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L2 Mandarin Chinese Learners' Pragmatic Development in Making Refusals: the Roles of Instruction and the Study Abroad Context

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Abstract

The study abroad environment is known to promote pragmatic development. This study was interested in how L2 Mandarin Chinese learners' use of refusals developed in this context and whether or not, and in what ways, explicit instruction taking place during study abroad could facilitate this development. To examine L2 learners' refusals, it is also important to understand how NSs (native speakers) make refusals. Therefore, this study paralleled an investigation of NSs' refusals.

The linguistic data was collected through role-plays from both learners and NSs. It was analysed qualitatively; the learners' role-plays were also analysed quantitatively to examine if the effect of instruction was significant. Interviews and questionnaires were also used with learners to collect information on the influence of their interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent using the L2 outside classroom on their development.

The NSs data pointed to the particular importance of two facets of negotiation of refusals: key linguistic devices associated with semantic formulas and structure of different semantic formulas. Starting from there, in learners' role-play data it was found that the study abroad context alone had an impact on their development in using semantic formulas and structuring refusals. But its influence on learning key linguistic devices was on a relatively smaller scale and was not common across all the learners. Instruction, on the other hand, was found to have some potential, especially in facilitating learning of a more complicated linguistic device, although the quantitative analysis did not show it resulted in any statistical significance. In addition, the interview and questionnaire data suggested that the frequency and types of interactions with NSs could affect the learners' development. But interactions with NSs needed to be initiated and nurtured; individuals that proactively sought out social interactions enjoyed more opportunities to learn.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study and orients the reader to the organisation of the thesis.

This study primarily concerns itself with how L2 learners' use of refusals develops in a study abroad context and whether or not, and in what ways, instruction taking place during study abroad could facilitate their development in this context. Initially, it was motivated by the growing attention on L2 pragmatics, especially pragmatic development in the field of Second Language Acquisition, which originated from a few theoretical calls in the late 20th century (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Gabriele Kasper & Dahl, 1991; Gabriele Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). And a study abroad context with rich input is known to promote such development. As such it makes a desirable place for fieldwork, which fits well with my past experience of teaching Mandarin Chinese to L2 adult learners in China. Moreover, the preliminary interviews, which are explained in Chapter 3, genuinely inspired me to expand the study to include instruction, attempting to examine whether or not, and in what ways instruction could facilitate learners' pragmatic development in a study abroad context, thus making more out of this unique learning environment. The interview also helped to set a pragmatic target, i.e. use of refusals.

To examine L2 learners' use of refusals, it is also important to understand how Mandarin Chinese NSs make refusals. But the literature offered only very limited information. Hence, this study paralleled an investigation of NSs' refusals, which was analysed first and used as a reference for the analysis of learners' refusals.

With this broad view, I delved into the literature, aiming to narrow down on the focus of this study. First, it is to understand what pragmatics is about? It could be challenging to provide a definition for pragmatics that indicates what the practioners of pragmatics actually do (Levinson, 1983). But in principal, pragmatics 'is the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms' and what differentiates pragmatics from, e.g. syntax and semantics, is the involvement of language users into analysis (Yule, 1996, p.4). Partially, 'this type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. It requires a consideration of how speakers organise what they want to say in accordance with who they are talking to,

where, when, and under what circumstances' (Yule, 1996, p.3). There are three types of pragmatic meaning: reference, illocutionary act and perlocutionary effect (Widdowson, 2007). The perlocutionary effect is what the speaker is trying to get the hearer to do by means of the language that delivers reference and the illocutionary act. However, from the hearer's point of view, before (s)he can choose any linguistic form, (s)he first needs to interpret the reference and illocutionary act in the way that the speaker intended in order to understand what perlocutionary effect the speaker has encoded within the utterance. In other words, not only does the hearer have to share linguistic knowledge with the speaker in order to decode the reference and illocutionary act, but (s)he has also to share knowledge of the social conventions which reflect available and possible linguistic options, but also put constraints on the speaker's options.

Hence, pragmatics involves a language user in both linguistic and social knowledge. This is in accordance to Leech (1983) division of pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. In Leech's (1983) terms, pragmalinguistics "consider[s] the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions" (p.11). In contrast to pragmalinguistics, Leech (1983) differentiates sociopragmatics as "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (p.10). Taking Leech's (1983) division a step further, Rose and Kasper (2001) explain, *pragmalinguistics* refers to "the resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meanings. Such resources include pragmatic strategies such as directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts." (p.2). *Sociopragmatics* refers to "the social perceptions [of] underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action." (p.2). In the field of second language acquisition, the users of a target language are learners. Thus, pragmatics in second language acquisition can be simply understood as how learners use a target language. Kasper and Dahl (1991) define, L2 pragmatics as concerning "non-native speakers' (NNSs') comprehension and production of speech acts, and how their L2-related knowledge is acquired".

So as far as learners are concerned, not only do they need to have pragmalinguistic resources in order to be able to produce a speech act, but they also have to possess sociopragmatic knowledge in order to interpret the intended meaning of the speaker given the context and to produce an appropriate response accordingly.

Hence, this study examines learners' two competences, namely, pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. And it defines pragmalinguistic competence as learners' knowledge of pragmalinguistic resources in the target language, such as possible semantic formulas and linguistic devices that can be used to deliver these semantic formulas. As for sociopragmatic competence, it refers to learners' knowledge of how to interpret a communicative action in the way native speakers in the target community would normally interpret such an action. In addition, sociopragmatic competence allows learners to perform a communicative action that is responsive to contextual factors, e.g. different semantic formulas may be required to refuse an invitation versus a suggestion.

In addition, to discuss learners' development of pragmatic competence, we also need to take a look at the concept of communicative competence and the components it consists of. Communicative competence is well discussed in Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). But I shall follow Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model, only because it attempted to link different components of the communicative competence in a more practical way, which better suits this study. Based on the previous works, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) proposed another model of communicative competence composed of five constructs: discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional competence (equivalent to what I refer to as pragmatic competence), sociocultural competence and strategic competence. Compared to Canale's (1983) model, linguistic competence in Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) is equivalent to Canale's linguistic competence, sociocultural competence and actional competence together correspond to his sociocultural competence, with the remaining two competences the same. Besides different views towards what competences could account for communicative competence as a whole, more importantly, in Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995, p. 9) model, they explain how these different components interconnect,

> We represent our model of communicative competence as a pyramid enclosing a circle and surrounded by another circle. The circle within the pyramid *discourse competence*, and the three points of the triangle are *sociocultural competence*, *linguistic competence*, and *actional competence*… our construct places the discourse component in a position where the lexico-grammatical building blocks, the actional organising skills of communicative intent, and the sociocultural context come together and shape the discourse, which, in turn, also shapes each of the other three components. The circle surrounding the pyramid represents *strategic competence*, an ever-present, potentially usable inventory of skills that allows a strategically competent speaker to negotiate messages and resolve problems….

Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model highlights interconnection between different components of communicative competence. The importance of examining the interconnection between pragmatic competence and other components has also been recognised by some other scholars. In their book discuss pragmatic development in a second language, Kapser and Rose (2002, p. 159) noted,

> But equal in importance to the development of pragmatics as an autonomous component of communicative competence is to relate it to other aspects of communicative ability.

In this study, examining the NSs' negotiation of refusals had highlighted these theoretical constructs: the link between pragmatic competence and linguistic competence and that and discourse competence in particular the structure of different semantic formulas. These became the areas of focus in examining learners' development in making refusals, especially because I have not come across very much discussion on these aspects in previous studies.

With these, I move next to introducing how L2 pragmatic development may be investigated. Learners' pragmatic development can be investigated using different methods: through longitudinal research with a given group of participants over an extended period of time, cross-sectional studies with participants of different proficiency levels, or instructional studies (Rose, 2000; Taguchi, 2010). Cross-sectional studies primarily investigate probable relationships between language proficiency and pragmatic production. Learners' pragmatic performance of a particular pragmatic target is compared and interpreted in relation to different proficiency levels. Although cross-sectional studies can help to understand what learners' pragmatic performances of a particular pragmatic target are possibly like at different proficiency levels, different learners' performances at different proficiency levels do not necessarily reflect the developmental trajectory of an individual learner as they move between proficiency levels. Longitudinal studies, on the other hand, provide more information on how learners' performances of a pragmatic target develop over time, thus allowing researchers to investigate issues in language acquisition. This study took a longitudinal approach; the primary linguistic data was collected at three different time points, namely towards the beginning of the study abroad period, immediately after the instruction was given, and towards the end of this period.

Pragmatic development can also be investigated from the point view of input effect. A number of studies have investigated the effects of different instructional intervention on L2 learners' pragmatic development. Usually these studies took place in a foreign classroom setting. A classroom environment could promote pragmatic development through planned pedagogical action on pre-selected pragmatic targets (Gabriele Kasper & Rose, 2002). Such an environment has a competitive advantage compared to any study abroad context in that it can focus learners' attention on specific pragmatic target, because it filters the pragmatic feature from potential distracters to become the focus of attention (Schmidt, 1993).

Although studies examining pragmatic development usually either took place in a study abroad context or in a foreign classroom, the two environments can be complementary to facilitate learners' pragmatic development. A couple of studies (Shively, 2011) have examined if intervention that actually takes place while learners study abroad can bring their pragmatic development further in this context. Studies like these two are useful in understanding whether or not, and to what extent, intervention could potentially help L2 learners to make more out of their study abroad experience, which also is one of the concerns of this study. After all, studying abroad is a unique opportunity that undergraduates only get once in their time studying at university.

To examine the role of instruction, I included a control group who received no instruction. Role-plays were the instrument used to collect the linguistic data from both the NSs and the learners. Interviews and questionnaires were also used with learners to collect information on the influence on their development of their interactions with NSs and the amount of time they spent using the L2 outside the classroom. The role-play data, including both the NSs' and the learners', was analysed qualitatively; the learners' role-plays were also analysed quantitatively to examine if the effect of instruction was statistically significant. The analysis examined two criteria: refusal's clarity and potential effect on the interpersonal relationship (details are discussed in Chapter 4). At a later stage of the analysis, I also factored in learners' interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent using the L2 outside the classroom, as reflected in the interviews and questionnaires, on their development as found in the role-plays.

These aspects are explained in more detail in the following chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the findings of previous studies on L2 pragmatic development. Chapter 3

is opened with the explanation for the preliminary interviews. Subsequently, it reviews characteristics of refusals that have been found in the literature and then moves specifically to discuss refusals in Mandarin Chinese. With these characteristics in mind, it continues to review L2 learners' performances of refusals found in previous studies. The chapter is closed with an introduction of the research questions. Then, Chapter 4 explains the methods this study has taken to conduct the examination. Next, Chapter 5 presents the findings of the NSs' use of refusals. Chapter 6 reports the findings of the L2 learners' development in making refusals, as well as factors that were found to affect this development in the interview and questionnaire data. Chapter 7 discusses the findings. Lastly, Chapter 8 offers a conclusion.

Before I move on, I would like to discuss an issue with the use of the term 'strategy'. As we will see more in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 reviewing previous studies, quite often the term 'strategy' is used. Use of the term 'strategy' can be confusing. In L2 pragmatic studies, it is widely used, and often implicitly refers to the use of semantic formulas that are found in speakers' utterances. But in politeness studies, the term 'strategy' is usually associated with polite strategies as proposed in Brown and Levinson's (1987) face theory. The term presumes that 'speakers have particular goals in mind and employ rationale means-to-ends reasoning to formulate a series of moves in order to achieve that goal in a way that is considered "polite", and the hearers must employ ends-to-means reasoning in order to figure out what that goal might be, as well as recognise the speaker's polite intension' (Dániel Z. Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 26). But in the study of L2 pragmatics, to my best knowledge, the notion of rationality, in particular Brown and Levinson's rationality (calculability) associated with the term 'strategy', has not been explicitly discussed.

Hence, I would like to clarify that, in this study, I use the term 'strategy' when reviewing previous studies as it was used in any particular study. And these largely are clustered in Chapter 2 reviewing L2 learners' pragmatic development and Chapter 3 reviewing refusals. In my own report, I only use the term 'semantic formula' to refer to components of a refusal such as *negative willingness* or *reason*. I did not investigate the details of the linguistic strategies underpinning the use of a formula (i.e. which of the Brown and Levinson's (1987) strategies it would correspond to) because this falls outside of the object of this investigation.

Chapter 2 L2 Pragmatic development

Within the field of L2 pragmatics, in particular in the 1990s, existing studies have predominantly focused on pragmatic use, especially the ways L2 learners' pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge is different from that of NSs, but not development (Gabriele Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). It gave rise to calls for more developmental research in the late 1990s (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999; Gabriele Kasper & Rose, 2002). Subsequently the number of studies taking a longitudinal approach to examine learners' pragmatic development is growing, though, in absolute terms, the number of such studies remains fairly limited (Taguchi, 2010). Of these L2 pragmatic studies, those that examine learners' pragmatic production, which is the focus for this study, have explored a range of areas including stages of L2 pragmatic development (e.g. Ellis, 1985), L1 influence on L2 pragmatic development (e.g. Barron, 2007), individual and contextual variables affecting development (e.g. Taguchi, 2011), interdependence between grammar and pragmatics (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004; Cho, 2003) and instructional effect on pragmatic development (e.g. Rose & Kasper, 2001).

In this study, primarily I focus on how learners' use of key linguistic devices associated with semantic formulas developed and how their structure of different semantic formulas developed over the study abroad period, which touches upon learners' pragmatic development as well as its interaction with linguistic competence and discourse competence. Also, the analysis considers the role of instruction in the study abroad context and the influence of learners' interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent using the L2 outside classroom on their development (see Chapter 4).

To lay out the structure for my study, in this chapter I use previous studies' findings to discuss four areas that concern this study. Section 2.1 focuses on L2 pragmatic development, and its interaction with learners' linguistic competence and discourse competence. Section 2.2 discusses the effect of the study abroad context on learners' pragmatic development, especially the influence of types of interactions that learners have with NSs. Section 2.3 discusses the effect of instruction in a foreign class setting on learners' pragmatic development. Finally, section 2.4 discusses two studies that have brought instruction into the study abroad context to

investigate its effect on facilitating study abroad learners to further their pragmatic development by making more out of the context.

2.1   L2 pragmatic development and its interfacing with development of linguistic competence and discourse competence

Previous studies on learners' pragmatic development often found that not all areas were learned equally. One tendency, as reflected in the findings of some studies, is that some social rules associated with a certain context might be learned earlier than the relevant language forms that may be involved. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) study provides an example in point. Using naturally occurring conversations, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) examined the use of suggestions and rejections in advising sessions over the course of one semester by non-native speakers of English. They found that, while over time learners became able to initiate suggestions (in contrast to merely responding to suggestions which was frequently the case in early sessions) and offer credible reasons when rejecting advisor's suggestions (in contrast to non-credible ones given in early sessions), they still struggled with using appropriate forms: they continually used various forms of aggravators and ignored mitigating devices. It indicates that while learners might have progressed with learning the rules of the institutional advising session, their development of linguistic forms that were involved in this context lagged behind.

Similarly, Barron's (2007) study also found that the learners progressed in learning the social rules for how to respond to offers of drinks in the target language, but their development of the use of upgraders for refusals was found to lag behind, especially those upgraders that involve use of relatively complicated devices such as non-formulaic utterances. Using a free DCT (Discourse Completion Task) to investigate how learners' use of upgrading for refusals to offers developed over a period of ten months in a study abroad context, Barron (2007) found that the Irish-English speaking learners of German were impeded by their L1 expectation of re-offer from the interlocutor after their initial refusal and thus fell short in using upgrading in their refusals to the initial offer. In Irish English it was considered conventional for the offerer to make a re-offer after the initial offer was refused. As a result, the refuser might only start to upgrade their refusal when responding to the re-offer, but usually not in their refusals to the initial offer. To the contrary, in their L2 German, re-offer was not considered conventional. Native speakers of German thus

usually upgraded their refusals as soon as they started to refuse. But when these learners realized that the convention of re-offer was only specific to their L1, they started to upgrade their initial refusals, as native speakers of German usually did, and stopped expecting a re-offer. However, Barron (2007) found that the Irish learners only increased their usage of upgrading in situations where strangers interacted, but not in situations where friends interacted. As it turned out, in situations where strangers interacted, use of formulaic utterances was adequate for upgrading, whereas in situations where friends interacted, non-formulaic utterances were often required for upgrading, which perhaps were more difficult to learn to use. And Barron (2007) found the year abroad did not seem to be sufficient for the learners to develop upgrading when non-formulaic utterance were involved.

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) proposed an explanation for why social rules were learned earlier than relevant language forms. They attributed the result of their learners' improvement in employing suggestions and rejections to negotiate in the advising session, compared to their struggle in using appropriate forms, to the availability of input. They explained that learners had acquired the institutional rules explicitly and/or implicitly when interacting with advisors or through explicit discussion with peers. However, regarding learning of relevant language forms, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) pointed out, learners did not have any access to the forms to perform these speech acts, because advisors only reacted to the intended force of the utterance in the face of inappropriate realization of speech acts, not specifically to its form. And further, they probably had few opportunities to observe native-speaker models in comparable situations.

As well as the access to language forms, Barron's (2007) study also showed grammar that is more challenging to learn to use is more likely to hinder learners' pragmatic use than grammar that is easier to learn. She explained, based on her findings, the primary advantage with formulaic utterances was that they were stored in memory as whole chunks and could thus be retrieved quickly and easily. Also, they were usually associated with a particular interactional purpose. Thus, they were easy to encode and decode. Unlike formulaic utterances, non-formulaic utterances appeared to be overly cognitively demanding for learners. These factors explain why the Irish learners increased their use of upgrading in situations that only involved use of formulaic utterances whereas their development in situations that required use of non-formulaic utterances lagged behind.

In addition, previous studies also revealed some characteristics of L2 learners' pragmatic use when compared to NSs of the target language. To give an example, learners tended to use a greater variety of semantic formulas compared to the NSs. Using DCT, Warga and Schölmberger (2007) investigated the development of seven Austrian German-speaking learners of French in making apologies. Examining devices indicating illocutionary force, including *expression of regret*, *offer of apology*, *request for forgiveness*, *excuses*, *justifications* and *offers of repair* using NSs of both their L1 and L2 as a baseline, Warga and Schölmberger (2007) found that the learners used a greater variety of semantic formulas. They explained, it was probably because the learners were less familiar with formulaic language use in the respective situations and therefore resorted to using all strategies that they could retrieve at the time. Similarly, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009), comparing differences in request-refusal sequential organizations in telephone conversations between American English speaking learners of Japanese (AJs) and native speakers of Japanese (JJs), also found that the AJs have displayed a greater variation in their refusal patterns (more detail was discussed in section 3.2.2). Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) attributed this difference between AJs and JJs to the AJs' limited knowledge of formulaic discourse patterns and conventional expressions involved in request-refusal sequences.

Another characteristic that previous studies often investigated is the influence of learners' L1 pragmatic competence on their L2 pragmatic usage. Learners' L1 influence is often discussed under pragmatic transfer, which refers to "the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than their L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (G. Kasper, 1992, p.207). It has both positive and negative influences. The positive influence of learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge may be a reflection of the concept of universality, whereas negative influences of their L1 pragmatic knowledge usually derive from the cultural specificity of pragmatic knowledge. Although universality is still in debate, the consensus is that universality probably exists in some areas among many languages, if not all languages. For example, Liao and Bresnahan (1996) found that *reasons* are preferred to make refusals in both American English and Mandarin Chinese, albeit the contents of the *reasons* used by native speakers of American English and those of Mandarin Chinese are not necessarily the same in all contexts. Universality also appears to exist in areas such as basic speech act categories

(Gabriele Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), external and internal modification (Blum-Kulka, 1991) and in a wide range of speech act strategies (Blum-Kulka, 1989). Positive influence of learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge on their L2 performance has been documented in some studies. For example, investigating the development of L2 English learners of German in learning external modifiers to requests, Schauer (2007) found that, not only did the learners have knowledge of applying basic modifiers when making a request, but they also showed an understanding, shared with native speakers of the target language, as to how to use these to modify a request appropriately according to different social variables (such as different status of interlocutors and imposition conditions). For example, none of the groups employed *promise of reward*, i.e. offering some compensation, in low imposition interactions. Similarly, investigating L2 German learners' requests to borrow a book, Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth (2010) also found that learners recognised requests as a dispreferred social action, which probably stemmed from some positive influence of learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge. Hence, prior to making their actual request, the learners often stated some relevant problem (e.g. (s)he cannot find the book). The pre-request often successfully solicited an offer from the interlocutor to lend the book to him/her, which saved the learners from having to actually make the request.

However, it is also worth acknowledging that, according to Wolfson (1989), native speakers' knowledge of "rules of speaking and, more generally, norms of interaction are… largely unconscious." If this is the case, learners' L1 pragmatic knowledge may be underexploited as it relates to their L2 pragmatic development simply because which aspects of their L1 pragmatic knowledge are universal and applicable in the L2 is not always obvious.

Learners' L1 pragmatic competence can also have a negative influence on their pragmatic performance in an L2. Such a negative influence is often referred to as negative pragmatic transfer. Barron (2003, p.38) cites, negative pragmatic transfer as "…the projection of first language-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge onto second language contexts where such projections result in perceptions and behaviours different from those of second language users." Negative pragmatic transfer is one of the major reasons that are most often used to explain differences that were found between learners' pragmatic performances and those of native speakers of the target language. For example, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) also observed some AJ participants first used Agreement to the request, then in

the following sequences, they started to employ *excuses* indicating actual refusals. But this Acceptance-Excuse sequence was not observed in the JJs' refusals. Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) explained that the AJs' use of Acceptance-Excuse sequence resembled typical disagreement interactions in the learners' L1 English that begin with agreement and end with disagreement.

In order to understand L2 pragmatic development, it can be insightful if it is examined with other components of communicative competence, as advocated by Kasper and Rose (2002). As introduced in Chapter 1, communicative competence, following Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995), is composed of five constructs: discourse competence, linguistic competence, actional competence (equivalent to what I refer to as pragmatic competence), sociocultural competence and strategic competence. Next I shall move to discuss the interconnection between learners' pragmatic competence and linguistic competence and between their pragmatic competence and discourse competence, which is especially relevant to this study.

To begin with interaction between pragmatic competence and linguistic competence, as Bardovi-Harlig (1999) noted, "although grammatical competence may not be a sufficient condition for pragmatic development, it may be a necessary condition" (p.677). Taguchi (2010) also stated, pragmatic production requires exact and accurate linguistic knowledge of lexis and morphosyntax so that the pragmatic functions that the learners perform are understood precisely.

Some studies exploring the relationship between pragmatics and grammar indicate that learners learned pragmatic concepts in the L2, but their linguistic competence developed more slowly. As such, learners' limited grammatical ability may restrict their pragmatic performance. For example, based on naturalistic conversations between learners and native speakers, Bardovi-Harling and Salsbury (2004) examined turn organization in development disagreement by three ESL learners (Eun Hui, Marta and Mousa) over a period of ten to twelve months. Their study illustrates that, although the L2 English learners understood that in English disagreement is better mitigated by some agreement, their performance of disagreement did not resemble the examples of native speakers. Specifically, they found that the learner Marta reversed the typical order seen in such a scenario, sequencing her disagreement before agreement instead of using her agreement to

preface her disagreement. Furthermore, they found, the forms used for agreement by learners in this study were not conventionalized.

Similarly, examining novice learners of L2 Spanish development of using various strategies (e.g. use of softeners and formality marking) to realise Spanish directives, Pearson (2006) also found that pragmatic competence appeared to precede linguistic competence. Spanish has multiple second-person pronouns with accompanying possessive adjectives and verbal inflections. Pearson (2006) observed, although learners were made aware of the need to address different hearers with varying levels of formality, because Spanish verb inflections marking tense, mood, and person are complex, their verb conjugations did not correspond to the level of formality that was appropriate. Rather, the learners produced formal verb forms to address friends and peers, and informal forms to address professors, shop clerks, and strangers. Although verbal accuracy was improved, in the directive acts of some learners', forms acquired earlier (e.g. formal commands) acted as default forms to encode all commands and present subjective forms were used for both informal and formal interactions.

But other researchers have also shown the opposite to be true; it has also been found that learners acquired some grammar without totally understanding its pragmatic functions. Barron's (2003) study offers possible explanation for learners lagging behind in their pragmalinguistic development: interference of L2 sociopragmatics with pragmatic production. Using a free DCT to examine L2 German learners' requests, offers and refusals to offers, Barron (2003) found, particularly in learning pragmatic routines, that most difficulties experienced by the learners were related to their L2 sociopragmatic competence rather than to their pragmalinguistic competence. For example, concerning use of the pragmatic routine "*Ich wollte fragen, ob*"/"*Eine Frage…*" (I wanted to ask if/whether…/one question…), Barron (2003) found that, although learners had increased their usage of this routine, they appeared to overgeneralize it and use it wherever they believed appropriate, rather than fully understanding the situations that required this routine. Similarly, the learners' lack of full understanding of the difference in the level of directness between the L2 and their L1 may have accounted for their lack of syntactic mitigation in request situations. Specifically, although learners were aware of a relatively higher degree of directness used in the L2 compared to their L1, they did not appear to understand the difference fully. As such, this led to their

inappropriate withholding of syntactic mitigation in their requests.

In reviewing a body of literature containing these seemingly contradictory results, Kasper and Rose (2002, p.187) speculated that,

> To conclude, in their development of L2 pragmatics and grammar, adult learners face different learning tasks at different developmental stages: in the very early phases they build on their available pragmatic knowledge, making do with whatever L2 grammar they have and at the same time acquiring the grammar needed to accomplish actions in L2. As learners progress, their learning task increasingly changes to figuring out the various pragmatic, often secondary meaning that specific grammatical forms have beyond their primary meaning(s). This process will evolve differently for different grammatical forms and their pragmatic meaning, and will depend, among other things, on the activities learners engage in and on whether grammatical and pragmatic knowledge of other languages helps to acquire new L2 pragmatic meanings of grammatical forms.

And grammatical competence is found to interact with learners' pragmatic competence in a quite complex way. Examining the relationship between grammatical knowledge and pragmatic knowledge/ability focusing on epistemic modality, Cho (2003) found that learners used a wider range of epistemic markers when their general linguistic proficiency increased. But she also found that learners' ability to use some pragmatic function of an expression does not necessarily mean that they would be able to perform all the pragmatic functions of the expression. In addition, Cho (2003) also found that learners only became aware of the mitigating functions of epistemic markers (a higher-level function) after they acquired the semantic meanings of the epistemic markers (a lower-level function).

Other than linguistic competence, another component of communicative competence, equally important for this study, concerns learners' discourse competence. Here, I first to explain a bit more about the make up of discourse competence in Celce-Murica, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model, which I introduced in Chapter 1. Then, I discuss the few studies that I have found that connected learners' pragmatic competence with their discourse competence.

> Discourse competence concerns the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, sentences and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text. This is where the bottom-up lexcio-grammatical microlevel intersects with the top-down signals of the macrolevel of communicative intent and sociocultural context to express attitudes and messages, and to create texts.

There are many sub-areas that contribute to discourse competence: *cohesion*, *deixis*, *coherence*, *generic structure*, and *conversational structure*. Celce-Murica, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) study explains in detail, here I only present the part that is relevant to this study, i.e. conversational structure. Conversational structure is

inherent to the turn-taking system in oral conversation. The turn-taking system deals with how people open and close a conversation. It is also closely associated with adjacency pairs. Some adjacency pairs involve giving a dispreferred response to a first-pair part that will require more effort and follow-up work on the part of participants. This is also related to what Celce-Murica, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) refer to as actional competence, which is equivalent to what I refer to as pragmatic competence.

Different aspects of learners' discourse competence may be examined in relation to their pragmatic performance. The two studies, i.e. Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth (2010) and Al-Gahtani and Roever (Gahtani & Roever, 2012) that I review next both investigated learners' conversational structure focusing on the utterances prior to the actual request. But another study (Geyer (2007)) discussed how discourse devices, together with contrastive expressions for self-qualification that were under investigation, jointly played an important role in creating a pragmatic effect that contributed either to foreground the main points of the utterance or to keep the qualification segments in the background.

Using telephone conversations conducted between American English speaking learners of German to analyse learners' organisation of a request to borrow a book, as mentioned previously, Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth (2010) found instead of directly making the request, often the learners (who played the role of requester) used a pre-request to try to elicit an offer to lend the book from the interlocutor. On the other end, the interlocutor (learners who played the role of requestee), correctly interpreting the purpose of the pre-request, often initiated the offer, which satisfied the unsaid request. Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth (2010) emphasized, learners performed "cohesive interactional activities" and demonstrated "their recognition of, and orientation to, the particular communicative activity-in-progress as well as their understanding of the underlying sequence organisation of that particular activity" (p.192). The significance of the learners' use of a pre-request led Taleghani-Nikazm and Huth (2010) to argue for the importance of examining learners' conversational structure in order to examine their pragmatic competence: "relying primarily or exclusively on an analysis of lexis and morpho-syntax in the confines of one turn alone provides a narrow perspective on describing learners' overall ability in performing request mediation. It would seem more accurate to provide analyses that

relate specific lexical and morpho-syntactic aspects of language to the sequential contingencies in which they are produced." (p.198).

In Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2012) study, they found learners' proficiency level could put constraints on learners' conversational structure in performing requests. Using role-plays, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2012) conducted a cross-sectional study investigating sequential organisation of requests made by Saudi learners of Australian English at different proficiency levels (beginners, lower- and upper-intermediate groups and advanced learners). They found that higher-level learners elicited information about the interlocutor's availability and provided accounts prior to issuing the upcoming request, which allowed them flexibility to adjust their request accordingly. In contrast, lower level learners frequently produced request first, and then relied on the interlocutor to elicit reasons or simply accept their request. As such, learners with low proficient level showed less control of the progress of their request. Nevertheless, even beginners occasionally applied some preliminary moves to cushion the upcoming requests, which displayed that these learners may have also been equipped with pragmatic competence regarding how requests may be mitigated during the pre-request phase, but their limited grammatical ability restricted their performance.

As Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2012) study shows, learners' pragmatic performances are closely linked with their linguistic competence and discourse competence (with regards to production of pre-request in that case). Another study, Geyer (2007), deliberately discussed the close relationship among pragmatic competence and linguistic competence and discourse competence. Geyer (2007) explored the interface by examining L2 Japanese learners' use of self-qualification segments in a corpus of oral proficiency interviews. Geyer (2007) explained, self-qualification are parenthetical statements within a discursive unit, which can hold pragmatic functions such as mitigating illocutionary force, asserting vulnerability, admitting the face-threatening nature of the speaker's own utterance, and so on. For example, *I know there are some nice ones* in (a) qualifies the speaker's statement by admitting to an overgeneralisation, and *I'm not so sure* in (b) qualifies the epistemic modality of the statement. And in Japanese, a qualification segment of talk is frequently introduced with contrastive markers, such as *demo*, *kedo*, and *ga*, all of which can be translated into English, as 'but', 'though', or 'although'.

    a)   *I know there are some nice ones*, but most of the parents I met were hopeless.

b) *I'm not so sure*, but he may show up tomorrow.

Geyer (2007) found when qualification segments of superior learners are examined, it was demonstrated that contrastive expressions in conjunction with other features jointly play an important role in creating a pragmatic effect in connected discourse, specifically discourse devices that contribute either to foreground the main points of the utterance or to keep the qualification segments in the background. The near-native learners often manipulate several devices in a stretch of discourse to make their utterances more comprehensible, and at the same time, such efforts make the qualification segments more salient and, therefore, effective. She concludes, the analysis indicated a relationship not only between L2 pragmatic and grammatical competence but also a close relationship among pragmatic, grammatical and discourse competence.

Concerning methods used to collect linguistic data, DCT was the primary instrument in L2 pragmatic studies. While the advantages associated with the use of DCTs have been accepted widely, the drawbacks of written DCTs have also been pointed out (Sasaki, 1998; Yuan, 2001). In comparison, the instrument of role-plays was also utilised in some studies as mentioned above. Role-plays, especially open role-plays, better reflect participants natural speech compared to written DCTs (Yuan, 2001). Because of the interactive nature of role-plays, the studies discussed above that examined learners' conversational structure mostly adopted this instrument. Relatively speaking, naturally occurring conversations were used least frequently among the three types of instruments; it was only found in Shively's (2011) study (see section 2.4) which investigated learners' use of requests at service encounters. The fact that naturally occurring conversations have been used only infrequently might be because the efficiency and the effectiveness of this method are very dependent on the pragmatic target under investigation, as discussed further in my methodology chapter.

To summarise, in this section, I have discussed how learners' pragmatic competence might develop, and how it might interact with learners' linguistic competence and discourse competence. What is in common among these studies and mine is that the inclusion of other components of communicative competence, in particular linguistic competence and discourse competence, is useful for establishing a more comprehensive view of learners' pragmatic development. I have also made

note of the instruments that were often used in L2 pragmatic studies and how they could meet the need for the investigation. The pros and cons of these instruments in previous studies offers a starting point for this study to decide its instrument; a detailed discussion on the decision of the instrument is presented in Chapter 4.

2.2   Pragmatic development and study abroad context

It is not difficult to see the advantages of the study abroad environment: diverse, rich and frequent input and opportunities for output. As such, this environment could be expected to be more likely to result in pragmatic development, compared to a foreign classroom setting, where input would usually not be as diverse, rich and frequent and opportunities for output would not be as many. In spite of these advantages that the study abroad environment has, studies have also found the outcome of study abroad is mixed (Diao, Freed, & Smith, 2011). For example, improvement is not consistent in all areas of linguistic growth and the degree to which improvement has made often can vary from learner to learner.

And of the possible factors that could affect the learning outcome of study abroad, learners' interactions with NSs play an important role in their learning. Hence, delving into learners' experiences interacting with the target speech community in the study abroad context may shed some light on how they might have come into the learning outcome. This was the area, as explained in Chapter 4, that I have primarily focused on in order to find some understanding of the learners' development in making refusals in this study. Therefore, in this section, I also devote discussion to findings from previous studies on how learners' experience in the study abroad could affect their learning.

In the remainder of this section, I discuss in what ways the type of interaction that a learner has can have an impact on their development. Concerning methodology, to investigate learners' interactions with NSs and how they facilitate learners' development, studies often adopt a mixed-methods design, including both quantitative and qualitative data (Allen, 2010; Dewey, Belnap, & Hillstrom, 2013; Schauer, 2006). Incorporating qualitative approaches such as interviewing and journaling could help to further understanding of these issues (Dewey et al., 2013; Schauer, 2006). To measure the amount of time that learners used the L2 out-of-class, Language Contact Profile (Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz, & Halter, 2004) is often used (Taguchi, 2008). To understand how learners' interactions with NSs could

affect their pragmatic development, this study also utilised an interview complemented by the Language Contact Profile to collect information as to how the learners interacted with NSs, as discussed in detail in my methodology chapter.

The advantage of the study abroad context has been supported by the studies that compared pragmatic development in a second language context and a foreign language context. There is evidence that learners in a study abroad context performed better in the production and perception of speech acts than learners in a domestic, formal instructional setting. For example, Schauer (2006) examined L2 learners' recognition and rating of pragmatic and grammatical errors. German speaking L2 English learners watched a video where interactions between the interlocutors' speech act expressions contained either grammatical or pragmatic errors. Compared with home university learners (EFL), the study abroad learners (ESL) recognised a considerably higher number of pragmatic errors than grammatical errors. And their pragmatic awareness continued to improve, by the end of their study abroad period they almost reached the native-speaker level. Some ESL learners reported that the opportunities to observe everyday life interaction helped them to notice the differences between their own output and that of NSs and that they then modified their language accordingly to adapt to the norms of the L2. As the learners' interview in Schauer's (2006) study shows, it is the exposure to the language use and interactions with the target speech community that appear to facilitate learners' pragmatic development in the study abroad context.

But by just spending time in the target speech community, learners' language would not automatically improve. It is far more complicated; 'on the one hand, concentrated time … in the host context would appear to facilitate significant linguistic gains. On the other hand, … individual differences interact in complex ways and are affected by the study abroad context, itself conditioned by cultural norms and factors related to program design' (DuFon & Churchill, 2006, p. 1). Thus, it is not only the environment that is available, but also how learners respond to what the environment affords, that plays a role in their development. In particular, the type of interactions that a learner has can reflect in what ways (s)he has used the L2, which can offer some access to the process of their development.

Isabelli-Carcia (2006) found two types of interactions that the learners in her study had with NSs, namely, multiplex and uniplex. Interactions that are multiplex can be characterised as that a learner is linked to others in more than one capacity,

e.g. as a co-worker and a friend. For second language learners, multiplex interactions could easily form by merely interacting with other learners who speak the same L1 in the target community. If such multiplex interactions are closed, it hinders learners' integration with the target speech community. Because in a closed interaction, speakers interact mostly within a defined territory, a given person's contacts will nearly all know each other (Milroy, 1987).

Interactions that are uniplex can be characterised as that a learner only associates with the local people in a single capacity. When learners first come to a new community, their interactions with the local community tends to be uniplex; the only type that they can expect to establish. Nonetheless, it still illustrates that learners are moving outside their L1 territory to interact with L2 NSs. This type of interaction that learners have with L2 NSs is in a single capacity, so they only develop their ability to talk about a single topic. Learners' interactions with their teacher can be an example for this type. When their relationship is simply as teacher and student, it means that the learner can only practice one type of language with the teacher. However, over time, if the learner could extend this relationship to friendship, then his/her interactions with the teacher start to show some multiplex characteristics. Thus, with the same teacher, the learner now can practice his/her language in one more capacity, namely as a friend, in addition to as the teacher. The interactions will then likely include a wider range of topics that allow learners to practice varying aspects of the L2 with more frequency, which promotes learners' development.

For example, in Isabelli-Carcia's (2006) study, two of her participants, Jennifer and Stain, make good examples in point. Jennifer, due to her unpleasant experience with her first host family, as well as her critical attitude toward Argentines' mannerisms and lifestyles, decreased her interactions to only her second host family, especially the children, and her American friends. Hence, Jennifer's interactions with the local community exhibited uniplex characteristics, being closed and simplistic, which in turn affected her acquisition of Spanish. Jennifer did not make any progress in her overall oral proficiency. Her speech was extremely short and relied heavily on the present tense regardless of the form needed. By contrast, Stain, while keeping contact with his Argentine roommates, managed to further his friendship with a friend's friend, who introduced him to another two friends. With these closer Argentine friends, Stain was often included in their activities which

afforded Stain a variety of opportunities to use his Spanish in different contexts. As shown in Stain's post-study abroad test, his linguistic accuracy improved and he moved from Intermediate High to Advanced in the Stimulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI). He stood out among the other participants by his self-confidence in initiating and sustaining different topics and his use of a range of speech functions.

But a desire to pursue interactions that are multiplex do not mean a learner has to interact with as many as NSs that (s)he possibly can. For example, using the language Contact Profile (Freed et al., 2004), Dewey et. al (2013) investigated learners' interactions with the local community and their language gains during study abroad. They found one of the important predictors of the learners' language gains was the level of friendship that a learner had with NSs. That is to say, the greater the learners' level of friendship with Arabs the higher their gains in Arabic were likely to be. Dewey et. al (2013) inferred, it might not be just a matter of how many friends or acquaintances a learner makes in the target speech community, but rather the level friendship they develop. They explained, it might be because deeper relationships might lead to more in-depth conversations that might require higher levels of language proficiency, as feelings, opinions, abstract topics, etc. might be discussed. Moreover, it was possible that when people developed deeper friendships, they gained access to experiences they might not otherwise have. Dewey et. al's (2013) explanation can be said to be compatible with Isabelli-Carcia's (2006) hypothesis; it is the type of interactions that manifest multiplex characteristics that are more likely to promote learners' development.

Irrespective of their benefit, interactions with NSs may not occur spontaneously; they probably need to be initiated and nurtured. Some studies zooming in learners' experience found that learners' initiative could make some difference to the type of interactions that a learner can have with NSs (Allen, 2010; Dewey et al., 2013; Diao et al., 2011). For example, Allen (2010) examined learners' interactions in French with host family members, peers, and other French speakers on a six-week study abroad programme in Nantes, France. He found different reactions among learners when facing challenges interacting with host families. Some students, although interacting in French with home family members was a struggle, recognised that maximising contact was a choice, and as a result, they maintained their motivation to communicate in French. Other learners, in contrast, did not exercise their initiative in encountering the same challenge. Several, when

they could not seem to find adequate opportunities to interact with their host family, simply retreated, rather than seeking out new opportunities. As one learner wrote on the blog, 'after dinner, I go to my room and listen to music and read until I am ready to go to bed' (Allen, 2010). Allen commented, 'in these key moments we see agency enacted in ways that pushed certain learners' linguistic abilities and ultimately resulted in a higher level of interaction and sustained motivation' (Allen, 2010, p. 19).

Learners' proficiency level may also play a role in finding opportunities to interact with NSs, which subsequently may give rise to different results in learners' linguistic development. Based on data collected using a multiple-choice questionnaire on perception of alternative speech realisation or the pragmatic meaning they assign to offered stimulus material over the course of one academic year, Matsumura (2003) did not find any significant direct effect of proficiency levels on pragmatic competence. Instead, he found the amount of exposure had greater potential to account for pragmatic development than the level of proficiency. But the amount of exposure can be constrained by the level of proficiency. That is, learners with a high level of proficiency did not necessarily develop their pragmatic competence in the target speech community if they had only a limited amount of exposure and that those with a low level of proficiency might still have developed their pragmatic competence if they had fair amount of exposure to the target speech community. But high levels of proficiency might have helped his participants in finding opportunities to interact with the target speech community, thus leading to greater levels of exposure. And greater exposure to the target language could have given rise to greater pragmatic competence. Nonetheless, neither these direct nor indirect effects were as strong an indicator of pragmatic competence as the effect of pragmatic competence on itself at the initial stage.

In addition, NSs also play an important role in learners' building some relationship with the local community. For example, some host families may not interact with learners frequently enough to be beneficial for learners' learning of the language and the culture; some even spoke more English (usually when learners are native speakers of English) than the target language (Allen, 2010).

To summarise, interactions that have multiplex characteristics are more likely to promote development compared to those that only have uniplex characteristics. To initiate interactions with NSs, some factors, such as learners' initiative and

proficiency level at entry, could potentially make a difference. But as the reader may have noticed, previous studies usually link learners' interactions with NSs to their general linguistic gains, but not specifically to their pragmatic development. In contrast, this study, concerned with learners' development in making refusals in a study abroad context, attempted to use an interview to solicit information on the learners' interactions in the local community to explore in what ways their interactions with NSs might have affected this development (see Chapter 4).

2.3 Pragmatic development and instruction

But while it is necessary to understand what impact interactions with NSs in the study abroad context might have on learners' pragmatic development, it is also important to bear in mind that the study abroad context itself does not necessarily foster pragmatic development. This is because, despite diverse, rich and frequent input that is available in the study abroad environment; it might not be salient. As Barron (2003, pp.246–247) noted: "the difficulty with second language input [in the study abroad context] appears to lie in its lack of saliency. Learners, where they are forced to notice a gap between their IL [interlanguage] productions and the L2 input have a chance of growing in its understanding. However, where input remains implicit, learners presume they are doing the right thing, and so continue along this path." Second language learners can fail to experience the crucial noticing for years in spite of sufficient and appropriate input being available to them in this context.

Therefore, as well as the study abroad context, whether or not teaching in a foreign classroom setting can influence such development has also become a research interest. These instructional studies all took place in a foreign classroom environment, aiming to investigate two questions: whether or not pragmatics can be taught in classroom and, if so, how learning can be better facilitated using different forms of instruction (e.g. explicit instruction versus implicit instruction). Such investigation is useful as if it is the case that pragmatics can be taught in the classroom, it implies that there is a different way to facilitate learners' pragmatic development besides studying abroad. As discussed earlier, the study abroad environment is not all-powerful in promoting pragmatic development. Its complexity inevitably entails various outcomes among different learners. Having the alternative of classroom teaching means another way to help learners to develop their pragmatic competence. Concerning the focus of this study, I here discuss findings regarding

both questions from previous studies. The discussion here lays some ground for the following section 2.4, where I move on to discuss the effect of intervention that took place in a different setting from these in this section, namely, study abroad. Also, I discuss some specific materials that were adopted for the instruction by some previous studies, focusing on explaining the advantages they have in facilitating pragmatic development. Different materials have different advantages, hence, might be more effective in facilitating learning different pragmatic targets. The discussion on materials for the instruction is limited to those with relevance to this study. Below, subsection 2.3.1 centres on the effectiveness of instruction, making note of research methodologies adopted in previous studies. It also discusses factors that potentially can affect the effectiveness of the instruction. Subsection 2.3.2 is about different materials that previous studies employed to construct the instruction.

2.3.1   Effectiveness of instruction

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the role that instruction can play in learners' development of pragmatic competence. They either focus on how teaching affects development of a pragmatic target compared to those who have received no instruction (Belz & Vyatkina, 2005; Billmyer, 1990; Compernolle & Williams, 2012; Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Takahashi, 2001) or investigate the effectiveness of different instructional methods, such as explicit teaching versus implicit teaching (Fordyce, 2013; Fukuya & Clark, 2001; Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009; House, 1996; S. Li, 2012; Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Narita, 2012; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Pearson, 2006; Takimoto, 2008, 2009; Tateyama, 2001; Yoshimi, 2001). Some of these studies included a delayed post-test to examine instruction's effect from a longer term perspective (Belz & Vyatkina, 2005; Takimoto, 2008). Concerning methodology, usually a combined method, namely a quantitative analysis and a qualitative analysis were used. The quantitative analysis was to examine the statistical significance of instruction on facilitating the pragmatic learning. The qualitative analysis was to reveal any specific area that instruction might have some influence on. However, as is usually the case, while the qualitative analysis always reveals some influence of the instruction on learners' pragmatic development, findings from quantitative analysis tend to be mixed.

Instructional studies started with examining whether or not receiving instruction could promote pragmatic learning in contrast to receiving no instruction. For example, Billmyer (1990) examined the use of compliments in conversation meetings that L2 Japanese learners of English had with their American language partners. She analysed the learners' compliments and responses to compliments quantitatively and qualitatively using different measures such as frequency of occurrence of norm-appropriate compliments and reply type and its effect on the interaction. Billmyer (1990) found that instruction improved the experimental group's performance in comparison to the control group. The experimental group frequently and spontaneously produced a greater number of norm-appropriate compliments, whereas most of the learners in the control group only made compliments when they were induced. Furthermore, their responses more accurately approximated native speakers; particularly in using deflect (e.g. comment). In contrast, learners in the control group relied on denials, as they tended to do in their L1 (Japanese), though they did make some simple responses with appreciation and agreement (e.g. "thank you" and "yes").

Other studies have also set out to investigate what types of instruction can be more effective in improving L2 pragmatic development. While the bulk of studies looked into different degrees of effectiveness between implicit teaching and explicit teaching, or deductive teaching versus inductive teaching, a few studies have also investigated the effectiveness of input-based practice (Fukuya & Clark, 2001; S. Li, 2012; Takahashi, 2001; Takimoto, 2009), and consciousness-raising activities (Narita, 2012) in promoting pragmatic development.

For example, Yoshimi's (2001) study examined effects of implicit instruction versus explicit instruction on the L2 Japanese learners' use of interactional discourse markers. Using both quantitative and qualitative analyses, her findings show that learners' use of the interactional markers benefited from explicit instruction in comparison to the group that received implicit instruction. Explicit instruction also seemed to have drawn learners' attention to the interactional demands of the task even in areas where no explicit instruction was provided. Overall, explicit instructional intervention was shown to be more effective in raising learners' attention to and thus in promoting learning pragmatics.

The consensus in the literature was that instruction did influence L2 pragmatic development and it can be said that, overall, explicit instruction better

facilitates such learning relative to implicit instruction (Jeon & Tadayoshi, 2006; Takahashi, 2010). But it is also worthy of note that it was not uncommon for a study to find mixed results (Cohen & Shively, 2007; S. Li, 2012; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose & Kwai-fun, 2001; Tateyama, 2001). In particular, it appeared to be rather difficult to show statistical significance of instructional effectiveness in quantitative analysis compared to using qualitative analysis to examine differences. For example, Tateyama (2001) examined the effects of explicit and implicit instruction in the use of the routine Japanese formula *sumimasen* on L2 Japanese learners. The routine formula *sumimasen* could be used in getting attention, apologizing and expressing gratitude. Tateyama (2001) found no significant differences in the quantitative analysis between the experimental group and the control group. And she argued that this might be because the amount of treatment was not sufficient. The same result was also encountered by Cohen and Shively (2007), despite the fact that the qualitative analysis revealed that the intervention might have benefited the experimental group in some specific aspects, such as the use of downgraders to requests, compared to the control group. Cohen and Shively (2007) also argued that the intervention might not "robust" enough to yield any statistical significance.

The amount of treatment was indeed found to have an impact on effectiveness of instruction. In his study on the effects of input-based practice on pragmatic development of requests in L2 Chinese, Li's (2012) finding pointed to a positive association between the amount of instructional practice and the magnitude of improvement in pragmatic performance accuracy for the production task. Using a computer-mediated pragmatic listening judgment task and an oral DCT, Li (2012) examined the effects of input-based practice on developing accurate and speedy requests in L2 Chinese. His statistical study showed that while the intensive training group (IT), who had twice as much practice as the regular training group (RT), outperformed the control group at both post-test and delayed post-test, the RT did not outperform the control group at either time point.

In addition, it has also been argued that L2 learner's proficiencies might also play a role in how effective an instructional method may be. For example, Codina-Espurz (2008) examined the link between learners' different proficiency levels and the effectiveness of explicit teaching. Her participants were Spanish EFL learners and they were assigned into two experimental groups: one with high-proficiency (lower-intermediate to advanced) and the other with low-proficiency (beginner to

elementary). And the two experimental groups were compared with each other, as well as with the control group. The instruction set its focus on request mitigation devices. Using DCT, Codina-Espurz (2008) found that the high-proficiency group displayed a more balanced use of the instructed mitigation devices at both the post-test and the delayed post-test stages than the low-proficiency group.

While learners' proficiency may be worth taking into account when considering the effectiveness of an instructional intervention, the teachability of different pragmatic features perhaps may also have some dependence on the types or the nature of the target features (House, 1996). For example, Cohen and Ishihara (2005) found that the speech acts they tested were not all equally teachable to learners of Japanese as a foreign language through explicit intervention. Requests were reported to be relatively more amenable to learning through explicit instruction. In addition, reviewing intervention studies, Takahashi (2010) noted that results concerning pragmatic teachability were also greatly influenced by the type of assessment on L2 pragmatic performance adopted in those studies and by the data analysis methods employed (quantitative vs. qualitative).

According to the findings of the studies reviewed above, instruction can facilitate pragmatic development in a foreign classroom setting and explicit instruction is relatively more effective compared to implicit instruction. If explicitly targeting on some pragmatic devices in a foreign classroom setting can facilitate development, would explicit instruction also help the study abroad learners to go further with their pragmatic development than what the study abroad context alone can afford? I will use a couple of studies that I found to discuss this question in the next section 2.4. But before then, I shall introduce some instructional materials that are relevant to this study next in subsection 2.3.2.

2.3.2 Instructional materials

This section reviews some of the components that were included as teaching materials in previous studies. They were also adopted in this study to help learners to learn refusals in Mandan Chinese (see Chapter 4 for more detail). Firstly, metapragmatic handouts, this component has been included in almost all the instructional treatments in investigations of the effects of teaching on pragmatic competence (e.g. Fukuya & Clark, 2001; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Billmyer, 1990;

Fukuya & Clark 2001 and Takahashi 2001). Handouts are particularly useful to assist classroom teaching as they save learners from being distracted when taking notes and they are also useful if learners would like to review after class.

Apart from handouts, different studies included different materials that were seen as best for the learning targets. A few studies included natural language resources to give learners a taste of how a pragmatic phenomenon is used by native speakers in natural discourses. For example, Yoshimi (1999) used live demonstration between native speakers in the classroom to present how Japanese discourse markers (i.e. *n desu*, *n desu me*, and *n desu kedo*) are used in producing non-formal, extended tellings in natural discourses. Differently, Tateyama (2001) utilized video-clips from three Japanese TV programmes to demonstrate how Japanese routine - *sumimasen* – is used in natural discourse.

In comparison to native speakers' demonstration, use of video-clips has more advantages. For one thing, multimedia materials based on original videos filmed in culturally authentic contexts, as highly evaluated by Kramsch & Anderson (1999), allow learners to get a better sense of the sociocultural context in which the language is used. Thus, "it offers the possibility of developing the sociocultural competence of language learners more readily than the pages of a textbook or the four walls of a classroom." (C. Kramsch & Andersen, 1999, p.31).

A third tool, the playback session, employed by House (1996), earned very positive evaluations in student feedback. In House's study, the playback sessions followed conversational tasks, where students were asked to reflect upon, discuss, and suggest alternative realizations of their own role-play and scenario productions with explicit reference to the metapragmatic information that they had been instructed earlier. This tool particularly helped in raising the students' ability to notice the gap between their interlanguage and native speakers' usage.

2.4   Pragmatic development and instruction in the study abroad context

The studies discussed in the last section demonstrated that instruction can facilitate learners' pragmatic development in a foreign classroom environment, and that explicit instruction tends to be more effective than implicit instruction, although this is not guaranteed in every case. The advantage that classroom teaching has, but learning through interactions with NSs out-of-class in the study abroad context usually falls short of, is that it can focus learners' attention to the specific pragmatic

target, as it filters out the pragmatic feature from potential distracters (Schmidt, 1993). Given one of the factors that hinders learners' pragmatic development in the study abroad environment is the lack of saliency of inputs, it would be useful to investigate whether or not, and to what extent, explicit instruction could lead to some additional pragmatic development, which would not necessarily be facilitated by the study abroad context otherwise. This is motivated by a desire to make more out of the diverse, rich and frequent input that the study abroad context can afford to promote learners' pragmatic development.

I have managed to locate two studies which have applied intervention to pragmatic learning in a study abroad context, i.e. Cohen and Shively (2007) and Shively (2011). The two studies adopted different designs and also differed in the content of instruction. Cohen and Shively (2007) adopted an experimental design with the control group receiving no treatment. The data was collected using DCTs and was analysed using a mixed method combining a quantitative and qualitative analysis. Shively's (2011) study only applied qualitative analysis on the data collected through natural interactions between learners and NSs at service encounters. The analysis was supported by weekly journals and interviews interpreting factors that might have contributed to the learners' improvement.

Cohen and Shively (2007) examined the impact of learning strategies on acquisition of requests and apologies in Spanish and French using DCT. The intervention comprised of two parts: at pre-departure there was a two hour orientation to the learning of speech acts and, in country, they were assigned to study the guide step by step, as well as to engage in e-journaling. While Cohen and Shively (2007) found that the entire population of the participants were statistically significantly different in their speech act performance in the post-test, there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their gains. But they revealed that twelve students in the control group against four in the experimental group performed less well on the post-test than on the pre-test.

The qualitative examination further revealed that in some specific aspects, such as use of downgraders to requests, more students in the experimental group than in the control demonstrated improvement. Cohen and Shively (2007) attributed the fact that the experimental group did not outperform the control group to the design of the intervention, arguing that perhaps it was not "robust" enough to yield statistically

significant findings for the impact of the intervention. Nevertheless, Cohen and Shively's (2007) attempt indeed benefited the participants in terms of downgrading requests.

Focusing on openings and requests in service encounters, Shively (2011) also found that some of the learners (seven American English-speaking learners of Spanish) explicitly benefited from the intervention. In addition, based on audio-recordings of naturally occurring service encounters, weekly journals and interviews, Shively (2011) found that natural interactions could implicitly socialise learners into the pragmatic norms of the local community. However, implicit socialisation was found to have some weaknesses: "the cultural point of views and the cultural values informing the behaviour" (p.1825) may not necessarily be communicated through such socialisation. In contrast, the learners who learned the norms in question through explicit explanations showed complete understanding of the local pragmatic usage of one form rather than another. But explicit explanations were not necessarily instruction. Explicit socialisation, for example some learners explicitly solicited advice from their host families as to how to make a request at the service encounter they visited regularly, could result in the same positive outcome. But, as Shively (2011) noted, the increased use of hearer-oriented and elliptical requests only benefited from the instruction. The instruction, however, did not seem to benefit all the participants equally.

To summarise, this chapter discussed L2 learners' pragmatic development and its interconnection with learners' linguistic competence and discourse competence, in particular conversational structure. It also discussed how leaners' interactions with the target speech community and the amount of language use could affect their pragmatic development. While study abroad is the context where L2 pragmatic development studies largely took place, some studies also investigated the potential of a foreign classroom setting to facilitate pragmatic development. Indeed, it is found that instruction that explicitly focus on some specific pragmatic target can effectively facilitate learners' development. A couple of studies also examined how the classroom's advantage, i.e. focusing learner's attention by filtering out potential distracters, could bring additional development of learners' pragmatic competence, thus making more out of the study abroad context.

In the next chapter, I explain how I settled on refusals as the pragmatic target for this study and on investigating whether or not, and in what ways; instruction in

the study abroad context could facilitate learners' development in making refusals. I also review previous studies that have examined refusals in Mandarin Chinese and discuss their findings that are relevant to this study.

Chapter 3 Refusals

Having reviewed how learners' pragmatic competence may develop and how interactions with NSs and instruction taking place in the study abroad context may contribute to this development, this chapter, as seen in section 3.1, begins with explaining how I decided the pragmatic target, i.e. refusal. Then section 3.2 reviews characteristics of refusals as found in in previous studies. This section is further divided into another two subsections. Section 3.2.1 focuses on use of refusals among native speakers of various L1, including Mandarin Chinese. Section 3.2.2 focuses on L2 learners' use of refusals. Lastly in section 3.3, I will introduce the research questions.

3.1   Setting the pragmatic target: the preliminary interviews

Although right from the beginning of the research process, I have been interested in investigating how L2 learners of Mandarin Chinese develop their pragmatic competence during study abroad, I was somewhat undecided on a few details. For example, what would be the pragmatic target? And how would I go about the investigation? Therefore, I planed an interview using students who had the experience of studying abroad in an attempt to understand a bit more about what might be at stake for them in their study abroad experience.

I managed to recruit seven SOAS students for the interviews: three were third-year students (Tom, Mike and Pawel), three were forth-year students (Adam, Bella and Liam) and one was a master's student at the time (Peter). They all signed a consent form. To protect their identity, the names here are pseudonyms. They had all spent a year studying in Beijing prior to the interviews. And all of them were British, except for Pawel, who was Polish. The interviews consisted of open questions and each was about 30 minutes long. It was audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The interviews helped me to decide a pragmatic target. Among other things, the interviews showed that refusals remained a challenge for these participants. For example, in his interview Adam commented on the way suggestions, such as the weather is cold you need to put on some more clothes, were made in Mandarin Chinese,

> I don't know how to explain it, but [it is] maybe a thought that they [Chinese people] know what is best for you, [they expect] you should follow what they think, I don't know, [for example] you should wear a coat, you should wear a coat, and they will

make you wear a coat; you should eat this food, [they] make you eat the rest of the food.

Adam's perception was quite a contrast to the social function of this type of suggestion as found in the literature: they are often used as small talk and/or conversation-making devices to build interpersonal rapport (Hinkel, 1994). If Hinkel's finding is true, the person who initiated these suggestions certainly had not achieved the intended rapport-building effect with Adam socially. What might have gone wrong here? That Adam did not necessarily share a common social background might be one reason. For the hearer to interpret a speech act as the way as it is intended by the speaker, critically, (s)he needs to share a common social background (G. Brown & Yule, 1983). Moreover, sharing a common social background would also allow the hearer to understand available and possible linguistic options as well as constraints in his/her responses in the context (Widdowson, 2007). As a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, I understand that it is just as common to turn down a suggestion like this without offending the person who made the suggestion as to accept it (this was confirmed by the native speakers' comments in this study: see section 5.1). I could not help asking myself, did Adam not share a common social background with regards to the social function of such a suggestion and possible responses in the context, as well as the linguistic ability to do so without offending the speaker? Could Adam's experience have been different if he had had such understanding?

Another example is from Peter's experience. When Chinese people offered to pay for him, Peter often failed to turn it down and negotiate to split the bill so that he could pay for himself. One may easily attribute this to Peter's limited linguistic ability, but it is also reasonable to ask, how had Peter tried to negotiate it? What did Peter know about refusing an offer to pay in Mandarin Chinese? These aspects that may be related to Peter's common social background shared with the L2 NSs, rather than his linguistic ability, might well give rise to learners' lack of success in the negotiation.

