confusion, the British participant (B7) asks her interlocutor if her response is intended to be taken as a 'NO' by saying: 'Is that a, no?' which clearly indicates that the British participant is not sure about the intention of her interlocutor and further insistence might be needed. This shows that both participants are mutually aware of the pretense in the sincerity of their speech acts (both the invitation and the refusal). In her second refusal, even though she provides a reason for not accepting the *invitation*, her use of the hedging signifies that she is not genuine about her response which results in participant B7 re-initiating the *invitation* for a third time. At this point, the Algerian participant A7 continues to refuse the *invitation* however, her response still shows that she is still hesitant. But her interlocutor B7 accepts the refusal and does not insist further. In this *invitation-refusal* sequence, different properties and features of Isaacs and Clark (1990) ostensible speech act are present. The pretense of the sincerity of the Algerian refusal, and the mutual recognition of the pretense by both participants eventually results in the collusion of the British participant by responding appropriately; that is, re-initiating the *invitation* for the second time. Also, the use of hedges by the Algerian participant which is considered as a feature of the ostensible speech act (Isaacs and Clark, 1990).

Scene No 23: High-low social status	Shot NO:	Time (minutes : Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
Adopting the role of a student, please offer your tutor a cup of coffee.	15	1:44	-	Hey, I am just getting a coffee. Do you want one?	-	--
	16	1:48	Genuine refusal	Oh, thank you. Thank you so much. I am full. Besides, I'm invited with my husband later. So, thank you.	Direct eye contact and plain facial expression	
	17	2:08	Re-initiating the offer	You sure? Its free!		
	18	2:11	Ostensible refusal	No, that is alright. I mean... I am always here. This is not new.	-	-
	19	2:14	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	Ok. No worries.	-	-

Table 24: Participant A7 and B7's interaction of an offer scene (Low-high social status)

This *offer-refusal* scene begins with the British participant B7 offering her Algerian interlocutor A7 a cup of coffee: 'Hey, I am just getting coffee. Do you want one? With direct eye contact and a plain face, the Algerian participant A7 declines the *offer* by stating: 'Oh, thank you. Thank you so much. I am full. Besides, I'm invited with my husband later. So, thank you'. Here, and in order to confirm her interlocutor's sincerity, the British participant B7 asks her interlocutor if she is sure about her refusal. In response to this, the Algerian participant A7 states: 'No, that is alright. I mean... I am always here. This is not new. Consequently, participant B7 accepts the refusal and does not re-initiate her *invitation*.

In this sequence, the Algerian participant A7's refusal is a combination of gratitude and a reason for her not being able to accept the *offer*. Here, there is a clear match between her utterance and her facial expression which signifies that she might be genuine about her refusal, that is, using appropriate verbal cues that denote her full commitment to what she is saying. However, her sincere intention is not recognised by the British interlocutor who asks if she is sure about her refusal. Here, the British participant does not extend her *offer* beyond courtesy, that is, she does not provide further reasons for her interlocutor to accept her *offer*, instead, she just mentioned that the coffee is free! This denotes to the Algerian participant A7 that her interlocutor's *offer* is not genuine as well and consequently colludes with her interlocutor and responds appropriately, that is, declining the *offer* hesitantly for the second time and no further insistence is provided by the British participant where she ends the sequence by accepting the refusal and therefore confirms that her intention to *offer* the coffee is not genuine either. Here, the Algerian participant's second refusal is not genuine as she is hesitant about her response a well as she does not provide any valid reason or explanation for her refusal which is again one of the features of ostensible speech acts introduced by Isaacs and Clark (1990)
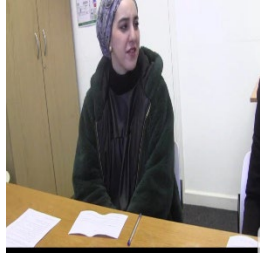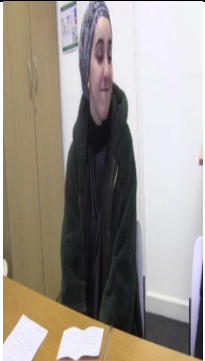
Scene No 24: High-low social status	Shot NO:	Time (minut es: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguis tic visual	Image/screensho t
Adopting the role of the employe e, please initiate the invitation of birthday party.	20	4:55	-	It's on Saturday.im doing kind of having a little of gathering. Jus t for fun if you want to come	-	-
	21	5:02	genuine refusal	Well, happy early birthday, but I do not think I can come on Saturday. I have got a lot of work to do	No eye contact and tightened facial expression	
	22	5:11	Acceptanc e of the refusal and no further insistence	Ok. I understand, understand.	-	-

Table 25: Participant A7 and B7's interaction of an invitation scene (High-low social status)

In this scene, adopting the role of the employee, the British participant B7 invites her Algerian interlocutor A7 to her birthday party by saying: 'It's on Saturday. I'm kind of having a little gathering. Just for fun if you want to come'. With no eye contact and tightened facial expression, the Algerian participant A7 declines the *invitation* as follows: 'Well, happy early birthday, but I do not think I can come on Saturday. I have got a lot of work to do' leading to

no further insistence from the British participant B7. Here, the Algerian participant A7 declines the *offer* politely by providing a reason for her not being able to attend the party. Her facial expressions show that she is sincere about her refusal as she looks apologetic.

In this sequence, both participants are mutually aware that the Algerian participant A7 is genuinely refusing the *invitation*, therefore, the British participant B7 does not provide further insistence on her interlocutor and straightaway ends the sequence. Here, it is worth mentioning that another reason for the British participant not insisting on her interlocutor to accept the *invitation* is the *social hierarchy* that exists between the two of them; that is, her being an employee cannot insist much on her employer and impose him to accept something he does not seem to be happy with. This emphasises the importance of the *social status* of the interlocutors involved in a certain communicative act on the way they navigate the speech act of refusals.

Scene No 25: low-high social status Adopting the role of professor, please make the offer of purchasing the book.	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	23	0:01	Genuine offer	You forgot your wallet! I will buy it for you. It is ok	-	-
	24	0:03	Ostensible refusal	That's alright. I think I am not in rush to get that book. I think I'm going to come back later	Direct eye contact and mild smile	
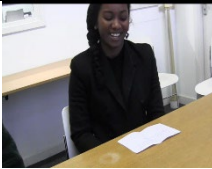
25	0:10	-	You sure!	-	-
26	0:11	Ostensible refusal	Yeah…Yeah …Thank you!	-	-
27	0:13	-	Just let me know	-	-
28	0:14	-	Thank you!	-	-
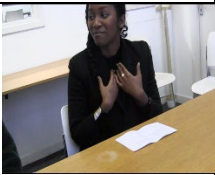
Table 26: Participant A7 and B7's interaction of an offer scene (Low-high social status)

In this interaction, the British participant B7 offers to buy the book by saying: 'You forgot your wallet! I will buy it for you. It is ok'. With direct eye contact and a mild smile, the Algerian participant A7 declines the *offer* as follows: 'That's alright. I think I am not in rush to get that book. I think I'm going to come back later'. As the refusal is not straightforward, the British participant B7 asks for confirmation from her interlocutor. The latter continues in declining the *offer* indirectly where she shows her gratitude instead of a direct no.

In this sequence, the Algerian A7 first refusal is insincere as it derives from her consideration of the costs to her addressee, that is, she does not want to impose on her interlocutor or cause them any trouble. Also, the kind of reason and explanation she provides to perform the refusal denote that her refusal is ostensibly extended. Similarly, her hedging expressions show that she does not genuinely want to decline the *offer*, rather she requires further insistence from her counterpart (see Isaacs and Clark, 1990). Consequently, her pretense is recognized by the British participant B7, where she extends her *offer* for another time in a tacit manner which again validates her insincere intention to *offer* and that she is

extending it just as a sign of courtesy. Nonetheless, the Algerian participant A7 rejects the

offer for the second time and no further insistence is provided.

Scene No 26: low-high social status Adopting the role of a professor, please initiate an invitation to your students to celebrate the success of the project	Shot NO:	Time (minutes: Sec):	Linguistic audio (verbal)		Paralinguistic visual	Image/Screenshot
	29	0:23	Genuine invitation	You know (Participant B7' name) you helped me a lot to get this project done. I am really happy to invite you with the other students to celebrate that. Would you like to come?	-	-
	30	0:45	Ostensible refusal	I really cannot. I have to go home to see my parents	No eye contact and mild smile	
		0:50	Re-initiating the invitation	You know you were very helpful, and you really did a lot. So, I think I can change the date of the celebration according to your schedule if you want?		

		1:00	Ostensible refusal	Oh no if everyone has agreed then I will just… you know its ok		
		1:03	-	Are you sure?		
		1:05	Ostensible refusal	I will just you know…It's ok I do not want it to be rearranged because it is the only one me not coming	-	
		1:11	Re-initiating the invitation	Yeah. you know you were working more on this project, so I really want you to be present in that	-	-
		1:20	Genuine refusal	I cannot do t hat. I wish you like... ho pe you guys have a good timing. I will be there with spirit.	Direct eye contact with hand movement	

		1:28	Acceptance of the refusal and no further insistence	That is alright. Since you are not interested, I am not going to embarrass you more. that is alright. I just wanted to thank you then.	-	-

Table 27: Participant A7 and B7's interaction of an invitation scene (Low-high social status)

In this *invitation-refusal* scene, adopting the role of the professor, the Algerian participant A7 invites her British participant B7 to celebrate the success of the project by saying: 'You know (Participant B7' name) you helped me a lot to get this project done. I am really happy to invite you with the other students to celebrate that. Would you like to come? With no eye contact and a smile on her face, the British participant B7 declines the *invitation* with an apology combined with a reason for not accepting it. She states: 'I really cannot. I have to go home to see my parents' The Algerian participant A7 re-initiates the *invitation* for the second time to convince her interlocutor to accept it by saying: 'You know you were very helpful, and you really did a lot. So, I think I can change the date of the celebration according to your schedule if you want? In response to this and with a hesitant and confused face the British participant B7 replies: 'Oh no if everyone has agreed then I will just… you know its ok' To confirm the sincerity of participant B7's refusal, the Algerian participant A7 asks: 'are you sure!' the British participant B7 further answers: 'I will just you know…It's ok I do not want it to be rearranged because it is the only one me not coming' The *invitation-refusal* sequence extends further where The Algerian participant A7 says: 'Yeah. you know you were working more on this

project, so I really want you to be present in that' Here, the British participant B7, for the fourth time refuses the *invitation* by stating her inability to come and wishing the other invitees a good timing together: 'I cannot do that. I wish you like... hope you guys have a good timing. I will be there with spirit'. At this stage, the Algerian participant A7 realises that her insistence is causing some sort of embarrassment to her interlocutor B7 and ends the *invitation-refusal* sequence by stating: 'That is alright. Since you are not interested, I am not going to embarrass you more. that is alright. I just wanted to thank you then'.

