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More than a Language Itself: The Speech Act of Refusal in Constructed Languages

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Abstract

This paper relies on the widely accepted concept that the speech act of refusal, which is intrinsically face-threatening and sometimes subtle to understand, requires pragmatic competence and cultural

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understanding. In light of this, the present study investigates the speech act of refusal in both natural and constructed languages, proposing that the speech act of refusal in constructed languages is a much more complex phenomenon, influenced by factors beyond language itself. This paper then demonstrates that the refusal strategies in two constructed languages, Esperanto and Unish, are similar to those in natural languages in accordance with linguistic typology; indirect refusals are more frequently used than direct ones. However, it is found that Esperanto interlocutors employ more direct strategies than Unish interlocutors, reflecting the low-context nature of Esperanto culture and the common values shared by Esperanto speakers.

Keywords: language equality, constructed language, high-context culture vs. low-context culture, speech act, refusal, directness vs. indirectness

1. Introduction

Politeness theory, communication theories of culture categorization (i.e., such as high context vs. low context cultures and individualism vs. collectivism), and the speech act of refusal are closely connected in the study of pragmatics. Politeness theory, which originated from Grice's (1975) CP¹ and was further developed by scholars like Lakoff (1977), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987), provides a framework for analyzing how speakers communicate to maintain interpersonal relationships and social harmony.

Cultural dimensions, as proposed by Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1980), offer valuable insights into how communication styles vary across

¹ The following abbreviations are used in this paper: CP (cooperative principle), EFL (English as a foreign language), OBJ (object), PL (plural), SG (singular), SUB (subject).

societies. The distinctions between individualism versus collectivism along with the continuum of high- and low-context cultures, significantly influence the expression and perception of politeness. In high-context, collectivistic cultures, indirectness and subtlety are often preferred to preserve group harmony, while in low-context, individualistic cultures, directness and explicit communication tend to be prioritized.

These theories are reflected in the speech act of refusal, which is intrinsically face-threatening and challenging to manage. Refusals require a substantial degree of culture-specific knowledge and a high level of pragmatic competence to maintain interpersonal relationships and social harmony. It is important for speakers of constructed languages with different native languages and cultures to cope with these differences for improved communication. Therefore, it may be interesting to investigate how the speech act of refusal is utilized in the context of intercultural communication. Along with this, the present paper will compare refusal strategies in constructed languages with those in natural languages, focusing on politeness theory, communication theory of culture categorization, and the speech act of refusal.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the preliminary remarks on politeness theory, communication theories of culture categorization, and the speech act of refusal, which are closely associated. Within the framework of these theories, Section 3 investigates how natural languages and constructed languages employ the speech act of refusal. Finally, Section 4 offers a conclusion and summary of this research.

2. Preliminary Background

2.1. Politeness Theory

Politeness theory originates with the foundational work of Grice (1975), who introduces the CP, which defines the norms of general conversation. Under this principle, specific ways of cooperative behavior are outlined through maxims of conversation: quantity, quality, relation, and manner. Grice's (1975) CP is developed based on the assumption that the principles underlying face-to-face interactions are universal.

Inspired by Grice's (1975) CP, Lakoff (1977) proposes incorporating a politeness principle into Grice's framework to address the apparent divergence of polite language from CP. She suggests that the maxims of CP should be subordinate to those of the politeness principle, recognizing polite language as a form of cooperative behavior (Xafizovna 2022).

Lakoff defines politeness as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange" (Lakoff 1990: 34).

The most influential development in politeness theory was introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987). They propose the concept of "face," building on Goffman's (1967) concepts of face and face-saving. Brown and Levinson (1987) define "face" as an individual's public self-image that needs to be maintained during interactions. They distinguish between negative face (the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition) and positive face (the desire to be liked and admired). Face-threatening acts are actions that undermine the hearer's self-esteem and sense of respect. Brown and Levinson (1987)

assert that politeness strategies are formulated to save the “face” of the hearer and specifically developed to address and mitigate face-threatening acts. These strategies include bald on-record (no attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer’s face), positive politeness (attempts to reduce the threat to the hearer’s positive face), negative politeness (attempts to mitigate the threat to the hearer’s negative face), and off-record (indirect communication).

