

Proficiency effects on L2 Arabic refusals: Appropriateness, linguistic strategies, and multidialectal practices

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This study examined the relationship between L2 proficiency and (1) appropriateness of refusals, (2) use of refusal strategies, and (3) multidialectal practices in performing refusals in Arabic. Using a spoken discourse completion task (spoken DCT), data were collected from 45 learners of Arabic at three different proficiency levels and from 15 Arabic native speakers. The situations used in the spoken DCT varied in power and social distance (i.e., refusing a friend's request to lend money, refusing a neighbor's request to lend a car, and refusing a boss's request to stay late to work extra hours). Findings generally revealed a positive relationship between proficiency and L2 Arabic learners' appropriateness, use of refusal strategies, and multidialectal practices in their refusals. However, results showed that native speakers solely employed spoken Arabic (i.e., the dialect), while learners relied heavily on Modern Standard Arabic. Analysis of refusal strategies showed that native speakers tended to provide vague explanations in their refusals except when refusing the neighbor's request, whereas the learners preferred to provide specific reasons for their refusals. Moreover, advanced-level learners were substantially verbose; as a result, their refusals could be perceived as lecturing or criticizing their interlocutor. This paper concludes with implications for researching and teaching L2 Arabic refusals with special attention to multidialectal practices.

Keywords: pragmatic competence, refusal strategies, L2 Arabic, proficiency, multidialectal practices, interlanguage pragmatics

1. Introduction

Hymes (1971) argued that communicative competence requires going beyond the knowledge of grammar and lexicon to include knowing what to say, how to say it, and when to say it to whom. Since then, later models of communicative competence (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale & Swain, 1980) have situated pragmatic competence as a critical component of communicative language ability because of its vital role in providing second language (L2) learners with the ability to communicate effectively in real-life social contexts. According to Leech (1983), pragmatic competence includes two types of knowledge—pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The former is concerned with knowing “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech, 1983, p. 11), while the latter focuses on the influence of social and contextual factors on our linguistic choices. L2 pragmatics, a sub-field of second language acquisition (SLA), investigates how L2 learners develop knowledge of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, and what factors affect the process of development (e.g., target language experiences, proficiency, and instruction) (Beebe & Waring, 2005; Taguchi, 2019; Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Over the last four decades, speech acts have been a major focus of research on L2 pragmatics. Among the speech acts studied (e.g., requests, apologies), refusals have attracted

much interest due to their face-threatening nature. Because inappropriate refusals could “lead to unintended offense and communication breakdown” (Taguchi, 2013), refusals have attracted much research interest from scholars in L2 pragmatics (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018; Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Bella, 2014; Morkus, 2018; Taguchi, 2013).

The current study examines the speech act of refusal among L2 Arabic learners at various stages of proficiency. Specifically, the study investigates the effect of L2 proficiency on three aspects of refusals: (1) appropriateness ratings, (2) use of refusal strategies, and (3) multidialectal practices in performing refusals in Arabic. By analyzing refusal patterns in relation to proficiency, we intend to identify potential causes of miscommunication in Arabic and to provide pedagogical recommendations for the teaching and assessment of Arabic refusals.

The paper is organized as follows: in the next section (Section 2), we provide background literature in order to situate the current study and its focus. Following this, in Section 3, we describe the methodology for data collection and analysis. Section 4 reports the results. In Section 5 we discuss the findings and provide pedagogical implications based on the findings.

2. Background

Refusals are face-threatening acts since they go against the interlocutor’s wishes, and the nature of this act might disturb social harmony (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Yet, refusals occur frequently in daily interactions and must be calibrated to various interlocutors and situations to avoid offense and to minimize the potential incoherence of the interlocutor. Due to their face-threatening yet ubiquitous nature, refusals have been a point of focus in L2 pragmatics research for some time. Previous studies revealed that refusals are often difficult for L2 learners to perform due to their lack of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge associated with refusals (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018; Bella, 2014; Félix-Brasdefer, 2003; Morkus, 2018; Taguchi, 2013; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). These studies often elicited refusals from L2 learners using a discourse completion test (DCT) or a role play and categorized refusal strategies using a coding framework (e.g., Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Salazar-Campillo, Safont-Jordà, & Codina-Espurz, 2009). The coding framework typically includes three types of refusal strategies: direct strategies (e.g., No, I can’t); indirect strategies (e.g., providing a reason that would indicate why compliance is not possible); and adjunct strategies, which do not themselves constitute a refusal but can accompany a refusal to soften its tone and minimize the potential face threat (e.g., I’d love to help, but . . .). These three types of refusal strategies are further divided into sub-strategies such as avoidance, regret, and alternative (see the methods section).

Takahashi and Beebe’s (1987) early study used a written DCT and examined refusals produced by Japanese learners of English in two contexts (EFL and ESL) across two levels of proficiency. The focus of the study was to examine pragmatic transfer from L1 Japanese to L2 English refusals. They observed L1 transfer in L2 learners of both contexts and both proficiency levels, but the EFL participants showed a higher degree of L1 transfer overall. They also found that in the ESL context, higher-proficiency learners exhibited more transfer than the lower-proficiency learners, while the opposite was true in the EFL data.

Félix-Brasdefer (2003) utilized role plays and retrospective oral reports to examine refusals among L1 and L2 speakers of Spanish. He found that L2 learners used more indirect refusal strategies than L1 speakers and that the learners’ lack of sociocultural knowledge limited their use of refusal strategies in a full capacity. Another study that focused on the development of

refusals is Bella's (2014) study, which used open role-plays and verbal reports to examine refusals among L2 learners of Modern Greek at three proficiency levels. Her findings revealed that, although there was a substantial development in the ability to produce refusals as proficiency increased, learners' production of refusals lagged far behind in many ways when compared to native speakers' refusals: learners at all proficiency levels used more direct strategies and fewer adjunct strategies than native speakers of Greek. In a more recent study, Morkus (2018) investigated proficiency influence on pragmatic transfer among L2 learners of Arabic in a study abroad context. Morkus used enhanced open-ended role plays to elicit refusals from his participants at two levels of proficiency: intermediate and advanced. Results showed that both L2 groups demonstrated negative pragmatic transfer from L1 English to L2 Arabic, although the extent of negative transfer was smaller in the intermediate group.

