

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study aimed to examine 17 refusal strategies used by American native speakers and fourth-year English major students at Udonthani Rajabhat University in the request situations. This chapter contains analysis of the collected data and the findings of the study. The findings were derived from the results analyzed and computed from the data obtained through the help of the Discourse Completions Test (DCT).

In the findings, symbols were used to refer to refusal strategies as follows:

N	=	Number of the American / Thai subjects
FS1	=	Statement of regret
FS2	=	Wish
FS3	=	Reason
FS4	=	Statement of alternative
FS5	=	Set condition for future or past acceptance
FS6	=	Promise of future acceptance
FS7	=	Statement of principle
FS8	=	Statement of philosophy
FS9	=	Attempt to the dissuade interlocutor
FS10	=	Acceptance that functions as a refusal
FS11	=	Avoidance
FS12	=	Statement of positive opinion/ feeling or agreement
FS13	=	Statement of empathy
FS14	=	Pause filler
FS15	=	Gratitude
FS16	=	Performative verb
FS17	=	Non - performative statement

In this part, the study was analyzed by using the classification by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). In the coding of both groups, the categories were exhaustive. This means that several situations with slightly different details were

represented under one strategy. For example, in F9 (Attempt to dissuade the interlocutor), there were four sub-types: criticizing the interlocutor, making the interlocutor feels guilty, letting the interlocutor off the hook and statement of self-defense. When the subject provided a performance that could be interpreted as letting interlocutor off the hook and as a statements of self-defense, these strategies were grouped into one category: F9 (Attempt to dissuade the interlocutor). For the detail, see Appendix B.

The responses of both Thai and American subjects obtained from the questionnaires were computed and presented in "Frequency". There were 1428 responses in refusing with the strategies used by the American subjects and 1555 responses with refusal strategies by Thai subjects. See the frequency of both subject groups in using refusal strategies in Appendices C and D.

Research Finding One

Research question one is "What were the refusal strategies used by Thai and American speakers of English?". To show the refusal strategies used by 50 Thai and 50 American speakers of English, the results were presented in terms of frequency and percentage as follows.

Table 1 The frequency of Thai students' responses to using refusal strategies in request situations.

Order	Refusal Strategies	*Frequency	Percentage
1	Reason	485	31.20
2	Statement of regret	416	26.76
3	Non - Performative statement	242	15.57
4	Statement of alternative	102	6.56

Table 1 (Cont.)

Order	Refusal Strategies	*Frequency	Percentage
	Statement of empathy	86	5.53
5	Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	68	4.37
6	Pause filler	66	4.24
7	Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	56	3.60
8	Avoidance	16	1.03
9	Performative verb	6	0.39
10	Set condition for future or past acceptance	4	0.25
11	Statement of principle	3	0.19
12	Acceptance that functions as a refusal	3	0.19
13	Promise of future acceptance	1	0.06
14	Statement of philosophy	1	0.06
15	Gratitude	0	0
16	Wish	0	0
	Total	1555	100

Note: Frequency refers to the use of each refusal strategy by Thai subjects.

In Table 1, it is shown that “reason” was the most commonly used strategy (31.20% of all the strategies coded). “Statement of regret” was the second most – commonly used (26.76 % of the strategies). “Non - performative statement” was the third most – commonly used (15.57 % of all the strategies coded). On the other hand, “promise of future acceptance” and “statement of philosophy” were used at only 1 or 0.06 %. However, neither showing “gratitude” nor showing “wish” was used by the subjects in both groups.

Table 2 The frequency of American subjects' responses to using refusal strategies in request situations.

Order	Refusal Strategies	*Frequency	Percentage
1	Reason	401	28.09
2	Statement of regret	306	21.44
3	Non - Performative statement	244	17.08
4	Statement of alternative	138	9.66
5	Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	124	8.68
6	Statement of empathy	58	4.06
7	Promise of future acceptance	31	2.17
8	Statement of positive opinion/ feeling or agreement	28	1.96
9	Statement of principle	25	1.75
10	Set condition for future or past acceptance	24	1.68
11	Wish	15	1.05
12	Pause filler	14	0.98
13	Avoidance	8	0.56
14	Statement of philosophy	5	0.35
15	Performative verb	4	0.28
16	Acceptance that functions as a refusal	3	0.21
17	Gratitude	0	0
	Total	1428	100

Note: Frequency refers to the use of each refusal strategy by American subjects.

As shown in Table 2, “giving reason” (28.09%) was the refusal strategy most often used by American subjects. “Statement of regret” was the second most – common strategy (21.44%), and “non - performative statement” was the third most – common strategy (17.08%). On the other hand, the least - commonly used refusal strategies was “acceptance that functions as a refusal” (0.21%). However, this rank did not include showing “gratitude” because American subjects did not use gratitude in

making a refusal speech act. For a better picture of the comparison of refusal strategies used by both subject groups, a bar chart is presented below.