In this sequence, even though the British participant B7's first refusal is delivered with a valid reason for her not being able to attend the party, what is conveyed by her non-verbal cues does show that there might be a possibility that she is not genuine about her refusal. According to Isaacs and Clark (1990), the discrepancy between what the interlocutor says and what they convey non-verbally signals the insincerity of the speech act as it proves that the speaker is not fully committed to what they are actually performing. Also, in her first refusal, the British participant is pretending sincerity therefore her refusal is not taken seriously by her Algerian interlocutor (A7). This results in the latter re-initiating the *invitation* for the second time which shows that both of them are mutually aware of the pretence of the British participant and that the Algerian participant A7 is appropriately responding to her interlocutor's pretense in sincerity. That is, she is colluding with her. Again, the British participant B7's refusal is ostensible as she seems hesitant in declining the *invitation* as well as she does not provide a valid reason and explanation for her refusal which is itself significant in determining whether the speaker is extending a genuine speech act or not (see Isaacs and Clar, 1990). Ultimately, her refusal is not taken seriously by the Algerian participant A7 where the latter colludes with her interlocutor's pretense and asks her if, she is sure. In response to

this, the British participant B7 provides an indirect refusal instead of saying 'yes' or 'no'; which is itself one of the properties of ostensible speech act (Ambivalence) that is introduced by Isaacs and Clark (1990) to achieve a tacit purpose; that is, an off-record refusal. Subsequently, the Algerian participant A7 recognises the pretense of the sincerity of her interlocutor and ultimately continues to insist on her interlocutor joining the party. At this point, the British participant B7 realises that her intention to refuse needs to be clearly conveyed to her interlocutor, she declines the *invitation* and makes it clear to her interlocutor that she is genuinely not able to attend the party by employing appropriate non-verbal cues to demonstrate her sincere intention of her refusal and eventually ending the *invitation-refusal* sequence at this stage where no insistence is further extended by the Algerian participant.

In the current study, the tabulated data is used as a method to present the data obtained from the improvised acted-out scenarios. The latter works in terms of supporting the overall core of the pragmatically oriented argument presented. Even though the present thesis does not exclusively focus on the non-verbal aspects, they are used to reach a multimodal data analysis that may serve as significant evidence for enhancing pragmatic insights about the true nature of speech acts. Therefore, it is not the main focus of my work; rather, it is predominantly employed to strengthen and support my argument and my findings. As my work is heavily embedded in pragmatics, I promptly dealt with the description of some of the facial expressions and body movements observed and underlined as screenshots from the scenarios in the tables. Therefore, I am bringing it as an augment to the points made here where it can be applied to strengthen the study's findings; believing that the majority of research in pragmatics does not even consider any non-verbal feature in their analysis.

According to Bousfield (2007), interlocutors may opt for an alternative linguistic choice once a slot is created and not always necessarily stick to one expected utterance. That is, interlocutors can choose between different structural formats in their daily life interactions which determines the appropriateness of their speech. Furthermore, Levinson (1983) states that those alternative second parts to the first parts of adjacency pairs are not of equal status as some of them are considered preferred and others dispreferred. Preferred responses are linguistically considered unmarked as they further a specific course of action that is already initiated by the *first-order* participants (Schegloff, 2007). On the contrary, dispreferred responses are linguistically marked as they expand the sequence accomplishment and require further reasons and explanation as in the case of the speech act of refusal undertaken in the current study.

Levinson (1983), however, introduces the concept of preference as not a psychological claim that is related to the interlocutors' desires, but rather as a structural phenomenon, not much different from the linguistic notion of markedness. In his work, Levinson (1983) mentions the correlation between the sequential position of turns and their content with the tendency to produce them in a preferred or dispreferred format. However, he does not refer to that as a psychological phenomenon but rather a structural one. In other words, the effect of context and other psychological factors on talk exchange as face considerations that are socially and psychologically rooted is not clearly mentioned in his work (see Bousfield, 2007). According to Bousfield (2007), those psychological aspects that do exist alongside structural preference are discarded in much conversational analysts' research either implicitly or explicitly. Bousfield (ibid) argues that if preference organization is purely structural, different *expectations* of answers are not considered. Following Bousfield's argument, a response to *invitations* or *offers* as a first pair part would be simply an acceptance or a refusal.

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Offers and *invitations* are usually followed by acceptance as a preferred response to the interlocutor; however, in the current study, we are tackling the way participants decline those two speech acts (*offers* and *invitations*) to eventually realize another speech act called *refusals*. Therefore, all the second pair parts are here considered dispreferred answers. Thus, the psychological and social considerations are clearly apparent in the interlocutors' responses (see extracts above).

It is vital to explore and draw on the conversational analysis and pragmatics on basic responses to *offers* and *invitations* that are actually present in my thesis and realized by first-order participants as they are considered both structurally and pragmatically dispreferred. Therefore, understanding a particular preference is really significant for us to be able not only to predict the future but also eliminate my data at the present. In light of the face-threatening nature of the speech act of a *refusal*, in the current study, some of the respondents from both groups (Algerian and British) claim that they usually opt for more *polite* choices and therefore carefully select their response format and prefer not to go direct and be rude or offensive to their interlocutors. This underlines the close relationship between face-threat (with its notion of accountability) explained in (chapter two, section 2.4.) and preference organization (see chapter two, section 2.7.3). Therefore, they do not only focus on the *structure* of their responses; rather, they focus on other factors such as facework: being polite and not harming or offending each other. Nevertheless, this implies that they expect responses from their correspondents not only in a certain structure but with particular implications mentioned earlier in Bousfield (2007a) as the socio-psychological or functional dimension.

Bousfield (ibid) argues that when it comes to preference organization in linguistic studies, we should go beyond the structural features of the phenomenon by not only considering it marked or unmarked but also focus on the social dimensions. Simply put, the

socio-psychological expectations of the respondents assigned to it. The following is an extract from the data where participant A2 refers to the significance of being polite in declining her interlocutor's *offers* or *invitations* by saying:

25) [*I find it difficult to refuse because I have to find the strategy that I follow. If I want to refuse, I feel like I have to make a strategy that breaks down the news that I am refusing that offer in a very polite and kind manner*].

Here, participant A2 clearly states that she opts for the right strategy to refuse in a kind and polite manner. Therefore, she is showing us that she does not only take the structural format of her utterance into account but rather the socio-psychological aspects alongside that by mentioning *politeness*. This, again, emphasizes the importance of both the structure and the content of her utterances as well as the effect of the cultural background in framing her sentences and being more *polite*. According to her, expressing her refusal in her mother tongue is considered easier than in English as she could frame her sentences in an appropriate way or as she refers to the '*polite*' way. Thus, it seems relevant to consider not only the structural dimensions of the respondents' responses; but rather, the socio-cognitive implications too which influence the speakers' responses to a certain utterance. Hence, it is safe to say that preference organization is not merely structurally oriented as we do feel the need either individually or socially to give accounts for our dispreferred responses. In other words, to better understand the linguistic phenomenon, we should not limit our analysis solely to the linguistic structure and neglect anything non-structural or psychological. Here, I am referring to the face threats that are mentioned throughout most of my data by the participants from both groups (Algerian and British) where they indirectly stressed the significance of saving their faces as well as others. They did not use the term '*face*'; instead, some of them employed the term '*politeness*' while others mentioned expressions similar to

caring for others' feelings, not hurting them, not embarrassing them, and the like. The following are extracts taken from data to illustrate more:

(37) [*Yeah, I feel like I would adjust myself to the like culture because I know people get offended, so I do not want to offend anyone by refusing their offer or invitation*].

(38) [*I think probably, mainly, politeness because I don't want to offend anyone. I want to be polite*].

In all the above-mentioned extracts, participants highlight the significance of being polite and not hurting the other interlocutors' feelings. Consequently, most of their responses were associated with *'face work'* and, broadly speaking, *'politeness.'* This was stressed too by Schegloff's (2007:61) claims where he acknowledges that in most cases individual leaning may correspond with sequential preference (see Limberg 2009). This may, however, suggest that participants' desires and tastes may as well be considered one of the psychological dimensions that determine respondents preferred/dispreferred turns which in return occur at the expense of the *first-order* and *second-order*'s relationship. The fact of respondents choosing either preferred or dispreferred responses along with accounts or an explanation suggests the overwhelming human behaviour and their psychological state and their reconstructable intent that is mainly down-to-face work where we primarily disaffiliate with others through *impoliteness* and affiliate with them through the use of *politeness* (see Guibshow 1990).

Throughout the data, there are different variations in the sequences employed by participants where different stages of *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* are used. In some cases, the scenarios are limited to one sequence where the respondent declines the *offer* or the *invitation*, and no further insistence is initiated. Whereas in other situations, participants extend their *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* sequence by creating multiple turns and

allowing the host to restart the *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* sequence once again. In some of the scenarios participants from both groups followed their dispreferred responses by an account or an explanation whereas in other instances a direct *"no"* was provided as a response to the *offer* or the *invitation*. Different sequences with different accounts and reasons were provided by different participants for different scenarios; all of which were later justified by the use of *politeness*. This seems to depend as well on the participants' backgrounds and the *social hierarchy* that exists between them. Participants from both groups (Algerian and British) acknowledge that one of the circumstances that trigger them to deal with or decide on the length of the *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* sequence is their previous interactions with other people of different backgrounds where they know that a single *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* sequence that is considered absolutely normal in their own culture might not be considered enough for a person or, broadly speaking, to the norms that exist in the other culture. Therefore, it is safe to say here that they do not refer to their own culture and social background only; rather, they do consider others as well. This, however, suggests the significance of not only the linguistic dimension but also the socio-psychological implications that a certain speech act may carry and the importance of digging into the reasons behind the way people structure their responses and do not ignore this fact.

Having data from *first-order* participants in my study sheds light on why participants of both groups (Algerian and British) provide reasons or explanations every time they give a dispreferred response to their counterparts whenever *refusing* an *offer* or an *invitation,* that is, not damaging their faces. This indicates the importance of giving an end to the ongoing central debate within conversational analysts both in terms of their original conceptualization and analysis of language. Simply put, their understanding of the interactional purposes of the way which language is structured and not just about basically how it is structured due to its

evolving nature. Likewise, we should understand that language structure has evolved that way through a reason that is mainly socio-interactional. In other words, our daily life interactions, and the way our culture and society are shaped play a great role in shaping our language behaviour to decide on the most effective and the least offensive way of communicating with each other; and the other way around. This is very clear from the data where there is an overlap between both *structural preference* and *pragmatic preference*. In some of the instances, participants extended their sequence by offering multiple times to show their genuine intention whereas in some of the examples, one *offer-refusal* or one *invitation-refusal* sequence was enough. This, however, happened very few times, and not so many explanations or reasons were provided to minimize the threat created by the respondents. In most of the examples, on the other hand, participants provided an extended explanation with two or more reasons, or even future planning was provided along with refusal. This, yet again, reinforces the fundamental role of pragmatic preference in our daily life conversation and the socio-psychological dimension assigned to it which obviously stands against the previous conversational analysts who would not allow any other explanations for the phenomenon to take place. Once more, this is not applied depending on just what we assume is in the individuals' heads; rather, all the instances present in my data are produced by *first-order* participants as evidence of that.

