Pragmatic Transfer in Thai EFL Refusals

By

Asst. Prof. Dr. Anchalee Wannaruk
School of English
Institute of Social Technology
Suranaree University of Technology
Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand

Pragmatic Transfer in Thai EFL Refusals

Anchalee Wannaruk

Abstract

The present study examined the occurrence of pragmatic transfer by Thai EFL learners in the speech act of refusal. Another purpose was to uncover motivating factors behind such transfer. Data collected using a discourse completion task (DCT) were analyzed as consisting of a sequence of semantic formulas. EFL refusal data were compared with similar data elicited from native speakers of English responding in English and native speakers of Thai responding in Thai. The findings reveal that pragmatic transfer exists in choice and content of semantic formulae. The findings suggest implications for language teaching methodology, including materials development.

Keywords: Refusal; Pragmatic transfer; Interlanguage pragmatics; Speech acts; Thais; Americans

1. Introduction

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) is a branch of second language research "which studies how non-native speakers ... understand and carry out linguistic action in a target language, and how they acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge" (Kasper, 1992, p. 203). In other words, interlanguage pragmatics studies aim to investigate language learners' performance and acquisition of pragmatic competence in the second language. Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993) identify five research areas in interlanguage pragmatics including pragmatic comprehension, production of linguistic action, development of pragmatic competence, pragmatic transfer and communicative effect. Research in interlanguage pragmatics has shown that ESL learners' performance of speech acts is often different from that of native speakers because of "lack of knowledge in the target language sociocultural rules" (Kwon, 2003, p. 38). As a result, communication breakdown may occur. This kind of failure in communication is called "pragmatic failure" (Thomas, 1983, 1984).

According to Thomas (1984, p. 226), pragmatic failure is "the mismatch which arises from cross-culturally different assessments within the social parameters affecting linguistic choice, size, size of imposition, social distance between speaker and hearer, relative rights and obligations, etc." Pragmatic failure is considered more serious than linguistic failure. If a person commits a linguistic error, he is just considered to be a less proficient language learner. However, if he makes a pragmatic mistake, he might sound rude, disrespectful or impolite.

One speech act in which communication breakdowns can possibly occur is the speech of refusal. Refusal is an effort on the part of speakers to deny to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor (Chen, Ye and Zhang, 1995 cited in Gass & Houck, 1999). It is not an act initiated by the speaker but a response to a speaker's act such as an invitation, a suggestion, an offer or a request. Refusals are also recognized

as "face-threatening acts" (Beebe and Takahashi, 1989). It can be said that saying 'no' is not an easy task in any language since the speaker might risk offending his/her interlocutor. With non-native speakers, the situation is getting worse. For example, EFL learners are likely to encounter problems in performing the speech act of refusal appropriately in English. Improper performance might lead to serious consequences including misunderstanding and negative impressions in English native speakers.

Pragmatic transfer (ST) is one potential cause of inappropriate performance in a second or foreign language. It is the use of rules of speaker from the culture in L1 in speaking a second or foreign language. Kasper (1992) defined it as the "influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (p. 207).

The phenomenon of pragmatic transfer and their motivating factors have been investigated in several speech acts in different languages, such as English, Hebrew, Spanish, French, German, Danish, Arabic and Portuguese (Byon, 2004). Several cross-cultural studies proved that pragmatic transfer is evident in L2 speech performance. As for Asian languages, except for Japanese, the number of ILP studies is limited. To this date, there has been no single attempt to study pragmatic transfer in Thai speech acts of refusal.

Specifically, the research questions are:
1. What are the semantic formulae for the speech act of refusals used by native speakers of Thai and American English and Thai EFL learners?
2. Does pragmatic transfer exist in the semantic formulae used in refusals of Thai EFL learners?

2. Studies of pragmatic transfer in refusals

A number of studies have been conducted to present evidence of pragmatic transfer in refusals across cultures. Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) investigated pragmatic transfer by Japanese learners of English. The purpose of the study was to examine if refusal strategies to requests, invitations, offers and suggestions varied according to the social status of the interlocutors. Data were collected using DCT written in two languages, Japanese and English. The subjects were Japanese ESL students and American students. It was found that transfer from Japanese to English existed in the order, frequency and content of semantic formulae used in the refusals. For instance, the content of the excuses in both Japanese and English made by the Japanese leaners of English was far less specific than the content of the excuses in English made by the American students. Another significant finding is that the Japanese subjects were likely to make different responses to the interlocutors of higher and lower status in both Japanese and English. That is, the Japanese expressed regret or apology more frequently when refusing interlocutors of higher status than they did with those of lower status. However, this study had a few drawbacks, for example, some situations in the DCT were not appropriate for the Japanese subjects who were graduate students but were assigned unrealistic roles as refuser, such as the president of a company or an owner of a store.

He (1998) compared patterns of refusal strategy by Chinese native speakers to that of native speakers of American English and learners of Chinese whose native tongue was American English. The influence of social factors, including social status,

social relationships and types of eliciting acts on refusal strategies were investigated. Discourse Completion Tests (DCT) and Oral Role Play (ORP) were employed as research tools. The DCT data identified thirteen refusal strategies used by native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and American English, as well as Chinese learners. The three groups were different in the frequency with which different strategies were employed. Among the thirteen strategies, there were six major refusal strategies including explanation, alternative, direct refusal, regret, dissuasion and avoidance strategies. Data gained from the ORP confirmed the DCT findings.

In another study, Robinson (1992 cited in Takahashi, 1996) studied rejections in English used by twelve female Japanese ESL learners. Discourse completion tests, simultaneous verbal reports, and retrospective interviews were employed as research tools. It was found that both intermediate and advanced learners realized the differences between American and Japanese cultures in terms of appropriate refusal behaviors. Subjects with lower proficiency were likely to be influenced by their L1 refusal behaviors. On the contrary, those with higher proficiency adopted American English refusal strategies.