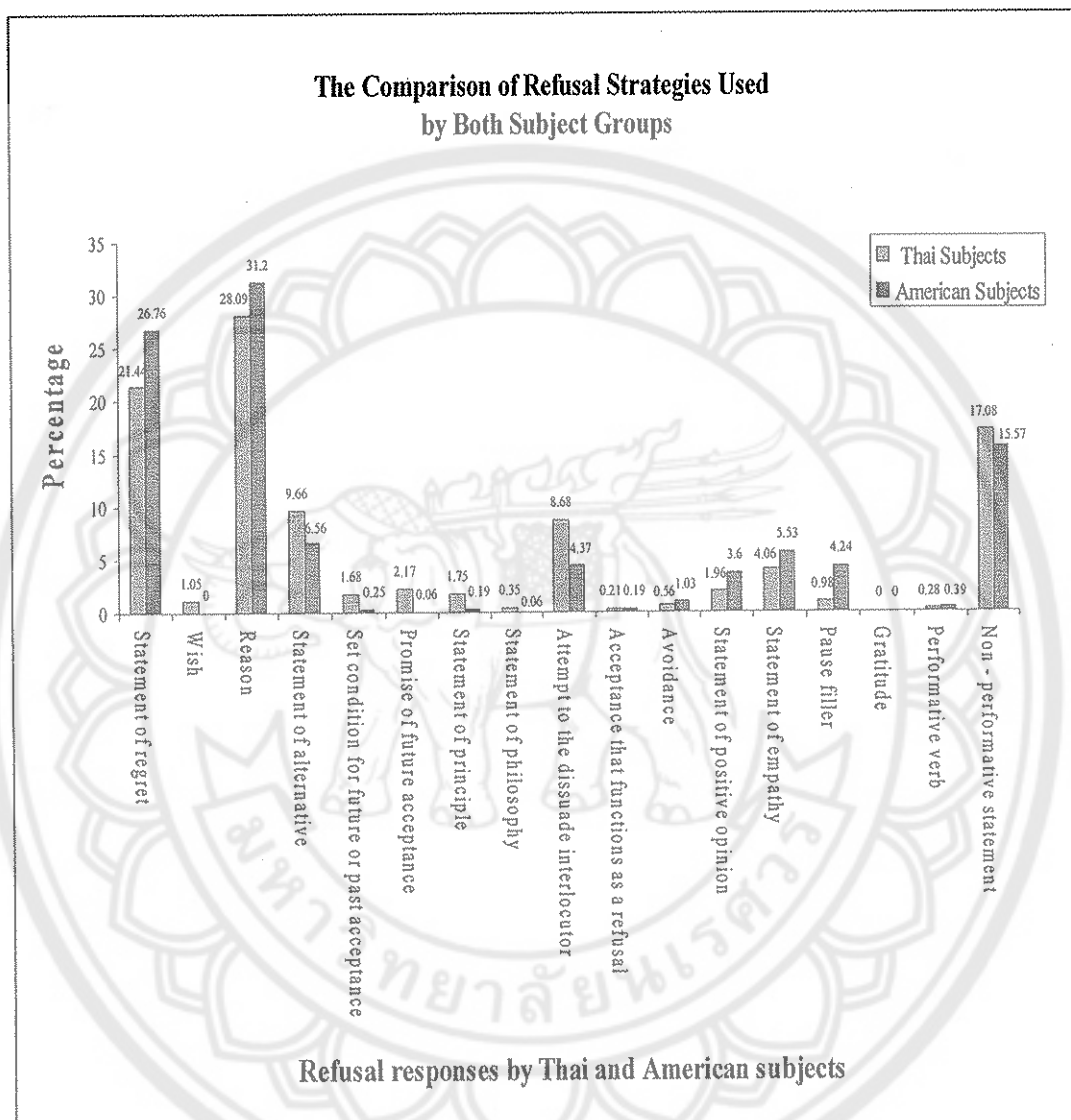


Figure 2 The Comparison of Refusal Strategies Used by Both Subject Groups

Research Finding Two

Was there a significant difference between refusal strategies in request situations used by Thai students and those used by native speakers of American English?

To answer this question clearly, the researcher explained it into two parts. In the first part, the researcher compared the percentage of American subjects to those of the Thai subjects in refusing the requests with Pearson Chi-square in Table 3. The second part reported different and similar characteristics of each refusal strategy made by both Thai and American subjects.

Part I The percentage and the characteristics of the Thai and American subjects' responses in 17 refusal strategies.

Table 3 The comparison of differences in refusing the requests made by 50 Thai and 50 American subjects.

Order	Refusal Categories	American (%)	Thai (%)	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
1	Statement of regret	98	100	0.315
2	Reason	98	100	0.315
3	Non - Performative statement	96	96	1.000
4	Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	88	66	0.009*
5	Statement of alternative	78	68	0.260
6	Statement of empathy	62	76	0.130
7	Promise of future acceptance	40	2	0.000*
8	Set condition for future or past acceptance	34	8	0.001*
9	Statement of principle	32	6	0.001*
10	Statement of positive opinion	30	56	0.009*
11	Wish	20	0	0.001*
12	Pause filler	16	58	0.000*
13	Avoidance	14	24	0.202

Table 3 (Cont.)

Order	Refusal Categories	American (%)	Thai (%)	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
14	Statement of philosophy	8	2	0.169
15	Acceptance that functions as a refusal	6	4	0.646
16	Performative verb	6	12	0.295
17	Gratitude	0	0	—
Significant value of all strategies				0.275

Note: The differences between the frequencies of strategies used by both subject groups that are statistically significant, presented with *.