Leech (1983) introduces the politeness principle to complement Grice’s (1975) CP. He argues that the CP alone is not sufficient for explaining why individuals often do not observe the maxims of conversation. Leech’s core model of the politeness principle is a cost-benefit scale concerning both the speaker and the hearer. Politeness entails reducing the cost and increasing the benefit for both parties involved. Leech’s principle is designed to maintain social harmony and avoid conflict through six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Included in the idea of the politeness principle are the concepts of relative politeness and absolute politeness, which help to explain how politeness is perceived and practiced in different social contexts. Relative politeness is context-dependent and varies according to situational factors, while absolute politeness is generally recognized as inherently polite across different contexts and cultures.

Post-modern scholars have critiqued the universal applicability of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model, arguing that politeness is highly context-dependent and culturally variable. Watts (1989) argues that the concept of polite verbal behavior should be understood within the broader context of political verbal behavior, which is contextually appropriate and expected in the given social context.

Watts (2003) introduces a discursive approach to politeness, focusing on how it is constructed in discourse. He highlights the

adaptable nature of politeness, emphasizing its variability and the necessity of negotiation within interactions. Watts asserts that politeness is not a universally fixed concept but varies depending on cultural and contextual factors.

Leech (2007, 2014) revisits his ideas on politeness in later works, acknowledging the criticisms of universalism and emphasizing the importance of cultural differences. Leech (2014) highlights the variability of politeness strategies across cultures, recognizing that what is considered polite in one context may be seen as impolite in another. Leech argues that politeness is highly context-dependent, and that cultural norms play a significant role in determining what constitutes polite or impolite behavior.

Politeness theory has developed from early universal models to frameworks that account for cultural, contextual, and individual variations in communication.

2.2. High-Context Culture vs. Low-Context Culture and Individualism vs. Collectivism

Politeness is closely intertwined with the concepts of high-context versus low-context cultures and individualism versus collectivism, which significantly influence communication behaviors and norms. Works by Hall and Hofstede provide important frameworks for understanding these cultural dimensions and their influence on politeness.

Hall (1959), defines culture as the way of life of a group of people, including their acquired behaviors, attitudes, and material things. It often functions on a subconscious level, serving as an unseen influence that shapes our thoughts. Within the framework of intercultural communication, Hall (1976) discusses the concepts of high-context and low-context cultures, emphasizing the significant influence of

context in determining how people behave and communicate. In high-context cultures, communication heavily depends on the surrounding context, with unspoken elements often being more important than the actual words used. As a result, interactions tend to be more implicit, indirect, and rely less on verbal expression. Conversely, low-context cultures place greater emphasis on the explicit content of verbal messages, with most information conveyed directly through words. In these cultures, what is spoken is more important than what is implied, leading to a less implicit style of communication.

At the high end of the continuum are Korea, China, Japan, and Arabic countries, while at the low end of the continuum are United States, Germany, and Scandinavian countries.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory further elaborates on cultural differences, particularly through dimensions such as individualism versus collectivism, which are related to notions of politeness.

Hofstede (1980) introduces the concept of individualism versus collectivism a key cultural dimension. He explains that individualistic cultures prioritize personal autonomy, individual rights, and direct communication. In these cultures, politeness is often associated with clarity and explicitness, which aligns with low-context communication styles where most information is conveyed through words rather than context. Conversely, in collectivistic cultures, group harmony and social cohesion are prioritized. Politeness in these cultures is characterized by indirect communication and strong dependence on context, reflecting the high-context nature of these societies, where much of the meaning is inferred from the situation and relationships rather than direct speech.

The theories of Hall and Hofstede provide an interesting framework for understanding how cultural dimensions influence communication styles, which can be related to different concepts of politeness.

Individualistic, low-context cultures tend to value directness and clarity, meaning politeness often involves being direct and unambiguous. This corresponds with the cultural emphasis on individual rights and personal expression. Collectivistic, high-context cultures, on the other hand, often emphasize the importance of group harmony and social cohesion. In these cultures, politeness is more likely to involve indirect communication, relying on context, non-verbal cues, and an understanding of shared norms to convey meaning without causing discomfort or offense.