Evidence of how challenging it is to perform refusals is found in L1 use, too. Where the preferred response is acceptance as far as the inviter or offerer is concerned, refusals, as a dispreferred responding act, have the potential to evoke subsequent exchanges until some agreement is reached (Davidson, 1984). Moreover, conversational exchanges involving refusals tend to be structurally complex as they

often involve delays and prefaces (e.g. Davidson, 1984; Levinson, 1983). On top of this, how refusals are constructed is found to vary in different cultures (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2008b for Spanish; Gu, 1990 for Mandarin Chinese; Szatrowski, 2004 for Japanese). Concerning L2 learners in cross-cultural communications, refusals have been found to be a 'sticking point' and to be rather difficult to perform (Gabriele Kasper & Zhang, 1995; King & Silver, 1993). Considering that it is challenging, but at the same time common, to perform refusals, I decide this would be the pragmatic target in this study.

In addition, the interviews found that the study abroad experience tended to result in quite different development paths and outcomes in terms of pragmatic competence depending on the learners' experience. But undoubtedly this experience had at least stimulated some pragmatic observations in all the participants. One of the participants, Peter's narrations were particularly inspiring to me as a researcher. Commenting on the way that requests were made in Mandarin Chinese as he experienced during study abroad, Peter stated,

> They sound rude… you know… People are equal; no one needs to do anything for anyone else just because they are superior. I even make my 92 years old grandmother to say 'please' when she asks me to pass some jam.

As shown, Peter perceived the way that requests were made in Mandarin Chinese, without the occurrence of the equivalent word 'please' in English, to be 'rude'. The reason for this probably originated from the influence of the way requests are usually made in English. In general, in English requests that are constructed using a question, e.g. can you pass me the salt, are considered more polite than those formed using a statement, e.g. pass me the salt (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Thus, 'using the same model of politeness in English when speaking Chinese', as Peter has stated in his interview, he evaluated the way that requests were made 'rude' in Mandarin Chinese. However, later on in the interview, Peter reflected on his early evaluation to show the change in his thinking after taking a Chinese anthropology class for his master's,

> Before, when I was last learning Chinese, I may have made many, many assumptions which I didn't realize. [What kind of assumptions?] like, for example, politeness in English means *limao* (politeness) in Chinese. …This was sort of in my head, the idea was sort of dormant, but the idea that is growing now is that actually Chinese have a completely different worldview; things look similar but actually are completely different… I thought being polite is using what you call it, *qing* (please), that sort of thing, whereas maybe polite is not contradicting your elders maybe in

China, or something like that. Maybe I'd been polite, but very impolite for them, *bulimao* (impolite; rude), something like that.

As his interview revealed, Peter's anthropology class appeared to make him realize that there might be a completely different politeness system in a Chinese community. This finding struck me, because explicit learning of the issue appeared to help Peter to reshape his view towards some cultural differences, which in this case was the difference in the way requests were made between Mandarin Chinese and English. Prior to his anthropology class, he might have used English as a benchmark to measure differences in language use that he encountered in Mandarin Chinese and then categorised them accordingly. Following his anthropology class, Peter showed signs of evaluating differences in language use in Mandarin Chinese within its cultural context. Of course, actually applying it when he speaks Mandarin Chinese is a completely different step from Peter's realization, but at least the interview shows that understanding some perspective of the target language as were reflected in language use can potentially have some influence on learners' pragmatic competence.

The interview with Peter genuinely inspired me; I started to consider conducting some explicit instruction for study abroad learners and wondering would some explicit learning about refusals while learners were in the study abroad context improve their experience interacting with the target speech community compared to that of Adam's and Peter's? And also from a language teaching point of view, by offering some linguistic devices, could the instruction help learners to make refusals when they genuinely want to?

With these thoughts in mind, I looked into the literature regarding the role of instruction in learners' pragmatic development. As can be seen in the discussion in section 2.3, explicit instruction has been found to facilitate L2 pragmatic development compared to implicit instruction. And while the majority of instructional studies took place in foreign classroom settings, I found a couple of studies that conducted the intervention while the learners were studying abroad. Although the designs of the two studies are different from each other, they both found some potential for instruction to further pragmatic development in the study abroad context. Because there were only two studies that I have found in this area, a lot more work would still be needed before some consensus may be reached. The study abroad environment offers such an advantageous opportunity for learners to

develop their pragmatic competence compared to foreign classroom environment (Gabriele Kasper & Schmidt, 1996), it is useful to investigate some methods that have the potential to facilitate additional development of learners' pragmatic competence. This study aims to make a contribution in this area by exploring whether and/or how instruction taking place at the beginning of the study abroad period could stimulate additional development of learners' pragmatic competence. More detail is explained in Chapter 4.

Above I have explained how I came to decide to examine learners' use of refusals in the study abroad context and whether and/or how instruction taking place while learners were studying abroad could facilitate additional development of their learning in making refusals, thus making more out of this context. Previously, in Chapter 2, I have also reviewed the role of instruction in learners' pragmatic development in the study abroad context. In the rest of Chapter 3, I shall focus on the characteristics of refusals in other languages, and in particular in Mandarin Chinese, using findings from previous studies.

3.2 Refusals

In order to investigate how learners learn to make refusals, it is important to understand some general characteristics of refusals, as the learning target (e.g. learning to make a refusal versus learning to make a request) may affect how it is learned and possibly when it is learned (Gabriele Kasper & Rose, 2002). Moreover, with the focus on how refusals are learned by learners of Mandarin Chinese, features of refusals in Mandarin Chinese are also very important to understand. Therefore, section 3.2.1 begins with reviews of characteristics of refusals in various languages from previous studies that are relevant to this study. Then it moves on to introducing refusals in Mandarin Chinese as reported in previous studies. It includes some linguistic forms that functioned to mitigate refusals. After laying the groundwork, in section 3.2.2, I will move to discuss findings on L2 learners' performances of refusals.

3.2.1 L1 Refusals

Structurally, refusals are found to be extensive and complex. To begin with, refusals are found to have the potential to evoke subsequent exchanges (Davidson, 1984). Based on natural occurring conversations, Davidson (1984) found upon

hearing some utterances that have a potential for a refusal (e.g. weak agreement such as *yeah*) the inviter or offerer is likely to interpret it as the initial invitation or offer may be inadequate and thus may subsequently display an attempt to deal with the inadequacies of the initial invitation or offer by "adding more components, providing inducements, or giving reasons for acceptance" (Davidson, 1984, p.107). Thereby the inviter/offerer may provide another opportunity for a response, such as acceptance (the preferred outcome), though this may still be rejected (Davidson, 1984). The exchanges might go on until some agreement is reached.

Moreover, as with acceptance, refusals are also a responding act to invitations, suggestions and offers (Davidson, 1984). But in contrast to acceptance, which is categorized as a preferred second part (Levinson, 1983, p.303) to invitations, suggestions and offers, refusals are dispreferred. As such, Levinson (1983, p. 334), based on English, noted that refusals typically exhibit a substantial number of the following features structurally: (i) delays, including (a) pause before delivery, (b) the use of preface, (c) displacement over a number of turns via use of repair initiators or insertion sequences; (ii) prefaces, including (a) the use of markers or announcers of dispreferred seconds like Uh and Well, (b) the production of token agreements before disagreements, (c) the use of appreciations if relevant (for offers, invitations, suggestions and advice), (d) the use of apologies if relevant (for requests, invitations, etc.), (e) the use of qualifiers (e.g. I don't know for sure, but…), (f) hesitation in various forms, including self-editing;

In addition to structural extensiveness and complexity, refusals were often found to be conveyed using accounts: in an indirect way. Drew (1984), analysing subsequent sequences to invitations using natural English conversations, found that, instead of rejecting directly, the invitee could simply use reporting some circumstances or activities that usually specifically concern the invitee's ability or availability to do something in order to enable the inviter to see for herself/himself that his/her invitation is being declined, but without explicitly or directly giving a rejection. And in providing the circumstances that prevent them from accepting, the invitee's reporting contributes to "absolving their consequences from being the outcomes of personal preference, choice, and unwillingness, and the like" (Drew, 1984, p. 145).

All these characteristics of refusals based on the language of English may have to do with the fact that refusals are dispreferred, and as such, the speaker tends

to try to mitigate them to minimise the disappointment they may cause to the interlocutor. But are these findings based on the language of English applicable in languages other than English? As presented below, there are some variations found in different languages and cultures as to the extent to which refusals may be mitigated and how, oriented by what may be acceptable in the specific language and culture. However, when comparing differences among different languages and cultures, it is equally important to keep in mind variations within the same speech community and culture to avoid overgeneralisation and show respect to individual differences. Next I shall discuss some variations found in a number of languages.

Szatrowski (2004) identified some differences in terms of the way that the inviter initiates an invitation and subsequently deals with the potential for, and actual, refusal in Japanese weak-opposition[i] invitation-refusals. Unlike how English invitation-refusal proceed, as found by Davidson (1984), in Japanese weak-opposition invitation-refusal, the invitee (i.e. the refuser) relies on his/her interlocutor (i.e. the inviter) in achieving his/her refusal. As a result, instead of further issuing the invitation, the inviter devoted his/her subsequent turn to co-produce the refusal that the invitee meant. Typically, the inviter does not spell out the invitation explicitly to begin with; they only do so if encouraged, e.g. hearing the invitee's expressions of interest in the invitation. On the part of invitee, on hearing the inviter's attempt to make an invitation, some positive opinion that prefaces the actual refusal will then be spelt out, but not the actual refusal. As the ball has now been kicked back to the inviter, the actual refusal, instead, will be carried out by the inviter, who, understanding the potential that the invitee's response has for a refusal, usually would offer some reason to make it easier for the invitee to make his/her refusal.

Variations of the ways that refusals were realised among different languages can be easily seen in contrastive studies. For example, comparing refusals made by Americans and Germans using DCT data, Becker (1999) found that, among some other things, Americans tended to use more direct refusals and often used their own interests as reasons for the refusal, whereas Germans used less direct refusals and resorted to explanations other than their own interest in refusing. Chinese and American English were compared in a couple of contrastive studies. Using DCT to compare refusals to requests in Taiwan Mandarin Chinese and American English, Liao and Bresnhan (1996) inform us that, in refusing a high-status interlocutor's

request, while the equivalent to 'I'd like to help, but I cannot' occasionally occurred in the Chinese participants' refusals, this expression was employed by the American participants substantially more frequently. They noted, the difference between the two groups could be explained as that this expression was used formulaically in American English refusals, but not in Mandarin Chinese. Instead, they found the Chinese participants offered specific *reasons*, four times more than their American counterparts. In a later study using DCT to collect refusals to requests, invitations, suggestions and offers, Chang (2009) found some differences between native speakers of Mandarin Chinese (CC) and native speakers of American English (AE) in direct refusals, in particular the use of *negative ability/willingness* and adjuncts to refusals. CC used significantly more *negative ability/willingness* than AE when refusing an invitation from a boss. CC were also found to use significantly fewer adjuncts than AE in refusing offers.

Comparing refusals made by some Mexican and American males using role-plays, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) found Mexicans were more likely to negotiate a refusal with frequent attempts at indirectness whereas Americans were more inclined to offer some alternative in order to reach a compromise. Not only did he generalise some patterns of different refusal realisation in the speech communities, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) also provided an explanation that could underlie the differences in the refusal realisations with the finding in the verbal report with the participants. He noted such different realisations in refusals among the two language communities reflected some different cultural values. The individuals in the Mexican group associated indirectness with values of respect, formality, and tentativeness. In contrast, directness was often used with interlocutors of equal status, with whom the speaker could be informal and open and feel close. The Americans associated the notion of directness with clarity, fairness, honesty and straightforward responses that convey the speakers' true feelings, as well as respect for the speakers' own wants.

Variations were also found within the same speech community, among different age groups, regions and different individuals, for example. Based on role-play data supported with participants' verbal reports, Bella (2009) investigated invitations and invitation refusals in Greek that were made by two contrastive age groups: the younger age group and the older age group. She found that the younger age group view invitations as enhancing the interpersonal relationship, therefore, they insist more and prefer to use 'positive politeness strategies' (P. Brown &

Levinson, 1987). In contrast, the older age group saw invitations as possibly posing constraints on the invitee, so they hardly ever insist and appear to favour negative politeness strategies. Regional variations were reported in Félix-Brasdefer's (2010) study. Using open role-plays, Félix-Brasdefer (2010) examined similarities and differences in the realization of requests in two varieties of Spanish, i.e. Mexico City and San José, Costa Rica. Although conventional indirectness was the primary means of negotiating a request in both groups, regional differences were found with respect to the frequency and type of strategy use (direct vs. conventionally indirect requests) and the frequency and type of internal modification of the request.

Variations within the same speech community and culture can also be manifested in the change of practice (e.g. of a speech act) over time. For example, in R. Chen and Yang's (2010) study they found Xi'an Chinese responded differently to compliments compared to those in an earlier study, i.e. Chen (1993). In R. Chen and Yang's (2010) study the majority accepted the compliment, whereas in Chen's (1993) study they largely rejected it. The authors attributed the change to the influence of globalisation on culture and values and thus on people who were born in different generations. Although the example is not of refusals per se, such findings still can serve as a reminder that the practice of speech acts may vary over time among the native speakers of the same language.

Variation among different individuals, as Félix-Brasdefer (2008) has found, is 'the norm', although a realisation pattern of refusals may be generalised. Using role-plays to examine refusals among some Mexican and American males, Félix-Brasdefer (2008) found, indirect refusals were used frequently among all individuals of both the American and Mexican groups, however, the degree of indirectness varied among different individuals. Individual variations can also be seen in the preference for direct refusals and adjuncts to refusals in each group. Félix-Brasdefer (2008) attributed individual variations to different personalities, ability in conversational skill, social class and upbringings.

Having represented the characteristics of refusals in other languages that were reported in the previous studies, next I summarise refusals' characteristics specifically in Mandarin Chinese based on a handful studies that I have found. I focus on three areas where these previous studies have laid some important foundation for my study: sub-categories of the initiating acts that can elicit refusals (Yang, 2008); the tactic of reporting some circumstances that specifically constrain

the invitee's ability or availability to comply but without having to explicitly or directly articulate a refusal (Y.-F. Chang, 2009; Daniel Z. Kádár, 2012; Pan, 2012); some linguistic devices to make refusals (Ma, 1998; Wang, 2001; Wu, 2003; Yang, 2008).

Using TV series, Yang (2008) subcategorized offers into 1) Gift offers, 2) Favour offers (e.g. giving a ride), 3) Food/drink offers, and 4) Opportunity offers (e.g. job, promotion). And Yang (2008) categorized invitations into ritual invitations and real invitations. In contrast to a real invitation, a ritual invitation often occurs at the end of the interaction and is often unspecific. She subcategorized suggestions into solicited suggestions and unsolicited suggestions. Solicited suggestions are those asked by the interlocutor in order to get suggestions from the hearer, whereas unsolicited suggestions are those voluntarily given without being asked for by an initiator. Unsolicited suggestions were further differentiated into two types, i.e. personal suggestions and commercial suggestions. Personal suggestions are initiated by the speaker in order to establish or/and maintain a relationship with the listener, while commercial suggestions are to promote sales, such as a suggestion given by a shop assistant. Yang (2008) claimed that unsolicited suggestions often occur between acquaintances. In addition, she also discussed different possible refusal features that corresponded to them. For example, she found that when someone genuinely refused food or drink, a persuasive *reason, excuse or explanation* or a *statement of principle* was necessary.

Yang's (2008) sub-categories of the initiating acts has offered guidance for this study (see section 4.2.1). More specific categorisation of the initiating acts is necessary to further understand differences in refusals to the same speech act. For example, under the broad term of 'refusals to offers', Chen et al. (1995) found that *dissuade interlocutor*, *regret* and *reason* most frequently occurred, whereas Yang (2008) found that a persuasive *reason, excuse or explanation* or a *statement of principle* was necessary. But looking into it with the more specific catergorisation in mind, the difference can be easily understood: what Chen et al. (1995) found was elicited by an offer of a promotion at work, whereas what Yang (2008) found was explicitly to refusals of offers of food or drink.

To recall towards the beginning of this section, I presented the tactic that was reported in Drew's (1984) study based on the language of English. That is, the speaker may report some circumstances that specifically constrain the invitee's

ability or availability to do something but without having to explicitly or directly articulate a rejection, thereby preventing it from being interpreted as personal preference, choice, and unwillingness and the like. Such a tactic was also reported by some studies on refusals in Mandarin Chinese (X. Chen et al., 1995; Pan, 2012). In fact, this tactic occurred frequently in delivering refusals in Mandarin Chinese as recorded by Pan's (2012) study. Based on interviews with Chinese immigrants in the US, Pan (2012) found that while the 'yes' answers were clear and straightforward, a majority of the "no" answers were 'packaged' in various external factors such as a language barrier, not knowing how to drive and having to look after children, that explained the inability/unavailability to participate in the survey, but did not touch upon the desire not to participate.

Furthermore, in Mandarin Chinese the circumstances in the report that specially showed constraints on the invitee's ability or availability to comply were found to have the tendency of being more specific, which might lead to evaluation of being untrueful by speakers of another language. Using DCT to compare refusals in Mandarin Chinese and in American English, Chang (2009) found some incidences where native speakers of Mandarin Chinese (CC) were more specific in accounting for the ability or availability to do something than native speakers of American English (AE), and often the *reasons* never occurred in the AE group. Specifically, in one of the scenarios where the participants had to decline the boss's offer of a promotion, some CC used the objection of their wife/husband as an *excuse* and some said that they were not sufficiently competent for the position. None of these *reasons* occurred in AE's refusals. And in another of the scenarios to refuse to lend their notes to classmates, about a third of CC said that their notes were not perfect. Most often, CC used the *reasons* that they had lent their notes out to somebody else, whilst AE simply said that they needed the notes themselves. Facing a similar finding in the scenario of refusing to lend notes to classmates, Félix-Brasdefer (2008b, p.138) raised the importance of common cultural background in helping learners to "infer on the part of the interlocutor, including an understanding of the cultural values of formability, vagueness, and tentativeness.".

At the same time, *reasons* or *excuses* in Mandarin Chinese refusals are sometimes found to be vague and unspecific. As one learner in Kasper and Zhang's study observed, "when a Chinese says *woyoushi* (我有事, 'I have something planned'), one should not ask 'what is it you are going to do', because that

expression is a 'conventional mask' that says 'don't bother me'. Maybe nothing is going on" (1995, p. 6). With such contradictory findings, a reasonable question to raise is, how are these different *reasons* used, for example, in what context, to whom, maybe even why does one occur instead of the other?

In addition, an 'other-oriented' tactic was also reported to indirectly convey a refusal in Mandarin Chinese. Through a case study examining a historical Chinese letter that Xu Miaojin (a famous general's daughter) wrote to turn down the Emperor Yongle's proposal to marry her, Kádár (2012) found that in order to persuade the Emperor give up the idea of marrying her, Xu Miaojin contrasted the differences between herself and the Emperor demonstrating that marrying her would be a disadvantage to the Emperor.

As discussed, very frequently refusals in Mandarin Chinese are conveyed indirectly via the same tactic as reported in Drew's (1984) study: reporting some circumstances that specifically constrain the invitee's ability or availability for compliance, but without having to explicitly or directly articulate a rejection. A refusal in Mandarin Chinese can also centre on an 'other-oriented' tactic. Next I will summarise the linguistic devices that were found to be used to make refusals in previous studies (Ma, 1998; Wang, 2001; Wu, 2003; Yang, 2008). These linguistic devices set the foundation for the construction of the instruction in this study; the role of instruction in learners' pragmatic development has been reviewed in section 2.2 and the reason for the inclusion of instruction in this study has been explained in section 3.1. The detail for the construction of the instruction is presented in section 4.2.1.

Linguistic devices are also discussed in almost all studies on refusals in Mandarin Chinese, although they are more of the focus in the studies that were conducted in Chinese (Ma, 1998; Wang, 2001; Wu, 2003; Yang, 2008). Here I only summarise those that were adopted by this study, including linguistic devices to convey refusals and to mitigate refusals. G. Kasper and Zhang found (1995) that a vague *reason* can be conveyed using the formulaic expression *woyoushi* (我有事, "I have something planned"). *Alternative* is often proposed by means of attaching a final sentence question, e.g. … *haoma* (…好吗, "…is it good?") or …*keyima* (可以吗, "…is it alright?"). Choices for *statements of regret* include *baoqian* (抱歉, "apologies"), *duibuqi* (对不起, "sorry"), and *buhaoyisi* (不好意思, "embarrassing;

embarrassed"). For expressing *gratitude/appreciation* there are found, e.g. *xiexie* (谢谢, "thanks") and *xiexie nide haoyi* (谢谢你的好意, 'thank you for your kindness'). *Statements of positive opinion/feeling or agreement* often follow a pattern similar to *haoshihao, keshi…* (好是好, 可是…, 'it is good, but…').

As for linguistic resources for mitigation, cajolers, as a lexical downgrader, have also been identified. Cajolers are used to make the communicative act being transmitted more palatable to the hearer and are essentially appeals for sympathy (House, 1996). Phrases such as *laoshishuo* (老实说, 'frankly speaking'), *niyezhidao* (你也知道, 'you must know'), *bietile* (别提了, 'don't even mention'), *nizhidao* (你知道, 'you know') are often employed to assist the refuser to win empathy so as to eliminate the negative effect of refusals (S. Liu, 2009; Tang, 2004b). Other lexical downgraders include downtoners, such as *keneng* (可能, 'perhaps'), and subjectivisers such as *wojuede* (我觉得, 'I feel') and *woxiang* (我想, 'I think'). Some lexical and phrasal intensifiers have also been found. For example, intensifiers for *statements of regret* include *zhen/zhende* (真/真的, 'really') and *shizai* (实在, 'truly'). Some lexical and phrasal intensifiers are also found. For example, intensifiers for statements of regret include zhen/zhende (真/真的, 'really'), feichang (非常, 'very'), *hen* (很, 'very'), *shifen* (十分, 'extremely'), *shizai* (实在, 'truly').

In addition to linguistic devices used to form a refusal, some resources for syntactic and lexical modifiers have also been identified. For example, some Chinese scholars identified "agent avoider" as a syntactic strategy to mitigate refusals. For example, in *buhaoyisi xianzanbuxuren* (不好意思, 现暂不需人, 'sorry, [we don't need] new people at the moment'), *ren* (人, 'people, person'), which is an indefinite noun referring to any human being, is used to avoid the refusal being directly against the requestor. As such, the negative effect is lessened in orienting the refusal to everybody (Tang, 2004b). Along the same lines, Wang (2001) and Ma (1998) noted, *ni* (你, 'you') should be avoided if possible, and *zanmen* (咱们, 'we', including both the speaker and the hearer) could be used as opposed to *women* (我们, 'we', excluding the hearer from the speaker), or *wo* (我, 'I') to show the refuser's empathy by putting himself/herself in the same shoes as the requester. For example, as a refusal, *zhexie shu bu waijie* (这些书不外借, 'these books are not available to lend')

(Tang, 2004a) sounds more acceptable as opposed to *ni buneng jie zhexie shu* (你不能借这些书, 'you cannot borrow these books') unless the refuser has a good *reason* as to why these books cannot be borrowed by this particular requester.

Having discussed the findings of some previous studies, next I shall move on to the types of data that these studies based their analyses on. As can be seen in the studies reviewed earlier, with the exception of a few studies that utilised naturally occurring conversation as data such as Division's (1984) and Szatrowski's (2004) studies and semi-interactional data, e.g. role-plays such as Félix-Brasdefer's (2008b) and Bella's (2009) studies, the majority based the analyses on written Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs). This is somewhat similar to the instrument adopted by studies investigating learners' pragmatic development, as discussed in Chapter 2. Although advantages in terms of logistics can be easily understood, the use of written DCT means that the target speech act was only produced within a single exchange. This drawback perhaps could limit the potential to unfold some features of refusals. As Division's (1984) study demonstrated, one of the features of refusals is the potential to evoke subsequent exchanges until some agreement is reached. Szatrowski's (2004) study also showed how the interlocutors co-constructed refusals over a sequence of exchanges. These studies have demonstrated, to capture the complexities involved in negotiating a refusal at each step, the instrument may be more informative if it is elicits refusals in sequences. In order to observe language use by some quantity of participants in some comparable situations while at the same time keeping interactive, role-plays were an alternative (Morrison & Holmes, 2003; Sasaki, 1998). Section 4.2.2 discusses in detail on the pros and cons of different instruments, providing an explanation for the instrument that this study has chosen.

3.2.2   L2 refusals

Having discussed the characteristics of refusals in a few languages, as well as in Mandarin Chinese in the last section, in this section I move on to studies investigating L2 learners' use of refusals. Unlike with the studies reviewed in Chapter 2, where I focused on learners' pragmatic development, studies in this section, as we will see shortly, largely investigated how learners could perform refusals at a particular time point, and usually compared to NSs (Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Y. Chang, 2011; Felix-Brasdefer, 2003; Félix-Brasdefer,

2008a; Hong, 2011; Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2002, 2009; Tanck, 2002). Of these studies, most were conducted in a very similar manner to Beebe et al.'s (1990) study in that data was collected through DCT and analysed in terms of the frequency of use of different semantic formulas, the content of these formulas and, sometimes, the order of use of different formulas in comparison to the refusals elicited from native speakers. In addition, they often also looked at the influence of L1 transfer in L2 refusals. Hong (2011) is the only study that I found that has examined refusals in L2 Mandarin Chinese.

The previous studies on interlanguage refusals have revealed that adult learners come with pragmatic competence, probably benefiting from their L1 pragmatics. This is because some pragmatic knowledge is universal (cf. Barron, 2003). As a result, some learners may negotiate a refusal in a very similar way to some native speakers of the target language, but the frequency and content of some components of the refusal may to some extent differ from those of the NSs (Tanck, 2002). Nonetheless, learners' refusals, in comparison to native speakers, tend to be more direct (Y. Chang, 2011; Hong, 2011), as manifested in their over-use of direct refusals (Hong, 2011) and a lack of specificity in their explanations (Beebe et al., 1990; Hong, 2011; Tanck, 2002). In addition, learners may refuse differently from both other native speakers of their L1 and native speakers of the target language (Beebe et al., 1990). For example, learners may use some semantic formulas less frequently than other native speakers of their L1 (Beebe et al., 1990) and they may use some semantic formulas that native speakers of the target language never use (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2002, 2009). Sometimes, learners do not use some semantic formulas that native speakers of the target language do use (Hong, 2011) or they may use them less frequently than native speakers of the target language (Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2002, 2009). Also, learners are found to often be less able to adapt their refusals according to social status (Beebe et al., 1990; Tanck, 2002).

Next I shall review these studies in more detail. To begin with Beebe et al.'s (1990) study, this study may be considered highly influential, with their classification of refusal semantic formulas widely adopted in the field of studying both L1 and L2 refusals. Using DCT, Beebe et al. (1990) investigated the influences of L1 in learners' use of refusals, with two control groups, i.e. native speakers of American English (AE) and native speakers of Japanese (JJ). Analysing the refusals as a series of semantic formulas, they found that in three areas there was some

evidence of negative transfer in JE (Japanese speaking learners of English) refusals: the order, the frequency, and the content of semantic formulas.

To be specific, JE used some semantic formulas that AE did not use at all. For example, when refusing a bribe to go to a fancy restaurant, JE used *set conditions*, *alternatives* and *promise*, which were not chosen by AE. Also, when refusing to accept an offer of payment (as compensation for the vase that she broke) from the cleaning woman, JE further elaborated after employing *letting off the hook*, with *a statement of philosophy* and *a suggestion of future alternative*. AE did not use these two semantic formulas. In addition, the study showed that JE was still status sensitive, just like JJ. For example, in situations involving unequal social status (e.g. between boss and employee), JE did not employ *regret* as AE did when refusing an invitation from, e.g. an employee. Another example suggested that JE might have also transferred their status sensitivity when speaking English was their use of *alternative*. Unlike AE, who did not suggest any *alternatives* when refusing an offer, regardless of the interlocutor's social status (equal or unequal), JE suggested an *alternative* when involving unequal social status, as JJ did. But JE did not suggest any *alternative* when refusing an offer from an interlocutor at an equal status. Neither did JJ. While JE, to a certain extent, reflected JJ pragmatic habits when refusing in English, they, in fact, also started to differ from JJ. For example, in refusing suggestions, JE employed a higher percentage of *alternatives* than AE did, but their usage was less frequent than JJ. Thus, the JE learners neither approximated AE nor JJ.

In terms of the content of semantic formulas, I shall focus on the use of *reasons* as these were discussed most elaborately with regards to the difficulty for learners to get the right level of specificity in *explanations* when refusing in L2. Beebe et al. (1990) found JE were rather vague with their *excuses* as to place, time, or parties involved, whereas AE tended to be slightly more specific pointing out the place they had to go to. However, some *explanations* that JE used when refusing an offer of food were a lot more specific and 'quite graphic', whereas AE simply said, 'no, thank you.' (p.66). Similarly, in Chang's (2011) study, examining Mandarin Chinese learners of English as a foreign language in producing and perceiving refusals, she also found that the *explanations* that learners produced were significantly more specific than those found in American English. For example, in refusing the boss's request to say late at the office, the *reason* 'I'm sorry. I cannot

stay because today is my grandmother's 80th birthday' was considered appropriate and persuasive by the Mandarin Chinese learners, whereas the native speakers of American English saw it as inappropriate: it sounded like a lie and too personal.

Beebe et al.'s (1990) and Chang's (2011) studies suggest that learners of Japanese and Mandarin Chinese have the tendency to use more specific *explanations* when refusing in American English. Conversely, in Hong's (2011) study, she found that American learners of Mandarin Chinese did not provide sufficiently specific *explanations* in their refusals. Using DCT data, Hong (2011) examined Mandarin Chinese learners' performance of refusals to an invitation by a professor to a Chinese New Year party. She also found L1's explanations for declination by and large were due to family commitments, whereas half of the learners did not provide a specific explanation and another quarter used personal entertainment (e.g. going to a movie) as an explanation to decline the invitation.

Once again this difference in the degrees of specificity in their *explanations* between the learners and the NSs was found to derive from influences of the learners' L1 culture on their performances using the target language. Hong (2011) explained, historically teachers in Chinese culture 'command strict respect from their students, who never publically challenge, contradict, or criticize them'. But in American culture, 'knowledge transferred to the students by their teachers is only "truth" or "facts" that exist independently of the particular teacher' (p.132). Such different attitudes towards student-teacher power relations probably explain why learners were comfortable using direct refusals, whereas NSs of Chinese preferred to be strategic with their refusals.

Tanck's (2002) study, on the other hand, focused on similarities and differences between NSs and non-native speakers of English. Also using DCT, Tanck (2002) examined use of refusals and complaints by learners of English with a variety of L1 backgrounds using NSs as baseline data. Tanck (2002) found that learners generally produced the same components in refusals as NSs, i.e. expression of *regret*, *excuse* and offering *alternatives*. But they differed in frequency, which suggested that learners and NSs had different assessments of the necessity of using one formula or another. While learners recognised the necessity to express *regret* when refusing a professor (their frequency in expressing *regret* was almost the same as NSs'), they might feel it was less necessary to express *regret* when refusing a friend, which may be seen in the fact that they expressed *regret* with only two thirds

of the frequency of NSs'. But learners more closely approximated NSs when refusing a friend in the amount of *alternatives* that they offered, which was similar in frequency to that offered by NSs. What was more, the learners also offered nearly the same amount of *excuses* when refusing a friend, but they fell short on *excuses* when refusing professor. Not only did learners use fewer *excuses*, but also they sounded rather vague; this lack of specificity could lead to them being perceived as disrespectful.

Using role-play data to investigate refusals to an invitation at different levels of social status (equal vs. unequal), Félix-Brasdefer (2003) found that advanced learners, resembling native speakers of Latin American Spanish (SPN-SPN), displayed their competence in employing, e.g. *indefinite reply*, *negative willingness* and *gratitude*. However, their use of strategies also reflected their L1 influence. For example, they most frequently used *positive opinion*, which was only the third most frequently used strategy among SPN-SPN, but was used most frequently by native speakers of American English (ENG-ENG). The learners were also found to use some strategies that deviated from either ENG-ENG or SPN-SPN. For example, they used *hedging* significantly more than both the control groups. Through the use of retrospective reporting, Félix-Brasdefer (2003) found that about half of the learners did not have any awareness as to how the invitation would be declined by native speakers of Spanish. Hence, Félix-Brasdefer (2003) suggested a lack of L2 sociocultural knowledge may be a critical factor affecting these advanced learners' language. However, in a later study, Félix-Brasdefer (2008b) also found that awareness does not necessary translate into learners' ability to produce refusals. Using retrospective verbal reports, Félix-Brasdefer (2008b) found his advanced learners of Spanish as a foreign language reported that they simply did not know what else they could say when the inviter insisted, even though they had expected an insistence after they had declined the initial invitation.

In addition to the issues found with the use of semantic formulas, some studies also revealed that the linguistic forms associated with certain semantic formulas were non-formulaic. Using oral DCT, Chang (2011) found her learners struggled with using accurate forms in expressing some strategies including *positive opinion*, *wish*, *negative ability/willingness* and *alternative.* For example, in refusing the boss's offer of a promotion, while native speakers formulaically said, e.g. 'I'm flattered by the offer' as *positive opinion*, learners used, e.g. 'I am happy that you

think that I am a right man'. This issue was also noted in Bella's (2014) study. Examining lexical mitigation made by learners of Greek, Bella (2014) found linguistic forms to realise certain semantic formulas in learners' refusals were often non-formulaic compared to NSs. For example, NSs usually phrased *disarming comment* by means of the formula μη με τταρεξηϒειζ ('don't misunderstand me')/ μη με τταρεξηϒειτε ('don't misunderstand me', polite plural). Learners, on the other hand, used μη θυμωσειζ ('don't get angry')/ μη θυμωσετε ('don't get angry', polite plural) as disarming comment, which can be said to be non-formulaic. Realisation of *willingness* was another example. Learners at all levels, including lower intermediate, intermediate and advanced, expressed *willingness* using the subjective θα ηθελα να βοηθησω ('I would like to help') in all situations, whereas the NS preferred its present indicative counterpart θελω (e.g. θελω ττολυ να σε βοηθησω 'I really want to help you') and ειμαι (ττολυ) ττροθυμοζ/η να ('I am very willing to') depending on the context. But none of this phrasing appeared in the learners' refusals. Similarly, Bardovi-Harling and Salsbury, 's (2004) study found Japanese speaking learners of English often used unconventional forms in their agreement, which was used to mitigate the disagreement. They found that, while over time learners became able to initiate suggestions (in contrast to merely responding to suggestions which was frequently the case in early sessions) and offer credible reasons when rejecting advisor's suggestions (in contrast to non-credible ones given in early sessions), they still struggled with using appropriate forms: indeed, they continually used various forms of aggravators and ignored mitigating devices.

In addition, as shown above, a large number of studies on L2 refusals utilised the instrument of written DCTs to collect linguistic data and refusals were usually analysed within one exchange. Considering negotiation is considered a central feature in making refusals, learners' performance of refusals within just one exchange could be hardly enough to understand how they negotiate a refusal over multiple exchanges. As Gass and Houck (1999) noted, to examine refusals in sequences has the advantage of capturing complexities involved in negotiating a refusal at each step. This observation echoes the interconnection between different components of learners' communicative competence in Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model, as discussed in Chapter 2. Specifically here, to understand learners' use of refusals it is also important to examine the structure of refusal over multiple exchanges, not just within one exchange. Although studies focusing on

refusal sequential organisation are scarce, I found a couple of studies that took the discourse viewpoint in examining learners' use of refusals (Gass & Houck, 1999; Kawate-Mierzejewska, 2002).

Using telephone conversations, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) compared differences in request-refusal sequential organisation between American English speaking learners of Japanese (AJs) and native speakers of Japanese (JJs). Adopting the idea of stage developed by Szatrowski (2004) and Tsui (1994) as the meaningful unit of her analysis of request-refusals in telephone conversations, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) found that the AJs displayed greater variation in their refusal patterns, but no representative pattern was found among either the JJs or the AJs.

JJs used five different types[ii] of refusal sequence, whereas AJs used seven. And of the types of refusal sequences used by JJ, only two were in common (the Excuse type and the Delay-Excuse type). Even within these two categorical types that were common, the actual sequences differed. For example, the JJs employed similar sequences of the Excuse type (Excuse-Delay-Excuse-Excuse), whilst the AJs used three slightly different sequences (Excuse-Excuse-Excuse, Excuse-Excuse-Delay-Excuse and Excuse-Excuse-Excuse-Posi/Excuse [iii]). Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) explained that this difference between AJs and JJs might have resulted from the AJs' limited knowledge of formulaic discourse patterns and conventional expressions involved in request-refusal sequences. Regarding the Delay-Excuse type, the Delay-Delay-Excuse-Excuse sub-type, which was slightly preferred by the JJs, was under-used by the AJs'. It reflected, as Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) stated, that the JJs tended to employ more delays over multiple turns before providing an excuse, whilst AJs moved to offering *excuses* rather sooner.

In addition, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) also observed the interlanguage dynamics of AJs' refusal realization. For example, they used an Acceptance-Excuse sequence, which did not occur at all in the JJs' refusals. Specifically, some AJ participants first used Agreement to the request, then in the following sequences, they started to employ *excuses* indicating actual refusals. Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) also explained that the AJs' use of Acceptance-Excuse sequence resembled typical disagreement interactions that began with agreement and end with disagreement.

Regarding Gass and Houck's (1999) study, one of outstanding contributions that it has made to the literature, in my opinion, is their insightful exploration of analytic methodology, spurred by their semi-naturalistic data. In order to analyse the data elicited using open role-plays, Gass and Houck turned to some methodologies from discourse analysis (Vijk 1982) when they ran into restrictions with the classification system that was identified by Beetle et. al. (1999) and usually adopted by studies in refusals. As will be explained in Chapter 4, this study would have encountered a very similar challenge in analysing the data if I had adopted only Beetle et. al.'s classification system (1999). The discourse approach that Gass and Houck (1999) took was, thus, highly useful for me.

In addition, Gass and Houck's (1999) study emphasised the central role of negotiation in conducting refusals. They found two types of negotiation - negotiation of expectations and negotiation of meaning. Negotiation of expectations focused on expectations that each speaker had as to how a refusal sequence should develop and when the expectation was not satisfied, speakers, mostly native speakers, tended to 'try to find their footing in the conversation, and guide the "wayward" partner onto familiar ground' (p.204). On the other hand, negotiation of meaning included linguistic form, linguistic meaning and pragmatic appropriateness. And Gass and Houck (1999) argued it was these negotiations on the part of native speakers when conversing with L2 learners that nurtured the L2 learners, because such negotiations helped to draw L2 learners' attentions to linguistic form and meaning and pragmatic appropriateness.

In summary, as shown above, a large number of studies on L2 refusals often focus the analysis on the frequencies of the occurrence of different semantic formulas in the learners' refusal responses compared to the NSs'. Although the linguistic devices that are associated with certain semantic formulas were discussed in some studies, usually the analysis was focused on how these linguistic devices were non-formulaic compared to the NSs'. However, as discussed in section 3.2.1 with use of refusals among native speakers of various L1, the speaker usually attends to the potential negative effect of refusals on the interpersonal relationship through the way refusals are delivered. For example, refusals were conveyed indirectly, reporting some circumstances that specifically constrain the invitee's ability or availability, rather than having to explicitly or directly articulate a rejection, in order to prevent them being interpreted as personal preference, choice, unwillingness and

the like (Drew, 1984; Pan, 2012). But this perspective, i.e. the likelihood of refusal to cause potential negative effect on the interpersonal relationship, has not been clearly highlighted in the L2 pragmatic studies reviewed above. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2, pragmatic production requires exact and accurate linguistic knowledge of lexis and morphosyntax so that the pragmatic functions that the learners perform are understood precisely (Taguchi, 2010). But previous studies have not yet connected learners' linguistic competence, as reflected in their use of linguistic devices in making refusals, to their likelihood to cause potential negative effect on the interpersonal relationship. In addition, while some previous studies showed the importance of a discourse approach in investigating refusals, the survey of the literature indicated that more studies are needed to shed more light in this regard.

3.3 Research questions

This study aims to contribute in these areas as summarised above, focusing the examination on learners' development in their use of linguistic devices, semantic formulas and structure of refusals by using a longitudinal approach. This study is also concerned with whether or not, and how, instruction taking place in the study abroad context could facilitate this development. To examine L2 learners' refusals, it is important to understand how NSs may make a refusal in the same context. Therefore, this study aims to answer three questions.

1. What information can the NSs' refusals tell us about the use of linguistic devices, semantic formulas and refusal structure in terms of:
   a. Clarity
   b. Potential effect on the interpersonal relationship
2. How have the learners developed their use of linguistic devices and semantic formulas in making refusals and how have they developed the structure of their refusals?
3. Does the instruction result in any significant difference in E-group's performance compared to C-group at the post-instruction and post-study abroad stages in the above two aspects? In what ways could the instruction facilitate learners' development? In what ways could interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent on using the L2 outside classroom facilitate their development?

Next in Chapter 4, I shall explain how these research questions will be answered.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

This chapter details the instruments used to collect data and the analyses undertaken in order to answer the research questions as introduced at the end of the last chapter. It begins with an introduction of the participants in this study including both learners and NSs in section 4.1. Then in section 4.2 it moves on to the instruments that were opted for to collect the data and the procedure for the data collection. Section 4.3 explains which analyses were conducted and how.

4.1   Participants

This study had two groups of participants: 12 L2 Mandarin Chinese learners and 56 native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. To protect their identities, all the participants' names in the report are pseudonyms.

4.1.1   The L2 Mandarin Chinese learners

The learners were students from SOAS, University of London. As an integral and compulsory component of their university degree program, in their second year (September, 2010), they went to Beijing Normal University to continue learning Mandarin Chinese.

While still in London, I contacted all the students who were going to Beijing through a few emails. In these emails, I explained my research and encouraged the students to voluntarily participate in my research. Only one student replied to my email, saying she was very interested and wanted to help. Her name is Louise. After arriving in Beijing, I met up with Louise. And through her, I met other students and some of them agreed to participate. In the meantime, in order to attract more students, I (a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese) also offered help, especially in situations in which speaking Mandarin Chinese was essential. A few students actually used my help, such as in finding an apartment to rent. In return, they all participated in the research, although some dropped out over time.

Initially, 20 students (some of them dropped out and some were excluded from the analysis for reasons to be given below) signed up. They all signed the consent form and were aware that they had right to withdraw at any stage if they wanted to do so. I am permitted to use their data.

To begin with, every participant took a SOPI (Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview) to test his/her proficiency level at the starting point of the study abroad period. SOPI is an established tape-mediated test of speaking proficiency and all its items are based on the speaking proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Compared to OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) that has been adopted in many studies (Diao et al., 2011), SOPI was more manageable taking into account time and financial constraints. SOPI also has a more established testing system compared to CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), which was more commonly used in Europe but rather underdeveloped to test non-European languages such as Mandarin Chinese (see Appendix D for the operation of SOPI and its proficiency levels).

Based on their SOPI results, the participants were quasi-randomly assigned into two groups, i.e. an experimental group (hereafter referred to as E-group) who would receive some explicit instruction on refusals and a control group (hereafter referred to as C-group) who received no instruction. The assignment was quasi-random, rather than totally random, because minor adjustment was made to ensure that the two males were split between the two groups and the learners in the two groups had similar Chinese proficiency levels. In addition, it also had to take into consideration that everyone in E-group would be happy to make the commitment to the instruction.

Three participants dropped out at different stages. Of the 17 learners that completed the study, five were excluded from the sample for the final analysis to ensure that there were equal numbers of learners who were at the same proficiency level in each group. Of the five students who were eliminated, four were from C-group and one from E-group. In C-group, one was excluded because she had one Chinese parent. Although she did not grow up being spoken to in Mandarin Chinese (nor Cantonese), as she pointed out in her interview, she was 'raised up half Chinese'. Thus her cultural background could be considered advantageous, especially because there was no learner in E-group that had such a background. The other three were eliminated because their proficiency levels were either too low or too high. In E-group, the one student was eliminated because she did not refuse in most of the role-plays.

As a result, 12 learners' role-play performances are used for analysis, with six in each group. Five are females and one is male in each group. Their average age was

20; the youngest were 19 and the oldest was 24. In terms of their proficiency level (SOPI results) at entry, the learners were equally split in each group, with four Intermediate-Low and two Intermediate-Mid.

According to the information given in their pre-study abroad questionnaire, as Table 1 shows, the majority of the participants grew up as monolingual, with two who grew up as bilingual: Jasmine speaks English & German and Molly speaks English & Spanish. These two bilinguals both happened to be in E-group. Among the monolinguals, most of them have English as their first language, with one in each group who has a different language, i.e. Louise's first language is German, she is in E- group and Grace's first language is Polish and she is in C- group.

Table 1: learners' background information

		Length of studying Mandarin Chinese before university	Has been to Mainland China
E-group	Emma:	2 weeks (2007)	Yes. She visited China on a school trip for two weeks. This was when she learned two weeks' Mandarin.
	Mia:	3 weeks (2007)	Yes. She has visited China for three week. This was when she learned 3 weeks' Mandarin.
	Molly:	2 years (2008-2009)	No
	Jasmine:	None	No
	Louise:	None	No
	Leo:	None	No
C-group	Abby:	4 x 2 hrs. session (2005)	No
	Oscar:	8months (2008)	Yes. He visited in the summer of 2009. By then, he had studied Mandarin Chinese for 8 months, and used a phrase book to help him get around.
	Daisy:	9 months (2008-2009)	Yes. She had a visit with a school trip in 2006
	Alicia:	1 year in 6th form	No
	Grace:	None	She visited southern China for 2 weeks.
	Emily:	None	She had three visits between 2006 and 2007 with school trips.

As seen in Table 1 above, some learners had experience learning Mandarin Chinese prior to university. Apart from the reflection of their Mandarin Chinese proficiency level in their SOPI rest, Molly and Alicia displayed more confidence in speaking. For example, Molly requested to take the full version of the SOPI test at the pre-instruction stage, while only short version was used with the rest of the learners. But to be consistent, like the rest of the learners, Molly's result was also only based on the short version of the test.

In terms of their experience living in a situation where they were exposed to a language other than their mother tongue prior to their study abroad in Beijing, Louise (E-group) and Grace (C-group) probably were most experienced. Louise's mother tongue is German. She went to a United World College (UWC) in India for two years' high school between 2006 and 2008, where she was taught primarily in English. The striking feature about UWC is that their students come from a very wide range of countries all over the world. Louise also worked as a volunteer in Argentina for six months in 2009 where she learned to speak Spanish. And at that time Louise was doing a degree in London, which of course should also be recognised as experience of living in a situation where she was exposed to a language other than her mother tongue. As for Grace, her mother tongue is Polish. She lived in Spain for a summer to learn Spanish. And similarly to Louise, because her mother tongue is Polish, her experiences of going to high school in England and doing a degree in London are also considered as experience living in a situation where she was exposed to a language other than her mother tongue. The other four learners all had very brief experience in this regard; mostly short term visits.

The learners had various levels of experience of visiting China prior to their study abroad in Beijing. Two learners in E-group had visited China before; Emma and Mia. Emma went with a school trip, Mia went to visit and studied Mandarin Chinese for a few weeks. In C-group, four out of six learners had visited Chinese before. Oscar (C-group)'s entry in the questionnaire is worthy of note; he had studied Mandarin Chinese for eight months before he went to visit China and while visiting he used a phrase book to help him get around, suggesting Oscar used his Mandarin Chinese during the visit. Thus, to a certain extent, Mia's and (especially) Oscar's experience visiting China may have had different implications for learning in that their experience interacting with the local community was not mediated by schools or other organisations.

As for how often they communicated with native speakers of Mandarin Chinese in Mandarin apart from their teachers, Emily (C-group) was the only one who reported that she used it on a monthly basis. She wrote, 'I kept in touch with a friend from Beijing. We used to email entirely in English. Since studying at SOAS I have used what I have learned to email in Chinese, or a mixture of Chinese and English. My friend is keen to correct mistakes and encourage me to use Chinese.' The rest of them all communicated irregularly, i.e. a few times a year.

4.1.2 The native speakers of Mandarin Chinese

Refusals were also collected from 56 native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. They also signed the consent form that had been translated into Mandarin Chinese. The majority of the NS were undergraduates, who were aged between 18 and 23. Among them 14 were male and 42 were female. It is worthy of note that, although all these NSs speak Mandarin Chinese, many of them also speak another dialect. Although they were all fluent Mandarin speakers and perfectly understandable, they still, to differing extents, carried their dialectical features when speaking Mandarin, for example, in their accents. These NSs were from various different regions in China, including from four autonomous regions (out of five), one municipality (out of four), and15 provinces (out of 22).

The NSs participated in all three sets of role-plays; 20 of them role-played in the scenarios collected at pre-instruction, 19 role-played in those collected at post-instruction and 17 in those collected at post-study abroad. In addition, a brief interview was conducted after the role-plays to elicit the NSs' views towards the initiating acts and the corresponding refusals.

However, not necessarily all the NSs' performances are included in the final analysis. Inclusion depends on whether or not they carried out their refusals to completion. Thus, for example, although 20 NSs role-played the scenarios collected at pre-instruction, only 13 are included for analysing refusals to invitations and 12 are included for analysis of refusals to personal suggestions (see Table 5 for the percentage of the NSs making refusals). And the people who were included for refusing the invitation were not necessarily the same people who were included for refusing the personal suggestions.

In addition, another Chinese person (Xie) and I also participated in the role-plays. The role-plays were designed to elicit refusals from these participants concerning two different social groups, i.e. friends and acquaintances. Throughout all the role-plays, I played the role of a friend and Xie played the role of an acquaintance. Xie at the time was a final year master's student from Shandong province.

4.2 Instruments and procedures

This study was essentially to answer three questions. First, how do NSs usually use linguistic devices and structure their refusals? Second, how do learners develop in these aspects? Third, whether or not and how instruction could affect learners' this development and in what ways do learners' interactions with NSs affect their development? To answer these questions, a few instruments were utilised: open role-plays (to collect linguistic data from both NSs and learners) and interviews and questionnaires (to collect information on learners' interactions with NSs). In order to investigate whether or not and how instruction could affect learners' development, the study also involved instruction. The following subsection 4.2.1 explains the design of the instruction and section 4.2.2 accounts for the instruments used to collect the data, including the choice of open role-plays and interviews and questionnaires that were used to collect data on learners' interactions with NSs. Section 4.2.3 explains the procedure that this study followed in the field to collect the data.

4.2.1   Instruction

The instruction took place at the beginning of the study abroad period. Its objective was to facilitate some additional learning of refusals, allowing learners to take better advantage of the study abroad context. Because this study is also interested in finding out whether or not instruction can result in any significant effect on learners' development, it included a control group. The instruction was only given to the experimental group; the control group received no instruction.

Regarding the content, the instruction set out to introduce how refusals can be conveyed in Mandarin Chinese and it also included some specific linguistic devices for making refusals. As refusal is a response move, to effectively deliver a refusal it is necessary to understand the initiating acts to which learners might want to refuse. Thus, some pragmatic features about the four initiating acts were also included. Next, I explain specifically what was included in the instruction and how it was carried out.

The instruction drew on findings from previous studies on Mandarin Chinese, as reviewed in section 3.2.1. Video-clips were chosen to introduce how refusals were operated among native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. The advantages of using

videos-clips were multi-fold. As Kramsch & Andersen (1999) noted, video incorporates societal contexts and culture with language use. 'Through multimedia in particular, language is no longer just a list of grammatical paradigms or lexical items. Rather, it is intimately associated with all kinds of verbal and paraverbal behaviours, and acoustic and visual context that is indissociable from the larger context in which the words are uttered. Language, in a sense, has become culture. Similarly, culture is no longer just the factual pieces of information that textbooks present in the form of culture capsules on foreign mores, but is produced and reproduced under our very eyes, on the screen, through what people say and how they say it. In multimedia, culture is inscribed in language use' (Kramsch & Andersen, 1999, p.31). In addition to richness of the context and culture that video-clips provide to learners together with the use of the target language, use of video-clips makes it possible to show how refusals were used by a wide range of native speakers, e.g. with different accents, speaking speeds, personalities, and educational backgrounds. This is also an advantage that, for example, textbooks do not have.

The video-clips that were selected for the instruction were extracted from three contemporary TV dramas, i.e. 蜗居 (Narrow Dwellings), 和空姐一起的日子 (Living with a Stewardess) and 奋斗 (Struggle). 'Narrow Dwellings' was first broadcast in November 2009 and was primarily about two sisters who were originally from a small town that tried to start their lives in Shanghai with the big sister striving to buy her own apartment, while the little sister was searching for the meaning of life. 'Living with a Stewardess' was first broadcast in March 2010. The story took place in Shenzhen and was about a young online game designer who was trying to win a heart of an airhostess who lived in the same building. 'Struggle' was first broadcast in May 2007. It took place in Beijing and was about a young architect and his friends who were trying to start their careers at the same time as searching for love in their lives.

In addition to their accessibility from Britain, these TV dramas were chosen because they reflect contemporary young people's pursuits and issues in Chinese society, covering three of the biggest cities in China and it was hoped that these would interest learners and engage them in discussions during the instruction. More importantly, these video-clips were extracted in an attempt to best demonstrate the refusals' features that were reported in previous studies. However, it is notable that

the instruction was not specifically designed according to the scenarios chosen for the role-plays. Rather, the choice of video-clips aimed to improve learners' general understanding of the initiate acts and the corresponding refusals.

The video-clips included in the instruction were all transcribed using both Chinese and English. The words that I believed that the learners were unlikely to have learned were listed out with pinyin to assist with pronunciation and with English translations. And these transcripts were given to the learners at the beginning of each instruction session, together with a copy of the PowerPoint slides that I used for each instruction. These PowerPoint copies included all the information that was covered during the instruction, so that students could review it whenever they would like.

The actual instruction was organised in four different sessions with each focusing on one type of refusal according to the initiate acts, namely: refusals to suggestions, refusals to invitations, refusals to offers and refusals to requests, with the subcategories specified in Yang's (2008) study in mind (see section 3.2.1). Each session was two hours long, largely using discussions to raise E-group's attention to some characteristics of the initiating acts and the corresponding refusals, as well as their differences or similarities to those in English. Some linguistic devices that were useful to make refusals were introduced alongside the relevant video-clips.

Discussion was chosen as the main means to deliver information about suggestions, invitations, offers and requests and refusals to suggestions, refusals to invitations, refusals to offers and refusals to requests in Mandarin Chinese. This was because I recognised the sensitivity regarding teaching culture and pragmatics to learners that had been raised in the literature (Ciler, 2003; Judd, 1999; C. J. Kramsch, 1993; Pearson-Evans & Leahy, 2007), and learners' subjectivity in learning L2 pragmatics (Siegal, 1995, 1996). The advantage of discussion in teaching pragmatics, in my opinion, is that it can help to raise learners' attention and awareness to certain issues, but also leaves space for learners to form their own opinions and thus decide how they would like to deal with the issues that have been raised.

Specifically, each session began with a few open questions which were associated with the learners' own experiences that eventually led to the relevant refusal. Before the actual video-clip was played, the words that I thought might be unfamiliar to the learners were explained so as to facilitate the learners' comprehension. Furthermore, each video-clips was played three times and each time

a question was asked to guide the learners through the video-clip, e.g. where did the scene take place, or by whom to whom was the suggestion made? This was also to give the learners more opportunities to understand the clip. And the questions were asked separately so that it was more manageable for the learners. The video-clip was followed by further discussion, e.g. how did the refuser perceive the initiating act and why? What semantic formulas were used to refuse and what was the effect on the refusee? What was the refusee's reaction after being refused? These discussions intended to raise learners' attention as to how the initiating acts were perceived and possible semantic formulas that might be employed and their effect on the interlocutor. At the end of each session, the learners were asked to pair up to role-play the refusal scenarios in the video-clips. This was to help to familiarize the learners with the contexts where refusals were made and especially with the linguistic devices that refusers chose. But because of the time constraints, these practice sessions were rather short; around five minutes.

The instruction took place right after the first set of role-plays. Because of logistics, such as the learners' availability, it was organised in four different sessions with each session two hours long. Because these sessions were in the evenings so that it did not clash with the learners' classes, the session length was designed to be just long enough to cover the topic, but not so long as to exhaust the participants. But this time constraint made me cut short the practice session, which was originally planned to be about an hour long so as to allow for a playback session. A playback session is where learners are asked to reflect upon, discuss, and suggest alternative realizations of their own role-play productions with explicit reference to the metapragmatic information they had been instructed earlier (House, 1996).

Even though not all the refusals covered in the instruction were included for the final analysis (see section 4.3.3), all four sessions will still be explained here because often the learners applied what they learned in one session (e.g. offers) in a different scenario (e.g. invitations). Focusing on the content of the instruction that was more relevant to the current report, Table 2 summarises the video-clips that were used, the semantic formulas and linguistic devices brought to the learners' attention and the discussion points used to raise their attention to specific cultural aspects relating to the initiating act and the corresponding refusal.

Table 2: What was covered in the instruction

	Refusals to Offers	Refusals to Suggestions	Refusals to Invitations	Refusals to Requests
Video-clips used	9 video-clips were used to introduce refusals to (1) offers of food and drink, (2) offers to pay, (3) offers of a favour, (4) offers of an opportunity (5) offers of gifts	4 video-clips were used to introduce refusals to (1) personal suggestions, (2) commercial suggestions, (3) a solicited suggestion	6 video-clips were used to introduce refusals to invitations	6 video-clips were used to introduce refusals to requests
Linguistic devices and semantic formulas	- Use of *buyong, biemafanle* (不用，别麻烦了, 'don't be bothered') and *bumafanle* (不麻烦了, 'don't trouble (yourself)') in refusals to offers of food and drink - Repeating *nonperformative statement*: *buyong, buyong, buyong* (不用, 不用, 不用, 'no need, no need, no need') - Use of *wolai* (我来, 'let me') to refuse offers to pay - Use of *yaobu…*(要不…, 'or'; 'how about…') and its variations and *…zenmeyang/haoma* (…怎么样 / 好吗, '…is it okay') to propose *alternatives*. - Use of linguistic devices to soften/intensify refusals - Use of *bule, women hai youshir ne* (不了，我们还有事儿呢, 'no, we've got other stuff to sort out') to refuse ritualistic invitations. - Use of time constraints, e.g. *zhejitian* (这几天, 'these few days') in refusals, and proposal at some indefinite time, e.g. *xiaci* (下次, 'next time') - Different uses of *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') vs. the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) in refusals - Use of cajolers such as *nizhidao* (你知道, 'you know') and *zhenbuqiao* (真不巧, 'unfortunately') in refusals			
Discussions points	- The way offers, unsolicited suggestions and invitations are usually made in Chinese, especially when they are repeated - How the initiating acts are made and refused differently between the interlocutors with different relationships - The use of *alternative* on the interpersonal relationship in refusals - Blameful manner in the offeree's response to the gift offered - How do requests differ from offers and invitations and how refusals to requests may be different from those to offers and invitations			

Although previous studies played an important role in guiding me to choose which video-clips to include for the instruction, because the literature only provided limited information on some topics (e.g. personal suggestions and refusals to personal suggestions), I also incorporated other examples of linguistic devices that happened to occur in some of the video-clips that I believed to be useful in relation to refusals, for example, the use of *yaobu…* (要不…, 'or'; 'how about…') to lead an *alternative* or different uses of *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') versus the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), which is also translated as 'cannot' in refusals (see section 6.2.2).

How semantic formulas could be sequenced in a refusal were demonstrated through one of the video-clips concerning refusals to invitations. In that scenario, the refuser first used a *nonperformative statement* supported with a more general *reason*. When the invitation was reinitiated, the refuser elaborated the *reason* explaining why he could not comply. When the invitation was pressed again, the refuser suggested an *alternative* to compensate for his absence. In his last refusal, he simply employed a *negative ability* to confirm his refusal. But at the time the importance of the structure of semantic formulas over different exchanges was not apparent to me as the researcher and, thus, was not explicitly highlighted to the learners in the instruction.