Table 3, it indicates similarities and differences between the two groups. For the differences, it is shown that there was a significant difference in 7 of those strategies: promising of future acceptance, pause filler, wish, set condition for future or past acceptance, statement of principle, attempt to dissuade the interlocutor and statement of positive opinion. In a general picture, Table 3 shows that there was no significant difference in 9 of those strategies used by the American and Thai subjects: statement of regret, statement of alternative, reason, statement of philosophy, acceptance that functions as a refusal, avoidance, statement of empathy, non-performative statement and performative verb. However, gratitude (0%) was not used by any of the 2 groups. Thus, the data could not be computed into Asymp sig (2-sided). The other 7 strategies showed significant differences between the use of strategies of both subject groups.

Part II The different and similar characteristics of each refusal strategy performed by Thai and American subjects

In part II, the analysis indicated that Thai subjects used seven refusal strategies differently from the American subjects. The examples below showed the differences in structure or order. Likewise, the analysis also indicated that Thai subjects used nine refusal strategies similarly to those used by the American subjects.

The examples shown below were selected from the responses of Thai and American subjects. Here, the unedited responses of Thai subjects were demonstrated.

These examples will be presented using the following symbols.

AE = An example taken from American subjects' responses

TH = An example taken from Thai subjects' responses

Differences in using refusal strategies

1. Wish (FS2)

In Table 3, it is shown that all the Thai subjects did not use "wish" in making refusal speech acts. However, 20.0% of all the American subjects preferred to use "wish". This means that there was a significant difference between the Thai students and the American native speakers in using refusal strategies. Likewise, Promsrimas (2000) suggested that using "wish" in making a refusal by Thai students might not occur in request situation. She stated that there was only one situation that the Thai subjects preferred to use "wish" in making the refusal speech acts. It was the inviting situation. This was possibly due to the lack of knowledge about expressing feeling by using the verbs or adjectives such as "wish", "unfortunately", "love to", etc. The Thai students might know only "sorry" to perform a refusal. This is different from American native speakers who used "wish" to save the interlocutor's face and mitigate a degree of refusal speech act.

"Wish" was an expression of willingness to comply. It was used to express the refuser's willingness to accept and conform to the interlocutor. In the refusals of Americans who used "wish" (1.05 %), it was indicated that the Americans used "wish" as a soft refusal and as a pre-refusal to prepare the listener for the upcoming refusal such as a pause filler, reason, statement of alternative, etc. Some examples of this style is provided below:

(8) **I'm willing to help you anytime**, but this weekend is very important for me. I have some errands. (AE)

(9) **I wish** I could help you, but my insurance has already expired. (AE)

In the examples above, it is indicated that "wish" or expressions of willingness are placed in the initial position in (8) and (9). In (9), the refuser uses "wish" to mitigate the refusal and adds the reason to support the refusal at the end.

2. Set conditions for future or past acceptance (FS5)

According to Table 3, the Thai students used set conditions for future or past acceptance in only 0.25% of their strategies. This differed from the native speakers of American English who used set conditions for future or past acceptance in 1.68 % of their strategies. The low percentage used by the Thai students may possibly have been due to unfamiliarity in using a second language.

It is possible that when they had to refuse in a second language, they were cautious about expressing correct grammar. This might imply that Thai students tend to reject the use of this strategy because they lack English language ability. In addition, Promsrimas (2000) found in her study that there was such a refusal strategy as set conditions for future or past acceptance in the Thai language.

The differences in using this strategy of the American and Thai subjects in this study agreed with the study of Sairhun (1999) who found that Thais rejected the use of set conditions for future or past acceptance. In other words, this data did not concur with the findings of a study by Liao and Breanahan (1996) which found that Asian people, e.g. Japanese people, preferred to express set conditions for future or past acceptance in making a refusal more than the American native speakers. Moreover, pragmatic transfer existed between the mother language and the second language when a Japanese person made a refusal in a second language. Nevertheless, the data in Table 3 showed that using set conditions for future or past acceptance between the Thai and American subjects had a significant difference at the level of 0.05.

According to Table 3, certain differences between using the set conditions for future or past acceptance by the Thai and the American subjects were found i.e. set conditions for future or past acceptance could be used in combination with other strategies and were normally used in a conditional form but the lengths for which the Thai students performed set conditions for future or past acceptance with other strategies were less than those of the American native speakers. In fact, the Americans used many more strategies to support their refusals than Thai students who often used "regret" with a set condition for future or past acceptance. See the differences in the examples below.

The response of a Thai student to a friend's request:

(22) **Sorry, if I finish my work, I will give it to you.** (TH)

The response of an American native speaker to a teacher's request:

(23) **I'm sure I can do it if you had told me two days ago.** I don't think I can send my homework earlier. I'm really sorry. Well...Can I send it after you come back? (AE)

In (22), the Thai refuser first employed a statement of regret to express apology to the interlocutor followed by a set condition for future or past acceptance that he would give the lecture notes to the interlocutor immediately after he finished his work. In contrast, the American native speaker refused the instructor's request with a set condition for future or past acceptance in the first step and provided 3 strategies: regret, pause filler and promise of future acceptance to maintain a good relationship in the final position. In the study of Thammo (2005), it was stated that this strategy usually occurred in the final position in the sequence of refusal. Thus, her findings were different from the findings of this study because the set conditions for future or past acceptance could occur in many positions as in examples (22) and (23) where the set conditions for future or past acceptance appeared in the initial position and the final position.