Recently, Al-Issa (2003) studied sociocultural transfer and its motivating factors within the realization patterns of the speech act of refusal by Jordanian EFL learners. EFL refusal data were collected using a discourse completion test (DCT), which was designed and further developed based on observational field notes data. The DCT was then followed by semi-structured interviews. Using semantic formulae as units of analysis, EFL refusal responses were compared with similar data elicited from native speakers of English responding in English and native speakers of Arabic responding in Arabic. The findings reveal three areas in which sociocultural transfer occurs in EFL learners' speech: choice of selecting semantic formulae, length of responses, and content of semantic formulae. Each was found to reflect cultural values transferred from Arabic to English. In addition, based on the interview data, it was found that learners' pride in L1, learners' perception of L2, and religion contributed to sociocultural transfer.

Kwon (2003) investigated the occurrences of pragmatic transfer in the refusals of Korean EFL learners with different levels of English proficiency. The subjects consisted of native speakers of Korean, native speakers of English and Korean EFL learners. Data were collected using a discourse completion test which elicited refusals of requests, invitations, offers and suggestions by interlocutors of different status. Using the refusal taxonomy of Takahashi and Beebe (1987) and Beebe et al. (1990), the data were categorized and compared to those of native speakers of Korean and English for any evidence of pragmatic transfer from Korean to English. Findings show that pragmatic transfer was observed in all groups of EFL learners. There was a positive correlation between pragmatic transfer and learners' proficiency. Beginning and intermediate learners were not as direct as native speakers of English but they sounded more direct than advanced learners and native speakers of Korean.

Eisenstein & Bodman (1993) studied a phenomenon of pragmatic transfer but from L2 to the native language. They focused on the expression of gratitude in American English. They stated that in several cultures, among family members, if one has performed a particular act which is a part of social roles, another person does not need to say "thank you" to express appreciation. In their study a Puerto Rican

who had lived in the United States for many years transferred sociopragmatic behavior from her L2 to her native language. That is, she thanked her father for helping her take care of her son, his grandchild. However, this had upset her father a lot. Bou Franch, (1998) considered this "an example of sociopragmatic transfer from the L2 to the L1, with a negative outcome for the speaker expressing gratitude" (p. 13).

3. Methodology
3.1 Subject
The subjects in this investigation were 120 graduate students. Forty Thai graduate students provided the native Thai data, 40 American graduate students provided the native English data, and the non-native data came from 40 Thai EFL graduate students. The subjects in the three groups were doing their master's or PhD degrees. The age of the subjects ranged from 22 to 40 years of age. Graduate students were selected because they were expected to have acquired the appropriate sociolinguistic rules that represent the 'norms' of their cultures. They were not required to take any special roles, except to be themselves in order to obtain realistic responses. For reliability of both set sets of L1 data, subjects who had spent an extended amount of time in the environment of the target language and culture were not included in the study. This is because cross-cultural communication studies have shown that in the L2 environment when proficient non-native speakers use their L1, their performance might not correspond to their native norms (Gumperz, 1982).

3.2 Discourse completion task
Data for this investigation was collected through a written role-play questionnaire called a 'Discourse Completion Task (DCT)'. DCT was developed based on interview data. Since the study is concerned with the graduate student population, the researcher interviewed graduate students for possible situations in which refusals were likely to occur. This resulted in twelve situations familiar to graduate students. These twelve situations were categorized into four types of eliciting acts: three invitations, three suggestions, three offers and three requests (see Table 1). In each type of eliciting acts, refusal was required to the interlocutors of high, equal or lower status. The questionnaire was written in two versions, English and Thai (see Appendices A and B). Both versions were developed to be equivalent in terms of format and content. The American graduate students and Thai EFL graduate students responded to the English DCT whereas the Thai version was employed with the Thai graduate students.

It is possible that the data collected by DCT might not correspond the data collected in real interaction in terms of actual wording, range of formulae and strategies, length of responses or number of conversational turns (Cohen, 1996). However, the DCT is advantageous in that the researcher can focus on the specific speech act of refusal and can control social factors in question including social status and distance between interlocutors. In addition, based on the study conducted by Beebe and Cummings (1996) which compared refusals in natural speech and in the DCT, it was found that written responses were valid. The content expressed by the DCT responses matched the content of actual spoken response. That is, the DCT can elicit sterotypical responses that reflect the values of the native culture. For all these reasons, DCT was chosen to collect data in the present study.

4

Table 1
Classification of DCT Questionnaire

Item	Eliciting acts	Status of the interlocutor		Situation
		Power*	Distance**	
1	Invitation	+	+	Invitation to a party
2	Invitation	=	+	See a movie
3	Invitation	-	-	Orientation program
4	Suggestion	+	+	Take statistics course
5	Suggestion	=	+	Improve research topic
6	Suggestion	-	+	Tutor a high school student
7	Offer	+	+	Teaching assistantship
8	Offer	=	-	Offer a ride
9	Offer	-	-	Newspaper subscription
10	Request	+	+	Mother's request
11	Request	=	-	Borrow a computer
12	Request	-	+	Interview

* + higher, =equal, -lower

** +familiar, -unfamiliar

3.3 Data analysis

Refusal strategies were analyzed based on the classifications developed by Beebe et. al. (1990), He (1998), and Iwata (1999) which are presented in Figure 1.

A. Direct strategies: Direct denial of compliance without reservation
    1. "No"
    2. Negative willingness/ability (e.g., "I can't"; "I won't"; "I don't think so")
B. Indirect strategies
    1. Regret: Utterances expressing regret (e.g., "I'm sorry"; "I feel terrible")
    2. Positive opinion/feeling or agreement (e.g., "That's a good idea"; "I wish I could help you but...")
    3. Excuse, reason and explanation: Explaining a reason for non-compliance
    4. Statement of alternative: Suggesting other alternatives or possibilities in order to maintain a positive relationship with the interlocutor (e.g., "I can do X instead of Y"; "Why don't you do X instead of Y?")
    5. Future acceptance: Using the promise to delay acceptance (e.g., "I'll do it next time"; "I promise I'll...")
    6. Statement of negative consequences (e.g., "It's your grade, not mine")
    7. Criticism (e.g., "That's a terrible idea!")
    8. Letting interlocutor off the hook (e.g., "Don't worry about me. You go and have fun")
    9. Self defense (e.g., "It is not because I don't want to listen to your opinion")
    10. Acceptance that functions as refusal: Unspecific or indefinite reply or lack of enthusiasm (e.g., "I'll do that when I have time")
    11. Avoidance: Avoiding direct response to proposed act
        11.1 Topic switch (e.g., "Now let's go back to Chapter One")
        11.2 Hedging (e.g., "Gee, I don't know"; "I'm not sure")
        11.3 Joke (e.g., "I like walking in the rain")
        11.4 Questioning (e.g., "How do you expect me to answer you?")
        11.5 Postponement (e.g., "I'll think about it")
        11.6 Pause filler: Use of fillers to fill a moment between the end of the interlocutor's utterance and the beginning of the speaker's refusal utterance. (e.g., "well.."; "oh..."; "wow")
    12. Gratitude (e.g., "Thank you for inviting me")
    13. *Asking for approval (e.g., "Is that possible?")
    14. * Sarcasm (e.g., "I forgot you almost got 'A' last term")