However, there turned out to be a notable gap between what was covered in the instruction, especially with regards to linguistic devices and those devices that occurred in the NSs' refusals as later revealed. The NSs' data also highlighted the importance of refusal's structure, which was not included in the instruction. These gaps were primarily because many aspects that were found to be important for negotiating a refusal in the NSs' data in this study were not highlighted by previous studies, and at the time the instruction was constructed, it was not obvious that these linguistic devices, semantic formulas and refusal structure would necessarily be challenging for learners. However, the NSs' data critically helped to set a reference. As can be seen in Chapter 5, using the NSs' data, I presented in what ways a variety of linguistic devices could differ in achieving refusals' clarity and attending to the interpersonal relationship. Nevertheless, it may still be worth keeping these gaps in mind when interpreting the findings with regards to the effectiveness of the instruction.

4.2.2 Instruments

This section describes the instruments that this study used to collect the data, including open role-plays, interviews and questionnaires. To begin with, I explain why open role-plays were chosen through comparing the pros and cons of this instrument with the other available options including DCT and naturally occurring conversations. This is followed by introducing the design of the role-plays. Then I move on to explaining why interviews and questionnaires were used to collect information on learners' interactions with NSs, as well as how these two instruments were designed.

Open role-plays

To examine L2 learners' production of certain speech acts, in principal, two types of data have been utilised in previous studies: naturally occurring conversations and elicited data. In general, Discourse Completion tasks (DCTs), closed and open role-plays have been undertaken to elicit data (Gabriele Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Of the instruments, DCTs 'have been a much used and much criticised elicitation format' in L2 pragmatics (for details see Gabriele Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 221). Hence, here I only focus on the factors that have influenced my decision to use open role-plays. First of all, I am interested in learners' pragmatic development in communicating a refusal face-to-face, thus, it is key that the instrument solicits speaking data. Although written data, to some extent, reflect and can reveal some characteristics of a speech act, it is still principally different from speaking data (Sasaki, 1998). As Bardovi-Harlig and Salsbury (2004) have emphasized, 'only through the studying of speaking can the development of turns be understood.' (p.199). Thus, speaking data can more accurately reflect learners' use of refusals in face-to-face interactions.

Secondly, as the closest instrument to naturally occurring interactions, role-plays 'allow examination of speech act behaviour in its full discourse context' (G. Kasper, 2001). Hence, role-plays are able to display the process as well as the interactive features of negotiating a refusal, as also noted in Gass and Houck's (1999) study. Considering the current research focus - refusals - this is a particularly appealing advantage. However, although the instrument of role-plays allowed to unfold the process of the negotiation within the context of the role-play, which went beyond the level of just a single response, it didn't have a real life function as natural conversations would (cf. Golato, 2003).

Being aware of this disadvantage of role-plays, in this study I have also tried to collect some naturally occurring interactions between the learners and the target speech community. Learners were given an mp3 recorder and asked to record their conversations when they interacted with NSs. A fairly good number of recordings were collected at the beginning. But as time went on, the learners got more occupied with their study and life in Beijing, and it became too much effort for them to continue. At the same time, considering the amount of work that the learners and I had to put into collecting these recordings and the outcome of this process, it was not

at all successful. In about sixty-three hours of recordings of natural conversations that the current research collected, only one refusal was captured. This was the case partially because the target speech act was refusals, as well as a high incidence of mistakes involved in the process of making the recording. Refusals are responding acts; they can only be solicited if the potential initiating acts take place first. And even if a potential initiating act does take place, it is still not guaranteed that it would solicit a refusal, which further reduces the chance that a refusal happens. As a result, the unpredictability as to how long it may take to collect a sufficient volume of data makes this instrument unrealistic; to collect enough to make some comparison of the same learners' development over time as well as from different learners had become almost impossible within the study abroad period.

Also, naturally occurring interactions are not suitable for certain comparisons as contexts and participants are usually different every time. Role-plays on the other hand, make comparisons possible as contexts and participants can be controlled. The only naturally occurring data undertaken in the past, as Kasper and Rose (2002) reviewed, has predominantly focused on institutional discourse, for example the academic advising sessions in Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) study and oral proficiency interviews, for example in Young and He's (1998) study. As Kasper and Rose (2002) further noted, compared to natural interpersonal conversation, institutional discourse has the advantage of being more highly structured, routinized, and recurrent, which could allow the researchers to observe native speakers and learners in the same social roles and contexts. Shively's (2011) study also used naturally occurring conversation between learners and service providers in service encounters (e.g. at a butcher). She examined the learners' requests focusing on a few linguistic aspects, for example opening of the requests and address forms and how they changed over the course of one semester and how the intervention effected the learners' pragmatic development. Like the other studies, the key that allowed Shively's (2011) study to make the comparisons of the same learners over time and among each other was that these service encounters were to some extent standardised in terms of the exchanges between a customer and the service provider and thus made them comparable. Some learners even reported their experience in the same service encounter through the semester.

The studies that have utilised naturally occurring data suggest a possibility to use naturally occurring data if the interactions between the learners and the native

speakers are relatively structured and recurrent. However, such settings precondition the potential pragmatic target can be investigated. As discussed in Chapter 3, refusals are the second of an adjacency pair. Hence, it is much less predictable as to when or if it would actually occur compared to, e.g. request, which is the first of an adjacency pair. In short, although I recognised it would be useful to have some naturally occurring conversations between the learners and the target speech community to observe their development in making refusals over time and did attempt to collect some, in reality, it was not realistic to use this instrument for the design of this study. Considering all the advantages and disadvantages of the three instruments, role-plays were opted for as the primary instrument.

After the instrument was decided, I set about designing the scenarios to elicit refusals. The initial scenarios included all four initiating acts, i.e. suggestions, invitations, offers and requests, which took place between two different social distances, i.e. friends and acquaintances (see Appendix A). In these scenarios, I chose to use situations that learners were likely to encounter in real life where they may want to refuse. I also hoped that the pre- and post-instruction role-plays could, to some extent, prepare the learners for situations that had a reasonable probability of happening during their time in Beijing.

Altogether three different sets of role-plays were conducted with the learners and they were collected at three different time points; prior to the instruction (hereafter is referred to as pre-instruction role-play), following the instruction (hereafter is referred to as post-instruction role-play) and towards the end of their studying abroad period (hereafter is referred to as post-study abroad role-play). To reduce test effect, especially considering that there was only about two weeks' gap between the pre- and post-instruction role-plays, some scenarios were replaced by a different subcategory of the same speech act at post-instruction. Taking refusals to offers for example, at pre-instruction the participants needed to refuse the acquaintance's food offer, but at post-instruction, they needed to refuse his offer to pay for a shared taxi, which fell in a different subcategory, i.e. refusal to an offer to pay. But because there was a much bigger gap between the post-study abroad and pre- and post-instruction role-plays (about seven months), only minor changes were made in the post-study abroad role-plays. For example, the food that the acquaintance offered to try was different - fish head in the pre-instruction role-play and deep-fried locusts in the post-study abroad role-play.

The same role-plays were also administered to the NSs, some with minor modifications. These changes were to ensure that the scenarios also made sense in Chinese people's experiences. For example, in the learners' pre-instruction role-play, fish-head was used to elicit the learners' refusals (to a food offer). However, fish-head was almost guaranteed to fail to elicit refusals from Chinese people, as it was seen as a common dish in Chinese people's eyes. Thus, the food was changed to deep-fried locusts in this scenario for the NSs.

Because this study adopted open role-plays, the learners and the NSs were not specifically told that they had to refuse. Rather, they were only instructed some reason that potentially could give rise to a refusal. For example, in the pre-instruction scenario they were requested to help with an acquaintance's English application for an American university. The participants were instructed that they had an essay to turn in the following Monday. Although this reason potentially could solicit the participants' refusals, refusals, however, were not the only choice that the participants had to make. As a result, some scenarios essentially failed in eliciting refusals (see section 4.3.3).

As for the administration of the role-plays with the learners, the pre- and post-instruction role-plays were conducted on my first trip. There was about two weeks' gap between the two sets of role-plays. The post-study abroad role-plays with the learners took place on the second trip towards the end of their study abroad period. The gap between the post-instruction role-plays and the post-study abroad role-plays was about seven months. The actual role-play took between approximately ten and fifteen minutes for all three stages. On the day of each role-play, role-play cards, together with an instruction card, were handed to the participants. They were all written in English to avoid confusion. The learners were given time to read through the instruction and the scenarios. Questions and problems, if there were any, were discussed. All the role-plays with the NSs took place on the second trip, and the same procedure as with the learners was followed in administrating the role-plays with the NSs. The instruction and the role-play cards were all written in Mandarin Chinese.

Interview and questionnaire

To understand as to how learners' interactions with NSs could affect their development in making refusals as was observed in the role-plays, this study also

used an interview, together with a questionnaire. As discussed in Chapter 2, qualitative approaches such as interviews and learning journals can help to further understanding of learners' experience interacting with NSs in a study abroad context (c.f. Dewey et al., 2013; Schauer, 2006). And Language Contact Profile (Freed et al., 2004) is often used (Taguchi, 2008) to collect the amount of time that learners used the L2 out-of-class. To understand how learners' interactions with NSs could affect their pragmatic development, this study also utilised an interview as a complementment to collect information as to who and how they interacted with NSs.

The questionnaire was adopted based on the Language Contact Profile (Freed et al., 2004) with some alterations made by me. Because the questionnaire was collected towards the end of the study abroad period, it is referred to as post-study abroad questionnaire in Appendix B. The questionnaire documented the amount of time that the learners spent using the L2 outside classroom based on their self-evaluation. The questions in the questionnaire asked learners to indicate how many days per week and how many hours per day they spent doing certain activities, including: using each of the four basic language skills in Mandarin Chinese (i.e. speaking, reading, writing and listening), interacting with NSs, and using English, which was mother tongue of majority of the learners and other languages other than English and Mandarin Chinese.

While the questionnaire could provide an estimate on the total amount of time per week a learner spent on each activity, to gain a more comprehensive picture of the learners' study abroad experience and the role that had on the learners' development, this study also conducted an interview with all the participants after they came back to England (see Appendix C). The addition of the interview could further our understanding related to language use. In addition, the interview solicited E-group's feedback on the instruction, which could provide some support for the interpretation of the instruction's effect on E-group's learning of making refusals in the role-plays.

Specifically, the interview questions for E-group and C-group were the same apart from the questions eliciting E-group's views towards the instruction. The topics included: (1) feedback about instruction, (2) their interactions with native speakers on a regular basis, (3) questions about some of their role-play performances, and (4) their learning of some grammar that was relevant to refusals. For C-group, question (1) was replaced with their feedback on how beneficial it was to participate in the

role-plays in terms of learning refusals. As a part of seeking the learners' feedback, a 5-point scale evaluation was conducted with both E- and C-groups with 1 being least helpful and 5 being most helpful.

The interview questions were first piloted with one learner in E-group in order to ensure that the amount of time it took was suitable. The researcher tried to control the interview to be within an hour for E-group. The time that it would take C-group was expected to be less, as discussion on the effectiveness of the instruction would be absent. The interview questions were revised to make it shorter after the pilot study, and the final version took everyone more or less an hour. The interviews were audio-recorded. Unfortunately, some parts of the interviews, especially the ones that were taken towards the beginning were inaudible. But the later recordings were all clear enough for accurate transcribing.

In addition, another questionnaire was also administrated towards the beginning of the study abroad period to elicit information on learners' history of learning languages in general and Mandarin Chinese in particular. It is referred to as pre-study abroad questionnaire in Appendix B. This questionnaire was to build some understanding of the learners' past, which might help to understand the learners' experience in the study abroad context that concerns this study. The information found in the background questionnaire was incorporated when introducing the participants in section 4.1.1.

To summarise, open role-plays were chosen to collect learners' and native speakers' refusals. The winning features of open role-play lie in that it can demonstrate the process of negotiation compared to DCTs, and in its practicality of collecting sufficient amount of data within time constraints and the better comparability of learners' performances over time and among each other compared to naturally occurring conversations. Although I acknowledge the limitations of role-play data compared to naturally occurring conversations in terms of a real life negotiation for a refusal, however, it just became rather unrealistic to collect sufficient data from naturally occurring conversations to make comparisons.

4.2.3   Data collection procedure

The data was largely collected on two trips; at the start of the learners' study abroad period (27th August to 27th November 2010) and towards the end of their

study abroad period (25th March to 27th May 2011). On the first trip two sets of role-plays were conducted with the learners, i.e. pre- and post-instruction role-plays and the instruction took place in between. The background questionnaire eliciting information on the learners' language learning history was also collected on this trip.

On the second trip the final set of role-plays, i.e. the post-study abroad role-play, was collected with the learners, and the questionnaire was administrated to collect some information on the amount of time that they spent using Mandarin Chinese in and outside the classroom. At the end of their study abroad period, the learners took another SOPI as an indication of their proficiency level. On this trip, the same three sets of role-plays that were administered to the learners were also conducted with native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. And by the end of the role-play, I also conducted a casual interview with the NSs in order to understand their view on the refusals. And these data can provide a reference to analyse the learners' use of refusals. The interviews with the learners were collected after they had finished their study abroad period and had returned to SOAS.

4.3 Analysis procedure and problems encountered

This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis was to answer whether or not the instruction resulted in any statistically significant effect on learners' development. The qualitative analysis was to answer how learners' use of refusals developed and in what ways the instruction and the learners' interactions with NSs could have affected this development. In the following three subsections, I explain in detail how these analyses were conducted. Subsection 4.3.1 starts with the criteria that were used to assess the learners' pragmatic development. Then subsection 4.3.2 moves on to the procedure of the quantitative analysis and subsection 4.3.3 is devoted to the qualitative analysis.

4.3.1   Assessing L2 pragmatic development

Assessing the learners' pragmatic performances inevitably involves the concept of 'appropriateness'. The concept of appropriateness is, as Dewaele (2008) stated, at the foundation of the model of communicative competence first proposed by Hymes (1972), who argued that language users also need knowledge about cultural norms in order to judge the social situation correctly so as to produce

appropriate speech, i.e. to know 'what to say to whom in what circumstances and how to say it' (p.277). Ever since, 'appropriateness' has become an essential concept in interlanguage pragmatic studies. Although learners' pragmalinguistic repertoire unavoidably approximates L1 speakers', at least to a certain extent, because L1 speakers are the models from whom learners learn the language, I am aware that judging the appropriateness learners' pragmatic performance with specific reference to native speakers may raise questions. This section discusses issues in assessing learners' pragmatic performances that have been brought up in the literature and the criteria that the current research adopted.

'Judgments on norms and appropriateness are not static but highly fluid' and 'it is quite unlikely that everyone will agree or disagree on degrees of (in)appropriateness of certain speech acts' (Dewaele, 2008, p.250). In other words, pragmatic choices probably, to a great extent, are defined by who the speaker is, their personality, and their views towards the world in general and towards a specific interpersonal relationship in particular.

However, in interlanguage pragmatic studies, L2 learner's pragmatic performances are frequently considered inappropriate by researchers. The assumption of many research designs is that learners' knowledge of the target language is incomplete and that deviations from the norm are evidence of that incompleteness. As Firth and Wagner (1997) pointed out, a learner is always conceived of as 'a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence' (p.757), rather than 'someone engaged in the contingent, turn-by-turn negotiation of meaning of conversational practice and who learns the language by using it to solve problems and achieve tasks set by the social setting itself. ' (C. Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007). And in categorizing the performance of learners in terms of appropriateness (i.e. how 'proper' was the social behaviour of the participant) researchers risk being biased (Cook 2002; Pavlenko 2005), as L2 users' deviations from the L2 norms may not necessarily perceived and interpreted in the same way as those by L1 users.

Questioning 'appropriateness' brings challenges in assessing L2 pragmatic competence. But at least it is important for researchers to be sensitive about what could be considered (in)appropriate. In addition, as far as learners themselves are concerned, sometimes they may not realize that their language use may be considered inappropriate because they do not know what is considered appropriate in

the target culture. In other words, while learners are entitled to make their own decision about what is appropriate or inappropriate when using L2 to communicate, it is essential that they have the knowledge about what is considered (in)appropriate in the target culture in order to make that decision. And when they are introduced to sensitive topics involving views of native speakers of a target language, it is also necessary to be aware of the enormous variations among NSs. As Ranney (1992) described, pragmatic competence is concerned with learners' 'ability to perform various speech acts, the ability to manage conversational turns and topics, sensitivity to variation in register and politeness, and an understanding of how these aspects of language vary according to social roles and settings.' (p.25)

Having opted out 'appropriateness' as the criterion for evaluation, as the researcher I faced the decision as to what could potentially be used to assess the learners' pragmatic development. In the literature, there is no consensus as to how to measure learners' pragmatic competence. Thus I turned to the objective of the instruction as set out following the preliminary interviews: to help learners to understand culturally specific characteristics of initiating acts and the corresponding refusals in Mandarin Chinese and, hence, to facilitate them making or learning to make refusals. In addition, it was clear that learners at least need a pragmatic repertoire to deliver refusals clearly, while at the same time attending to the potential negative effect on the interpersonal relationship (hereafter abbreviated as effect on IR). As such, in this study, the two criteria of clarity and effect on IR were developed to assess the learners' pragmatic performance quantitatively and qualitatively. Clarity was chosen because learners might not necessarily communicate their refusals clearly to NS interlocutors due to their limited linguistic and pragmatic competence. Effect on IR was chosen because, as shown earlier in Chapter 3, one of the goals when the speaker conveys a refusal is to manage interpersonal relationships. In this study, a learner's refusal is considered successful if it is clear and does not raise unnecessary negative effects on the IR compared to NSs'. Next, I explain how these criteria were measured.

4.3.2   Quantitative analysis and problems encountered

This section explains the focus of the quantitative analysis, the statistical tools it adopted and the problems it encountered.

Focus of the analysis

A quantitative analysis was conducted on the learners' role-play performance. The focus of this analysis was to compare if the learners' performance at post-instruction had improved compared to that at pre-instruction, and if their performance at post-study abroad had improved compared to that at post-instruction.

To prepare the role-play data for the analysis, the learners' performances were first rated by two native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Rating was done according to the two criteria, i.e. clarity and potential effect on the interpersonal relationship (please see Appendix K for details). Clarity concerns the extent to which the learner's refusals can be understood by the interlocutor without any difficulty. Clarity was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is least clear and 5 is most clear. Note, clarity does not concern how direct a refusal is. That is to say, a refusal may be considered a 5 regardless of how the refusal is made, i.e. directly or indirectly, if its content can be understood without any clarification or inference to the context. Effect on IR is concerned with the likelihood that a learner's refusals could cause any unnecessary negative impact on his/her interpersonal relationship with the interlocutor. Effect on IR was also rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is most likely to have a negative impact and 5 is least likely to have a negative impact.

Statistical tools

The statistical analyses conducted in this study draw on three books: Hatch and Farhaby (1982), Woods et al. (1986) and Dörnyei (2007). Inter-rater reliability was first tested using the Pearson product moment correlation. A *t*-test was used to compare the mean scores for clarity and effect on IR ratings for E-group and C-group at the three different stages. ANOVA was also carried out to test if the differences between the two groups at different stages were significant at a 5% level. The independent variable in the current research is division into either E-group or C-group, while there are two dependent variables, namely the scores for clarity and effect on IR. In addition, regression analysis was used to compare the performance of E-group versus C-group at the three different stages. In the regression analysis, the independent variable refers to inclusion in E-group or C-group. The dependent variables relate to the score in terms of either clarity or effect on IR.

Three things about the statistical analysis are worthy of note. First of all, unlike the qualitative analysis, as I will explain in the next section, the statistical analysis is conducted on all the role-play scenarios including refusals to suggestions, invitations, offers and requests between both friends and acquaintances. Only the cases in which a learner had accepted the initiating acts without any attempt at refusal, for which '0' was assigned to him/her, were excluded from the statistical analysis. Finally, at each stage clarity and effect on IR are analysed separately.

Analytic procedure and problems encountered

There were 36 audio-recordings from the 12 learners in total. In order to avoid bias, the audio recordings were first cut according to different scenarios. Thus there were 288 individual recordings of role-play performances. They were numbered and mixed so that the raters were not able to tell, for example, which took place at pre-instruction and which at post-study abroad. The two raters practiced three times with a subset of the recordings until they reached an acceptable inter-rater correlation before they started to rate the rest of the scenario-recordings. The learners' final score was derived from the average of the two raters' scores.

Some problems have arisen when rating the role-plays. The extent to which the learners' refusals are clear or could potentially cause any negative effect on IR largely depends on who the interlocutor is and what information is exchanged. Subjectivity in judging this appeared to be inevitable even though the current research tried to make the criteria as objective as possible. As such the statistical results need to be taken with caution. The statistical results should also be treated with caution because the current research had only a very small sample of participants.

4.3.3   Qualitative analysis and problems encountered

This section explains how the qualitative analysis in this study was conducted. The qualitative analysis includes two parts: (1) analysing the role-play data, and (2) analysing the interview and questionnaire data. Detail of each of these analyses is presented below.

Analysis of role-plays

Focus of analysis

This study had two groups of role-plays: NSs' and learners'. They both were qualitatively analysed. The analysis of the NSs' role-plays was focused on (1) use of key linguistic devices and semantic formulas (2) structure of refusal. The finding was used as a reference to analyse the learners' role-plays. The analysis of the learners' data was focused on how they developed in their use of key linguistic devices, semantic formulas and the structure of their refusals.

Use of linguistic devices and semantic formulas

Both NSs' and learners' refusals were first catergorized into direct refusals and indirect refusals during the coding process. Chen et al. (1995) defined direct refusals as "direct denial of compliance without reservation" (p.126). Similarly, Yang (2008) defined direct refusals as "direct denial using denying vocabulary or statement showing unwillingness or inability". In this study, which drew on these two studies, direct refusals included *nonperformative statement*, *negative willingness* and *negative ability*. I have also included *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, which was identified using the NSs' data in this study, as a direct refusal. *Nonperformative statement* is used to refer to linguistic devices that directly carry out a denial of compliance such as *buyong* (不用, "no need"), *buqule* (不去了, "won't go"). *Negative willingness* and *negative ability*, according to Chen et al. (1995), are "utterances showing unwillingness or ability" to comply (p.126), containing linguistic devices such as *buxiang* (不想, "wouldn't like to") and *buneng* (不能, "cannot"), respectively. Indirect refusals include, for example, *reason*, *alternative*, and *negtive consequence*. *Negative consequence* here is used to refer to a semantic formula that points to some negative consequence if the refuser complies, see Example 1. Beebe et al.'s (1990) system also identifies adjuncts to refusals, which essentially modify refusals, but do not in themselves carry refusing force, as Chen et al. (1995) explained. Adjuncts include, for example, *positive feeling* (e.g. *tinghaode, danshi* 挺好的, 但是…, "it sounds good, but…") and *express willingness* (e.g. *wo qishi tingxiangqu de* 我其实挺想去的, "I'd like to come, but…"). Please see

Appendix F for more detail.

Example 1

我怕在这儿吃饭回去赶不上开会
Wo pa zai zher chifan huiqu ganbushang kaihui
"I'm afraid that I won't make it to the meeting on time if I stay for dinner."

While this study followed this fundamental division, it, however, has amended the subcatergories to suit the data. For example, *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* is added to direct refusals in the list. This is because, as the name indicates, this semantic formula functions to alleviate the concerns that one's interlocutor may have, which is different from *nonperformative statement* such as *buyong* (不用, "no need") or *buxing* (不行, "no way") which has no such function. As we will see in Chapter 5 reporting the findings of NSs' use of refusals, *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* was critical in refusals to personal suggestions. Personal suggestions stem from the speaker's concern about his/her interlocutor's well-being and are usually used to enhance the interpersonal relationship (cf. Yang, 2008). Thus the use of *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* is particularly justifiable in these scenarios.

Refusal's structure

Through comparing the learners' refusals with those of the NSs', it becomes clear that, not only is it important to use key linguistic devices to deliver a refusal clearly and to try not to pose unnecessary risk on IR, but also is it important to acknowledge some common patterns among the NSs as to how refusals might be structured in a negotiation. Without such acknowledgement, learners could misplace certain semantic formulas, giving rise to an undesirable outcome. It could also result in the L1 Chinese speaker's re-shaping his/her negotiation, which, as a result, indirectly impacts the learner's next turn. This is because the negotiation is co-contributed by both parties; the initiator also tries to negotiate a desired outcome (acceptance).

Analytical framework

While the aforementioned semantic-based system allows identifying the composition of the learners' refusals, it does not provide any information as to how

these semantic formulas were structured over different exchanges in the process of negotiating the refusal. This challenge was also encountered by Gass and Houck (1999): 'the most obvious [feature] was the dynamic nature of the interaction resulting from a real face-to-face encounter' (p.36). They continued, 'the role-plays resulted in what were often lengthy interactions in which the participants negotiated their way to a resolution. … Speakers hummed and hawed and cut each other off ' (p.37). The drawback of only applying a semantic classification system was also observed by Kasper (2006). She pointed out that the approach of using only semantic formulas to categorize a speech act, without considering their structural locations, could oversimplify the speaker's different intents: how they accommodated to the interlocutor's previous utterance and how their current response affected the interlocutor's following utterance.

To deal with this challenge, like Gass and Houck's (1999), I also integrated methods that are used for discourse analysis to analyse the data (G. Brown & Yule, 1983; McCarthy, 1991; Widdowson, 2007). A refusal was divided based on a basic unit, the 'adjacency pair'. An adjacency pair is composed of two turns, each by a different speaker, adjacently placed, of which one is a recognisable 'first', such as offer or invitation, and the second is a recognisable 'second', such as acceptance or rejection (G. Brown & Yule, 1983). Levinson (1983) characterized adjacency pairs as sequences of two utterances that are: (i) adjacent; (ii) produced by different speakers; (iii) ordered as a first part and a second part; (iv) typed, so that a particular first part requires a particular second (or range of second parts), e.g. offers require acceptances or rejections, greetings require greetings and so on. Adjacency pairs are 'the fundamental unit of conversation organisation' (Levinson, 1983, p. 304). Applying minimum meaningful units to natural conversations/semi-naturalistic conversations can help to unfold the complexities inherent in refusals. This minimum meaningful unit, called 'episode' in Gass and Houck's (1999) study and 'stage' in Kawate-Mierzejewska's (2002) study, is simply referred to as 'unit' in the current analysis.

However, adjacency pair is recognised to be 'actually too strong a requirement' (Levinson, 1983, p.304), as insertion sequences frequently occur. An insertion sequence is when one question-answer pair is embedded within another or is found where a notification of temporary interactional exit and its acceptance are embedded within a question-answer pair. As a result of insertion sequences, 'a

question and its answer may be many utterances apart; nevertheless the relevance of the answer is merely held in abeyance while preliminaries are sorted out and insertion sequences are thus restricted in content to the sorting out of such preliminaries' (Levinson, 1983, p.304).

The adjacency pair can be expanded by adding an insertion sequence between the first and second. For example, refusals may often be delayed by insertion sequence or by the use of preface. Insertion sequence could be, for instance, *request for more information* about the initiating act, while prefaces could include 'the production of token agreements before disagreement' (Levinson, 1983). As Schegloff explained, 'the use of such an utterance may sound the alert that a particularly delicate utterance or action is upcoming, and may, by its very production, confer the attribute of delicateness on an utterance/action which may not otherwise have borne it blatantly.' (p.61) The method of assigning an analytical unit to the role-play performances has, to a great extent, helped to further my understanding of the occurrence of semantic formulas at different exchanges in a refusal and what the speaker was trying to do with the use of a particular semantic formula.

In addition, some semantic formulas are usually found before actual refusals. And it is found that these semantic formulas cannot just occur anywhere within a refusal. Rather, they fulfil different functions and often there is some constraint in terms of their position. Thus, on top of assigning an analytical unit to the role-play performances based on adjacency pairs and insertion sequences, refusals were further grouped according to their functions into delays and prefaces. Delays can be achieved by 'displacement over a number of turns via use of …insertion sequences' (Levinson, 1983, p.307). Such insertion sequences include *repetition*, *request for more information* and/or *request for clarificatio*n. Prefaces can be 'the production of token agreements before disagreements… the use of appreciations if relevant… the use of apologies if relevant… the use of qualifiers (e.g. I don't know for sure, but…)' (Levinson, 1983, p.307).

Before I move on to give examples, please note the current analysis is limited to only linguistic aspects. Silence or pause, which can be interpreted as refusals (Davidson, 1984) are not considered. In addition, it should be noted that nonverbal cues (Gumperz, 1982), such as prosody, are also not taken into account.

Next, I will give an example to show how a role-play refusal is divided into minimum analytic units based on adjacency pairs and how the refusal semantic formulas based on Beebe et al.'s (1990) classification, are grouped according to their different functions in the process of negotiating a refusal. I have chosen a Chinese participant (Sun) who could demonstrate all the elements that I have just introduced. But please be aware that other participants did not necessarily use everything that was found in Sun's refusal sequence.

In Example 2 below, the left column shows the role-play and the right column is the semantic formulas that are identified. The example is taken from the role-play in which the refuser is of a mind to decline an acquaintance's invitation to karaoke because in the past the acquaintance has always insisted on picking up the bill for everyone. The entire refusal is divided into three units. Unit 1 was the most extensive of the three; Sun twice used a question regarding the invitation to delay her refusal (line 4 and line 6). After the acquaintance greeted Sun, he asked a question to check her availability for Sunday (line 1). After Sun confirmed that she was available, the acquaintance initiated his invitation (line 3). Hearing the invitation, Sun repeated the event and then expressed her willingness to come, followed by a *request for more information* (line 4). The acquaintance answered Sun's question, then he simply re-initiated the invitation (line 5). Sun repeated the time of the event and then she made another *request for more information*. And this time the request was aiming directly at the issue at hand, 'this time we are splitting the bill, or…' (line 6). Note, she did not finish the sentence, but intentionally left it unfinished for the acquaintance to take it over. As expected (line 7), the acquaintance took over by explaining the situation. Only after the groundwork had been laid, did he directly answer Sun's question. In line 8, Sun hesitated. Promptly, the acquaintance re-initiated his invitation by complementing Sun that she was a good singer and noting how much fun singing karaoke usually was (line 9). Only to this re-initiation, did Sun give a direct response: she first employed a direct refusal, followed by an *excuse*, as line 10 has shown. Then she finished her turn by offering an *alternative*.

Example 2: Sun's (S) refusals to Acquaintance's (A) invitation to karaoke

	Semantic formulas
Unit 1:	
1 A: 你好 你这个周天有时间吗	Availability check

		Nihao ni zhege zhoutian youshijian ma	
		"Hello, do you have time this Sunday?"	
2	S:	有啊	Confirmation
		You a	
		"Yes, I have."	
3	A:	我约了一些朋友去唱歌 你也一块儿来呗	Initiation
		Wo yuele yixie pengyou qu changge ni ye yikuair lai bei	
		"I made a plan with some friends to sing karaoke, would you like to join us?"	
4	S:	真的(!) 唱歌 我很想去耶 在哪呢	Repetition + Willingness +Request for more information
		Zhende(!) changge wo henxiangqu ye zainarne	
		"Really(!) Karaoke I'd really want to go. Where is the place?"	
5	A:	呃::呃离学校不是很远 然后周天晚上你有时间吗 一块儿过来吧	Re-initiation
		E:: e li xuexiao bushi henyuan Ranhou zhoutian wanshang Ni youshijian ma yikuair guolai ba	
		"Err:: err [it's] not very far from the university. Then [it's] on Sunday night, do you have time? Come with us."	
6	S:	星期天: 这次大家一起出钱 还是…	Repetition + Request for more information
		Xingqitian: zheci dajia yiqi chuqian haishi…	
		"Sunday: This time will we split the bill or…"	
7	A:	呃 这次我约了一些朋友过来 还有一些新朋友 呃 想你过来一块儿认识一下还是我来请客	Answer
		E zheci wo yuele yixie pengyou guolai haiyou yixie xinpengyou e xiang ni guolai renshi yixia haishi wo laiqingke	
		"Err, this time I've invited some friends and there're also some new friends, err, [that I] would like to introduce to you. [So it's] still me that treats everyone."	
8	S:	((Pause))呃: ((Laughter))	Pause
		((Pause)) e: ((Laughter))	
		"((Pause)) err: ((Laughter))"	
9	A:	你歌唱得那么好 就一块儿过来玩会呗 很有意思的	Re-initiation
		Ni ge changde name hao jiu yikuair guolai wanr bei henyouyisi de	
		"You are really good at singing, just come and join us. [It'll] be fun."	
10	S:	呃 星期天我可能去不了了 突然想起来有一些事 然后呃还是你们一起去吧我觉得你 你跟你的朋友在一起可能会感觉更舒服一些	Direct refusal + Excuse + Alternative
		E xingqitian wo keneng qubuliao le turan xiangqilai you yixie shir ranhou e haishi nimen yiqi quba wojuede ni gen nide pengyou zaiyiqi keneng hui ganjue geng shufu yixie	
		"Err, Sunday, I probably cannot make it. [I] just remember that I've got some plan. Then, err, it'd be better if you guys go. I think it'd probably be more comfortable if it's just you and your friends."	
	Unit 2:		

11	A:	呃 你周天也要有事情吗我们时间不长 就 6 点到 8 点三个小时 周末嘛 出来放松一下 *E ni zhoutian ye yao youshiqing ma women shijian buchang jiu liudian dao badian sange xiaoshi zhoumoma chulai fangsong yixia* "Err, have you also got plans on Sunday? We won't be long, just from six to eight, three hours. [It's] a weekend, come and relax a bit."	Re-initiation
12	S:	啊我就刚好那个时间 约了/就可能要和几个 最好的姐妹儿一起出去 *A wo jiu ganghao nage shijian yuele/jiu keneng yao he jige zuihaode jiemeir yiqi chuqu* "Err, I just happen to at that exact time have a meeting with/ just probably will be going out with a few close friends."	Excuse
		Unit 3:	
13	A:	呃 你真的来不了了吗 这边也有几个朋友我想介绍你一块儿认识一下 *E ni zhende laibuliaole ma zhebian ye you jige pengyou woxiang jieshao ni yikuair renshi yixia* "Err, you really cannot make it. There are also a few friends that I'd like to you to meet."	Request for confirming refusal
14	S:	啊 还是不去了吧= *A haishi buquleba=* "Uh, [it's] still [better] if I don't come="	Direct refusal
15	A:	呃 *E* Err	Hesitation
16	S:	=祝你们玩得高兴= *=Zhu nimen wanrde gaoxing=* "=Uh I hope you guys have a good time="	Positive remark
17	A:	=那好吧那我们 有时间下次再约 *=Na haoba na women youshijian xiaci zaiyue* "=Alright the, [if] we have time we can meet another time."	Accepted + Propose for future event
18	S:	好 行 *Hao Xing* "Okay. Alright."	Acknowledged

Unlike unit 1, Unit 2 was very concise; beginning with the acquaintance's re-initiation (line 11) and finishing in Sun's refusal - indirectly by using an *excuse* (line 12). Although the way that Sun tried to refuse the invitation differed in Unit 1 and Unit 2, the way that the acquaintance made his invitation stayed very similar. But in Unit 3, the acquaintance altered the way that he made the invitation, which delivered the message to Sun that he has effectively accepted her refusal and thus it led the conversation to an end. As seen in line 13, the acquaintance used a leading question to ask Sun to confirm her refusal. Despite the fact that it was also followed by a *reason* for why Sun should come, it was still obvious enough to Sun that the

acquaintance would soon withdraw his invitation. As shown in her response, Sun made a very simple confirmation (line 14). And while the acquaintance was hesitating about what to say (line 15), Sun carried on and made a positive mark: wishing them to have a good time (line 16). Subsequently, the acquaintance accepted her refusal, but made a proposal for a future event (line 17). Sun acknowledged it (line 18) and the whole conversation ended.

The assignment of analytic units allows me to display the way Sun approached her refusal. She did not refuse the invitation straightaway; rather, she clarified some questions that she had about the invitation before she clearly stated her refusal in Unit 1. As she has clearly stated her refusal, in Unit 2, she furthered it with an *excuse* for her unavailability. The assignment of analytic units also shows how the acquaintance's invitation proceeded in line with each different semantic formula that Sun used in her refusal. As such, the different phases that Sun's refusals and the acquaintance's invitation went through emerged. Hence, how Sun's refusal semantic formulas and the acquaintance's invitation interplayed within these different phases and progressed have become clear.

To specifically study refusal, we can filter out the acquaintance's lines and only focus on Sun's refusals, as Table 3 below displays. All the characteristics that mark refusals as dispreferred seconds are marked with an arrow on the left and in the parentheses are the semantic formulas that Sun used. With the division of unit, it clearly emerges that there are some semantic formulas (i.e. lines 4 and 6) that come prior to Sun's actual refusals (lines 10, 12 and 14). Although they are also important parts of Sun's refusal, they are essentially not her refusals.

Table 3: Sun's refusal structure

      Unit 1
→   Line 4: Preface (repetition + willingness) + Delay (request for more information)
→   Line 6: Delay (repetition) + Delay (request for more information)
      Line 8: Pause
      Line 10: Refusal (direct refusal + excuse + alternative)

      Unit 2
      Line 12: Refusal (excuse)

      Unit 3:
      Line 14: Refusal (direct refusal)
      Line 16: Positive remark
      Line 18: Acknowledgement

Hence, the application of analytic units has facilitated realization of the different positions of semantic formulas that occurred in the process of Sun's negotiating her refusal and what functions they were to fulfil. In Beebe et al.'s (1990) classification of semantic formulas, although it does inform us of the majority of possible refusal semantic formulas that might be found, it is not clear where these semantic formulas could be placed in a refusal. For example, *repetition* is classified as an indirect refusal in the system. The use of analytic units enables us to see that it usually occurs prior to the actual refusal. What is more, the application of analytic units helps to demonstrate how Sun's negotiation of a refusal flowed through a change of semantic formulas that carried out different tasks. For example, she employed two *requests for more information*, but she did not relate them to her refusal until the second one, after she had attended to some social exchange. Only at the second time did she use it to lay some groundwork for her refusal; the first was just a token. In Sun's actual refusal, although at first she employed a direct refusal to make her stance clear, it was accompanied with a vague *reason* and an *alternative*. Then in Unit 2 she moved forward choosing a rather obvious *excuse*, which marked the point that the acquaintance started to back down. In the last unit she simply employed a *direct refusal* alone to reinforce her refusal. But she also summarily employed *positive remark*, aiming to maintain a positive interpersonal relationship.

Analytic procedure and problems encountered

To prepare for the analysis, the role-plays were first transcribed using symbols that are introduced in Atkinson and Heritage's book (1984, p. iv) (please see Appendix E for details). The transcribed role-plays were then independently coded by two native speakers, following Beebe et al's (1990) classifications with some modifications (please see Appendix F for the list and discussion earlier).

There were two major issues that had to be dealt with in coding the NSs' refusals, ambiguity of a semantic formula employed in a certain context and the absence of a semantic formula in the Beebe et al.'s classification system. For example, one coder spotted that, in refusing to try the deep-fried locusts, in many cases that the speakers' utterance could be considered as both a *reason* and a *negative feeling* about the food, see Example 3 and Example 4. And in this particular scenario (refusing the offer of food – deep fried locusts), utterances like these two

were actually quite typical. The two coders then discussed a solution for coding. Because, to some extent, a *negative feeling* may be used as a *reason* in refusals, if an utterance could be directly used to answer the why-question, it was counted as a *reason*. For example, both of the utterances mentioned below could be a response to the why-question. That is, 'why did you not want to try deep-friend locusts?' 'I feel that, just from the name, it sounds horrible.' Or 'why did you not want to try deep-fried locusts?' 'This thing looks quite scary.' Hence, the coders recoded these semantic formulas as *reason* based on the rule that they had agreed on.

Example 3: NS Hu's refusal to Locusts

Hu: 可是我觉得名字就挺恐怖的
Keshi wojuede mingzi jiu tingkongbu de
'But I feel, just from the name, it sounds horrible.'

Example 4: NS Jin's refusal to Locusts

Jin: 哇 这个东西长得好吓人呀
Wa zhege dongxi zhangde haoxiaren ya
'Wow, this thing looks very scary.'

However, there were two utterances that were coded as *negative feeling* in this scenario. To give an example, in NS Jiang's response, see Example 5, the first part of her utterance was coded as *negative feeling*, which is followed by *reason*. The first utterance could not be used as a response to the why-question; 'How come you love eating deep-fried locusts!' does not fit as a *reason*. Indeed, through this utterance, Jiang criticised the acquaintance' eating habits in an attempt to dissuade the acquaintance's offer for her to try them.

Example 5: NS Jiang's refusal to Locusts

Jiang: 你怎么爱吃油炸蝗虫呀 那东西看着就不好看
Ni zenme aichi youzhahuangchong ya nadongxi kanzhe jiu buhaokan
How come you love eating deep-fried locusts. That thing just does not look good.'

The other issue that I encountered was that two semantic formulas that were employed in the NSs' refusals were not in Beetle et al.'s (1990) list, but they were critical to the refusal in these scenarios. I added them in with a name that I have

given. For example, in refusing a personal suggestion to go to hospital to bring down a fever, NS Bian used *nifangxinba* ('you don't need to worry'), see Example 6, which was named as *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*. During the practicing coding phase with the other coder, I included a couple of refusals where *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* was employed; the other coder did not find any problem coding it. The other new semantic formula was *take action*, which was found in refusing personal suggestions and offers to pay.

Example 6: NS Bian's refusal to High-Fever

> Bian: 真的不用了 不用麻烦了 你你放心吧
> *Zhende buyongle buyong mafanle ni ni fangxin ba*
> 'Really, no need. You don't need to be bothered. You don't need to worry.'

In comparison to coding the NSs' refusals, coding the learners' was fairly straightforward. But it was also not problem-free, either. Difficulties largely arose from learners' lack of proficiency in expressing subtlety. For example, in refusing the suggestion to go to hospital to bring down a fever, see Example 7 below, Louise's response gave rise to disagreement between the coders as to whether to code it as *reason* or *alternative*. In order to explain why Louise's utterance was confusing, we can use a NS's response, in refusing the same suggestion, to show that a few more linguistic devices were required in order to explicitly differentiate *reason* from *alternative*.

Example 7: Louise's refusal to High-Fever

> Louise: 嗯 你知道 我想 我啊 我在床 啊 喝一喝 啊 茶 啊 明天 觉得 好一点儿
> *En nizhidao woxiang wo a wo zaichuang a heyihe a cha a mingtian juede haoyidianr*
> 'Urn, you know, I think, I urn, I am in bed, urn, drink some, urn, tea, urn, tomorrow, I feel a bit better.'

In NS Meng's refusals, she employed both *reason* and *alternative*. So I shall use them as an example to demonstrate the critical linguistic devices that Meng used to express these two different semantic formulas. First of all, Meng employed these two different semantic formulas in two different exchanges; in her first refusal she employed *reason* and in her subsequent refusal, she employed *alternative*.

Chidianryaojiuhaole ('[if I] take some medicine, then it will recover'), in Example 8, was composed of a conditional clause, indicated by the conditional adverb *jiu* (就, 'just') at the beginning of the second part. This conditional adverb indicated that 'taking some medicine' would help Meng to get better, implying that seeing a doctor was unnecessary. As such, it was categorised as *reason*. In her second refusal, see Example 9, what Meng would like to do was made explicit, in contrast with what she did not want to do (i.e. go to hospital to have an injection). And to make this *alternative* solution convincing to the acquaintance, Meng also linked it to the desirable result, speculating that it 'should' heal itself.

Example 8: NS Meng's refusal to High-Fever

> Meng: 啊 最不喜欢打针了 没事儿 吃点儿药就好了
> *A zuibuxihuan dazhenle meishir chidianryao jiuhaole*
> 'Uh, I really hate injections. No worries, [if I] take some medicine, then it will recover.'

Example 9: NS Meng's refusal to High-Fever

> Meng: 嗯 我真的不太想去医院 也不想去打针 嗯 我稍微休息一会儿 应该会好的
> *En wo zhende butaixiang quyiyuan yebuxiang qudazhen en wo shaowei xiuxiyihuir yinggaihuihao de*
> 'Urn, I really don't want to go to hospital, and also don't want to have an injection. Urn, I'll take a little bit of rest, it should heal itself.'

Without these subtleties it would also be very difficult to tell if Meng was using *reason* or *alternative*. In Louise's case, it was ambiguous if she thought that if she drank some tea she would feel better so she would not need to see a doctor or if she would like to drink some tea instead of going to see a doctor as drinking tea would be enough to help her to feel better. In a case like Louise's, it was also very difficult to interpret the meaning from the acquaintance's response that followed. The acquaintance simply interpreted Louise's statement as a refusal, irrespective of whether it was meant as a *reason* or an *alternative*. But although the acquaintance perceived Louise's utterance as a refusal, the ambiguity as to which semantic formula she was attempting and the lack of subtlety in how she progressed her refusal sequentially might have weakened the potential effectiveness of her refusal.

In regard to the ambiguity found in this example, the coders agreed to code Louise's utterance as *reason*. This was because after examining all the learners' examples, the coders found a few examples in which a *reason* and an *alternative* were expressed differently. For example, in her initial refusal in Example 10, Mia's response showed very similar ambiguity to that which was found in Louise's case. However, in her subsequent refusal in Example 11, Mia response was clearly an *alternative*. Thus, in comparison, Mia's first response can be considered as a *reason*.

Example 10: Mia' refusal to High-Fever

Mia: 啊 不用不用 啊 我 啊 睡觉 然 然后 身体好了
A buyong buyong a <u>wo a shuijiao ran ranhou shengti haole</u>
'Uh, no need, no need, I<u>, urn, take some sleep, then, then, my body feels better</u>.'

Example 11: Mia' refusal to High-Fever

Mia: 啊 谢谢 可是我 真的 只要睡觉
A xiexie keshi <u>wo zhende zhiyao shuijiao</u>
'Uh, thank you, but <u>I really only just want to take some sleep</u>.'

The learners' refusals and NSs' were coded by two other coders and me. Coder A (a master's student in a linguistics-related area) and I coded the learners' refusals and coder B (a PhD student in linguistics) and I coded the NSs' refusals. Two coders were used due to time constraints.

Inter-rated agreement was calculated using percentages and semantic formulas that were used within one refusal were counted separately. For example, in Meng's first refusal mentioned above (Example 8), three semantic formula were used; (1) *reason* (i.e. she does not like injections), (2) to *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* (i.e. no worries), and (3) *reason* (i.e. taking some medicine will make her feel better). In testing inter-rate reliability, the two coders scored '1' only when the semantic formula that was coded was the same and the boundaries of a semantic formula were identified as the same. If either of these criteria were not met, the coders scored '0'. So in this case, if both the coders coded the three exactly the same, with identical divisions, they would score three '1's.

The inter-coder agreement for coding learners' refusals was 94.1%. Inter-coder agreement ran a bit lower for coding the NSs' refusals, at 90.4%. However, as Kasper (2001) points out, along with the many advantages of using role-play to elicit

data, comes its disadvantage in its difficulty in getting a high inter-rater agreement in coding, 'since illocutionary force and the precise function of conversation markers often cannot be unambiguously determined'. The current research achieved a reasonable inter-rater agreement and for the cases in which the two raters disagreed, they discussed until agreement was reached.

After the role-plays were coded, they were subject to preliminary analysis. I spotted three problems, which have led to elimination of the scenarios covering refusals to requests and offers and of the role-plays involving a friend (all scenarios). As a result, the role-plays that are included in the final analysis are only between acquaintances, and the scenarios only included refusals to personal suggestions and refusals to invitations, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Finalised role-play scenarios for analysis

Pre- instruction	Post-instruction	Post-study abroad
Suggestion to put on more clothes in cold weather	Suggestion to go to hospital for an injection to put down a fever	Suggestion to go to hospital because of bad diarrhoea
Invitation to go to Karaoke	Invitation to visit his home city	Invitation to a class activity to visit a holiday resort

In regards to the scenarios that were excluded from the main qualitative analysis, the first issue was that most of the participants, including both learners and the NSs, accepted the requests. As seen in Table 5 below, using the NSs' data as a baseline, the percentage of cases at the three different time points in which a request was refused was much lower than those of other initiating acts. Considering the current study's focus, they were excluded from the analysis. Although the fact that the requests were largely accepted, itself, is an interesting phenomenon, it is, unfortunately, not much use in studying refusals. Also, the current research does not have enough data to be able to make any further comment on this phenomenon, other than that it was observed. Please note, in Table 5, in the brackets are abbreviations for each scenario, which will be used to refer to these scenarios hereafter.

Table 5: Initial role-play scenarios and percentage of the NSs making a refusal

Pre- instruction		Post-instruction		Post-study abroad	
Offer some fish head to try (**Fish-head**) Offer to pay the bill (**Offer to pay1**)	68% (**Fish-head**) None (**Offer to pay1**)	Offer to pay for a shared taxi (**Taxi**)	21%	Offer some deep-fried locusts to try (**Locusts**) Offer to pay the bill (**Offer to pay2**)	47.1% (**Locusts**) None (**Offer to pay2**)
Suggestion to put on more clothes in cold weather (**More-Clothes**)	60%	Suggestion to go to hospital for an injection to put down a fever (**High-Fever**)	95%	Suggestion to go to hospital because of bad diarrhoea. (**Severe-Diarrhoea**)	100%
Invitation to go to Karaoke (**Karaoke**)	60%	Invitation to visit his home city (**Visit-Home**)	63%	Invitation to a class activity to visit a holiday resort (**Visit-*Shidu*^{iv}**)	61%
Request to proofread an application for American university (**Proofread-Application**)	20%	**Request** to proofread some translation from Chinese to English (**Proofread-Translation**)	15.8%	**Request** to fill out a questionnaire (**Questionnaire**)	16.7%

In addition, there were some flaws in the design of the role-plays that were unforeseen. In an effort to avoid test effect, especially when the gap was as short as two weeks between the role-plays, relatively different scenarios were presented at the pre- and post-instruction stages. Unfortunately comparability between some role-plays ended up being affected. For example, the scenario involving an offer of food to elicit refusals at pre-instruction was replaced by an offer to pay for the shared taxi at post-instruction. Although these scenarios were still in the same category of offers-refusals, they turned out to be incompatible for analysis. As a result, refusals to offers were also excluded from the main qualitative analysis.

The last issue was partially associated with an inherent disadvantage of the instrument of role-plays. Unlike in naturalistic occurring conversations, in role-plays, the relationship between the interlocutors is rather arbitrary. For example, as reflected in a brief interview with the NSs right after their role-play performances, in response to the question had she refused differently to a friend and an acquaintance in the role-plays, NS Zhu answered, 'not really, because I am not familiar with either of you.' (Translated by the researcher). The majority of the participants admitted that, although they had noticed that they were supposed to see the role that I played as a friend, their language perhaps was not an accurate reflection of this dynamic.

Simply, they had only just met me through participating in the role-plays. In comparison, the NSs' refusals to an acquaintance probably better reflected their real-life response.

Subsequent to the elimination of the role-plays involving requests and offers and those between friends, there was another reason for exclusion depending on a role-play's final outcome. As Gass and Houck (1999) proposed, there are four possible outcomes in negotiating a refusal, i.e. acceptance (complete or conditional), refusal, postponement, or alternative action/ compromise by the respondent (p.4). Taking the NSs' responses to the invitation in the pre-instruction scenario for example, seven participants accepted the invitation in the end; two participants postponed it; one participant ended it with an *alternative*; and the rest all successfully refused the invitation. The current research eliminated those participants who accepted the invitation in the end, despite the fact that they may have attempted to refuse. Because it is common to see refusals before acceptance in Mandarin Chinese, even though one intends to accept to begin with (e.g. Zhu, Li, & Qian, 1998, 2000), it is almost impossible to ensure that the refusals given before acceptance were substantive. But those participants who used *postponement* and *alternative* were included in the analysis, as *postponement* and *alternative* were interpreted as refusals.

Once the role-plays for final analysis were ready, the actual analysis was done in two steps. The NSs' refusals were first analysed, which is reported in Chapter 5. The learners' refusals were then analysed, which is reported in Chapter 6.

Analysis of interviews and questionnaires

Focus of analysis

The objective of the analysis of the interviews and questionnaires were two fold: (1) to find out how the learners in E-group perceived the instruction and (2) to examine how learners' interactions with NSs using the L2 contributed to their pragmatic development. This was in the hope of finding some insight into individual and/or contextual factors that have possibly played a role in the learners' pragmatic development, in particular, in their use of refusals, as found in the role-plays.

<u>Analytical procedure and problems encountered</u>

The interview data was first transcribed and then analysed. The learners' feedback on the instruction was evaluated on the scale 1 to 5 with 1 not helpful at all and 5 extremely helpful. Analysis on the learners' social network was focused on the NSs that they interacted with on a regular basis. Learners basically listed all the Chinese people that they had interactions with even if only for a very short period of time, except for people that they were only acquainted with once or twice. In this case, I believe I captured all interactions that potentially could have had an impact on the learners' development in the study abroad context.

Regarding the analysis of the questionnaires, the background questionnaire provided some information about the learners' history of learning a language. The information gathered from this questionnaire was mostly incorporated in the introduction about the leaners (see section 4.1.1).

As the questionnaire was to elicit the amount of time that the learners themselves estimated they spent using the L2 during study abroad, the analysis focused on working out a total. But no statistics were used to detect any link between the amount of time spent using the L2 and their pragmatic development. This was because, firstly, I found that the learners' evaluation was rather subjective depending on how they felt about the time they used out-of-class time. Some students seemed to overestimate the amount of time and some seemed to underestimate it when I compared it with their telling in the interviews (see Chapter 6). Secondly, I have a very small group of learners (N=12), which is not enough for any statistical analysis.

Instead, I interpreted the questionnaire data, together with each learner's interviews to try to draw a more comprehensive picture of the learners' interactions with the local community. For example, the total amount of time that Oscar (C-group) estimated was relatively small compared to some of the others. But through personal contact and comments from his roommates, who also participated in this study, Oscar liked to initiate and/or seize the moment in chatting with Chinese people that he met randomly, e.g. in a restaurant or when he was travelling. And when he had opportunities like this, Oscar tended to really pay attention to the language that the interlocutor used. Oscar once told me that he often came home and tried to look up words for which he could remember the sounds from a chat that he had had with a Chinese person. Thus, the information gathered from the

questionnaire and interview can be taken together to shed light on the way that Oscar liked to interact with NSs, which may have benefited him more than he had estimated in the questionnaire alone. As such, in Chapter 6, I present the findings from both the questionnaires and the interviews together, reporting a summary of the learners' interactions with NSs.

To summarise, in this chapter, I have introduced all the participants that took part in this study. With the learners, I have also sketched their history of learning languages, including Mandarin Chinese, as revealed by one of the questionnaires. Drawing from previous studies on L2 pragmatics and refusals, I explained the reason for using open role-plays to collect linguistic data from both NSs and learners, and an interview and questionnaire to collect information on the learners' interactions with NSs. Moreover, I have also explained which analyses I have included in this study and how I conducted them, as well as the problems that I encountered in the analyses and how I have dealt with them.

Now that I have presented the research question and the methodology adopted to answer these questions, from the next chapter, I shall start to present the findings. Chapter 5 reports the NSs' refusals. Chapter 6 focuses itself on findings in relation to learners. Then Chapter 7 discusses these findings. Chapter 8 concludes this study.

Chapter 5 Findings in the native Mandarin Chinese Speakers' Refusals

This chapter answers research question 1, regarding how the NSs in this study negotiate the refusals. It reports NSs' use of refusal semantic formulas and the key linguistic devices that were associated with them in terms of refusals' clarity and effect on IR. It also reports findings as to how the semantic formulas were laid out in conversation exchanges in negotiation of refusals.

To discuss linguistic forms involved in conveying a refusal semantic formula, we need to acknowledge 'conventional expressions' in the L2. Conventional expressions usually are used to refer to linguistic devices that a speech community would tend to apply highly uniformly in a particular context (Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011). Use of conventional expressions is important as it triggers the NS interlocutor to understand the refusal semantic formula in the intended way (Wildner-Bassett, 1986). And NSs of a target language provide possible conventional expressions, which, in a sense, set a boundary on what expressions are conventional and what are not conventional and thus may potentially bring confusion to the interlocutor. In this study, I have observed some patterns that commonly occurred in the NSs' refusals, as far as refusals' 'clarity' and 'effect on IR' were concerned. I am avoiding using the term 'conventional expressions' here because the number of the NSs that participated in this study (N=56) cannot justify its representation for the entire population of NSs.

While the NSs' data offers a reference to compare the learners' refusals with, issues relating to using NSs as a baseline should be borne in mind. As discussed in section 4.3.1, the learners' refusals are not judged to be appropriate or not according to the NSs' cultural values. The NSs' data is also not used as the standard by which the learners' refusals must be judged. Rather, the NSs' data is used to demonstrate some linguistic means to conduct refusals that are clear and are unlikely to cause unnecessary negative effect on IR. Even among the small number of the NSs that are considered in this study, variations were evident. As Table 6 below shows, a wide variety of refusal semantic formulas were observed to refuse invitations among the NSs, ranging from *negative feelings* to *criticism* to *take action*. And all of these various semantic formulas contributed to successfully negotiate a refusal one way or another. Considering that such variation was observed among the NSs, the linguistic

means that were identified here may be considered only as an indication of possible options, rather than a complete list of all usable linguistic means.

Table 6: The NSs' use of refusals

Initiating acts	Personal suggestions			Invitations		
	More clothes	A high fever	Severe diarrhoea	Karaoke	Stay at parents' place	Class activity
Reason	50%	31.9%	34.7%	43%	46.2%	34%
Put mind at ease	23.3%	20.2%	28.7%	N/A	9.2%	4%
Nonperformative	14.1%	21.0%	22.8%	17%	12.3%	16.2%
Neg. willingness	3.1%	1.7%	N/A	8%	N/A	1%
Neg. ability	1.6%	N/A	N/A	1%	N/A	1%
Alternative	1.6%	18.5%	10.9%	14%	27.7%	12%
Take action	1.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Neg. consequence	N/A	4.2%	1%	2%	N/A	2%
Neg. feeling	N/A	N/A	N/A	2%	N/A	6%
Postponement	3.1%	N/A	N/A	1%	1.5%	10.2%
Other semantic formulas	N/A	2.5%	2%	10%	3%	14%

Put mind at ease = Put the interlocutor's mind at ease; Nonperformative = Nonperformative statement; Neg. = Negative
N/A= Not applicable

Please also note, although the NSs' data have potential to shed light on some interesting features of Mandarin Chinese pragmatics, this perspective is not the primary focus of this study and thus the discussion below will concentrate only on the insights from the NSs' data that are directly relevant to the research questions regarding learners' development in their use of refusals. In what follows, I shall elaborate on refusal semantic formulas and linguistic devices that were found in refusals to personal suggestions in section 5.1 and in refusals to invitations in section 5.2. Section 5.3 discusses how some refusal semantic formulas were laid out in the structure of a negotiation for refusal. To make the point that frequency of refusal semantic formulas is of limited relevance when it comes to how a refusal can be negotiated, section 1.4 exhibits some samples of the variations among the NSs, especially focusing on the use of less frequent refusal semantic formulas. It is to show that irrespective of its frequency relative to other refusal semantic formulas, any of these semantic formulas can negotiate a clear refusal without posing unnecessary risk to IR.

5.1 Refusals to personal suggestions

Before I proceed to discuss linguistic devices and semantic formulas in refusals to personal suggestions, it may be useful to give a little background using the interview data from the NSs to show how this social ritual was viewed among the NSs. These interview data also demonstrate different attitudes towards and handling of this social exchange. In general, all the NSs acknowledged that this type of suggestion comes from a good intention and, generally speaking, that they appreciate the sense that their interlocutor is caring about them. Jiang's statement is a good example to show how these suggestions are appreciated.

> Actually, I think that, when I was at home, it's parents reminding me… definitely it feels quite irritating…. But now because this is my first year in university… with roommates I think we are still in the period of getting used to each other. … I feel, sometimes my roommates say, 'remember to put on a bit more clothes' or something like this, then I feel quite touched, …I feel our relationship is quite good. …this is something that you only feel is precious when you are in an unfamiliar place.
>
> (Translated by the researcher)

However, some NSs found personal suggestions, such as to put on more clothes because the temperature had dropped, rather interfering. NS Yu stated, he would refuse firmly because he was an adult and he did not like other people to interfere with his habits and lifestyle. In contrast, NS Zhao chose to make some compromise, for example, agreeing that he would bring some clothes with him, although he knew he would not need them. Otherwise he felt he was being ungrateful about the care expressed by the interlocutor. NS Pi found it easier to just agree with the initiator, though she would not actually consider following through with it. Agreeing with the initiator might seem like a good approach, but it sometimes leads to awkwardness. NS Huang explained that in such a situation in the past he had run into the initiator later on, but he still wore what he had been wearing before, thus it felt a little bit embarrassing.