3. Promise of future acceptance (FS6)

The data in Table 3 showed that 2.0 % of the Thai students used "promise of future acceptance" in making a refusal which was less than the American native speakers (40 %). This led to the difference of using a promise of future acceptance in making the refusal speech acts between the Thai students and the American native speakers at the significant level of 0.05.

According to the findings, 40 % of the American speakers preferred to use this style because it provided a way to avoid direct confrontation. It also helped to mitigate the effect of the refusal by giving a promise to comply with the interlocutor's need in the future as in the following example:

(23) **Sorry, I'm totally booked right after school. I will help you next time.**

In (23), the American student made a refusal of the instructor's request to stay after school. The American student began to refuse with a statement of regret followed by a reason and promise of future acceptance. In this example, the American

student agreed to comply with the instructor's request but not at the time required by the instructor.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Thai students' avoidance of using the promise of future acceptance might be associated with Thai culture that cares about the interlocutor's feelings and face. In addition, they were not sure of the time to comply with the interlocutor's request. If they made a promise, it might lead to a bad relationship when they broke that promise. In the responses of some Thai students when they had to use a promise for future acceptance, they often combined the promise with other strategies such as reason, statement of regret, pause filler, and statement of positive feeling as in the example shown below:

(24) I'm sorry. It would be very exciting to visit you at your new home but I have an examination today. Well...I **promise I will go to help you immediately after I'm finished.** (TH)

In (24), the Thai student had to refuse a friend's request to help him move to another town. In the sequence of refusal, it is shown that he/she was aware of the friend's feelings and face. He/she used four strategies in the initial position i.e. statement of regret, statement of positive feeling, reason and pause filler, and then the promise of future acceptance was placed at the final position. This finding supported the finding of Thammo (2005) that the positions of other strategies were exchangeable, but the promise of future acceptance strategy was usually placed at the end of the refusal.

4. Statement of principle (FS7)

Table 3 shows the differences in the "statement of principle" used between the subjects in both groups. 6 % of the Thai students employed "statement of principle" which was less than the American speakers (32 %). According to Pearson Chi-Square statistics, there was a significant difference in using the statement of principle strategy between both subjects at the 0.05 level of significance.

"Statement of principle" was used when the refuser tried to increase the reliability of the refusal speech act. Then, the refuser expressed a general rule or some morality believed to be related in refusing the interlocutor's request. However, this study did not mention the relationship between the use of a refusal and the status of the interlocutor. It is shown that Thai subjects often used this strategy in a formal request

situation where the interlocutor had an inferior status. The example is described as follows:

(25) I'm really sorry, Jenny. I can't do that because it's against the rules. **I believe everybody has to attend on schedule.** Thus, you have to take the exam in the schedule, too. (TH)

In (25), the Thai refuser was an instructor who used this strategy to refuse a request to postpone taking the midterm test from a student. The Thai subjects used the principle strategy by referring to the education rules. In the sequence of refusal, the statement of regret was placed in the initial position. After that, the refuser provided a non-performative statement and placed a statement of reason in the end position. Moreover, the principle strategy was placed in the middle position.

In another example, the American subjects used this strategy to refuse a family member's request to borrow money as in the example shown below:

(26) No way. I just have a **rule** about not lending out my money. **I'm sure mom and dad would loan you the money if you have a good reason...**just ask them. (AE)

In the example (26), the American subject in this study was a sibling of the requester. The response in this example, then, might be caused by the individualistic culture in which American people are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families only. The example (26) indicated that the American subject used principle strategy with his/her intention of not lending money. Therefore, the subject aimed to refuse by giving an excuse which referred to the principle of family relationship.

It was found in the Chinese refusals studied by Chen, et al. (1995), Japanese refusals studied by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990), Arabic refusals studied by Nelson, et al. (2002) and Thammo (2005) that this strategy was rarely used in Thais and non-native speakers.

5. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor (FS9)

Table 3 shows the differences in the attempts to dissuade the interlocutor used between both groups. The data showed that 66% of the Thai students employed the strategy "attempt to dissuade the interlocutor" which was less than the American native speakers (88%), thus indicating that the use of the attempt to dissuade the

interlocutor between the Thai and American subjects was significantly different at the 0.05 level.