Figure 1: Classification of refusal strategies

For example, if a respondent refused an advisor's offer of teaching assistantship saying "I'd really love to teach but this term is hard to me. Thank you very much," this response would be coded as consisting of three units or strategies, each falling into a corresponding semantic formula (as shown in the brackets):
(1) I'd really love to teach
[Positive feeling]
(2) but this term is hard to me
[explanation]
(3) Thank you very much.
[Gratitude]

After the classification, the total number of semantic formulae used by each group in response to each eliciting act was then counted. Then the researcher compared the similarities and differences across three groups of subjects. Grammatical accuracy was not examined.

3.4 Reliability of coding

Four raters, two Thai native speakers and two American native speakers, were selected to code the DCT data independently. All were English teachers. Results showed that although coders reached a high level of consistency in categorizing the data (92% for the English data and 89% for the Thai data), there were discrepancies on how to classify certain responses. Therefore, any disagreement about coding were discussed among raters to raise the level of agreement.

4. Findings

Findings will be presented in four sections including refusals to invitations, refusals to suggestions, refusals to offers and refusals to requests. In each eliciting acts, top three frequently used semantic formulae will be presented according to each group of subjects. Examples of semantic formulae used are also provided. Those semantic formulae responded by Thai native speakers will be translated into English for understanding. The expressions produced by Thai EFL speakers were presented as it was without any grammatical correction.

4.1 Refusals to an invitation

A. Refusing an advisor's invitation to a party (+power, +distance)
Your advisor talks to you after class.

Advisor: I'm having a party for my advisees this weekend. Will you be
             able to come?
You: _____
Advisor: That's too bad. I was hoping you could come.

Table 2
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (80%)	1. Explanation (90%)	1. Explanation (75%)
2. Positive feeling (45%)	2. Negative ability (75%)	2. Negative ability (30%)
3. Negative ability (35%)	3. Regret (30%)	3. Positive feeling (25%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 3
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• I'd love to but I can't this weekend. • I'd love to, but I can't. I have to work. • I'd love to but I have a lot of stats homework due in the morning. • Oh, I'd love to, but I have to be out of town for the weekend. • I'd like to come but I've already made plans. Thank you for the invitation. Maybe some other time.	• I don't think I can. I'm not available this weekend. • I'm so sorry, sir. I'm going to be out of town this weekend. • I'm really sorry. I can't really go. I'm engaged. • I'm afraid I can't because there is a party at my house too.	• I'd really love to come but I have something important. • I'm afraid I can't join you because I have an appointment with John. • I would like to go but I have another plan to do. • I'd really love to go but I have something important to do this weekend. Maybe some other time.

The most frequently used strategy when refusing a familiar interlocutor of high status in all three groups was 'explanation'. The second most frequent strategies for Americans was 'positive feeling', such as "I'd love to" and "I'd like to come" whereas 'negative ability', such as, "I won't be able to" and "I can't" was the second

most frequent for Thais. 'Negative ability' and 'regret' were the third most frequent strategies for Americans and Thais respectively. Comparing the three groups, it was found that Thai EFL learners were similar to the other two groups. In particular, they used 'positive feeling' as one of the top three semantic formulae as the American group.

B. Refusing a friend's invitation to see a movie (=power, +distance)
You live in a dormitory. One evening your roommate invites you out.
Roommate: We are going to see a movie tonight. Would you like to come along?
You: _____
Roommate: That's too bad. Well then, maybe next time.

Table 4
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (90%) 2. No (45%) 3. Gratitude, Future acceptance (25%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2. Negative ability (55%) 3. No (25%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2. Positive feeling (35%) 3. Regret (20%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 5
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• Nah, I need to get on back. I was going to work on the project. • Mmm, no, you know I don't like movies too much. • No, thanks dude, maybe next time.	• I can't. Tonight I have to study. • No. I don't want to see a movie. • I guess not. I'm going to watch a TV program tonight. • I can't go. I'm so sleepy.	• I'd like to see a movie but I'm sick. • Umm...I'm sorry. I don't think I can make it. • Sorry. Tomorrow I have class early. • Sorry. I don't want to go to see a movie because it isn't interesting.

All three groups used 'explanation' the most when refusing a familiar interlocutor of equal status. The second most frequent strategy for Americans was 'no' whereas 'negative ability' was for Thais. The third most common strategy for Americans were 'gratitude' and 'future acceptance' whereas 'no' was for Thais. Unlike the American and the Thai groups, the Thai EFL group used 'positive feeling' (e.g. I'd like to see a movie) and 'regret' such as "I'm sorry" and "Sorry." Interestingly, one observation is that Thai EFL learners seemed to be more polite when they spoke English. Speaking Thai, they seemed to be more direct using direct strategies including 'no' and 'negative ability'.

C. Refusing a junior official's invitation to speak for an orientation program (-power, -distance)

A junior official from the International Office calls you.

Junior official: The International Office will hold an orientation program for international students this Thursday. The topic is about cross-cultural experience. So we would like to invite you to be a guest speaker.

You: _____

Junior official: I'm sorry to hear that. Maybe next time.