However, the challenge of handling personal suggestions did not put off some of the NS refusing them, especially in the scenarios where they wanted to refuse the suggestions to go to hospital for a high fever (95%) and severe diarrhoea (100%). This may be due to the combination of it being unnecessary in the refuser's view to see a doctor and the cost of going to see a doctor, especially because there were some alternatives, such as those refusers proposed, that did not cost anything and could be just as effective. In contrast, the fact that it did not cost the refuser anything to put on more clothes may have made refusing this suggestion relatively more difficult. As

seen in Table 5, only 60% of the participants managed to bring their refusals to completion in this scenario.

Next in 5.1.1, direct refusals and the key linguistic devices associated with them are discussed. Section 5.1.2 turns to indirect refusals and the key linguistic devices that were found to ensure their clarity and limit the potential for negative effect on IR.

5.1.1 Direct refusals and key linguistic devices

Three types of direct refusals were found in the refusals to personal suggestions scenarios: *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, *nonperformative statement* and *negative willingness*. In the following three sub-sections, I shall first explain why, compared to the other two, *negative willingness* needs to be used with caution and discuss two linguistic devices associated with it. Then I discus *nonperformative statement* and *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, focusing on the linguistic devices that were associated with them.

Use of *negative willingness*: *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') or *buyao* (不要, 'don't want to'; 'mustn't')

Negative willingness was used very infrequently (3.1% in the refusals to the More-Clothes scenario, 1.7% in the High-Fever scenario and none in the Severe-Diarrhoea scenario, see Table 6 (p.103), which may have to do with its potential negative effect on IR. As NS Wang noted in her interview in regards to the circumstances in which she would use *negative willingness*: she would just directly say that she did not want to, if it were with her friends. Her comment implies that it was only when her interlocutor was a friend that she could afford to say *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to'), implying saying *buxiang* may sound direct and perhaps a bit blunt to refuse people who are not as close as a friend.

This potential risk in using *negative willingness* was also reported in previous studies. Chen et al. (1995) claimed that their participants preferred those *reasons* that referred to 'prior commitment or obligations beyond the speaker's control' to those 'stating the speaker's deliberate preference for non-compliance' (p.132). Use of *negative willingness* essentially can be considered as deliberately expressing the speaker's preference for non-compliance. Pan (2012) also reported that her

interviewees often employed external factors, such as not knowing how to drive, to refuse to participate in the government survey, instead of directly expressing their 'unwillingness'.

Apart from the fact that use of *negative willingness* may sound direct and perhaps a bit blunt given the interlocutor is not as close as a friend, caution also needs to be taken when choosing the linguistic device to deliver this semantic formula. In the NSs' data, only *buxiang* (不想) was used. But because *buyao* (不要) was also found in the learners' data, I shall compare the two to explain why *buyao* was not used to deliver *negative willingness* by the NSs. Both *xiang* (想) and *yao* (要) are categorized under modal verbs in Yip and Rimmington's (1997) grammar book, and used to express *wish* or *desire*. *Xiang* is used to express 'a mild wish' and is translated as 'would like', which is consistent with Li's (2004) study. In contrast, *yao* expresses 'a strong desire', and is translated as 'want' (Yip & Rimmington, 2004, p.283). This is consistent with one of the three usages in Lü's (2004) grammar book. But Lü (2004) further noted that *buyao* is not usually used to express the negation. Rather, the negation usually uses *buxiang* ('wouldn't like to') or *buyuanyi* (不愿意, 'not willing to'). However, Yip and Rimmington (2004) accepted *buyao* to deliver the meaning of 'don't want to' (p.284). There are another two usages of *yao* in Lü's grammar book, which are consistent with Li's (2004) study, include: 'necessity' that is usually translated as 'must' and 'possibility' that is translated as 'will'. The former's negative is *buyao* (不要, 'mustn't'), whereas the latter's negative usually is *buhui* (不会, 'won't'). To knit these studies together, there are two problems with the use of *buyao* to denote 'I don't want to', which appears to have been the learners' intention. Firstly, it can be considered ungrammatical according to Lü (2004). Secondly, because *buyao* actually means 'mustn't', it can be perceived as there may be something wrong with complying with the personal suggestions such that the refuser feels (s)he must not comply. Even accepting Yip and Rimmington's (2004) claim that *buyao* can be used to express 'I don't want to' in Mandarin Chinese, it may still be seen to convey a rather strong tone in refusals. As illustrated in the NSs' data, *buyao* was not found in any refusal across all the scenarios. Considering personal suggestions are usually derived from the interlocutor's caring (as reflected in the NSs' interview) and are usually initiated to build interpersonal rapport (Hinkel, 1994), the use of *buyao* can be seen to run a high risk of making the refusal sound

rather blunt, and thus, could potentially cause negative effect on IR.

Use of *nonperformative statement*: *buyong buyong* (不用不用, 'no need, no need')

Similar to *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* (see the next subsection), *nonperformative statement* was also very frequently used in refusals to personal suggestions (see Table 6 p.103). When it was used, *buyong* (不用, 'no need') was primarily used to deliver it. The linguistic device used to deliver *nonperformative statement* in refusals to personal suggestions is important in order not to cause any unnecessary negative effect on IR, in contrast to, for example, *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden'), which was often found in learners' refusals (see Chapter 6). A repeated *nonperformative statement* was often found, especially towards the end of the refusal for intensification. But it could also be found in the initial refusal, as seen in Example 12 and Example 13.

Example 12: NS Qin's refusal to Severe-Diarrhoea

> Qin: 啊 不用不用 啊 那个 一会儿就好了
> *A buyong buyong a nage yihuir jiu haole*
> 'Uh, <u>no need, no need</u>. Uh, well, (it) will soon feel better.'

Example 13: NS Jin's refusal to Severe-Diarrhoea

> Jin: 啊呀 不用不用 就是一点儿 嗯 小的不好受 就是肚子 呃肚子不
> 大舒服 嗯 没什么事情
> *Aya buyong buyong jiushi yidianr en xiaode buhaoshou jiushi duzi e duzi butaishufu en mei shenme shiqing*
> 'Well, <u>no need, no need</u>, it's just a little, urn, small uncomfort. (It's) just my stomach, err, stomach doesn't feel too comfortable. Urn, (it's) certainly nothing.'

In contrast, this technique of intensification was very frequently found in the initial refusals to the offer to pay for a shared Taxi, which made this scenario stand out from the rest of the refusals under investigation. Although the scenario was excluded from the main body of the analysis (see section 4.3.3), it is relevant here because this finding in the NSs' data was consistent with the video-clips that were used to instruct E-group about the characteristics of refusals to offer to pay in Mandarin Chinese during the instruction. They both reflected that, not only was declination usually expected (cf. Gu, 1990), but also that intensification, in particular

at the first turn, is often employed to enhance IR by projecting the refuser's stronger concern for the cost that the offerer bears.

Use of *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*: *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') or *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem')

Put the interlocutor's mind at ease was not specifically highlighted in the literature. But it was added on to the direct list of refusals in this study. This is because this semantic formula functions to alleviate the concerns that one's interlocutor may have, as the name indicates, which is different from *nonperformative statement* such as *buyong* (不用, 'no need'), which has no such function (see section 5.1). As Table 6 (p.103) shows, it accounted for a high percentage of the direct refusals in refusals to personal suggestions across all three scenarios. It was also found in some other scenarios, including invitations and offer to pay (excluded from the final analysis, see section 4.3.3), though in these scenarios it was only used among a small group of the NSs.

Across all the scenarios where *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* was employed, the linguistic device *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') was most frequently used to deliver it. *Meiguanxi* (没关系, 'doesn't matter') was also used, but not as often. A different linguistic device, *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem') was found in the learners' refusals. This was not referred to in previous studies (to my best knowledge), thus I consider it here in the context of the NSs refusal data, which can serve as a reference. The fact that *meiwenti* was not found in the NSs' refusals indicates that this linguistic device may not be commonly used to put the interlocutor's mind at ease.

To summarise, in line with previous studies, *negative willingness* was found to be less preferred. Use of *negative willingness* can be considered as deliberately expressing the refuser's preference for non-compliance, thus in a community where extrinsic *reasons* were generally found to be preferred in refusals, it may run high risk of causing negative effect on IR. This risk is especially high in the case that *buyao* (不要, 'don't want to'; 'mustn't') is used. In comparison, *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* and *nonperformative statement* were preferred in making refusals to personal suggestions. To deliver *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') and *meiguanxi* (没关系, 'doesn't matter') were seen

to be conventional expressions, whereas *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem') was seen to be at least uncommon. Although using *meiwenti* may not cause any negative effect on IR as such, it may not fulfil the desired pragmatic function of putting the interlocutor's mind at ease as is the case with using *meishir*. As for *nonperformative statement*, *buyong* (不用, 'no need') was found to be common and it was found to be repeated for emphasis.

5.1.2 Indirect refusals and key linguistic devices

Two main indirect refusals are focused on here: *reason* and *alternative*. *Reason* was found to be key in all three scenarios. *Alternative* was mostly found in the refusals to High-Fever and Severe-Diarrhoea, but not so much in the refusal to More-Clothes. This may have to do with the difference in the design of these scenarios. A few linguistic devices were found to be key: *jiu* (就, 'just'; 'only'), *zhi* (只, 'only') and *hui* (会, 'will'). This section explains how these linguistic devices contributed to *reason*'s clarity.

Use *of reason*: *jiu* (就, 'only') and *zhi* (只, 'only')

Reasons that were used to refuse personal suggestions in all three scenarios were found to be quite specific; this is in line with findings in previous studies (Y. Chang, 2011; Yang, 2008). As seen in Example 14, NS Bian specifically explained that because her health 'was usually great, and her immunity was quite strong', she believed she would get better if she could just rest a bit at home. Thus, it was implied that going to see a doctor was unnecessary. By helping the interlocutor to understand why exactly going to see a doctor was believed to be unnecessary, specificity in a *reason* was found to facilitate justification of the refusal.

Example 14: NS Bian's refusal to High-fever

> Bian :不用了 我身体很棒的 平时 抵抗力也挺强的 就这点儿小病
> 那个 在家休养一会儿就好了
> *Buyongle wo shenti henbangde pingshi dikangli ye tingqiangde jiu zhedianr xiaobing nage zaijia xiuyangyihuir jiu haole*
> 'No need, my health is usually great, and my immunity is quite strong, just this little problem, well, it would get better if I get some rest at home.'

In a study of L1 Mandarin Chinese learners of English, Chang (2011) also found that the learners produced significantly more specific *reasons* refusing in American English, because they believed they were more polite and appropriate in light of their L1 communication conventions.

In addition to the importance of specificity, the linguistic devices *jiu* (就, 'only') and *zhi* (只, 'only') were found to contribute to the *reason*'s effectiveness. According to Lü (2004), one of the usages of *jiu*, as an adverb, is to 确定范围 (p.316), which can be translated as 'limit the focus to'. And *jiu* can be used interchangeably with *zhi*, as also noted in Ross and Ma's (2006) grammar book. Within this usage, Lü (2004) specifies that when *jiu* is followed by a clause, it limits the focus to the subject of the clause following *jiu*.

Consistent with the grammar books, in the NSs' data, *jiu* (就, 'only') and *zhi* (只, 'only') were used to limit the problem specifically to 'stomach' as seen in Example 15, denoting that only the stomach hurts, nothing else hurts. By doing so, the meaning that going to see a doctor is unnecessary was implied. Similarly, in Example 16, NS Teng used *zhi* to exclude the possibility of any abnormality in the high fever, which may have warranted going to see a doctor. In both refusals, *jiu* or *zhi* can be seen as serving to downgrade the problem, thus, justifying a refusal. In a way they helped to make the *reason* more effective than would have been the case without them.

Example 15: NS Ni's refusal to Severe-Diarrhoea

> Ni: 没事儿 就是肚子有点儿疼
> *Meishir jiushi duzi youdianr teng*
> 'No worries, it's only that my stomach is a little bit sore.'

Example 16: NS Teng's refusal to High-Fever

> Teng: 觉得没有那么严重吧 我这个还好啦只是一般的发烧嘛 没关系啦
> *Juede meiyou name yanzhong ba wo zhege haihao le zhishi yibande fashao ma meiguanxile*
> '(I) feel (it) is not so serious. Mine is okay; only a normal fever. It's nothing.'

Use of *alternative*: *jiu* (就, 'just') and *hui* (会, 'will')

This subsection focuses especially on the use of *jiu* (就, 'just'), and how it helps to increase clarity in the *alternatives* used to negotiate the refusal. As reflected in the translation, this usage of *jiu* is different from the previous one that is translated as 'only'. The use of *jiu* under discussion here may originate from its grammatical function, as Ross and Ma (2006) state, that is 'to link two verb phrases and to signal a relationship of sequence between them' (p.94). Within this usage, Lü (2004) specifically notes that when *jiu* is followed by an adjective, the adjective denotes the result of the verb.

As seen in Example 17, it is this usage of *jiu* (就, 'just') that tightly links the *alternative* suggested by the refuser (having some sleep) to the desired result, that is getting better. It also draws focus to the effect of the *alternative* in achieving the same result as going to see a doctor, which was what the interlocutor suggested doing. As such, it conveys the unnecessariness of going to see a doctor. Without *jiu*, the desired result might not be clearly conveyed, therefore, the *alternative* may not fully realise its persuasiveness.

Example 17: NS Ha's refusal to High-Fever

> Ha: … 就是小烧 过一段时间 睡个觉可能就好了
> *Jiushi xiaoshao guo yiduan shijian shuigejiao keneng <u>jiu</u> haole*
> '…It is only a small fever. After some time… as soon as I have some sleep it will probably <u>just </u>be okay'

In addition to *jiu* (就, 'just'), *hui* (会, 'will') was also found to play a similar function. As stated in Yip and Rimmington's (2004) grammar book, *hui* expresses probability. It helps to suggest a high likelihood of the *alternative* leading to the desired result, that is getting better, as seen in Example 18. Irrespective of the choice of *jiu* or *hui*, the connection between cause and effect was obvious. As a result, whatever was preferred in relation to dealing with the fever and why they preferred it was clearly implied.

Example 18: NS Meng's refusal to High-Fever

> Meng: 我稍微休息一会儿 应该会好的
> *Wo shaowei xiuxi yihuir yinggai <u>hui</u> haode*
> 'I'll rest a little bit, it <u>will </u>probably be better.'

To summarise, using the NSs' data, the linguistic devices, *jiu* (就, 'just'; 'only'), *zhi* (只, 'only') and *hui* (会, 'will') were identified as being key to the clarity of *reason* and *alternative*, in negotiating the refusal. Although this information was not covered in the instruction, it is still interesting to examine how the learners developed in expressing their *reasons* and *alternatives* over time, which were the two main indirect refusals used to negotiate the refusals in the role-play data.

5.2 Refusals to invitations

This section presents semantic formulas and key linguistic devices that are critical for clarity and effect on IR in refusals to invitations. I shall first provide an overall view on refusals to the invitations using the NSs' data, noting that it was found that refusing an invitation differs from refusing personal suggestions. Specifically, the exchanges in refusing personal suggestions were relatively more conventionalised, whereas the exchanges in refusing invitations reflected the NSs' different personalities and views towards interpersonal relationships to a greater extent.

Within the refusals that were elicited by the invitations at the three different time points, some notable differences were found. Because being invited to karaoke happened very often, as pointed out by the NSs in the interviews, refusals in this scenario were found to be more relaxed. If someone could not make it at the time this was not seen as a big deal, as they could probably catch up next time, or the time after next. Thus, even when one felt in debt to the inviter because he has paid the bill for the last a few times, it was still considered easy to find an opportunity to balance things out. As far as effect on IR was concerned, some more risky refusal semantic formulas such as *negative feeling* towards the fact that the acquaintance intended to pay again for everyone to go to karaoke were also found among the refusals to invitations. Furthermore, there was another interesting attitude towards this particular invitation revealed in the interview. The participants pointed out that singing karaoke was considered a leisure activity in the community compared to, for example any coursework. As such, many participants found it easy to find excuses to get out of it, and being busy with homework was most commonly applied among the NSs.

In contrast, refusals in the Visit-Home scenario were found to be much more cautious, focusing on coming up with good *reasons*. Among some participants,

although deep in their heart they believed that it was better that they did not stay in an acquaintance's parents' place, as they did not know them, on the surface they felt the urge to avoid putting negative effect on the interpersonal relationship, as they did not want the acquaintance to think that they were ungrateful for the generous invitation. NS Xiao offers a good example for this dilemma that some participants faced when making refusals. She explained, 别人的一番好意 如果你不领情的话 不太好 (it is out of kindness that others make the invitation, if you don't accept it doesn't look good). As a result, she 就找借口回绝 (just finds some excuses to refuse). Probably also due to the urge to be polite, some participants were either very vague with their final refusals or postponed. For example, Xiao used *postponement*, i.e. 呃到时候再说吧 (Urn, let's see then.) and Teng laid emphasis on opportunities in the future, 机会有的是啦 下次我再去吧 这次 有可能真的… ('There are plenty of opportunities. Another time I will come to visit. This time probably is really…')

Refusals in the Visit-*Shidu* scenario appeared to be relatively direct; for example, NS Tang asked the acquaintance to invite other people instead because she was thinking to go with her club. This directness may be because the invitation was made by an acquaintance. Furthermore, it was an activity organised by his class (rather than himself). As some NSs pointed out in the interview, the acquaintance (the inviter) himself was also a participant, which was unlike the other scenarios where he was actually the host. As such, a refusal, and even a relatively direct one, may run little risk of putting pressure on IR.

The negotiations were much more diverse in refusals to invitations, as reflected in varied use of semantic formulas shown in Table 6 (p.103).

5.2.1 Direct refusals and key linguistic devices

This subsection focuses on two direct refusals, *nonperformative statement* and *negative ability*, and the key linguistic devices that were associated with them. It is found that, not only did the two semantic formulas differ in terms of their effect on IR, but also that the different linguistic devices that could be used within each sematic formula vary greatly in their effect on IR.

Use of *nonperformative statement*: *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') and *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden')

Nonperformative statement was relatively frequently used across all three scenarios in the refusals to invitations. In the Karaoke scenario for example, as seen in Table 6 (p.103), the ratio was 17% *nonperformative statement* vs. only 1% *negative ability*. And in the Visit-Home scenario, no *negative ability* occurred at all. The higher frequency of *nonperformative statement* may have originated from the reasons giving rise to refusals. When *nonperformative statement* is used, the justification for refusing is typically drawn directly from the circumstances of the scenario. This may be seen in the representative linguistic device *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go'); it simply states the action that the refuser will not take upon an invitation. As seen in Example 19, *buqule* was supported by the following *reason* - 'I don't know any of your friends (that are coming)'. In contrast, to use *negative ability*, justification needed to be linked to some factor, such as a physical condition, which may not be so easily drawn from the circumstances of the scenario, as we will see in more detail in the next subsection.

Example 19: NS Wang's refusal to Karaoke

> Wang: 这回我就<u>不去了</u> 你那些朋友我也不认识
> *Zhehui wo jiu <u>buqule</u> ni naxie pengyou wo ye burenshi*
> 'This time <u>I won't come</u>; I don't know any of your friends (that are coming).'

The learners frequently used another linguistic device, *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden'), instead of *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go'), but this device very seldom occurred in the NSs' refusals. According to Ross and Ma (2006), *bukeyi* expresses prohibitions and they translate it as 'not allowed to'. I use 'forbid; forbidden' as the translation in this study. *Bukeyi* was only found once in the NSs' refusals across all the scenarios: refusing to try deep-fried locusts, as seen in Example 20 below. Although it was only one example, it still sheds some light on a possible context in which and how this linguistic device could be used in a refusal. It is important to note the *reason* that justified refuser's choice of *bukeyi*: his religious belief. It was the refuser's religious belief that forbids him from eating anything that had a life. The rigid *reason* given in this refusal and the uniqueness of the case

among all the NSs' data indicates that *bukeyi* may deliver a strong illocutionary force as a refusal. Without a matching *reason*, it may run risk causing negative effect on IR. But having a matching *reason* to justify the choice of *bukeyi* could remove the potential risk, while at the same time intensifying the refusal, as seen in Zhao's case in Example 20.

Example 20: NS Zhao's refusal to Locusts

Zhao: 啊 蝗虫 我 我好象是有宗教信仰的 <u>不可以</u>吃 那个 有生命的 物体
A huangchong wo wo haoxiang shi you zongjiaoxinyang de <u>bukeyichi</u> nage youshengbingde wuti
'Uh, locusts! I, I seem to have religion, so I <u>shouldn't</u> eat, those, things that have lives.'

Use of *negative ability*: *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了)

This subsection discusses the difference in the two linguistic devices *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) when used to deliver *negative ability*. To give a bit of background information, in Chinese grammar, *buneng* is categorized under modal verbs, whereas *buliao* is not. Some grammar books categorise it under potential complements (e.g. Yip & Rimmington, 2004). Ross and Ma (2006) name it as 'the potential suffix *buliao*'. This study adopted the term potential suffix *buliao*, as this term precisely covers what was instructed to E-group during the instruction.

Both *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) can be used to express inability; *buneng* is usually translated as 'cannot' (R. Li, 2004; Yip & Rimmington, 2004). Ross and Ma (2006) define the potential suffix *buliao* as 'unable to perform the action' (p.192). More specifically, Yip and Rimmington (1997, 2004) note, the ability or inability to carry out the action expressed in the verb is to some extent dependent on external circumstances beyond the speaker's control. They further point out that this contrasts with the use of the modal verb *buneng*, which tends to imply that 'personal attitude, capacity or judgment, rather than external circumstances, determine ability (or inability)' (1997, p.118).

Yip and Rimmington's (1997, 2004) distinguishment between the use of *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) is consistent with

Liu's (1980) study. As can be seen in his examples, (A) indicates that the subject 'wanted to' tell the father whatever the father had asked, but (s)he was not able to put it into words. Although the *reason* was not explicitly stated, the structure itself implies that, in any case, *it was not because the subject did not want to tell him*. In contrast, (B) indicates that the subject 'did not want to' tell the father what he had asked. And because the *reason* was not explicated stated, it leaves room for interpretation as for the *reason* why (s)he did not want to tell the father. Usually, the listener tends to assume it is negative.

(A) 我，我*说不出来*，爸。
    Wo, wo shuobuchulai, ba.
    'I, I am not able to say it out, dad.'

(B) 我，我*不能说出来*，爸。
    Wo, wo buneng shuochulai, ba.
    'I, I cannot say it, dad.'

In the NSs' data, consistently, the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) was usually associated with a *reason* – some exogenous factor – that justified the speakers' inability to comply. For example, NS Sun supported her *negative ability* with, 'it just happens to be that at the exact same time I will be going out with my close friends'. A couple more examples from the refusals to offers further illustrate the differences between these two linguistic devices. As in Example 21 below, using the potential suffix *buliao* to refuse the offer to try deep-fried locusts, NS Fu blamed the scariness of the food, rather than her level of eagerness, for her inability to try the locusts. In contrast, where *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') was used, the accompanying reasons were found to focus on explaining why the refuser had reached such a conclusion. In Example 22 below, the *reason* (locusts look quite terrifying) could logically give rise to the refuser's choice of *buneng*, which emphasized her belief that locusts were not supposed to be food. And the 'negative consequence', namely, 'otherwise I may have nightmares in the night' further justified the choice of *buneng*. In such a way, the *reason* preceding *bunengchi* (不能吃, 'cannot eat'), together with the 'negative consequence' following it, restricted the potential for other, more negative, interpretations that may otherwise be seen with this semantic formula.

Example 21: NS Fu's refusal to Locusts

Fu: 真不行 我吃<u>不了</u>这个 这太可怕了
Zhenbuxing wo <u>chibuliao</u> zhege zhe taikepale
'Really, no way. I <u>cannot eat this</u>. It's too scary.'

Example 22: NS Yang's refusal to Locusts

Yang: 这个我看着就挺恐怖 <u>不能吃不能吃</u> 要不晚上都做噩梦了
Zhege wo kanzhe jiu tingkongbu <u>bunengchi bunengchi</u> yaobu wanshang dou zuo'emengle
'They look terrifying to me, <u>I cannot eat, cannot eat</u> otherwise I may have nightmares in the night.'

Due to the difference in what *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) imply, when *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') is overgeneralized in the contexts where the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) may be more appropriate, but the *reason* is not up to justifying it, it may leave space for more negative interpretation. Hence, such overgeneralisation has the potential to cause negative effect on IR.

Before closing this section, I would like to introduce another type of complement, the potential directional complement (Yip & Rimmington, 2004). It was found in one of the learners' refusals at the post-study abroad stage. Although there is no specific explanation in Yip and Rimmington's (2004) grammar book, except for some examples, as the name indicates, this type of complement is used together with a directional indicator (Yip & Rimmington, 2004). One of examples given in Yip and Rimmington's (2004, p. 154) grammar book is

这么多，我吃<u>不下</u>了
Zheme duo, wo <u>chibuxiale</u>
'This is too much. I <u>cannot eat</u> any more.'

(The underline is inserted by the researcher)

In this expression, the word *xia* (下, 'down') can be seen as the directional indicator, which indicates the direction 'down'. This example is particularly relevant, because it shows that *chibuxia* (吃不下, 'cannot eat') is considered a potential directional complement, which can be seen a relative to the potential suffix *buliao* (不了). *Chibuxia* (吃不下, 'cannot eat') is the linguistic device that was found in the learner's refusal (see Chapter 6).

5.2.2   Indirect refusals and key linguistic devices

This section focuses on two indirect refusals: *reason* and *alternative*. While the discussion about *reason* is only concerned with its content, not the use of any particular linguistic device, the discussion about *alternative* is concerned with both.

Use of *reason*

This subsection discusses the use of *reason* in the NSs' refusals to invitations. Consistent with the findings regarding the use of *reason* in their refusals to personal suggestions, *reasons* were found to be specific, and importantly, it was further found that the development of *reasons* over turns to become more specific is the key to their persuasiveness, as well as effect on IR.

For example, in the Visit-Home scenario, after stating that it might be inconvenient to stay at the acquaintance's parents' place, in a subsequent turn, NS Ha elaborated that young people such as them would probably come back very late and it would probably disturb the parents' routine. Over multiple turns, Ha extended her *reason* step-by-step to justify why she thought it was inconvenient to stay at the parents' place, with her points all derived from the point of view of concern for the acquaintance and his parents' benefit, rather than her own benefit.

Such an other-oriented *reason* (c.f. Kádár, 2012) is worthy of some attention: a majority of the NSs tactfully laid blame on themselves and how their staying could inconvenience the parents, despite the fact that the reason given on the card was that the parents' place was too small and thus it might be not comfortable for them to stay. However, some NSs also stated their concern for their own space and comfort if they stayed with the parents.

In addition, in the Karaoke scenario, *excuses* (i.e. not the reason displayed on the role-play card: that they did not want to come along this time because they felt indebted to the acquaintance) were also found. The word 'excuse' chosen here, instead of 'reason', tries to convey a hypothesis that those 'reasons' that were used may not be true. This usage of *excuses* was found to be similar to 'ostensible' invitations in Isaacs and Clark's (1990) study in that the listener recognises the speakers' covert intention and plays along as the speaker expects him/her to do. The NSs data shows that the power of *excuses* came from their specificity and consistency over turns, which also reduced the likelihood of causing any negative effect on IR. Next I shall use some examples for demonstration.

In the Karaoke scenario, *excuses*, in all cases, specifically pointed at the refuser's unavailability using prior commitment such as 'it just happened that at that exact time I had arranged to go out with a few close friends' (extracted from NS's Sun's refusal). And because such an *excuse* is so specific, it appeared to be very effective. It took no effort for the interlocutor to recognise that the *excuse* was just a token and that refuser did not want to accept the invitation. But it was unwise to challenge the *excuse* as doing so may jeopardize IR. The NSs' data shows that whenever an *excuse* was employed, the inviter usually played along and understandingly backed down. But it is also important to note that, even though *excuses* may not necessarily be true, they were still found to be consistent. Usually the NSs that employed it chose a common *excuse* (e.g. having a meeting) and stuck to it.

Excuses indicating the refuser's unavailability were found in the Karaoke and Visit-*Shidu* scenarios, but were not found in the Visit-Home scenario. This may be because in the latter scenario the inviter bears more cost, hence, through using *excuses* indicating unavailability the refuser may risk being perceived as insincere and ungrateful. In contrast, even though the inviter also bears cost in the Karaoke scenario, because it is a very common social event among college students and happens fairly frequently, using *excuses* indicating unavailability to refuse was seen as common, as was noted by the NSs in their interviews. Use of *excuses* among the NSs of Mandarin Chinese was also found in some previous studies. For example, Chang (2009) found NSs of Mandarin Chinese employed *excuses*, especially in the scenario concerning not lending notes to a classmate. Using *excuses* appears not to be a feature unique to Mandarin Chinese. Felix-Brasdefer (2008b) found that Mexican Spanish speakers also favoured fictitious *reasons*, in other words *excuses*, such as saying that they did not have the notes with them at the time, or that the notes were illegible to avoid lending notes to classmates. This difference in Mexican Spanish from American English led Felix-Brasdefer (2008b) to emphasise that cross-cultural interactions required 'inference on the part of the interlocutor, including an understanding of the cultural values of formability, vagueness, and tentativeness' (p.138).

In this study, through the acquaintance's reactions to *excuses* that were used in the NSs' refusals, it was not difficult to see that the implication was mutually understood. As some NSs commented in their interviews, even though *excuses* were

relatively transparent, they felt as an acquaintance, the interlocutor could not be sure. Furthermore, even if the acquaintance might have sensed it was not true, he probably would recognise that the *excuses* were just a polite way to refuse the invitation, rather than directly articulating 'I do not want to come'. Hence, *excuses* were used tactically among the NSs to avoid specifying the real *reason* for refusing an invitation, or to fob the acquaintance off.

Use of *alternative*: *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about')

This subsection is concerned with *alternative* and the use of *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about') to lead it. As shown in Table 6 (p.103), *alternative* was found to be the second most frequently used semantic formula (after *reason*).

Although the contents of actual *alternatives* may vary among the NSs, in essence, they are used to facilitate a refusal while at the same time to mend any potential negative effect that refusals may have on IR.

Although it is not indispensable, the use of *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about') functions to alert the interlocutor to the counter opinion that the speaker is going to bring up. Thereby, it contributes to the negotiation of the refusal. And it was found to be frequently employed among the NSs across all three scenarios, as seen from Example 23 to Example 25.

Example 23: NS Dong's refusal to Visit-*Shidu*

> Dong: 呃 <u>要不</u> 那个 下次有什么活动 吃饭呀啥的 晚上的 然后我都能过去
> *E <u>yaobu</u> nage xiaci youshenmehuodong chifan shade wanshangde ranhou wo dou nengguoqu*
> 'Urn, <u>or</u> next time if there's some other activity, (such as) having dinner and so forth, in the evening, then I will all be able to come.'

Example 24 NS Yang's refusal to Karaoke

> Yang: 嗯<u>这样吧</u> 因为实验我也去不了 呃 咱俩再挑个时间 以后我请你去好不
> *En <u>zheyangba</u> yinwei shiyan wo ye qubuliao e zanlia zai tiaoge shijian yihou wo qingniqu haobu*
> 'Urn, <u>how about this</u>, because of the work in the lab, I can't come, shall we find another time? I'll treat you to sing karaoke then, how does that sound?'

Example 25： NS He's refusal to Visit-Home

> He: 噢 那 那<u>要不</u>这样吧 <u>要不</u> 呃等到 等到那个放假的时候 去你们 家乡玩一下 但是住在旁边的什么旅馆呀或者宾馆之类的就可 以了…
>
> *Ou na na <u>yabuzheyangba yaobu</u> e dengdao dengdao nage fangjia de shihou qu nimen jiaxing wanryixia danshi zhuzai pangbiande shenme lüguanya huozhe binguan zhileide jiu keyile…*
>
> 'Oh, then, then, <u>how about this</u>, <u>how about</u>, urn, when the holiday comes, (I) will come to visit your home city, but staying in a hostel or hotel of sort nearby is fine…'

5.3   Refusal structure in the NSs' refusals

This study found structure had an important effect in negotiating a refusal. A semantic formula's location facilitates understanding how it accommodates to the interlocutor's previous utterance and how the current response affects the interlocutor's following utterance (G. Kasper, 2006). In this section I shall focus on: (1) the way that different refusal semantic formulas are laid out over different exchanges; (2) the use of delays, especially prefaces, prior to an actual refusal.

5.3.1   Structure of semantic formulas

Where different semantic formulas are structured in the exchanges was found to have an impact on a refusal's clarity and effect on IR. However, I shall focus the discussion only on those NSs' cases that are most relevant to understanding the learners' development: the semantic formula used in the last refusal to personal suggestions and where *hedging* and *postponement* were placed in a refusal to the invitation to Karaoke. Before I proceed, it is important to understand how the NSs' refusals were constructed in general, which provides the context to discuss the two aspects mentioned above.

The way that the NSs organised their refusals could be summarised as, 'general', 'specific', 'general'. Take their refusals to personal suggestions for example, as seen in Example 26 line 2, in responding to the initiation of the suggestion semantic formula(s) that can be characterised as 'general' were found to be quite common. Then, when the suggestion was reinitiated, the semantic formulas used would usually be elaborated to become more 'specific', see line 4. The suggestion could be pressed one more time. But usually the refusal would not get to

be more specific. Before actually closing up his suggestion, the acquaintance usually used a yes-no question to ask his interlocutor to confirm the refusal. In the last refusal, the refuser usually used a succinct, but clear and firm, response such as in line 6, which was back to 'general' again.

Example 26: NS Kang's refusal to High-Fever

1	A:	我看你烧得挺厉害的 要不去医院打一针吧
		Wokan ni fashao tinglihaide yaobu quyiyuan dayizhen ba
		'I think your fever looks quite serious, how about you go to hospital to have an injection?'
2	Kang:	啊 不用了 呃我 嗯吃点儿药就行了
		A buyongle e wo en chidianryao jiu xingle
		'Uh, no need. Urn, I'll, urn, take some medicine and it will be fine.'
3	A:	打一针的话 我觉得可能会好得快一些 你这样 总是会不舒服的 而且 对身体也不好
		Dayizhen dehua wojuede keneng hui haode kuaiyixie nizheyang zongshi hui bushufude erqie dui shenti ye buhao
		'If you take an injection, I think it probably will get better sooner. If you stay ill, you will always feel unwell, and it is not good for your health.'
4	Kang:	啊没事儿 我我以前发烧都是 通过吃药 它自己就会/它很快就会好的 所以不用去打针 谢谢你
		A meishir wo wo yiqian fashao doushi tongguo chiyao ta zijijiuhui/tahenkuai jiuhui haode suoyi buyong qudazhen xiexieni
		'Uh, no worries. Before, when I've had a fever, by taking some medicine, it would /it would soon get better. So no need to go for an injection. Thank you.'
5	A:	呃 你真的不需要去打针吗
		E ni zhende buxuyao qudazhen ma
		'Urn, do you really not need to go for an injection?'
6	Kang:	对不需要 我觉得现在 已经好多了
		Dui buxuyao wojuede xianzai yijing haoduole
		'No, no need. I now already feel better.'
7	A:	呃那好吧 那希望你快点儿好起来
		E nahaoba na xiwang ni kuaidianr haoqilai
		'Urn, okay then. Hope you get better soon.'
8	Kang:	好的 谢谢
		Haode xiexie
		'Okay, thanks.'

In the refusals to personal suggestions, the semantic formula in the last refusal was critical to help the acquaintance to close up his suggestion. As the NSs' data indicates, it tended to be 'general' and usually a simple *nonperformative statement* would be adequate. But it required the refuser's understanding of where the yes-no question led to and what semantic formulas would be expected to effectively co-construct the closure with the acquaintance.

Next I turn to discuss *hedging* and *postponement* in a refusal sequence. Two things about NS Han's use of these semantic formulas are worth attention, see Example 27: firstly, that both *hedging* (line 6) and *postponement* (line 8) were placed towards the end of the refusal and secondly, that *postponement* came after *hedging*. Han's timing in using *hedging*, namely after she has given a 'specific' *reason* for the refusal (line 4), might have played a critical role in her success in negotiating the refusal. As the general refusal structure shows, Han used *hedging* at the time that the refusal started to become 'general' again. The move from 'specific' (line 4) to 'general' (line 6) signalled to the interlocutor to back down, by withdrawing the impetus to negotiate. Even if in the situation in which *hedging* did not get the inviter to back down and the invitation was pressed one more time (line 7), *postponement* still was there to back it up (line 8), which would force the inviter to back down.

Example 27: NS Han's refusal to Karaoke

		…
1	A:	啊我约了一些朋友去唱歌 你也一块儿来呗
		A wo yuele yixie pengyou qu changge ni ye yikuairlaibei
		'Uh, I made a plan with some friends to sing karaoke, would you like to join us?'
2	Han:	噢(.) 嗯: 我不去了
		Ou(.) en: wo buqule
		'Oh(.) Urn: I won't go.'
3	A:	嗯 你唱歌挺好的大家都喜欢 而且这次 有一些新朋友我想介绍你认识一下你就一块过来吧
		En ni changge tinghaode dajia dou xihuan erqie zheci you yixie xinpengyou woxiang jieshao ni renshiyixia ni jiu yikuair guolaiba
		'Urn, you're very good at singing, we all like to listen to. Also this time there are some new friends that I'd like to introduce you to. Why don't you come with us?'
4	Han:	哎其实说实话 因为每次吧 我们都玩得很开心但是你总不让我付钱 我觉得特别不好意思
		Ai qishi shuoshihua yinwei meiciba women dou wanrde henkaixin danshi ni zong burang wo fuqian wo juede tebie buhaoyisi
		'Ai, in fact to be honest, because every time although we always had fun, you never let me pay. I felt really embarrassed.'
5	A:	呃: 这样 这次我跟朋友们已经约好了你就直接过来吧 然后 以后的话我们 AA 制好吗
		E: zheyang zheci wo gen pengyoumen yijing yuehaole ni jiu zhijie guolaiba ranhou yihou dehua women AAzhi haoma
		'Urn: how about this, this time (because) I've made a plan, you just come with us. Then in the future we can go Dutch, how does that sound?'
6	Han:	哎呀真的不用了 我这周还不知道有没有时间呢还耽误你们的时间
		Aiya zhende buyongle wo zhezhou hai buzhidao youmeiyou shijianne hai danwu nimende shijian
		'Really, no need. I am not sure if I'd have time this week. And it may

7	A:	呃没关系 我们就周末晚上 呃唱三个小时左右 周末嘛你也放松一下
		E Meiguanxi women jiu zhoumo wanshang e chang sange xiaoshi zuoyou zhoumoma ni ye fangsongyixia
		'Urn, it's not a problem. We only go for about three hour in the evening. It's a weekend, you also (need to) relax.'
8	Han:	嗯: 那我看看吧 如果有时间我就跟你们去 但记得下次一定我们要 AA 制了
		En: na wo kankanba ruguo youshijian wo jiu gennimen qu dan jide xiaci yiding women yao AAzhi la
		'Urn: I will see what I can do, if I have time I will join you. But you must remember that next time we have to split the bill.'
9	A:	呃 好的那回头我们电话联系
		E haode na huitou women dianhua lianxi
		'Urn, okay. Let's get in touch over the phone.'
		…

5.3.2 Delays and prefaces and key linguistic devices

Having noted that using a simple *nonperformative statement* in response to the interlocutor's pre-closing yes-no question straightforwardly co-constructed the closure in refusals to personal suggestions and having discussed where *hedging* and *postponement* may be placed in a refusal sequence, in this subsection, I discuss the use of delays and prefaces in refusals. I shall also take this opportunity to discuss the use of *gratitude* and *apology* with reference to prefaces, as well as expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite'). These were frequently found in the learners' prefaces, so the presentation here is to lay ground for the discussion on the learners' use of prefaces (see Chapter 6).

The most distinctive feature found in refusals to invitations was that they frequently involved delays and prefaces. However, they were not used evenly; it was found that delays were considerably more frequently used as alerts for upcoming refusals than prefaces. In the NSs' refusals to the invitation to karaoke, eight out of thirteen NS who brought their refusals to completion used delays. Some used two delays in a single turn and some used delays for two turns. For example, NS Sun, in the first turn, used *request for more information* to find out where the event was going to be. Subsequently, she used *request for more information* to find out if everyone would split the bill. By employing these *requests for more information* Sun step by step brought the acquaintance to the core of problem, i.e. who would pay the bill, laying groundwork for her oncoming refusals. The majority of delays were used

in association with the initiation of the invitation. In other words, they occurred towards the beginning of the negotiation before the actual refusal was brought up.

In contrast, preface was used much less frequently compared to delays, only three out of thirteen NSs employed it. Prefaces were usually found in responding to the initiation of the invitation, and often they were composed of *positive feeling*, see Example 28 or *expressing willingness*, see Example 29. But when preface was found towards the end, it was used to summarily express *gratitude* towards the invitation before finalising the refusal. In the Visit-Home scenario, quite a few more prefaces were found, but the higher usage of prefaces in this scenario probably resulted from the fact that the participants were instructed to accept the invitation to visit the acquaintance's home city, but not to stay with his parents.

Example 28: Lu's refusal to Karaoke

    Lu: 哇唱歌啊 挺好啊 周天时间具体几点啊
       Wa changge a tinghaoa zhoutian shijian juti jidian a
       'Wow karaoke, <u>really good</u>, what time is it exactly on Sunday'

Example 29: Sun's refusal to Karaoke

    Sun: 真的 唱歌 我很想去耶 在哪呢
       Zhende changge wo henxiang qu ye zainarne
       'Really karaoke, <u>I'd really like to come</u>, where is it going to be.'

Note the linguistic devices that were usually used to express *positive feelings* and to *express willingness* tended to be formulaic. This may be important to clearly communicate a refusal as they forewarn the interlocutor of the oncoming refusal. To begin with *express willingness*, *xiang* (想, 'would like to') was found to be the key linguistic device. As seen in Example 30, NS Xiao used '*wozhengxiangqune*' to express her interest in the invitation and willingness to comply. Similarly, as seen in Example 31 below, NS Sun used '*wohenxiangqu*' to express her interest in coming to the karaoke. NS Huang used '*wozaojiuxiangqu*' to express his keenness to comply with the invitation, as seen in Example 32 below.

Example 30: NS Xiao's refusal to Home-Visit

    Xiao: 呃挺挺好的... 我正想去呢
       E ting tinghaode… wo zheng<u>xiang</u> qu ne

'Urn, (it) sounds very, very good..., I was just <u>thinking</u> to visit (a place like that).'

Example 31: NS Sun's refusal to Home-Visit

Sun: 真的 唱歌 我很<u>想</u>去耶 在哪呢
Zhende changge wo hen<u>xiangquye</u> zainarne
'Really karaoke, <u>I'd really like</u> to come, where is it going to be.'

Example 32: Huang's refusal to Home-Visit

Huang: 是吗 我早就 <u>想</u>去你们家那边看看了
Shima wo zaojiu <u>xiangqu</u> nimenjia nabian kankan le
'Really, I've been <u>wanting</u> to go to your home city to visit.'

Turning to *positive feeling*, t*inghaode* (挺好的, 'sounds good') was repeatedly found. As seen in Example 33,NS Jin was positive about the invitation to visit *Shidu*. In the same scenario, NS Xu expressed his *positive feeling* as seen in Example 34. As seen earlier in Example 30 above, NS Xiao also used t*inghaode* (挺好的, 'sounds good') to express her *positive feeling* about visiting the acquaintance's home city.

Example 33: NS Jin's refusal to Vist-*Shidu*

Jin: 啊 去十渡啊 <u>挺好的</u>…
A qushidua <u>tinghaode</u>…
'Uh, going to *Shidu*, <u>sounds good</u>…'

Example 34: NS Xu's refusal to Vist-*Shidu*

Xu: 呃去玩儿 <u>挺好的</u>…
E quwanr <u>tinghaode</u> …
'Err, going out, <u>sounds good</u>…'

Next I shall take this opportunity to discuss the use of *gratitude* and *apology* with reference to prefaces. *Gratitude* was occasionally found in prefaces among the NSs, but the learners were found to use it much more often. However, because it does not necessarily have the pragmatic function in Mandarin Chinese as *gratitude* has in English (Levinson, 1983), the use of it can be seen as redundant in the L2.

Apology, on the other hand, can cause negative effect on IR if it is used too frequently, as it may carry strong refusing force. I shall explain why. While no cases

of *apology* were found in the NSs' refusals to personal suggestions, it was employed from time to time in the refusals to invitations. In these cases where *apology* was used, it tended to be used when the NSs believed they were culpable. This usage of *apology* was found to usually to occur towards the end, especially in the last refusal, where the NSs summarily apologised for their unavailability.

This finding lends some support to a claim on the use of *apologies* in Mandarin Chinese in the literature (W.-L. M. Chang & Haugh, 2011; X. Chen et al., 1995; Pan & Kádár, 2011). Citing Pan and Kádár (2011), Chang and Haugh (2011) state that, in modern China *apologies* are more often achieved 'by means other than linguistic expressions, such as taking redressive action or doing something for the person offended to mend the relationship' (p.416). Similarly, in investigating use of refusal in Chinese, Chen et al. (1995) claim, 'the expression of regret in Chinese *duibuqi* (对不起, 'sorry') is not as applicable to different contexts as its English equivalents such as 'I'm sorry'' (p.135). They further claim that a refuser will usually use offers of alternatives in order to show sincere *regret*, and that *duibuqi* is used to signal no more negotiation in refusals, thus, carrying a strong refusing force.

As such, it is not surprising to find that the way that *apologies* are used as a preface in English, was not found in the NSs' data. In addition, two linguistic devices were used to express *apologies*: *buhaoyisi* (不好意思, 'embarrassing; embarrassed') and *duibuqi* (对不起, 'sorry') with the former dominant in terms of frequency. This may be because *buhaoyisi* tends to be used to 'acknowledge embarrassment on the part of the speaker', while *duibuqi* is 'the appropriate *apology* for actions that show disrespect towards another' (Ross & Ma, 2006, p.380).

Before finishing this section, I shall discuss the use of *keqi* (客气, 'polite'), especially *buyongkeqi* (不用客气, 'no need to be polite') and *taikeqi* (太客气, 'too polite'), to demonstrate how they were employed in the NSs' refusals. The *keqi* expressions were frequently used to express *positive feeling* in the L2 learners' refusals. I felt some of them sounded unnatural. But I could not find any explanation in dictionaries. So I used the NSs' data to try to offer some explanation. In order to get as many examples as possible, all the NSs' data was examined, including those scenarios that were excluded from the final analysis for the rest of the study.

It was found that four formulaic expressions were used frequently: *bukeqi* (不客气), *buyongkeqi* (不用客气), *bie(name)keqi* (别(那么)客气), and *taikeqile* (太客

气了) or *zhemekeqi* (这么客气). *Bukeqi* can be translated as 'you are welcome', and it was often found in reply to *xiexie* (谢谢, 'thank you'). Although in this study it was mostly used by the offerer, occasionally it was also used by the offeree. For example, in the scenario in which a visitor brought some flowers for the host on a visit, in reply to the host's gratitude, the visitor said, *bukeqi yinggaige* (不客气 应该 的, 'you are welcome, I'm supposed to').

Both *buyongkeqi* (不用客气) and *bie(name)keqi* (别(那么)客气) can be translated as 'don't need to be polite'. They were most often found in the offerer's turns trying to persuade the interlocutor to accept an offer. For example, the acquaintance often used it during the reinitiation to *persuade* his interlocutor not to reject it because they felt the need to be polite. *Buyongkeqi* can also be used in reply to *xiexie* (谢谢, 'thank you'). In that sense, it is similar to *bukeqi* (不客气, 'you are welcome').

Taikeqile (太客气了) and *zhemekeqi* (这么客气) can be translated as 'too polite' and 'so polite', respectively. They were usually used as a remark on the interlocutor's social act. The two expressions were most often found in the scenarios in which a visitor brought a present for the host on a visit. After the visitor presented the gift, very often the host used either *taikeqile* or *zhemekeqi* followed by 'you don't need to bring anything for me' as a response to the visitor's bringing a present (the social act). In this case, her identity as the host may have legitimised her use of these two expressions, but, in general, *taikeqile* and *zhemekeqi* were usually not used by the offeree. This may be because the two expressions can bear a critical tone, implying the amount of politeness is unnecessary, although it does not imply a negative feeling, as the emphasis is on maximising the refusee's benefit over the refuser's own benefit. As such they very seldom appeared in refusals. Rather, they were more often used by the offerer to further persuade the refuser as the exchanges progressed. As demonstrated, the expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite') were not used to express *positive feelings* in prefaces.

5.3.3 Variations among the NSs' refusals

Previously I have presented some commonly occurred patterns among the NSs' refusals, in this subsection, I shall show some variations in the NSs' use of

semantic formulas in negotiation of a refusal. It is important to be aware of individual differences as to how a refusal can be approached. Not only does such diversity offer us a wider linguistic pool in teaching refusals to L2 learners, but it also reminds us of different approaches that the L2 learners might also take when making refusals. This is also to continue showing that negotiating a refusal involves use of a sequence of semantic formulas; frequency of any specific refusal semantic formula, as was the focus in many earlier studies as discussed in Chapter 3，is less important when it comes to understanding how a refusal can be negotiated. Rather, the question that ought to be asked probably is how semantic formulas were used, rather than how frequently they were used, as far as refusals' clarity and potential negative effect on IR are concerned. More importantly, it is not just about how one single semantic formula was used, but it is also about how different semantic formulas were used together to negotiate the refusal.

To give an example, to use *negative feeling* to refuse a sincere invitation could potentially run a risk of upsetting the inviter, hence, it could have a negative impact on IR. This can probably explain the very low percentage (2%) of its usage among the NSs, as shown in Table 1 (p. 64). But as shown in Example 35 below, NS Hu applied it in her refusal to the invitation to karaoke. Because the cost was on the part of the inviter if he would again pay for everyone, this legitimated the use of *negative feeling*. No offense was meant, and none would be taken, either. As seen in line 4, after Hu found out that the inviter again intended to pay for everyone, *zenme you shi ni ya* was used with a rather blaming intonation. But as can be seen in line 5, the inviter opened his turn with trying to put Hu's mind at ease (*meiguanxi*, 'doesn't' matter') and then continue persuading her with a different reason. The position of the usage of *negative feeling* in Hu's refusal, in some way, could be considered as a 'delay'. This is because there was no clear stance expressed at the time. Hu seemed to use *negative feeling* to solicit more information, waiting to find out how the acquaintance was going to solve this negative comment of Hu's. But at the same time, this semantic formula signalled the potential for refusing. Subsequently, Hu moved on to *excuses*. As seen in line 8 and 10, she said she was very much a house person and she did not like going out. And then in the next exchange she furthered that she was a bit unwell because of her sore throat so she could not make it this time. These *excuses* made the inviter eventually back down, which was signalled with the pre-closure question asking her to confirm the refusal. Hu coherently

responded that it's better if she took some rest at home. But Hu followed it with *xiayici* suggesting future interactions, which the acquaintance took upon and finished his invitation with a suggestion for a future meeting.

Example 35: Hu's refusal to invitation to karaoke

...

1   A: 恩(.)我和一些朋友一块儿去唱歌(.)你也一块来呗 (.)
En(.) wo he yixie pengyou yikuair qu change(.) ni ye yikuair laibei(.)
'En(.) Some friends and I are going to karaoke together(.) Why don't you come along(.)'

2   Hu: 去唱歌呀(.)你 (.)你们打算以什么方式结帐啊 (.)这次 (.)这一次 (.)
Qu changge ya(.) ni(.) nimen dasuan yi shenme fangshi jiezhang a (.) zheci (.) zheyici (.)
'Going to karaoke(.) you(.) how are you guys going to pay the bill(.) this(.) this time(.)'

3   A: 嗯::这次我们都已经约好了(.)我来请客 (.)
En:: zheci women dou yijing yuehaole (.) wo lai qingke (.)
'En:: this time we've made the plan(.) I will treat everyone(.)'

→ 4   Hu: 怎么又是你呀(.)
Zenme you shi ni ya(.)
'How come is it you again(.)'

5   A: 啊(.)没关系的(.) 呃这次都约好了(.)你就过来吧 (.)周天儿放松一下 (.)而且你歌儿唱得那么好 (.)大家都很喜欢听你唱歌的 (.)
A(.) meiguanxi(.) e zheci dou yuehaole(.) ni jiu guolai ba(.) zhoutianr fangsong yixia(.) erqie ni ger chang de name hao(.) dajia dou hen xihuan ting ni changgede (.)
'Ah(.) doesn't matter(.) Urn this time I've made a plan(.) You just come along(.) It's Sunday come and relax a bit(.) And you are such a good singer(.) We [Aiya] all like listening to your singing(.)'

6   Hu: 这个不太好吧 (.) (Pause)觉得挺不好意思的 (.)
Zhege butaihao ba(.) (Pause) juede ting buhaoyiside(.)
'This is not appropriate(.) (Pause) [I] feel quite embarrassed(.)'

7   A: 恩(.) 这次我还邀请了一些新朋友(.) 你也过来认识一下
En zheci wo hai yaoqingle yixie xin pengyou ni ye guolai renshi yixia
'En(.) this time I've also invited some new friends(.) you can meet them'

8   Hu: 哎呀(.) 你也知道我这个人比较宅的(.) 我老喜欢呆屋子里
Aiya(.) ni ye zhidao wo zhegeren bijiao zhaide(.) wo lao xihuan dai wuzili
'Well(.) you know that I am a house person(.) I always like staying in'

9   A: 都周末了(.) 出来放松一下吧
Dou zhoumole(.) chulai fangsongyixia ba
'It's a weekend(.) come out with us and relax'

10 Hu: 没有(.) 我因为有点儿(.) 那个 感冒了(.) 然后(.) 嗓子挺疼的 恐怕不能去了(.) 这一次
Meiyou(.) wo yinwei youdianr(.) nage ganmaole(.) ranhou(.) sanzi tingtengde kongpa buneng qule(.) zheyici
'Not really(.) because I'm having a bit of(.) well cold(.) then(.) my throat hurts a lot I'm afraid I can't come(.) this time'

11 A: 是吗
Shima
'Really'

12	Hu:	对
		Dui
		'Yes'
13	A:	呃(.) 真的不不能来了吗
		E(.) zhende bu buneng laile ma
		'Ur(.) really can't you come'
14	Hu:	哎呀 我周末在家休息一会吧(.) 下次吧(.) 下次吧(.)
		Aiya wo zhoumo zaijia xiuyi yihuiba xiaciba xiaciba
		'Well I'd better rest at home this weekend(.) next time(.) next time(.)'
15	A:	那好吧 下次我们有时间再约
		Nahaoba(.) xiaci women youshijian zaiyue
		'Alright then(.) next time we can make another plan when we have time'
16	Hu:	好(.) 行
		Hao(.) xing
		'Urn okay alright'

In the same scenario, in NS Wang's negotiation, she differently used *alternative* to leverage her refusal to the invitation, which also effectively brought her refusal to completion. As seen in Example 36, in line 2, upon hearing the acquaintance's first re-initiation, Wang straightforwardly made her refusal followed by the *excuse* that she had to study for an exam. She finished her turn with a *wish* that they have a good time. When the acquaintance pressed the invitation emphasising they would only go for three hours, Wang re-issued the refusal and also proposed an *alternative* (line 4), suggesting that they go karaoke another time. This *alternative* could be characterised as unspecific and rather symbolic; it was found in many NSs' refusals. This *alternative* was not used to negotiate the refusal, but rather mitigate the potential negative effect inherent with the refusal. But it all changed after Wang refined it into a promise while the acquaintance was hesitating, as seen in line 5. By furthering an unspecific and symbolic *alternative* into a promise that Wang would treat the acquaintance to sing karaoke next time, Wang shifted more weight onto this semantic formula during the negotiation. And when the acquaintance still did not back down (line 7), Wang escalated the *alternative* by adding the definite adverbs *yiding* (line 8) emphasising her commitment to keep the promise. From her first use of the *alternative* to the last refined one, Wang successfully turned an unspecific *alternative*, which was usually seen as an adjunct to refusals into a semantic formula that functioned as an actual refusal in the negotiation. And Wang's success in bringing her refusal into completion demonstrated the possibility of diverse ways to negotiate refusals.

Example 36: Wang's refusal to invitation to karaoke

...

| | 1 | A: | 恩(.)有几个你认识的(.)再说不认识的(.)你认识一下(.)新交一下新朋友嘛(.) |

1　A:　恩(.)有几个你认识的(.)再说不认识的(.)你认识一下(.)新交一下新朋友嘛(.)
En(.) you jige ni renshide(.) zaishuo burenshide(.) ni renshi yixia(.) xin jiaoyixia xinpengyouma(.)
'Urn, there're a few people that you've met, on the other hand, those that you don't know, you can meet them. And try to make some new friends.'

2　Wang:　哎呀(.)算了算了(.)我下周周一还有一个考试(.)我还没复习呢(.)你们好好儿玩啊(.)
Aiya(.) suanle suanle(.) wo xiazhou zhouyi haiyou yige kaoshi(.) wo hai mei xifu ne(.) nimen haohaor wan a(.)
'Well, forget about it forget about it. Next week on Monday I have an exam. And I haven't started revision. You guys go and have fun.'

3　A:　恩(.)我们时间不长(.)也就三个小时(.)周天嘛(.)你放松一下(.)啊(.)调整调整状态(.)下周考得更好(.)
En(.) women shijian buchang(.) ye jiu sange xiaoshi(.) zhoutianma(.) ni fangsongyixia(.) a(.) tiaozheng tiaozheng zhuangtai(.) xiazhou kaodegenghao(.)
'Urn, we won't be long; just three hours. [It's] Sunday, you come and relax a bit, ah, let your hair down, next week you will do better in your exam.'

→　4　Wang:　恩(.)我看还是算了吧(.)下回(.)下回咱们再一起出去玩(.) -
En(.) wokan haishi suanleba(.) xiahui(.) xiahui zanme zai yiqi chuquwan(.) -
'Urn, I think it's better I give it a pass. Next time, next time we can go out together -'

5　A:　恩::
En::
'Urn::'

→　6　Wang:　-下回我请你唱歌(.)-
-Xiahui wo qing ni changge(.)
'- Next time I will treat you to karaoke.'

7　A:　哎呀(.) 可是你(.) 我们这次都约好了(.) 机会难得啊(.) 你歌唱得那么好(.) 不来可惜了(.)
Aiya(.) keshi ni(.) women zheci dou yuehaole(.) jihui nandea(.) ni ge changdenamehao(.) bulai kexile(.)
'But…, this time we have made a plan. It's a good opportunity. You're such a good singer, it is a shame if you don't come.'

→　8　Wang:　哎呀(.) 这次你们好好儿玩吧(.) 也不差我一个(.) 下回我考完试(.) 一定请你唱歌(.)
Aiya(.) zheci nimen haohaorwanba(.) ye bu cha wo yige(.) xiahui wo kaowanshi(.) yiding qing ni changge(.)
'Well, this time you guys go and have fun/ It won't be a problem just missing me. Next time when I finish my exam, I'll definitely take you to karaoke.'

　　A:　真的来不了吗(.)
Zhende bulaile ma(.)
'Really, you are not coming with us?'

　　Wang:　恩(.)真的来不了了(.)
En(.)zhende laibuliaole(.)
'Well, really, I can't make it.'

...

This is just to give an example of various ways that different NSs used to negotiate a refusal in different scenarios. I do not feel it is the researcher's position to assess which one is good or efficient. I think different people just have different ways to achieve things. I hope this section showed that while there were some commonly occurring patterns that could be observed among the NS participants, variations among the participants should also be acknowledged. Variations found in this study hopefully can keep us alert in trying to avoid the tendency to overgeneralise the NSs when using their data as baseline.

To summarise, in this chapter, I have reported the findings of the NSs' use of refusals in terms of key linguistic devices, semantic formulas and structure of different semantic formulas relating to the learners' use of refusals. I have also touched upon variations among the NSs' refusals. This was just to show that while some commonly occurred patterns could be observed, a negotiation could be achieved in different ways. In the next chapter I move to report the findings of the learners' development in making refusals in these aspects, as well as the roles of instruction and the study abroad context alone on their development, as reflected in the interview and questionnaire data.