According to the findings, the “attempt to dissuade interlocutor strategy” was used in attempting to persuade the interlocutor to give up an action plan. This strategy was preferred when it was considered that a refusal might be hurtful or create a major confrontation between the refuser and the interlocutor. On this point, there were four sub-types of attempts to dissuade the interlocutor i.e. letting the interlocutor off the hook, using statements of self-defense, criticizing the interlocutor or producing a statement of negative feeling/opinion, making the interlocutor know or feel he/she has done something wrong as described below:

Letting the interlocutor off the hook

(29) I’m okay; however, I’m going to have to ask you to plan on coming to work unless I can arrange to have one of your co-workers work your shift. (AE)

(30) Don’t worry about it. I will do it tomorrow. (TH)

In (30), the strategy of letting the interlocutor off the hook used by Thai students showed consideration towards to the interlocutor’s feelings. It is possible that in this context, “Don’t worry about it,” has a similar meaning to “*Mai pen rai*,” in the Thai language. On the other hand, American native speakers spoke of their feelings directly by using expressions such as “I’m okay” or “That’s all right”. As in the example (29) above, these words were a pre-refusal to letting the interlocutor know that the refuser was not willing to comply with the request.

Using statements of self-defense

This sub-type was not found in either group. Promsrimas (2000) stated that this strategy mostly occurred in refusing an offer. The data was also dispersed to other sub-types of attempts to dissuade the interlocutor.

Criticizing the interlocutor

This strategy is similar to “statement of sarcasm” in the study of Thammo (2005) which was used to criticize the interlocutor or to produce a statement of negative feeling/opinion. Although this strategy is rarely used among the Thais, there is an example of this strategy used by a Thai student below:

(31) **It is not a good idea.** You should take the exam before the other students. I know you want to help your brother, but you should consider yourself and help yourself before helping him. (TH)

In (31), the Thai students criticized the interlocutor who requested a postponement for taking the midterm test because her brother had had an accident. In the sequence of refusal, it was indicated that criticizing the interlocutor usually occurred in the initial position as in the example (32). It was also indicated that the Americans placed the criticism in the initial position of the refusal statement when a roommate requested to borrow a dress.

(32) **You are too fat for it.** I'm sorry. (AE)

Making the interlocutor feel guilty

(33) Sorry about that, I understand about this situation. I know you want to meet your cousin but it is your work, but **you should have more responsibility.** (TH)

(34) **Have you ever thought about the problem_**when you take the weekend off? (AE)

In (33), the sequence in using the strategy of making the interlocutor feel guilty was different from the American speaker. The Thais often place statements of regret before making an expression to "make the interlocutor feel guilty". In (34), however, the American native speaker selected the strategy of "making the interlocutor feel guilty" either at the beginning of the refusal (example 34), or at the end of the refusal (example 33). Moreover, statement of regret did not occur with this strategy.

6. Statements of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (FS12)

The data from Table 3 shows that the Thai students provided more statements of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (3.60%) than the American speakers did (1.96%). Thus, this data revealed a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level.

(43) **I'd love to,** but I'm really sorry. I've got a very important appointment with my family. (AE)

The example in (43) was in a request situation where a boss requested an extra hour to finish up the work. The American speaker used this strategy to mitigate the refusal by letting the interlocutor feel good.

(44) **You are the best, child**, but I don't think we have time. (TH)

In the postponement for taking the midterm test, the Thai student employed this strategy in the initial position. Furthermore, this finding concurred with the findings of Sairhun (1999) in that this strategy was a way to soften the refusal and was often used a reason.

7. Pause filler (FS14)

According to Table 3, the Thai students provided more pause fillers (4.24%) than the American native speakers did (0.98%). This data led to the comparison of using pause fillers because there was a significant difference at the 0.05 level.

Thus, it was indicated that the Thai students and the American native speakers were similar in terms of the use of pause fillers to make a refusal in the request situations. The similarities in this strategy were due to the similar interjections such as "Uh"/"Well"/"Oh"/"Uhm" used by both groups to buy time to think and persuade the requester to give up the plan. After that, they tried to think about other strategies which could support their refusal and reduce the interlocutor's loss of face as in the examples shown as follows:

(49) **Well**, we have to follow the rules. (AE)

(50) **Oh!** I'm really sorry. I have to use it for something important. (TH)

In (49), the American subject used the interjection "well" to buy time, and gave a reason for rejecting the interlocutor's request to borrow a key to get inside the classroom. Likewise, the Thai subject also used "Oh" in the initial position in the sequence of the refusal. After that, they tried to provide a statement of regret to reduce the threatening effect of the refusal before ending the refusal with a statement of reason.

Similarities of using refusal strategy

1. Statement of regret (FS1)

Table 3, showed similarities of strategies used between the subjects in both groups. Statement of regret is employed by both Thai students and native speakers of American English (26.76 % and 21.44 %, respectively).

According to Table 3, using the formulaic expression "I'm sorry" was found in both Thai and American subjects. An expression of regret was sometimes used in combination with other strategies and typically appeared either in the initial or final position of a refusal. Here are some examples:

1. **I'm sorry** but I need to use it now.(AE)
2. Three months is too long, girl. I have to save my money for the next semester. **Sorry baby.** (AE)
3. **I'm really sorry**, my friend. You know, I had an accident last weekend.
So sorry. (TH)
4. I'm sorry. I'm very busy this weekend. **Can I send it tomorrow, please?** (TH)
5. I'm sorry, but I have an exam today. **I promise I will go to help you immediately after I finish the exam.** (TH)