4.4 Conclusion

The analytical chapter introduced a detailed analysis of the data collected in the current study. It started with the thematic analysis of the set of themes originated form the semi-structured interviews. Then, I presented a detailed analysis of the tabulated data resulting from the improvised acted-out scenarios. Now we move into the finding and discussion chapter.

5   Findings and discussions

In this study, I questioned the notion that associates a *first-order* approach with an *emic* perspective and a *second-order* approach with a scientific one, as numerous substantial distinctions go unnoticed. I did not approach both terms as a simplistic dichotomy but carefully deconstructed the *first-order* and second-order distinction. This involves recognizing the potential gaps in our understanding and developing strategies to bridge them. Put differently, it is much more productive to use the different settings of the *first-second* order distinction in *face* and *politeness* research to explain the main points for theorization and analysis rather than treating the *first-order and second-order* as a basic dichotomy. Consequently, unmasking several significant distinctions that are often unmarked by those who claim to be either *first-order* or *second-order* researchers. Hence, in the current study, I aim to go beyond the all too frequent practices of using English data as an unmarked and unspoken standard in theorizing and conceptualizing both *face* and *politeness*; therefore, bridging the gap between the two orders.

Throughout the analysis, it is evident from their answers that participants from both groups prioritize the importance of being *polite* towards others and the avoidance of hurting their feelings in line with Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Here, I am referring to participants' understandings of *politeness* which may or may not necessarily be the same as the linguistic *politeness* theorized by previous academics, and the relationship between the two has been discussed above about *etic* and *emic* understandings of the concepts (see chapter two, section 2.5 for the discussion on *first-order* and *second-order* conceptualizations of *Politeness*). In other words, some of the respondents' 'first-order' claims have been recognized and reflected the position of second-order theorizing in terms of Brown and Levinson's (1987) approach. In the discursive responses, the respondents have argued that

they specifically seek to avoid being rude and unkind to others. All participants' responses in the current study are considered *first-order* responses (see chapter three, section 3.3) demonstrating essentially the model of what we call *face-management* or *face-saving* (see chapter two, section 2.4.2) that is mainly associated with the speech act I am exploring in the present study (*refusals*; that is, refusing *offers* and *invitations*). Therefore, this largely confirms what Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) *second-order* theory would be happening in many respects and, crucially, is very similar to how *first-order* language users themselves recognize and talk about their perceptions of *politeness* they use and experience. Thus, it is the *first-order* respondents informing and largely validating the *second-order* approach (Brown and Levinson 1987). Furthermore, some of the participants referred to the significance in their interactions of what we can recognize in *second-order* as *'face-saving'* while interacting with other participants by using terms like not hurting someone's feelings, caring for their emotions, not embarrassing them, and the like. Hence, it is safe to say that *first-order* interlocutors in the current study have their understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it compared to what is widely and globally labelled and understood.

Also, the results of the current study show that participants from both groups apply the ostensible speech act of refusals in their daily life communication, however, not all the participants were aware of its existence or even how to talk about it. They referred to it as something associated with *politeness* and is predominantly used when they want to save their *faces* as well as their interlocutors' *faces* when realizing the speech act of refusals. This implies that ostensible speech act of refusal is not recognized by all individuals and needs to be given more attention in future academic research especially when dealing with intercultural communication scenarios where participants of different cultural backgrounds interact with each other. In contrast, the term genuine was frequently mentioned by participants of both

groups throughout the data. This reinforces the significance of focusing the attention to shed light on the ostensible speech act to familiarise people with the similarities as well as the differences between both being genuine and insincere during communication and the intention interlocutors have behind that. Following the framework of Isaacs and Clark (1990), most of the participants refused the *offers* or the *invitations* they received insincerely where different features and properties of the ostensible speech act were present. Some of them were accompanied by matching non-verbal features while the rest of them denote that they are not genuine. Some of the participants appeared to be hesitant about their refusals and used hedges while others did not provide any explanations or reasons for their not being able to accept the *offer* or the *invitation,* and so on. Different features and properties of the ostensible speech act were used by participants of both groups. It is worth noting, however, that not all of the participants were aware of the nature of the speech act of refusals they were using, where some of them associated that with being *polite* and referred to it as the opposite thing of being genuine.

One major reason for the participants' use of ostensible speech acts in their daily life communication is them being *polite* to each other and trying not to offend their interlocutors. Another reason is the cultural norms that they need to abide by while interacting with each other. Some of them are aware of those norms while others focus more on being *polite* and relate this to their kind nature as individuals. In a similar vein, the Algerian participant A7, as shown in example (104 above), emphasized the significance of *reciprocity* in *politeness*, that is, both parties engaging in the conversation need to show caring about each other's *face* and try not to hurt them. Therefore, investing in word choice as much as possible to remain *polite* and kind towards others and to reciprocate across multiple interactive events. In this regard, the Algerian participant A7's claim touches upon the intricate interplay between personal

identity, social norms, and interactions. Her statement suggests that consistently being kind to other interlocutors may sometimes lead her to agree to things that contradict her own personal values and beliefs. Therefore, highlighting the struggle between the willingness to maintain positive social connections by being kind to others and the need to remain true to herself. Furthermore, emphasising the idea that social obligations may vary across different cultures. In this sense, some of the Algerian participants argued that they sometimes feel a sense of duty to conform to social norms and values, even if at the expense of them compromising their personal desires and needs, demonstrating the huge influence of cultural norms on individuals' behaviour. This implies that maintaining social harmony may impact how individuals react to different situations. Additionally, the participant's statement indicates that individuals evaluate and interpret speech acts in different ways based on their understanding of the speech acts' potential impact on their relationship with others. Thus, emphasizing the significance of individuals perspectives in shaping behaviour as well as the subjective nature of social interactions, in general.

On the whole, the Algerian participant A7's statement emphasises the challenges individuals face when navigating social interactions, where they need to balance their personal values, societal expectations, and interpersonal connections. In relation to this, however, some participants have claimed that being kind to people all the time might be problematic as they find themselves agreeing to something that is against their identity or principles. Again, those social obligations are evaluated differently throughout the data where some participants (mostly Algerians) claimed that they abide by them out of courtesy while others argued that they do not necessarily feel accountable to their social acts. Thus, it is more or less the individual's interpretation and evaluation of the speech act, that is, the

amount of impact their reaction to a certain speech act would have on their social relationship with their interlocutors.

Another worth mentioning point is that imposition and insistence on the interlocutor to accept an *offer* or an *invitation* are interpreted differently by participants. Some of them claimed that the sincerity of their interlocutors is highly related to the way they frame their speech acts. That is to say, how they issue a certain speech act says a lot about whether they want them to be part of their plans or not, while others interpret that as a social pressure where they find themselves obliged to abide by certain rules that dictate on them how to behave in similar situations. Moreover, participant A7 highlighted the importance of being *polite* in rejecting others' *invitations* and *offers* even if with invented excuses rather than saying a direct "no" to them. Overall, participants from both groups underlined the significance of realizing refusals politely to make them less complex and less face-threatening.

Another critical consideration in the current study is the significant impact culture has on the way participants realize the speech act of refusals and the adjustments they make when dealing with interlocutors of different cultural backgrounds. Some of the participants claimed that they stick to their own culture while others clearly mentioned that they try to fit within the host culture. However, their predominant concern is always to remain *polite* and not offend others. In this regard, some of the Algerian participants argued that they consider their own culture more *polite* compared to the British culture while a few of them (participant A5) exceptionally asserted that the opposite is true, that is, she views her own culture more direct compared to the British culture. However, in all respects, it is safe to say that the more participants are familiar with the host culture, the more likely they are to adjust their speech and eventually communicate effectively.   In a similar vein, the Algerian participant A7 stated

that people from her own culture (i.e., Algerian culture) should be knowledgeable about what is considered to be the norm in dealing with refusals in contrast to someone who is not familiar with that culture. She believes that she needs to provide explanations and reasons for her refusal if the interlocutor she is dealing with has a different cultural background in contrast of when dealing with an Algerian interlocutor where less explanations for the refusal should be provided, participant A7 claims that:

(103) [*Generally, in most cases, I cannot just say no, I cannot make it without explanation. But some people, like, especially if someone is European, like, **the context we are in like in Europe, someone might not be familiar with your culture and stuff.** So, I tend to clarify and explain why I should refuse that*].

Here, The Algerian participant A7 points out the importance of the context where the *refusal* is realized, i.e., to her, more clarification and explanations are required when dealing with someone who is not familiar with her own culture. According to her, people from her own culture should understand her situation without further clarification as she expects them to share the same background knowledge as her, compared to someone who does not belong to the same culture. This, however, indirectly shows her consideration towards others and how much she cares for their reaction and feelings. Still, she later emphasizes her being *polite* in both ways. She further claims that one of the reasons for her not accepting her interlocutor's *offers* or *invitations* is that she would find herself forced to invite them back in the future. In other words, adhering to global constraints which are culturally sensitive. That is to say, she needs to reciprocate and repay the action or the benefit she received under the social norms existing in her Algerian culture. This is present in Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework where the authors argued that *politeness* is of 'mutual interest' (1987:60) for

participants to support each other's *face* based on mutual vulnerability. In other words, if the speaker tries to purposefully save the hearer's *face*, they are more likely to expect them to do the same through a concept known as 'reciprocity'. Therefore, mutual interest in maintaining both interlocutors' *faces* consequently promotes reciprocal behaviours as in the case of participant A7's obligation to invite them back in the future. Here, she refers to the social obligations that exist in her culture that affect her refusals (see chapter three, section 3.4). According to this respondent, in the Algerian culture, most people tend to invite others back whenever they are invited. However, this reciprocity is interpreted differently from one individual to the other, for some of them it is a sign of courtesy and kindness, however, to others it is a social obligation and imposition. Thus, it is always as per the participant's interpretation of the speech act. Therefore, the Algerian participant A7 in this scenario ends up accepting the *offer* or the *invitation* despite her inner desire not to accept it just as a way of avoiding the embarrassment that may occur due to the social expectations.