Chapter 6 Findings of L2 learners' pragmatic development and the roles of the instruction and the study abroad context

This chapter reports findings that answer the research questions regarding how learners' use of refusals developed in the study abroad context and whether or not, and in what ways, the instruction that took place in study abroad could facilitate this development. It also reports findings from the interview and questionnaire data as to how interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent on using the L2 outside classroom facilitate the learners' development. The findings from quantitative analyses of the learners' role-play data are first presented in section 6.1, followed by the findings from the qualitative analyses on the same data in section 6.2. Four more subsections are used to present the findings from the qualitative analyses: 6.2.1 reports the findings of the learners' development in use of refusals to personal suggestions; 6.2.2 reports the findings of the learners' development in use of refusals to invitations; 6.2.3 reports how learners' refusal structure developed; 6.2.4 reports the learners' own evaluation of the instruction and their interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent on using the L2 outside classroom on their development.

6.1 Results of the quantitative analysis

The current research ran a statistical analysis in order to answer research question 2, that is whether or not the instruction resulted in any significant difference in E-group's performance in comparison to C-group in terms of clarity in expressing refusals and their effect on IR as rated by the two coders, at each of the three stages (pre- and post-instruction as well as post-study abroad). The statistical analyses also consider the development in each group's role-play performances over time. The analyses were conducted using 288 role-play performances that the 12 learners produced in total, which were rated by two native speakers according to clarity and effect on IR. The inter-rater correlation for clarity is $r = .61$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed) and the inter-rater correlation for effect on IR is $r = .68$, $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Please note, it was found that, occasionally, some learners accepted without any attempt to refuse. These performances were excluded from the statistical analysis. Specifically, at pre-instruction four role-plays that had such acceptance were excluded, at post-instruction two were excluded and at post-study abroad one was excluded.

The independent variable in the current research is division into either E-group or C-group, while there are two dependent variables, namely the scores for clarity and effect on IR. Mean scores of clarity and effect on IR ratings for E-group and C-group at the three different stages are presented in Table 7 below. ANOVA was also carried out to test if the differences in clarity and effect on IR between the two groups at different stages were significant at the 5% significance level. Summary results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 8 below. Linear regression was also carried out to test the differences between the two groups and within each group at the three different stages. Summary results of the regressions are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 7: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of clarity and effect on IR ratings

		Clarity		Potential effect on Interpersonal relationship	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-instruction	C-group	3.68	0.61	4.05	0.60
	E-group	3.76	0.52	4.15	0.66
Post-instruction	C-group	3.78	0.58	3.89	0.65
	E-group	3.69	0.59	4.11	0.75
Post-study abroad	C-group	4.21	0.50	4.45	0.49
	E-group	4.08	0.52	4.58	0.46

Table 8: Summary results of ANOVA

			df	SS	F	p-value.
Pre-instruction	Clarity	Between groups	1	0.15	0.48	0.49
		Within group	78	24.77		
	Potential effect on interpersonal relationship	Between groups	1	0.20	0.50	0.48
		Within group	78	31.00		
Post-instruction	Clarity	Between groups	1	0.21	0.62	0.43
		Within group	92	31.64		
	Potential effect on interpersonal relationship	Between groups	1	1.17	2.39	0.13
		Within group	92	45.08		
Post-study abroad	Clarity	Between groups	1	0.44	1.70	0.20
		Within group	105	27.17		
	Potential effect on interpersonal relationship	Between groups	1	0.40	1.75	0.19
		Within group	105	23.83		

Table 9: Summary results of Regression

			Coeffi-cients	t-Stat	p-value	95% Confidence Level Lower bound	Upper bound
Pre-instruction	Clarity	Intercept	3.68	41.25	0.00	3.50	3.85
		X Variable 1	0.09	0.69	0.49	-0.16	0.34
	Potential effect on interpersonal relationship	Intercept	4.05	40.63	0.00	3.85	4.25
		X Variable 1	0.10	0.71	0.48	-0.18	0.38
Post-instruction	Clarity	Intercept	3.78	43.75	0.00	3.61	3.95
		X Variable 1	-0.10	-0.79	0.43	-0.34	0.15
	Potential effect on interpersonal relationship	Intercept	3.89	37.70	0.00	3.69	4.10
		X Variable 1	0.22	1.55	0.13	-0.06	0.51
Post-study abroad	Clarity	Intercept	4.21	60.86	0.00	4.08	4.35
		X Variable 1	-0.13	-1.30	0.20	-0.32	0.07
	Potential effect on interpersonal relationship	Intercept	4.45	68.70	0.00	4.33	4.58
		X Variable 1	0.12	1.32	0.19	-0.06	0.30

It is found that at pre-instruction, the difference between E-group (M=3.76, SD=0.52) and C-group (M=3.68, SD=0.61) in terms of refusal clarity is not significant. As shown in Table 8, ANOVA tests of the two groups yield an F-value of 0.48, with a *p*-value of 0.49. Similarly, the difference for effect on IR between E-group (M=4.15, SD=0.66) and C-group (M=4.05, SD=0.60) is also found not to be significant, as the corresponding F-value is 0.50, with a *p*-value of 0.48.

At post-instruction, the mean scores given in Table 7 suggest that while E-group (M=3.69, SD=0.59) did not perform better than C-group (M=3.78, SD=0.58) in terms of refusal clarity, there did appear to be some difference between the two groups in terms of effect on IR (E-group: M=4.11, SD=0.75 vs. C-group: M=3.89, SD=0.65). However, the ANOVA result at the same stage, in Table 8, suggests that this difference is not statistically significant at the 5% level. Similarly, at post-study abroad, while the raw means suggest E-group (M=4.58, SD= 0.46) performed slightly better than C-group (M=4.45, SD=0.49) in terms of effect on IR, the

ANOVA result at the same stage suggests that this difference is also not significant at the 5% level.

There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of refusal clarity at either the pre- or post-instruction stages. While the raw means for the post-study abroad stage suggest that E-group (M=4.08, SD=0.52) somewhat fell behind C-group (M=4.21, SD=0.50) in terms of refusal clarity, ANOVA again shows that this difference is not significant at the 5% level.

The regression analysis shown in Table 9 reflects the change in score over time. As expected, the C-group (performance reflected in the intercept in Table 9), which received no instruction, did not show signs of statistically significant development between the pre- and post-instruction stages, in terms of either refusal clarity or effect on IR. But between post-instruction and post-study abroad, developments in both refusal clarity and effect on IR were found to be significant at the 5% level (p<0.05). To elaborate, at post-instruction, in terms of C-group refusal clarity, the intercept was 3.78, falling between a 3.61 lower bound and a 3.95 higher bound. And at post-study abroad the intercept was 4.21, falling between a 4.08 lower bound and a 4.35 higher bound. At a 95% confidence level there is no overlap between the two intercepts. The same was true with C-group's effect on IR. Regression analysis produces the same result for E-Group in terms of both clarity and effect on IR.

Overall, although the raw means suggest somewhat better performance in terms of effect on IR at both the post-instruction and post-study abroad stages in E-group compared to C-group, these differences in mean scores were not found to be statistically significant. Thus instruction did not seem to make any significant difference in E-group's performances in terms of refusal clarity or effect on IR at either post-instruction or post-study abroad compared to C-group. Within each group, while no development was found due to time between pre- and post-instruction (which were about two weeks apart), there was statistically significant development observed in terms of both clarify and effect on IR between post-instruction and post-study abroad (seven months later).

As the ANOVA results show, within group variances were much greater than between groups variances at all stages of the study. There are a number of factors that could potentially have given rise to these high variances. One possibility is the differences between role-play scenarios that were used at the different stages,

especially between pre- and post-instruction. A few new scenarios were employed at the post-instruction stage to avoid test effect because the time interval between when the role-plays were collected was only about two weeks.

Another possibility could be due to a very small sample of learners. Although the number of role-plays used for statistical analysis was large enough to be valid for the statistics, they, however, were performed by only 6 learners in each group. With a very small sample size this quantitative analysis is only suggestive. Larger sample sizes would be required in future research.

6.2   Results of the qualitative analysis

This section reports findings from the qualitative analyses on the role-play data of the learners' development in making refusals to personal suggestions (section 6.2.1) and to invitations (section 6.2.2), and in structuring their refusals (section 6.2.3). It also reports findings from the interview and questionnaire data as to how interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent on using the L2 outside classroom facilitate the learners' development (section 6.2.4).

6.2.1   The learners' development in making refusals to personal suggestions

This subsection specifically presents the findings as to how the learners' use of refusals to personal suggestions developed during the study abroad period and in what ways the instruction and their interaction with NSs in the study abroad context alone could facilitate their development. But before then, as a reminder, I recast what were covered in the instruction and what were found to be important in the NSs' data but were not covered in the instruction.

In Chinese society, giving personal suggestions is generally considered as caring and polite behaviour; it helps to reinforce friendships. Although sometimes it might risk being perceived as unnecessary or excessive, people make these suggestions when they can because it is part of social habits. Many of the NSs stated that they usually refused personal suggestions, although they would try to be sensitive to the good intention of the person who made the suggestion when delivering a refusal. Some also felt guilty about refusing someone's good intention, and thus chose to compromise in order to satisfy the person who made the suggestion (see section 5.1).

Facing such a common social interactions in the target speech community as personal suggestions, but one that is seen as much less common in the learners' L1 culture, it is likely that the learners may find it difficult to refuse if they do not think these personal suggestions are necessary, especially because personal suggestions can be made a bit persistently. Therefore, in the instruction I tried prepare the learners for personal suggestions and to encourage them to make refusals if they wanted to do so by helping them to understand refusals themselves would not be a problem, so long as they were aware of whom they were refusing and of what they were refusing. Only a few linguistic devices that were present in the video-clips were dealt with and highlighted to E-group, e.g. *buyong* (不用, 'no need'). This was because very few linguistic devices were identified in previous studies and those that were identified were very context specific. In addition, although repeating *nonperformative statement* for intensification was not highlighted to E-group in the refusals to personal suggestions session of the instruction, this usage had been explicitly emphasized in the refusals to offers session. Similarly, although using *alternative* as a way to mitigate potential negative effects that a refusal may bring to IR was not highlighted in the refusals to personal suggestions session, it was explicitly emphasized in the refusals to invitations sessions (see section 4.2.1). As we will shortly see below, E-group's use of both of these linguistic devices in their refusals to personal suggestions somewhat increased at the post-instruction stage. These increases might be a reflection of an impact of the instruction on the E-group learners' use of refusals.

The NSs' refusals in the same scenarios have also helped to identify some more semantic formulas and key linguistic devices associated with them that had not been reported in previous studies. Specifically, the different frequencies of the occurrence of *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, *nonperformative statement* and *negative willingness* points to a preference for *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* or *nonperformative statement*, but not *negative willingness*. This pragmatic knowledge is important for learners, as applying *negative willingness* potentially could pose a risk to IR. Furthermore, the linguistic device to deliver *negative willingness* was found to be especially critical in avoiding causing even more negative effects on IR, relative to *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* and *nonperformative statement*. Of the two linguistic devices, *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') and *buyao* (不要, 'don't

want to'; 'mustn't'), the latter is found to be less desirable. The NSs' data also revealed a new semantic formula - *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*. It also showed that the linguistic devices that can be used to deliver *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* were either *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') or *meiguanxi* (没关系, 'doesn't matter'). The former was employed much more frequently. But there is no substantial difference in illocutionary force that was found in the NSs' data between these two devices.

In addition, the NSs' data showed that *alternative* was frequently found in the High-Fever and Severe-Diarrhoea scenarios. The adverb *jiu* (就, 'just'; 'only') was found to be critical for *alternative*'s clarity, typically focusing on the result of the *alternatives* in order to convince the interlocutor of unnecessariness of the suggestion. Without using *jiu* to point to the desired result, the *alternative* proposed could lose the intended effect. In addition to *jiu* , the modal verb *hui* (会, 'will') was also found to express the probability of the *alternative* helping with the fever. Similarly in the same scenarios, *jiu* or *zhi* (就 or 只, 'only') were found to serve to downgrade the problem in *reason*, thus, justifying the refusal. As a result, the use of the two linguistic devices helped to make the *reason* more persuasive than would have been the case without them.

Having recast what was covered in the instruction and what was found in the NSs' data that was relevant to the discussion of the learners' development, next I move on the findings of the learners' data. In general, the learners' use of semantic formulas showed great similarity to that of the NSs. As Table 10 and Table 11show, the range of semantic formulas that were found among the learners and the NSs were fairly similar, even as early as at the pre-instruction stage. As we can see, *reason* was the most frequently used in both groups. And the kinds of *reasons* that the two groups used also displayed some resemblance at this early stage. For example, both the groups used 'I don't feel cold' as seen in Example 37 (1) and (2) below and 'my hometown is even colder' as seen in (3) and (4).

Table 10: Learners' direct refusals to personal suggestions compared to the NSs (%)

	Mind at ease			Nonperformative			Negative willingness		
	L			L			L		
	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs
Pre	N/A	N/A	20.3%	20.0%	18.5%	12.2%	16.0%	7.4%	1.4%
Post	N/A	N/A	20.2%	34.5%	11.5%	21.0%	10.3%	15.4%	1.7%
Post-SA	15.2%	9.1%	28.2%	30.3%	27.3%	22.3%	6.1%	6.1%	1.0%

L = Learners; E= the Experimental group; C= the Control Group
Pre =Pre-instruction; Post =Post-instruction; Post-SA =Post-study abroad
Mind at ease= Put the interlocutor's mind at ease; Nonperformative= Nonperformative statement

Table 11: Learners' indirect refusals to personal suggestions compared to the NSs (%)

	Reason			Alternative			Condi. on accep.		
	L			L			L		
	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs
Pre	64.0%	59.3%	43.2%	N/A	N/A	1.4%	N/A	7.4%	N/A
Post	37.9%	53.8 %	31.9%	17.9%	11.5%	18.5%	N/A	N/A	2.5%
Post-SA	33.3%	36.4%	34.0%	12.1%	11.7%	18.2%	N/A	3.0%	1.9%

	Neg. conseq.			Topic switch			Other strategies		
	L			L			L		
	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs
Pre	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.4%	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.3%
Post	N/A	N/A	4.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.7%	N/A
Post-SA	3.0%	N/A	1.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

L = Learners; E= the Experimental group; C= the Control Group
Pre =Pre-instruction; Post =Post-instruction; Post-SA =Post-study abroad
Condi. on accep.= Set condition on acceptance; Neg. conseq.= Negative consequence

Example 37: Similar reasons between the learners and the NSs in their refusals to More-Clothes

(1)   Learner: 现在我 我觉得很舒服
Xianzai wo wojuede henshufu
'Now I, I feel very comfortable.'

(2)   NS: 我觉得不冷
Wojuede buleng
'I don't feel cold.'

(3)   Learner: 我从 啊 我从 啊 瑞典来/我是从瑞典来的 瑞典毕竟太冷了 我我 天气冷的时候我不觉得不舒服
Wo cong a wo cong a Ruidian lai/wo shi congRuidian laide Ruidian bijing tailengle wo wo tianqi lengdeshihou wo bujuede bushufu
'I am from, urn, I am from, urn, Sweden/I come from Sweden. Sweden is after all too cold. When the weather is cold, I don't feel uncomfortable.'

(4)   NS: 我家乡就特别冷然后我就觉得我这样习惯了不怎么冷
Wojiaxiang jiu tebieleng ranhou wojiujuede wozheyang xiguanle buzenme leng
'My hometown is very cold. Then I think I am used to this. It is not very cold.'

These similarities found between the learners and the NSs indicate some universality between the two group's pragmatic knowledge. In the learners' case, such pragmatic knowledge essentially originates from their L1 pragmatic knowledge. Universality has been found in the literature to result in a positive influence on learners' L2 pragmatic performances (Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Liao & Bresnahan, 1996; Taleghani-Nikazm & Huth, 2010) (see section 3.2.2). As we will see more in the oncoming sections, such similarities to the NSs were observed frequently in the learners' refusals. But proficiency levels and L2 pragmatic knowledge appeared to limit its potential to facilitate learners' production of refusals. Both the instruction and the study abroad experience appeared to be able to contribute to L2 pragmatic knowledge, which in turn, facilitated the learners' adjustment to the target speech style following the post-study abroad period.

Development of key linguistic devices in direct refusals

This subsection focuses on learners' development in using different direct refusals over time and the key linguistic devices associated with them. Learners' data was compared to the NSs' data, as well as compared with each other, between E-group and C-group, to examine influences of the instruction and the study abroad context alone on their development. The instruction was found to facilitate E-group's increased use of *nonperformative statement* at the post-instruction stage, compared to C-group. But the two groups became very similar in this regard at the post-study abroad stage, which suggests that the study abroad context alone may have also fostered C-group's learning, as is seen in the case of learning to use *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* to refuse personal suggestions. While some development was observed with regards to *nonperformative statement* and *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, in relation to *negative willingness*, there was no indication among learners in both groups of grasping the difference between the two linguistic devices, *buyao* (不要, 'don't want to'; 'mustn't') and *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to'), in terms of their effect on IR.

Learners' use of nonperformative statement: buyong buyong (不用不用, 'no need, no need')

This subsection reports the learners' development in the linguistic devices that they used to deliver *nonperformative statement*. In the case of E-group, the focus will be on the repeated form *buyong buyong* (不用不用, 'no need, no need'), where repetition adds emphasis, which was instructed to the E-group. As C-group did not receive the instruction, the focus is on their development as reflected in the different linguistic devices that were used to deliver the semantic formula, using Daisy's case as an example.

At both the pre- and post-instruction stages, Daisy (C-group) used an ungrammatical linguistic device to deliver *nonperformative statement*, as seen in Example 38 below. *Budei* (不得) was very likely meant to express 'don't have to' in English. *Dei* (得) is used to express strong obligation in spoken Mandarin Chinese, which is usually translated as 'must' or 'have to' (Ross & Ma, 2006). Yip and Rimmington (2004) specifically note, *dei* (得) is never used in the negative. Lü (2004) notes, its negative is *buyong* (不用, 'no need'); *budei* cannot be used. Thus, *budei* can be considered an ungrammatical form to express 'don't have to'. Instead, *buyong* should be used. As reflected in the NSs' data, *buyong* was utilized in this scenario; *budei* was never observed (see section 5.1).

Example 38: Daisy's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

> Daisy: 呃 我好 我 *[1]不得去
> E wohao wo *budeiqu
> 'Err, I'm fine. I *don't have to go.'

At post-study abroad, as seen in Example 52 (p.157), Daisy employed *buyong* (不用, 'no need') (underlined, in line 4) for *nonperformative statement*. In line 6, she employed a different form, *buxuyao* (不需要, 'don't need') (also underlined), which could be used as an alternative for *nonperformative statement* in her response to her interlocutor's pre-closure question (see section 5.1). Considering its sequential position, this linguistic device firmly confirmed Daisy's refusal. Overall, Daisy's employment of *nonperformative statement* had improved; not only because it was

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[1] The * symbol is used to indicate that a learner's utterance is ungrammatical.

delivered using the grammatical forms, but also because it was well justified by the *reason* and intensified when it was expected. Thus, they were not blunt, in contrast to those *nonperformative statements* that she used at the previous stages.

Turning to E-group, the form, *buyong buyong* (不用不用, 'no need, no need'), which is repeated for emphasis, was instructed and was particularly striking for the E-group participants. They all applied it in some scenario(s). And in their interviews (conducted post study abroad), E-group also commented on the usefulness of learning this method and how common this way of intensifying a direct refusal was observed during their time studying in the target speech community. As presented in section 5.1, this repeated form was also found in the NSs' refusals to personal suggestions. With regards to the use of the technique of repeating for emphasis, the scenario which best differentiated E-group from C-group was their refusals to offers to pay for a shared taxi. Thus, I have also inserted a couple of examples from this scenario in order to try to offer a full picture of the influence of the instruction in this regard, although the scenario was excluded from the main body of the analysis (see section 4.3.3).

E-group and C-group displayed diverging trends in their frequency of *nonperformative statement* between the pre- and post-instruction stages. As Table 10 (p.141) shows, E-group increased their use from 20.0% at pre-instruction to 34.5% at post-instruction, whereas C-group decreased slightly from 18.5% to 11.5%. It was found that E-group's increase resulted from both a larger number of learners that employed it and a greater number of instances of use by the same learner. The instruction may have had an effect on this increase. The potential effect from instruction was especially evident in the case of learners who did not use *buyong* (不用, 'no need') at pre-instruction, but did employ it at post-instruction. This was particularly because the linguistic device was used in a repeated manner, which was highlighted as a way to intensify the refusal during the instruction. For example, *buyong buyong* (不用不用, 'no need, no need') appeared in Emma's (E-group) refusal at post-instruction. Considering the form (*buyong*), especially repeating it for emphasis, did not occur in any of Emma's refusals at the pre-instruction stage (including those that were excluded from the final analysis), but it was instructed to her at the instruction, her use of it most likely reflected some effect of the instruction.

However, it is worthy to note that the form *buyong* (不用, 'no need') was actually employed at pre-instruction by two learners, Molly (E-group) and Grace (C-group). Considering that all the learners came from the same class prior to the study abroad period, the occurrence of this linguistic device at the pre-instruction stage, although only found in two instances, suggested that it might have already been instructed to the learners prior to the intervention carried out in this study. But the intervention may have helped to link it with refusals, and especially by introducing a new usage (repeating it for emphasis), to bring it back to the fore of the learners' attention.

Molly (E-group) offered an example in point. In contrast to her use of *buyong* (不用, 'no need') at pre-instruction, at the post-instruction stage in a different scenario, when an acquaintance offered to pay for the taxi that they had shared, she repeated it to intensify the refusal, as seen in Example 39. Use of intensification was especially desirable in this scenario, in particular at the first turn. As argued in section 5.1, the use of intensification in the initial refusal characterised this scenario; it critically contributed to enhancing IR by projecting the refuser's stronger concern for the cost of the offer that the offerer bears. Thus, by intensifying her refusal, Molly actually attended to IR. Considering refusals to an offer to pay were covered in the instruction and the technique of repeated *nonperformative statement* was highlighted, it probably was not by chance that Molly used this manner to intensify her refusal in this scenario.

Example 39: Molly's refusal at post-instruction (Taxi)

> Molly: 啊 不用不用不用 嗯 我可以啊 啊 请客…
> *A buyong buyong buyong en wokeyi a a qingke…*
> 'Uh, no need, no need, no need, urn, I can, uh, uh, pay for us...'

The technique of repeating a *nonperformative statement* was also found in Jasmine's (E-group) refusals in this scenario. As seen in Example 40 below, not only did Jasmine apply the repetition for emphasis, but she also used *buxing* (不行, 'no way'), a device that may be considered to carry a stronger tone.

Example 40: Jasmine's refusal at post-instruction (Taxi)

Jasmine: 啊 <u>不行不行</u>啊 我 我呃 我请你啊
A <u>buxing buxinga</u> wo wo e woqingni'a
'Uh, <u>no way, no way</u>. I, I, err, I pay for you.'

In contrast, in C-group no new linguistic devices associated with *nonperformative statement* were observed between the pre- and post-instruction stages. For example, no one who did not employ *buyong* (不用, 'no need') at pre-instruction, started to use it at post-instruction. For another example, Daisy, who used the ungrammatical *budei* (不得) at pre-instruction, used it again at post-instruction. And C-group did not seem to be aware of the technique of repeating *nonperformative statement* for intensification at this stage, in particular, in the scenario where they tried to refuse the offer to pay for the shared taxi. Take Grace (C-group) for example; although she was one of the two learners who used *buyong* at pre-instruction, in Taxi scenario she used *nitaikeqile* (你太客气了, 'you are too polite') at her first turn. As discussed in section 5.3.2, this expression usually is not used to express *gratitude*. More importantly, by employing this expression where an intensified *nonperformative statement* should have been placed indicated Grace might not be fully aware of the typical way to refuse an offer to pay at this stage.

However, at the post-study abroad stage, the group differences between E-group and C-group had become fractional. Rather, the difference observed among different individual learners regardless of group was more notable than the group differences. The study abroad context appeared to have reinforced what E-group learned from the instruction, through interactions and observations. But at the same time, *buyong* (不用, 'no need') has also started to occur in C-group learners' refusals, suggesting that these learners might have acquired an understanding of this device via their study abroad experience. Here, I present two examples that are both from E-group. But, to a certain extent, these examples still demonstrate individual learners' different development following the post-study abroad period, which contributes towards to explaining why group difference had become almost invisible, especially among a very small group of learners. Examples of C-group development are presented in later sections.

Many learners in E-group commented on how they became good at using what they learned through the instruction. As Molly (E-group) commented in her

interview, 'because it (the instruction) was near the beginning of our year, it's always useful to know colloquial phrases (the example she gave was *buyong buyong*, 'no need, no need') that are used all the time and eventually they do become natural to you because you practice them so much'.

Louise offered another example. At the post-study abroad stage, as seen in Example 41, Louise employed *buyong* (不用, 'no need'), not only in conjunction with an intensifier *zhende* (真的, 'really'), but also the compound was repeated to intensify the refusal. And again in her last refusal, she repeated *nonperformative statement* for emphasis. As Louise recalled in her interview, expressions such as *buxing buxing buxing* ('no way, no way, no way') - repeating *nonperformative statement* for emphasis - was one of the things that she had learned from the instruction. And she has also heard Chinese people using it very frequently, which reinforced her using it. Louise' usage can be seen as evidence of the impact of the instruction in facilitating Louise's learning and usage of this device.

Example 41: Louise's refusals at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

> Louise: 真的不用 真的不用 我不要 啊 去医院 不太/真的不太重要
> 谢谢你
> *Zhendebuyong zhendebuyong wo buyao a quyiyuan butai/*
> *zhende butai zhongyao xiexieni*
> Really no need, really no need, I won't, uh, go to hospital.
> Not too/ really not too important. Thank you.'

However, it was also found that a grammatical and desirable linguistic device that learners had learned might be replaced by an ungrammatical one over time. For example, Emma (E-group) learned from the instruction to use *buyong* (不用, 'no need') in the post-instruction role-play. But in her refusal at post-study abroad, as seen in Example 42 below, Emma used *budei* (不得), an ungrammatical form to express 'don't have to', where *buyong* should have been utilized, as noted earlier. *Buyong* actually was not found in any of Emma's refusals at this stage (including those that were excluded from the main body of the analysis). As Louise' (E-group) refusal (see Example 41 earlier), as well as the NSs' data, has demonstrated, the Severe-Diarrhoea scenario did elicit this linguistic device. Therefore, the absence of *buyong* in Emma's refusal cannot be fully explained by the difference between the

scenarios. However, it is possible that the linguistic device still existed in Emma's repertoire, but that she was not able to retrieve it as she had done at post-instruction.

Example 42 Emma's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

> Emma: 嗯 我知道可是 呃 我 我 呃我觉得我吃坏了东西 呃然后我觉得不好 我觉得 *跟这个病我 *不得去医院
> *En wozhidao keshi e wo wo e wojuede wo chihuaile dongxi e ranhou wojuede buhao wojuede *genzhegebing wo*budei quyiyuan*
> 'Urn, I know, but, err, I, I, err, I think I ate something bad. Err, then I feel bad. I think, *with this illness, I *don't have to go and see a doctor.'

Learners' use of put the interlocutor's mind at ease: meishir (没事儿, 'no worries') vs. meiwenti (没问题, 'no problem')

As a reminder, *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* was only categorised through analysing the NSs' refusals at the post-data collection stage. It was not highlighted in the literature, thus it was not covered in the instruction. Hence, what was found about this semantic formula and the linguistic devices associated with it in the NSs' data (see section 5.1) are used as a reference when considering the learners' data.

Put the interlocutor's mind at ease was only found in one learner's refusal at the pre-instruction stage. But over time more learners learned to use this semantic formula to refuse personal suggestions. However, it was found that the contexts in which the learners used *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* were narrower compared to the NSs. This observation suggests that the learners might not have been fully aware of all the contexts in which *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* may be used. Within the contexts where it was used, some learners employed *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries'), which is a typical form, but other learners used *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem'), which is not. This shows that more precise pragmalinguistic knowledge still needed to be further developed. I shall now present some examples.

As early as post-instruction, Abby (C-group) employed *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* in her refusal to the invitation to stay at the acquaintance's parents' apartment. She was the only learner in either of the two groups who used this semantic formula prior to the post-study abroad stage. But she utilized both *meishir* (

没事儿, 'no worries') and *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem') in the same response; one followed the other. And her intonation suggested that Abby might have thought that they both were equally applicable in this context. The co-existence of the linguistic devices showed Abby might treat the two the same in terms of their pragmatic function in the L2.

Following the post-study abroad period, only *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') was found in Abby's refusals to deliver *put the interlocutor's mind at* ease; *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem') was not observed. The absence of *meiwenti* arguably could suggest that Abby might have realized that there was some difference between the two devices, but it certainly could also be argued that Abby's understanding of the contexts in which *meishir* can be used is still limited. This is because, in Abby's refusals at post-study abroad, *meishir* was only observed in one scenario: her response to a Chinese host's rejection of the flowers that Abby brought along. In the scenario where the personal suggestion was refused, *meishir* was not found. As a reminder, refusals to personal suggestions are the scenarios in which *meishir* most frequently occurred in the NSs' data. This scenario is also where some other learners, for example, Daisy in C-group and Jasmine in E-group (the report on their usage follows) started to use *meishir*. However, in this scenario, Abby used *xiexie*, which conveys her *gratitude*, instead of *meishir*, which conveys to *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*. It is not that use of *gratitude* is ungrammatical or wrong in this context; it is just that it is not common in Mandarin Chinese. As Rose and Ma (2006, p.370) noted,

> In Chinese culture, you thank others for actions that benefit you or show you respect. Such actions include doing something for you… or helping you in some way. In Chinese culture, you do not thank others for compliments or invitations.

Rose and Ma (2006) may have overstated where *gratitude* may not be found, but their observation on where *gratitude* usually occurs seems reasonable. If we accept Rose and Ma's (2006) observation, then the fact that Abby employed *gratitude* instead of *put the interlocutor's mind at* ease in this scenario indicated that she may not have been aware the latter was more typical in the L2 given the context. This one instance alone, not to mention the absence of *put the interlocutor's mind at* ease in Abby's refusals in some other scenarios, could indicate that, following the post-study abroad period, Abby might still not have been fully be aware of all the contexts in which *put the interlocutor's mind at* ease may be utilized.

In the cases of Jasmine (E-group) and Daisy (C-group), the fact that they both employed *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* to refuse the personal suggestion in the post-study abroad role-play, in contrast to Abby's use of *gratitude*, suggested that they may have learned, probably through interacting with and/or observing the target speech community, that this semantic formula is usually used in this context. Thus, the occurrence can be considered as a development resulting from the study abroad experience, as they did not employ *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* prior to this stage. But like Abby (C-group), Jasmine (E-group) only employed this semantic formula in this particular scenario, not elsewhere. Furthermore, the fact that Jasmine used *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem') instead of *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries'), which was not found in any of her refusals, including those that were excluded from the main body of the analysis, suggests that either she was unable to retrieve *meishir* (没事儿) or she was not aware that *meiwenti* is not typically used to express *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, or perhaps both.

In comparison to Abby (C-group) and Jasmine (E-group), Daisy (C-group) demonstrated better understanding of what was considered more typical in this context. Not only did she use *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* (as opposed to *gratitude* as in Abby's case), but she also used *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') (as opposed to *meiwenti* 没问题, 'no problem' as in Jasmine's case) to deliver it. Furthermore, Daisy also employed this semantic formula in her response to a Chinese host's ritual rejection to the flowers that she brought along, where Abby employed it, and again using *meishir* to deliver it. Of the three learners, Daisy can be considered to have become the most adept at using *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* following the study abroad period. But she still missed out some scenarios where *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* could be used, as was seen in the NSs' refusals.

By and large, it is notable that *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* was still missing in the majority of the learners' refusals at the post-study abroad stage. As seen in Example 43, Grace, for example, used *bushi name zhongyao* (不是那么重要, 'not so important') (coded as *reason*), where *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') was seen typically, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Example 43: Grace's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Grace: 我不要麻烦你 我觉得真的<u>不是那么重要</u>

Wo buyao mafanni wojuede zhende <u>bushi name zhongyao</u>

'I don't want to trouble you. I think [that] <u>it's really not that important</u>.'

Learners' use of negative willingness: buxiang (不想, 'wouldn't like to') vs. buyao (不要, 'don't want to'; 'mustn't')

This subsection focuses on the learners' development in their use of *negative willingness* and the linguistic devices, *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') and *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't') to deliver it. What was found in the NSs' data was used as reference, as neither the use of this semantic formula nor the difference between the two linguistic devices had been discussed in the instruction (see section 5.1).

It was found, even at the post-study abroad stage, that the learners still used *negative willingness* too often, relative to *put the interlocutor's minds at ease* and *nonperformative statement*, as shown in Table 10 (p.141). Taking E-group for example, even though *negative willingness* had decreased from 16.0% at pre-instruction to 6.1% at post-study abroad. The ratio of the three semantic formulas was still 6.1%/6.1%[2] (*negative willingness*): 15.2%/9.1% (*put the interlocutor's minds at ease*): 30.3%/27.3% (*nonperformative statement*). In contrast, the ratio found in the NSs' data in the same scenario was 1.0% : 28.2% : 22.3%. And though the ratio of these three semantic formulas in the NSs' refusals may have varied at the different time points because of the differences among the three scenarios, *negative willingness* consistently accounted for a very small proportion across all three scenarios. As such, even at the post-study abroad stage, compared to the NSs, a further decrease in the usage of *negative willingness* among the learners may be desirable, because *negative willingness* runs more risk of causing negative effect on IR, compared to the other two semantic formulas.

Risk to the IR is especially the case if *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't'), rather than *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') is used to deliver *negative willingness*. Compared to *buxiang*, *buyao* expresses a strong desire, rather than a mild wish, for

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[2] On the left hand of the oblique is E-group; on the right hand side of the oblique is C-group.

non-compliance, and hence, runs higher risk of causing negative effect on IR, as discussed in section 5.1.1. However, the learners did not appear to distinguish between the two linguistic devices to deliver *negative willingness* even in the post-study abroad role-plays, though the frequency of this semantic formula was found to have decreased as shown in Table 10.

For example, *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't') was again observed in Daisy's refusals at the post-study abroad stage, as shown below in Example 44 (pre-instruction), Example 45 (post-instruction) and Example 46 (post-study abroad). Likewise, in Louise's pre-instruction role-play, and again at post-study abroad, she used *buyao*, as seen in line 2 in Example 41 (p.147). But unlike Daisy, Louise actually also used *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') at the post-study abroad stage: in the scenario where she refused the food offer to try deep-fried locusts, which was excluded from the final analysis (see section 4.3.3). This indicates that, while Louise had both *buyao* and *buxiang* in her repertoire, she might not be fully aware that, unlike *buxiang*, using *buyao* to express *negative willingness* could pose a higher risk to IR.

Example 44: Daisy's refusal at pre-instruction (More-Clothes)

Daisy: 啊 嗯 我<u>不要</u> 呃 我 太热了
A en wo<u>buyao</u> e wo tairele
'Uh, urn, I don't <u>want</u> (to put on more clothes), err, I'm too hot.'

Example 45: Daisy's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

Daisy: 我我<u>不要</u>去 对不起
Wo wo <u>buyao</u>qu duibuqi
'I, I don't <u>want</u> to go, sorry.'

Example 46: Daisy' refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Daisy: 啊 我<u>不要</u>去医院 啊真的没事儿 我 嗯*只有 拉肚子 所以 我 只要呃休息一下
*A wo<u>buyao</u> quyiyuan a zhende meishir wo en *zhiyou laduzi suoyi wo zhiyao e xiuxiyixa*
'Uh, I <u>don't want</u> to go to hospital. Uh, really, no worries. I, urn, *only have diarrhoea. So, I only want, err, to rest.'

To summarise, this section has reported the learners' use of direct refusals to personal suggestions. Some learners were found to have learned to use *put interlocutor's mind at ease* to make refusals in the study abroad context even with no assistance of the intervention. But the analysis also found that the learners had not yet fully developed their sociopragmatic knowledge regarding the different contexts in which this semantic formula could be used. And regarding linguistic devices, it was found that while some learners managed to learn to use the typical form, other learners did not. The difference between the use of *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') and *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't') to deliver *negative willingness* was also not found to be differentiated in the majority's refusals.

In regards to the instruction, the technique of repeating a *nonperformative statement* for emphasis was found to be striking for E-group and it appears to have influenced them at the post-instruction stage (albeit to different extents). The influence of the instruction may also have interacted with different learners' study abroad experience, such that at the post-study abroad stage the instruction survived in some learners and did not in other learners.

Development of key linguistic devices in indirect refusals

Previously, I reported the learners' development in their use of direct refusals and the key linguistic devices associated with them. This subsection reports the learners' development in their use of indirect refusals focusing on *reason* and *alternative* and the key linguistic devices that contribute to their clarity.

Use of reason: jiu or zhi (就 or 只, 'only')

This subsection reports the learners' development in using *reason* over time, as well as the usage of *jiu* or *zhi* (就 or 只, 'only') associated with it. As pointed out earlier in section 5.1, some similarities were found between the learners' *reasons* and those of the NSs, in terms of content at the pre-instruction stage. This may have resulted from some degree of universality in the two group's pragmatic knowledge. But unlike their *reasons* at pre-instruction, the learners in both groups used *reasons* at the post-instruction stage that were very general compared to the NSs, perhaps due to the change of the scenarios. And they stayed general over turns, rather than being elaborated to become more specific.

For example, in her refusal at post-instruction, Jasmine (E-group) used three *reasons*: 'I'm comfortable' in Example 47, 'I'm fine' in Example 48, and 'I *not illness' in Example 49. They were all very general. Take her *reason* 'I'm fine' for example; she did not specifically point out what it was that made her fine. As argued in section 5.1, specificity in *reasons* was important to justify the refusal by helping the interlocutor to understand why exactly going to see a doctor was believed to be unnecessary.

Example 47: Jasmine's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

Jasmine: 啊 嗯 我 我舒服啊我不要 我不要去
A en wo wo shufu'a wobuyao wobuyaoqu
'Uh, urn, I, I am comfortable. I don't want, I don't want to go (to hospital).'

Example 48: Jasmine's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

Jasmine: 嗯 我好 我我只想 *睡觉一下
*En wohao wo wo zhixiang *shuijiaoyixia*
'Urn, I'm fine. I, I'd only like to *sleep a bit.'

Example 49: Jasmine's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

Jasmine: 啊 嗯 不是啊 我 我不 嗯 我 *不病
*A en bushi'a wo wobu en wo*bubing*
'Uh, urn, no, uh, I, I'm not, urn, I'm *not illness.'

Daisy (C-group) offers us another example illustrating that when *reason* is not developed over turns to justify the direct refusals, it can lead to a rather blunt refusal overall and, thus, may cause negative effect on IR. As seen in Example 50, Daisy said she did not like to see a doctor (line 2), but she did not specifically point out anywhere in the sequence what it was that made her not like to see a doctor. And in line 4 Daisy said she was okay, but she did not specify how she was going to be okay, for example, was she going to take some medicine so that she would be okay?

Example 50: Daisy's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

1   A: 我看你有点儿发烧 要不要去 医生那儿打一针
              Wokan ni youdianr fashao yaobuyao qu yisheng nar dayizhen
              ' I think you look like you are having a fever, do you want to see a doctor and have an injection.'
2   Daisy: 啊 嗯 我不喜欢 嗯(.) 去医生

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A en wo buxihuan en(.) quyisheng

' Uh, urn, I don't like, urn(.) seeing a doctor.'

3   A: 嗯可是 你不打针的话可能要病上一周 那会很难受的

En keshi ni budazhen dehua keneng yao bingshang yizhou na hui hennanshoude

' Urn, but if you don't have an injection you might be sick for the whole week, which will be rather uncomfortable.'

4   Daisy: 呃我好 我 *不得去

*E wohao wo *budeiqu*

' Oh, I am good, I *don't have to go.'

5   A: 打针的话你会好得快一些

Dazhen dehua ni hui haode kuaiyixie

' Urn, if you have an injection you will feel better soon.'

6   Daisy: 嗯 ((pause)) 我我不要去 对不起 ((laughter))

En((pause)) wo wo buyaoqu duibuqi ((laughter))

' Urn((pause)) I, I don't want to go, sorry ((laughter)).'

7   A: 嗯 你确定你不去打针吗

En niqueding ni buqu dazhen ma

' Urn, are you sure that you won't go to have an injection?'

8   Daisy: 嗯↑

En↑

' Urn↑'

9   A: 你 确定 你不要打针吗

Ni queding ni buyao dazhen ma

' Are you sure that you don't need to have an injection?'

10   Daisy: 对

Dui

' Yes.'

11   A: 嗯那好吧那就算了 那也希望你快点儿好起来

En na haoba na jiu suanle na ye xiwang ni kuaidianr haoqilai

' Urn, okay, forget about it, I hope you will feel better soon.'

At the post-study abroad stage, the learners' *reasons* generally became more specific, thus, they sufficiently justified the refusals. They, therefore, can be considered to be more persuasive in negotiating the refusal compared to those at the post-instruction stage. Also, because they were specific, it helped the interlocutor to better understand why they were refusing the suggestion. Hence, they were less likely to cause negative effect on IR, compared to those at the pre-instruction stage. As seen in Example 51 below, Jasmine (E-group) first explained that she had got some medicine from a pharmacy in line 2. And in her subsequent turn in line 4, she further explained that two months ago she had very similar diarrhoea, showing it was a problem that she had experience dealing with.

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Example 51: Jasmine's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

1   A: 你好 我看你有点儿不舒服 要不去医院看一下

Nihao wokan ni youdianr bushufu yaobu quyiyuan kanyixia

'Hello, I feel [that] you look a bit unwell, how about you go and see a doctor?'

2   Jasmine: 啊 嗯 没问题没问题 我去了 嗯商店(.) 买了((pause)) 药

A en meiwenti meiwenti wo qule en shangdian(.) maile((pause)) yao

'Uh, urn, no problem, no problem, I went to, urn, a shop(.) and bought ((pause)) some medicine.'

3   A: 呃 可是要是去医院看一下的话 会好得快一点儿

En keshi yaoshi quyiyuan kanyixia dehua hui haodei kuaiyidianr

'Urn, but if you go and see a doctor [you] will recover sooner.'

4   Jasmine: 嗯 真的没问题 我(.) 嗯:: 两个月前/ 以前有 有一样的拉…拉肚子 所以真的 真的没问题

En zhende meiwenti wo(.) urn:: lianggeyue qian/yiqian you you yiyang de la…laduzi suoyi zhende zhende meiwenti

'Urn, really no problem. I(.) urn:: two months ago/ago, had had the same dia…diarrhoea. So really, really, no problem.'

5   A: 呃你确定现在不需要去医院是吗

E niqueding xianzai buxuyao quyiyuan shima

'Are you sure that you don't need to go to hospital?'

6   Jasmine: 不需要 [谢谢你]

Buxuyao [xiexieni]

'No need. [Thank you]'

7   A: [那希望] 你快点儿好起来

[Na xiwang] ni kuaidianr haoqilai

[Then hope] you feel better soon.

8   Jasmine: 好的

Haode

'Okay.'

Similarly, as seen in Example 52 below, Daisy (C-group) also improved her *reasons*. First in line 2, she attempted to state that 'it was only diarrhoea' (this *reason* will be discussed in more detail below) implying there was no other problem. To follow, Daisy proposed an *alternative*; she only wanted to rest. Considering its absence in Daisy's refusal at the post-instruction stage, the occurrence of this semantic formula can be considered another area of improvement. By pointing out an *alternative* to get to the same result (getting better), Daisy more delicately conveyed the refusal. And in line 4, she noted that she had already taken some medicine. So she believed it now could get better soon, which convincingly conveyed the message that diarrhoea is the only problem and she has taken care of it.

Example 52: Daisy's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

1　　A:　我看你有点儿不舒服 要不要去医院看一下
　　　　　　Wokan ni youdianr bushufu yaobuyao quyiyuan kanyixia
　　　　　　'I think you look a bit unwell, do you want to go and see a doctor?'

2　Daisy:　啊我不要去医院 啊 真的没事儿 我 嗯 *只有 拉肚子所以 我只要 休息一下
　　　　　　A wobuyao quyiyuan a zhende meishir wo en *zhiyou laduzi suoyi wo zhiyao xiuxi yixia
　　　　　　'Uh, I don't want to go to hospital. Uh, really, no worries. I, urn, *only having diarrhoea, so I just want to rest a bit.'

3　　A:　我觉得 去医院看一下的话 好得会快一点儿
　　　　　　Wojuede quyiyuan kanyixia dehua haode hui kuaiyidianr
　　　　　　'I think if you go and see a doctor it will get better sooner.'

4　Daisy:　我 已经有/我已经吃药/吃了药所以 我觉得呃(.) 现在可以 快点儿 好 呃不用=
　　　　　　Wo yijingyou/wo yijing chiyao/chileyao suoyi wojuede e(.) xianzai keyi kuaidianrhao e buyong=
　　　　　　'I already have/I've already took medicine/taken some medicine. So I think, err(.) now it can recover soon. Err, no need='

5　　A:　=你觉得真的不需要吗
　　　　　　=Nijuede zhende buxuyao ma
　　　　　　'=Do you think you really don't need?'

6　Daisy:　呃真的不需要
　　　　　　E zhende buxuyao
　　　　　　'Oh, really no need.'

7　　A:　那好希望你快点儿好起来
　　　　　　Nahao xiwang ni kuaidianr haoqilai
　　　　　　'Okay. I hope you feel better soon.'

8　Daisy:　啊谢谢((laughter))
　　　　　　A xiexie ((laughter))
　　　　　　'Uh, thank you ((laughter)).'

Jasmine (E-group) and Daisy's (C-group) refusals between post-instruction and post-study abroad demonstrated that their *reasons* improved over time and this made some difference to their refusals overall. But in one of Daisy's *reasons*, *wo en *zhiyou laduzi* (我 嗯 *只有拉肚子) in line 4, *zhiyou can be considered ungrammatical in this context, because it is primarily used to indicate the precondition needed to achieve a certain result (Lü, 2004, p. 681). From the context, it is reasonable to infer that she was trying to express 'I only have diarrhoea' in English. As discussed in section 5.1, this way of reasoning was also found among the NSs and the linguistic device that was used to express it was *jiu* or *zhi* (就 or 只, 'only'). In fact, this linguistic device was used by two learners: Mia (E-group), as seen in Example 53 below and Leo (E-group), as seen in Example 54 below.

Example 53: Mia's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Mia: 啊不用不用 只是 拉肚子
A'buyong buyong zhi shi laduzi
'Uh, no need, no need, it is only diarrhoea'

Example 54: Leo's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Leo: 我 不是不太舒服 只是 呃小东西
Wo bushi butai shufu zhishi e xiaodongxi
'I'm not too uncomfortable; it *just is*, err, a small thing.'

Although without *jiu* or *zhi* (就 or 只, 'only') the sentence would not be ungrammatical, the addition of it helps to limit the problem to the diarrhoea. This focusing of the problem helps to enhance *reason*, increasing its persuasiveness in facilitating the refusal. The absence of this linguistic device in situations where it could occur may affect the persuasiveness of *reason*. For example, *jiu* or *zhi* could have been used in Emma's *reason*, but it was not. In Example 55, *jiu* or *zhi* is inserted using brackets at the point where it could have been used. Overall, Emma's *reason* had improved compared to that at the post-instruction stage, where she generally stated it was troublesome (to go to hospital). But the absence of *jiu* or *zhi* may have somewhat affected its persuasiveness compared to Mia's refusal, for example.

Example 55: Emma's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Emma: 呃我觉得我(就/只)吃 坏了东西 呃然后我觉得不好
E wojuede wo (jiu/zhi) chihuale dongxi e ~~ranhou wojuede buhao~~
Err, I think I (only) ate something bad. Err, then I felt unwell.'

Use of alternative: jiu (就, 'just')

This subsection reports the learners' development in their use of *jiu* (就, 'just') in *alternative* between the post-instruction and post-study abroad stages. *Jiu* played an important role in enhancing *alternative*'s clarity. It connected cause (the *alternative* they suggested) and effect (the desired result), conveying that the acquaintance's suggestion (going to hospital) was absolutely unnecessary. This analysis only focuses on the post-instruction and post-study abroad scenarios,

because these scenarios appeared to naturally elicit *alternatives* in the course of negotiating a refusal, as observed in both the learners' and the NSs' data. The pre-instruction scenario (More-Clothes), on the other hand, did not elicit a similar type of *alternative* as the other two.

It was found that this linguistic device was totally absent among the learners at the post-instruction stage, but was observed in two learners' refusals at the post-study abroad stage: Molly (E-group) and Grace (C-group). This demonstrated some degree of improvement in this regard, even though on a rather small scale. Take Molly's (E-group) use of *alternative* for example, as given in Example 56. While Molly explicitly stated what she wanted to do as an *alternative* (drink a glass of water) and the potential effect of this *alternative* (that is good), the absence of *jiu* (就, 'just') could have undermined the clarity of her *alternative* as without it the potential result is not clearly linked with the *alternative*. The absence of *jiu* was also observed in Grace's (C-group) refusal at post-instruction, see Example 57. In contrast to *jiu*, the general adverb *ranhou* (然后, 'then'), which was employed to connect *chiyao* (吃药, 'take some medicine') and *wohaole* (我好了, 'I will be okay'), cannot adequately convey the effectiveness of *chiyao* in achieving the desired result. According to Lü's (2004, p.461) grammar book, *ranhou* only indicates that one event happened after another, not that one event is the cause of the other.

Example 56: Molly's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

> Molly: …嗯喝一一一杯水那好了
> … *En'he yi yi yibeishui na haole*
> '…Um, drink a, a, a glass of water, that is good'

Example 57: Grace's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

> Grace: …我 吃药然后我好了
> ... *Wo chiyao <u>ranhou</u> wo haole*
> '… I take some medicine. <u>Then</u> I will be okay'

At post-study abroad, *jiu* (就, 'just') was found in Molly's (E-group) and Grace's (C-group) refusals. As a result, their refusals were enhanced through the clearly stated value of the *alternative* in achieving the given result. As seen in Example 58 below, Molly's use of *jiu* helped to guarantee that the precondition (rest a bit) would bring about the result (the fever would get better). In comparison to the

construction of her refusal at post-instruction given in Example 56 above, the use of *jiu* totally transformed the effectiveness of her *reason* in negotiating the refusal. Similarly, as seen in Example 59 here, Grace also used *jiu* to link her *alternative* to the potential effect.

Example 58: Molly's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Molly: 啊不用了 我可以休息一下就好了
A buyongle wo keyi xiuxiyixia jiu haole
'Uh, no need. I can rest a bit, and (I) will just be better.'

Example 59: Grace's refusal post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Grace: …我觉得吃那个药就应该好转
... Wo juede chi nageyao jiu yinggai haozhuan
'… I think by taking that medicine (I) should just get better.'

However, *jiu* (就, 'just') was not found in the majority of the learners' refusals, even at the post-study abroad stage. As seen in Example 61, Louise's (E-group) *alternative* in the post-study abroad role-play was essentially the same as that at post-instruction as seeN in Example 60; *jiu* was still missing. Without *jiu* linking the *alternative* (drink some tea) to the desired result (getting better), the cause-effect relationship between the *alternative* and the desired result was not very clear.

Example 60: Louise' refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

Louise: 我在床 啊喝一喝啊茶 啊明天觉得好 一点儿
Wo zaichuang a'heyihe a'cha a mingtian juede hao yidianr
'I am in bed, uh, drink some, uh, tea, uh, tomorrow, (I) feel a bit better.'

Example 61: Louise's refusal at post-study abroad (Severe-Diarrhoea)

Louise: 呃我喝一点儿茶明天好一点儿
E wo he yidianr cha mingtian haoyidianr
'Err, I drink a little bit tea, tomorrow (it is) a bit better.'

To summarise, this section reported the learners' development in using *reason* and the linguistic device *jiu* or *zhi* (就 or 只, 'only') that contributed to the clarity of *reasons*. It also reported the learners' development in using the linguistic device *jiu* that affected the value of *alternative* in achieving the given result. It found that, overall, the learners improved their *reasons*; they became specific and hence

relatively more persuasive in aiding the negotiation of the refusal compared to those at post-instruction and, at the same time, became unlikely to cause negative effect on IR. In contrast, the use of the linguistic devices associated with these semantic formulas was only improved in the case of a limited number of the learners.

6.2.2 The learners' development in making refusals to invitations

Previously, learners' development in making refusals to personal suggestions was reported. This section continues to address research questions 2 and 3, focusing on the learners' development in making refusals to invitations. Invitations and refusals to invitations are usually very common in all societies, but certain objects of invitations may occur more frequently in some societies than others. In this study, for example, an invitation to karaoke is used in the pre-instruction scenario, which is a very common social interaction in the target language community, as the NSs noted in their interviews. The fact that this is a very frequent social activity to a great extent accounts for why people are not reluctant to refuse it if they cannot make it and are more relaxed about it, as they could easily make up for it another time. In contrast, an invitation to visit one's home city and stay with their parents does not happen as frequently in Chinese society as it does in some other societies. And the fact that a higher percentage of *reason* and a lower percentage of *nonperformative statement* was observed in the NSs' data, compared to that in the other two scenarios eliciting refusals to invitations, as well as the use of other-oriented *reason*, pointed to the sensitivity and need to manage IR when refusing this invitation. Of the three, the invitation to join a social activity that was organised by someone's class was probably easiest to refuse as the inviter was also a participant, whereas in the other two scenarios the inviter was the host.

Before I proceed to report how the learners dealt with these different scenarios and in what ways the instruction and the study abroad experience might have facilitated the learners' development, I shall first recast what was covered in the instruction in relation to refusals to invitations and what was found in the NSs' refusals that is relevant to the discussion, but was not covered in the instruction. During the instruction, features of invitations in Mandarin Chinese and refusals to them, based on findings in previous studies were introduced to E-group, using video-clips. Some additional linguistic devices that were found in the video-clips were also

highlighted and explained to E-group to ensure understanding. The instruction also covered differences between *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) and the use of some cajolers such as *nizhidao* (你知道, 'you know') and *zhenbuqiao* (真不巧, 'unfortunately') to win empathy from the inviter before actually refusing. Essentially, the potential suffix *buliao* emphasizes the inability to carry out the action due to some extent to external circumstances beyond the speaker's control. Conversely *buneng* puts more weight on the refuser's personal decision in judging the situation (for further discussion see section 5.2). These forms were also compared to other forms, such as *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') that were found in the learners' pre-instruction refusals. In addition, the instruction also tried to draw the learners' attention to the use of *alternative* in refusals, because of its role in mitigating potential negative effects on IR (X. Chen et al., 1995), together with *yaobu...* (要不…, 'how about…') or *zheyangba...*(这样吧…, 'how about…') to lead *alternative* because they were frequently employed in all the video-clips where an *alternative* was suggested.

In light of the NSs' refusals, a few things are worthy of note. First of all, whereas *negative ability* was only employed infrequently, *nonperformative statement* was much more frequently used. And *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') was the key linguistic device to deliver *nonperformative statement*. Second, in contrast to real *reasons*, *excuses* were also found, in particular in refusals to the invitation to karaoke. The key characteristics of the use of *excuses* in this scenario lie in their specificity and consistency over multiple turns.

Having recast what was covered in the instruction and what was found in the NSs' data that was relevant to the discussion of the learners' development, next I move on the findings. As shown earlier, Table 10 and Table 11 show (p.140-141) the range of semantic formulas that were found among the learners and the NSs were fairly similar, even as early as at the pre-instruction stage. As we can see, *reason* was the most frequently used in both groups. And the kinds of *reasons* that the two groups used also displayed some resemblance at this early stage. For example, both the groups used 'I don't feel cold' as seen in Example 37 (1) and (2), 'my hometown is even colder' as seen in (3) and (4) (p.141).

As Table 12 and Table 13 below illustrate, the learners again showed some degree of commonality with the NSs in their use of semantic formulas. For example,

both *nonperformative statement* and *negative ability* were used as direct refusals and *reason* and *alternative* were used as the primary indirect refusals.

Table 12: Learners' direct refusals to invitations compared the NSs (%)

	Nonperformative			Neg. abili.			Neg. will.			Mind at ease		
	L			L			L			L		
	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs
Pre	2.7%	21.9%	17.9%	13.9%	9.4%	8.3%	N/A	3.1%	1.2%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Post	34.5%	25.0%	12.3%	N/A	3.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.6%	9.2%
Post-SA	8.8%	4.2%	14.0%	20.0%	8.3%	2.0%	N/A	N/A	2.0%	N/A	N/A	4.0%

L = Learners; E= the Experimental group; C= the Control Group
Pre =Pre-instruction; Post =Post-instruction; Post-SA =Post-study abroad
Nonperformative = Nonperformative statement; Neg. abili= Negative ability; Neg. will. = Negative willingness; Mind at ease=Put the interlocutor's mind at ease

Table 13: Learners' indirect refusals to invitations compared to the NSs (%)

	Reason			Alternative			Apology			Other strategies		
	L			L			L			L		
	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs	E	C	NSs
Pre	36.1%	43.7%	40.5%	25.0%	6.3%	14.3%	13.9%	15.6%	2.4%	8.3%	N/A	15.6%
Post	24.1%	46.4%	46.2%	41.4%	17.9%	27.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3.6%	4.5%
Post-SA	29.4%	45.8%	34.0%	20.6%	8.3%	12.0%	14.7%	20.8%	6.0%	5.8%	N/A	26.2%

L = Learners; E= the Experimental group; C= the Control Group
Pre =Pre-instruction; Post =Post-instruction; Post-SA =Post-study abroad

But plenty of examples of differences in the use of semantic formulas and key linguistic devices can also be found. The instruction was found to raise E-group's awareness of differences between the use of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) and *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') in delivering *negative ability* in terms of their effect on IR, although its effectiveness varied among different individuals. However, this effect of the instruction was reflected in more learners' refusals at the post-instruction stage than at the post-study abroad stage. Except for in the case of one learner (Louise), *buneng* again became the primary linguistic device that they depended on for *negative ability* at the post-study abroad stage, mirroring that at the pre-instruction stage. Potential directional complements, e.g. *chibuxia* (吃不下, 'unable to eat') were observed in the example from one learner (Grace) in C-group at the post-study abroad stage. But Grace's use of these devices was attributed to her

developed linguistic competence, rather than pragmatic competence. The instruction was also found to promote the learning of some linguistic devices such as *yaobu* (要不, 'how about…'; 'or') in conjunction with *alternative*. But again it was not retained at the post-study abroad stage. By contrast, a variation of this linguistic device, *zheyanghaobu* (这样好不, 'how about this…'), was found in the example from a learner in C-group (Oscar) at the post-study abroad stage. The following sections report the detailed analysis of each semantic formula and the key linguistic devices associated with them.

Development of key linguistic devices in direct refusals

In refusals to invitations, the main differences between the learners and the NSs in regards to direct refusals centred on the different frequencies of *nonperformative statement* and *negative ability* and on the key linguistic devices they used to deliver them. As found in the NSs' refusals (see section 5.2), a *nonperformative statement* delivered using *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') can be easily justified using *reason* drawn directly from the circumstances of the scenario. To use *negative ability*, depending on whether it is delivered using *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') or the potential suffix buliao (不了), a matching *reason* is important to avoid causing unnecessary negative effect on IR. In this regard, some changes were observed in E-group, compared to C-group and they may be attributed to the instruction.

Use of negative ability: buneng (不能, 'cannot') vs. the potential suffix buliao (不了)

This subsection focuses on the learners' development in using *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) to deliver *negative ability*. It was found that through highlighting the pragmatic value of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) in refusals, the instruction facilitated learning and using this linguistic device.

At the pre-instruction stage, no difference was observed in E-group's and C-group's use of linguistic devices for *negative ability*. If a learner, regardless of whether (s)he was in E-group or in C-group, used *negative ability*, then *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') was the linguistic device used. To demonstrate changes over time, I focus only on the learners who used this semantic formula at different time points: Leo, Louise and Jasmine in E-group and Abby and Grace in C-group. As seen in

Example 62- Example 64 below, Louise, Leo and Molly (E-group) used *buneng* to deliver *negative ability*, in conjunction with a *reason* that they was busy. This was also the case with the learners in C-group, see Example 65 below. Grace did not use *negative ability* at pre-instruction, but she used it at post-instruction and also delivered it using *buneng* (不能), as we will see shortly. As shown using the NSs' data in section 5.2, if a *reason* points to some prior commitment, the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) tends to be used, emphasizing that it is beyond the refuser's control. Because *buneng* puts more weight on the refuser's personal decision in judging the situation, without an appropriate *reason* to help the interlocutor to understand why the refuser has come to that decision, it may leave space for more negative interpretations, which may cause negative effect on IR.