In example (1), the statement of regret was placed in the initial position, while it was placed in the final position in example (2). In example (3), however, "I'm really sorry" and "So sorry" were placed in both initial and final positions. In addition, other strategies can be used in combination with expressing regret e.g. combination of statement of alternative and promise of future acceptance in examples (4) and (5). Moreover, a statement of regret can occur with a pause filler such as "Uh"/"Well"/"Oh"/"Ah" as shown in example (6) used by Thai students and example (7) of native speakers of American English below:

(6) **Oh!...** I'm busy this weekend because I'm going to take a trip. I'm sorry. Can we do it next week? (TH)

(7) **Well...**I have an appointment tonight with my mother because it's her birthday. I'm so sorry. Next time I promise I will. (AE)

Examples (6) and (7) showed that statements of regret always occurred with statements of reason. In (6), the refuser began the refusal with the pause filler "Oh!" which showed hesitation in making a refusal. After that, the refuser placed a reason stating that the refuser was busy and finally expressed a statement of regret and an alternative, respectively. In (7), the statement of regret was placed between the reason and promise of future acceptance.

2. Reason (FS3)

Table 3 showed a similar percentage between the Thai students and the American native speakers in that they employed “reason” to make refusals (31.20% and 28.09%, respectively).

In using “reason” in a refusal speech act, the reasons of the Thai subjects were similar to those of the American subjects in that they aimed at not hurting the interlocutor or making the interlocutor lose face. In addition, the refusals performed by the Thais and the Americans often consisted of unspecified reasons as shown in the examples below:

(10) I have an important **engagement** that’s been planned for two days.(AE)

(11) Sorry, I have some **errands to take care of**. (AE)

(12) I’m sorry but I **have an appointment** right after school today.(TH)

On the other hand, in the example (13) and (14) below, the Thai and the American subjects used specific reasons. They sometimes referred to a third person such as a mother, father or sister, etc.

(13) I’m very sorry, boss. I have to tell you that I **need to go back home because my mother is sick**. (AE)

(14) I **want to send money to my sister**. I’m sorry. (TH)

In addition, Thai students tended to refer to a specific reason which was not strong enough to support the refusing. This characteristic was previously found in Thai students’ refusals. (Sairhun, 1999)

(15) I’m sorry. I can’t give my homework to you because I **have to clean my house**. Could I hand in the homework on the appointment? (TH)

As shown in example (15), using such a specific reason as “cleaning the house” of the Thai student was a weak reason because the professor had authority to give order or make a request to the student. Additionally, “handing the homework to the professor” was a general duty of students. Thus, “cleaning the house” used by the Thai student in this study might be analyzed as an excuse. A similar finding was discovered by Beebe, et al. (1990) wherein the Japanese used the reason for making refusal speech acts, “I have something to take care at home.”

3. Statement of alternative (FS4)

With regard to the use of statements of alternatives in the refusal speech acts of Thai students and American speakers, the data revealed no statistical difference at the 0.05 level between the two groups in their use of "statement of alternative". The findings on using statements of alternative in this study were not different from those in the study of Sairhun (1999).

The statement of alternative was the indirect refusal strategy providing a way to avoid direct confrontation between the interlocutor and the refuser. In addition, it could be divided into 3 groups i.e. statement of alternative by changing the time, statement of alternative by setting conditions and statement of alternative by suggesting another way as in the following examples:

Changing the time

(16) So sorry, but **I'm willing to help you next time**. It's because I don't have money now. (AE)

(17) Sorry, I'm very busy now, but **I will consider it later**. (TH)

Statement of alternative by setting conditions

(18) I'm sorry to say no, but **you can take it to copy right now** and give it back to me. (AE)

(19) Sorry, I want to lend it to you, but **I can send them to Xerox**. (TH)

Statement of alternative by suggesting another way

(20) I'm sorry. I have an important engagement to attend tomorrow that's been planned for some time. **If you need this quickly then perhaps you'd better ask one of the other secretaries for assistance**. (AE)

(21) First, no, you cannot borrow my key. Second, I'm sorry but I'm running very late...so if this can't wait until tomorrow, **please take it up with the housekeeper**. (TH)

In the Thai student's refusal to a worker's request to take the weekend off, example (17) shows the use of the statement of alternative by changing the time. This was the way the boss provided an alternative by asking the worker to reconsider his/her request at another time. The boss provided his/her willingness or ability to possibly follow the worker's need at a time the boss appointed by himself/herself. In (16), the refuser also used the statement of alternative by changing the time.

In refusing a friend's request to borrow lecture notes, (18) presented a statement of alternative by setting the condition of the refusal of the American subject which was similar to that of the Thai subject in (19). Both tried to mitigate a refusal by setting a condition that they might be able to help according to their own ability and convenience.

Likewise, the Thai and American subjects used the statement of alternative by suggesting another way for maintaining a good relationship. These alternatives sometimes referred to a third person as shown in (20) and (21).

4. Statement of philosophy (FS8)

The data from Table 3 indicated that the Thais and Americans had no significant difference in using the statement of philosophy at the 0.05 level. Thus, it meant that the Thai and American subjects had similarities in using the statement of philosophy.