2.3. The Speech Act of Refusal

The speech act of refusal has attracted numerous scholars as a subject of study due to its complex nature and the delicate social dynamics it involves. Refusal is a speech act that responds to another person's action, such as a request, invitation, offer, or suggestion, rather than being initiated by the speaker. Since refusals generally serve as the second part of a conversational exchange, the refuser has limited opportunity for planning. This, combined with the wide range of possible responses, can make refusals more complex than many other speech acts (Gass & Houck 1999).

A refusal is generally considered an act by which a speaker "denies to engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor" (Chen et al. 1995: 121) and is a type of undesired response (Felix-Brasdefer 2009). Thus, the speech act of refusal is inherently face-threatening both to the speaker and the hearer (Brown & Levinson 1987), meaning it has the potential to damage interpersonal relationships if not managed carefully (Kwon 2004). To mitigate the risk of threatening face, speakers from different languages employ various strategies to prevent offense (Lyu & Tak 2018).

Moreover, refusals are influenced by various social factors,

including age, gender, education level, social distance, and power (Fraser 1990, Smith 1998), and their form and content can vary depending on the eliciting speech act (Lyuh 1992, Keshavarz et al. 2006).

Eslami (2010) asserts that appropriate refusal behavior can differ between cultures, as speakers rely on their deeply ingrained cultural values when performing complicated and potentially face-threatening speech acts such as refusals. Therefore, appropriate comprehension and execution of refusals require an understanding of other cultures and a high level of pragmatic competence.

3. Discussion and Implication

3.1. Speech Act of Refusal in Natural Languages

Numerous scholars, including Beebe et al. (1990), Lyuh (1992), Liao and Bresnahan (1996), Beckers (1999), Kwon (2004), Allami and Naeimi (2011), Chang (2011), Hong (2011), Siebold and Busch (2015), Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016), Xiumin and Nuan (2022), and others, examine refusal strategies in natural language from various aspects of interlocution situations. Moreover, the ways of refusing requests, invitations, offers, or suggestions are also an interesting field in EFL. Much research has been done with a comparison between different refusal strategies in native language situations and EFL contexts.

In Lyuh's (1992) study, which analyzes 15 different situations, it is found that Americans are significantly more direct in their refusals than Koreans in most situations.

In a comparison of American and Korean speakers, Kwon (2004)

reports that both Korean and American speakers generally favor indirect strategies of refusal over direct ones. However, American speakers favor direct refusals more than Korean speakers. Additionally, they differ in the semantic formulas employed; Korean speakers prefer negative politeness strategies (i.e., apologies), while American speakers demonstrate positive attitudes.

According to Beebe et al. (1990), the Japanese tend to employ indirect strategies to maintain good relationships within Japanese society (Beebe et al. 1990, Kanemoto 1993, Gass & Houck 1999, Ebsworth & Kodama 2011). However, using these indirect strategies in American society can result in pragmatic failure since Americans may feel that their interlocutor is not telling the truth. The comparable findings are proposed by Ebsworth and Kodama (2011).

A similar tendency is also detected in Chinese speakers (Liao & Bresnahan 1996, Chang 2011, Hong 2011, Guo 2012). Guo (2012) suggests that both Chinese and American participants tend to prefer to use indirect strategies of refusal over direct ones. However, American participants tend to refuse directly more often than Chinese participants. In other words, Chinese speakers are more concerned in softening their refusals by being indirect, preserving face, and avoiding embarrassment; Americans facilitate more direct strategies than Chinese.

Allami and Naeimi (2011) propose that for native Iranian speakers, the interlocutor's social status (low, equal, high) is a critical factor, whereas for Americans, it is less influential as they tend to refuse fairly consistent regardless of the social status. In addition, Hassani et al. (2011) posit that Iranian speakers employ more indirect strategies with high-status interlocutors when they refuse.

Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016) find that Jordanian Arabic and American English speakers use indirect strategies more often than

direct strategies; Jordanian Arabic speakers use more indirect strategies than American English speakers.

Krulatz and Dixon (2020) found that, on average, both the Korean and Norwegian participants in their study employed substantially more indirect strategies than direct strategies when they refused. However, Korean speakers used more indirect strategies than the Norwegian participants, while Norwegian speakers tended to utilize more direct strategies than the Korean participants.

Xiumin and Nuan (2022) investigated refusal strategies of three different cultural groups (i.e., Chinese, Korean, and American) and showed that all the groups employed indirect strategies more frequently than direct strategies. However, the American participants, who are exposed to a low-context culture, used direct refusals significantly more frequently than Chinese and Korean subjects, who are characterized as being from high-context cultures.

Within the framework of politeness theory in pragmatics, refusals inherently carry the risk of causing offense, leading to the employment of various strategies to mitigate the potential harm (Kwon 2004). An improperly delivered refusal can harm interpersonal relationships. Since refusals threaten the face of the person being refused, they are often expressed indirectly, and consequently, direct refusals are less common. Supporting this, Chen (1996) utilizes semantic formulas to analyze refusals and finds that direct refusals are uncommon, regardless of the refuser's native language.

Considering the investigation of the refusal patterns in natural languages, this paper proposes that, overall, most natural languages employ indirect strategies more frequently than direct strategies. However, speakers who are exposed to low-context cultures, such as Americans, tend to use direct refusals significantly more often than those exposed to high-context cultures, including Chinese, Japanese,

and Koreans.

3.2. The Speech Act of Refusal in Constructed Languages

In this subsection, the speech act of refusal in two constructed languages, Esperanto and Unish, is investigated.

Esperanto, the world's most widely spoken constructed language, was created by L. L. Zamenhof in 1887 (Wikipedia 2024a). Unish, standing for Universal Language, was created by a research team at Sejong University in Korea (Wikipedia 2024b). Both constructed languages aim to resolve language inequalities that are deeply associated with historical, political, economic, and cultural issues that privilege certain languages over others, leading to compelling social consequences. Due to the dominance of English as an international lingua franca in various sectors including international business, science, technology, and entertainment, native English speakers are naturally endowed with significant advantages. In the same sense, the speakers of less globally dominant languages perpetually encounter obstacles to accessing opportunities and resources because of language inferiority. To resolve the issue of language inequality, these two constructed languages attempt to develop much simpler grammar and lexicon than English.

It is natural that constructed languages, such as Esperanto, used primarily in international contexts, have a different position from English as an international language. Galor and Pietiläinen (2015) and Stria (2017) compare Esperanto speakers with EFL speakers and then propose that they are in common that both groups communicate in the international contexts. However, they differ in whether they have a common culture and share values. According to their findings, unlike EFL speakers, Esperanto speakers share certain common values (i.e., equality in communication and peace or language goals) and common

culture alongside their native culture. Therefore, EFL speakers are likely to negotiate their communicational norms according to the given circumstances and context. However, in the case of Esperanto speakers who may share some common values, their communication can be defined as being between the communication inside a group with acknowledged norms and completely free international communication where the norms are newly created (Koutny & Wolarska-Sobocińska 2022).

3.2.1. Esperanto

Developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in the 1970s, politeness theory plays a significant role in the study of pragmatics. It expands on Erving Goffman's concept of face theory, exploring why and how we use politeness in social interactions (Studysmarter 2024).

Considering politeness theory, Koutny and Wolarska-Sobocińska (2022) examined the speech acts of greeting, addressing, requesting, refusal, and invitation of 122 Esperanto speakers from 30 countries, to investigate linguistic politeness in a multicultural community (i.e., in constructed language settings). The total number of the native languages spoken by the participants was 43.²

Interestingly, social position, and gender do not significantly affect greeting and addressing in the multicultural Esperanto community. Furthermore, there is little difference in speaking to a close acquaintance (i.e., a friend) or distant acquaintance (i.e., a senior). More surprisingly, the Esperanto speakers from Asia are more likely to use informal forms in an Esperanto context; however, in their native settings, they

² There are some Esperanto speakers who have more than one mother tongue. Therefore, the number of the native languages in this study is 43, exceeding the number of countries from which the speakers reside.

tend to use formal ones more frequently. This phenomenon may suggest that the characteristics of the speech acts of greeting and addressing in their native language are overridden by the characteristics in Esperanto. Given the fact that Esperanto, one of the most famous constructed languages, has a regular structure and less ambiguous vocabulary, it is expected that Esperanto is much more similar to a language spoken in low-context environments than in high-context environments. Therefore, regardless of the speakers' native background, in the Esperanto community, the greeting and addressing strategies are likely to align with those in low-context culture, resulting in more frequent informal patterns.

Again, the speakers of Esperanto feel a strong sense of community, leading them to use informal forms of communication in most speech acts, such as greeting and addressing. Even Esperanto speakers from Asia tend to adapt to these informal speech acts, which are characteristic of American communication styles.

By contrast, as for the speech act of refusal, Koutny's experiment shows that a total of 33.6% of the respondents refuse requests directly, while 52.5% of the respondents do so indirectly. Similar to speakers in natural languages, Esperanto participants utilize indirect strategies of refusal more often than their direct counterparts. However, it seems that Esperanto speakers generally use more direct refusals than speakers of natural languages. This is supported by Koutny's argument that in communication in a self-chosen language community like Esperanto, informal or direct forms prevail.

3.2.2. Unish

Consider another constructed language, Unish, created by Korean scholars with the purpose of eliminating language inequality. Unish is based on 14 major natural languages and 1 constructed language,

Esperanto. To coin the easiest and simplest lexicon, Unish pursues the three principles: commonality, shortness, and simplicity. Furthermore, the Unish research team posits that the lexicon in Unish is comprised of the easiest and simplest words, 90% of which originate from English.

To investigate the speech act of refusal in Unish, two books published by the Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2019, 2021), were examined. Fourteen refusal situations were found in these two books, 11 of which employ indirect strategies. Based on this, it can be proposed that indirect refusal strategies are preferred in Unish over direct ones. Some examples are as follows in (1) and (2):

- (1) a. We wil hav diner togeder after movi?
 1st-PL-SUB will have dinner together after movie
 ‘Shall we have dinner together after the movie?’
- b. I be sorry, but i must get up
 1st-SG-SUB be sorry but 1st-SG-SJ must get up
 early nedai. Let’s hav diner togeder
 early tomorrow let-1st-PL-OBJ have dinner together
 next time.
 next time
 ‘I am sorry, but I must get up early tomorrow. Let’s have
 dinner together next time.’

Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2021: 57)³

³ We could not find many refusal cases in Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2019, 2021). However, in spite of the limited number of the examples in these books, we assume that other refusal cases in Unish may comply with the cases given in (1) and (2).

- (2) a. U be free tonait? I finded
 2nd-SG-SUB be free tonight 1st-SG-SUB find-PAST
 very nice French restoran. I like
 very nice French restaurant 1st-SG-SUB like
 takeing u dere.
 take-GERUND 2nd-SG-OBJ there
 ‘Are you free tonight? I found a very nice French
 restaurant. I would like to take you there.’
- b. Oh, u be very kind. But i
 oh 2nd-SG-SUB be very kind but 1st-SG-SUB
 hav apointi tonait.
 have appointment tonight
 ‘Oh, you are very kind. But I have an appointment tonight.’
 Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2021: 66)

In the data in (1) and (2), indirect strategies, such as statements of regret, explanation, and future acceptance, are utilized when Speaker B refuses.

Consider another example extracted from Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2019):

- (3) a. I may help u?
 1st-SG-SUB may help 2nd-SG-OBJ
 ‘May I help you?’
- b. No, dank. I kan handl it.
 No thank 1st-SG-SUB can handle 3rd-SG-OBJ
 ‘No, thanks. I can handle it.’
 Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2019: 90)

Unlike (1) and (2), Speaker B in (3) directly refuses the request of Speaker A; Speaker B employs one of the direct strategies, negative ability.

Although a limited number of refusal situations were found in the Unish resources, it may be concluded that indirect strategies are more pervasive than direct ones when making refusals.

3.2.3. Comparison Between Esperanto and Unish

In Subsections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, we investigated the speech acts of refusal in Esperanto and Unish to predict how they might be performed in a constructed language, drawing on Koutny and Wolarska-Sobocińska's (2022) research and the two aforementioned Unish books, Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2019, 2021). Hinging on this analysis, it is suggested that there are both similarities and differences between Esperanto and Unish in terms of the usage of refusal strategies. These differences could serve as indicators for the development of constructed languages.

Both Esperanto and Unish were developed with the typical characteristics of a constructed language: simple vocabulary and unambiguous syntactic structures (Koutny & Wolarska-Sobocińska 2022). They are, therefore, likely to be more associated with low-context cultures than to high-context cultures. Following this notion, Koutny and Wolarska-Sobocińska (2022) shows that, in the Esperanto community, informal forms are used in most greeting and addressing situations.

However, according to the theory that refusal takes a face-saving strategy in order to try to avoid conflicts (Brown & Levinson 1987), it is found in Koutny and Wolarska-Sobocińska's (2022) study finds that Esperanto speakers tend to employ indirect strategies of refusal more frequently than direct ones. A similar pattern of refusal has been

detected in Unish through careful examination of the two published Unish books, showing that indirect strategies of refusal are more prevalent than direct strategies in Unish conversation, similar to Esperanto.

Therefore, this paper asserts that both Esperanto and Unish have a preference for indirect strategies of refusal over direct ones. However, this tendency is not unique to Esperanto or Unish, but is rather a universal feature of refusal, as it is generally accepted that indirectness is more common than directness in natural languages, regardless of the interlocutors' native culture and language.

Alongside the similarities between Esperanto and Unish, this paper proposes that they also have a significant difference. The salient difference between these two constructed languages lies in the frequency of the direct strategies of refusal. In Esperanto, direct strategies of refusal are used much more frequently than in Unish. This result aligns with Koutny and Wolarska-Sobocińska's findings (2022) that Esperanto shows a higher percentage of direct refusal occurrences compared to natural languages with high-context cultures (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) and Unish. To shed light on this, this paper argues that the interlocutors in the Esperanto community voluntarily choose to belong to it and have already established familiarity with one another; they may be more cautious about cultural otherness, language equality, sense of belonging to the community, and freedom in self-expression. Therefore, it is naturally predicted that direct and informal forms are more likely to be used in the Esperanto community. They perform the speech acts of greeting, addressing, and refusal differently from how they do in their native languages. This difference results from Esperanto's long history of shared values, newly created norms, and its use in real conversational situations. It, therefore, functions much more like a natural language.

Unlike Esperanto, however, Unish is still developing its vocabulary and structures, and there are few speakers who use it as a second or foreign language for communication. Therefore, Unish is enormously influenced by the creators of the language. In spite of the similar tendency detected in both Esperanto and Unish, Unish unitizes indirect strategies of refusal more frequently than Esperanto. Even though Unish is heavily rooted in English, it appears to follow the Korean high-context culture system since indirect refusals are used more significantly than direct ones, by up to four times. Therefore, this paper argues that since Unish was developed in Korea and remains rarely used as a colloquial communication tool, the authors of the two books, Language Research Institute at Sejong University (2019, 2021), are likely to have influenced the refusal strategies in Unish. This argument complies with Koutny and Wolarska-Sobocińska's (2022) proposal that refusal is predominantly influenced by the native culture of the speakers (Yamagashira 2001, Wannaruk 2008, Al-Shboul & Maros 2020).

Finally, this paper posits that in multicultural communication communities such as constructed language settings, native culture and linguistic background may influence the performance of the speech acts. However, other factors, such as attitudes towards a language or other cultures, tolerance for unconventional behavior, language-specific purposes, and a sense of belonging to the community, can have more impact on face-threatening acts, such as refusals (Stavans & Shafran 2017, Koutny & Wolarska-Sobocińska 2022).

4. Conclusion

This paper is based on the premise that the speech act of refusal is

a face-threatening act; therefore, overall, indirect strategies of refusal are more frequently employed in natural languages. This paper also predicts that if a constructed language facilitates a refusal strategy, it might resemble the form of low-context culture because of its simple vocabulary and unambiguous structures. Furthermore, it is argued that, in a constructed language, other factors should also be considered since maintaining social harmony in various social contexts is important.

This paper shows that Esperanto and Unish share a common pragmatic feature when refusing: a preference of indirectness over directness. However, they differ in the frequency of direct refusals, with Esperanto utilizing direct strategies more frequently than Unish.

Finally, this paper suggests that future researchers need to consider various factors such as language, social and political equality, and shared common culture in order for constructed languages to be used internationally.

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