Likewise, unsurprisingly though, participant A7 claimed that she finds her own culture more *polite* compared to the British culture where her perception is that people do not provide any excuses or explanations to their refusals, where they just reply with a direct 'no'. This, however, has some implications for how laypeople talk about *politeness*, where most of them would see their own culture as the default norm and everyone else varies from those norms. However, as mentioned earlier, that might not always be the case for all the individuals of that particular culture where some interlocutors exceptionally consider their culture less polite and more direct compared to other cultures. Appropriately, and as regards her claims, people tend to define the way they, themselves, and others around them would do things in an agreed way so that they function properly; and, consequently, judge others'

cultures by the standards of their own culture. She further added that she usually expects her

interlocutors to provide her with reasons for not accepting her *offer* or *invitation* better than

declining them with a direct 'No' even if those reasons are not genuine. In a similar vein, the

British participant B7 stated that she does not usually stick to her British norms when dealing

with people of other cultures as everyone expects her to do, rather she tries to reflect on her

grandparents' Jamaican cultural background and does not impose her British cultural norms.

Participant B7 stated that:

> (120) [*I feel like British people do not do that and do not adapt to other people's culture*
>
> *and norms. And like, it is very sad when like, yeah, sorry, sorry.* ***And maybe that is***
>
> ***because my grandparents are from a different culture****, So I'm empathetic to that but*
>
> *like, I feel like, I am much rather if I am going to one of my friend's house, my Pakistani*
>
> *friend, for instance, if I go to their house, or their parent's house, I'm going to be innate,*
>
> *try to bring my cultural norms. And I do not want to rely on British norms either,*
>
> *because everyone else tries to adopt British norms. And really, maybe we should, the*
>
> *British should adapt to everyone else's norms. yeah, that is how I do so that kind of*
>
> *adapts*].

In other words, she does not act as to what she is socially expected to act like, rather she

reflects on what is more socially appropriate and acceptable to her as an individual. Here the

British participant B7 reflected on her desire for cultural interchange and understanding,

along with expressing her frustration with what she considers a lack of adjustment and

adaptability from British culture. According to her claim, adapting to others' cultural norms

is, in fact, a challenging process influenced by different factors including personal experiences,

social expectations, family background, and more. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals to

embrace and value other cultures and try to learn from one another in order to foster inclusivity and cultural misunderstandings, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. Hence, finding a balance between being open to new perspectives and experiences and maintaining one's cultural identity is significant in promoting understanding and social harmony across different societies.

Equally, participant A1 claimed that after her being asked if she needed anything, her interlocutor did not initiate the *offer* several times as expected. To her, and as per the culture she comes from (the Algerian culture), people tend to reject the *offer* or the *invitation* at least two times to three times to finally accept it. They consider this as a social norm they need to abide by every time they deal with the speech act of refusals and anything that is not aligned with that is considered odd to that culture, that is, socially inappropriate. In that situation, her interlocutor was not aware of that and ended up not offering her again. Her interlocutor, being British, is not familiar with the Arabic social scripts of *offering-rejecting*, *offering-rejecting*, and finally *offering-accepting*; (and sometimes it extends to more than a three *offer-refusal* sequence) therefore in most cases this might cause a significant communication misunderstanding in an intercultural setting. Some Algerian families, including mine, tend to insist on the guest several times to accept the *offer* or the *invitation*, especially when realized face-to-face. This is considered a great sign of courtesy in the Algerian culture; therefore, the lack of insistence on the guest might indicate to them that they are not welcome, and the opposite is deemed to be true. Also, after accepting the refusal of their guests, some Algerian families tend to re-initiate the *offer-refusal* sequence for another time just to confirm the sincerity of their interlocutors' intention to refuse, as well as to show more kindness and courtesy. In so many Algerian families, being hospitable is so highly prioritized that it sometimes feels imposing on the guest and threatening both their positive *face* as well as

their interlocutor's negative *face*. It depends, however, on the background of both interlocutors, i.e., if they do share the same cultural background, this might be interpreted as a sign of liking the person and wanting them to stay more and take care of them; while it might be also understood as rushing them to go if not realised properly. That is, in the Algerian culture, some people interpret the constant offering as an implicit intention of the guest to ask them to leave instead of seeing it as a sign of kindness and courtesy. We might accept the refusal after a certain sequence, however, end up offering or inviting again after some time where the guest has at times even forgotten about the *offer* or the *invitation*. This may or may not work as sometimes they keep insisting on their refusals; however, at times they find no other excuses to say no and finally accept the *offer* or the *invitation*.

This was clearly explained in the Algerian participant (A2) when she was asked if she ever accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to decline it; the Algerian participant A2 provided an example of her declining the *offer* of having to drink the juice. Her interlocutor (a Saudi lady) offered the drink several times but the Algerian participant A2 kept declining until she finally accepted the *offer* knowing that it was very cold weather, and she genuinely did not want to have any cold drink. Here, despite the fact that both participants share, to some extent, the same cultural background (Arabic), the genuine intention of the Algerian participant was not clearly understood by her interlocutor even though she hardly tried to convey that. Hence, instead of showing kindness and courtesy, the Saudi lady's further insistence was interpreted by her guest (the Algerian participant, A2) as an imposition and eventually both interlocutors' faces were threatened. Therefore, it all depends on the context where the *invitation* or the *offer* is initiated, the way the host conveys their intention, and the interlocutors' expectations and evaluation of a certain speech act, as well as the way they convey their genuine intention to refuse a certain act. Hence, a communicative

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misunderstanding may easily occur if the two parties share the same cultural background, not to mention when participants have completely different cultural backgrounds and expectations on how to realise the speech act of refusal as the case in the current study (British and Algerian participants). In this regard, the Algerian participant A7 claimed that sometimes she finds herself obliged to accept an *offer* or an *invitation* despite her willingness not to do so just because of the social norms that exist in her culture which dictate how to behave in a certain situation. Those norms are considered by participants to be predominant in every culture and are most likely to be considered acceptable and right to follow (the default).

Another aspect to consider in the current study is the participant's interpretation of what is polite and what is impolite. For most participants declining an *offer* or an *invitation* in an indirect way along with providing reasons and explanations is the key to successful communication where both participants' faces are saved and no risk of harming each other's feelings. However, others believe that being straightforward to the point is better than confusing the interlocutor and implying that you are not genuine about your answer. Also, it is worth mentioning that the *weightiness* of the speech act itself within a certain culture is considered very crucial in the way participants evaluate and interpret it. In this regard, when the British participant B6 was asked whether she has ever accepted an *invitation* or an *offer* despite her inner desire to refuse it and the reason behind that, she claimed:

(96) [*Not really know, maybe I am vegan now. But before I was vegan, if someone were to offer, chocolate or something, I probably would have said yes. Even though I was not necessarily in the mood for it at that moment. Sometimes just out of politeness, okay, but for the most part, when it comes to bigger things, **like actually going somewhere or doing something that I am quite happy to just say, No, thanks**. I am*

not in the mood. I would not necessarily, I would not be worried about hurting

someone's feelings, **because I would hope that I have enough of a relationship with**

that person for them to understand why*, but maybe sometimes was like, you know,*

in meetings, okay. Or, like, when you are not really with friends, but more colleagues

where someone is like, oh, would you like a cup of tea? And, oh, that is good actually

a good example, in job interviews. If someone says, do you want a cup of tea or coffee?

I never want a cup of tea or coffee because I feel like it is distracting. But I always say

yes, yeah. Because I read somewhere. Once that it makes you seem more

approachable. If you say, yeah, yeah, your hot drink. That is like, one of the things I can

think of. Yeah, yeah.

Here the British participant B6 points out that her being polite towards people has to do with

the act itself, i.e., whether it is a minor thing that does not really matter to her or something

very crucial; therefore, it is important to highlight the fact that every individual understands

politeness and when to be *polite* in their own way rather than to what is universally agreed

for it to be. Also, in this case, the participant refers to the *weightiness* of the speech act itself,

that is, the imposition it may cause to her interlocutor. In this regard, the British participant

B6 claims that the act of refusal itself plays a great role in her being *polite* to others as she

believes that major things do not require being super polite when rejecting them compared

with something less important. Thus, what she might consider polite as a *rejection* might not

be considered the same by another person. That is to say, her absolute sense of what

politeness means differs from what others consider *polite*. Interestingly, this is identified as

polite in *second-order* theorizing terms (see Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to

Participant B6, it is crucial to highlight that every individual interprets *politeness* as per their

understanding of what is acceptable to them rather than what is universally agreed to be. The same participant B6 states that she usually behaves according to her character as a person rather than sticking to what is considered to be the norm in her own culture, that is, she considers that more or less an individual thing rather than cultural.

Another yet noteworthy variable that we need to highlight here is the social status as well as the social distance that exists between interlocutors that significantly impact the way participants realise the speech act of refusals. According to the British participant B6 when dealing with someone of the same social distance or having the same power as hers, she would feel more comfortable rejecting their *offers* or *invitations* as she believes that the more the social gap exists between her and the other interlocutor the more pressure she would feel when refusing them. When asked whether she finds it easy or difficult to decline an *offer* or an *invitation* and the reason why; the British participant B6 claims that:

(89) [*that **it depends on the circumstance and also on the person themselves** Yeah. Sometimes the circumstances oblige you to accept and sometimes to refuse and other times that the person themselves who are offering this invitation Yeah or offer they may, or we cannot I cannot refuse easily Yeah. So, it depends. With some people it is easy with others …Okay, depending on their social status, the relationship that relationship Yeah, it could be difficult*].

Here, the British participant B6's claims confirm how difficult she finds it to reject others' *offers* or *invitations* when they hold a different social status or because the social distance that exists between her and the person she is refusing. According to her, the presence of these two social variables complicates the act of refusing where she needs to provide further explanations and reasons for her refusal. In this regard, participant B6 has claimed that

declining the *offer* or the *invitation* of someone slightly close to her is never considered the same as refusing a person she does not really know or is not close enough to her as in the case of a student-supervisor context. She believes that saying no to someone close to her like a friend would not bother her much and she would not feel too much uncomfortable doing so compared to another person. Again, the British participant B6 associates her being polite and kind with the relationship she shares with her interlocutor. However, it is worth noting here that the British participant B6 perceives her own culture more polite than the Dutch culture in contrast with previous British participants' assertions. In other words, according to her perspective, the British participant relies on her British cultural background when dealing with close friends, as she finds it more difficult to turn their *offers* or *invitations* down; whilst she adopts her Dutch cultural background when interacting with people less socially familiar to her.

Once again, this instance confirms that politeness is not always interpreted and evaluated similarly by all members of the same culture. In a similar vein, the British participant B5 claimed that rejecting an *offer* or an *invitation* from someone who is socially close to her is perceived to be more challenging than refusing a stranger, where a direct no or a simple excuse is generally deemed to be acceptable. Therefore, suggesting that societal expectations and social dynamics within relationships have a significant impact on shaping perceptions of *politeness* and appropriate behaviours.