While the studies described above mainly focused on proficiency effects on refusal strategies and L1 transfer, a smaller number of studies have also investigated proficiency effects in different aspects of refusal production, such as fluency, appropriateness, discourse management, and conversation sequences (e.g., Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2018; Gass & Houck, 1999; Taguchi, 2013). For example, Gass and Houck (1999) utilized open role-plays to investigate refusals by three Japanese ESL learners. Their analysis went beyond the coding of refusal strategies, including the analysis of non-verbal features, turn-taking sequences, vocal characteristics, and communication strategies. They found that learners employed a variety of communicative strategies such as backchannel cues (e.g., nodding, affirmative responses) and non-verbal expressions in order to mitigate the potential face threat and to show solidarity to their interlocutor. In a recent study, using open role-plays, Taguchi (2013) examined refusal strategies among Japanese EFL learners at two different proficiency levels and compared the strategies with those of English native speakers. The primary focus of the study was to investigate the effect of L2 proficiency on appropriateness ratings, speech rate (fluency), and use of linguistic strategies in refusals (by adopting a coding system based on Beebe et al., 1990, and Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El Bakary, 2002). Taguchi found a positive relationship between proficiency and refusal performance as indicated in appropriateness rating and speech rate. However, due to the learners' limited linguistic repertoires, only a marginal difference was observed in the use of linguistic strategies between learners of different proficiency levels. Both learner groups used significantly more direct refusals than native speakers did.

A more recent study by Al-Gahtani and Roever (2018) investigated proficiency effects in terms of how learners of English produced refusals as dispreferred actions in interaction. Drawing on insights from Schegloff (2007), the authors maintained that dispreference "is achieved sequentially through inter-turn gaps and delays, insert expansions, and ostensible repair initiation, and turn-internally via certain prefatory particles (e.g., "well", "oh"), pro-forma agreement (i.e., "yes but"), explanations or accounts, mitigation, and elaboration" (p. 141). Al-Gahtani and Roever used role play scenarios to elicit refusals from Arab learners of L2 English at three levels of proficiency. Then, they adopted a conversation-analytic perspective to analyze the data. They found a positive relationship between proficiency and the ability to perform refusals as dispreferred social actions. For example, advanced learners used more preliminaries to delay and mitigate their refusals. However, advanced learners still lagged behind their native speaker peers who had a greater linguistic repertoire to express dispreference, such as the prefatory particles "oh" and "well" and idiomatic expressions such as "I've got + task" when providing a reason for refusal.

While previous studies on L2 refusals have investigated the relationship between proficiency and learners' choice of refusal strategies, appropriateness, fluency, and interactional strategies in refusals over a number of target languages, multidialectal (i.e., diglossic) practices in less commonly taught languages like Arabic are still lacking in L2 pragmatics research. Studies on Arabic refusals from different regions in the Arab world point to the following common characteristics of refusals among Arabic native speakers: (1) tendency to use less indirect and lengthy refusals with a higher status interlocutor (e.g., Al-Issa, 2003); (2) use of more direct refusal strategies with an equal interlocutor (e.g., Nelson et al., 2002); (3) tendency to provide vague, unspecific reasons for refusals (e.g., Al-Shalawi, 1997); and (4) use of God's name to show sincerity and consideration to the interlocutor (e.g., Al-Issa, 2003). While these characteristics of native speaker Arabic refusals can be used to examine L2 Arabic learners' refusals, what is lacking in the current literature is incorporating multidialectal practices as criteria for analysis. Investigating learners' use of dialect in refusals is relevant in the context of Arabic because of the tension between Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and dialect in L2 Arabic contexts. Since Arabic is a diglossic language, different varieties of Arabic are used in different contexts (e.g., Al Masaeed, forthcoming; Al-Batal, 2018; Ryding, 2006; Shiri, 2013; Youness, 2015). While MSA is an official language in over 22 countries in the Arab world (and beyond) and has been used primarily for literacy, media, political speeches, and religious ceremonies, it is not the language variety that local Arabic speakers use in the majority of their daily interactions in the local community. In fact, there are numerous regional varieties of Arabic that are exclusively used in spoken interactions. These regional varieties can be quite different from one another (e.g., Egyptian, Levantine, Moroccan, Tunisian, to mention a few). Everyday interactions that take place in routine situations (e.g., shopping, dining, and service encounters) are conducted in these dialects almost exclusively. This diglossic and multidialectal situation in Arabic makes the acquisition of pragmatic competence even more challenging for learners of Arabic. At the same time, this situation presents an opportunity to study the use of dialect as an indicator of pragmatic competence among L2 learners of Arabic.

In summary, previous studies on L2 refusals have explored the impact of proficiency on learners' use of refusal strategies, appropriateness, fluency, and interactional strategies in different target languages (e.g., Arabic, English, Greek, and Spanish). Nevertheless, literature is still limited when it comes to the analysis of multidialectal practices in L2 Arabic refusals. To fill this gap, the current study investigates the proficiency impact on three aspects of refusal performance in L2 Arabic: (1) overall appropriateness, (2) use of linguistic strategies, and (3) multidialectal practices. By using these three criteria combined, the study addresses whether proficiency effects are observed in the language-specific aspect (i.e., use of dialect) as well as in common areas of refusal performance (i.e., appropriateness and linguistic strategies).

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A total of 60 participants (30 females and 30 males) participated in this study. They were all volunteer participants who were recruited and consented in accordance with Institutional Review Board regulations. Participants included 45 native speakers of American English who were enrolled in Arabic language classes in a large public university in the United States and 15 native speakers of Levantine Arabic who were university students in Jordan (8 females and 7 males).

L2 participants were divided into three proficiency groups based on their placement in the Arabic program: (1) 15 beginners enrolled in the second semester in the Arabic program (8 females and 7 males), (2) 15 intermediate learners enrolled in the fourth semester (8 females and 7 males), and (3) 15 advanced learners who were either enrolled in or had completed the sixth semester in the Arabic program (6 females and 9 males). At the time of data collection all L2 participants had studied both MSA and one or more of the following Arabic dialects (for at least two semesters): Egyptian, Levantine, and/or Moroccan. The Arabic program emphasized the integration of MSA and a dialect at each level, depending on the linguistic background of the instructor. The program used the *Al-Kitaab* textbook series (Brustad, Al-Batal, & Al-Tonsi, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 2011). Both beginner and intermediate classes were five credits and taught five days a week (50 minutes each), while advanced classes were three credits and taught three days a week. In addition, materials for the dialect instruction were prepared thematically and independently from the textbook. This typically involved providing learners with lists of vocabulary and expressions, and contextualized exercises to improve their communicative skills to execute certain functions such as greetings, introductions, shopping and bargaining, ordering food, traveling, etc. Refusals, however, were not explicitly taught. During data collection, participants were instructed to imagine themselves in an Arab country of their choosing and to complete the task in any Arabic variety they deemed appropriate for the situation. The native speakers primarily chose to use Levantine Arabic, which is their native dialect.