Table 6

Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (95%) 2. Gratitude (50%) 3. Regret (30%)	1. Explanation (90%) 2. Negative ability (45%) 3. Alternative (25%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2. Regret (35%) 3. Positive feeling (30%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 7

Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• Oh, thanks for the invitation, but I already have a previous engagement so I won't be able to attend. • Sorry, but I'm not prepared enough to address the group. Maybe next time. • Thanks, I'm honored but I am really too busy.	• I'm quite busy at this time. I might not have time to prepare for the presentation. • I don't think I can. I'm not good at public speaking. • I'm sorry. I'm already engaged with something that day.	• Sorry. I have an examination on this Thursday. • I'm so sorry. Actually I want to go there but I am not free that day. • I'd really love to help you but I have to be a speaker in another seminar. Maybe some other time.

The most frequently used strategy when refusing an unfamiliar person of lower status for all three groups was 'explanation', such as "It doesn't look like I'd have time to prepare a talk this week" or "I already have a commitment for this evening." 'Gratitude' is the second commonly used for Americans whereas the second most frequent strategy for Thais was 'negative ability'. The examples of 'gratitude' are "I'm honored you considered me" and "I'm flattered that you called." The third strategy frequently used by Thais was an 'alternative', such as "Why don't you ask Mr. X?" whereas 'regret' was the third strategy most commonly used by Americans. Interestingly, the Thai EFL group were more similar to the American group than the Thai group. That is, 'explanation' and 'regret' were two out of three frequently used semantic formulae.

4.2 Refusals to suggestions

A. Refusing an advisor's suggestion to study an advanced statistical course (+power, +distance)

You meet your advisor to plan for next semester's courses.

Advisor: Because your thesis is quantitative, I would suggest that you take an advanced statistical course next semester.

You: _____

Advisor: Okay. You know what's best for you.

Table 8
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL

1. Explanation (70%)
2. Alternative (50%)
3. Negative ability,
   Pause filler (30%)
	1. Explanation (90%)
	2. Alternative (40%)
	3. Negative ability (30%)
		1. Explanation (60%)
		2. Alternative (25%)
		3. Negative ability,
		   Gratitude (20%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 9
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• Well, I had planned to take other courses that semester. I'll take the stats after that. • Hmm..I had something else in mind. I was thinking I ought to take Professor X's class since it's only offered every other semester. And I thought I would pick up statistics over the summer. • I would rather not. I think I know enough to be able to do it.	• I can't because next term I have to register the course which is offered only in Term2. • I'm sorry I can't. I have three courses to take already. Four would be too much for me. • I have already taken the fundamental statistics. For the rest I can study it myself.	• I'm sorry. I don't think so with you. I think I should take 203512. I think it is more important than an advanced statistical course. I may take it later. • I think I can read it myself so I don't want to take this course. • Thank you for your suggestion but I plan to take Analytical Chemistry next semester. So I think should be after next term.

All three groups were alike in terms of three most frequently used semantic formulae when refusing familiar individuals of high status. These semantic formulae include 'explanation', 'statement of alternative' and 'negative ability'. For example, they said, "I think I know enough to be able to do it" and "I don't think I can fit it into my schedule" when giving an explanation. The examples of 'statement of alternative' include "I prefer to study statistics myself" and "I'd rather take that next semester." 'Pause filler' and 'gratitude' which are adjuncts to refusals were also used frequently by the American and the Thai EFL groups respectively.

B. Refusing a friend's suggestion to narrow a research topic (=power, +distance)
While working on a paper, you consult your friend who previously took the same
course. Your friend gives you some suggestions.

Friend:	Your topic is kind of vague. Why don't you narrow it down a little bit?
You:	_____
Friend:	Okay. Just an idea.

Table 10
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (60%)	1. Explanation (75%)	1. Explanation (65%)
2. Pause filler (25%)	2. No (15%)	2. Gratitude (25%)
3. Positive feeling (20%)	3. Positive feeling (10%)	3. Positive feeling (10%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal
strategy

Table 11
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• That would be nice if I had the time. • That's how I meant for it to be. • Oh, I'm tired of working on it. I'm just going to had it in and see what I get.	• I think the topic is ok. • No. I think it is appropriate. • No. If it's narrow, I won't be able to write 30 pages. • I don't think so. It is easy to search for related information for this topic.	• Thank you but I think it is suitable. • I think this topic is important. Why don't you study it? Then you know why I want to spend time on this. • Thank you for your suggestion. That's a good idea but I think it will be too narrow. • Yes, it's good ideas, but I prefer to do it this way.

'Explanation' was employed most by the three groups when responding to
acquaintances of equal status. For instance, they said, "I wanted to show how this
impacts a variety of areas rather than focuses on one aspect." The second most
commonly used semantic formula for Americans was 'pause filler' whereas Thais
used 'no' which is a direct strategy. All three groups used 'positive feeling', such as
"That might be a good idea", as the third most common strategy. Unlike the other
two groups, the Thai EFL learners also used 'gratitude' as the second most common
semantic formula.

C. Refusing a high school student's suggestion to skip the details (-power, +distance)
You are a college student tutoring a senior high school student. After one class, he talks to you.

Student: I already understood everything in the first chapters. You don't need to explain thoroughly. Why don't you skip the details?

You: _____

Student: Alright. No problem.

Table 12
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (70%)	1. Explanation (80%)	1. Explanation (70%)
2. Alternative (45%)	2. No (30%)	2. Positive feeling (10%)
3. Negative ability (20%)	3. Alternative (15%)	3. Regret (5%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 13
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• In order to understand the rest of it, I must go over the first chapters. • Well, actually it's very important that we review it anyway. That way, you can show me how much you know, too! • I'll skip the details when your class performance demonstrates the appropriate level of understanding.	• No. Teaching in details in the first chapters is necessary for understanding the other chapters. • Just review a little bit more, okay? • No. These chapters are important.	• Sorry. I want to make sure that you really understand the first chapter. • I'm afraid I have to explain it quite thoroughly to make sure that you understand everything before we move on. • I'm glad that you understood those chapters. However, I want to make sure you can understand it thoroughly.