On another note, throughout the data, most participants highlighted the significance of receiving genuine responses from their interlocutors when declining their *offers* or *invitations*. In this regard, the Algerian participant A1 claims that when receiving a direct 'no' without any explanation may come across as offensive to her. Consequently, she associates

being more *polite* and the manner in which refusals are expressed to the genuineness of the interlocutor in rejecting her *offer* or *invitation*. She additionally states that it is better to provide a valid reason for rejecting the *offer* or the *invitation*; if no reason is provided, she believes that opting for an indirect refusal is still appropriate than saying a direct 'no'. This is however her interpretation of what is socially perceived as *polite* and acceptable. Also, she stresses the importance of whether her interlocutor's facial expressions align with their verbal *refusal*. In her view, this reflects their sincerity in being apologetic and their genuine intention not to hurt her feelings or cause any offense. Consequently, according to her perspective, it is about the way interlocutors frame their refusals as well as the use of fitting non-verbal cues which indicate their sincere intention and respect in interpersonal interactions, which is itself a sign of being genuine.

According to Isaacs and Clark (1990) the discrepancy between what is said and what is actually expressed non-verbally denotes that the speech act is ostensible. Therefore, the participant A1 here appears to indirectly refer to the ostensible speech act of refusals without her necessarily being aware of its characteristics. This highlights the significance of studying this type of speech acts to deepen individuals' understandings and familiarity with them. In doing so, individuals can effectively handle ostensible speech acts in their daily interactions, especially in intercultural settings, to avoid misunderstandings and ultimately maintain positive relationships with others. Consequently, raising awareness of the nuances of communication to foster mutual respect and smoother interactions among individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

Respectively, the Algerian participant A5 highlights the impact of the word choice in both her own refusals and the way she perceives others' refusals. According to her

perspective, replacing a casual excuse like 'not in the mood' with a more sincere explanation such as 'I am not feeling well' indicates greater validity and genuineness. This distinction implies that the strategies employed in a refusal can significantly influence how it is perceived and interpreted by interlocutors. In the sense that, choosing words that convey honesty and genuineness can improve individuals' quality of communication and enhance their social relationships with others. Another point to focus on here is that the level of sincerity differs from one person to another, that is, some of the participants claimed that the more explanations and reasons their interlocutors provide the more genuine they consider their refusal. However, as per the Algerian participant A5, it is not a matter of offering further explanation but rather the type of reason provided. Therefore, the Algerian participant A5's perspective indicates that whether a refusal is perceived as *polite* or *impolite* is subjective and likely dependent on interlocutors' evaluations and interpretations, rather than on what is universally agreed to be the social norms.

Essentially, every individual's perception of politeness and social etiquette is influenced by their personal experiences, cultural background, and interpersonal relationships. Thus, what is perceived as socially appropriate or inappropriate can vary significantly among various individuals and cultural settings. To this end, navigating those subjective interpretations and adjusting to others' behaviours can effectively improve communication and ultimately enhance social relationships across various social settings. Yet, the Algerian participant A7 claims that it is not about being genuine or not; rather providing an excuse or an explanation for not doing so matters more. According to her, it is not necessary to be always sincere about your refusal rather an invented reason could serve the purpose. Participant A7 states that:

(108) [*it is something you mentioned before. It is about being genuine. Yeah. You know, if I talk about my own culture, generally just you cannot say a direct no, okay? Instead, you must give excuses explanations. I if someone tells you are invited to my house that day, you and you're not willing to go so the first thing you will say, you know, either you could say I'm saying you can say I'm invited somewhere else, or I'm having I'm hosting guests that day, you know,* **like even if you just try to invent some excuses as a way to say no,** *yeah,* **but here in the UK, for example, as part of their culture, they tend to say a direct No,** *yeah. Oh, sorry, this happened to you and just, it is just a short story. Short, no, you know, as simple as that.* **Through time on becoming, I am not to say I started to adopt that behaviour**].

Here, the Algerian participant A7 is discussing the cultural differences in how individuals from various cultures handle refusals. She considers her own culture (Algerian culture) more polite compared to the British culture, where providing reasons or explanations is typical norm rather than directly saying "no". On the opposite, in the UK giving a straightforward "no" without excuses or explanations is more common. According to her perspective, if she is invited somewhere but prefers not to go, she might mention prior commitments or that she is hosting guests, even if those reasons are not entirely accurate. In this regard, she believes that even invented excuses would serve the purpose rather than just saying a direct "no" to others' *offers* and *invitations*.

Furthermore, the Algerian participant A7 highlights the fact that over time she started adapting herself to this direct approach, which initially felt unfamiliar to her. This indicates how cultural norms regarding communication and refusal can vary, and how people may adapt their behaviour to fit in others' cultures. This is, however, in opposition to what the

previous Algerian participant A6 claims where she identified the Algerian culture as a more direct one in comparison with the British culture. This is yet another confirmation that every individual interprets and evaluates the cultural norms as per their own understandings. This indicates that despite the discrepancy between cultures when it comes to realizing the speech act of refusals, it remains all the time the interlocutor's choice whether to stick to their L1 cultural norms, switch to the L2 cultural norms, or apply both. However, remarkably, no matter which cultural norms interlocutors from both groups choose to abide by; their main purpose remains always not to harm others' feelings and be *polite*. In a similar vein, the British participant B5 states that guessing the interlocutor's intention requires more familiarity with them as participants might be hiding their real intention behind their *polite* manner. Thus, to her, it remains uncertain and cannot be always figured out. She maintains that:

(78) [*I think probably sometimes, because it is like, I do not know. It is a difficult one. I think that is, so I think less so recently, but I think maybe, I do not know. It is I suppose I am British, British people meet other people from different countries. I do not know just you have that kind of politeness,* **always as part of what you are taught as a child to be polite, always be polite.** *And sometimes I think that is actually a little bit problematic. Because it is not very authentic somewhere. It is just being this polite person all the time. So, I think, I think probably politeness is what I just say is something that is this very British kind of thing. But it is sometimes the opposite of politeness is really not very nice, but it is dressed in this idea of politeness, I guess politeness!]*

Here the British participant B5 asserts that even if being *polite* is meant to be the norm in dealing with others, it does not all the time serve the purpose as it might be hiding the real intention of the interlocutor. This is, however, remains uncertain and requires more

familiarity with the interlocutor's character to guess their intention, if ever possible. This highlights that as members of a certain society, those norms, and rules on how to behave are introduced to us at a very early stage of our life. However, according to her claim: ***'sometimes I think that is actually a little bit problematic. Because it is not very authentic somewhere.'***, those norms might not necessarily be the same or applicable in another cultural context, therefore, causing some problems for members when they communicate interculturally. However, according to her, *politeness* always remains a key aspect despite the context where she is operating. This corresponds with what the Algerian participant A5 has claimed; according to her, no matter what the context is when refusing, the interlocutor should always stick to politeness. She further adds that she does not face any problem when dealing with people from different cultural backgrounds; and that she does not even bother to know what is considered to be acceptable in that culture as far as she remains polite. Again, politeness remains always a significant aspect to consider in any intercultural context no matter what cultural discrepancy is between those cultures. In other words, whether interlocutors choose to stick to their cultural norms, or switch or adjust to other cultures, their successful communication is significantly related to how much they are *polite* and how effective and appropriate they apply it.

Likewise, the British participant B5 states that knowing the etiquette of other cultures plays a great role in preventing cultural misunderstandings. Relatedly, the Algerian participant A7 refers to the importance of the context where the refusal is realized, that is, further explanations and clarifications are needed when dealing with someone who is not familiar with her own culture in contrast to someone sharing the same cultural background. This shows that individuals have expectations that members of their culture are aware of the

norms that exist in that particular culture and therefore assume that their speech act might

be understood more compared when dealing with someone external; that is, from a different

culture. Thus, providing more explanation and clarification is highly related to the nature of

the person they are dealing with and where they come from. In this regard, the British

participant B7 emphasizes the importance of the context where the *offer* or the *invitation* is

being rejected. She asserts that:

> (114) [*I do not feel disrespected but… then I think that I do not know whether the*
>
> *person is being truthful or not. Okay, **sometimes, especially if it is through text or***
>
> ***something. So, I am just like, oh, are they telling the truth**, like Yeah, but I do think*
>
> *that you know?... yeah, but then accept it anyway, like, it is okay, you know, no worries.*
>
> *I do not feel so, I would not say it was disrespected. I would not say annoyed, I just feel*
>
> *like, I feel sad. Okay, upset. If I wanted someone to come. Yeah, if I want someone to*
>
> *come, like, I feel sad. I will not say disrespected or annoyed. Because they might have*
>
> *a situation where they just cannot make it. So, I have to be kind of empathetic. But*
>
> *yeah, like, I would not even I would not say upset I just say disappointed*].

To her, receiving a refusal face-to-face is always considered better than rejecting behind the

screen (texting) or over the phone, as she believes that she cannot guess the sincerity of her

interlocutor if it is not face-to-face. Again, she is indirectly referring to the ostensible speech

act where she could assess her interlocutor's sincerity through interpreting their facial

expression. Therefore, the discrepancy between what is spoken and what is non-verbally

expressed is a significant sign of the insincerity of the interlocutor in declining the *offers*

*invitations (*see Isaacs and Clark, 1990). To this end, we can safely say that Isaacs and Clark's

(1990) framework remains a valid reference in comparing the two types of speech acts of

refusals (genuine and ostensible). Similarly, the British participant B5 claims that the way the refusal is usually framed along with the tone, as well as the *social status* of her interlocutor, play a great role in her interpreting the refusal and whether she feels disrespected or not. Again, the British participant here refers to some of the features and properties that help her in deciding whether her interlocutor is declining her *offers* or *invitations* genuinely or insincerely.

Relatedly. The Algerian participant A7 claims that in a way to avoid saying a direct 'no' to people especially when social differences exist refusing someone not close enough to her seems to be very difficult. Therefore, her, ignoring the text and replying after a certain period by providing a particular excuse appears to be much easier. The Algerian participant A7 highlights that her strategy of dealing with refusals is not to decline immediately when she receives the *offer* or the *invitation*, rather she chooses to ignore it than apologise later on. This emphasizes that different people deal with the speech act of refusal in different ways and that they do follow the social norms in a way that they consider appropriate to them rather than appropriate to everyone.

The data collected via improvised acted-out scenarios were analysed based on the analysis framework used by Isaacs and Clark (1990). Overall, their analytical framework validates its efficiency in the study of the speech act of refusals where it helps distinguish between genuine and ostensible refusals used by both the Algerian and British participants in the current study. The nonserious use of language by both participants was apparent throughout the data which confirms that it is common enough in their ordinary discourse. Therefore, giving an account of it whenever studying any theory of language is deemed to be necessary. Isaacs and Clark's (1990) features and properties appeared predominantly and

frequently in most responses of the participants of both groups. Based on Isaacs and Clark's (1990) analytical framework, both the Algerian and British participants aimed to extend some refusals that they did not intend to be taken seriously by their counterparts (at least not from the first *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* sequence) in order to accomplish some other purposes as being polite and not hurting each other.