However, this strategy had a similar characteristic to "reason" (FS3) and the "statement of principle" strategy (FS7) wherein the content in this strategy referred to the philosophy as ideas and beliefs about the meaning of life and the examples of Thai and American subjects as shown below:

(27) Oh, I'm sorry. My dress won't fit you. Don't worry. **Nobody is perfect.** You can wear another dress of my sister's. (AE)

(28) **I don't want to go back on my word.** I promised my mother I would go to Pattaya with her this weekend, so I cannot lend my car to you. (TH)

In the same way as shown in example (28), the Thai student indirectly rejected a friend's request to borrow his/her car by offering a statement of philosophy used to provide an example for the refusal and increase the validity of refusing.

In example (27), the American native speaker used this strategy to refuse a roommate's request to borrow a dress for a wedding in example (27). The refuser used "nobody is perfect" to mitigate the refusal and comfort the roommate who was worried about her figure/body/shape. Furthermore, the refuser tried to explain that nobody had a perfect body. She referred to human nature. After that, the American subject offered another alternative for the roommate, saying that she could borrow another dress from someone else.

5. Acceptance that functions as a refusal (FS10)

The data from Table 3 indicated that this strategy was rarely used among the Thai and American subjects wherein the strategy was employed at rates of 0.19% and 0.21%, respectively. Thus, the data indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups in using “acceptance that functions as a refusal” at a significance level of 0.05. Moreover, the analysis indicated two sub-types of this strategy: “lack of enthusiasm” and “unspecific or indefinite reply”.

Lack of enthusiasm

The refuser showed an acceptance, but that acceptance functioned as a refusal since the refuser did not intend to comply with the interlocutor’s need immediately, but only offered acceptance to stop the interlocutor from bothering him/her as in the example shown below (Only one example of the American native speaker was found in the questionnaire):

(35) So, it’s my life. (AE)

In (35), the American subject refused the teacher’s request to stay after school. This shows that the refuser was not willing to comply with the interlocutor’s need.

Unspecific or indefinite reply

This strategy was used to avoid a direct refusal. The refuser tried to beat around the bush to evade compliance. This strategy was also used to acknowledge the interlocutor’s feelings as well as soften the threatening effect of the refusal.

(36) I’m not sure. (AE)

(37) Oh! No, I’m not sure. You should ask the teacher in the major. (TE)

In (36), the American subject tried to avoid conforming to the interlocutor’s needs by using an indefinite reply to refuse a student’s request for a key to get inside the classroom. The American subject did not use this strategy in combination with other strategies whereas the strategy used by the Thai students in (37) often occurred with other strategies such as pause fillers, reasons or statements of alternative.

6. Avoidance (FS11)

According to Table 3, the use of “avoidance” by the Thai and American subjects had no significant difference at the 0.05 level. This strategy was used when

the refuser wanted to avoid a direct response to a proposed course of action since avoiding a direct positive response indicated a refusal. In addition, three sub-types were found in this strategy as follows:

Postponement

(38) Really? **I will think about it.** If I decide to let you go, I'll tell you.

(AE)

(39) **Let me think about it.** I'm very busy with my work now. (TH)

In (38), the American refuser performed neither an acceptance nor a refusal, but asked to accept or refuse later. In the same way, the Thai student used "Let me think about it," in (39) to ask for a postponement.

Repetition

Only the American subjects provided this strategy to repeat and restate the part of the act on the interlocutor's request. Normally, they used a word or a short phrase as in the example below:

(40) **Take the weekend off?** It's very busy here every weekend. You are the best worker. I need your help. (AE)

This was a request situation wherein the worker requested the weekend off from the boss because it was his father's birthday. The American subject repeated the request "take the weekend off" to imply that it was beyond the American refuser's expectation, and gave a specific reason by saying that the bookstore was very busy every weekend. The refuser offered a compliment, and provided a positive statement at the end to make the listener feel good.

Change of topic

This strategy was used to avoid a direct acceptance as in the example of the American subject below:

(41) I am very busy with my project at the moment. **How about you new home? Is it far from here?** I will visit you when I finish my project. (AE)

The American refuser tried to shift the interlocutor's request by changing the topic of their conversation.

Hedging

This strategy was meant to show refusal to comply with the interlocutor's request. The refuser often said something to rid him/herself of the obligation to the interlocutor as in the example shown below:

(42) I don't know, sir. I have to take care of my mother. I will try to do it tonight. I will do it as well as I can, but **I can't guarantee it.** (TH)

In (42), the instructor made a request to hand in the homework earlier than the appointment. Then, the Thai refuser expressed a hedging in the initial and the final position of a refusal sequence. The refuser began the refusal by hedging to avoid complying with the interlocutor's request. After that, he/she provided a reason to strengthen the refusal. In the end, the refuser added the hedging in the final position of a refusal sequence. As mentioned above, this strategy of changing topic was rarely used among the Thai and American subjects.

7. Statement of empathy (FS13)

The data from Table 3 indicated that there was no significant difference between the Thai students and American native speakers as regards statement of empathy. The Thai and the American subjects often avoided confrontation by asking for understanding or empathy from the interlocutor as in the examples below.

(45) I probably won't be able to. I will help you next time. **Don't be angry at me.** (AE)

(46) No, I can't do that. **I hope you will understand.** (AE)

(47) I'm really sorry, **I know you want to see your brother**, but you have to take the test now. (TH)

(48) Sorry, I can't do that. **I understand that you have a problem**, but you should take the test now, ok? (TH)

In (45) and (46), the American and Thai subjects used this strategy to refuse a friend's request to help him move to another town. It showed that the American subject wanted to maintain a good relationship between the refuser and interlocutor. This was probably because the American native speakers knew more words or expressions to use in this situation. Moreover, in (47), the Thai subject began a refusal by showing regret and empathy to make the interlocutor understand his/her feeling, but they insisted on refusing the hearer.

8. Performative verb (FS16)

In Table 3, the Thai students used performative verb at higher frequency than the American native speakers. This data led to the comparison of using performative verbs; there was, however, no significant difference at the 0.05 level of significance.

It is well-known that a performative verb is a verb inferring an action itself. According to this strategy, a performative verb is provided to express refusals such as refusal, denial, rejection, disagreement, repudiation, etc. In using a performative verb by the Thai students and American native speakers, it was found that both subjects were familiar with the expression “no” or “I can’t” rather than an expression of the performative verb. This direct refusal strategy was employed at a rate of 12.00% by the Thais and 6.00% by the Americans. An example from a Thai subject is shown in (51) and another from an American subject is shown in (52):

(51) I’m sorry but **I refuse to give you the key**. It’s not suitable to give keys to students and I have to go outside now because I have some important errands.
(TH)

(52) I’d like to, but **I have to deny your request**. I have other things to do.
(AE)

Thai students used the performative verb “refuse” as in example (51). The refuser used this strategy to directly refuse the student’s request. The statement of regret was placed on the initial position. After that, the statements of reasons were used to clarify their refusal as well as to soften the previous direct refusal, whereas the American speaker in (52) placed the performative verb in the middle position then the refuser placed statements of positive opinion and reason in the initial and end positions.

9. Non-performative statement (FS17)

According to Table 3, the use of “non-performative statements” by the Thai and American subjects had no significant difference at the 0.05 level.

This strategy was a direct refusal that used negation lexical items such as “no” or “not”. These words made the interlocutor understand immediately that his/her need had been rejected by the refuser.

(53) **No**, I’m sorry. I’m really busy. (TH)

(54) **No**, I'm really sorry. I can help you another time. (TH)

(55) I'm sorry but **I'm not free** after school. I have to go to the doctor.

(AE)

(56) **I'm not finished yet**; I haven't had enough time to understand it yet.

I'm sorry I can't send it in early. (AE)

In examples (53) and (54), the Thai refuser used "no" to express a direct refusal strategy that deterred the request by the boss to help translate an English complaint. In addition, the statement of regret usually occurred with the non-performative statement to mitigate the effect of the refusal whereas the word "not" was used by the American subject in (55) to stop a friend from requesting to borrow a notebook. Likewise, the use of "not" by the American subjects in (56), the strategy of offering a regret together with the strategy of giving a reason were used to soften the refusal and bring peace into the conversation.

Moreover, "I can't" and "I don't" were also used to express non-performative statements used to express unwillingness and inability to comply with the interlocutor's request. This strategy was normally used with a reason, regret or statement of alternative to reduce tension as well as to maintain a good relationship between the two parties as shown in the examples below:

(57) I'm sorry but **I can't help you**. I'm in a rush. Anyway, you can ask the janitor to open the room for you. (AE)

(58) **I can't let you borrow this dress** but I'll help you buy a different one if you want. (AE)

(59) **I don't think so**. My dress is very important to me. I cannot lend it to anyone. (AE)

(60) Oh! **I don't have money at the moment**. (AE)

The expressions of non-performative statements like "I can't" and "I don't" were used in (57), (58), (59), and (60). In (59), the refuser used "I don't" to emphasize a refusal in the initial position of the refusal sequence because the dress of the refuser was a special thing that her mother had given her, and a concrete reason was used after that to mitigate the refusal. In (60), the refuser used "I don't" to show a strong inability as the "can't" in example (57) which showed that the refuser did not have the ability to help the interlocutor open the room. In this sentence, the refuser

prepared the interlocutor for the upcoming refusal by stating regret before providing the non-performative statements. Moreover, the refuser in (58) used the expression "can't" to express an inability to lend the dress to the interlocutor. The refuser placed the non-performative statements at the initial position of the refusal sequence. Then, the refuser added the statement of alternative to reduce the effect of the refusal. In addition, there was nothing in example (58) to prepare the interlocutor for the refusal as in example (57).

Use of "no" or "not" and "I can't" or "I don't" was found in the refusals of both subjects. Moreover, from the examples given, the expressions of the non-performative statements could be placed in every position; in the initial, middle, and final positions of the refusal sequence.

However, the data in Table 3 was surprising in that the Thai and the American subjects did not use the "gratitude" strategy (FS15) to refuse any of the requests in the questionnaire. Thus, there was no statistically significant difference.

In summary, there was no significant difference at the 0.05 level between the two subjects, thus meaning that the Thai students and American speakers had similarities in using refusal strategies in the request situations. In the next chapter, issues related to the selection of refusal strategies, the similar and different characteristics of refusal strategies performed by Thai and American subjects, some pedagogical implications and recommendations for further studies will be discussed.