Example 62: Louise's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

Louise: 啊 对不起 我这个晚上不能... 我很忙 我 我不能跟你出去
A duibuqi wo zhege wanshang buneng wo henmang wo wo buneng gen ni chuqu
'Uh, sorry, I cannot this night. I'm busy; I cannot come with you.'

Example 63: Leo's refusal pre-instruction (Karaoke)

Leo: 啊 我不能跟你们 跟你们去
A wo buneng gen nimen gen nimen qu
'Uh, I cannot, with you, go with you.'

Example 64: Molly's refusal pre-instruction (Karaoke)

Molly: 嗯 我觉得我不能 因为我有 啊 那天我有事儿
En wo juede wo buneng yinwei wo you urn natian wo youshir
'Urn, I think I cannot, because I have, uh, that day I've got other stuff to do.'

Example 65: Abby's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

Abby: 卡啦 okay 我很喜欢呃 可是今天 啊 啊这次 我想我不能去
Kala okay wo hen xihuan e keshi jintian a a zheci wo xiang wo buneng qu
'Karaoke, I like it very much, err, but, today, uh, uh, this time, I think I cannot come.'

At the post-instruction instruction stage, the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) was employed by some learners in E-group, but in scenarios that were excluded from the main body of the final analysis. To demonstrate that the instruction may have had some effect on E-group, I shall present the examples where four learners (Molly, Leo, Jasmine and Louise) in E-group used the potential suffix *buliao*. One of the scenarios was where the learners tried to refuse a friend's offer to tutor English. In her refusals in this scenario, Molly used *zuobuliao* (做不了, 'cannot do it'), see Example 66. In the same scenario, Leo also used *zuobuliao*, see Example 67. Louise used *qubuliao* (去不了, 'cannot go') to refuse this offer, see Example 68. Jasmine used the linguistic device in a different scenario, to refuse an acquaintance's request for help to proofread a translation. As seen in Example 69, Jasmine used *bangbushang* (帮不上, 'cannot help'). *Bangbushang* can be considered a potential directional complement. This linguistic device was highlighted to E-group through a video-clip in the refusals to requests session.

Example 66: Molly's refusal at post-instruction (Tutor-English)

Molly: 嗯 我觉得我 啊 我能 啊我做不了因为 啊 现在我太忙了我有 太多的作业
En wo juede wo a wo neng a wo zuobuliao yinwei a xianzai wo taimangle wo you taiduo de zuoye
'Urn, I think I, uh, I can, uh, I'm unable to tutor, because, uh, now I'm too busy, I have, too much homework.'

Example 67: Leo's refusal to an offer to tutor English (post-instruction)

Leo: 嗯 ((pause)) 我要做 但是我做不了 我 呃 我的*工作英语不好
*En ((pause)) woyaozuo danshi wo zuobuliao wo e wo de *gongzuo yingyu buhao*
'Urn ((pause)), I want to do but I'm unable to tutor. I, err, my *work English is not good.'

Example 68: Louise's refusal at post-instruction (Tutor-English)

Louise: 啊 我 那 啊对不起 我我觉得我去不了 我 啊我 不可以教
A wo na a duibuqi wo wo juede wo qubuliao wo a wo bukeyi jiao ta
'Uh, I, that, Louise: uh, sorry, I, I think, I'm unable to go, I, uh, I shouldn't teach him.'

Example 69: Jasmine' refusal post-instruction (Proofread-Translation)

Jasmine: 啊 嗯 这段时间我很忙 啊 嗯 我真的不 会帮忙你 我 帮不上

A en zhedianshijian wo henmang a en wo zhende buhui bangmangni wo bangbushang ni

'Uh, urn, this period of time I'm very busy, uh, urn, I really won't help you, I'm unable to help you.'

Louise and Jasmine's (both E-group) cases are especially interesting because apart from the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), they still used some other less desirable linguistic devices, as far as IR is concerned. In Louise's case, she still used *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') at another of her turns, see Example 70. However, the fact that Louise used *kongpa* (恐怕, 'I am afraid) to downgrade the following *negative ability* suggests that she may have been more aware of the need to attend to IR when refusing compared to her bare use of *negative ability* at the pre-instruction stage.

Example 70: Louise's refusal at post-instruction (Tutor-English)

Louise: 啊 你知道我 我没有钱[时间] 我现在在 嗯大学很忙 嗯 恐怕我我不能

A nizhidao wo wo meiyouqian[shijian] wo xianzaizai en daxue henmang en kongpa wo wo buneng

'Uh, you know, I, I don't have money[time], now I'm, at, urn, university, very busy. Urn, I'm afraid that I cannot.'

In Jasmine's case, she used *buhui* (不会, 'won't') before she used *bangbushang* (帮不上, 'cannot help'), see in Example 69 above. This mixture of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), or rather a potential directional complement in Jasmine's case *bangbushang*, together with some undesirable linguistic devices may suggest that while the learners were actively trying to apply the potential suffix *buliao*, they appeared to struggle with using it consistently at the post-instruction stage, which shows some constraint that limited linguistic competence may have on their pragmatic performance. Taking Jasmine for example, it appears likely that she was attempting to say 'I cannot' with *buhui*, rather than 'I won't' (which is what it actually means in this context), as well as trying to use this new linguistic device *bangbushang* that she learned from the instruction to express the same meaning of 'unable to help'. As revealed by the interview data, the learners tended to use *buhui*

as the English 'unable to'. But *buhui* is only used to mean 'unable to' in Mandarin Chinese with reference to acquired skills, where it is used elsewhere it is likely to be understood as its other meaning, i.e. 'will not' (Lü, 2004).

At the post-instruction stage, however, no one in C-group employed the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) in any scenario including those that were excluded from the main body of the final analysis, suggesting that either it was not in their repertoire or it was, but the learners did not understand its usage. *Buneng* (不能, 'cannot') was not found in any learner's refusal except for Grace. The fact that none of the NSs and only one of the learners employed *negative ability* in this scenario suggests that the scenario might not elicit this semantic formula. The reason that Grace used it was probably due to the specific *reason* she tried to use to refuse the invitation. Nevertheless, the occurrence of *buneng* still indicated that, like the others just mentioned, Grace may also not have been aware of the potential negative effects that *buneng* could bring to IR if a *reason* was not in place to justify it.

To demonstrate Grace's unawareness of the potential negative effects that *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') could bring to IR, I shall first present her refusal in detail to show her competence in making the refusal, which contrasted with her use of *buneng*: to the acquaintance's initiation of the invitation, Grace responded that she had already booked a hotel room. When the acquaintance re-initiated his invitation emphasising the convenience and that it would cost nothing if she stayed at his parents' place, Grace replied that she had already paid for the room. However, when the acquaintance insisted – maybe Grace could call the hotel and see if they could refund the deposit, as it was better if she stayed at his parents' place, she replied with *negative ability*, as seen in Example 71 below. The occurrence of *buneng* in this context could be interpreted as that Grace thought it was inappropriate for her to stay at his parents' place, rather than that she was reluctant to stay because she had already booked a hotel. Considering that the rest of her negotiation was very well planned and clearly expressed, the use of *buneng* indicated the high likelihood that she simply did not know using *buneng* could bring some negative effects to IR if it was not paired with a matching *reason*.

Example 71: Grace's refusal at post-instruction (Visit-Home)

Grace: 我可以呃 来 呃 在你的家玩儿一会儿 可是我<u>不能</u>住

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Wo keyi e lai e zai nidejia wanryihuir keshi wo <u>buneng</u> zhu
'I may, err, come, err hang out a bit in your house. But I <u>cannot</u> stay.'

At the post-study abroad stage, the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) was only found in Louise's (E-group) refusals. She used it in her first refusal, see Example 72 below, and again in her last refusal, see in Example 73 below, confirming the refusal. Louise's use of *qubuliao* (去不了, 'cannot go'), justified by the accompanying *reason*, precisely conveyed that it was because she was unable to get up so early that she could not comply. The form of *qubuliao*, plus the *reason* did not leave any space for other, more negative, interpretations. Unlike at the post-instruction stage, where she mixed using both the potential suffix *buliao* and *buneng*, at the post-study abroad stage *buneng* was not found in any of Louise's refusals, suggesting that Louise may have become better at using the potential suffix *buliao*.

Example 72: Louise' refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Louise: …我觉得 星期六 啊 七点早上非常非常早 可能我<u>去不了</u>
…*Wojuede xingqiliu a qidian zaoshang feichang feichang zao keneng wo <u>qubuliao</u>*
'… I think, Saturday, uh, seven in the morning, too, too early, perhaps I <u>cannot make it</u>.'

Example 73: Louise' refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Louise: 我真的<u>来不了</u>
Wo zhende <u>laibuliao</u>
'I'm really <u>unable to come</u>'

The rest of the learners who had used the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) at the post-instruction stage shifted back to using *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') to deliver *negative ability* at the post-study abroad stage. For example, Jasmine only used *buneng* for *negative ability*, see Example 74 below. Leo and Molly did not use it in the Visit-*Shidu* scenario, but they both used *negative ability* in refusing a friend's invitation to her farewell party (excluded from the final analysis, see section 4.3.3 for explanation), as seen in Example 75 and Example 76 below.

Example 74: Jasmine's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Jasmine: 呃 那 6 点 4…45 分钟嗯太早 我<u>不能</u>去 我有事儿

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*E na liudian si…sishiwu fenzhong en taizao wo bunengqu
woyoushir*
'Err, then six, four, forty-five, urn, too early, I <u>cannot</u> go,
I've got other stuff.'

Example 75: Molly's refusal at post-study abroad (Farewell-Party)

Molly: 真对不起 我觉得我 真的<u>不能</u> 因为 嗯我太忙了做这个作业
*Zhen duibuqi wojuede wo zhende <u>buneng</u> yinwei en wo
taimangle zuo zhege zuoye*
'Really sorry, I think, I, really <u>cannot</u>, because, urn, I am too
busy doing this homework.'

Example 76: Leo's refusal at post-study abroad (Farewell-Party)

Leo: 我真的想去 但是 也不可能 <u>不能</u>
Wo zhende xiangqu danshi ye bukeneng <u>buneng</u>
'I really want to go, but still impossible, <u>cannot</u>'.

Understanding the pragmatic value of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) was found to be the key for its retention in Louise's case. During the interviews, Louise was the only learner who commented on the pragmatic function that the potential suffix *buliao* could bring to refusals, as had been explained during the instruction. She understood that in contrast to *buneng* (不能, 'cannot'), the potential suffix *buliao* implied, as Louise put it, 'one's desire to go, but that you cannot make it.'

Jasmine (E-group) offers a counter example, demonstrating that not actually understanding the pragmatic importance of the structure may give rise to the loss of its usage. Although she employed *bangbushang* (帮不上, 'unable to help') in one of her refusals at the post-instruction stage, it appears that it might have been simply a copy of the video-clip in which this linguistic device was highlighted to E-group, because of the similarity between the contexts. Evidence that Jasmine may have simply mimicked the form seen in the video clip can be found in the scenario to refuse the offer to tutor English at post-instruction, where Louise, Molly and Leo all employed the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), but Jasmine used *buhui* (不会, 'won't') instead, see Example 77 below. Again it appears likely that she was attempting to express the meaning of 'I cannot' with *buhui*. If Jasmine had actually grasped the pragmatic function of using *bangbushang*, she should have used the potential suffix *buliao* in this scenario - *jiaobuliao* (教不了, 'unable to teach'), to avoid causing

potential negative effect on IR. Moreover, not using any linguistic device that linked to the potential suffix *buliao* at post-study abroad further suggested that Jasmine's use of *bangbushang* may have been simply because of the context, rather than being an indication of her understanding of the potential suffix *buliao*. Jasmine's interview also confirmed that she indeed did not understand the potential suffix *buliao*; she did not even believe that she had used the linguistic device.

Example 77: Jasmine's refusal at post-study abroad (Tutor-English)

Jasmine: 啊嗯对不起我 没有时间我 实在不会教她
A en duibuqi wo meiyou shijian wo shizai buhui jiaota
'Uh, urn, sorry, I, don't have time, I really <u>won't</u> teach her.'

In C-group, at the post-study abroad stage, the learners who employed *negative ability* all used *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') except for Grace. For example, as at pre-instruction, Abby again used *buneng* at post-study abroad, see Example 78, where the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) would have been suitable, as far as its effect on IR is concerned, as the *reason* she offered (she'd got stuff to do on Friday night so it could be a problem to get up so early on Saturday morning) pointed to her inability to get up. The use of *buneng* in this context could imply that Abby thinks it is inappropriate to come.

Example 78: Abby's refusal at post-study abroad (Tutor-English)

Abby: 嗯 谢谢你给我这个机会 可是我 我觉得我不能来
En xiexieni geiwo zhge jihui keshi wo wojuede wo buneng lai
'Urn, thank you for giving me this opportunity, but I, I think I <u>cannot</u> come.'

Grace was the only learner in C-group who did not use *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') to deliver *negative ability*. Instead, Grace used *qibulai* (起不来, 'cannot get up') to expresses her inability to get up out of bed. She also used another form, *chibuxia* (吃不下, 'cannot eat') in her refusal to try deep-fried locusts, see Example 79 below. As shown using the NSs' data (see section 5.2), *chibuxia* is categorized under potential directional complements. In my opinion, *qibulai* can also be considered as a potential directional complement, though it is not listed among the examples in the Yip and Rimmington's (2004) study. I shall include it in the

discussion because, as we will see, it actually does not affect the finding I would come to. Grace's use of these forms was similar to Louise's use of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) in that they were less likely to cause negative effect on IR, which would have been the case had *buneng* been used in the same context. However, unlike in Louise's case, it cannot be argued that Grace was fully aware of the difference between *buneng* and the potential suffix *buliao* in regards to refusals. In one scenario, to a friend's invitation to her farewell party, Grace used *buneng*, see Example 80, where she could have used *gaosubuliao* (告诉不了, 'unable to tell'). Grace's use of *buneng* here is very similar to the example that I have quoted from Liu's (1983) study to explain the difference between *buneng* and the potential suffix *buliao* in section 5.2. *Buneng gaosu ni* (不能告诉你, 'cannot tell you') can be interpreted as 'I should not tell you', as, for example, it may be inappropriate to tell you. This counter example indicated that Grace might not have understood more than the specific expressions *qibulai* (起不来, 'cannot get up') and *chibuxia* (吃不下, 'cannot eat) which could be used in the specific contexts in which she used them. In other words, Grace usage of *qibulai* and *chibuxia* may be because of her improved grammatical ability, rather than because she understood that the use of these linguistic devices would not pose unnecessary risks to IR in refusals, whereas the use of *buneng* (不能) could put pressure on IR if the *reason* did not match up with it.

Example 79: Grace' refusal at post-study abroad (Locusts)

> Grace: 我不喜欢吃这个菜 我怕<u>吃不下</u>
> *Wo buxihuan chi zhegecai wopa <u>chibuxia</u>*
> 'I don't like this dish (deep-fried locusts), I'm afraid I <u>cannot eat them</u>.'

Example 80: Grace's refusal at post-study abroad (Farewell-Party)

> Grace: 我现在<u>不能</u>告诉你 我再给你打电话吧
> *Wo xianzai <u>buneng</u> gaosuni wo zai geini dadianhuaba*
> 'Now I <u>cannot</u> tell you, I will call you.'

Use of nonperformative statement: bukeyi (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') vs. buqule (不去了, 'won't go')

This subsection reports the learners' development in their use of key linguistic devices to deliver *nonperformative statement*. It was found, across all three

scenarios, that the linguistic device that the learners, including both E- and C-group, used primarily was *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden'). And it persisted through to the post-study abroad stage. Although the risk of using *bukeyi* in refusals was highlighted to E-group in the instruction, it did not seem to have any effect on their pragmatic performance in the post-instruction or post-study abroad role-plays. For example, *bukeyi* was found in Louise's (E-group) refusals at post-instruction and it occurred again at the post-study abroad stage.

The linguistic devices employed by the learners differed greatly from those found among the NSs. As noted using the NSs' data (see section 5.2), *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') was the primary device to deliver *nonperformative statement* in these scenarios. Using *buqule*, the justification for refusing can be drawn directly from the circumstances of the scenario. *Bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden'), on the other hand, delivers a strong illocutionary force as a refusal, and without a matching *reason*, it may run risk of causing negative effect on IR.

The persistence of *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') in the learners' refusals at the post-study abroad stage suggests that they may have not have become aware that *bukeyi* might be too strong as a refusal unless there was a matching *reason* accompanying it or that it could pose risks to IR. And the absence of *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') suggests that they may have not learned that this linguistic device could be deployed in this context.

To summarise, this section reports the learners' development in using direct refusals focusing on *negative ability* and *nonperformative statement* and the key linguistic devices used to deliver them. It was found that the learners still tended to use *negative ability*, rather than *nonperformative statement* to refuse the invitations in the three scenarios. And in their delivery of *negative ability*, the learners' tendency to overgeneralize *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') in the contexts where the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) may have been more appropriate, put their refusals at risk of causing negative effect on IR. The overgeneralization of using *buneng* may be due to the challenge of learning and using the potential suffix *buliao*, as was reflected in the learners' interviews. It may also be due to their unawareness of the potential risk that the use of *buneng* may pose to IR without a matching *reason*. The instruction was found to have some effect on E-group's learning of the potential suffix *buliao*.

Understanding of the pragmatic value of the potential suffix *buliao* may have played an important role in facilitating this learning.

Regarding *nonperformative statement*, the learners including both E- and C-group did not demonstrate much development in the linguistic devices that they used to deliver it. *Bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') persisted through the post-study abroad stage; *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') was still absent in all the learners' refusals. The instruction was not found to have any effect on E-group's use of *bukeyi*.

Development in indirect refusals

Previously, I reported the learners' development in their use of direct refusals and the key linguistic devices associated with them. This section focuses on the learners' development in using indirect refusals.

Use of reason/excuse

This subsection reports the learners' development in using *reason/excuse*. But unlike the previous sections, no linguistic devices were found to be particularly key in terms of clarity and effect on IR. Rather, the development of the content of *reason/excuse* over multiple turns was found to be critical in aiding the negotiation of the refusal.

As pointed out using the NSs' data in section 5.2, the use of *excuse*, as opposed to the real *reason*, was found among some NSs in their refusals to the invitation to karaoke. And other-oriented *reasons* were found among many NSs in the Visit-Home scenario. Use of *excuses* was also found among some learners, reflecting some similarity between the learners and the NSs. Other-oriented *reason* was also employed by one learner, Mia (E-group). The main factor that may have undermined the persuasiveness of the learners' use of *reason* was likely the fact that their *reasons* were not developed to be more specific over turns at the pre- and post-instruction stages.

In the Karaoke scenario, *reason/excuse* were used frequently among the NSs and they were coherently developed to become more specific across turns. Such development of the content of *reason/excuse* over turns is important as far as effect on IR and effectiveness are concerned. But the learners often shifted from one *excuse* to another, which made them less specific and rather incoherent across turns, which

could undermine its persuasiveness in aiding to negotiate a refusal. For example, as shown in Example 81 below, in line 2, Mia first stated that she was unavailable because she would have guests to visit. But then in line 4, she shifted to that she was unavailable because she had a lot of homework, where she could have elaborated on the pre-arranged visit that she had started in line 2. Because she scattered her effort across different refusals, rather than focusing on elaborating one *excuse*, the acquaintance, as shown in line 5, did not show any sign of backing down, at the stage of the third turn, where he usually did so.

Example 81: Mia's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

1	A:	你好这个周天我们去唱歌儿你也一起来吧
		Nihao zhege zhoutian women quchangger ni ye yiqilaiba
		'Hello, this weekend we're going to sing karaoke, would you like to join us?'
2	Mia:	啊谢谢你谢谢 啊：我们 啊 啊((pause)) 我/可是我 啊今天晚上我有客人啊不 不有/没有时间
		A xiexieni xiexie a: women a a ((pause)) wo/keshiwo a jintian wanshang wo you keren a bu buyou/meiyou shijiang
		'Uh, thanks thanks. Uh, we, uh: uh ((pause)) I/ but I, uh, this evening I have some guests, uh, not, not have/ don't have time.'
3	A:	呃我们周天晚上 就唱一个小时 时间不很长很好玩儿你也一块儿来吧
		E women zhoutian wanshang jiuchang yige xiaoshi shijian buhenchang henhaowanr ni ye yikuairlaiba
		'Err, it's on Sunday night, and we're only going an hour, not very long. It's great fun, come with us. '
4	Mia:	呃 呃 卡啦 okay 很玩儿[很好玩] 可是啊 我有很多作业我 啊真不好意思 可是我没有时间
		E e kala okay henwanr[henhaowanr] keshi a wo you henduo zuoye wo a zhenbuhaoyisi keshi wo meiyou shijian
		'Err, err, Karaoke is great play[great fun], but, uh, I have a lot of homework, I, uh, really embarrassing, but I don't have time.'
5	A:	呃你做作业也需要休息一下的 我们时间不长 你休息好了你的作业也能做得很好的
		E ni zuozuoye ye xuyao xiuxiyixia de women shijian buchang ni xiuxi haole nide zuoye ye neng zuode henhaode
		'Err, even if you have to do your homework, you still need to rest. We're not going for a very long time. If you have a good rest, you would do your homework more efficiently.'
6	Mia:	啊哪里哪里 啊我们可不可以 啊 啊 嗯((pause))你 你可不可以 啊来我的家吃饭我啊我做(.) 做饭啊给你好不好
		A nali nali a women kebukeyi a a en ((pause)) ni ni kebukeyi a lai wodejia chifan wo a wo zuo(.) zuofan a geini haobuhao
		'Uh, I'm flattered, I'm flattered. Uh, can we, uh, uh, urn ((pause)) can you, you, uh, come to my place for dinner? I, uh, I, make(.) make some food, uh, for you, how does that sound?'
7	A:	呃 可是周天我们约好了去唱歌儿你还能来吗
		E keshi zhoutian women yuehaole quchangger ni hai neng lai ma
		'Err, but on Sunday we've made a plan to sing karaoke, can you still come?'

8	Mia:	呃好 很喜欢去唱歌儿=
		E hao henxihuan qu changger=
		'Err, okay, (I) really like singing karaoke='
9	A:	=好的=
		= Haode =
		= Okay =
10	Mia:	=谢谢 谢谢 呃=
		=Xiexie xiexie e=
		Thanks, thanks, err=
11	A:	=那我回头打电话给你好吗
		=Na wo huitou dadianhua geini haoma
		= Then I'll ring you later, okay?
12	Mia:	好啊好啊 谢谢 再见
		Hao'a hao'a xiexie zaijian
		'Okay, okay. Thanks. Bye.'
13	A:	再见
		Zaijiang
		Bye.

In contrast, as shown in Example 82, after Emily gave her *excuse/reason* in line 4, she stuck to it in line 6, simply using a *nonperformative statement*, although her form might have been a bit strong. Emily's consistency over turns in sticking to one *excuse/reason* led the acquaintance to accept her unavailability, as seen in line 7, and hence, to withdraw his invitation. In fact, in line 5 in his third response, the acquaintance had already shown a sign of backing down in using the form *ni bunenglai ma* (你不能来吗, 'you cannot come'). This was in contrast to his response at the same turn in Mia' case in Example 81 above, where he was positively trying to persuade her to join him at the karaoke: 'even if you need to do your homework, you still need to rest a bit. We won't be long. Only when you have proper rest, can you do your homework more efficiently'.

Example 82: Emily's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

1	A:	你好 这个周末我们去唱歌 你也一块儿来吧
		Nihao zhege zhoumo women quchangge ni ye yikuairlaiba
		Hello, this weekend we are going to karaoke, why don't you come with us
2	Emily:	啊 this ((in English)) 啊 这个周末我不想去 对不起
		A this ((in English)) a zhege zhoumo wo buxiangqu duibuqi
		'Uh, this ((in English)), uh, this weekend I don't want to come, sorry'
3	A:	啊 我们有很多人一块儿 很有意思的 你歌儿唱得那么好 一块儿来吧 很好玩的
		A women you henduoren yikuair henyouyiside ni ger changde namehao yikuairlaiba henhaowanrde
		'Uh, there're going to be quite a lot of people together. It'll be

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fun. You are such a good singer, join us, it will be really fun.'

4	Emily:	嗯啊 我已经跟呃别的人出去 这个周末
		En a wo yijing gen e biederen chuqu zhege zhoumo
		'Urn, uh, I've (planed) to go out with somebody else that weekend'
5	A:	啊 这个 周天的晚上时间不会很长 你不能来吗=
		A zhege zhoutiande wanshang shijian buhui henchang ni buneng laima=
		'Uh, this, uh, Sunday night, it won't take a long time Cannot you come='
6	Emily:	啊
		A
		'Uh'
7	A:	=大约一个小时左右
		=dayue yige xiaoshi zuoyou
		'=It's just about an hour or so'
8	Emily:	啊啊 我 我不可以 对不起
		A a wo wo bukeyi duibuqi
		'Uh, uh, I, I can't, sorry'
9	A:	啊真的已经约好了
		A zhende yijing yuehaole
		'Uh, you really have already made plans'
10	Emily:	啊 ((laughter))
		A ((laughter))
		Yes ((laughter))
11	A:	好的那么我们下次再一起好吧
		Haode name women xiaci zaiyiqi haoba
		'Fine, then we can go together another time'
12	Emily:	啊下次
		A xiaci
		'Uh, next time'
13	A:	好的
		Haode
		'Okay'

At the post-instruction stage, a similar problem was still found among the learners. The majority did not take their *reason*, which was that their staying would be troublesome for the acquaintance's parents, any further in the manner that was found among the NSs. Rather, they tended simply to recycle it over multiple turns. Molly offered an example on this point; over two turns she kept noting it would be a hassle if she stayed with his parents and hence she could stay in a hotel, but she did not elaborate as to why her staying would be a source of trouble. In contrast, the NSs, who used a similar *reason,* elaborated it in a number of ways. For example, if they come back late, it could disturb the parents' routine. Or in order not to disturb the parents' routine, their freedom to come back late might be limited, thus, it is inconvenient for the refuser, too. The potential drawback of not furthering this *reason* was that it might be perceived as not conveying sufficiently serious concern

for the host's parents, which, in turn, might put pressure on IR.

The challenge for learners to get the right level of specificity of *reasons* when refusing in an L2 was also found in some previous studies (Beebe et al., 1990; Y. Chang, 2011; Hong, 2011), due to differences in what was considered acceptable in the L1 from that in the L2. For example, comparing L2 Japanese learners of English (JE) and native speakers of American English (AE), Beebe et al. (1990) found JE were rather vague with their *excuses* as to place, time, or parties involved whereas AE tended to be slightly more specific pointing out the place they had to go to. However, some *excuses* that JE used when refusing an offer of food were a lot more specific and 'quite graphic', whereas AE simply said, 'no, thank you.' (p.66). And in her study of refusals by American English speaking learners of Mandarin Chinese, Hong (2011) found that half her learners of Mandarin Chinese did not provide a specific *explanation* and used personal entertainment, such as going to a movie, which was not employed by native speakers because of the risk of being perceived ungrateful for the invitation and thus sounding rather disrespectful.

By the post-study abroad stage, the learners' use of *reason* had become much more specific, and, as a result, provided better justification for negotiating a refusal. For example, Mia, who shifted between different *reasons/excuses* at the post-instruction stage became more specific in her refusal at the post-study abroad stage, explaining that she only finished work at ten on Friday night, thus, meeting at six forty-five the next morning may be a bit too early. Because Mia chose to abandon the refusal in the end (she compromised, saying she was going to sleep on the bus instead), it is unclear to what extent the change in her use of *reason* had an impact on the negotiation of her refusals. Nonetheless, Mia's refusal had certainly become more coherent compared to that at pre-instruction. The study abroad experience and their improved proficiency level, as reflected in their SOPI results (see section 6.2.4), may also have contributed to the change.

Use of alternative: yaobu/ zheyang (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about')

This subsection is devoted to the learners' development in using *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about') to lead *alternative*. It also reports some *alternative* that were unique to the learners. As noted using the NSs' data in section 5.2 very often when the NSs employed *alternative*, *yaobu/zheyang* was used.

This linguistic device alerts the listener to the counter opinion that the speaker is going to bring up. While this linguistic device was absent at the pre-instruction stage, it was found among some learners in E-group, see Example 83 and Example 84 below, at post-instruction, but not in C-group. The instruction may have contributed to this change in E-group.

Example 83: Jasmine's refusal at post-instruction (Visit-Home)

Jasmine: 啊 呃 嗯<u>要不</u>我 嗯 住在 呃 我可以 嗯 在一个嗯旅馆儿睡觉

A e en <u>yaobu</u> wo en zhuzai e wo keyi en zai yige en lüguanr shuijiao

'Uh, err, urn <u>how about</u> I, err, live, urn I can, urn, sleep in an, urn, hotel.'

Example 84: Leo's refusal at post-instruction (Job-Opportunity)

Leo: 嗯<u>要不这样吧</u> 嗯 我找 我找到一个朋友 他 他可能呃帮你的朋友

En <u>yoabuzheyangba</u> en wozhao wozhaodao yige pengyou ta ta keneng e bang nide pengyou

'Urn, <u>how about this</u>… urn, I find, I find a friend, he/she probably, urn, help your friend (with her English).'

However, at the post-study abroad stage, *yaobu / zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or; how about') was no longer evident in any learner's refusals in E-group. Nonetheless, in the interview, Leo demonstrated that he was still aware of the linguistic device *yaobu / zheyang*; he used it in one of the examples that he gave. Thus, the absence of this linguistic device in Leo's refusal in the post-study abroad role-play may be because he did not think it was important to apply it in the scenario.

But interestingly, Oscar (C-group) twice employed this linguistic device, as seen in Example 85 and Example 86 below, though these refusals were in the scenarios that were excluded from the main body of the final analysis (see section 4.3.3). They indicated that Oscar had learned to use this device to lead his *alternative* between the post-instruction stage and the post-study abroad stage. In his interview, Oscar recalled that he noticed this linguistic device from the Chinese interlocutors during the previous role-plays. Thus, it is possible that the forms caught Oscar's attention during the role-plays and then he learned to use them afterwards.

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Example 85: Oscar's refusal at post-study abroad (Farewell-Party)

Oscar: 对 那 这样好不 我 我 今天明天 啊这些天非常努力学习 写
论文 我 我周天 有时间给你打电话 但是 说不定晚一点儿
*Dui na zheyanghaoba wo wo jintian mingtian a zhexietian
feichang nuli xuexi xielunwen wo zhoutian youshijian geini
dadianhua danshi shuobuding wanyidianr*
'Right, then how about this… I, I, today and tomorrow, uh I
try to work as hard as I can these days, writing my essay. And
Sunday I will ring you if I have time. But, it may be late.'

Example 86: Oscar's refusal at post-study abroad (Scholarship-Application)

Oscar: 啊 那这样好吧 我 你给我看一下但是我不知道我我有没有
时间看一下 所以你可以给我但是*我说不定我可以看
*A na zheyanghaoba wo ni geiwo kanyixia danshi wobuzhidao
wo youmeiyou shijian kanyixia suoyi nikeyi geiwo danshi *wo
shuobuding wo keyi kan*
'Uh, how about this… I, you can send it to me, but I don't
know if you have time… I don't know, if, I, I have time to take
a look. So you can send it to me, but *I am not necessarily sure
that I can take a look.'

In addition, some *alternative*s were found that were unique to the L2 learners,
which may have derived from their L1 influence. At the pre-instruction stage, Alicia
(C-group) suggested that the acquaintance come to her activity instead of her
accepting his invitation for karaoke. Mia (E-group) tried to invite the acquaintance to
come over for dinner as a way to balance out the fact that he had always paid for the
karaoke. In the post-instruction scenario, Molly's (E-group) suggested she could
cook dinner when she accepted the invitation to stay with the acquaintance's parents.
The fact that none of these *alternatives* were found among the NSs indicated that
they might not be typical social approaches in Mandarin Chinese. But it is important
to note that the NS interlocutor did agree to the suggestions in Alicia and Molly's
cases. This showed learners' different social approaches, such as what kind of
alternatives were chosen, might not pose risk to the IR.

At the post-study abroad stage, the *alternative*, that some learners proposed,
namely catching up with them later, was also not found among the NSs. As seen in
Example 87 below, Leo responded with a question; asking if it would be possible to
come later. The acquaintance did not reject the possibility; rather he suggested that
Leo could meet them at *Shidu* later if he could not get up so early in the morning.

Upon getting the acquaintance's approval, Leo further suggested a more specific time, see Example 88. Again, the acquaintance accepted it, suggesting that Leo try to come earlier if he could.

Example 87: Leo's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Leo: 我 我可不可以 嗯 晚 晚一点儿去吗
Wo wo kebukeyi en wan wanyidir quma
'I, I can or cannot, urn, late come a bit later?'

Example 88: Leo's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Leo: 我 十一点到行不行
Wo shiyidian dao xingbuxing
'Is it okay [if] I come at 11?'

Although these differences might be an indication of the learners' unfamiliarity with typical *alternatives* in the L2, the NS interlocutor's response suggested that whether or not they were typical for the L2 might not be a major concern. After all, unlike the use of key linguistic devices that could make a difference to learners' refusals' clarity and effect on IR, the difference in the content of these *alternatives* only indicated culturally different social approaches. The function of giving an *alternative*, which is to attend to IR, is likely to be understood by the interlocutor, regardless of a difference in the content of the *alternatives* mentioned.

At the post-study abroad stage, one *alternative* that was found among the learners were also found among the NSs. Mia (E-group), in Example 89 below, suggested they could go for dinner together after they come back from *Shidu*. This *alternative* was also found in NS Dong's refusal. The occurrence of this *alternative* indicated the study abroad experience might have helped Mia to become more familiar with what might be a possible *alternative* to propose in this context.

Example 89: Mia's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Mia: 啊 那 也挺好 可是 我星期五 啊 十点下班 啊 我觉得 6 点 45 是 早一点儿 可能你们呃回来以后我们可以一起去 吃饭
A na yetinghao keshi wo xingqiwu a shidian xiaban a wojuede liu dian sishiwu shi zaoyidianr keneng nimen e huilaiyihou women keyi yiqi quchifan

'Uh, that will be quite nice, but, uh, Friday, uh, I only finish work at ten o'clock. Uh, I think 6:45 is a bit early. <u>Maybe after you, err, come back, we can have supper together</u>.'

To summarise, this section reports the learners' development in using *reason*, as well as *alternative* and the linguistic device *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about'). It found that, in general, the learners developed their *reason* to become more specific over turns at the post-study abroad stage, which increased the persuasiveness of their *reason* in negotiating the refusal. While the instruction was found to have some effect on E-group's use of *yaobu/zheyang* to lead *alternative* at post-instruction, the effect did not seem to be retained in most cases at the post-study abroad stage. However, Leo's case suggested its absence might be because it may not have been deemed important to use in these particular role-plays. In addition, it was found that participating in the role-plays itself could implicitly draw learners' attention to the use of some linguistic devices.

6.2.3 The learners' development in refusal structure

Previously, I discussed the learners' development in their use of semantic formulas and key linguistic devices in refusals to personal suggestions and invitations primarily focusing on the influences of the instruction and the study abroad context alone. In this section, I shall continue answering research question 3 focusing on learners' development in the conversational strcutre of refusals. Specifically, the report includes two parts: organisation of strategies in a refusal sequence and use of delays and prefaces.

Before I proceed, I shall remind the reader of the findings from the NSs. The way that the NSs generally organised their refusals, i.e. 'general', 'specific', 'general', had a great impact on where specific semantic formulas were usually used in a refusal. In refusals to personal suggestions, the semantic formula in the last refusal, responding to a yes-no question for confirming the refusal, was critical to help the acquaintance to close up his suggestion. As the NSs' data indicates, a semantic formula that was characterised as 'general' was usually used and *nonperformative statement* would be adequate. But to apply this semantic formula required the refuser's understanding as to where the yes-no question led to, given its position, and the importance of a 'general' semantic formula at this point to co-constructed the closure with the acquaintance.

In addition, the general pattern, i.e. 'general', 'specific', 'general' that was observed in the NSs' refusals also showed that the actual negotiation of the refusal usually only started from the second exchange. But to use a 'general' semantic formula at the first exchange was also important, as it would help to delay the use of a more semantic formulas that were characterised as 'specific' to later in the course of the negotiation. In NS Han's example (see section 5.3), at the first exchange she simply employed *nonperformative statement* as a 'general' semantic formula to show her stance. Subsequently, she explained with a 'specific' *reason*, which enhanced the refusal at the same time as attending to IR. When she tried to move to a 'general' semantic formula again at the third exchange, she used *hedging*. When *hedging* did not make the acquaintance back down, she followed it with *postponement*, which eventually made the acquaintance withdraw. Where Han's *hedging* and *postponement* occurred in the refusal is important to keep in mind; it will be referred to when I discuss Molly's (E-group) use of the two semantic formulas at the pre-instruction and the post-study abroad stages.

With regards to the use of prefaces and delays, specifically in refusals to invitations, the NSs demonstrated a preference for using delays to signal to the interlocutor about an oncoming refusal, rather than to do so by using prefaces. When prefaces did occur, they tended to be delivered using some formulaic linguistic devices. *Xiang* (想, 'want to') was found to be the key linguistic device to *express willingness*, as seen in *wo zheng xiang qu ne* (我正想去呢, 'I was just thinking to visit (a place like that)') and *wo hen xiang qu* (我很想去, 'I'd really like to come'). *Tinghaode* (挺好的, 'sounds good') was repeatedly found to express *positive feeling*. But expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite') such as *taikeqile* (太客气了, 'too polite') were not found to express *positive feelings* in prefaces.

Apologies were found to be used very infrequently in the NSs' refusals. Where *apologies* were used in invitations, they tended to occur when the NSs believed they were culpable, usually towards the end, especially in the last refusal, where the NSs summarily apologised for their unavailability. The way that *apologies* are used as a preface in English, as noted by Levinson (1983), was not found in the NSs' refusals to invitations. Two linguistic devices, i.e. *buhaoyisi* (不好意思, 'embarrassing; embarrassed') and *duibuqi* (对不起, 'sorry') were used to deliver *apologies*, with the former dominant in terms of frequency. This observation may be

because *duibuqi* can signal no more negotiation in refusals, thus, carrying a strong refusing force (X. Chen et al., 1995).

Having given a reminder of how the NSs structured their refusals, next I move to reporting how the learners' refusal structure developed over the study abroad period using the findings from the NSs as a reference.

Development in refusals' structure

Refusals' structure was found to be problematic for the learners at both the pre- and post-instruction stages. In particular, their inability to recognise the pre-closure question from the acquaintance's suggestions made many learners fail to co-construct a closure. In turn, this prolonged the exchanges, so making negotiating a refusal even more challenging for the learners. A lack of familiarity with how personal suggestions could be made and with how refusals could be constructed might have led the learners to misplace semantic formulas in their refusals. In addition, in refusals to invitations, a lack of familiarity with how refusals might be constructed again made some learners place their specific semantic formulas too early, which often resulted in the refuser failing to bring their refusals to completion. Next I shall present the learners' examples, beginning with their use of semantic formulas in their last refusals to personal suggestions.

In refusals to personal suggestions, before closing up his suggestion, the acquaintance often used a yes-no question, (e.g. do you really feel that you don't need an injection) to ask the interlocutor to confirm his/her refusal. The learners often treated it as the same as any other re-initiation and hence gave a full response, rather than recognising that it was a move prior to the closure. This often gave rise to some extra exchanges, maybe because the acquaintance felt that he had to attend to his interlocutor's previous response and so could not close his suggestion as he had intended. For example, in the post-instruction role-play, Oscar (C-group) used a new *reason* to refuse this routinized question, see Example 90. Oscar did not seem to recognise that, at this point, he only needed to confirm his refusal, for example by using *zhende buyong* (真的不用, 'really no need').

Example 90: Oscar's refusal at post-instruction (High-Fever)

Oscar: 呃 但是 啊 有有点儿贵 啊 我我现在 钱不太够
E danshi a you youdianr gui a wo wo xiangzai qian butaigou

'Err, but, uh, a little bit expensive. Uh, my money isn't quite enough at the moment.'

Hearing Oscar's reply, the acquaintance could not close up his suggestion; instead, he issued another question that is 'can't your insurance cover it?' Although Oscar managed to give a reasonably understandable answer, thus helping the interlocutor to close up his suggestion, it still demonstrated to some extent Oscar's lack of familiarity with the operation of personal suggestions and with the general structure of refusals across turns. However, at post-study abroad, the learners all demonstrated their acknowledgment of this pre-closure question and simply confirmed their refusal. Take Oscar again for example, to the acquaintance's yes-no question in the post-study abroad role-play, he simply replied, *duiya* (对呀 ,'certainly'), thus smoothly leading the acquaintance to move forward to close up the suggestion.

I now turn to report the learners' development in the conversational structure of their refusals to invitations. In both the pre-instruction role-play, where the learners were invited to karaoke, and the post-instruction role-play, where they were invited visit an acquaintance's home city and stay at his parents' place, quite a few learners shifted to use an *alternative* after a few turns when the refusals that they had tried previously could not get the acquaintance to back down. As shown in Example 91 below, where Molly (E-group) was trying to refuse the invitation to karaoke, at the first exchange she used *hedging* (line 2) and in the next turn *postponement* (line 6). But then when both the refusals did not get the acquaintance to back down, in line 8, Molly suddenly shifted to an *alternative* in response to another re-initiation from the acquaintance.

Example 91: Molly's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

1	A:	你好这个周末我们几个朋友一块儿去唱歌 你也一块儿来吧
		Nihao zhege zhoumo women jige pengyou yikuair quchangge ni ye yikuair laiba
		'Hello, this weekend some of us are going to karaoke, would you like to come?'
2	Molly:	嗯 我觉得我不能 因为我有/啊那天我有事儿 啊 我 我觉得因为你买啊 这张票 你可以很快的唱歌 可是我不知道呃 如果[3]*我可以来不来

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[3] 如果 (ruguo) is usually translated as 'if'. But in Mandarin Chinese it can only be used in conditional clauses, but cannot be used to lead the sub-clause as in 'I don't know if…'. Thus, Molly's use of 如果 (ruguo) is ungrammatical in this context.

*En wojuede wo buneng yinwei woyou/ a natian youshir a wo wo juede yinwei nimai a zhezhangpiao ni keyi henkuaide changge keshi <u>wo buzhidao e *ruguo wo keyi laibulai</u>*

'Urn, I think I cannot, because I have/ uh, that day I have some other stuff. Uh, I think because you bought, uh, this ticket, you can quickly go and sing some karaoke, but <u>I don't, err, know *if[7] I can come or not</u>.'

3	A:	嗯我们有很多人一块儿 你歌儿唱得那么好我们一起去 很有意思的=

En women you heduoren yikuair ni ger changde namehao women yiqiqu henyouyiside=

'Urn, quite a few of us will be going. You are such a good singer. It'd be really fun if you can come='

4	Molly:	嗯

En

'Urn'

5	A:	= 一块儿来吧

=yikuair laiba

'= Come with us!'

6	Molly:	嗯：<u>我得想一想</u> 可是我 我想我有 别的事儿呃 可是啊我觉得你们一块儿可以有一个很好玩儿的时间

En: <u>wo deixiangyixiang</u> keshi wo woxiang wo you biedeshir e keshi a wojuede nimen yikuair keyi you yige henhaowanrde shijian

'Urn: <u>I have to think about it</u>, but I think I, I've got some other stuff. But, uh, I think you guys can have a good time. '

7	A:	啊 呃你 歌儿唱得那么好 你你一块儿过来唱 我们会玩得很开心的 时间不长

A e ni ger changde namehao ni ni yikuair guolaichang women hui wanrde henkaixinde shijian buchang

'Uh, err, you are such a good singer, you, you come with to the karaoke, we will have a great time. The time won't be too long.'

8	Molly:	嗯 我想啊 给你啊钱啊 因为我啊 我觉得都一块儿啊给钱的好

En woxiang a geini a qian a yinwei wo a wojuede dou yikuair a geiqian de hao

'Urn, I want, uh, to give you, uh, money, uh, because I, uh, I think we pay together is better.'

9	A:	啊 不用客气 没有关系的 只要我们在一块儿玩得开心就可以了=

A buyongkeqi meiyouguanxide zhiyao women zai yikuair wanrde kaixin jiu keyile=

'Uh, no need to be polite. It doesn't matter. As long as we have a good time, it's fine='

10	Molly:	嗯

En

'Urn'

11	A:	=你也一块儿来玩吧

=ni ye yikuair laiwanrba

=You come with us.

12	Molly:	嗯 啊好 啊可是我啊想啊给你钱 可是我来的

En a hao a keyi wo a xiang a geiniqian keshi wo lai de

'Urn, uh, good, uh, but I, uh, want, uh, to give you money, but I will come.'

13	A:	啊真的不用 你太客气 这次就还是由我来请客 好吗

A zhende buyong ni taikeqi zheci jiu haishi wolai qingkeba haoma

'Uh, really no need. You are too polite. This time it will still be me to treat everyone, is it okay?'

14	Molly:	好

Hao

Okay.

15	A:	好的 那我们 回头一块儿见

Haode na women huitou yikuair jian
Okay. Then let us get in touch later

16   Molly: 嗯
En
'Urn.'

In fact, the way in which Molly (E-group) organised the adjacent sequence - *hedging* followed by *postponement* - was identical to NS Han, suggesting some shared knowledge underlying this sequence. But, crucially, what was found to be different was that Han only employed it in her last two turns, whereas Molly employed this sequence in the first two turns, probably because she did not expect that the invitation could have gone as far. Signals of this expectation could be observed in her use of strategies. Following the *postponement* Molly employed a *wish* that the acquaintance and his friends would have a good time. This adjunct indicated that Molly might have expected a withdrawal from her interlocutor. However, the acquaintance did not withdraw, rather, he again re-initiated the invitation. In her corresponding response, Molly shifted to an *alternative*, 'I'd like to give you money, because I think it's better that we pay together', which was somewhat disconnected from the semantic formulas that she used at the previous turns. Because this response revealed to the acquaintance that, it was the way of paying the bill that had hindered Molly from accepting the invitation, he re-initiated his invitation accordingly. Previously, the acquaintance had always focused on the fun of karaoke when trying to persuade Molly to come and had not centred on the issue of who would pay the bill. At her turn this time, Molly accepted, but still tried to negotiate to contribute to the bill, 'okay, but I want to pay for myself, but I will come.' The acquaintance spent another turn insisting that it was okay for him to pay this time. This time, Molly totally abandoned her refusal and accepted the invitation.

The disconnection between the semantic formulas that Molly (E-group) used in line 6 and those in line 8 in Example 91 signalled that, at the pre-instruction stage she was not familiar with the fact that inviter could be so persistent in Mandarin Chinese. Considering where NS Han placed her use of *hedging* and *postponement* and her success in bring the refusal to completion, it might have been Molly's early use of them that accounted for her lack of success in bringing her refusal to completion. Had Molly been a bit more familiar with what the sequences of refusals to invitations might be like in Mandarin Chinese, she might have held *hedging* and *postponement* in reserve, rather than using them up in the first two turns. Molly's

post-study abroad performance, where she also used *hedging* and *postponement*, as seen next, adds further evidence that this might indeed have been the case.

As shown in Example 92, in her initial refusal, Molly (E-group) expressed her opinion on the time that she was invited to join the activity (line 2), which is an example of demonstrating a sign of a 'general' refusal. When the acquaintance reinitiated the invitation, Molly went more 'specific'. In line 4, she explained, because she had a party to go on the previous night, it was not a good idea to get up so early the next morning. The acquaintance then suggested that she could rest on the bus, and therefore reinitiated the invitation. Only at this point did Molly employ a *hedge:* she was not sure if she could join them, but she could ask if any of her friends would be able to come (line 6). Lastly, when the acquaintance asked her to confirm, Molly used *postponement:* 'I can ring you, is it okay?' (line 8). The acquaintance withdrew this time.

Example 92: Molly's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit- *Shidu*)

1	A:	你好你这个周六有时间吗 我们要去十渡玩儿呢 早上 6 点 45 一块儿出发你也一块儿来呗
		Nihao ni zhege zhouliu you shijian ma women yaoqu shidu wanrne zaoshang liu dian sishiwu yikuair chufa ni ye yikuair laibei
		'Hello, are you free this Saturday? We are going to *Shidu*, leaving together at 6:45am, would you like to come?'
2	Molly:	哎 6 点 45 那太早了
		Ai liu dian sishiwu na taizaole
		'Hey, 6:45am, that's too early.'
3	A:	啊那个地方有点儿远 但是 早上出发的话 路上 呃车少点儿 空气也新鲜
		A nage difang youdianryuan danshi zaoshang chufa dehua lushang e che shaodianr kongqi ye xinxian
		'Uh, that place is a bit far out. But if we leave early, there is less traffic, err, on the road and the air is also fresher.'
4	Molly:	嗯 我应该想一想 因为 呃 呃 以前我应该 呃去一个晚会 晚上以前 所以呃我觉得一点儿早 ((laughter)) 呃 起床 不是 好
		En wo yinggai xiangyixiang yinwei e e yiqian wo yinggai e'qu yige wanhui wanshangyiqian suoyi e wojuede yidianrzao ((laughter)) e'qichuang bushihao
		'Urn, I should think about it, because, err, err, before, I should, err, go to a party, before the night, so, I think, err, I think, to get up early, err, is not good.'
5	A:	呃大家难得聚一块儿 而且那个地方 真的很多好玩儿的东西 嗯 你要是不来就可惜了而且 我们去的路上你也可以再休息一下在车上
		E dajia nande juyikuair erqie nage difang zhende you henduo haowanrde dongxi en ni yaoshi bulai jiu kexile erqie women qude lushang ni ye keyi zai xiuxi yixia zai cheshang
		'Err, it is difficult to get everyone together, and the place has a lot to see. Urn, if you don't come, it'd be a shame. Also, on the way, you can rest on the bus on the way there.'
6	Molly:	啊 那我问问我的朋友因为 呃 她可能可以去 呃可是 *我不知道要是我可以去不去
		*A na wo wenwen wode pengyou yinwei e ta keneng keyiqu e keshi e *wo*

buzhidao yaoshi wo keyi qubuqu
'Uh, then I will ask my friend, because, err, she probably can come, err, but *I am not sure if I can come or not. '

7   A: 嗯那你真的 不确定你能来吗
            En na ni zhende buqueding ni neng lai ma
            'Urn, then are you really not sure if you can come?'

8   Molly: 啊我可以 给你打电话好吗
            A wo keyi geini dadianhua haoma
            'Uh, can I ring you?'

9   A: 好那也行那我们回头联系好吧
            Hao na yexing na women huitou lianxi haoba
            'Okay. Then let us get in touch later.'

By comparing Molly's (E-group) organisation of *hedging* and *postponement* in the pre-instruction role-play with that in the post-study abroad role-play, is clear that she developed her sociopragmatic knowledge as to how invitations may be issued in L2 Mandarin Chinese, which may have contributed to her different structure of these two semantic formulas. Her interview revealed that during the time she was studying in Beijing, she invited Chinese people to come over for a meal and she was also invited out by Chinese people. These experiences probably contributed to her knowledge in terms of refusals to invitations. Molly's case demonstrated that the study abroad experience may have helped learners to grasp how refusal sequences may be constructed, so allowing them to structure their semantic formulas more effectively following the study abroad period.

Learners' development in their use of delays and prefaces

To begin with delays, in the pre- and post-instruction role-plays, only two learners employed them. The infrequent occurrence of delays may have been due to the constraints of their linguistic proficiency at this stage. But the fact that they appeared at all showed that these learners had an understanding, as well as an ability, to use delays in refusals. Specifically, at pre-instruction, in the Fish-Head scenario, Oscar (C-group) tried to get a bit more information before he issued an actual refusal, asking 'what flavour is it?' Not getting a straight answer, Oscar asked more specifically in his next turn, 'is it spicy?' Mia (E-group) used a delay in the Visit-Home scenario at post-instruction. When her interlocutor first initiated the invitation, Mia employed a delay of *request for more information*, asking, 'where is your home city?'

At the post-study abroad stage, the learners increased their use of delays: half the learners used delays in their refusals to invitations. Some of these delays were composed of *request for more information* and some were composed of *repetition*. For example, after the acquaintance initiated the invitation, Leo (E-group) first asked, 'what is there at *Shidu*'. Then he specifically asked, 'what time (to meet)' in the next turn. When the acquaintance stated the time, Leo pointed out that the time was too early for him, indirectly refusing the invitation. To the same invitation, Grace (C-group) employed *repetition* as a delay responding to the acquaintance's initiation of the invitation, before she moved forward to negotiate a refusal. These examples of the use of delays suggest that at the post-study abroad stage the learners had developed in their use of delays in order to negotiate a refusal, despite the fact that there was not any help from the instruction on this issue.

The learners' use of prefaces was found to be more complicated compared to their use of delays. Two areas of interest will be further discussed: (1) the semantic formulas used in prefaces and (2) the linguistic devices that were used to deliver them. Three semantic formulas were found in the learners' prefaces; *positive feeling*, *express willingness* to comply and *apology*. While with *positive feeling* and *express willingness*, the problem came with the linguistic devices, which were non-formulaic, the use of *apology* itself in a preface can be problematic.

The use of non-formulaic linguistic devices was found from the pre-instruction stage and persisted through to the post-study abroad stage. At the early stages, such non-formulaic use was mostly illustrated in their use of various expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite') to express *positive feeling*. As seen in Example 93 below, in her refusal to the invitation to visit an acquaintance's home city in the post-instruction role-play, Grace (C-group) employed *taikeqi* (太客气, 'too polite'), which was categorized as a preface as it was understood as Grace's expression of appreciation for the invitation.

Example 93: Grace's refusal at post-instruction (Visit-Home)

> Grace: 啊谢谢你 你太客气了 可是我已经付付了这个呃房子/这个钱
> *A xiexie ni ni taikeqile keshi wo yijing fu fule zhege e fangzi/zhege qian*
> Uh, thank you, you are too polite, but I've already paid this, err, house/ this money[deposit].'

At the post-study abroad stage, the range of non-formulaic forms expanded. For example, in her initial refusal to the invitation to *Shidu* in the post-study abroad role-play Louise (E-group) prefaced her refusal using *feichangyouyisi* 非常有意思 (very interesting) expressing her *positive feeling* about the invitation. In the same scenario, Emily (C-group) used *tinghaowanr* (挺好玩儿, 'sounds quite fun') to express her *positive feeling*, as seen in Example 94.

Example 94: Emily's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

> Emily: <u>挺好玩儿</u> 可是 这个周末 不太方便 不好意思
> *Tinghaowanr keyi zhege zhoumou butai fangbian buhaoyisi*
> '<u>Sound quite fun</u>, but this weekend it's not very convenient for me. Sorry.'

However, expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite') were still found to deliver *positive feeling* at the post-study abroad stage. For example, Grace's (C-group) first response, when she was offered a gift, was *nitaikeqi* (你太客气, 'you are too polite'). Although it was not found in her earlier refusals, in her refusals to try locusts in the post-study abroad role-play Louise (E-group) used *feichangkeqi* (非常客气, 'especially polite') to express her *positive feeling* towards the offer, as seen in Example 95.

Example 95: Louise's refusal at post-study abroad (Locusts)

> Louise: <u>非常客气的</u> 可是 对不起 真的不可以 这个别的菜非常好吃
> *Feichang keqide keshi duibuqi zhende bukeqyi zhege biedecai feichang haochi*
> '<u>Very polite</u>, but, sorry, really shouldn't. This other dish looks very nice.'

As shown using the NSs' data in section 5.3, *taikeqile* (太客气了, 'too polite') is usually used as a remark on the interlocutor's social act. Usually it is not employed by the recipient, probably because it bears a critical tone implying the amount of politeness is unnecessary. And expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite') were only found in certain formulaic expressions such as *buyongkeqi* (不用客气, 'no need to be polite') and *taikeqile*. Expressions such as *feichangkeqi* (非常客气, 'especially

polite') can be considered non-formulaic. The occurrence of these non-formulaic expressions at the post-study abroad stage suggested that some learners might still not grasp the way *keqi* was used. In fact, judging from their responses to a friend's offer of a gift (excluded from the main body of the final analysis, see section 4.3.3), most learners still had not mastered the use of *keqi*. Importantly, the risk of using these non-formulaic linguistic devices is that they might not fulfil the function of forewarning the NS interlocutor for the oncoming refusal with the same effect as formulaic devices, as native speakers of a target language may be only tuned to those devices that are conventionalised.

Turning to use of *apology* in preface, once again it also persisted through to the study abroad stage. At the pre-instruction stage, Emma (E-group) for example, employed *apology* to preface her refusal to the invitation to karaoke, as seen in Example 96. Similarly, Daisy (C-group) also used *apology* in her initial refusal, as seen in Example 97 and again in her third refusal. And again in the post-study abroad role-play, Emma used *apology* to preface her refusal, see Example 98 below.

Example 96: Emma's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

Emma: 啊对不起 我我不不来/我不去 卡啦-okay
A duibuqi wo wo bu bulai/ wo buqu kala-okay
'Uh, <u>sorry</u>, I, I won't, won't come/ I won't go to karaoke.'

Example 97: Daisy's refusal at pre-instruction (Karaoke)

Daisy: 啊对不起 我 啊 我 我不会
A duibuqi wo a wo wo buhui
'Uh, <u>sorry</u>, I, uh, I, I won't [come].'

Example 98: Emma's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Emma: 啊对不起 嗯 这个时间太太早
A duibuqi en zhege shijian tai taizao
'Uh, <u>sorry</u>, urn, this time is too, too early.'

The frequent occurrence of *apologies* showed the learners' unfamiliarity with the use of this semantic formula in refusals in Mandarin Chinese. In English, *apologies* can be used as a preface before a refusal, simply for the sake of saying 'no' (Levinson, 1983). In Mandarin Chinese, as argued in section 5.3, they tended to be used only when the NSs believed they were culpable and usually occurred

towards the end, especially in the last refusal, where the NSs summarily apologised for their unavailability. Moreover, the choice of *duibuqi* (对不起, 'sorry') as an *apology*, as seen in Example 96 and Example 97 above, in contrast to *buhaoyisi* (不好意思, 'embarrassing; embarrassed'), can pose risk to IR, as *duibuqi* is often used to signal 'no more negotiation' in refusals, as claimed by Chen et al (1995), and thus, carries a strong refusing force. *Buhaoyisi* tends to be used to 'acknowledge embarrassment on the part of the speaker', rather than 'the appropriate apology for actions that show disrespect towards another' as *duibuqi* does (Ross & Ma, 2006, p.380).

6.2.4 The roles of instruction and the study abroad context in the learners' development in making refusals

Previously in the sections from 6.2.1 to 6.2.3 I have reported findings of the learners' development in making refusals in the role-plays using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this section I present the findings from the interview and questionnaire data. The data provided two types of information: E-group learners' feedback on the instruction and learners' interactions with NSs for both E-group and C-group. I first present the learners' evaluation of the instruction, followed by the learners' interactions with NSs outside classroom.

The learners' evaluation of the instruction

Overall, the learners' evaluation of the instruction pointed to some influences that the instruction had on their learning of refusals. Jasmine rated the instruction 5 out of 5: 'I think they were all really good … partly because I knew how to be polite and to say no thank you. …It's just I felt more comfortable and not scared, feeling I'd insult anyone or be rude. … Cultural aspects, it made me more aware of the difference between our culture and Chinese culture.'

Indeed, more generally, the instruction successfully increased E-group's awareness in regards to pragmatic aspects of language learning in general and refusals in particular. As Emma commented in her interview, 'I never really thought about it [initiating acts and refusals], so you sort of introduced the topic to us. Then I think once I knew about it, I'm more aware of it.' Commenting on the fact that an offer can be made repeatedly in Mandarin Chinese, Jasmine said, 'it was very

different to here in the West… I think if I haven't done the lessons…I would've been pretty uncomfortable with the fact of, you know, … really not wanting it'. Louise also found the instruction beneficial. She rated the instruction 4 out of 5: 'I definitely improved … we discussed the situations and that it's okay to just sort of insist, using like different phrases to refuse … and definitely [it increased] confidence to refuse.' The instruction also gave Louise some insights into how refusals can be conducted in Mandarin Chinese: 'we had lots of discussions about …interactions between Chinese people and simply that reflection gave me a lot of cultural insight into how Chinese minds work'.