However, I should acknowledge that the data obtained from the current study is not meant to apply to the whole Algerian or British people and is not entirely authentic. Therefore, different results might be obtained if data is collected in natural settings where people interact spontaneously. It is worth mentioning in the analysis of the data that most of the exchanges of the participants from both groups complied with the five defining properties and therefore were treated as ostensible speech acts of refusal, while very few were classified as genuine refusals. Hence, it is safe to say that ostensible refusals constitute a coherent class of speech acts used in our daily lives that should be studied in more depth and in different cultural settings. Also, it is crucial to note that all the defining properties used by the Algerian participants are relatively similar to those of English ones, therefore, answering the question raised in the introduction regarding the existence of any similarities or differences in the way both Algerian and British students realize the speech act of refusals. However, we should note that the initiations of the Algerian participants might appear more imposing to the British participants or any other cultural outsiders. In other words, the unstated purpose Algerian participants have behind their insincere refusals which is considered part of ritual politeness, and which is mainly characterized as a face-saving act used to establish their social character and positive face, might appear as disturbing and hypocritical to people of other cultures who do not necessarily share the same cultural backgrounds with them.

6 Summary and conclusion

My study is an exploration of intercultural negotiation of refusals to *offers* and *invitations*. It is aimed at understanding the nature of such a speech act; that is, whether it is ostensible or genuine, and the main features and properties that define it. To accomplish this, a detailed analysis of the data collected both in Improvised acted-out scenarios and semi-structured interviews was completed. The study suggests that there is clear evidence of cultural differences in expressions in the performance of the speech act of refusals to both *invitations* and *offers.* The findings also show that there are cultural script variations in refusals not only in terms of Arabic and English in relation to the speech acts, but also in terms of cultural script responses to *offers*, on the one hand, and *invitations* on the other. The cultural analysis above provides insights into how cultural conceptualisations influence the ways that language is used to convey social meaning, particularly through attending to issues of *power* and *distance* between interlocutors. The analysis above could serve as a useful reference point for developing appreciation and awareness of the pragmatic sensitivity and understanding of the cultural differences for learners in any intercultural context. Furthermore, it demonstrates the main features and properties of ostensible refusals of both Algerian and British MMU students. Relying on Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework, the data suggest the use of both ostensible and genuine speech act refusals as well as the confusion created when not understanding the intention of the interlocutors. That is to say, some genuine refusals were considered insincere and, therefore, triggered additional insisting making the sequence further extended leading to uncomfortable and embarrassing situations; while other refusals were insincerely performed and misunderstood as genuine ones. Moreover, the study suggests that one of the main reasons for extending

the *offer* and *invitation* sequence is to confirm the interlocutors' sincerity of the refusals. Whereas the reason for not accepting the *offer* or the *invitation* from the first time and seeking further insistence was mainly related to the socio-cultural background the participants come from. In this regard, some of the participants claimed that they relate this to being *polite* and saving each other's *faces* whereas some of them consider accepting the *offer* or the *invitation* from the first time as a sort of imposition on their interlocutors. Correspondingly, participants maintained that another reason they decided on the refusal pattern to follow is the *power* and *distance* that exist between them and their counterparts as declining the *invitation* to join a friend for a movie night was not framed the same way as declining the supervisor's *offer* to purchase the book. Thus, highlighting the significance of the social variables in deciding on the way to respond to *offers* and *invitations*.

Due to the challenges of having access to naturally occurring data, but by being primarily concerned about the cultural influence on the Speech Acts in question, participants were asked to improvise the way they refuse two scenarios (one *offer* and one *invitation*) and immediately after that, they were invited for semi-structured interviews to reflect on the way they acted out the scenarios as well as to discuss the socio-cultural norms they rely on in their everyday interactions when refusing others. Having two parties from totally different cultures (Algerian and British) with diverse cultural backgrounds and scripts where different cultural expectations exist leads to communicative misunderstandings and failure to convey the appropriate intention. Thus, knowing the etiquette of other cultures plays a significant role in preventing cultural misinterpretations which are as per my data severely related to *politeness* and *face-saving.*

As my data exhibited, participants from both cultures drew heavily from their L1 culture in terms of scripts and script expectations when refusing *offers* and *invitations*. They paid attention to facial expressions as well when depicting the sincerity of the speech act of refusals of their counterparts. Therefore, the thesis critically highlights the significance of both verbal and non-verbal cues in predicting whether speakers need to insist further on their interlocutor or accept the refusal and end the *offer-refusal* or *invitation-refusal* sequence. In this regard, participants claimed that having their interlocutors' facial expressions match their verbal refusal indicates the sincerity of their counterparts in being truly apologetic and that their intention was not to hurt their feelings; therefore, being *polite*.

Additionally, some of the participants stated that the sort of contradiction between what is uttered verbally and what is expressed non-verbally (through facial expressions) by the interlocutors when declining their *offers* and *invitations* provoked them to re-initiate their speech act and insisting further. This, however, highlights two important things: 1. the significance of relying not only on the verbal cues to depict the sincerity of their counterparts as the non-verbal cues play a great role in providing some hints whether the refusal is genuine or not. 2: The misinterpretation of the facial expressions which sometimes mislead participants and confuses them when figuring out the intention of their interlocutors. In this regard, showing a smiling face when rejecting the *offers* or the *invitations* was mainly used to express *politeness* rather than being hesitant to accept them or seeking for additional insistence. This, however, underlines the significance of non-verbal cues in intercultural communication and the need for individuals to be aware of the cultural differences that exist between cultures in order to efficiently navigate intercultural interactions and become more adaptable to those differences if required. Moreover, exploring the complexity of the notion of the *face* and how it varies cross-culturally is still in need of further theoretical and practical

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development. This only relatively changes the longest someone is actually living in the UK or in their L2 host culture where everyday life interaction with people helps develop participants' communicative skills and become more aware of the communicative disparities among different cultures to check whether the speakers' intentions are correctly conveyed or not. In other words, there is evidence that the longer a participant has been in an L2 culture, there are perceived changes in their approach to, and ability to read for both verbal and non-verbal cues as stated by some of the participants of the current study.

Here, we should also highlight the fact that this is not to say that people with L1 scripts lose them in intercultural communication; rather, they compartmentalize those scripts as appropriate to other L1 speakers even when operating with them in the L2 host culture; or when they are back home in the L1 culture. They have essentially now acquired a new set of scripts that illustrate the dynamics of refusals and the associated rituals within an L2. As such they now have a wider repertoire of resources upon which to draw, and it appears that they will select which set of scripts is appropriate in which scenarios (based on refusal to which type and weight of Speech Act; and with whom they are speaking) and situations (whether more formal and weightier or informal and less weighty) they find themselves in. We should also point out that sometimes when an L1 speaker interacts with another L1 speaker using English in an L2 setting like The UK for instance, they still perform Arabic scripts instead of English ones. Some participants, however, claimed that they fully rely on the host culture's scripts, even when their counterparts shared the same Arabic cultural background. Although some of the participants claimed that at times, they choose to engage in a sort of combination of their own *face-work* and the one they subscribe to in their host culture, others stated that they purely rely on one understanding of the *face-work* be it their own or the one of the host

cultures. This demonstrates the cultural force has a strong influence, especially where the participants are L1 speakers even when operating in L2 language and cultural environments.

This is perhaps unsurprising as Spencer Oatey (2008) has convincingly demonstrated that *face* which is considered a self-image or social identity of individuals has a cultural influence where different cultures have different notions of *face* leading to cultural conflicts and misunderstandings in intercultural interactions. Hence, my thesis reveals the idea of seeing cultures as discrete cognitive entities and it all has to do with cultural appropriation and cultural masking which seems to be one of the very dynamic areas of research at the moment where demonstrating how individuals engage across-cultural boundaries and the choice of what kind of identity they want to adopt. In this regard, adopting one kind of identity is entirely dependent on the individual's choice of how to perform their refusals; and this does not entirely automatically mean they would actually become more English or the other way around; rather, it helps in improving their intercultural communication skills. In terms of the present thesis, this obtains even when someone is speaking in L2 language to another L1 speaker there will be variations on that as well as accommodation made for the L2 speakers and their relative lack of what the L1 culture script might be and the negotiation around that.

Following Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework, both Algerian and British participants employed ostensible and genuine refusals to the *offers* and *invitations* they received in different ways. They framed their refusals in a certain way that seems to be appropriate for them but not necessarily interpreted the same way as expected by the other interlocutor. Put differently, and as the data demonstrated, some of the participants' refusals in the *offer-refusal* or the *invitation-refusal* were genuine from the first time and did not require any further insistence or re-initiating of the *offer* or the *invitation*. Yet, this was not clear for their

counterparts whom they kept insisting on several times and eventually extending the *offer-refusal* and the *invitation-refusal* sequence to multiple turns before finally ending it. This, however, led to miscommunication, misinterpretation, and essentially meta-negotiation of the interlocutor's *intention* and *sincerity*. Throughout the data, Isaacs and Clark's (1990) features and properties of ostensible speech act are present in most of the sequences demonstrating the existence of ostensible refusals where no reasons for the participants to accept the *offer* or the *invitation* are provided at times. Additionally, no clues for the timing and location where the *invitation* takes place were provided, eventually, not extending beyond social courtesy. To this end, I can safely demonstrate that Isaacs and Clark's (1990) model does account for the current study and provides a solid basis for depicting the ostensible nature of the speech act of refusals as it does for *invitations* when it was first introduced by them. Therefore, and despite the fact that *refusals* are different in their characteristic features from *invitations*, Isaacs and Clark's (1990) framework proves to be valid and applicable in depicting the nature of refusal (genuine or ostensible) performed by participants in different social contexts. Besides, applying it to different speech acts like the speech act of *requests, apologies*, and the like would provide a comprehensive understanding of the ostensible speech act nature which remains still an under-researched area of study in the field of intercultural pragmatics. Hence, my study may make a valuable resource for practitioners and scholars in the field of intercultural communication where various ways of realizing speech acts in different social contexts such as business are examined and significant discussions about the differences between ostensible and genuine speech acts could be made.

As per the results of the current study, different properties and features of the ostensible speech act were present in the interlocutors' responses. One of which is providing

reasons that are generally derived from them considering costs to the addressee, that is, not imposing on them and therefore not causing troubles for them. Throughout the data, both interlocutors performed speech acts insincerely to serve an indirect purpose where their aim was not to be taken seriously. Furthermore, they employed vague and unclear responses to decline the *invitations* and the *offers* they received. Also, in most of their responses, there was a discrepancy between what they uttered verbally and what they conveyed non-verbally which indicated that they were not fully committed to what they actually performed. Another feature of the ostensible speech act that was predominantly employed by both interlocutors is the use of hedging expressions that denoted their hesitation in delivering their refusals to both *offers* and *invitations*. Another frequently used feature by both interlocutors was providing insufficient details to determine their genuineness of the refusal speech act, i.e., there were many instances throughout the data where participants made their intention undetectable to the hearer whether they sincerely wanted to refuse the initiating act or not.