When refusing to a familiar person of lower status, all three groups used 'explanation' as the most frequent strategy. For example, they said, "I really need to know how well you understood in order to continue" and "It's my responsibility to make sure you understand the details." The second most commonly used strategy for Americans was 'alternative' such as "Let me ask you some questions to see how much you understand" and "Why don't you tell me the details instead? whereas Thais used 'no'. The third most commonly used strategy for Thais was 'alternative' whereas 'negative ability' was the third most common strategies for Americans. Unlike the other two groups, the Thai EFL learners adopted 'positive feeling' and 'regret' but with low percentages.

4.3 Refusals to offers

A. Refusing an advisor's offer of teaching assistantship (+power, +distance)

Today your advisor calls you into his office.

Advisor: Our Department needs to hire a teaching assistant this term. Are you interested in taking the job?

You: _____

Advisor: Well then. Maybe next time.

Table 14

Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (95%) 2. Gratitude (30%) 3. Negative ability, Positive feeling (25%)	1. Explanation (90%) 2. Negative ability, positive feeling (35%) 3. Alternative (10%)	1. Explanation (70%) 2. Gratitude (35%) 3. Positive feeling (20%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 15

Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• I'm afraid I have too much to do • It sounds like a great opportunity, but I'm going to have to pass it up. I am just too busy. • No, thanks. I have a number of other things I want to focus on. • I would really like to but I'm really busy these days and I wouldn't be able to give you 100%.	• I don't think I can. I think that I won't make a good teacher. • Yes, but I'm busy with studying this term. I'll ask my friends to see if they are interested. • Probably not. I don't think I am capable enough.	• That's very kind of you but this term is hard to me. Thank you. • Thank you but I can't take the job because I study very hard this term. • I'd really love to teach but I still have to take some coursework. • It's interesting. However, this semester the course work is quite hard for me. I'm afraid I can't spend time on teaching.

The most commonly used strategy when refusing a familiar interlocutor of high status was 'explanation' for all three groups. The examples of 'explanation' by Americans were "I don't really like to teach" and "I'm a little busy right now." The examples by Thais were "I'm taking many courses this semester" and "I haven't got enough ability and knowledge." As the second most commonly used strategies, Americans used 'gratitude', such as "I appreciate the offer" and "I'm honored that you'd ask me" whereas Thais employed 'negative ability', such as "I can't," "I'm unable to" and 'positive feeling', such as "I'd be delighted." The third strategy most commonly used by Thais was 'alternative' whereas 'negative ability' and 'positive feeling' were the third most used strategy for Americans. The examples of 'positive

feeling' were "It sounds like a great opportunity" and "I'd love to take this job." Like the American group, EFL subjects employed 'explanation', 'gratitude' and 'positive feeling' as the top three frequently used semantic formulae.

B. Refusing a neighbor's offer for a ride (=power, -distance)
You are walking down the street and it starts raining hard. A couple who live nearby stop the car and offer you a ride.

Woman: Do you need a ride?
You: _____
Woman: Okay. Bye.

Table 16
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. No (85%) 2. Gratitude (80%) 3. Explanation (65%)	1. Explanation (80%) 2. Gratitude (75%) 3. No (35%)	1. Gratitude (70%) 2. Explanation (65%) 3. No (40%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 17
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• No. Thank you you're very kind. • No. Thank you. I don't have far to go and I will be okay. • No. Thanks. I'm almost there.	• Thank you. But I'm almost there. • No. Thank you. • No. I'm almost home. • Thank you. My house is just over there.	• Thank you but I don't go to the apartment yet. • No. Thanks. I will stop to buy something at that store first. • Thank you very much but I have something to do before going home.

When refusing an unfamiliar person of equal status, all three groups employed the same first three semantic formulae, namely 'explanation', 'gratitude' and 'No', but with different frequencies. The examples of 'explanation' by Thais were "I'm almost home" and I'm not going far." The explanations used by Americans were quite similar to those of Thais, such as "I just have a short distance to go" and "I haven't got far to walk." 'Gratitude' is the most frequently used strategy by the EFL group but the second most for both American and Thai groups. Interestingly, all three groups used a direct strategy 'No', which is a direct semantic formula.

C. Refusing a newspaper agent's offer of subscription (-power, -distance)
The phone rings at home.

Agent: We have a special offer from (newspaper's name). You will get a 20% discount off the regular price. Are you interested in being a new subscriber?

You: _____

Agent: Alright. Thanks anyway.

Table 18
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. No (85%)	1. Explanation (60%)	1. No (50%)
2. Gratitude (75%)	2. No (55%)	2. Gratitude (45%)
3. Negative ability, Explanation (35%)	3. Gratitude (30%)	3. Explanation (40%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 19
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• No, I'm not interested in your paper. I don't like the news coverage. • Thank you but I'm not interested. • No. Thanks for calling. • No, I'm not interested.	• No, I've already subscribed another newspaper. • No. I'm not interested. • No. Thank you.	• No. Thank you. • No. Thank you. My office has already subscribed it. • Sorry. I'm not interested. Thank you.

Refusing unfamiliar interlocutors of low status, all groups employed the same first three strategies but in different order. Americans and the EFL group used 'no' the most whereas Thais used 'explanation'. Thais' expressions of 'explanation' were, for example, "I have already subscribed to X" and "I haven't got time to read a newspaper." 'No' was the second most common strategy for Thais whereas 'gratitude' was the second most common for Americans and the Thai EFL group. Americans used 'negative ability' and explanation' as the third most common semantic formulae. Expressions of 'explanation' by Americans included "I read the Daily Illini at work" and "The department gets a copy already." Again, the use of direct semantic formulae including 'No' and 'negative ability' and short responses were observed in this eliciting act across the three groups.

4.4 Refusals to requests

A. Refusing a mother's request (+power, +distance)

Your (host) mother says to you.

Mother:	I wonder if you could go to the bank and mail this package at the post office for me tomorrow.
You:	_____
Mother:	Never mind. I'll go there myself.