3.2 Instrument

The data for the current study came from a larger project that utilized a spoken discourse completion task (spoken DCT) consisting of 11 situational scenarios that elicited three speech acts: apologies, refusals, and requests. This study reports on three spoken DCT items used to elicit refusals. The use of spoken DCT was considered appropriate for this study because the goal was to investigate learners' knowledge (not performance) of refusals in L2 Arabic. In addition, a spoken DCT gives the researcher some control over contextual variables (e.g., power, social distance) so they can easily compare learners' responses across groups. Besides, the spoken modality used in the task can reflect the degree to which learners can apply their pragmatic knowledge to speaking (for a detailed discussion of data collection methods in speech acts performance, see Culpeper, Mackey, & Taguchi, 2018; Félix-Brasdefer, 2010; Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

In the spoken DCT, participants were presented with a scenario illustrating a refusal situation and then asked to produce a refusal in Arabic. The situational scenarios were provided in English so learners would not rely on vocabulary and phrases appearing in the scenario prompts. Furthermore, providing prompts in English ensured learners' understanding of the scenarios (see, e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Al Masaeed et al., 2018; Li, 2014).

The three situational scenarios used to elicit refusals were adopted from Bella (2014). The scenarios differed from each other on two contextual factors: social distance and power differences between interlocutors (see below).

'Friend' situation (-Power, -Distance)

This is an informal, symmetrical situation because both interlocutors are of equal social distance and power. The situation is presented to the participant as follows: A close friend of yours with whom you get together very frequently and talk on the phone almost daily has some financial

problems. She/he asks you to lend her/him \$150 which she/he will be able to return to you after 15 days. **You can't give it to him/her.**

'Boss' situation (+Power, +Distance)

This is a formal situation with asymmetries in power and social distance between the participant and his/her boss in the work place. The situation is presented to the participant as follows: You work at a bookstore. It is Thursday/Friday at 3:30 p.m. and your boss who you have a good professional relationship with has just received a delivery of new books which need to be available for sale on Sunday/Monday morning. He approaches you and asks you to work an extra three hours (until 7 p.m.) in order to prepare the books' inventory and display, **but you can't stay.**

'Neighbor' situation (-Power, + Distance)

This is an informal situation; there is no power status, but there is social distance between the two interlocutors. The situation is presented to the participant as follows: One morning your neighbor, who you don't know well but exchange pleasantries with on a regular basis, knocks on your door and explains that his car has broken down and that he needs to take his children to school. He asks to borrow your car, which he promises to return in an hour. **You can't lend it to him.**

The situational prompts were presented to the participants in English (as above). They read the prompts and produced refusals orally in Arabic. Participants' responses were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

3.3 Data analysis

The refusals produced by the participants were audio-recorded, transcribed in Arabic, and transliterated (see Appendix A for details on transliteration conventions). The refusals were analyzed according to three dimensions: (1) appropriateness (rated on a six-point scale), (2) type and frequency of refusal strategies used by participants, and (3) the use of MSA, spoken Arabic, and English in participants' refusals.

Appropriateness of refusals was assessed using a six-point rating scale adopted from Taguchi (2013), which ranged from zero to five (see Table 1 below). Each refusal was rated by the first author and two other faculty members who specialized in teaching L2 Arabic (one from the Levant and the other from Egypt). Cases of discrepancy in rating were discussed until the raters reached agreement. Average appropriateness score was compared across three proficiency groups (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) using the Kruskal-Wallis test.

Table 1. Appropriateness rating scale

Ratings	Descriptions
5 Excellent	- Expressions are fully appropriate for the situation. - No or almost no grammatical or discourse errors.
4 Good	- Expressions are mostly appropriate. - Very few grammatical and discourse errors.
3 Fair	- Expressions are only somewhat appropriate. - Grammatical and discourse errors are noticeable, but they do not

	interfere with appropriateness.
2 Poor	- Due to the interference from grammatical and discourse errors, appropriateness is difficult to determine.
1 Very poor	- Expressions are very difficult or too little to understand. There is no evidence that the intended speech acts are performed.
0	- No performance

Type and frequency of refusal strategies were analyzed based on a typology of refusals developed in previous research (Beebe et al., 1990; Salazar-Campillo et al., 2009). Refusal strategies were classified into three main categories: direct strategies, indirect strategies, and adjuncts to refusals (see Appendix B for the typology of refusal strategies), and then compared across three proficiency groups. In Arabic, direct refusal strategies can be realized through (1) a blunt refusal as in '*maa biddii*' (I don't want to do X) or '*laa maa biddii*' (No, I don't want to do X); or (2) via a negation of proposition as in '*maa bagdar*' (I can't).

Indirect refusal strategies are utilized to soften the impact of a refusal and can be categorized into nine different types. In the current data five types of indirect strategies were found: (1) regret/apology as in '*?aasif*' (sorry); (2) reason as in '*maa mafii ma?aarai*' (I do not have money); (3) alternative as in '*?idha biddak mumkin ?awaggiflak taksii*' (if you like, I can get you a taxi); (4) avoidance as in the following sarcastic answer '*?anaa law mafii miyyih w-khamsiin dinaar maa bitshuufnii hawn*' (I wouldn't be here if I had a hundred-fifty dinars); and (5) criticism (usually used to highlight the inappropriateness of the request itself) as in '*maa ?ismak? ?anaa laa ?afrif ?ismak, maadhaa turiid? turiid ?an tastakhdim sayyaarati? maa ?aqdir ?an ?u?iik sayyaaratii, ?aasifah*' (what's your name? I don't know your name, what do you want? You want to use my car? I can't give you my car, sorry).

Furthermore, adjuncts (strategies that do not function as refusals on their own but help soften the act of refusal) include five subtypes. Two types of adjuncts were found in the current data: (1) willingness as in '*wallaahi biddii ?asaa?idik bas maa mafii*' (by God I want to help you, but I don't have any); and (2) empathy as in '*?anaa ba?rif ?indak mushkilah maf al-kutub laakin...*' (I know you have a problem with the books but ...).