Based on the results of the current study, the *social status* of the interlocutors significantly influenced the way they realised the speech acts of refusal. Different *politeness* strategies were employed depending on the *social status* where individuals of *lower status* demonstrated a higher use of indirect strategies when refusing an *offer* or an *invitation* from someone holding a higher *social status*. Both Algerian and British participants demonstrated that the main reason behind their use of indirect strategies was to maintain harmony and show respect toward their interlocutors. In contrast, individuals of *higher status* frequently opted for direct strategies when refusing those of *lower status*. Participants claimed that they prefer to employ some mitigating strategies to reduce the potential face-threats when refusing offers and *invitations* as well as not to put themselves in awkward situations.

Therefore, minimise the face-threat for both parties in the conversation. Another substantial reason behind both participants not using direct refusals was the cultural norms they abide by which significantly shape how their refusals are expressed. It is worth noting, however, that some participants claimed that they prefer not to use direct refusals regardless of the *social status* of their interlocutors as they think that they might be considered rude, while others maintained that being direct at times is perfectly fine to them. This emphasises the idea that both the *social status* of interlocutors and the cultural norms highly influence their choice of the refusal strategies used in refusing *offers* and *invitations*. Nevertheless, this remains always dependent on the participants' interpretations of what is considered to be socially and culturally appropriate to use. Put differently, what is considered rude and inappropriate by a certain person might be seen as perfectly fine to use by another person despite the cultural background they come from.

Another significant point we should highlight is that individuals with higher *social status* may feel more empowered to refuse i*nvitations* and *offers* compared to *lower status* individuals who may feel pressured to comply even if they do not want to. This was evident in some of the interlocutors' responses. Throughout the data, participants from both cultures (Algerian and British) reflected on some instances where their intention was not successfully conveyed. For example, the Algerian participant A2 reflected on her experience where her genuine intention to refuse the juice was not appropriately conveyed and she ended up having it despite her willingness not to. Here we should note that despite the fact that both the guest (Saudi Arabian) and the host (Algerian participant A2) have the same social status, that is, being friends; there was a social distance gap between the two interlocutors where the Algerian participant A2 explained that she found it uncomfortable declining the *offer*

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especially after the consistent insisting of her interlocutors. In this example, even though both interlocutors belong to the same culture (Arabic) there was a cultural misunderstanding and communicative breakdown. And so many other instances in the Algerian culture where the host insists on their guest to accept things they do not wish to have or an Algerian leaving the house hungry just because their host does not insist on them several times as expected. And another range of examples mentioned throughout the data of the participants' failure to either convey their true intention to refuse the *offer* or the *invitation* or their interlocutors' misinterpretations of their genuine intention to decline them as the case of one British participant accepting the *offer* to have something that is not vegan. Overall, the interlocutors' *social status*, *social distance*, and the culture they come from play a crucial role in the way they realise the speech act of refusals, impacting their linguistic choices, *politeness* strategies as well as the mitigating techniques used.

Moreover, the results of the study suggested that participants of both groups (Algerian and British) are sensitive to the notion of *face* when rejecting others' offers and invitations. Across the data, expressions like not hurting the interlocutor, being awkward, being uncomfortable, and avoiding being rude and impolite were significantly employed. They claimed that they do not want to be perceived as impolite and confrontational despite the fact that they sometimes find themselves agreeing to do things against their true willingness. This however highlights the importance of understanding the intention of the interlocutors behind their refusals. Delivering a refusal without clear verbal and physical clues can be misleading for the interlocutors who find it difficult to detect the intention of their counterparts and eventually end up perceiving insincere refusals as genuine and the other way around. To this end, it is of paramount importance to check the sincerity of the

interlocutor before coming to any final decision. This, however, can only be achieved when we can efficiently determine the main features and properties that define the speech act of refusals in every single culture. I trust that the modest outcome of the present study contributes to comprehending the realisation of the ostensible speech act of refusals and inspire additional research in the context of inter/cross-cultural communication.

In this regard, individuals of different cultural backgrounds may have different interpretations and expectations of speech acts based on their cultural values and norms. Therefore, insincere refusals may be particularly challenging in such contexts as they hinder mutual understanding and therefore result in communication failure. Overall, the extent to which the ostensible speech acts affect the *face* of interlocutors in intercultural communication depends on different factors, including the context of the interaction, the communication style, the linguistic strategies used, and to a great extent the cultural sensitivity. To this end, it is crucial for individuals interacting in intercultural settings to be aware of those differences and attempt to check and detect the sincerity of their interlocutors in order to maintain positive relationships.

Considering the widespread of the English language, it is significant for language teachers to consider which linguistic and cultural groups are most relevant in demonstrating instances of inter/cross-cultural communication for their students, and therefore promoting their intercultural communication competence in order to meet the challenges of such globalised world. In this regard, Echcharfy (2019) argues that culture courses, particularly at the university level, should not solely focus on exposing learners to the target culture; rather they should serve as a place where learners reflect on their experiences.

One of the strategies they proposed to help learners develop communicative pragmatic competence is the use of students-centered tasks that underlie students' experiment of translating activities from their first language to the target language based on the existing knowledge they have. This plays a great role in helping students understand how cultural norms are reflected and why pragmatic translations can be challenging and make them realise how culture and language are interrelated. According to Koutlani and Eslami (2018), some pragmatic strategies which are used to realise a certain speech act in L1 are difficult to translate into L2 because of the cultural difference where they struggle to find the equivalent translations to some concepts.

Exposing learners to the different cultural aspects of their language and the target language provides them with the analytical skills necessary for them to arrive at their own generalisations regarding what is appropriate language use in a certain inter/cross-cultural context (Shmidt, 1993). This way students will have the opportunity to share problematic instances they encountered from their own day-to-day life experiences or from TV shows, and movies in the target language. It is crucial in broadening learners' perceptions of such globalised world and allowing them to engage in ongoing negotiations and reflections on cultural differences. In this regard, Echcharfy (2019) argues that different examples can be presented to learners where they can provide tentative explanations for any pragmatics failure detected in the exchanges. Similarly, Koutlaki and Eslami (2018) argue that in order to gain a clearer understanding of the target culture, teachers need to provide their students with a detailed explanation of the different values prevalent in the two cultures and how those values are encoded and manifested through various communicative strategies in

different languages. Therefore, it is worth pointing out the cultural differences in order to avoid cultural misunderstandings and discomfort.

In the semi-structured interview answers, one of the Algerian participants (A7) claims that before coming to the UK, she used to watch videos about British culture in general and not necessarily the way British people communicate. Her aim was to familiarise herself with the British culture so that she would not experience any cultural shock when arriving here. This highlights the significance of incorporating videos into the oral sessions which enhances students' engagement and provides them with a visual context for learning where they can develop awareness of the cultural differences in realising different speech acts.

Also, implementing improvised acted-out scenarios in the classroom can be effective in promoting students learning and engagement as they might raise the students' critical thinking and provide them with the opportunity to understand the challenges when operating in a foreign language when relying solely on their cultural norms. In this regard, teachers can provide the students with a certain speech act to improvise in both their native language as well as the target language and later ask them to reflect on the acting of their colleagues. That is, draw their attention to any similarities or differences observed during the interaction better than using textbooks or written scenes as in the form of DCTs. Accordingly, teachers can use any miscommunication instances to reflect on any inter/cross-cultural communication failure occurring to help students develop their communicative skills.

Overall, Given the globalised nature of the world, it is essential that students achieve a certain level of both language proficiency and intercultural competence to increase the number of highly educated individuals who will be capable of effectively competing as

students and professionals across different fields and cultural contexts, enhancing their readiness to engage in study and work programs abroad.

6.1 Limitations and direction for future research

In spite of the findings and the insightful data this study yielded, there are still some limitations that prompt future research. One of which is the difficulty in accessing naturally occurring data, for ethical reasons. Relying on natural data would have offered perhaps more faithful understandings of the nature of human communication as both verbal and non-verbal cues could have been fully captured and therefore accurate data and findings would have originated. I have nevertheless innovated with the introduction of 'Improvised, acted-out scenarios' as a superior method or contribution to methodology than simply relying on DCTs which have inherent limitations and issues, as I explored in depth earlier (see Chapter Three, section 3.3.1). Therefore, in order to gain a better vision of the phenomenon under study and provide a deeper understanding of human communication where participants interact without any sort of instruction in spontaneous situations deemed to be necessary.

Also, as the current study focused on MMU students only, the data generated cannot be generalized to all the Algerian communities living in the UK as there might be variations in the cultural scripts now and in the future. Therefore, this study gives room for future research where different varieties of English and Arabic cultural scripts can be negotiated and developed further. I looked only at university students where there are actually so many people living in foreign English-speaking countries like the UK for other intercultural reasons including businesses, jobs, and the like. Therefore, this research has an implication not just for students within the UK, but rather for anybody who is moving to any other L2 cultural context to embark on a new journey to a different language or culture. In this regard, moving

to a new linguistic and cultural environment requires not only linguistic proficiency; rather the need to deeply understand the cultural variations in communication styles that characterise each culture. What might be perceived as acceptable or appropriate speech or actions in one culture could be viewed differently or even inappropriate in another cultural context, as individuals have different expectations of how to communicate and behave within a specific cultural framework. Consequently, they need to familiarise themselves with cultural script variations to successfully navigate social interactions. Essentially, by acknowledging and understanding those disparities, people can adjust their communication styles according to the expectations of the host culture and ultimately foster a smoother integration into the new cultural environment and nurture positive interpersonal relationships.

This thesis forms a basis for a new set of research and hypothetical observations. It clearly indicates that there is a lingering cultural influence on speech act production and reception in ritual and script formats even when one speaker is operating in L2. This is important when we consider that British society is increasingly multicultural and therefore there are different cultural influences, cultural rituals, and cultural scripts all contributing to how people perform, orient to, and respond to British English. Moreover, focusing on various non-verbal features when conducting inter/cross-cultural research and following a detailed analysis of the non-verbal aspect of the communication instead of concentrating on describing the facial expressions only is deemed to be required. This would offer rich findings and consequently help gain a better understanding of human communication and mitigate inter/cross-cultural misunderstandings. To this end, having learners of a foreign language aware of the cultural differences both verbally and non-verbally would efficiently improve their communicative skills and help them become effective communicators when encountered with situations that require them to rely not only on their cultural scripts to

successfully convey their proper intention and not being misunderstood. Therefore, incorporating modules on intercultural and cross-cultural differences as well as non-verbal communication into their curriculum is deemed to be looked for.

7   Bibliography

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Appendix 01: Ethical approval letter

Manchester Metropolitan University

17/05/2019
Project Title: The Realisation of the Speech Act of Refusals in Intercultural Setting:
Ostensible or Genuine?