Table 20

Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (80%) 2. Alternative (55%) 3. Regret (40%)	1. Explanation (90%) 2. Alternative (50%) 3. Negative ability (15%)	1. Explanation (60%) 2. Regret (45%) 3. Negative ability, Alternative, Positive feeling (10%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 21

Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• I'm sorry Mom, but I can't. I have to be at the library tomorrow. • Oh, I can't. I have that doctor's appointment. Can't Carrie (sister) do that for you? • Oh, Mom! I have so much to do tomorrow. Can't Dad do that for you?	• No, I can't. I have an appointment with my classmates to do a term project. • Can you wait? I have a lot of assignments to do tomorrow. • Can (sister) do that for you? I have an appointment with my friend tomorrow.	• Sorry. I'll be very busy tomorrow. • I'm sorry Mom. I cannot do that for you because I have to study all day long. • I'd really love to but I have something important to do. Sorry. • Sorry, Mom. Now I'm very busy. Can you wait until this weekend?

Refusing a familiar person of high status, Thais, American, and EFL learners used 'explanation' as the most frequent strategy. For example, they said, "I have a lot to do tomorrow" and "I'm busy tomorrow." Both Thais and Americans also used 'alternative' as the second most common strategy. The examples of 'alternative' included "You can take my car" and "Can't Dad do that for you?" However, the third most frequent strategy used by Thais was 'negative ability', such as "I can't" and "I'm unable to", whereas 'regret' was the third most commonly used by Americans. Interestingly, as for the Thai EFL group, they were more like the American native speakers than the Thai native speakers in that 'regret' was one of their semantic formulae employed most.

16

B. Refusing a graduate student's request to use a computer (=power, -distance)
You are in a computer room working on an assignment which is due tomorrow morning. It is late at night and you still have much to do. The computer room is very crowded and there are students waiting to use the computers. One of the students approaches you.

Student: Excuse me. Do you think you could let me use the computer for twenty minutes?

You: _____

Student: That's okay.

Table 22

Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (90%) 2. Regret (55%) 3. Alternative (25%)	1. Explanation (75%) 2. Regret (45%) 3. Negative ability, Alternative (35%)	1. Regret (60%) 2. Explanation (55%) 3. Negative ability (25%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 23

Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• I'm sorry but I need to be glued to this computer until tomorrow morning. I have so much left to do. • I'm sorry I still have a lot to finish before tomorrow. Perhaps someone else does not have such a tight deadline. • I'm really behind but I'll let you know when I'm done if you still need a computer.	• I have to turn in this report tomorrow. I'm sorry. • I can't. I have to finish typing this too. • I can't. Sorry. Can you come back in half an hour? • I'm sorry. I'm in a hurry too.	• Oh I'm sorry. I have a lot of work to do and I'm afraid I can't finish it in time. • Sorry. I have many things to do tonight. Maybe you can ask somebody. • I'm sorry because my assignment is not finished yet and it is due tomorrow morning.

Both Thais and Americans employed 'explanation' as the most common strategy to refuse an unfamiliar interlocutor of equal status. For example, they said, "I've got too much to get done right now" and "I've got to hand in this tomorrow morning and I still have too much to do." The second most commonly used strategy for Americans and Thais was 'regret'. The third most frequently used strategies by Thais were 'negative ability' and 'alternative', whereas 'alternative' was the third one for Americans. The examples of 'alternative' were "Maybe you could ask someone else" and "Have you tried the computer in FLB?" Pragmatic transfer was observed here. That is, the Thai EFL group employed 'negative ability' which is one of the direct

refusal strategies as the Thai native speakers whereas the American group hardly used this strategy.

C. Refusing a junior member's request to interview (-power, +distance)
During lunch time at the university, a junior member in your department asks you for a favor.

Junior member: I am doing a project that requires me to interview subjects. Could I interview you for 15 minutes?
You: _____
Junior member: That's too bad. Thanks anyway.

Table 24
Top Three Frequently Used Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
1. Explanation (95%)	1. Explanation (95%)	1. Explanation (70%)
2. Regret (45%)	2. Regret (45%)	2. Regret (50%)
3. Positive feeling (25%)	3. Future acceptance (35%)	3. Future acceptance (30%)

*The percentage of respondents in the given group who used a particular refusal strategy

Table 25
Examples of Semantic Formulae

American	Thai	Thai EFL
• I'm terribly sorry but I don't have a minute. • I'm sorry but I really don't have the time right now. • I'd really like to help you out but I'm afraid I'm really strapped for time right now and can't really afford to. • Sorry I'm late for an appointment.	• I'm sorry. I have an appointment. • I can't. I'm quite busy. I will next time. • Can it be next time? I'm quite busy now.	• Sorry. Now I don't have enough time. Maybe next time. • Sorry. I have to go to the library now. • I'm sorry. I'm in a hurry. I need to see my professor right after lunch. • Sorry. I have to go to a lecture in 10 minutes.

The first and second most frequently used semantic formulae when refusing a familiar interlocutor of lower status for all three group were 'explanation' and 'regret'. The examples of 'explanation' were "I just don't have time" and "I'm on my way to class." The third most commonly used one for Americans was 'positive feeling' including "I'd really like to help you out" and "I wish I could help you." Here again pragmatic transfer was found. That is, while no American participants used 'future acceptance', it was employed by both the Thai native speakers and the Thai EFL learners.

5. Choice of semantic formulae

5.1 'No'

In general, Thais and Americans in the present study hardly said, 'no' especially to a person of higher status. The manner of avoiding saying 'no' is probably due to the fact that both Thais and Americans consider 'face' of the interlocutor of the most importance in an interaction. They do not want to hurt people's feelings or insult people by saying 'no'. For Americans, the percentages of using 'no' in most situations were not high, except in the situations in which the interlocutors were of equal status or of lower status, such as a friend's invitation to see a movie, a neighbor's offer for a ride, and a newsagent's offer of newspaper subscription.

As for Thai native speakers, they employed 'no' in more situations than did the Americans. Similar to the Americans, Thais tended to use 'no' when refusing individuals of equal or lower status as well, namely in refusing a friend's invitation to see a movie, a friend's suggestion to narrow a research topic, a neighbor's offer for a ride, a newsagent's offer of newspaper subscription, and a high school student's suggestion. Based on a follow-up interview, both Americans and Thai native speakers had similar opinions concerning the use of 'no'. That is, it was appropriate to say 'no' directly to friends because friends were intimate persons. On the other hand, a stranger and a newspaper agent were socially distant; therefore, directness was given the first priority. In the case of a high school student, social status is an important factor. That is, in most interpersonal communication in Thai society, a person of higher status is likely to be assertive and expressive whereas a person of lower status tends to be passive. Thus, a tutor who was faced with his or her student's suggestion would think that his or her authority was being challenged and would become defensive and authoritative.