Finally, for the analysis of multidialectal practices, the first author analyzed the transcribed refusals and identified all the words and phrases in MSA, in a dialect (e.g., Egyptian, Levantine, and Moroccan), and in English. Then, frequency and proportion of words/phrases in these categories were compared across three proficiency groups.

4. Results

4.1 Analysis of appropriateness ratings

Table 2 below displays descriptive statistics of L2 participants' appropriateness scores. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant difference among the three L2 groups (beginning, intermediate, and advanced), $\chi^2 = 13.36$, $p = .001$. The Mann-Whitney U test revealed that the intermediate group outperformed the beginning group ($z = 2.28$, $p < .023$), and the advanced group outperformed the beginning group ($z = 3.62$, $p < .0001$). However, there was no significant difference between the intermediate and advanced group ($z = 1.19$, $p < .250$).

Although both intermediate and advanced groups outperformed the beginning group, analyses of individual situations (i.e., ‘Friend’, ‘Boss’, and ‘Neighbor’) showed mixed findings. The difference between the intermediate and beginning group was significant only for the ‘Neighbor’ situation ($z = 2.31$, $p < .026$), while the difference between the advanced and beginning group was significant for all situations: $z = 2.52$ ($p < .016$) for the ‘Friend’ situation, $z = 2.56$ ($p < .015$) for the ‘Boss’ situation, and $z = 3.49$ ($p < .0001$) for the ‘Neighbor’ situation. The ‘Neighbor’ situation was particularly difficult for all groups, as shown in the lower average score than the other two situations.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of rating scores

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Beginning group ($n = 15$)				
All situations	3.42	0.76	2.00	4.67
‘Friend’ situation	3.67	0.96	2.00	5.00
‘Boss’ situation	3.53	1.04	2.00	4.50
‘Neighbor’ situation	3.42	0.76	2.00	4.00
Intermediate group ($n = 15$)				
All situations	4.10	0.76	2.50	5.00
‘Friend’ situation	4.27	0.98	1.50	5.00
‘Boss’ situation	4.13	0.74	3.00	5.00
‘Neighbor’ situation	3.90	1.11	3.00	5.00
Advanced group ($n = 15$)				
All situations	4.46	0.39	4.00	5.00
‘Friend’ situation	4.50	0.50	4.00	5.00
‘Boss’ situation	4.47	0.64	3.00	5.00
‘Neighbor’ situation	4.40	0.83	3.00	5.00

Note. Participants’ refusals were scored on a six-point rating scale. ‘All situations’ refers to the average score of three situations combined (‘Friend’, ‘Boss’, and ‘Neighbor’).

4.2 Analysis of linguistic strategies

In general, the advanced group produced the highest number of refusal strategies in all situations (146 strategies total). The intermediate group produced 112 strategies, which was more than the native speaker group produced (104). As expected, the beginner group produced the fewest number of refusal strategies (93). The next section presents analyses of refusal strategies by situation.

4.2.1 Refusing to lend money to a friend (-P, -D)

Table 3 presents analyses of refusal strategies in the ‘Friend’ situation. All groups employed substantially more indirect strategies in this situation. The beginning-level group employed direct

refusals most frequently, while the intermediate group used them least frequently. Regarding the use of adjuncts, there seems to be a relationship between the use of adjuncts and level of proficiency: frequency of adjuncts increased according to proficiency levels.

Table 3. Percentages and frequencies of strategies in the ‘Friend’ situation (-P, -D)

Level	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total # of strategies
Beginner	21.85% (7)	75% (24)	3.12% (1)	32
Intermediate	5.26% (2)	84.21% (32)	10.52% (4)	38
Advanced	16% (8)	68% (34)	16% (8)	50
Arabic NS	14.28% (4)	71.42% (20)	14.28% (4)	28

Examples 1-4 below illustrate common refusal strategies in the ‘Friend’ situation (i.e., refusing to lend money to a friend). Both native speakers and beginners favored showing regret and stating the reason for refusal. The advanced-level learners, on the other hand, showed a tendency to combine a number of strategies to perform their refusals. This is shown in Example 4, where the learner combined four strategies: regret (twice), reason, and willingness.

1. Native speaker:

ʔaasif wallaahi maa maʕii maʕaarii.
Sorry, (by God) I do not have money.

2. Beginner:

ʔaasif laysa ʕindii ʔamwaal kathiiran.
Sorry, I don’t have a lot of money.

3. Intermediate:

ʔanaa ʔaasif laysa ʕindii fuluus, ʔanaa, ʔuriid ʔashtarii telefizyawn
I’m sorry. I do not have money. I want to buy a television.

4. Advanced:

ʔaasif ʕadiiqii wa-laakin ʔanaa faqiir jiddan alʔaan. ʔanaa ʔuriid ʔan ʔusaaʕidak wa-laakin alʔaan mustaʕiil ʔaasif.
Sorry my friend! I’m very poor now. I want to help you, but it’s impossible now—sorry.

As shown in Example 1 above, native speakers most frequently performed their refusals by stating regret followed by a reason. They also invoked God’s name to show sincerity and to emphasize that the lack of money was indeed the cause of the refusal. Some similarities were found between the native speaker group and the beginner group in terms of the utterance length: both groups tended to produce short refusals; however, the beginning-level learners’ responses differed from native speakers’ responses in the following ways: (1) regret was often combined with a direct refusal (sometimes in English) as in ‘*mutaʔassif I can’t*’ (sorry I can’t) or ‘*laa mutaʔassif*’ (no I’m sorry); and (2) some reasons given for a refusal were inappropriate as in ‘*ʔaasifah wa bididi ʔaakul*’ (sorry and I want to eat) or ‘*ʔaasifah wa laakin laa yumkinuni laʔnnii laazim ʔaakul*’ (sorry but I can’t because I need to eat).

The intermediate group’s refusals were longer than those in the beginner group. Intermediate learners tended to provide more reasons than the native speaker group, and they sometimes

expressed the need to do something else with the money they wanted to borrow, such as buying a TV, planning for a sibling's birthday, or buying books. These specific reasons did not come up in the native speakers' refusals; when refusing the request, native speakers preferred highlighting the state of not having the money rather than expressing their intention to do something else with the money. By doing so, they emphasized to their interlocutor that they would be willing to lend the money if it were available, which is considered polite in Arabic.

The advanced group used the largest number of refusal strategies, including the use of multiple strategies within individual refusals. Their strategies included expressing willingness and empathy as well as providing alternatives. However, this tendency of overusing strategies highlighted a departure from the way the native speaker group performed refusals in this situation. Also, in spite of their verbosity and multiple strategies, there were no instances of the advanced group invoking God's name to show sincerity and consideration, which was a frequent strategy for native speakers.

4.2.2 Refusing boss's request to stay late and work extra hours (+P, +D)

Table 4 below displays analyses of refusal strategies employed by all groups in the 'Boss' situation. Similar to the 'Friend' situation, all groups used indirect strategies most frequently in this scenario. In addition, the advanced group continued to exhibit verbosity with a noticeable increase regarding the use of adjuncts. However, the native speaker group used direct refusals more often in this situation than in others.

Table 4. Percentages and frequencies of strategies in the Boss situation (+P, +D)

Level	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total # of strategies
Beginner	20.58% (7)	73.52% (25)	5.88% (2)	34
Intermediate	20.51% (8)	74.35% (29)	5.12% (2)	39
Advanced	16.98% (9)	62.26% (33)	20.75% (11)	53
Arabic NS	25.64% (10)	64.10% (25)	10.25% (4)	39

Examples 5-8 provided below are representative of each group's refusal strategies in this situation (Boss Situation: +P, +D).

5. Native speaker:

baʕtadhir minnak maa bagdar lʔinnuu ʕindii ʔiltizaamaat thaanyih.

With apologies to you, I can't because I have other commitments.

6. Beginner:

ʔaasif ʕindii waajibl kathiiran.

Sorry, I have a lot of homework.

7. Intermediate:

ʔana ʔaasif laa yumkinunii ʔan ʔaʕmal, ʕindii ʕuff haadha al-masaaʔ.

I'm sorry I can't work; I have a class this evening.

8. Advanced:

ʔanaa ʔaasif wa-laakin ʕindii ʔijtimaaf ʔaakhar wa haadha al-ʔijtimaaf muhim jiddan. laakin ʔidha turiid mumkin ʔusaafidak bukraa qabla ʔan taftah, wa-laakin al-yawm mustahiil, ʔaasif

I'm sorry but I have another meeting, and this meeting is very important. However, if you want, I can help you tomorrow before you open. It is impossible today—sorry.

In addition to their frequent use of direct refusals in this particular task, native speakers tended to refuse by apologizing for their inability to work, followed by stating a vague reason for their lack of availability (e.g., having other commitments, having something else that needs to be done). All learner groups, on the other hand, demonstrated a tendency to provide specific reasons for not being available to work longer (e.g., having a class, homework, having an important meeting, dinner with the family who is coming from out of town, etc.).

4.2.3 Refusing to lend car to a neighbor (-P, +D)

Table 5 presents analyses of refusal strategies employed by each group in the 'Neighbor' situation. Once again, all groups employed substantially more indirect strategies, with the intermediate learners exhibiting the highest frequency of indirect strategies. The beginner group showed no use of adjuncts, while native speakers utilized them the most in this situation. However, the use (or lack) of adjuncts by L2 groups is notable here because, as in the 'Friend' situation, it shows a positive relationship between the use of adjuncts and level of proficiency.

Table 5. Percentages and frequencies of strategies in the Neighbor situation (-P, +D)

Level	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts	Total # of strategies
Beginner	22.22% (6)	77.77% (21)	0% (0)	27
Intermediate	8.57% (3)	80% (28)	11.42% (4)	35
Advanced	16.27% (7)	62.79% (27)	20.93% (9)	43
Arabic NS	15.38% (6)	61.53% (24)	23.07% (9)	39

Examples 9-12 below are indicative of how each group tends to refuse lending one's car to a neighbor that they do not know very well (Neighbor Situation: -P, +D).

9. Native speaker:

baʕtadhir minnak yaa jaar; ʔanaa mitʔakhkhir w-laazim ʔalahhig ʔimtihaani. ʔidha biddak mumkin ʔawaggiḡlak taksii.

My apologies to you neighbor; I'm already late trying to catch my exam. If you like, I can get you a taxi.

10. Beginner:

ʔaasif ʔuriid ʔadhab ʔila al-mustashfa, ʔaasif.
Sorry, I want to go to the hospital. Sorry.

11. Intermediate:

ʔana ʔahtaaj sayyaaratii li-ʔadhab ʔilaa al-ʕamal. ʔanaa ʔaasif.
I need my car to go to work. I'm sorry.

12. Advanced:

ʔaasif jaarii da mish mumkin. ʔindii ʔamal fii saaʔah laakin min al-mumkin ʔaakhudh ʔatfaalak ʔilaa al-madrasah fii ʔarii ʔilaa al-ʔamal.

Sorry my neighbor this is impossible—I have work in an hour, but it is possible to take your kids with me on my way to work.

An interesting finding about the native speaker group's refusals in this situation is their frequent use of providing an alternative to help the neighbor. This is done by offering to drive their children to school on the way to the speaker's destination, offering to get a taxi, or checking with somebody else to see if they can give the neighbor a ride. In addition, native speakers' reasons for refusal are specific in this situation: refusing because they have to go to work, catch an exam, or go to the university. The beginner and intermediate groups, on the other hand, expressed regrets and gave reasons for refusal, as in *'mutaʔassif ʔanaa have to ʔadhab ʔila bayt ʔusratii'* (sorry I have to go to my family's house), or provided a regret alone as in *'ʔaasif'* (sorry). However, while the beginner group showed no tendency of providing alternatives, this strategy started to emerge in refusals produced by intermediate learners as in *'ʔaasif yaa jaar saʔaquudak wa ʔiflak ʔila al-madrasah wa ʔaʔuud ʔila baytii'* (sorry neighbor, I'll drive you and your child to school and come back to my house).

The advanced group's refusals, in keeping with previous scenarios, featured the highest frequency of refusal strategies, approximating the native speaker group's patterns in terms of the distribution of strategies. However, their refusals lagged far behind the native speaker group in many aspects, including semantic and grammatical mistakes such as those shown in Example 13 below:

13. *yaa ʔadiiqii ʔanaa ʔaasif sayyaartak maksuurah [laa taʔmal] wa laazim tadhab ʔila al-madarash ʔanaa mish mumkin ʔaakhudhak [ʔaʔtiik] sayyaartii laakin mumkin ʔasuug sayyaartii maʔak wa maʔ ʔatfaalak [ʔaakhudhkum li-l-madrasah]*

My friend, I'm sorry that your car is broken [not working], I can't take [give] you my car but it's possible to drive my car with you and your children [take you all to school].

The word for a broken car in Arabic is *'muʔaʔtalah,*' while the word used here, *'maksuurah,*' is usually used with items that literally break and shatter. It seems that the speaker was translating literally from English to Arabic. The word *'ʔaakhudhak'* (I take you) was used in place of *'ʔaʔtiik'* (I give you), and there appears to be no clear explanation for this confusion. Finally, the offer to drive the neighbor and his children to school is linguistically problematic; the way it is said by this learner would indicate applying the act of driving to the car, the neighbor, and his children. While there are several ways to express this option, the one produced by this learner does not make sense simply because in Arabic 'driving' is used specifically to describe an action performed by vehicles (but not to giving rides). This could be a case of L1 transfer because in English it is acceptable to say "I will drive you" when what you mean is that you will give somebody a ride.

Other notable tendencies found in advanced learners' refusals include their use of abrupt responses such as *'laa haadhaa al-waqt laysa jayyid ʔaasif'* (no this is not a good time, sorry). They also criticized and lectured the neighbor for his request as in *'ma ʔismak? ʔanaa laa ʔaʔrif ʔismak, maadhaa turiid? turiid ʔan tastakhdim sayyaarati? maa ʔaqdir ʔan ʔuʔiik sayyaarati, ʔaasifah'* (what's your name? I don't know your name, what do you want? You want to use my

car? I can't give you my car, sorry). Responses like these reflect poorly on appropriateness, which will be addressed in the Discussion section.

4.3 The use of MSA, spoken Arabic, and English (multidialectal practices)

Table 6 below shows the percentages and number of words in MSA, dialect, and English in the participants' refusals. While L2 learners showed development in terms of the amount of dialect they used as their proficiency increased, even the advanced group lagged far behind native speakers in employing the dialect as the main linguistic code for the realization of refusals. This is significant because, as stated earlier, Arabic native speakers almost always use dialects in everyday situations like those in the spoken DCT task used in the current study. The tendency of employing the written variety (i.e., MSA) in spoken refusals is marked and thus highlights the learners lack of sensitivity toward the spoken register (see the next section for further discussion).

Table 6. Percentages and number of words in MSA, dialect, and English in the data

Level	MSA	Dialect	English	Total of words
Beginner	85.61% (256)	4.34% (13)	10.03% (30)	299
Intermediate	85.52% (443)	14.28% (74)	0.19% (1)	518
Advanced	66.93% (490)	32.92% (241)	0.13% (1)	732
Arabic NS	0% (0)	99.73% (381)	0.26% (1)	382

In addition to the tendency to rely on MSA as the main variety in all L2 groups, the beginner group was found to employ English when they had difficulties accessing the desired words in Arabic to complete their refusals. These cases were found in the 'Neighbor' situation as in '*laa ʔastatiiʔ give you sayyaaratii ʔaasif*' (I can't give you my car, sorry) and in '*ʔaasif laa yumkinunii share sayyaaratii maʕak*' (sorry, I can't share my car with you). These cases were also present in the 'Friend' situation as in '*laa laa yuminunii lend money*' (no I can't lend money) and in '*mutaʔassif I can't*' (sorry I can't).

Overall, the beginner group used the fewest words/expressions in a dialect. The dialect appeared in the refusals of five learners, mostly in the "Boss" situation. The dialect expressions that were frequently used by the beginner group included: '*laazim*' (it is necessary), '*maa ʕindii*' (I don't have), and '*biddii*' (I want to). The intermediate group, on the other hand, used dialect expressions far more frequently than the beginner group in all three situations (22 in the 'Friend' situation; 24 with 'Boss;' and 28 in the 'Neighbor' situation). The dialect expressions that were most frequent in this group included: '*bass*' (but) and '*maa 3indii*' (I do not have) as in '*ʔanaa ʔaasif bass maa ʕindii fuluus*' (I'm sorry but I don't have money). However, these 74 dialect words/phrases were not evenly distributed among intermediate group participants—they were all found in the data of three participants, and two of them (one male and one female student) used the dialect almost exclusively in all three situations, which resulted in 73 dialect words/expressions. The male participant's responses received a full score (five) in appropriateness ratings in all three situations, while the female student received a full score in the 'Friend' situation, four points in the 'Boss' situation, and two and a half points in the 'Neighbor' situation. The female student's relatively low score in the 'Neighbor' situation, despite her use of dialect, was because she provided a direct refusal and did not offer an alternative.

The advanced group were the most capable users of the dialect among the three L2 groups. This is evident in the use of 241 dialect words/expressions by 12 out of 15 advanced-level participants in all three situations (68 in the 'Friend' situation; 93 in the 'Boss' situation; and 80 in the 'Neighbor' situation). Common dialect words/phrases used by the advanced group included '*bass*' (but); '*maa ṣindii*' (I don't have); '*mish mumkin*' (it's not possible); '*biddii*' (I want); and '*laazim*' (it is necessary). There were three advanced learners who never used the dialect, but they did have some exposure to the dialect beyond the classroom: two of them had studied abroad, and one had traveled briefly to the Arab world prior to data collection. On the other hand, among the 12 advanced learners who used the dialect, two did not study abroad at all. It seems that these learners picked up the dialect in class, or they had some exposure to the dialect outside the classroom.

5. Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between L2 proficiency and (1) appropriateness of refusals, (2) use of refusal strategies, and (3) multidialectal practices in performing refusals in L2 Arabic. Findings are summarized and discussed accordingly.

Although results showed that in general learners' refusals were judged to be more appropriate as their proficiency level increased, the 'Neighbor' situation was particularly difficult for all three learner groups. A possible explanation for this finding is that the concept of neighbor is quite culture-specific in Arab communities; there is a shared understanding that a neighbor should be treated with great respect. Therefore, the native speaker group gave an apology and reasons for not being able to honor the neighbor's request in their refusals. Most of them also offered an alternative. Their responses were more elaborate and less direct compared with those in other two scenarios, potentially due to the importance placed on neighbor relations in the Jordanian society where native speaker participants were recruited. In contrast, the beginner and intermediate L2 groups tended to produce less elaborate and more direct refusals in the 'Neighbor' scenario than in other scenarios, which made them appear generally dismissive and unaware of the sociocultural norms of neighbor relationships in Arab communities. The advanced group, on the other hand, employed the fewest number of refusal strategies in the 'Neighbor' scenario compared with their responses to the other two situations, though they still used the highest number of strategies in this scenario among the L2 groups. Despite producing the longest discourse with the most refusal strategies, the advanced group still lagged behind native speakers in appropriateness scores, principally because of their verbosity. Listing multiple reasons why the request cannot be fulfilled could be perceived as emphasizing unfeasibility of the request; as a result, their refusals sound like lecturing or criticizing the interlocutor for making the request. These patterns indicate the learners' lack of sociopragmatic awareness, since native speakers in this study preferred not to dwell on the reasons they cannot help, allowing the requester to save face.

Analyses of direct refusal strategies showed mixed results. For example, while the beginner group utilized direct strategies most frequently in the 'Friend' and 'Neighbor' situations, the intermediate group was found to employ them the least in those two situations. In addition, the use of direct refusals in the 'Boss' situation showed a different pattern: they were used most frequently by the native speaker group, while advanced learners employed them least often. This finding—using more direct strategies in refusals made to an interlocutor with a higher status—is at odds with other studies on L2 refusals such as Bella (2014), Morkus (2018), and Taguchi

(2013). A possible explanation for the contrasting finding (i.e., native speakers' tendency to be direct in this situation) is that the native speakers attempted to wrap up the topic with fewer details to avoid any further potential negotiation or confrontation.

Another difference between the native speaker group and the learner groups was found in the reasons provided for refusals. While native speakers tended to provide vague reasons for their refusals such as '*ʕindii ʔiltizaamaat thaanyih*' (I have other commitments) or '*ʕindii ʔashiyaa? thaanyih laazim ʔaʕmalhaa*' (I have other things I have to do), advanced learners preferred to provide more specific reasons. This finding was also observed in previous research on L2 Arabic requests and apologies (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Al Masaeed et al., 2018). However, native speakers did not show this tendency in the 'Neighbor' situation because they provided very specific reasons for their refusals, including going to work, catching an exam, and going to the university. Another interesting finding about the native speaker group's refusals is that in the 'Neighbor' situation they frequently provided an alternative to help the neighbor as a strategy. This also illustrates the importance of showing a higher degree of respect when interacting with neighbors in Arab societies as explained in the previous section.

Present findings also revealed a tendency of intermediate and advanced learners using a greater number of refusal strategies and producing longer discourse than native speakers. For example, the intermediate group tended to provide more reasons than the native speaker group in the 'Friend' situation, and their reasons for a refusal sometimes included expressing the need to do something else with the money that the friend wanted to borrow. This tendency highlights the intermediate group's lack of sociopragmatic knowledge. Similarly, advanced learners engaged in a substantially higher degree of verbosity to compensate for their lack of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. Because of verbosity, in some cases, learners' refusals appeared as lecturing or criticizing their interlocutor. This tendency of engaging in verbosity is in line with previous findings (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Al Masaeed et al., 2018; Bella, 2014; Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Edmondson & House, 1991). The lack of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge causes learners to doubt whether what they are saying is sufficient, subsequently leading to an overuse of refusal strategies. This study added to the previous findings by showing that verbosity can occur in oral production, too (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Flores Salgado, 2011), not only in written production as posited by Edmondson and House (1991). Therefore, it can be argued that verbosity in L2 speech acts is a feature that appears in both the written and spoken modality, regardless the instrument (e.g., DCT and role plays) (e.g., Bella, 2014). It is also notable that verbosity was a characteristic of the intermediate and advanced groups, indicating a relationship between verbosity and proficiency. It seems that, when learners have a greater amount of linguistic resources, they tend to use them to expand on their discourse, even when brevity is the norm in certain situations. These findings indicate that proficiency may not always account for learners' sociopragmatic knowledge—knowledge of what to say and how much to say in certain situations. These findings (lack of straightforward relationship between proficiency and sociopragmatic knowledge) are in agreement with Taguchi's (2018) observation of previous findings in cross-sectional research on L2 requests.

Regarding multidialectal (and multilingual) practices, lower proficiency learners often employed English to compensate for their limited linguistic repertoire in Arabic, and the use of English decreased markedly as learners' proficiency increased. A significant finding in the current study is that the native speaker group produced all 382 words in dialect (except one word in English) and no MSA at all in their refusals. This shows the total absence of MSA in the everyday situations in the spoken DCT used in this study. The use of the dialect was extremely

limited in the beginner and intermediate groups. The advanced-level learners, on the other hand, showed significant development in terms of their appropriateness ratings and strategy use in refusals, but they still relied on MSA far more than the dialect, which is in stark contrast to native speakers, who used only the dialect for the everyday situations in the spoken DCT.

To summarize, the findings of the current study revealed a general positive relationship between proficiency and three dimensions of L2 refusal performance: appropriateness, use of refusal strategies, and multidialectal practices. As level of proficiency increased, learners demonstrated an ability to utilize more varied linguistic strategies and more multidialectal practices, which led to more appropriate refusals. However, the findings also highlighted the general lack of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge in the advanced group's refusals. Their verbosity and significant reliance on MSA (instead of the dialect) underscored their struggle with mapping between multidialectal practices and social contexts.

6. Pedagogical implications

The present findings, particularly learners' lack of awareness of dialects, offer important pedagogical implications because being able to recognize which variety of the language to use in such situations is a crucial part of pragmatic competence for L2 Arabic learners. While it is highly important that learners have access to both MSA and the colloquial varieties of Arabic, teaching learners how native speakers use the dialect for real-life communication is paramount, especially in everyday situations like those used in this study. The findings, therefore, call for the importance of pedagogical interventions to enhance learners' pragmatic competence by exposing them to an array of real-life situations and stressing the role of the dialect as the main variety of daily life communication. To support their pragmatic competence, there is a need to train learners to choose which variety is appropriate when, with whom, and why. Current approaches to teaching L2 Arabic seem to have significant work ahead to address this challenge in language policies and curriculum design. A major challenge specific to the L2 Arabic context has been amplifying the monolingual ideology that ignores the multidialectal and multilingual practices existing in the Arab world. The best way to deal with this kind of ideology is to collect empirical data that demonstrate how communication *really* takes place in the Arab world in different contexts, especially in the current globalized world. Scholars in the field should focus on the data-driven approach to show how Arabic is used in real-life situations rather than relying on perceptions of how Arabic should be used.

Moreover, pedagogical interventions should be incorporated at the level of materials development. A quick review of the current Arabic textbooks indicates how pragmatic competence is not addressed systematically or in significant detail, which leads to dissatisfaction with learners' progress in the field. Rather than simply categorizing Arabic as a difficult language to learn, an evidence-based language policy and curriculum design should be prioritized. One approach is to collect authentic data of native speakers of Arabic from different geographical locations and levels of education while communicating in different situations (formal and informal). After this kind of corpus is collected, materials design can be guided to reflect authentic language use that can enhance the development of pragmatic competence among learners of Arabic.

7. Conclusion and future directions

Using a spoken discourse completion task, the current study investigated the effects of proficiency on the appropriateness, refusal strategies, and multidialectal practices in L2 Arabic refusals. The findings showed a general positive effect of proficiency level on all three dimensions. Hence, the findings showed that an increase in proficiency enables learners to produce more appropriate refusals with a richer combination of refusal strategies, and more utilization of the dialect. However, the study also revealed that even advanced-level learners lagged behind native speakers in the type and range of strategies used. In addition, advanced learners are found to rely heavily on MSA instead of the dialect in their production of refusals.

The findings of the current study offer a significant contribution to the existing literature on L2 pragmatics. The study showed that the ability to use dialects is a reflection of contextually-appropriate language use, yet this crucial aspect of pragmatic competence has not been considered in previous L2 pragmatics studies, especially in L2 Arabic. For example, a few previous studies on L2 Arabic speech acts (e.g., Al Masaeed, 2017; Al Masaeed et al., 2018; Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b) did not highlight multidialectal practices and development. Rather, these studies examined pragmatic competence through learners' use of MSA. This tendency is problematic because it does not reflect the sociolinguistic reality of the Arab world. A possible reason for the neglect of this aspect (i.e., multidialectal practices) in previous studies might be their tendency of focusing on appropriateness ratings and strategies count when assessing L2 speech acts. Although these two criteria have been used as a language-generic approach when evaluating speech acts, the present findings point to the importance of a language-specific approach to the assessment of pragmatic competence. Following the call for *pragmatics-specific-to-languages* (Taguchi, 2017), we should ask: What makes someone pragmatically competent in Arabic? Answers to this question will naturally lead to a range of pragmatic devices in the structure and discourse of Arabic. We can describe what Arabic pragmatics entails, linguistically and culturally, and how they could be applied to the analysis of pragmatic competence in L2 Arabic. Rich representations of dialects in Arabic can certainly play an important role as a yardstick for examining Arabic pragmatic competence.

Related to this, the current study points to the need to support learners' pragmatic competence by building a substantial pragmalinguistic repertoire that can assist their linguistic choices that are appropriate for a particular social context. To this end, L2 Arabic pedagogy needs to emphasize the necessity of learning and teaching Arabic to reflect the sociolinguistic reality of the Arab world: MSA for literacy, and the dialect for daily communication. Adopting this approach will enhance learners' pragmatic competence, giving them more access to the Arab world, its peoples, and cultures.

It is clear that more research is needed in the context of L2 Arabic pragmatics. We hope that future research will build on the methods and findings of this study to gain more insights on L2 Arabic pragmatics. Future research in speech act production could expand the number and types of scenarios in data collection instruments. The current study, for instance, utilizes three scenarios with two variables to examine refusals by L2 Arabic learners. More situations with additional variables would increase the validity of the results. In addition, future research would benefit from employing follow-up interviews with participants to gain more insights into what pragmatic resources they have and/or lack. Finally, it is worth noting that proficiency levels of the participants in the current study were based on their placement in the academic program they came from. Previous studies (e.g., Rose, 2000) have pointed out that grouping participants in this way can present an issue in L2 pragmatics research, and we agree with them. In future research, more information about participants' background and proficiency levels (independent of course

placement) would be helpful to explain the uneven distribution of the multidialectal expressions used by the learners within each level.

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Appendix A: Transliteration Conventions

The Arabic sound	The transcription symbol	Examples
ب	b	baab = door
ت	t	ʔikhtilaaf= difference
ث	th	muḥaadath a = conversation
ج	j	ḥijaab= hijab
ح	h	hub = love
خ	kh	khaalid = immortal
د	d	ʕindahu= he has
ذ	dh	haad ha = this
ر	r	al-ʕibaraat= expressions
ز	z	zawaaj= marriage
س	s	al-fasaad= corruption
ش	sh	shukran = thank you
ص	ṣ	ṣuurah= picture
ض	ḍ	muḥaaḍarah= lecture
ط	ṭ	ṭabiib = doctor
ظ	ẓ	muʕẓam= most of
ع	ʕ	naʕam= yes
غ	gh	ṣagh <i>hi</i> rah= small (f.)
ف	f	fii = in
ق	q	qabl = before
ك	k	hunaak= there
ل	l	al-ʕaalam= the world
م	m	ʕindama= when
ن	n	nisaaʔ = women
ه	h	haadha = this
و	w	wa = and
ي	y	yad = hand
ء	ʔ (glottal stop)	ʔantii=you (f.)
ّ	consonant double lettering	nufak kk iir= we think
Short vowels:		
َ	a	naʕam= yes
ِ	i	min= from
ُ	u	shukran = thanks
Long vowel:		
ا	aa	maka aa n= place
و	uu	naafu uu rah= fountain
ي	ii	fii = in

Appendix B: Typology of refusals (adapted from Beebe et al., 1990; Salazar-Campillo et al., 2009)

	Refusal strategies	Examples
Direct strategies	Performative verbs / Bluntness	No! I refuse.
	Non-performative statements / Negation of proposition	I can't. I don't think so
Indirect strategies	Plain indirect	I can't. It looks like I won't be able to go.
	Wish	I wish I could help you...
	Reason / Explanation	I can't. I have a doctor's appointment.
	Regret / Apology	I'm so sorry. I can't.
	Alternative: - Change option - Change time	I would join you if you choose another restaurant. I can't go right now, but I could next week.
	Disagreement / Discussion / Criticism	Under the current economic circumstances, you should not be asking for a raise.
	Statement of principle / philosophy	I can't. It goes against my beliefs.
	Avoidance (verbal) - Hedging - Change topic - Joking - Sarcasm	Well, I'll see if I can't. Haha, you know how much I love this restaurant!
Adjuncts to refusals	Positive opinion	This is a great idea, but...
	Willingness	I'd love to go, but...
	Gratitude	Thanks so much, but...
	Agreement	Fine! But...
	Solidarity / Empathy	I'm sure you will understand, but...

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