In addition, the fact the intervention was conducted near the beginning of the study abroad period may have allowed the learners to make more use of the study abroad context to enhance learning. Molly (E-group) commented, 'because it (the instruction) was near the beginning of our year, it's always useful to know colloquial phrases (the example she gave was *buyong buyong*, 'no need, no need') that are used all the time and eventually they do become natural to you because you practice them so much'.

Conversely, Mia's comments in her interview suggested that learner's proficiency level at that point in time might limit the effectiveness of instruction taking place early on in study abroad period, offering an interesting viewpoint. Mia evaluated the instruction; 'I would say 3 [on a 1 to 5 scale] until I … caught up on my notes. I went back over them again…a couple of weeks ago… and now 4… because… I don't know, it's got into my brain better the second time around. And also my Chinese level is higher, much higher now than it was at the beginning of the year, so… I just found this time round having had the lessons, like, things have made so much more sense …' Mia's comment implying that her lower Mandarin Chinese proficiency level might have hindered her understanding of the instruction brought up an interesting issue. The interaction of learners' proficiency level with the effectiveness of the instruction has also been found in the literature. For example, Codina-Espurz (2008) found that her high-proficiency group displayed a more balanced use of the instructed mitigation devices at both the post-test and the delayed post-test stages than the low-proficiency group. Therefore, it is possible that if the E-group learners' proficiency level were higher on average, they might understand the instruction better.

In the same vain, the fact that E-group overall achieved less in their proficiency level at the post-study abroad stage, compared to C-group, as Table 14 shows, may have had an impact on their performance of refusals. While the two groups were very similar at pre-SOPI, i.e. four learners were at IL and two at IM, at post-SOPI the results indicates that C-group had achieved a lot more in terms of their language proficiency. All the learners in C-group but one (Emily) have moved up at least two levels, i.e. from IL to IH or from IM to A. In comparison, the majority of E-group did not achieve as much; they only moved up one level, i.e. from IL to IM level, or from IM to IH. At best, the learners in E-group only reached as high as IH level. But some learners in C-group achieved as high as AH. Grace achieved most across the two groups; she moved from IL to AH level.

Table 14: The results of SOPI tests

E-group	Pre-SOPI	Post-SOPI	C-group	Pre-SOPI	Post-SOPI
Emma	IL	IM	Abby	IM	A
Jasmine	IL	IH	Daisy	IL	IH
Leo	IM	IH	Alicia	IL	IH
Louise	IL	IM	Emily	IL	IM
Mia	IL	IH	Grace	IL	AH
Molly	IM	IH	Oscar	IM	A

IL= Intermediate Low, IM= Intermediate Mid, IH = Intermediate High,
A= Advanced, AH= Advanced High

The use of video-clips, containing dynamic and rich context, showed potential to 'socialise' learners into some learning beyond what was explicitly instructed. For example, some learners used some phrases in their refusals in the post-study abroad role-plays that caught my attention. When Jasmine (E-group) tried to decline the offer to pay at post-study abroad, she employed *buhaoyisi* (不好意思, 'embarrassing; embarrassed'), see Example 99 below. Although there was still a bit of work needed in terms of her accuracy, the fact that Jasmine chose it in refusing an offer to pay suggests that she did have an understanding of the context where this phrase may be appropriate to use. Indeed, as Jasmine recalled in her interview, she had learned it from one of the video-clips during the instruction. In one of the scenarios regarding offers and refusals to offers, the speaker used this linguistic

device when trying to decline a friend's offer to drive her home after the dinner they had had together at which the friend had paid the bill, see Example 100 below,

Example 99: Jasmine' refusal at post-study abroad (Offer to pay2)

Jasmine: 真的真的 我已经 我会<u>不好意思</u>
Zhende zhende wo yijing hui <u>buhaoyisi</u>
'Really, really, I have already… I will be <u>embarrassed</u>.'

Example 100: A refusal covered by one of the video-clips used in the instruction

不用不用不用, 我自己打车回去就行了。你今天请我吃饭，我已经很<u>不好意思了</u>
Buyong buyong buyong wo ziji dache huiqu jiuxingle ni jintian qingwo chifan wo yijing hen <u>buhaoyisile</u>
'No need, no need, no need. I will just take a taxi back. Today you have treated me for this meal, which has already made me feel very <u>embarrassed</u>.'

The learners' report of interactions with NSs

This section presents the findings regarding the learners' interactions with NS as revealed by the interviews together with the questionnaire. As discussed in Chapter 4, in the questionnaire, the learners' evaluation was found to be rather subjective depending on how they felt about the time they used out-of-class. Some students seemed to overestimate the amount of time and some seemed to underestimate it when I compared it with their telling in the interview. I shall give a couple of examples here before I move on to a summary of their interactions with NSs.

Table 15 below summarises the amount of time that the learners reported they spent speaking with NSs. In each cell, on the left of the colon, it presents the number of days that each learner spent speaking Mandarin Chinese with NSs outside of the classroom; on the right it is the amount of hours that they spoke each day. The numbers in the brackets indicate the average hours that the learner spent per week.

Table 15: Findings of learners' interactions with NSs from the questionnaire

		Speaking Mandarin/week	Extended conversation	Speaking other languages	Speaking English
E-group	Louise	5: 0-1(2.5)	1: 0-1	5: 0-1	7: > 5
	Mia	6: 0-2 (6)	4: 0-1	4	7: 3-4
	Leo	2: 2-3 (5)	0	0	7: > 5
	Jasmine	2: 4-5 (9)	4: 0-1	2: 2-3	7: > 5
	Emma	7: 0-1 (3.5)	0	0	7: > 5
	Molly	2: 3-4 (7)	7: 0-1	4:	7: 2-3
C-group	Daisy	7: 1-2 (10.5)	5: 2-3	0	7: > 5
	Alicia	3: 1-2 (4.5)	1:0-1	0	7: > 5
	Grace	2: 0-1 (1)	7: 0-1	4: 0-1	7: 4-5
	Emily	1: 1-2 (1.5)	2: 0-1	0	7: > 5
	Oscar	3: 0-1 (1.5)	1: 1-2	0	7: 2-3
	Abby	1: 0-1 (0.5)	0	0	7: > 5

It is not difficult to see that there was some variation in these learners' self-evaluation. For example, Mia reported that on average she spent *six* days a week and typically *up to two hours* on those days speaking Mandarin Chinese with NSs outside of class. She also estimated *four* out of seven days she had extended conversations with NSs and typically on those days the conversations could last *up to an hour*. Moreover, Mia believed she spoken English (her L1) only *three to four hours* of each day every week. Daisy reported that on average she spent *seven* days a week and typically between *one and two hours* on those days speaking Mandarin Chinese with NSs outside of class. She also reported *five* out of seven days a week she had extended conversations with NSs, and on those days typically the conversations were *between two and three hours*. Up to this point, we can clearly tell that compared to Mia, Daisy spent more time speaking the L2 with NSs. But then Daisy reported she spent *more than five hours* each day every week speaking English (her L1), which was more time than that Mia reported she had spent speaking English. This observation indicates that Daisy might have a different estimate for the way she spent her time from Mia.

In addition, comparing the learners' estimates in the questionnaire of the amount of time they spent having 'extended' conversations with NSs, some notable variations among the learners' estimates could also be observed. For example, Daisy (C-group) reported that on average she spent *seven* days a week and typically between *one and two hours* on those days speaking Mandarin Chinese with NSs

outside of class. She also reported *five* out of seven days a week she had extended conversations with NSs, and on those days typically the conversations were *between two and three hours*. And from her interview, we understood that this amount of extended conversations was plausible in her case. In comparison, in Grace's (C-group) case, she reported on average she spent *two* days a week and typically *up to one hour* on those days speaking Mandarin Chinese with NSs outside of class. But then she also reported *seven* out of seven days a week she had extended conversations with NSs, and on those days typically the conversations were *up to one hour*. In Grace's interview, she only mentioned one Chinese person that she interacted with quite a bit. But she also pointed out that it was mostly during the first term. So the amount of extended conversations that Grace reported she had was difficult to justify based on her interview. More importantly, the difference between Daisy and Grace's estimate on the amount of extended conversations that they had with NSs suggested they might have a different view as to what could be counted as an extended conversation. Such variations among the learners indicate some subjectivity in their self-assessment, which is worth keeping in mind when reading the figures in the Table.

Nevertheless, when the questionnaire was interpreted together with the learners' interview, some better understanding to the learners' self-assessment can be obtained, although not necessarily in all cases. For example, according to the interview, Daisy (C-group) and Jamine (E-group) were found to be the only learners who managed to build claose friendships in the local community and interacted with their Chinese friends on a regular basis. And this is fairly consistent with their self-report on the amount of time spent speaking the L2 outside of class. As the number in the brackets indicates, on average, Daisy and Jasmine spent most time speaking with NSs. The figures in the table suggest that although both Daisy and Jasmine managed to build some good friendships with some NSs and interacted with them regularly, Daisy might have spent relatively more time speaking the L2 compared to Jasmine.

Next is a summary of the learners' interactions with NSs. Let us begin with Daisy in C-group. She reported three groups of NSs that she interacted with: a group of NSs that Daisy met at a club, who were all English teachers, a Chinese boyfriend during the second semester who she met at a bar and some Chinese colleagues at the school at which she taught English full-time for a month. Daisy's interactions with

these NSs displayed the characteristics of a multiplex network (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006). For example, Daisy commented on her experience working at the school, 'Although it was only a month, it helped my Chinese a lot… I had a lot of contact with my boss, my colleagues. My interview for the job was all in Chinese…' And Daisy's relationship with the boyfriend gave her both social and language opportunities, as she stated in her interview, 'we used to meet up a lot, go for dinner either with other friends of mine or Chinese friends of his.' They only spoke Mandarin Chinese, because her boyfriend did not speak any English, 'we had conversations just about everything, from like what was on the TV, we ended up chatting about golf, to like different types of wine, because he makes wine for living. I could manage to have pretty decent conversations with him most of the time.'

Interactions with these NSs probably offered Daisy many opportunities to observe personal suggestions, invitations and offers between the NSs, as well as to handle them herself. For example, Daisy developed an insight into the use of *reason* to refuse offers to pay. She stated in the interview: 'I think if I was like really wanted to pay for a meal, then I'd find different reasons… to build up a case for why I should pay. … For example if one of my friends had recommended a restaurant or something. I'll be like, 'oh, no, because you recommended it, let me pay this time.' … If we picked up some food and they hadn't eaten a lot, I'll be like, 'oh, you didn't eat enough and I'll pay.' *I used to try and find reasons like about the actual meal to kind of justify us paying it. I find it easier than that like, no, let me pay, no, let me pay'. … I think that if you had a reason and you stuck with it, you were quite persistent with it, it usually worked.*' (Emphasis added by the researcher). This statement showed that Daisy understood one of the keys to effectively refuse an offer to pay, although Daisy did not actually demonstrate her ability to use these types of reasons in her post-study abroad role-plays.

While it has been established in the literature that a study abroad context can promote learning about a speech act (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Barron, 2007; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Kinginger, 2008; Matsumura, 2001; Schauer, 2007; Shively, 2011), what different learners manage to learn is often not the same (e.g. Masuda, 2011; Siegal, 1995). In this study, the fact that Daisy managed to gain this insight into NSs' refusals by no means implies that other learners would also be able to learn this through their study abroad period. Daisy was the only learner who

exhibited an understanding of the use of *reason*, which was notably similar to the reasons that tended to be employed by NSs in the same context.

By and large it was the types of interactions that a learner had which determined what they learned. Jasmine (E-group) also told a story in her interview about *reason* that she learned through real life interaction, 'this one time… because I needed a hammer, I went to a shop nearby and I saw a hammer on the table, I was like, 'oh, do you sell hammers'. He said, 'no, no, no, but just take mine, and just bring it back later'. 'Oh okay, are you sure?' Taking your hammer, I mean in London you'd never do that. When I went back, I brought him a bottle of beer just to say thank you to him. But at first he didn't want to accept it. I said, 'please, like, in England, whenever you want to say thank you, you give a small something.' He had a bit of a laugh', at this point, Jasmine emphasized, 'I just said …it's our culture to give a little bit of present. As soon as I said that he was like 'oh, oh, okay''. Clearly, Jasmine recognised the NS accepted her beer because of the *reason* she offered, i.e. it is English culture. This experience probably made Jasmine realise that this particular *reason* could help to meet some her social needs, this is probably why Jasmine applied a similar one strategically in her post-study abroad role-play to persuade the host to accept the flowers that she brought on a visit, as seen in Example 101.

Example 101: Jasmine's response to a host's rejection to the gift that she brought (post-study abroad)

Jasmine: 啊不是不是 是 *英文的文化 我们我们 嗯 每次去朋友的家 嗯 去吃饭 嗯我们带一瓶酒或者 一朵花儿

A bushibushi shi Yingwende wenhuan women women en meici qu pengyoude jia en quchifan en women dai yippingjiu huozhe yiduo huar
'Uh, no, no, (it) is *English culture. Every time we, we, urn, come to a friend's house, urn, to have a meal, urn, we bring a bottle of wine or a flower stem.'

The *reason* may be specific to Jasmine, but how she developed it is worth some attention. As with the 'going to bathroom' trick to actually pay the bill (discussed below), Jasmine's opportunities to learn these strategies came through her attempts to reciprocate the actions of NSs that she interacted with. This may be just

Jasmine's interpersonal style, but her friendship with Qi Ming may have also contributed to it. Qi Ming was the main Chinese person that Jasmine mentioned in the interview, he was also the person through whom Jasmine experienced Chinese culture and built her social network in Beijing. Growing up in Beijing, Qi Ming introduced a lot of local food and places that he visits regularly to Jasmine. Jasmine's friendship with Qi Ming also considerably helped her Mandarin Chinese, she stated in her interview, 'if they (Qi Ming and/or his friends) tell me something and I don't understand, they will explain it, which is really, almost like a teacher'. And because Qi Ming was not at all interested in speaking English, Jasmine only spoke Mandarin Chinese with him. Jasmine also socialised with the people that Qi Ming saw on a regular basis, including a few of his friends, his cousin and his parents. In her post-study abroad questionnaire, Jasmine was one of a few learners who self-evaluated that they had had extended conversations in Mandarin Chinese; over four times a week, for up to an hour.

Her friendship with Qi Ming might have contributed to her very positive views towards certain customs, Jasmine stated, '[Chinese people are] very generous… I don't know how to say, like in paying bills they get up and wanna pay your bill... I think giving presents also like, because you want to, not because you feel you have to. It's the same like inviting friends out to eat. It's not because oh we're friends, I should invite you out, you know, it's I want to invite you out because I want to, you know, have some food with you, because you are my friend, you know.' This positive view in return might have led Jasmine to reciprocate all the hospitalities that she received: she offered food to them; she fought with them to pay the bill. There was another story Jasmine told about fighting over a bill, 'I went out to pay the bill, and then his *jiejie* (Qing Ming's cousin) came along. I was like, 'no, no, I'm paying.' And she tossed me out at the corner, 'oh, I'm paying.' So we, like, had a little fight…'. Subsequently when she had an internship in Shanghai during the summer after her study in Beijing finished, Jasmine received a nice good-bye gift from the office manager representing the company. Again Jasmine reciprocated the hospitality; she bought a small plant for the office as a thank you and good-bye present, which the colleagues were very impressed with. Positively responding to these social interactions gave Jasmine some good experiences, over and above the language opportunities it brought.

While different types of interactions with NSs offer different opportunities to learn the L2 and the culture, some seemed to be readily picked up simply by observing interactions among NSs. The use of *take action* is an example. *Take action* was found to be critical in many cases in the refusal to an offer to pay for a meal; all the NSs who successfully refused the offer employed it and those who did not employ it all failed to negotiate the refusal. Mia (E-group) employed this semantic formula in the pre-instruction role-play - before she attended the instruction. As seen in Example 102, after the acquaintance initiated the offer, Mia responded with an *alternative*, that she wanted to pay (line 2). She even interrupted (lines 4 and 6) and overlapped (line 8) with the acquaintance indicating that she was geared up to pay. Lastly in line 12, Mia employed *take action*, shouting *fuwuyuanr fuwuyuanr maidan* ('waiter, waiter, the bill').

Example 102: Mia's refusal to an offer to pay (pre-instruction)

1	A:	呃 这顿饭我来买单 好吗
		E zhedun fan wo lai maidan haoma.
		'Err, this meal I'll pay the bill, is it okay?'
2	Mia:	啊 啊 我来 我 我来买单
		A a wolai wo wolai maidan.
		'Uh, uh, let me, let, let me pay the bill.'
3	A:	啊 你太客气了=
		A ni taikeqile=
		'Uh, you are too polite-'
4	Mia:	=No no no 不是不是 不是不是 我我-
		= 'No no no' bushi bushi bushi wo wo-
		'No, no, no, ((in English)) No, no ,no, no, I, I-'
5	A:	这次我请你-
		Zheci woqingni-
		This time I pay for you-
6	Mia:	>啊 啊<
		>a a<
		>Uh, uh<
7	A:	[欢　　]
		[huan　　]
		((Was overlapped by Mia)) To wel- ((welcome))
8	Mia:	[我请你] 你是我的客客人
		[Woqingni] ni shi wode ke keren
		((Overlapping with A)) I pay for you ((overlap ended)) You are my gue…guest.
9	A:	呃 你来中国 为了表示欢迎你 我来请客 好吗
		E nilai Zhongguo weile biaoshi guanyingni wolai qingke haoma
		'Urn, you came to China, in order to welcome you, let me pay, is it okay?'
10	Mia:	=可是 你是 啊 中国人 我跟你说中文 我想要我的中文水平好了 呃 所以 我 啊 买你的 啊 晚饭
		=Keshi nishi a Zhongguoren wo genni shuo Zhongwen wo xiangyao wode Zhongwen shuiping haole e suoyi wo a mai nide a wanfan.

11	A:	啊 你太客气了 为了 表示欢迎你 这次就让我来请 好吗=

A ni taikeqile weile biaoshi huanyingni zheci jiu rang wolaiqing haoma=

'Uh, you are too polite. To welcome you, this time just let me pay, is it okay?'

12	Mia:	=£服务员儿 服务员儿 买单

=£Fuwuyuan fuwuyuan maidan

=£Waiter, waiter, the bill.

((All laughed))

…

As we know from her pre-study abroad questionnaire, Mia (E-group) had visited China prior to her time studying abroad. The learners all reported in their interviews that it was very common to see Chinese people fighting for the bill over a meal during the time they studied in Beijing. Jasmine (E-group) told the story of how she successfully used *take action* to pay the bill in her interview. Jasmine observed that sometimes her Chinese friends used the excuse of 'going to bathroom' to actually pay the bill. Therefore, one time Jasmine also 'went to bathroom' to pay the bill and her Chinese friends only found out afterwards as they did not expect this 'western girl' could have learned the trick and actually used it.

Although there are relatively few examples, the study abroad context was also found to promote learning of some linguistic devices. Daisy (C-group) offered an example. As seen in Example 103 below, in her refusal to the offer to tutor English (excluded from the main body of the final analysis, see section 4.3.3), Daisy managed to express that she 'doesn't have any particular interest in this type of work' in Mandarin Chinese. In her interview, Daisy recalled, 'I think I learned that (the expression) from my boyfriend. Because I remember…one night when we were watching TV and had like a very in-depth conversation about sports. And like I was saying about how people in England really like football and I asked him if he liked football. I think how he replied was something similar to that (the expression), so I think I must've just picked it up on it'.

Example 103: Daisy's refusal at post-study abroad (Tutor-English)

Daisy: 呃我知道是兼职 可是我真的很忙 我有很多作业 呃 我也呃 对 这样的工作 没有什么特别的 呃 兴趣.

E wozhidao shijianzhi keshi wo zhende henmang wo you henduo zuoye e woye e dui zheyangde gongzuo meiyou shenme tebiede e xingqu.
'Err, I know it's part-time, but I'm really very busy. I have a lot of homework (to do). Err, I also, err, don't have any particular interest in this type of work.'

What is also interesting and worthy of note is that Daisy did not think the expression she managed to use was specific to Mandarin Chinese. She stated in her interview, 'I would probably express it similarly in English, too.' This note of Daisy's indicates that, the expression itself was not new to her, it was just that her Mandarin Chinese had improved enough following the study abroad period to allow her to express things that she was not able to express at the earlier stages.

However, the interview data also showed that just because learners were living in the target speech community, it did not mean that ready to access to NSs should be assumed. It was found the learners had rather limited occasions to meet NSs. Many of the NSs that the learners stayed in touch were met randomly, but not all learners were able to develop relationships with NSs in such a way. Ultimately learners needed to be proactive in order to create opportunities for more extensive interactions with NSs. For example, Jasmine (E-group) who developed a close friendship with Qi Ming actually met him rather randomly. She recalled in the interview, one day after class, she was sitting by the canal near where she lived. Qi Ming and his friend had just finished college and were walking along the canal bank. When they saw Jasmine, they stopped. They were interested in having a chat with her, but were debating if Jasmine could understand them. At this time, Jasmine interrupted, *tingdedong* (I can understand you). Then they had a bit of a chat and then they got the courage to ask Jasmine if they could take a photo with her. Jasmine was used to people asking to take a photo with her. They also asked for her phone number. Emma (E-group), on the other hand, did not develop a relationship with a guy that she met similarly. She and her roommates were hanging out near the canal bank and some Chinese guys came to talk to them. Although they had had a nice chat, when Emma saw one of the guys came to wait at the bottom her building and invite her out for a meal, she rejected his offer and the relationship did not develop further.

Often it was found that if learners were passive, rather than proactive in establishing their relationships with NSs, that resulted in a lack of opportunities in

using the L2. Emily (C-group) offered another example in point: '…in my dancing team … I made some good friends there … it's kind of funny, towards the end one of my friends, he was Chinese, I just spoke to him in Chinese, he didn't know at the time that I could speak Chinese. It made me feel I should've just made more effort …'.

Emma (E-group) offered another example. According to her self-evaluation in the post-study abroad questionnaire, outside classroom she spent over five hours every day doing things in English, e.g. reading news, books, watching movies, and exchanging emails. In contrast, she only spent less than one hour speaking Mandarin Chinese. And she reported that she never had any extended conversations in Mandarin Chinese, although she had a lot of superficial and brief exchanges with strangers and acquaintances, e.g. exchanging greetings or obtaining logistical information. In the interview, Emma reported that she interacted with two NSs: Claudia (Emma's language exchange partner) and Amy (Emma's Mandarin Chinese tutor). However, with Claudia, Emma highlighted they spoke more English than Mandarin Chinese, as Claudia's English was a lot better than Emma's Mandarin Chinese. But Emma involved herself in many social activities. With Amy, Emma recalled they spoke a bit more Mandarin Chinese, but often Amy would explain things using English. She volunteered, one time at an orphanage and the other time at the Chinese Migrant Children Foundation where she played games or sports with some children. She was also involved in a book festival and stewarded two events (one held in English and one in Mandarin Chinese). She travelled. But Emma did not seem to proactively practice her Mandarin Chinese in her social interactions. She reported that in most of these events she did not need to rely on her Mandarin Chinese. Most Chinese people she interacted spoke English better than she spoke Mandarin Chinese. This was in accordance with Emma's self-evaluation in the post-study abroad questionnaire.

But one of the recordings from Emma illustrated that when Emma was forced to speak Mandarin Chinese she was able to manage. To help this study to collect natural conversations with NSs, Emma asked a Chinese girl who was a friend of her roommate's to participate. The girl was very shy; she didn't speak unless she was asked a question. To avoid silence and keep the conversation flowing, Emma had to initiate questions. She asked her about music and food that she liked, etc. The conversation was actually quite successfully in my view. This incident shows that

some learners' passivity could disadvantage them in an environment in which they had to depend on themselves to create opportunities for practice.

In addition, the interview data also revealed some notable differences among the learners responding to some cultural differences. For example, Daisy reported that she saw personal suggestions as 'a nice way of Chinese people showing their caring', noting that 'normally I kind of think that kind of suggestion …kind of as a nice and polite way of showing caring for people. So I never really had any problem with that. I never really used to say no. … Maybe they could be at times a bit forceful about it, …[but] if you were like, 'yeah, okay,' and went along with it, I didn't find it to be overly forceful. … I just took it as another part of Chinese culture. … If I was going into class with a cold, I'd expect to get, 'Have you had any medicine yet, you should go to the doctor'. … I kind of got used to it.'

Louise (E-group), on the other hand, noted that she always refused such personal suggestions. She explained in her interview: 'yeah, that (personal suggestions) happened regularly to me… I think they are very cute. [But] I would be like, 'no, no, I will be fine. Thank you, but I'll be fine.' … Fine, it's cute, but I didn't need you to tell me that, I know how much to wear'. Louise did not feel she needed to compromise her habits, although she understood that she needed to learn about Chinese culture and respect its differences. As she pointed out, she would also be upfront and refuse offers of food, 'I'm vegetarian, I don't eat this, I'm sorry.' She continued explaining, 'Then I'll make it a point to say, you know, I understand this is your culture, but this is part of my culture. You know, I want you to respect that as well.'

However, Louise's unwillingness to compromise her style in dealing with personal suggestions by no means suggested that she had a general antipathy towards the cultural differences that she encountered. Quite the contrary, she demonstrated some unique insight into cultural differences: 'I think it depends a lot more on how well you know each other. And actually, sort of, the culture like, becomes secondary once you are friends and you know each other…'. With her Chinese friend, Jason, for example, Louise explained, 'at a certain point we got into a comfort zone so that we can both speak in the way that we are with our cultural backgrounds, but we would also feel sort of free to ask, 'why did you just do that that way, like, what are the reasons behind that', …you are not in Chinese culture and you are not in German or English culture, you are somewhere above that, and you are just meeting…' Using

Louise's own words, 'I guess, as a language student, I undergo a sort of identity shift, and especially, like, living in China. I probably have done this identity shift lots of times, but it is, like, part of my identity is now being a German national and, like, I have been born in Germany and, like, living in England and then going to China. I pick up bits and pieces of all these cultures and I become more aware of it…' Being aware of cultural differences facilitated Louise' interactions with NSs. Louise told a story in her interview, 'I found out that he (a man in his 60s who also worked in the bicycle shop that Louise worked in) called me like *pangzi* (i.e. a word used to refer to someone that is fat). But I knew how to take it because you know, he didn't mean it in an offensive way. He was the guy who always wanted to, like introduce me to, like his, I don't know, grandson.'

The different attitudes and approaches that were found among the learners in essence were no different to those found among the NSs. As shown in section 5.1, some NSs also see personal suggestions as interfering with their own independence, some were very happy to go along, and some chose to compromise just to satisfy the interlocutor. The similar variations found among the learners and the NSs lend support to the challenge of NS's norm (C. Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007; Swain & Deters, 2007) and the need to take into account learners' agency in pragmatic learning and teaching (Pellegrino A., 2005).

The interview data again brought up the importance of controlling learners' L1 influence on their L2 pragmatic performance. As discussed in section 5.2 , the learners' L1 gave rise to their struggle in learning and using *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') and the potential suffix *buliao* (不了). The interview data showed that learners' L1 sociopragmatic knowledge might hinder their L2 pragmatic performance, too. Emma offered an example in point. She displayed a good understanding as to how refusals worked in Mandarin Chinese in the interview: 'I think it's [refusals] more about persistence [in Mandarin Chinese]. If someone asks you to do something, if you say no, then they will ask you a couple of times. Sometimes it could be a bit of a challenge, because you keep saying no but they will keep asking you. So I think it shows that you just need to keep at it…you don't want to sound rude… [but] in that situation you are talking in Chinese, so it's okay just keep saying no.' Emma's comments on a Chinese host's routinized rejection of a gift also showed her understanding of social expectations following the study abroad period, she stated,

'You kind of realize that it is just what is done really. So you just have to be like 'oh, no, no, no, it's for you' they are like 'oh, no, no, no', 'it's for you'. You kind of realize it's actually just like social expectation, I guess. Yeah, that's going to happen, so you just have to be aware of that. You haven't done something wrong; it's just them being polite… So I guess in Chinese culture… I imagine if a Chinese person gives a Chinese person a bottle of wine, and they were like 'oh, great, thanks' then the giver would consider that person quite rude. So obviously both parts require a bit of understanding'.

Even though Emma recognised that it was okay to keep refusing in Mandarin Chinese beyond the point that would be acceptable in her L1 (English), she, however, still could not get herself to bring certain of her refusals to completion even following the study abroad period. As seen in Example 104 below, Emma gave in after three attempts in refusing the invitation in the post-study abroad role-play. When the acquaintance showed a bit of concern as to whether or not Emma could find the place, thus, he insisted that it would be more convenient if they went together, Emma abandoned her refusal.

Example 104: Emma's refusal at post-study abroad (Visit-*Shidu*)

Emma: 如果你给我你的… 我可以给你 啊 打电话然后 嗯 一点儿 晚 我可以 呃 看见/啊看(.) /找到你/你们
Ruguo ni gei wo nide… wo keyi gei ni a dadianhua ranhou en yidianr wan wo keyi e kanjian/ a kan(.)/zhaodao ni/nimen
'If you give me your… I can give you, uh, a call, then, urn, a bit later I can, err, see/uh look(.)/ find you/you.'

Considering that Emma brought her refusals to the personal suggestion and the offer of food to completion at the same stage, this giving in was not necessarily due to her linguistic ability. Rather, it may suggest that she needed to further control her L1 influence when performing refusals in the L2.

Alfie's (C-group, but later excluded from the main body of the analysis, see section 4.3.3) interview may offer us an explanation. Commenting on his use of *apologies*, Alfie noted, although he acknowledged that he did not need to use *apologies* as frequently when speaking Mandarin Chinese as when speaking English, the habit of using it when speaking English still, to some extent, impeded him from not using it in Mandarin Chinese. Alfie explained: 'we might get a slap as a child

when we don't say 'sorry'. It is just a habit of using it. But given time, I am sure I will become more used to not using it as much in Chinese as I do in English'. This shows that it may take some time for learners to develop control over their L1 influence, even though they fully understand what is supposed to be done in the L2.

To summarise, in this chapter, I have reported findings of the learners' development in making refusals in the role-plays using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Then I have examined the learners' experience interacting with NSs using the interview and LCP questionnaire data. This has helped me to understand how the learners thought of the instruction and in what ways their study abroad experience might have contributed to their development in general and in making refusals in particular. In the next chapter, I shall discuss these findings as they relate to findings from previous studies.

Chapter 7 Discussion

In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I reported the findings of the NSs' use of refusals and the learners' development in making refusals in their role-play performances. I have also presented the learners' evaluation of the instruction and their interactions with NSs in the target speech community, as given in the interviews and questionnaires. In this chapter, I discuss these findings together with findings from previous studies, focusing on the contributions of this study to the literature. I use three sections and each corresponds to an area that my research questions target at. In section 7.1, I discuss findings on refusals as seen from the NSs' data, which provides an answer to research question 1. In section 7.2, I discuss how the learners' use of refusals developed during the study abroad period. This aims to answer research question 2. In section 7.3, I discuss the impact of the instruction taking place in the study abroad context and the study abroad context alone on the learners' pragmatic development. This provides an answer to research questions 3.

7.1 What information did the NSs' data tell us about refusals in Mandarin Chinese?

Understanding how NSs make refusals is important in investigating L2 learners' use of refusals. The NSs' data played an essential role in this investigation. In particular, it showed, as far as a refusal's clarity and the likelihood to pose risk to IR were concerned, key linguistic devices are critical, as well as how different semantic formulas are structured over different exchanges as a whole in the negotiation of refusals. Furthermore, the NSs' data unfolded the specific linguistic devices, semantic formulas and structure of different semantic formulas that were key in the refusals under investigation, which, to my best knowledge, has not been reported in previous studies.

Next I summarise the findings before making the discussion. To begin with semantic formulas, this study found *put the interlocutor's mind at ease* was often involved in refusals to personal suggestions; but this formula had not been previously reported in the literature. In addition, in line with findings in previous studies as discussed in Chapter 3, the role of *alternative* and the role of specificity of *reason* in negotiation of refusal were also found to be central in the NSs' data in this study. As reported in the NSs' interviews, *alternative* could facilitate the negotiation while at the same time mending potential negative effects that refusals might cause on IR.

Specificity of *reason* was found to be instrumental to refusals' persuasiveness as well as limiting the potential for negative effect on IR. And according to the NSs' interviews, it was also important that *reason* pointed to exogenous factors that constrained the refuser's availability, rather than his/her unwillingness to comply which potentially could bear more risk of causing negative effect on IR, as was also discussed in Pan's study (2012).

I also found that *reason* could in fact be *excuses*, especially in refusing the acquaintance's invitation to karaoke. In this role-play, some NSs used totally different *reasons* to refuse from the one written on the role-play card instructed to them. And in the interviews I found out they were just *excuses*. Some NSs commented that the fact this was an acquaintance allowed the use of it and they expected the inviter to recognise that it was just a polite way to deliver a 'no'. Echoing this comment, in the NSs' role-play data, whenever *excuse* was used, the acquaintance (also the inviter) usually played along; understandingly backing down. This finding indicated, as was also discussed in Félix-Brasdefer's (2008) study, that the use of *excuse* takes some mutual understanding of cultural values underling this practice between the interlocutors. This potentially could be a challenge for L2 learners to play along with if they were not aware of it.

Moving to linguistic devices, this study found several key linguistic devices in the NSs' role-play data that were critical for refusals' clarity and/or to limit the potential for negative effect on IR. The way these key linguistic devices in making refusals, as discussed here, cannot simply be found in dictionaries, as I experienced throughout conducting the analysis. Rather, it was through using the point of view of discourse analysis that I was able to come to these findings in the qualitative analysis. It was found that *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') was typically associated with *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*; while *meiwenti* (没问题, 'no problem') can be said to be uncommon. In the refusals to invitations, using *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') to deliver *nonperformative statement* would not run unnecessary risk on IR, as the justification for refusing can be drawn directly from the circumstances of the scenario, whereas using *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') may cause negative effect on IR without a matching reason due to the strong illocutionary force associated with it. Compared to *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') to convey *negative willingness*, *buyao* (不要, 'don't want to'; 'mustn't') could bear more risk

of having negative effect on IR. Similarly, when *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') was overgeneralised in the contexts where the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) might be more appropriate, and the *reason* was not up to justifying it, *buneng* might leave space for more negative interpretation, hence, could have the potential to cause negative effect on IR. The adverbs *jiu* (就, 'only') and *zhi* (只, 'only') were found to play an important role in delivering *alternative* and *reason* in refusals to personal suggestions in terms of refusals' clarity. And using *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about') to lead *alternative* could function to alert the interlocutor to the counter opinion that the speaker was going to bring up, thereby contributing to the negotiation. Last but not least, this study also revealed how the four formulaic expressions involving *keqi* (客气, 'polite') were typically used.

Although these linguistic devices were by no means new, the role that they were found to play in the refusals highlighted the importance of a device's pragmatic function in language use. Often a linguistic device's pragmatic function was not a highlight in previous studies. And as far as teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese is concerned, understanding of different linguistic devices' pragmatic function can be considered a necessary part of understanding the language. Thus, these findings on use of key linguistic devices in this study have the potential to shed some light in this area. As McCarthy (1991) emphasised, 'it is language forms, above all, which are the raw material of language teaching, while the overall aim is to enable leaners to use language functionally'.

The NSs' data also showed that the structure of different semantic formulas taken as a whole was critical in negotiation of refusals. To be relevant to the learners' development, I used the NSs to discuss two specific areas. One was in the refusals to personal suggestions; here the semantic formula in the last refusal was critical to help the acquaintance to close up his suggestion. Usually a simple *nonperformative statement* would be adequate to co-construct the closure. But this required the refuser's understanding that the yes-no question was just a move of pre-closure, rather than the same as any other re-initiation. The other area to highlight was the use of *hedging* and *postponement* in refusals to invitations, reflecting the importance of the way that different refusal semantic formulas might be laid out to negotiate a refusal. Typically, *postponement* came after *hedging*, and the two semantic formulas were placed towards the end. *Hedging* could send a signal to the inviter to back down

by the refuser's withdrawing the impetus to negotiate. *Postponement* could be used as a back up if *hedging* did not get the inviter to back down.

The use of delays and prefaces was also examined using the NSs' data. It was found that delays and prefaces were not used evenly. Delays were used considerably more frequently as alerts for upcoming refusals than prefaces. And the majority of delays occurred towards the beginning of the negation, before the actual refusals were raised in the subsequent exchanges and these delays usually were made up of *request for more information*. Differently, prefaces were usually found in responding to the initiation of, for example, an invitation, but not to re-initiation. And often prefaces were composed of *positive feeling* or *expressing willingness*; *xiang* (想, 'want to') was found to be the key linguistic device to *express willingness* and *tinghaode* (挺好的, 'sounds good') for *positive feeling*. *Apology* and *gratitude*, on the other hand, were not often found in prefaces. But when they were found, usually they occurred towards the end of a refusal and were used to summarily express the refuser's apology (for use of *apology*) for their unavailability or appreciation (for use of *gratitude*) toward the invitation before finalising the refusal.

Refusal structure is also not a new topic. Using Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model, it is an element that makes up discourse competence, which is a component of communicative competence. The scholars placed discourse competence in a position where the other three components, i.e. linguistic competence, actional competence (equivalent to what I refer to as pragmatic competence) and sociocultural competence come together and shape the discourse, which in turn, also shapes each of the three. But as shown in section 2.1, structure was seldom discussed in earlier studies. This study, using the NSs' data, emphasised that the structure of different semantic formulas as a whole were critical to negation of refusals in terms of both clarity and limiting the potential for negative effect on IR.

Last, but not least, the NSs' data demonstrated plenty of variations in making refusals. These variations remind us that NSs are individuals that have different personalities, beliefs and views in their social life, which sometimes may be overlooked when NSs are portrayed as the standard that is used to measure L2 learners' performances against. To be aware of variations among NSs also means to treat the frequencies of use of different semantic formulas more carefully. More

frequently used semantic formulas may not necessarily have more limited potential for negative effect on IR; less frequently used ones could be just as effective to achieve refusals. It really depends on how different semantic formulas were conveyed using key linguistic devices and structured over exchanges. Importantly, these variations demonstrated the possibilities of using different semantic formulas to negotiate refusals, which is important to consider in teaching and assessing the learners' pragmatic competence.

7.2   How have the learners' refusals developed?

This section discusses E- group and C-group learners' development between the pre- and post-instruction and post-study abroad stages. It solely focuses on the areas that the learners' refusals developed; factors that might have contributed to/ constrained their development are discussed in the next section. I shall also summarise the findings before I make any discussion.

To begin with the pre-instruction role-plays, as the quantitative analyses show, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups' use of refusals in terms of clarity and effect on IR (see section 6.1). Concerning proficiency level, as reflected in their SOPI results, the two groups were very similar, too, at that stage. The learners as a whole were trying to survive, rather than to communicate. Very frequently, clarification and repetition were needed to encourage them not to give up. Nonetheless, some learners still experienced breakdowns. For example, during the exchanges, Emily said, "I just don't know how to make the sentence. Urn, I want to say, 'I am warm enough already. I don't need anything.' I'm stuck. Sorry."

The learners' performances in the role-plays in the qualitative analysis at pre-instruction stage mirrored the findings in the quantitative analysis; the two groups were found to be largely similar in terms of use of key linguistic devices, semantic formulas and refusal structure. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis revealed specific areas in which the learners in both groups fell short. First, in their refusals to the personal suggestion, both groups' learners tended to use *negative willingness. Put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, which was used most frequently among the NSs, was not found in any learner's refusal. Furthermore, to deliver *negative willingness*, *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') and *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't') were both found and they were used interchangeably to express the meaning of 'I don't want to…'. As revealed using the NSs' data, compared to

buxiang, *buyao* bears more potential risk of causing negative effect on IR. Concerning use of *reason*, it tended to be too general to help the interlocutor understand why exactly putting on some more clothes was believed to be unnecessary. Consequently, it was not up to justifying the refusal to avoid posing unnecessary negative effect on IR.

Similarly, in the learners' refusals to the invitation, *negative ability* tended to be used very frequently, whereas *nonperformative statement*, which occurred most frequently in the NSs' refusals, was found at a lesser frequency. This perhaps was derived from an overgeneralisation of the linguistic device *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') to translate the word 'cannot' in English. But often the *reason* that accompanied it was not specific enough to justify the use of *buneng*. This tendency could put the learners' refusals at higher risk of causing negative effect on IR. As revealed using the NSs' data, if *buneng* was used a *reason* would be explicitly communicated leaving virtually no space for potential negative interpretation, or the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), rather than *buneng*, would be used, especially if a *reason* pointed to some prior commitment to emphasise that it was beyond the refuser's control. But in the learners' case, the potential suffix *buliao* was not found at the pre-instruction stage. In addition, when *nonperformative statement* did occur, the linguistic device *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') was often used to deliver it, whereas *buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') was not found. The advantage of *buqule* lay in that the justification for refusing could be drawn directly from the circumstances of the scenario. *Bukeyi*, on the other hand, delivered a strong force as a refusal, and without a matching *reason*, it might run risk of causing negative effect on IR. Besides *bukeyi*, *budei* (不得) was used to deliver *nonperformative statement*. As argued in section 6.2.1, *budei* was meant to express 'don't have to' in English, but is an ungrammatical form in Mandarin Chinese (Lü, 2004; Yip & Rimmington, 2004). As for *reason*, in addition to the issue as was just discussed above (it tended to be too general), another tendency was that *reason* was often inconsistently shifted from one to another over different exchanges. Not only could this frequent shifting undermine *reason*'s persuasiveness in negotiating a refusal, but it also could weaken the coherence of the refusal structure. With *alternative*, the infrequent occurrence suggested that the learners in both groups might not be fully aware of the potential of this semantic formula in Mandarin Chinese for negotiating a refusal and limiting the risk of

causing negative effect on IR. Furthermore, the linguistic device *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about') to lead *alternative* did not occur in any learner's refusal at this stage. This linguistic device can help to alert the listener to the counter opinion that the speaker is going to bring up, thus, could contribute to the refusal's clarity.

In terms of the learners' refusal structure at the pre-instruction stage, in the learners' refusals to the personal suggestion, most learners' responses to the yes-no question showed that they might not actually understand the function of this question as a pre-closure move. The majority treated the question as the same as any other re-initiation and gave a full response, rather than recognising a simple *nonperformative statement* would do. In the learners' refusal to the invitation, as seen in the example of Molly (E-group) given in the section 6.2.3, she used *hedging* and *postponement* too early in her refusal. As a result, up on hearing another re-initiation of the invitation, she shifted to a totally different semantic formula, before she ended up having to give up her refusal. Molly's case represented an issue with the majority of learners; they tended to underestimate how many exchanges it could take to negotiate a refusal to an invitation in Mandarin Chinese.

As for the use of delays and prefaces in the pre-instruction role-play, although delays were found in a couple of cases, compared to the number of prefaces that were used, it was evident that the learners as a whole tended to use prefaces over delays. This was in contrast to the finding of the NSs' data, where delays were used preferably over prefaces in these refusals. And when prefaces were used among the NSs, importantly, they usually occurred in response to the initiation of, for example, an invitation, or could be towards the end especially if *apology* or *gratitude* was used. But they were certainly not found in any of the refusal within the same negotiation, preceding an actual refusal for mitigation, as was often found in English (Levinson, 1983). Differently, in most learners' cases of using prefaces, they could occur several times within the same negotiation, which resembled the way they were used in their L1 English. Where prefaces were used *apology* and *gratitude* were often found. In contrast, *apology* and *gratitude*, according the NSs' data, were only occasionally used in prefaces towards the end of a refusal to summarily apologise for their unavailability or express the refuser's appreciation towards the invitation before finalising the refusal.

As summarised above, at the pre-instruction stage, the learners' refusals manifested the characteristics of the pre-basic stage[v], as reviewed in Kasper and Rose's (2002) study. The learners in both groups tried to make do with whatever L2 grammar they could reach, as seen in the cases where they overgeneralised certain linguistic devices to meet their needs for communication, such as *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') to translate the word 'cannot' in English and the ungrammatical form *budei* (不得) from the grammatical form *dei* (得, 'have to') to express the meaning of 'don't have to' in English. As a result, at the pre-instruction stage, realisation of refusals was found to barely involve any linguistic attempt to limit the potential risk that refusals could cause on IR.

The indispensible role of linguistic competence in pragmatic performance was also displayed vividly in the phenomenon of 'free variations' of some of key linguistic devices at this stage (Ellis, 1985). Ellis (1985) noted that in early stages, perhaps because when learners first learn new linguistic items they may not know precisely what functions they realise in the L2, it is likely that a fair proportion of the variability is indiscriminate. That is, the learner possesses two or more forms that he/she uses to realise the same range of meanings. This type of variation is referred to as free variation. In this study, the way that many learners mixed *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') and *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't') to deliver *negative willingness* was a sign of free variation. It could also be reflected in some learners' mixed use of *buneng* (不能, 'cannot'), *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') and in some case *buhui* (不会, 'won't; cannot') to translate the meaning of 'cannot' in English. As argued using the NSs' data in Chapter 5, these linguistic devices can have differing effect on IR in refusals. As such, in order not to pose unnecessary negative effect on IR, learners need to learn the different pragmatic function of these linguistic devices in making refusals. This is just as Kasper and Rose (2002) note, as learners develop, their learning gradually changes from making do with whatever L2 grammar they could reach to figuring out the various pragmatic meanings that specific linguistic devices have. But this process may evolve differently for different grammatical forms and their pragmatic meaning. Learners' development at the post-instruction stage, and especially at the post-study abroad stage, showed some signs of this process.

Next, let us first turn to the learners' performance in the post-instruction role-play. Because E-group received the instruction whereas C-group did not, to highlight the influence that the instruction might have had on E-group learners compared to C-group, I discuss the two groups separately, rather than like the discussion regarding the pre-instruction role-play, where I discussed the two groups together as there were not notable differences between them.

At post-instruction, the overall performance of learners in both groups was not much different compared to that at pre-instruction. The majority of the issues with use of semantic formulas, the key linguistic devices associated them and refusal structure that were identified at pre-instruction stayed quite similar. This was probably because the learners' overall performance was to a great extent tied to their proficiency level, which probably had not changed much between the two data collection times given the gap was only about two weeks apart. This finding in the qualitative analysis echoes that in the quantitative analyses; at post-instruction compared to pre-instruction there was not any statistically significant difference for either E-group or C-group in terms of their refusals' clarity and potential negative effect on IR.

But some differences could be identified in E-group compared to C-group and compared to E-group themselves at pre-instruction. These difference mostly centred on three semantic formulas: *negative ability*, *alternative* and *nonperformative statement*. Knowing the content of the instruction (see section 4.2.1), these changes could be considered as its effect on these learners' refusals. The greatest change was the occurrence of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) in *negative ability*, even though it was often mixed together with forms such as *buneng* (不能, 'cannot'), which occurred at pre-instruction. The potential suffix *buliao* was also often used in a formulaic way with relative more common verbs such as *zuo* (做, 'to do') in *zuobuliao* (做不了, 'cannot do it'). There was no sign of unpacking the structure to use it with some relatively less common verbs such as *jiao* (教, 'to teach') in *jiaobuliao* (教不了, 'unable to teach (business English)'), which was found very frequently among the NSs in the scenario to refuse a job offer in one of the role-plays. Nevertheless, the occurrence of the potential suffix *buliao* signalled that some learners in E-group started to realise there was an alternative to express the meaning of 'cannot' in Mandarin Chinese and made an attempt to use it in making refusals.

This is likely to result from the instruction, especially because it was not observed in any of the learners in C-group. The next change was the active use of *alternative* in negotiation of refusals, and the occurrence of *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样) to lead it, which was not found among the C-group learners. The proactive use of *alternative* among E-group learners signalled that some had started to take advantage of this semantic formula to negotiate a refusal after becoming aware of its role from the instruction. The last change was the occurrence of *buyong* (不用, 'no need') to deliver *nonperformative statement*, especially in a repeated matter to intensify the refusal. The use of this technique was especially desirable in the scenario where the refuser was trying to refuse an offer to pay for a shared taxi. An intensified refusal in this scenario helped to emphasise the refuser's concern for the cost to the offerer in making the offer, which contributed to a more positive effect on IR. Considering this change could not be seen among the C-group learners, especially in this scenario, it showed that some learners in E-group might have become aware of this technique following the instruction and showed the ability to apply it to express their concern for the cost of the offerer in the L2.

As summarised above, at the post-instruction stage, in some learners' refusals in E-group, there was some development, albeit moderate, in proactively using *alternative* and some key linguistic devices to attend to potential negative effect that refusals might cause on IR. This modest development among the E-group learners that could contribute to limiting refusals' potential for negative effect on IR in the qualitative analysis of the role-plays echoes the difference in E-group and C-group raw means in the statistical analyses. However, considering the very small number of key linguistic devices and semantic formulas that were found to have improved and the small number of learners among whom these changes were observed, it can be understood why these developments did not result in a statistically significant difference between the two groups following the instruction.

The phenomenon of free variations, as discussed in reference to the pre-instruction stage, continued to be seen at the post-instruction stage. But seven months later, in their post-study abroad role-plays, there were more signs of rearranging a previous variable system into a new variable system among the learners as a whole; as some specific linguistic devices were mapped with their pragmatic meanings.

Now let us move to learners' use of refusals at the post-study abroad stage. Relatively more progress was observed among the learners as a whole in the quantitative analysis of the role-plays, which was seen in the findings of the regression analysis. The regression analysis shows there was a statistically significant development between post-instruction and post-study abroad in terms of both clarity and effect on IR for both E-group and C-group. But there was still no significant difference between the two groups at this stage. In fact, the differences that were observed between the two groups at post-instruction in the qualitative analysis was blurred; almost all the linguistic devices that E-group took away from the instruction and used in the post-instruction role-plays were also found in C-group at post-study abroad. Instead, differences among individual learners across both groups in their role-play performances became evident. And what was also interesting is that, while most of the development observed in the role-play data at post-instruction (which can be argued to have benefited from the influence of the instruction) was found in the changes in using linguistic devices, most of the changes in the post-study abroad role-play data (which were most likely to have benefited from the influence of the study abroad context) were found in the learners' manipulation of semantic formulas and refusal structure to negotiate their refusals.

Next, I summarise the findings from the role-plays at post-study abroad to support this point. The semantic formulas that the learners as a whole became very good at using included *reason* and *alternative*. *Reasons* were found to be a lot more specific and their content was generally more persuasive. This development was also evident among the learners who achieved less improvement compared to their peers at the second SOPI. This finding indicates that, following the study abroad period, the learners in both groups, regardless of their proficiency level, understood which *reasons* would be persuasive to justify their refusals. Similarly, it was found that almost all the learners' in both groups used *alternative* to negotiate refusals. Although some *alternatives* might not be typical if compared to those found in the NSs' refusals, which may be a reflection of the learners' being less familiar with relevant cultural norms (Warga & Schölmberger, 2007), the fact that these learners actively used *alternative* to negotiate a solution indicated their recognition of the role that this semantic formula could play in negotiation of refusals, which was certainly not the case at earlier stages, especially among the C-group learners. Furthermore, all learners' refusal structure was found to have improved. They all demonstrated their

understanding of the yes-no question in the personal suggestions as merely a pre-closure and simply used *nonperformative statement* to confirm their refusals. Also, more learners used delays before actually launching a refusal at post-study abroad than at the pre- and post-instruction stages, although the amount of prefaces that were used still exceeded what was found in the NSs' refusals.

These improvements in the learners' use of *reason*, *alternative* and refusal structure, as just mentioned above, at the post-study abroad stage suggest that the learners had become better understanding how refusals could be negotiated in the L2, compared to at both pre- and post-instruction, perhaps through interacting with the target speech community. For example, as Jasmine (E-group) reported in the interview from her experience interacting with NSs, 'if someone invites you over…, you chat first; "is it not too much trouble" and you are waiting for them to say, "oh, it's okay, fine". Or "I was just doing that to be polite". Or "no, no, it's really no problem." Then you know actually really it's no problem…'. The influence of the study abroad context will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

Compared to the development found in the use of the semantic formulas and refusal structure, the learners' development in the use of key linguistic devices at post-study abroad was found to be on a relatively smaller scale and not common across all learners. Those key linguistic devices that were found among E-group learners' at post-instruction associated with *negative ability*, *alternative* and *nonperformative statement* were no longer evident at post-study abroad among those learners, except for the repeated *buyongbuyong* (不用不用, 'no need, no need'). The potential suffix *buliao* (不了) to deliver *negative ability* was only retained in one learner's refusal in E-group (Louise); the rest shifted back to using *buneng* (不能, 'cannot'). While these same linguistic devices were also found in some C-group learners' refusals, they were uncommon and scattered among different individual learners' refusals. None of the key linguistic devices were found to be common across all learners in both groups, like the use of *reason* at post-study abroad. Specifically, *yaobu/zheyang* (要不/这样, 'or'; 'how about') to lead *alternative* was only found in Oscar's (C-group) refusal; he had not used it at either pre-instruction or post-instruction. And this linguistic device occurred in two various forms, suggesting Oscar was able to unpack the structure to form some variation in delivering *alternative* in different contexts. A similar structure to the potential suffix *buliao* (不

了), i.e. potential directional complements, was found in Grace's (C-group) refusal. She was the only other learner (besides Louise in E-group) in either group who used this structure. However, as argued in Chapter 5, it could have been Grace's improved linguistic competence that triggered this usage, rather than that she understood the pragmatic function in avoiding causing unnecessary negative effect on IR in making refusals.

The development of other key linguistic devices was very limited, essentially resembling what were found in the pre-instruction role-plays. The primary device to deliver *nonperformative statement buqule* (不去了, 'won't go') was still absent. Rather, *bukeyi* (不可以, 'forbid; forbidden') was persistent through to the post-study abroad stage in many learners' refusals using *nonperformative statement*. *Buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to') and *buyao* (不要, 'don't want'; 'mustn't') were still not differentiated to deliver *negative ability*. The semantic formula *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*, and the linguistic device *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') to deliver it, were notably missing in the majority's refusals. In addition, even at the post-study abroad stage, the learners still did not learn that the way they used *keqi* (客气, "polite") to express *positive feeling* was uncommon in Mandarin Chinese, nor did they demonstrate that they had learned the key linguistic devices to express *positive feeling* and to *express willingness* in prefaces. Also, the adverbs *jiu* (就, 'just'; 'only') and *zhi* (只, 'only') were still absent in most learners' refusals in both groups.

As summarised above, it is not difficult to see that following the post-study abroad period the learners developed relatively more in the areas with regards to semantic formulas and refusal structure and relatively less in the areas with regards to key linguistic devices. This finding can be said to resemble Bardovi-Harlig's (1999) finding in that, as discussed in Chapter 2, the learners showed more progress with learning social rules, in this particular case how to make a refusal, while their development of key linguistic devices that were involved can be said to lag behind. Further, similar to Barron's (2007) finding, this study also found that of the key linguistic devices under examination, those with grammar that is more challenging to learn to use were more likely to hinder learners' pragmatic use than those with grammar that is easier to learn. The difference between the development of the potential suffix buliao (不了) in Louise and Grace's cases (neither of them

demonstrated that they could use the structure in an analysed way, namely, unpacking the structure to use it with less common verbs in different contexts) and that of yaobu… (要不…, 'how about…') to lead alternative in Oscar's case (he could use the device in an analysed way, unpacking the structure to form some variation in different contexts) offers an example. These cases once again underline the interface between learners' pragmatic competence and their linguistic competence; it can be said that learners' linguistic competence is a foundation of their pragmatic performance and its development plays a critical part in learners' pragmatic development. That said, learners' linguistic ability does not necessarily correspond to their pragmatic competence. Grace's case of using a similar structure to the potential complement suffix *buliao* (不了) is an example. As argued in section 6.2.2, the occurrence of this structure might have resulted from her improved linguistic ability, rather than have been triggered by her developed pragmatic competence.

Nevertheless, within the learners' development in the use of the key linguistic devices, some cases indicated that learners slowly resolved some of free variations that existed in their L2 by developing clearer form-function relationship (Ellis, 1985). In Louise's (E-group) case of learning to use the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), the change, from unsystematically switching between it and *buneng* (不能, 'cannot') in the post-instruction role-play to using only the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) with *reason* emphasising the unavailability beyond her control in the post-study abroad role-play, demonstrated some process of a learner's learning a form-function relationship. Specifically, Louise's development in using the potential suffix *buliao* at post-study abroad demonstrated non-systematic variations slowly becomes relatively systematic.

Furthermore, it was found that development within the same learner was not simple; but rather complex, dynamic and non-linear. For example, Grace (C-group) achieved the highest score in the second SOPI (Advanced-High) and she was the only one reached this level. She was one of the two learners that correctly used the critically important adverb *jiu* (就, 'just') in delivering *alternative* and a similar structure to the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) to deliver *negative ability*. However, the key linguistic device *meishir* (没事儿, 'no worries') in *put the interlocutor's*

mind at ease was still missing in her refusals, which could be considered relatively easier to use compared to *jiu* (就, 'just') and more common compared to the linguistic device *buliao* to deliver *negative ability*. Daisy (C-group) offers another example. She probably was one of the learners who made improvement in most areas in the post-study abroad role-plays compared to her performances at the pre- and post-instruction stages. She could be considered the most successful case in terms of learning to use *put the interlocutor's mind at ease*: not only did she use a linguistic device that was common, but she also used it in more contexts compared to any other learners. Daisy also managed to learn to express 'I don't have any particular interest in this type of work' in refusing an opportunity to tutor English at post-study abroad; the grammar involved here was not found in any other learners' refusals. However, from the pre-instruction, through post-instruction to post-study abroad, she continued using *buyao* (不要, 'don't want to'; 'mustn't') in *negative willingness*, which runs higher risk of causing negative effect on IR compared to *buxiang* (不想, 'wouldn't like to'). Louise (E-group) was also an interesting case. She was among one of the three learners who only moved one level up at the second SOPI; from Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid (the rest all moved up at least two levels). Many of the key linguistic devices in her refusals at post-study abroad stayed quite similar compared to those at post-instruction and some even to those at pre-instruction. But she was the only learner in E-group developed the use of the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) between post-instruction and post-study abroad, understanding its pragmatic function in avoiding causing unnecessary negative effect on IR.

It was also found that learners could go back to the form that they had used at an earlier stage; maybe back to even wrong grammar. For example, Jasmine (E-group), while she was found to have developed her use of *reason* and *alternative* in negotiating refusals following the study abroad period, the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) that she was able to use at post-instruction was no longer found in her refusals at this later stage. As her interview revealed, she did not even remember that she had actually used this device at post-instruction. Similarly, while at post-study abroad Emma developed in making her *reason* more persuasive and showed her good understanding about making refusals in Mandarin Chinese in the interview, her linguistic device to deliver *nonperformative statement* went from *buyong* (不用, 'no need') at post-instruction to *budei* (不得) at post-study abroad. The latter is an

ungrammatical form to translate the meaning of 'don't have to' in English. Emma's case was the opposite of Daisy's (C-group). *Budei* was found in Daisy's refusals at pre- and post-instruction. At post-study abroad Daisy moved to use *buyong*, and she even used *buxuyao* (不需要, 'don't need') to deliver *nonperformative statement*, which can be seen to be relatively stronger in tone, hence, can intensify the refusal.

In addition to interfacing with linguistic competence, negotiating refusals also interlinks learners' pragmatic competence with their discourse competence, in particular, conversational structure. Some of the struggles that the learners experienced at the earlier stages (pre- and post-instruction) can be said to originate from their lack of familiarity with refusal structure. In refusing the personal suggestions, the learners did not confirm their refusals as expected to by their interlocutor, falling short of recognising the pre-closure question from the acquaintance's suggestions. This, in turn, prolonged the exchanges, which made the negotiation even more challenging for the learners than it already was. In refusing the invitations, a lack of familiarity with refusal structure perhaps made some learners place some semantic formulas too early, which often resulted in the refuser failing to bring their refusals to completion. Similarly, in using prefaces and delays, the majority showed the tendency to resort to prefaces, which resembled their use in English, rather than delays, which was most frequently used among the NSs in these contexts. At post-study abroad, the learners as a whole showed improvement in their refusal structure. But it was found that they still used more prefaces if compared to the NSs in the same contexts. The habits relating to making refusals that the learners developed with their L1 were found to interfere with their use of prefaces. The next section will discuss in detail about the factors that could have played a role in the learners' pragmatic development.

To summarise, while changes were found in the qualitative analysis of the role-plays among E-group learners at post-instruction compared to C-group learners and compared to their own performances at pre-instruction, they did not result in any statistical significance in the quantitative analysis between E-group and C-group at post-instruction, nor between E-group's performances at pre- and post-instruction. But between post-instruction and post-study abroad, the learners as a whole showed statistically significant development, although there was still not any statistically significant difference between E-group and C-group at post-study abroad. Echoing the quantitative findings between post-instruction and post-study abroad, the

qualitative analysis also found variation in pragmatic development in the post-study abroad role-plays compared to the post-instruction role-plays. But this pragmatic development primarily centred on learners' use of semantic formulas and refusal structure, which can be said to derive from their improved understanding as to how refusals could be made in Mandarin Chinese. In comparison, the learners' development in learning key linguistic devices lagged behind; it was on a relatively smaller scale and was not common across all the learners. Greater individual differences were found among different individual learners' pragmatic development compared to that at the earlier stages (pre- and post-instruction). And development among the learners was found to be complex, dynamic and non-linear.

7.3   What are the roles of the instruction and the study abroad context?

Previously, I have discussed how the learners' refusals developed from pre-instruction to post-instruction to post-study abroad using the role-plays. In this section, with support from the interviews and questionnaires, I discuss the roles of the instruction taking place in the study abroad context and the study abroad context alone in the learners' development.

As discussed in the last section, following the instruction in the post-instruction role-plays some development was found among the E-group learners compared to the C-group learners. Because this development corresponded to what had been instructed to E-group during the instruction, it could be considered as the effect of the instruction. Although the development observed in the role-play data mainly concentrated on the use of key linguistic devices, the interview data suggested that the instruction, by discussing cultural perspectives in relation to the use of refusals in Mandarin Chinese, had also helped to make the learners aware of some differences in making refusals between the L2 and English (see section 6.2.4). Therefore, the interviews complementarily showed that the instruction had contributed to E-group learners' understanding as to how refusals could be made in the L2.

Despite the fact that the instruction may have had some influence on individual learners' refusals, it did not result in any statistical significant effect on E-group compared to C-group at post-instruction. At post-study abroad, what the E-group learners took away from the instruction was only found to have been retained in Louise's refusals. But Louise's case of learning to use the potential suffix *buliao* (

不了) pointed to the potential of the instruction in facilitating learning of a more complex linguistic device, making more out of the study abroad context. As argued earlier in Chapter 6, it was Louise's understanding of the difference that the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) could make to limiting refusals' potential negative effect on IR compared to *buneng* (不能, 'cannot'), garnered through the instruction as pointed out by herself in the interview, that triggered her learning to use the device. And this drive was not deterred by Louise's proficiency level. She was among one of the three learners with the lowest level at SOPI at post-study abroad, only having moved up one level from Intermediate-Low at entry to Intermediate-Mid, while most others moved up at least two levels.

This finding is similar to Shively's (2011) study, which examined the effect of explicit instruction taking place while the American English speaking learners of Spanish were studying abroad on their development in making requests at service encounters. As discussed in section 2.4, Shively (2011) also found that explicit instruction has more potential to facilitate learning of more complicated grammar in L2 Spanish, compared to both explicit and implicit socialisation with NSs. To take this finding one step further, I argue, this potential of instruction compared to learning through interacting with NSs in the study abroad context could probably be understood as that NSs may be an expert in using the L2, but they may not necessarily be fully aware of and/or understand the structure of certain linguistic devices from a linguistic point of view and their pragmatic functions (Wolfson, 1989). Instruction, on the other hand, is specifically designed to facilitate learning of the language.

But the fact that the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) was only developed in Louise' refusals among E-group learners (the others had gone back to using *buneng* (不能, 'cannot'), as was the case at pre-instruction) and only found in Grace's refusals among C-group learners at post-study abroad might have had something to do with how difficult it is to learn to use this device. As reflected in the learners' interviews, a majority did not understand the device in terms of where and how it can be used. And the device could become increasingly difficult to handle when it involved unpacking it to use with some verbs. Take the word *youyong* (游泳, 'swim') for example, to express 'cannot swim' using the potential suffix *buliao* (不了), the word *youyong* has to be split and to have *buliao* inserted in between, that is

youbuliaoyong (游<u>不了</u>泳). In contrast, to express the same meaning using *buneng* (不能), the word *youyong* only needs to be attached to it, i.e. *bunengyouyong* (不能游泳), which, to a great extent, resembles the use of 'cannot' in English. Although the insertion may not be necessary with all verbs, the variations in its use with different verb structures required some analysis from learners and unpacking the structure was thus probably cognitively more demanding, which might have contributed to the relatively high difficult level in learning it compared to the device *buneng*, which does not vary regardless of different verb structures. That being said, Louise's (E-group) case suggested that more complicated linguistic devices could potentially be learned by lower level learners if they could understand its pragmatic function.

In addition, various factors in relation to the design of the instruction could also have interacted with its effect. The gap between what was instructed to the learners and how it was assessed in the role-plays may have given rise to the very small effect of the instruction on learning linguistic devices, as seen in the qualitative analysis. As discussed in section 4.2.1, the instruction, as inspired by the findings of the preliminary interviews (see section 3.1.1), aimed to smooth the learners' encounters with the initiating acts and encourage them to make refusals when they wanted to do so. Although some linguistic devices were included, they were limited to what had been found important for making refusals in previous studies. The assessment of the learners' performances in the role-plays in qualitative analysis, on the other hand, was based on two criteria, i.e. clarity and potential effect on IR using the NSs' data as a reference. As shown in Chapter 5, a number of key linguistic devices were identified as critical using the NSs' refusals, but they had not been discussed in previous studies, hence, were not included/highlighted in the instruction. The issue that the type of assessment on L2 pragmatic performance could potentially give rise to different results concerning pragmatic teachability has been noted by Takahashi (2010). Although I am unable to offer more insight than what was encountered in this study, assessment of learners' pragmatic development is an area that may be worth pursuing in future studies.

Moreover, the amount of information that was covered in each session of the instruction might have sacrificed its robustness, especially with regards to key linguistic devices. As presented in section 4.2.1, in each two-hour session, due to time pressure, both information on refusals to one of the four initiating acts and key

linguistic devices were discussed. These sessions might have been informative, but, in hindsight, they might also have overloaded learners with information. In Takimoto's (2009) study, she emphasised the need to 'isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention' in order to make a target linguistic device salient, which was found to be critical to facilitate learning internal downgraders in L2 English requests. In contrast, the instruction design in this study perhaps was not very effective making the linguistic devices salient. And comparing different designs of instruction in previous studies, those in which the instruction did not explicitly target the use of specific linguistic devices, e.g. Cohen and Shively's (2007) study and Liddicoat and Crozet's (2001) study, appeared to find the intervention was not as effective as those in which the instruction explicitly targeted on some specific linguistic devices, such as Yoshimi's (2001) and Ghobadi and Fahim's (2009) (see section 2.3).

But the design of the instruction also demonstrated a couple of positive effects. One was the timing of the instruction. The intervention was conducted near the beginning of the study abroad period, which may have allowed the learners to use the study abroad context to develop their learning. As Molly commented, the use of *buyongbuyong* (不用不用, 'no need, no need') had become natural to her through practising it in interactions with NSs (see section 6.2.4). The other was the use of video-clips. As seen in Jasmine's case in section 6.2.4, the dynamic and rich context of the videos showed some potential to facilitate some learning beyond what has been instructed.

In comparison to the instruction, the study abroad context was found in the qualitative analysis to have a varying impact on the learners' development in making refusals. As presented in section 6.2, the impact of the study abroad context was found especially evident in facilitating learning of semantic formulas and refusal structure between the post-instruction and post-study abroad stages; its impact on facilitating the learning of key linguistic devices was found on a relatively smaller scale. And for those linguistic devices that were learned, the development was not usually common across all the learners, compared to the development found in learning of semantic formulas and refusal structure. And often, where a linguistic device was used in the contexts that happened also to achieve a pragmatic function and value, it tended to be learners' linguistic knowledge, rather than pragmatic knowledge, that may have accounted for the usage. As argued in section 6.2.2,

Grace's (C-group) use of potential direct suffixes might be due to the proficiency level (Advance-High) that she managed to achieve, rather than her understanding of the effect of the linguistic devices on IR.

This finding resembled findings of some previous studies as discussed in Chapter 2 (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993; Barron, 2007); the study abroad context facilitated learning of social rules, but less so in learning of key linguistic devices. As to why the study abroad experience benefits learning of these two different aspects to differing extents, Liddicoat and Crozet (2001) argued that speakers might have greater control over aspects of language use such as topic selection and information content than they do over aspects of language form. This finding is similar to Bialystok's (1993) claim that learners may go through different stages in the course of developing pragmatic competence: conceptual representation, formal representation and symbolic representation. Conceptual representation is the stage in which utterances can be "formed to satisfy specific speech acts but the speakers are focusing on the intended meaning and not on the forms being selected to express that intention" (p.51). And only at the stage of formal representation, are speakers able to organise utterances around categories, e.g. in terms of the illocutionary force of those utterances. When learners move up to the symbolic representation level, they would be able to manipulate the relationship between devices and their pragmatic effect on the interpretation of utterances in specific contexts.

I argue it might also be because learning of social rules does not necessarily involve use of the target language. Emma's case offers an example. As shown in section 6.2.4, Emma had a fairly good amount of experience interacting with the target speech community, but very little of it required her speaking Mandarin Chinese. Such experience might have contributed to her understanding of culture perspectives, but perhaps not necessarily benefited her linguistic development. Echoing this experience, in the post-study abroad role-play the content of *reason* in Emma's refusals had become more persuasive compared to those at pre- and post-instruction. She also actively used *alternative* to assist her negotiation. But as shown throughout Chapter 6, Emma's development in using key linguistic devices somewhat lagged behind. In the second SOPI test, she was also one of the three learners who only moved one level up from Intermediate-Low to Intermediate-Mid; the rest achieved at least two levels up. As Emma put it herself in the interview, 'the

trouble was implementing… I knew what I meant to do but you kind of get caught quite often in a conversation…'.

In addition, the type of interactions that learners have with NSs is found to have some influence on what they may learn in the study abroad context. As shown in section 6.2.4, Daisy (C-group) was one of the learners in this study whose interactions with NSs demonstrated multiplex characteristics (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006). She had three different groups of friends with whom she interacted regularly and in various capacities. As found in the qualitative analysis, Daisy was the only learner who demonstrated that she understand how to use *reason* to justify her paying for a shared meal, refusing to let her Chinese friends always pay. And it was her interaction with one group of her Chinese friends that gave her this insight. Daisy's interactions with NSs also facilitated her learning to express 'I don't have any particular interest in this type of work' in making a refusal; she was the only learner who used this structure at post-study abroad. As she recalled in the interview, it was one of the in-depth conversations that Daisy had with her Chinese boyfriend that facilitated learning of this expression. In contrast, Emma's (E-group) interactions with NSs showed uniplex characteristics (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006) in that they were limited to superficial daily exchanges, as revealed by both her interview and the questionnaire. As a result, Emma's linguistic ability was found to have lagged behind.

Even within the interactions with NSs that could be characterised as multiplex, the type of interactions is also found to have an impact on what learners can learn. The difference in what Daisy (C-group) and Jasmine (E-group) learned from interacting with their Chinese friends offers an example. While Daisy learned a persuasive *reason* to justify her paying for a shared meal in order to refuse to let her Chinese friends always pay, facing the same challenge, Jasmine (E-group), instead, told a story about how she used the excuse of 'going to bathroom' to pay the bill. And it was her experience interacting with her best Chinese friend, Qi Ming, that taught her this tactic. Jasmine also commented on what *reason* could be persuasive, but it was in a different situation from that Daisy was dealing with. Through the experience persuading the person who kindly lent Jasmine a hammer, she learned that the *reason*, i.e. it is English culture, could sometimes get Chinese people to accept her way of doing things in China. This is probably why Jasmine used a similar *reason* in her post-study abroad role-play.

This finding is somewhat similar to Dewey's (2013) study, which found it is the level of friendship, rather than how many friends or acquaintances a learners makes in the target speech community that may better predict the learners' development. But this is providing the L2 is the language for communication between learners and NSs. Learners could build a good level of friendship with NSs, but without speaking the L2. As seen in Emily's case in section 6.2.4, she established a good relationship with some NSs from her dance class. It was just that she used her L1 English to establish the relationship, rather than the L2.

However, Oscar's (C-group) case shows level of friendship might not be the only contributor to learners' development. As reflected in his questionnaire and interview, Oscar did not seem to have developed a similar level of friendship as Daisy (C-group) or Jasmine (E-group) had with their Chinese friends. However, while Oscar may have not brought any acquaintanceship further to friendship, his interactions with NSs appeared to involve diverse topics and to be in various capacities. As Oscar reported in the interview, some of the conversations that he had with some Chinese people he acquainted, for example in a restaurant or when he was travelling, were very interesting. Often they helped him to see different Chinese people's thoughts and helped to expand his vocabulary. Oscar's case suggests that different learners might have different ways to interact with NSs, and it is possible that they all could facilitate linguistic development and pragmatic development as long as the interactions involve a wide range of topics and occur in various capacities (Isabelli-Garcia, 2006).

Furthermore, the learners' interviews show that, regardless of the type of interactions with NSs, they would not occur spontaneously. They needed to be initiated and nurtured (Allen, 2010; Dewey et al., 2013; Diao et al., 2011). Learners' initiative and perseverance were found to interplay with opportunities to access NSs. Individuals that proactively sought out social interactions with NSs and persevered even when interactions did not work out as expected were found to enjoy more opportunities to learn. Jasmine (E-group) and Emma's (E-group) different experiences offered an example in this aspect. Jasmine's (E-group) close friendship with Qi Ming, as shown in section 6.2.4, actually developed from one of many rather random encounters, but Jasmine took the chance. In a similar situation, Emma, on the other hand, chose not to proceed, feeling uncomfortable with the situation.

A case like Emma's also revealed some dilemma that learners faced when trying to create interactions with NSs. Although learners understood that interactions with NSs would lead to linguistic and pragmatic gains in the study abroad context and, generally speaking, they all wanted to interact with NSs, some learners also explicitly pointed out that, through personal contact, they were not comfortable throwing all their social rules, views and beliefs out of the window, just to find opportunities to practice the language with NSs. Alicia (C-group) gave another example. She had a Chinese boyfriend. But at the point that she could no longer handle him keeping showing off his western girlfriend to his friends and even family and not showing interest in getting to know her, she had to break up the relationship, as Alicia reported in her interview. And not all Chinese people were very happy to speak only Mandarin Chinese with the learners; some Chinese people were keen to interact because they wanted to practice their English. Emma's (E-group) interactions with Claudia, her language exchange partner, were an example. Although Emma tried to stick to the rule (at one meeting they spoke English and the next meeting they spoke Mandarin Chinese), because Claudia's English was much better than Emma's Mandarin Chinese and she was very keen to practice her English, they often ended up speaking more English than Mandarin Chinese. As time went on, Emma had less and less contact with her. Similar dilemmas that learners can face when interacting with NSs in the study abroad context are also documented in some previous studies (e.g. Allen, 2010; Diao et al., 2011). Such dilemmas seemed to often be linked with learning in this context, those learners who could keep themselves 'motivated' and persevere tended to enjoy more opportunities to learn.

In addition, as seen in section 6.2.4, learners' L1 could have had a negative impact on their pragmatic development (Barron, 2003; G. Kasper, 1992). Emma's (C-group) and Alfie's (C-group, but later excluded from the main body of the analysis, see section 4.3.3) cases suggested learners needed time to develop some control over the influence of linguistic habits developed with the L1 when speaking the L2. As Gass (2008) suggested, output may help to develop some degree of automaticity. Automatic processes are those that have become routinized. But in order for language use to be routinized, a certain amount of practice is needed. Molly's (E-group) statement on her learning to use one of the devices, *buyong buyong* ('no need, no need'), provides an example for the contribution of practice to automaticity; because she learned the device at the beginning of her study abroad

period, it eventually became natural to her because she practiced it very often during studying abroad.

All in all, the study abroad context showed advantages, compared to the instruction, in promoting the learners' understanding as to how refusals can be made in the L2, which contributed to their development in semantic formulas and refusal structure. But it was found to be less advantageous in promoting the learning of key linguistic devices. Rather, the instruction was found to have more potential in facilitating, especially more complicated, linguistic devices. But to ensure its robustness, the design of instruction needs to take into careful consideration the difficulty level of a linguistic device and the amount of information it delivers given time constraints.

The type of interactions that a learner can have with NSs in the study abroad context was found to play a role in the learners' pragmatic development. Interactions with multiplex characteristics were found to be more beneficial. But such interactions do not have to depend on the level of friendship; one-off interactions may well facilitate linguistic and/or pragmatic gains if such interactions also involve a wide range of topics using the L2. But almost all interactions need to be initiated and nurtured; while attempting to learn from interactions with NSs in a study abroad context was often found to stretch learners' comfort zones, those who sought out opportunities to interact with NSs and persevered enjoyed more opportunities to learn. That said, learners' L1 could also have a negative influence on their L2 learning. More practice and time may help overcome the L1 influence.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I conclude the study using four subsections. In section 8.1, I review the main findings of this study. In section 8.2, I shall make some suggestions as to what these findings can imply for second language acquisition. In section 8.3, I consider the limitations in this study, hoping my experience can be useful for future research. In section 8.4, I conclude the study.

8.1 Summary of findings

'For second language acquisition (SLA) research, there are perhaps few contexts as potentially rich and complex as study abroad' (DuFon & Churchill, 2006, p.1). With a view to considering the richness of this context and to facilitate a better outcome of a study abroad context, I set a target to investigate how L2 Mandarin Chinese learners' refusals developed in the study abroad context and what the roles of the instruction taking place in the study abroad context and the study abroad context alone were in this development, inspired by the findings in the preliminary interviews. To examine L2 learners' refusals, it is also important to understand how NSs make refusals. Therefore, I paralleled the study with an investigation on native speakers' refusals.

This study included an experimental group who received the instruction and a control group who received no instrument. The linguistic data was collected through role-plays at three different time points (pre- and post-instruction and post-study abroad), and it is analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Interviews and questionnaires were also used to collect information on the influence of learners' interactions with NSs and the amount of time spent using the L2 outside classroom on their development.

The NSs' use of refusals demonstrated the interfaces between pragmatic competence, linguistic competence and discourse competence in negotiation of a refusal, pointing to three areas that are important as far as refusals' clarity and effect on IR are concerned: use of key linguistic devices, use of semantic formulas, and refusal structure. Further, the NSs' data showed key linguistic devices and how they are critical to convey the semantic formulas with which they are associated and how some semantic formulas and the conversational structure of refusals can make a difference to a negotiation.

Regarding how the learners developed from pre-instruction to post-instruction to post-study abroad, E-group, compared to C-group, showed some changes in using key linguistic devices in the qualitative analysis of the role-play data at post-instruction compared to pre-instruction. These changes can all be attributed to the influence of the instruction, though they did not result in any statistically significant difference between the two groups in the quantitative analysis. At post-study abroad, compared to their development in terms of the use of semantic formulas and refusal structure, the learners' development with regards to key linguistic devices overall can be said to have lagged behind at post-study abroad.

Comparing the learners' changes between pre- and post-instruction, which are most likely to have benefitted from the instruction, with their changes between post-instruction and post-study abroad, which are most likely to have benefitted from the study abroad experience, it can be said that the study abroad experience and the instruction showed some signs that they might facilitate the learners' development in making refusals in different aspects. The study abroad experience is found to facilitate more in learning semantic formulas and refusal structure, which probably originates from the learners' increased understanding of how refusals can be made in Mandarin Chinese, but less in learning of key linguistic devices. In comparison, the instruction showed more potential in facilitating learning of linguistic device, especially more complicated ones.

Furthermore, the qualitative analysis found that the types of interaction that a learner has with NSs might have an impact on his/her development. Interactions involving various capacities between learners and NSs are found to be most beneficial. But considering some of the dilemmas that the learners faced in this study, to initiate and nurture such interactions could bring challenges to learners in the study abroad context. Learners who were more proactive and persevered managed to create more opportunities to interact with NSs, thus, enjoyed more opportunities to learn.

8.2   Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study point to some areas that may be worth considering in classroom teaching. First of all, is the need to draw learners' attention to pragmatic usage in the L2. As the interviews indicate, the learners often emphasise, for example, grammar and vocabulary when learning the L2. While these aspects are all

critical, what they also need to be aware of is that grammar and vocabulary are only pieces on the chessboard used to achieve objectives. Part of the learning process should be to understand what grammar and vocabulary could actually achieve in communication, i.e. their pragmatic function, which it is what this study found the learners lacked, even following the study abroad period. Further, the findings about how the learners' pragmatic competence, linguistic competence and discourse competence are interwoven in making refusals highlights the importance for teaching to help learners to develop all components of communicative competence including, discourse competence and sociocultural competence, as well as pragmatic competence. In my experience suggests, these compentences may not be given sufficient attention in constrast to, for example, grammar.

For teaching to also target development of learners' pragmatic competence, discourse competence and sociocultural competence in the L2, teachers can try to make more use of learners' L1 pragmatic competence. In this study I repeatedly found that the learners' L1 competence in relation to refusals was generally compatible with what is required for making refusals in Mandarin Chinese. But the learners were not necessarily aware of the applicability of the L1 pragmatic competence and neither was I as an instructor and researcher prior to conducting this study.

However, language teachers should also bear in mind that knowing what is supposed to be done does not necessarily mean that learners could make a change in the blink of an eye. This observation reveals a different complication in L2 pragmatics from that noted in the literature. Usually, previous studies have focused their emphasis on L2 learners' agency in learning L2 pragmatics (Siegal, 1995, 1996) or on how learners' misconceptions hinder their learning L2 pragmatics (Masuda, 2011). This study found that sometimes the learners do understand what they are expected to do in the L2, but because of their limited linguistic ability and/or L1 influence, they may still find it difficult to perform using the L2.

Next, the discussions of specific key linguistic devices, semantic formulas and refusal structure could be useful for teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as a second/foreign language. During analysing the data, I often encountered problems in finding any references to a linguistic device's pragmatic function in making refusals and the different that refusal structure could make to the negotiation. I hope the

discussion of these issues in this study can be used as a starting point in future studies.

Lastly, Mia's case makes the timing of instruction worth further consideration, which is related to the influence of learners' proficiency level and sociopragmatic knowledge on their development. While some linguistic devices (e.g. *buyong buyong*, 'no need, no need') may be suitable to be instructed at the beginning of the study abroad period, others (e.g. the potential suffix *buliao* 不了) may need to be reinforced following the study abroad period. Mia's comment (see section 6.2.4) indicates if a learner does not have the relevant sociopragmatic knowledge to facilitate his/her understanding of a speech act, the effectiveness of instruction may be affected. Louise's success in learning the potential suffix *buliao* (不了) offers another example for the role of understanding in learners' learning (see section 6.2.2). If understanding indeed plays an important role in L2 pragmatic development, and providing that the study abroad context can indeed facilitate the development of sociocultural knowledge, the effectiveness of instruction may be improved if learners are given instruction again following the study abroad period. This issue may be worth investigating in future research.

8.3　Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has some limitations that readers are advised to bear in mind when interpreting the findings. First of all, because of the very small number of learners that signed up for the study, the statistical results need to be interpreted with caution. Secondly, even though role-plays, compared to other instruments, can demonstrate the process of negotiating refusals, the extent to which the participants' performances in the role-plays reflect their negotiation of refusals in real-life may vary in different cases (Gass & Houck, 1999). Next, the differences among scenarios at different stages may have an impact on the comparison of the learners' performances at different time points, although this method may also have helped to reduce test effect, especially between the pre- and post-instruction stages, which was only a two-week gap. In addition, there was a gap between what was instructed in the field and what was examined in the analyses, which may have had an impact on the assessment of the instruction's effect. But as the instruction drew on findings from previous studies, such a gap may be inevitable, as the use of key linguistic devices and semantic formulas are usually context specific. Lastly, please bear in mind that

the analyses focused only on linguistic usage, other aspects such as silence or pause are not considered. Also, nonverbal cues (Gumperz, 1982), such as prosody, are also not taken into account.

Reflecting on the design of this study, several things are worth considering for future research. This study adopted several instruments aiming to collect various types of data to complement the analyses. While there may be some advantages to using a mix of instruments, the reality is that it can easily overload the participants and also bring too much workload to the analysis. It may be practical to keep a research design more focused by being more selective with research instruments.

Secondly, although open role-plays can demonstrate the negotiation process of a refusal, ultimately they are not real life interactions. Even though naturally occurring interactions are sometimes difficult to collect, as was the case in this study, it is still worth considering including some form of naturalistic data to support elicited data, if possible. Moreover, there may be some advantages in keeping the role-play scenarios used to collect linguistic data at different time points the same for compatibility, even though doing so may risk some test effect on the subsequent collection if the time gap between data collection stages is small.

Thirdly, the design of the instruction needs to keep simpler. As discussed earlier, the robustness of the instruction may be comprised if it includes too much information, especially if it is to target both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic information. Reflecting on the instruction in this study, it might have been a good idea to keep information about sociopragmatic competence and pragmalinguistic competence separate so as to help the learners focus.

Lastly, it may be necessary to adopt the approach of discourse analysis in considering refusals.. As shown in this study, classification of sematic formulas alone cannot adequately demonstrate how a refusal is negotiated, while through incorporating the analysis of the structure of refusals, use of key linguistic devices and semantic formulas can be better understood.

8.4   Concluding remarks

Study abroad is a unique opportunity for learners who study a second language at university to improve their pragmatic competence. This study, by investigating how a sample of learners from this specific group had developed their use of refusals during their study abroad period and the roles of instruction taking

place in the study abroad context and the study abroad context alone might have played in their development, aimming to find some way to help learners to make more out of this opportunity. Such an approach was only, to my best knowledge, adopted by two studies previously: Cohen and Shively (2007) and Shively (2011). While all the studies find instruction taking place in the study abroad context can facilitate additional learning, in particular the learning of some more complicated linguistic devices, the design of the instruction can limit the extent to which it may be beneficial. Likewise, the study abroad context alone can promote pragmatic development even without any assistance of instruction in this context, but the extent to which a learner can develop using the environment often is often found to vary among individual learners depending on many different factors. In this study, certain types of interactions, in particular ones that have various capacities are found to facilitate more development. To enhance the roles of instruction and the study abroad context itself in facilitating learners' pragmatic development in a study abroad context, the design and the timing of the instruction, the types of interactions with NSs and the challenges that learners often face to initiate and nurture these interactions need to be further addressed.

A couple of points about methodology used in this study are also worth considering in future studies. The point of view of discourse analysis that this study took offers a more comprehensive view of how refusals can be negotiated among the NSs and between a learner and a NS. This perspective allowed this study to reveal some characteristics of refusals in Mandarin Chinese that have not been reported in previous studies and that can be used for teaching and learning Mandarin Chinese as a second/foreign language. This point view has been advocated previously by Gass and Houck (1999) and emphasised in Kawate-Mierzejewska's (2002) study, as well as in some more recent ones (Gahtani & Roever, 2012; Taleghani-Nikazm & Huth, 2010). But the point of view of discourse analysis in L2 pragmatic studies still needs a lot more attention. In addition, using L2 Mandarin Chinese learners as the participants in this study contributes a further example to the literature, in which this group of learners have seldom been studied. Understanding learners of a diversity of L2s can expand our understanding of L2 learners as a whole in terms of their pragmatic development.

Notes:

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[i] Szatrowski (2004) categorized refusals (to invitations) into weak-opposition versus strong-opposition. She explained, "the term weak-/strong-opposition [is used] in a relative sense to refer to conversation with relatively fewer/more utterances that express direct opposition". In the weak-opposition invitation-refusal used in Szatrowski's (2004) study, the invitee only expressed direct opposition once, the inviter never opposed the invitee and the inviter continued the invitation only if the invitee encouraged him/her to do so. In contrast, in the strong-opposition invitation-refusal, the invitee expressed direct opposition eight times, the inviter opposed the invitee four times and the inviter continued the invitation anyway even without the invitee's encouragement. Further, Szatrowski (2004) identified that Japanese strong-opposition invitation-refusal in many ways is very similar to features in English invitation-refusals identified by Davison (1984).

[ii] Based on the first and last semantic formula used in a refusal sequence, Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002, 2009) further named different patterns of refusal sequences. For example, the Excuse type means 'excuse' was used as the primary strategy in both the first and the last stages of a refusal sequence. The Delay-Excuse type means Delay was used in the first stage and Excuse was used in the last stage.

[iii] Posi/Excuse refers to Positive Indication, but Excuse type. One AJ used this refusal type at stage one responding to the initiation of the request: "…Uh, huh. I have a friend, right. I do. I often talk to her. But I am not sure if she likes this recording idea." (Only citing the English translation of this AJ's refusal).

[iv] *Shidu* is in a suburban area of southwest of Beijing. The place has now been well developed to attract tourists. Many local people run B&B style accommodation because people from Beijing like to experience some 'rural' life over weekends. There are a few places like this around Beijing. It has become one of the popular activities that classes often organise for their students to do over weekends.

[v] Kasper and Rose (2002) discussed in full detail the developmental stages of learners' learning to make requests in English. Here I only present their summary combining the findings from the longitudinal studies that they examined. Five stages of developmental tendencies were summarised: pre-basic; formulaic; unpacking; pragmatic expansion and fine-tuning. Learners' request characteristics varied depending on the stage they were at. At the pre-basic stage, learners' requests may be highly context-dependent with minimalist realisation and no relational goal (i.e. politeness) was conveyed. At the formulaic stage, learners mainly relied on unanalysed routines and imperatives to make requests. At the unpacking stage, learners started to unpack routine formulas, showing more productive use of routine formulas. More frequent use of conventional indirectness may also be observed in their requests. At the pragmatic expansion stage, new forms started to be seen in learners' requests, together with mitigation and more complex grammar. At the fine-tuning stage, learners' requests may start to vary depending on the interlocutors, relational goals and contexts.

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Appendix A: Role-play Scenarios

Pre-instruction role-plays

Scene 1 A Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** has invited you to eat out, and you have delightedly accepted, as the acquaintance is an interesting person, and you'd like to make friends with him. At table, the acquaintance offers you some fish head to try that you don't quite feel like trying.	Scene 1 假设你和一个刚认识不长时间的留学生在一家饭馆吃饭。这家饭馆的鱼头烧得很有名，所以你给他夹了一块儿让他尝尝，你说… 饭吃完了，你叫服务员买单，你说… 帐单来了，你提出由你买单，你说…
Scene 2 You are invited to visit a Chinese **FRIEND'S** family for the first time, and you bring a bottle of wine (红酒, hóngjiǔ) as a gift. The scene begins at the door, you hand over the wine, saying… During your visit, you notice a nice Chinese vase (花瓶, huāpíng), and you make some compliments,…	Scene 2 你的一个外国朋友来你家玩儿，他带了两瓶酒，你说… 你们聊天儿的时候，他称赞起你一对你刚买的中国老式花瓶，你回答说… 。因为这两个花瓶是你在地摊上买的，也不贵，你看这个老外很喜欢，你打算送给他,你说…
Scene 3 It is winter, and you are wearing a T-shirt, a Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** suggests you put on some more clothes, but you don't feel you need it.	Scene 3 你一个刚认识的朋友来你宿舍找你。外面是冬天，但他只穿了一件体恤衫，于是你拿一件上衣建议他穿，你说…
Scene 4 A Chinese **FRIEND** of yours suggests you two form a language exchange team, which, however, is not of interest to you.	Scene 4 你最近交了一个外国朋友，你想借这个机会和他练习练习英语口语，所以建议你们组成一个语言学习小组，…
Scene 5 A Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** is calling to invite you to go to a Karaoke (卡啦 OK, kǎlā ok) again. Although you've enjoyed it every time, because he did not let you pay, which makes you feel kind of indebtted to him, you are thinking not to come along this time.	Scene 5 你和一些朋友这个周末要去唱卡啦OK，你打算再把某某带上，虽然你认识他时间不长，但他人也挺有意思，歌也唱得不错，交个朋友嘛。于是你给他打电话…
Scene 6 A Chinese **FRIEND** of yours invites you to join her birthday dinner on Sunday night, but you have a big exam	Scene 6 这个星期天是你的生日，你打算和一些朋友去吃饭，热闹热闹。正好，在

coming on Monday, and you haven't even started your revision yet.	校门口你碰见了你的外国朋友某某，你打算把他也叫上，你说…
Scene 7 Your Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** asks you to help him with an English application for an American university. He's been nice and helpful. But unfortunately you have an essay to turn in next Monday.	Scene 7 你认识一个留学生，虽然时间不很长，但你对他很热情，也帮过他几次忙。你现在在申请一家美国大学，英文申请写得不很顺利，所以你想请他帮忙看看，你说…
Instruction 7 role-plays altogether; 4 with an acquaintance and 3 with a friend. Time for each role-play may vary, depending on spontaneous interactions. But overall, it will take you 30 minutes or so to finish. You will have 10 minutes to prepare, please use this time to read through all role-play scenes, and feel free to ask if you have any question. In addition, there will be 3 minutes interval between each role-play for you to scan the scene again.	

Post-instruction role-plays

Scene 1 You and your SOAS friends are going to dinner with some Chinese acquaintances. People are sharing taxis to the restaurant. You happen to share one with a Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE**. After the taxi stops, he offers to pay for you, …	Scene 1 你和一些朋友和一些留学生约好了一起去吃饭。大家都打车去，你碰巧和一个刚认识的留学生坐一辆出租车。车到地方了，你打算由你来付车钱，你说…
Scene 2 A Chinese **FRIEND** of yours is looking for someone to teach business English to a friend of hers. She offers the opportunity to because the wage is very attractive. But you are not interested.	Scene 2 你的一个朋友叫你帮找一个能教商务英语的外国人。你有一个留学生朋友，你觉得你朋友公司付的课时费不错，所以你觉得是个挺好的机会，就问他愿不愿意，你说…
Scene 3 You are having a fever, your Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** suggests you go and have an injection. But you don't think it's necessary.	Scene 3 你去找刚认识的一个留学生朋友，你发现她发高烧，于是你就建议他去医院打一针，你说…
Scene 4 The real estate agent suggests you settle on this apartment right at the moment you are viewing for the first time and pay some deposit. But you are not very comfortable with that.	Scene 4 假设你在一家房屋中介公司工作，你带了几个留学生去看了一个房子，您觉得非常合适，于是您建议他们当时就租下来，你说…
Scene 5 A Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** invites you to visit his home city, and stay in his parents' flat. Although you'd like to visit his home city, you don't want to stay in his parents' flat as you heard it's not common for Chinese people to have spare living space.	Scene 5 放假了，你邀请新结交的一个留学生朋友一起回老家玩几天，而且你想让他住在你家，你说…
Scene 6 On a visit, your Chinese **FRIEND** invites you to stay for dinner.	Scene 6 你的一位外国朋友来你家作客，你邀请他留下来吃饭。
Scene 7 A Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** needs some help with translating a Chinese document into English, and asks if you could help. But you are quite busy lately.	Scene 7 你在翻译一个文本，有些地方你拿不准，你想让你刚认识的一个留学生帮忙看一下，你说…

Scene 8	Scene 8
You are travelling with some friends by train, a Chinese person asks you to swap seats, but you don't want to.	你和朋友们坐火车去玩儿，但是你的座位离他们有点儿远，所以你想和邻座的换一下，你说…

Post-study abroad role-plays

Scene 1 A Chinese **FRIEND** of yours offered a job opportunity. The publisher that her friend works for is trying to recruit a part-time English proofreader - 8 hours a week and 500 Kuai. But you are not interested in the job.	Scene 1 你朋友的出版社要招一个兼职英文校对。一周工作 8 小时，500 块钱报酬。你觉得这是个挺好的机会，就问一个留学生朋友有没有兴趣,…
Scene 2 Today is Wednesday, a Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** is calling to invite you to an activity for their class' – a visit to Shidu (Beijing suburb and you haven't been). It's on Saturday, and you need to meet them at 6:45am outside the main library. But you don't want to go, as it's too early.	Scene 2 今天是周三，你们班这周六组织去十渡玩－早上 6:45 在图书馆门前集合，你想邀你的外国朋友一起去，…
Scene 3 You are suffering from diarrheoa and also threw up a few times. When your Chinese language partner came (you are **ACQUAINTANCES**) and found out you are ill, he suggests you go to hospital. But you don't think it's necessary.	Scene 3 你去找一个刚认识的留学生语伴，你发现他拉肚子又吐了，于是你就建议他去医院看看，你说…
Scene 4 At a Chinese hairdresser's, the hairdresser says, your hair is dry and dull, so suggests you have a hair nourishing treatment (焗油,jú yóu). However, you don't think it's true and necessary.	Scene 4 你在剪头发，理发师说，你头发很干也很枯燥，建议你做个焗油，可你觉得不需要···
Scene 5 You are eating out with a Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE**. He offers you some deep fried locusts (油炸蝗虫, yóuzhá huángchóng) to try, which is a renowned Beijing snack, but you don't feel like trying it.	Scene 5 你和一个刚认识时间不长的留学生在饭馆吃饭。你给他夹了油炸蝗虫让他尝尝，你说… 帐单来了，你提出买单…
Scene 6 On a visit to a Chinese **FRIEND'S** house, you brought some flowers. At the door, you hand over the flowers to the host, …	Scene 6 一个留学生来你家做客。他带了一些花，在门口，他把花递了过来，… 你把一个你在香港买的水晶属相吊坠送给他,… 他要离开的时候，已是晚饭时间，你就请他留下吃饭，…

Scene 7 A Chinese **FRIEND** of yours is going to study in America. She runs into you on Wednesday and invites you to her farewell party on Sunday night. But your Sinological project is due on Monday and you haven't even started yet.	Scene 7 你要去美国留学，临行前你打算办一个晚会，邀请一些朋友一起庆祝庆祝也顺便告个别。晚会在周天晚上，星期三你正好碰见一个外国朋友，你就邀请他…
Scene 8 Your Chinese **ACQUAINTANCE** asks you for help with a questionnaire (调查问卷, diàocháwènjuàn) he carried out regarding foreigners' opinions towards Beijing's tourist sights. He's been really welcoming and did you a few favours. But unfortunately you have an exam next Monday.	Scene 8 你认识一个留学生，虽然时间不很长，但你对他很热情，也帮过他几次忙。你现在需要一些外国人参加你的科研调查，帮你填一份调查问卷，是关于外国人对北京旅游景点的意见和建议，所以你想请他帮忙，你说…
Scene 9 A Chinese **FRIEND** asks you for a favour. She is trying to apply for some scholarship at an English university, she'd like you to have a look at the application and correct grammar mistakes and also give her some comments. But you're quite busy recently.	Scene 9 一篇申请奖学金的英文申请，你想让你一个留学生帮忙看一下，你说…

Appendix B: Questionnaires

Pre-study abroad questionnaire

The information that you provide in this questionnaire will help the researcher to grasp a student's history of learning languages, as it may has some impact on his/her performance in the present research.

Your honest and detailed responses will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Name: _____

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1. Age _____

2. What is/are your native language(s) _____

3. If you receive some of your education in a language different from your mother tongue, what are the languages _____

4. What other languages do you speak: please rate your proficiency of the each language

Language	Number of years you have studied	Proficiency

[use 1) Novice, 2) Elementary, 3) Intermediate, 4) Advanced, 5) Superior].

5. Did you study Mandarin Chinese before university:

    No / Yes: when _____   for how long _____

6. Have you been to China prior to this trip to BNU:

    No / Yes: from when to when _____where _____

    why_____

7. Apart from the experience in Question 6, have you ever lived in a situation where you were exposed to a language other than your native language (e.g. short visits; work placement/study abroad; exposure through your family):

    No / Yes: please give details below. If more than three, please list the others on the back of this page.

	Experience 1	Experience 2	Experience 3
Country/region			
Language			
Purpose			
From when to when			

8. On average, how often did you communicate with native or fluent speakers of Chinese in Mandarin apart from your teachers in class prior to your trip to BNU:
   1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily
   If you did, can you also explain how these Chinese people relate to you, what you   like   about   conversing   with   them

   _____

   _____

   __

9. For each of the items below, choose the response that corresponds to the amount of time you estimate that you spend on average doing each activity in Mandarin prior to your trip to BNU:

   a. Watching television in Mandarin

      1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily

   b. Reading newspapers in Mandarin

      1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily

   c. Reading novels in Mandarin

      1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily

   d. Listening to songs in Mandarin

      1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily

   e. Reading magazines in Mandarin

      1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily

   f. Watching movies or videos in Mandarin

      1) never; 2) a few times a year; 3) monthly; 4) weekly; 5) daily

Post-study abroad questionnaire

The responses that you give in this questionnaire will be kept confidential. The information that you provide will help the researcher to better understand the learning experiences of students of Chinese during their study abroad.

Your honest and detailed responses will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Name: _____

Please indicate the Mandarin classes you are taking at BNU:

Course code	Course name	Brief description of what you did in class and how useful it is for you	What language do you usually speak with your classmates

Please list the events you participated in or activities you did either using Mandarin or English during studying in Beijing, e.g. attended a Chinese wedding, travelling, working, and/or volunteering
(please continue at the back of this sheet if you need more space).

Type	With whom	From when to when (or how often)	What did you do	The language you used most

1. Which situation best describes your living arrangements in Beijing?
    a. I lived in the student dormitory
        i. I had a private room
        ii. I had a roommate who was a native or fluent Mandarin speaker
        iii. I lived with others who are NOT native or fluent Mandarin speakers
    b. I lived alone in a room or an apartment
    c. I lived in a room or an apartment with native or fluent Mandarin speakers
    d. I lived in a room or an apartment with others who are NOT native or

fluent Mandarin Speakers

    e. Other: Please specify:

For the following items, please specify:

    a) How many *days per week* you typically used Mandarin in the situation indicated, and

    b) on average how many *hours per day* you did so

Circle the appropriate numbers

2. On average, how much time did you spend speaking, *in Mandarin*, outside of class with native or fluent Mandarin speakers?

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

3. Outside of class, I tried to speak *Mandarin to*:

    a) my instructor

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    b) friends who are native or fluent Mandarin speakers

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    c) classmates

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    d) strangers whom I thought could speak Mandarin

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    e) other Mandarin speakers in the dormitory or who live in the same building

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    f) service personnel

    Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
    On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

g) others, specify:

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

4. How often did you use Mandarin outside the classroom for each of the following purposes?

a) to clarify classroom-related work

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

b) to obtain directions or information, e.g., "Where is the post office?", "What time is the train to…?", "How much are stamps?"

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

c) for superficial or brief exchanges, e.g., greetings, ordering in a restaurant, with acquaintances, or _____

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

d) extended conversations with friends, or acquaintances, native speakers of English with whom I speak Mandarin

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

5.
a) How often did you try deliberately to use things you were taught in the classroom, including grammar, vocabulary and expressions with native or fluent speakers outside the classroom?

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

b) How often did you take things you learned outside of the classroom - grammar, vocabulary and expressions, back to class for question or discussion?

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

6. How much time did you spend doing the following each week?

a) speaking a language other than English or Mandarin to speakers of that language, e.g. German with a German-speaking friend

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    b)   speaking Mandarin to native or fluent speakers of Mandarin

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    c)   speaking English to native or fluent speakers of Mandarin

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    d)   speaking Mandarin to nonnative speakers of Mandarin, i.e. classmates

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    e)   speaking English to nonnative speakers of Mandarin, i.e., classmates

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

7. How much time did you spend doing each of the following activities outside of class?

    a)   overall, reading in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    b) reading Mandarin newspapers outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    c)   reading novels in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    d) reading Mandarin language magazines outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

e) reading schedules, announcements, menus, and the like in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

f) reading e-mail or Internet web pages in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

g) overall, in listening to Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

h) listening to Mandarin television and radio outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

i) listening to Mandarin movies or videos outside of class
Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

j) listening to Mandarin songs outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

k) trying to catch other people's conversations in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

l) overall, writing in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

m) writing homework assignments in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

n) writing personal notes or letters in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    o) writing e-mail in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    p) sending text messages in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many hours per day? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    q) filling in forms or questionnaires in Mandarin outside of class

Typically, how many days per week? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

8. On average, how much time did you spend speaking in *English* outside of class during studying in Beijing?

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

9. How often did you do the following activities in *English* during studying in Beijing?

    a) reading newspapers, magazines, or novels or watching movies, television, or videos in English

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    b) reading e-mail or Internet web pages in English

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    c) writing e-mail in English

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

    d) writing personal notes and letters in English

Typically, how many *days per week*? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
On those days, typically how many *hours per day*? 0-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 more than 5

Appendix C: Interview Questions

With the experimental group

1. What did you benefit most from your time in Beijing in terms of learning Chinese?
   a) On reflection, what do you wish you could've done better?

2. On the scale 1 to 5, how helpful did you find the lessons we had about refusals when needing to refuse; 1 not helpful at all and 5 extremely helpful?
   a) From the lessons we had about refusals, what did you learn about characteristics of offers and the way offers are refused in Chinese?
   b) From the lessons we had about refusals, what did you learn about characteristics of suggestions and the way suggestions are refused in Chinese?
   c) From the lessons we had about refusals, what did you learn about characteristics of requests and the way requests are refused in Chinese?
   d) From the lessons we had about refusals, what did you learn about characteristics of invitations and the way invitations are refused in Chinese?
   e) From the lessons we had about refusals, what did you learn about differences in refusing friends vs. acquaintances in Chinese?

3. Tell me about the Chinese people you interacted with on a regular basis,
   a) Who are they? How did you get to know them? How frequently did you see them and what did you usually do with them?
   b) Were there occasions when they made invitations/offers/personal suggestions/requests that you wanted to refuse?
      (i) Did you manage to refuse? Why/why not?
   c) Did you learn anything about refusals new from the lessons in that process?
      (i) New characteristics/ expressions/ anything different from the instruction?
      (i) When interacting with these people, did you notice any differences in the ways they made offers/ invitations/ suggestions/ requests?
4. How did you feel about the way these 4 acts were made in Chinese as well as the way they are refused, especially in comparison to English or your first culture?
   a) Did you blend any of these differences into your system?
   b) Has the way you felt about these differences changed at all over the last year and how?

5. Please review the role-play cards:
   a) In some scenarios you were conversing with a Chinese friend and some with a Chinese acquaintance, did you actually responded differently to these different roles? Did who you were conversing with affect your decisions on whether or not you would refuse or accept?
   b) (Gift offer pre-instruction) When you offered a gift, what did you think the host would say or do? How did you feel about her refusal? Were there other things that struck you (e.g. times of rejection, characteristics of rejection)? At the time we did the post-study abroad role-play, what were your expectation?

c) Before you studied in Beijing, what did you know about gift exchange custom?
   (i) What did you learn about gift exchange in Chinese during the year?
   (ii) How did you feel about it? Did the way you felt about it change over the last year?
   (iii) Would who the offer come from, i.e. friends vs. acquaintances make any difference to people's decision to refuse or accept, and why?
d) Were you offered some food you didn't want to eat?
   (i) Was it usually easy to refuse such offers?
   (ii) What strategies did you usually use? How did you learn them?
   (iii) How did Chinese people usually respond to your rejection?
   (iv) Did you try to offer food to Chinese people?
e) What was your experience like with respect to paying bills with Chinese people?
   (i) What strategies did you usually use when you tried to refuse? How did you learn them?
   (ii) Did you learn what Chinese people usually do or say to persuade you not to pay (e.g. not a significant amount, you pay next time)? Did you try it? Was it successful, why/ why not?
   (iii) In your observation, was there any difference in different people's habits in terms of paying bills?
f) Did some Chinese student suggest you two to form a language exchange team?
   (i) Did you usually refuse or accept? Why?
   (ii) What reasons did you usually use if you tried to refuse?
   (iii) How did Chinese people usually respond to your refusal?
g) How did you feel about personal suggestions at the beginning of your time in Beijing? Did it change at all over the year? Why/ why not?
   (i) Did you usually accept or refuse and how did it go?
   (ii) Did you learn how Chinese people usually refuse or accept such suggestions?
h) Did you find it difficult to reject commercial suggestions and why?
   (i) What reasons/strategies did you usually use to reject them? How did you learn them?
i) Did you find it difficult to refuse requests and why?
   (i) Would who made the request make any difference to your decision?
j) Which role-plays did you make refusals to because you were told to do so?
   (i) Did any role-play scenario actually happen? Can you please try to recall what happened?

6. What did you find most difficult in making refusals?
  a) On a scale 1 to 5 how do you rate the influence of (a) instruction (b) role-plays (3) interacting with Chinese people on your ability to make refusals; 1 is no influence and 5 is extremely influential.
  b) Did these three interplay in your learning experience and how?
7. Did you feel different when making refusals at the beginning of the year and towards the end? If so, how?
8. Did the experience of studying and living in Beijing change your view towards different cultures and language differences? What are the changes?

9. What are the expressions for apologies in Chinese? In your opinion, is there any difference between *duibuqi* 对不起 (sorry) and *buhaoyisi* 不好意思 (embarrassing/embarrassed)?
    a) Which one did you often use and why?
10. What can you use to express English 'can't' in Chinese (e.g. 不可以, 不能, 不行)?
    a) Is there any difference between them?
    b) How did you decide which to use when refusing?
    c) Have you thought about possible different effects they have on your listener when you used them to refuse?
    d) Did you learn anything about use of these expressions in different refusals over the last year?
    e) You know potential verb complements such as 去不了, 帮不上, is there any difference between this structure and the other expressions for 'can't'?

With the control group

1. What did you benefit most from your time in Beijing in terms of learning Chinese?
   a. On reflection, what do you wish you could've done better?

2. Did you learn anything that you didn't know before from doing the role-plays?
   a. Did you learn anything about refusals in the role-plays?
   b. Did you find it challenging to make refusals in the role-plays? What about in real life?
   c. How helpful did you find the role-plays when needing to refuse? On the scale 1 to 5, 1 not helpful at all and 5 extremely helpful?

3. Tell me about the Chinese people you interacted with on a regular basis,
   a. Who are they? How did you get to know them? How frequently did you see them and what did you usually do with them?
   b. Were there occasions when they made invitations that you wanted to refuse?
      i. Did you manage to refuse? Why/why not?
      ii. Did you learn anything about characteristics of invitations and the way invitations are refused in Chinese?
      iii. Did you notice any differences in the ways that different people made invitations?
   c. Were there occasions they made offers that you wanted to refuse?
      i. Did you manage to refuse? Why/why not?
   (i) Did you learn anything about characteristics of offers and the way offers are refused in Chinese?
      ii. Did you notice any differences in the ways that different people made offers?
   d. Were there occasions when Chinese people made personal suggestions that you wanted to refuse?
      i. Did you manage to refuse? Why/why not?
   (ii) Did you learn anything about characteristics of suggestions and the way suggestions are refused in Chinese?
      ii. Did you notice any differences in the ways that different people made suggestions?
   e. Were there occasions when Chinese people made requests that you wanted to refuse?
      i. Did you manage to refuse? Why/why not?
   (iii) Did you learn anything about characteristics of requests and the way requests are refused in Chinese?
      ii. Did you notice any differences in the ways that different people made requests?
   f. Did you learn anything about differences in refusing friends vs. acquaintances in Chinese?

4. How did you feel about the way invitations/offers/suggestions/request are made in Chinese as well as the way they are refused, especially in comparison to English or your first culture?
   a. Did you blend any of these differences into your system?

b. Did the way you felt about these differences change at all over the last year and how?

5. Please review the role-play cards:
   a. In some scenarios you were conversing with a Chinese friend and some with a Chinese acquaintance, did you actually responded differently to these different roles? Did who you were conversing with affect your decisions on whether or not you would refuse or accept?
   b. (Gift offer pre-instruction) When you offered a gift, what did you think the host would say or do? How did you feel about her refusal? Were there other things that struck you (e.g. times of rejection, characteristics of rejection)? At the time we did the post-study abroad role-play, what were your expectations?
   c. Before you studied in Beijing, what did you know about gift exchange custom?
      i. What did you learn about gift exchange in Chinese during the year?
      ii. How did you feel about it? Did the way you felt about it change over the last year?
      iii. Would who the offer come from, i.e. friends vs. acquaintances make any difference people's decision to refuse or accept, and why?
   d. Were you offered some food you didn't want to eat?
   (v) Was it usually easy to refuse such offer?
   (vi) What strategies did you usually use? How did you learn them?
   (vii) How did Chinese people usually respond to your rejection?
   (viii) Did you try to offer food to Chinese people?
   e. What was your experience like with respect to paying bills with Chinese people?
      i. What strategies did you usually use when you tried to refuse? How did you learn them?
      ii. Did you learn what Chinese people usually do or say to persuade you not to pay (e.g. not a significant amount, you pay next time)? Did you try it? Was it successful, why/ why not?
      iii. In your observation, was there any difference in different people's habits in terms of paying bills?
   f. Did some Chinese students suggest you two to form a language exchange team?
   (iv) Did you usually refuse or accept? Why?
   (v) What reasons did you usually use if you tried to refuse?
   (vi) How did Chinese people usually respond to your refusal?
   g. How did you feel about personal suggestions at the beginning of your time in Beijing? Did it change at all over the year? Why/ why not?
   (iii) Did you usually accept or refuse and how did it go?
   (iv) Did you learn how Chinese people usually refuse or accept such suggestions?
   h. Did you find it difficult to reject commercial suggestions and why?
   (ii) What reasons/strategies did you usually use to reject them? How did you learn them?
   i. Did you find it difficult to refuse requests and why?
   (ii) Would who made the request make any difference to your decision?

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      j. Which role-plays did you make refusals in because you were told to do so?
         i. Did any role-play scenario actually happen? Can you please try to recall what happened?

6. What did you find most difficult in making refusals?
    a. On a scale 1 to 5 how do you rate the influence of (a) role-plays (b) interacting with Chinese people on your ability to make refusals; 1 is no influence and 5 is extremely influential.
    b. Did these two interplay in your learning experience and how?
7. Did you feel different when making refusals at the beginning of the year and towards the end? If so, how?

8. What are the expressions for apologies in Chinese? In your opinion, is there any difference between 对不起 (sorry) and 不好意思(embarrassing/embarrassed)?
    a. Which one did you often use and why?
9. What can you use to express English 'can't' in Chinese (e.g. 不可以, 不能, 不行)?
    a. Is there any difference between them?
    b. How did you decide which to use when refusing?
    c. Have you thought about possible different effects they have on your listener when you used them to refuse?
    d. Did you learn anything about use of these expressions in different refusals over the last year?
    e. You know potential verb complements such as 去不了, 帮不上, is there any difference between this structure and the other expressions for 'can't'?

Appendix D: SOPI test

SOPI tests were composed of four sessions and difficulty level ascended as the test moved forward. The test began with some warm-up questions such as "what is your name", which were excluded from the final scoring. The second session used pictures as a guide for responses, e.g. to give directions according to a map. In the third session, the candidates needed to speak about some selected topics. For example, the candidates were asked about their opinions towards the elimination of P.E. classes in American high schools. The last session was for the examinee to elaborate on various real-life situations. For example, the candidates had to apologize to a Chinese professor that they had lost the reference book that he lent to them.

The final score came with four different levels, i.e. Novice, Intermediate, Advanced and Superior. The first two levels were sub-divided into Low, Mid and High. But the Advanced level had only two sublevels, i.e. Advanced and Advanced-High.

Appendix E: Transcript Notation

[Left brackets indicate the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by another's talk.

]   Right brackets indicate the point at which two overlapping utterances end.

(.)   A period indicated a stopping fall in tone, not necessarily the end of a sentence. And it is placed in parentheses

(word) Parenthesized words are possible hearings.

(( ))   Double parentheses contain author's descriptions rather than transcriptions.

..   Two periods that are placed in parentheses indicate a slightly longer stopping fall in tone.

!   An exclamation point indicates an animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation. And it is also placed in parentheses.

:   A colon indicates an extension of the sound of syllable, and more colons prolong the stretch.

-        A short untimed pause within an utterance is indicated by a dash. Untimed intervals heard between utterances are described within double parentheses and insert where they occur.

…   The ellipsis is used when the speaker intentionally leaves her utterance off or a sentence is not yet finished then a new sentence starts

/   A slash is used where the speaker self-corrected herself.

=   When there is no interval between adjacent utterances, the second being latched immediately to the first (without overlapping it), the utterances are linked together with equal signs. The equal signs are also used to link different parts of a single speakers' utterance when those parts constitute a continuous flow of speech that has been carried over to another line.

Appendix F: Refusal Semantic formulas

1. Direct Refusals:
   A. Nonperformative statement: e.g. 不行 (no way), 算了(forget about it), 我不去了 (I won't go), 没有必要 (it's not necessary).
   B. Negative willingness/ability: 不能 (can't), 不想 (wouldn't like to).

2. Indirect Refusals: The refusal has to be inferred by means of another speech act
   A. Statement of regret: e.g. 对不起 (sorry), 不好意思 (embarrassing; embarrassed).
   B. Put the interlocutor's mind at ease: 没事儿 (don't worry), 没关系 (it doesn't matter).
   C. Reason
   D. Statement of alternative:
      a) I can do x instead of y, e.g. 这次我不去了, 我想在家休息休息 (I won't go this time, I'd like to stay home and get some rest). 要不我帮你问问我同学，看有没有人有时间教她 (Or I can help to ask my classmates and see if anyone has time to teach her).
      b) Why don't you do x instead of y, e.g. 要不你找别人吧 (Why don't you try and see if somebody else could come)
   E. Set condition for future/potential acceptance: e.g. 我星期一有大考，要不我就去你生日晚会了 (If I didn't have this huge exam, I'd have gone to your birthday party). 要是有其他的英文方面的工作就更好了(if they had other work in relation to English it would have been better).
   F. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor
      a) Threat or statement of negative consequences, e.g. 我怕在这儿吃饭回去赶不上开会 (I'm afraid that I won't make it to the meeting on time if I stay for dinner).
      b) Criticism (e.g. statement of negative feeling or opinion), e.g. 又去唱歌啊 (Are we going to Karaoke again)?
   G. Avoidance
      a) Repetition of part of, e.g. the offer (油炸蝗虫)?
      b) Postponement (e.g. 我想想 I'll think about it, 再说吧 let's talk about it later, 下次吧 another time).
      c) Hedging (e.g. 尽量到时候去 I'll try my best to come).
      d) Take action (e.g. 这是20块)

3. Adjuncts to refusals: modify the refusal but do not in themselves carry refusing force
   a. Statement of positive feeling (e.g. 挺好的但是… it sounds good but…)
   b. Express willingness: e.g. 我其实挺想去的 (I'd like to come, but…).
   c. Request for more information/confirmation (e.g. 这个英文校对主要是做什么工作呀 what does English proof-reading involve)?
   d. Gratitude/appreciation (e.g. 谢谢 thank you)
   e. Positive remark: (e.g. 生日快乐 Happy Birthday, 一路顺风 travel safely).
   f. Proposing an indefinite gathering in the future: e.g. 下次吧 another time.

Appendix G: Rater Instructions

This rating is to help my research to decide how much development the learners have made in terms of making refusals during the time they studied abroad. The rating focuses on the actual negotiation of refusals, namely, from when the offer/ suggestion/ invitation/ request is first made to when some agreement is reached. So the opening and the closing of each role-play are not included.

In addition, as it is not the result but the process as to how a learner negotiates a refuse that interests the current research, acceptance after some extensive negotiation will still be included in the rating. Offers/ suggestions/ invitations/ requests accepted straightaway will be grouped together for further analysis. In addition, when rating the learners' refusals, it is sensible to take into account the initiate acts, i.e. what is it that a learner is trying to refuse, e.g. a request or an offer.

The learners' role-plays will be rated in two aspects, i.e. clarity and potential effect on the interpersonal relationship. Clarity concerns the extent to which learner's refusals can be understood by the interlocutor without any difficulty. A refusal may be considered 5, however the refusal is made, i.e. directly or indirectly, if its content can be understood without any clarification or inference to the context. Clarity will be rated on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 is least clear and 5 is most clear.

Potential effect on the interpersonal relationship is concerned with the likelihood that a learner's refusals to cause any unnecessary negative impact on his/her interpersonal relationship with the interlocutor. It includes the way that the learner made his/her refusals (e.g. direct refusal vs. indirect refusal), as well as the language the learner used (e.g. 我不可以帮住你 vs. 我可能没有时间帮你). The learner may be assigned 5 if his/her refusals are unlikely to result in any offense on the part of the interlocutor. Potential effect on interpersonal relationship will also be rated on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 is most likely to cause a negative effect and 5 is least likely to do so.