5.2 'Negative ability'

'Negative ability', the other type of direct strategies was used in many situations. Americans used 'negative ability' in refusing an advisor's invitation to a party, an advisor's suggestion to study an advanced statistical course, a high school student's suggestion to skip the details, an advisor's offer of teaching assistantship, a newspaper agent's offer. Among Thais, 'negative ability' was used in refusing an advisor's invitation to a party, a friend's invitation to see a movie, a junior official's invitation to speak, an advisor's suggestion to study an advanced statistical course, an advisor's offer of teaching assistantship, a mother's request, a graduate student's request to use a computer. Although 'negative ability' including expressions such as "I can't", "I don't think I can" carries the degree of directness, in the respondents' opinions, it is less direct than 'no'. They used 'negative ability' because they wanted to be direct but polite.

5.3 'Explanation'

'Explanation' was the most frequently used strategy by native speakers of Thai and American English, as in Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford (1991, 1992). However, unlike the Japanese, who gave explanations which were more vague than those given by Americans (Beebe et al, 1990), and the Koreans who gave unspecific times or places in their explanations (Inook, 1992), most Thais in the present study gave clear and acceptable explanations. Common explanations given by Thais were, "My

19

mother and I plan to visit my grandmother this weekend" or "My family and I will be out of town this weekend" when refusing the professor's invitation to a party. Similarly, Americans gave specific details in their explanation, such as, "I have a lot of stats homework due in the morning" when refusing a request to use a computer or "I need to work on the new set of experiments we just set up yesterday" when refusing the mother's request.

However, in the EFL group, it was found that responses given by EFL learners with high and low English proficiency were different. That is, EFL learners with high English proficiency were more specific than low language learners when giving explanation. For example, advanced EFL learners gave explanation, such as "Oh, that's a pity because I have to go to my hometown to visit my father. He's in the hospital." or "Oh, I'm sorry. I can't. I have an appointment with the dentist." when refusing the advisor's invitation to a party. On the contrary, in refusing a junior member's request to interview, the low language learners responded, "Sorry. This Thursday I'm not free." or "I think I can do it" in refusing a friend's suggestion to narrow a research topic.

5.4 'Gratitude'
    Concerning the use of 'gratitude' which is one type of indirect strategies, Nelson, Al Batal & El Bakary (2002) found that English participants in their study used 'gratitude' much more frequently than did the Arabic subjects in refusing invitations, offer, and suggestions. Likewise the present study found that the Americans adopted 'gratitude' in more situations than did the Thai native speakers. The frequent use of 'gratitude' was observed among the Americans in invitations by equals and a lower status person and all cases of offers. The infrequent use of 'gratitude' by the native speakers of Thai in the present study accorded well with what was found about an Puerto Rican woman in Eisenstein and Bodman's study (1993). Based on the interview, although Thais feel sorry or grateful, they hardly express their apology or appreciation verbally with family members or intimates. They feel awkward saying it in L1. However, they are more comfortable thanking or apologizing verbally when speaking English. Interestingly, it was found that 'gratitude' was used a lot by the Americans in refusing a neighbor's offer for a ride and a newspaper agent's offer of subscription. It is possible that 'gratitude' is used here to show appreciation and to close the conversation as well.

Surprisingly, the Thai EFL learners in the present study fell between the other two groups. They tended to use 'gratitude' much more frequently than did the Thai native speakers but less than the American groups. To be specific, 'gratitude' was found in the situations of suggestions by equals and a higher status person and all cases of offers. According to the follow-up interview, the Thai EFL learners were aware that they must be polite when speaking English. They had been taught that saying "Thank you" when someone has done something for you or offer you something is a must. However, when speaking with a Thai person, they can show their gratefulness by smiling or with facial expressions. This phenomenon of being more polite in L2 was also found in Bou Franch's study (1998). That is, Spanish learners in the UK are often considered impolite due to their infrequent use of "sorry" and 'please." However, when they go back to Spain, they are considered too polite or unnaturally polite because they say "sorry" or "please" in Spanish too frequently.

5.5 Positive feeling & Regret

Beebe et al. (1990) found that both Japanese learners of English and native speakers of Japanese were likely to make different responses to higher versus lower status interlocutors whereas native speakers of English were sensitive to status equals versus status unequals (higher and lower). However, Thai and American native speakers in the present study seemed to be sensitive to status unequals (higher and lower). They adopted more mitigating formulae dealing with higher or lower status persons than with status equals. For instance, they stated positive feelings or apologized when refusing an invitation by a person of higher or lower status. Dealing with a person of equal status, both native speakers of English and Thai used more direct formulae including 'no' and 'negative ability'.

According to Liao and Bresnahan (1996), native speakers of English in their study of cross-cultural refusals employed 'positive feeling' such as "I'd love to but..." much more frequently than did the native speakers of Mandarin. It is explained that Chinese people do not state positive opinions first if they want to refuse because they are afraid that if they do, they will be forced to comply. Comparing the use of 'positive feeling' and 'regret' by Thai native speakers, it was found that Thais were likely to use 'regret' rather than 'positive feeling' when refusing invitation whereas Americans seemed to use 'positive feeling'. Thai native speakers, in the present study, perceived refusals to a higher status person or a lower status person with social distance to be face-threatening. In their opinion, 'regret' would indicate their feeling guilty of being unable to comply with the interlocutors' invitations. As a result, they used 'regret' for making the interlocutor lose 'face'.

Surprisingly, the EFL learners stated positive feeling and apologized more than native speakers of English and Thais such as in the situations of a friend's invitation and a junior official's invitation. This is probably because they want to show their politeness and think that stating positive feeling or apologizing is pragmatically appropriate so they overgeneralize their use in the target language. Overuse of statement of positive feeling may be related to classroom instruction. Patterns such as 'I'd really love to but..." or 'That's a good idea but..." are often introduced as common expressions to begin a negative response to invitation.