EthOS Reference Number: 4189

Ethical Opinion

Dear Fatima Ali,

The above application was reviewed by the Arts and Humanities Research Ethics and Governance Committee and, on the 17/05/2019, was given a favourable ethical opinion. The approval is in place until 20/08/2020 .

Conditions of favourable ethical opinion

Application Documents

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Project Proposal	Project proposal.	19/11/2018	01
Recruitment Media	fatima-Advert	19/11/2018	01
Consent Form	CONSENT FORM	01/04/2019	01
Information Sheet	Participant-Information-Sheet (1)	16/05/2019	01

The Arts and Humanities Research Ethics and Governance Committee favourable ethical opinion is granted with the following conditions

Adherence to Manchester Metropolitan University's Policies and procedures

This ethical approval is conditional on adherence to Manchester Metropolitan University's Policies, Procedures, guidance and Standard Operating procedures. These can be found on the Manchester Metropolitan University Research Ethics and Governance webpages.

Amendments

If you wish to make a change to this approved application, you will be required to submit an amendment. Please visit the Manchester Metropolitan University Research Ethics and Governance webpages or contact your Faculty research officer for advice around how to do this.

We wish you every success with your project.

Art and Humanities Research Ethics and Governance Committee

Appendix 02: Participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: The Realisation of the Speech Act of Refusals in Intercultural Setting: Ostensible or Genuine?

Aims of the research

The present study seeks to explore the realization of the ostensible (insincere) Vs genuine (sincere) speech acts of refusals, in a setting where Algerians and British interact with each other to see how much this can influence the flow of communication. It, essentially, aims to broaden the scope of cross-cultural pragmatics to help reduce cultural miscommunication, i.e. how people converse and understand each other in a context where participants from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other.

Therefore, you are invited to take part in the research study entitled. **The realisation of the speech act of refusals in intercultural setting: Ostensible or genuine?** A research project that is being undertaken by FATIMA ALI, a researcher at Manchester Metropolitan University. However, before you decide whether you wish to take part; it is important that you will be aware of the research aims and what it would involve for you. Please, take time to read the following information carefully and do not hesitate if you would like more information or if anything you read is not clear. Finally, take time to decide whether to take part in the study or not.

What is the purpose of the study?

The present study aims to look at the effect of realizing the speech act of refusals in a cross-cultural setting where Algerian and British students interact with each other to see the extent to which this can influence the flow of communication. It intends to broaden the scope of speech acts studies to ostensible speech acts. This study aims to investigate the realization of the ostensible (i.e. ritualistic, for politeness purposes) versus genuine speech acts of refusals and the main features that define Algerians and British students' use of such speech acts in response to invitations and offers. It will investigate the purposes both groups have behind being ostensible or genuine while performing refusals, and the cultural norms behind this. It seeks to analyse two

different modalities, i.e. speech and gestures, participants produce while performing refusals. This will be done by focusing on face orientation theory when producing refusals to help reduce intercultural miscommunication and helping English and Algerian students to handle cross-cultural interactions more efficiently.

Moreover, the study aims to find out the strategies used by both groups and the underpinning reasons for their use. This research will be part of the researcher doctoral thesis, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Why I have been chosen?
You have been asked to participate in this study as an individual who is currently enrolled as a student at Manchester Metropolitan University. You have been also chosen, as you are an adult over 24 years old, and able to provide informed consent. Eight Algerian and eight British postgraduate female students studying at MMU will be taking part in this study.

Do I have to take part?
The participation is on a voluntary base; however, the researcher is willing to offer help of a similar kind (if applicable) to any of the participants, such as taking part in a study they are conducting or will conduct in the future. Thus, you are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. However, if you decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms, one is for you to keep, the other is for our records. This will show you have agreed to take part. You are free also to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

If I take part what will I have to do?
First, an invitation will be posted on the MMU Facebook page; there will be also posters and flyers on the university boards. After explaining the aim of the study, people will be invited to volunteer. Once you volunteer to become a participant, You will be asked to act out some scenarios (invitations and offers); which are mainly statement in which the researcher reads the situation to the participants and give them the stage to act them out as naturally as possible. For example the researcher tells you to imagine you meet one of your friends on street whom you have not seen for a long time. He/she invites you for a meal at the new restaurant in the city centre. How will you refuse his or her invitation? The acted out scenarios will last for approximately 3-5 minutes each and will be videotaped, transcribed and analysed later. As a second task, you will be invited to conduct focus group interviews which will not exceed 20 minutes , and which will be audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed too. Each group of both Algerians and British will be interviewed separately. In the interviews, you will be mainly asked on why you have formed your refusals in a particular way, you will be also asked on what you have been thinking of while refusing a particular statement.
To not put pressure on you, i will be grateful if you send me a list of your availability to schedule a timetable that suits the whole group.

What are the risks (if any) of taking part?
Any risks that may occur from taking part in the study relate to the possible identification of the participants at first. To alleviate this risk all participants will be anonymised and any distinguishing data will be removed. The data collection will take place in university premises for example a meeting room at MMU which adhere to health and safety regulation standards.

What are the benefits of taking part?

We hope that this study will help you better understand how speech acts, more specifically how refusals are initiated to influence the addressee's responses. Additionally, it is hoped that the research results will help you and other overseas student initiate more effective refusals to reduce cross-cultural miscommunication.

How will the information about me be used?

The data collected will be used for this study; this will include the presentation of the project at conferences or within academic journals where appropriate. All personally identifiable information will be made anonymous; this includes removing names and any other identifiable features. The researcher will videotape the scenarios and tape record the conversation in the interviews. The recordings will be transcribed by the researcher and will not include any names. You will be assigned a pseudonym and referred to as 'participant A', etc. Once the transcription is complete, the recording will be disposed of. The transcribed data will be kept safely in password-protected files for the length of the project and will not be made accessible to any other parties but the researcher. You are welcome to request a copy of the transcription.

Who will have access to information about me?

All data collected from the participants will be confidential. It will be only identifiable to the researcher as anonymised documents. All online data will be collected and stored safely; given a research code known only by the researcher and saved on a password-protected computer. Finally, all data will be used for the purpose of the study only, and no future use will be allowed. All the data will be destroyed by the end of the research. I do work within the confinement of the data protection act 1998, over matters of privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights.

What if I do not carry on with the study?

If you wish to withdraw from the study, any information from you may still be used anonymously. Moreover, if you wish for any data to be destroyed, this can be done up on request.

Who is sponsoring the research?

The research is sponsored by the Algerian Consulate in London.

What if there is a problem?

If you have concerns about any aspect of this study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher at fatima.ali4@stu.mmu.ac.uk or07517615313

Alternatively, if you wish to contact another part for formal complaints, you may contact the researcher' Director of Studies, Dr. Bousfield Derek at d.bousfield@mmu.ac.uk. Or the researcher'S first supervisor Dr. Bullo Stella at s.bullo@mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 3: consent form

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: The realization of speech act of refusals in cross-cultural setting: genuine or ostensible?

Research conducted by: Fatima Ali, PhD candidate, languages, TESOL& Applied Linguistics

Department of Languages, information and communications

Manchester Metropolitan University

Geoffrey Manton Building

Telephone: +44(0)7517615313   email: fatima.ali4@stu.mmu.ac.uk

Please initial all boxes

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated **/11/2018** (version **01**) for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

3. I understand that all data collected will be used to inform the research aims.

4. I agree to act out the scenarios(offering and inviting)in the presence of only the researcher and other participants who are involved in the interaction.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

6. I understand that I will act out the scenarios as naturally as I can to provide rich and accurate

data which will benefit the research.

7. I allow the researcher to videotape the scenarios while I am acting.

(The scenarios will be acted out at any time that is convenient for you.)

8. I agree to be engaged in the focus group interviews to answer the questions raised by the researcher.

9. I allow the researcher to audio-record the interviews.

(Interviews will be held in accordance with your schedule)

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You will receive a copy of your signed and dated consent form and information sheet by post.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Fatima Ali A student	Date	Signature

Appendix 4: Improvised acted out scenarios

Scene 01: High-low social status

You are taking a break in the student lounge. One of your students comes by and gets himself a cup of coffee from the free coffee machine. He offers you a cup, too, but you cannot drink it as you have just finished your tea.

Participant 01: Adopting the role of a student, please offer your tutor a cup of coffee.

Participant 02: please, reject this offer.

Scene 02: Equal social status/ same distance

You are visiting a friend of yours whom you have not seen for almost a year. Your friend is so delighted that you are visiting. He/she prepared a big meal for you with their traditional food as well as some nice dessert. At the end of the meal, you feel so full, but your friend offers you more dessert. However, you actually cannot.

Participant 01: try to offer your friend some dessert.

Participant 02: please, do reject the offer.

Scene 03: low-high social status

One of your professors is accompanying you on a visit to a book fair with a group of other students. You are about to pay for a rather expensive book when you realize that you have forgotten to take your wallet.

Participant 01: Adopting the role of professor, please make the offer of purchasing the book.

Participant 02: please refuse the offer.

Scene 04: High-low social status

You work as a boss of a big company. One of your employees is celebrating his birthday the following Saturday. He invites you to come to the party.

Participant 01: Adopting the role of the employee, please initiate the invitation.

Participant 02: please, reject the invitation.

Scene 05: Equal social status

You feel very tired and are not in a good mood. One of your close friends invites you to the movies with him/her this evening to make you feel better. However, you would prefer to stay home and rest.

Participant 01: ask your close friend to join you for a movie in the evening.

Participant 02: please refuse your friend's invitation.

Scene 06: Low-high social status (invitation)

You have just helped your professor to finish a project. To celebrate the successful completion of the project he/she invites you along with the other students involved to lunch. However, your mother is sick and you have to look after her.

Participant 01: Adopting the role of a professor, please initiate an invitation to your students to celebrate the success of the project.

Participant 02: Please, try to reject the invitation of your professor.

Appendix 5: semi-structured interview guide

Opening questions:

1. please introduce yourself.

2. In which year of your study are you?

Introductory questions

4. When do you think you should refuse an invitation or an offer?

5. Do you feel uncomfortable when you refuse to accept an invitation or an offer? Why?

6. Do you feel annoyed or disrespected when you receive a refusal? Why?

Transition questions:

7. To what extent is it important for you to be genuine or ostensible while eliciting refusals?

8. Have you ever declined an invitation, or offer despite your willingness to accept it? What was the reason?

9. Have you ever accepted an invitation, or offer despite your willingness to refuse it? What was the reason?

Key questions:

10. When receiving an invitation, or an offer, do you find it easy or difficult to refuse? Why?

11. Which social and cultural norms do you think to affect your production of refusals?

12. Would you rely on your cultural norms while interacting with interlocutors of other cultural backgrounds?

Ending question:

13. Do you have any further comments on what we talked about today?