6. Conclusion
6.1 Pedagogical implications

Inferred from the differences between the native speakers of Thai and American English, pragmatic failure can occur in an interaction between individuals from the two groups. For example, the findings indicated that native speakers of Thai expressed 'gratitude' less frequently than did native speakers of American English when refusing invitations by equals and lower status persons and when refusing all situations of offer. Following the Thai language norm, EFL learners might risk committing pragmatic failure and be considered rude although this was not found in the EFL group in the present study because most EFL subjects were graduate students with fair to high level of English proficiency.

The present study has some pedagogical implications. Foreign language teachers should be aware that fluency in a language involves both a mastery of linguistic knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Even language learners with a fairly

advanced level of proficiency can produce pragmatic failures (Kwon, 2003). Explicit teaching of L2 pragmatics in the language classroom might be necessary. Language teachers should adopt teaching materials or language activities focused on conscious raising. Language learners should be taught to be aware of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic behavior (Kasper, 2001) and that cross-cultural pragmatic differences exist so that they know what native speakers mean to say. However, mastering intercultural competence the learners are not necessarily assimilated into the target culture (Pohl, 2004). As Liddicoat (2000) said, language learners should understand what messages native speakers mean to convey though they do not want to imitate native speakers' language behavior.

6.2 Suggestions for further studies

Before generalizing the findings of the study, we must be aware of certain limitations. First, the present study used DCT as a research tool. Data obtained from a written role play questionnaire might yield data different from naturally occurring data. Second, the subjects representing Thai and American native speakers and Thai EFL learners were graduate students with fair to good English proficiency. This might limit the generalization of the results to other groups of Thai and American native speakers. As a result, future research in pragmatic transfer should take individual's level of English proficiency into consideration in order to better understand the occurrence of pragmatic transfer. In addition, future studies may employ other research tools such as role play or simulation to support the use of Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Finally, to study pragmatic transfer by EFL learners, a longitudinal approach might be applied for better understanding of the development of pragmatic competence.

References

Al-Issa, A. (2003). Sociocultural transfer in L2 speech behaviors: evidence and motivating factors. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 27, 581-601.

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, B.S. (1991). Saying "No" in English: Native and nonnative rejection [Monograph]. Pragmatics and Language Learning, 2, 41-58.

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, B.S. (1992). Refining the DCT: Comparing open questionnaires and dialogue completion tasks. Paper presented to the Sixth International Conference on Pragmatics and Language Learning.

Beebe, L., & Cummings, M. (1996). Natural speech act data versus written questionnaire data: How data collection method affects speech act performance. In S. Gass, & J. Neu (Eds.), Speech acts across cultures: Challenges to communication in a second language (pp.65-86). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Beebe, L. & Takahashi, T. (1989). Sociolinguistic variation in face-threatening speech acts: Chastisement and disagreement. In M. Eisenstein (Ed.), the dynamic interlanguage: Empirical studies in second language variation (pp.199-218). New York: Plenum.

Beebe, L., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In R. C. Scarcella, E. Anderson, & S. D. Krashen (Eds.), Developing communicative competence in a second language (pp.55-73). New York: Newbury.

Bou Franch, P. (1998). On pragmatic transfer. Studies in English Language and Linguistics, 0, 5-20.

Byon, A.S. (2004). Sociopragmatic analysis of Korean requests: Pedagogical settings. Journal of Pragmatics, 36, 1673-1704.

Cohen, A. D. (1996). Speech acts. In S. McKay & N. Hornberger (Eds.), Sociolinguistics and language teaching (pp. 383-420). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Eisenstein, M. & Bodman, J.W. (1993). Expressing gratitude in American English. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka. (Eds.), Interlanguage pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gass, S. M. & Houck, N. (1999). Interlanguage refusals. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Gumperz, J. (1982). Discourse strategies. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

He, W. (1998). Issues in second language teaching: Pragmatics and discourse analysis in teaching Chinese as a second language. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Clark University.

Inook, L. (1992). The Art of refusal: Comparison of Korean and American cultures. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University.

Iwata, M. (1999). Implying "No" in Japanese: Sociolinguistic analysis of Japanese refusals. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Victoria, Victoria.

Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. Second Language Research, 8, 203-231.

Kasper, G. (2001). Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. Applied Linguistics, 22, 502-530.

Kasper, G. & Blum-Kulka, S. (1993). (eds) Interlanguage pragmatics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kwon, J. (2003). Pragmatic transfer and proficiency in refusals of Korean EFL learners. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University.

Liddicoat, A.J. (2000). Everyday speech as culture: implications for language teaching. In A. Liddicoat & C. Crozet (Eds.), Teaching languages, teaching cultures (pp.51-63). Melbourne: Applied Linguistics Association of Australia.

Liao, C. & Bresnahan, M. (1996). A Contrastic pragmatic study on American English and Mandarin refusal strategies. Language Sciences, 18, 703-727.

Nelson, G.L., Al Batal, M., & El Bakary, W. (2002). Directness vs. indirectness: Egyptian Arabic and US English communication style. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 26, 39-57.

Pohl, G. (2004). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure and implications for language teaching. Second Language Learning & Teaching, 4. Retrieved January 10, 2006. from http://www.usq.edu.au/opacs/sllt/.

Takahashi, S. (1996). Pragmatic transferability. Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18, 189-223.

Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. Applied Linguistics, 4, 91-112.

Thomas, J. (1984). Cross-cultural discourse as 'unequal encounter': Towards a pragmatic analysis. Applied Linguistics, 5, 226-235.

The Author

Anchalee Wannaruk is an Assistant Professor at Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhonratchasima, Thailand. She received a B.Ed. with honors from Chulalongkorn University, an M.A. in Applied Linguistics (Mahidol University), and a Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). Currently she is the coordinator of the PhD program in English Language Studies at Suranaree University of Technology. Her main interests include spoken discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

Acknowledgements

THE CENTER FOR LIBRARY RESOURCES AND EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

SURANAREE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY