NIKOLETT VÁSÁRI

University of Szeged
nickeyprof@gmail.com

Pragmatic transfer in the refusal strategy choices of Hungarian EFL students

Throughout the last few decades, the development of learners' communicative competence in a foreign or a second language has been the focus of studies in second language acquisition (SLA) and interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) alike. Communicative competence includes both the grammatical and the pragmatic knowledge necessary for successful communication. ILP examines how non-native speakers communicate and interact in a second or foreign language and how they decode how non-native speakers communicate in a second or foreign language. This study is intended to contribute to the body of research on interlanguage pragmatics (ILP). This study investigates the pragmatic transfer of Hungarian university students who are learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Hungarian and English. A 12-item discourse completion test (DCT) designed by Beebe et al. (1990) for eliciting refusal speech acts is adapted for the present study. The results of the current study reveal the preferences in refusal strategy choices by Hungarian students vs. American English native speakers and the presence of transfer apparent in the refusal strategies utilized by Hungarian university students.

Keywords: interlanguage pragmatics, pragmatic transfer, positive transfer, negative transfer, refusal strategies

1. Introduction

People communicate daily to express themselves, share their thoughts, and maintain social relationships with their acquaintances. Such communication requires linguistic knowledge and cultural background knowledge on what a given society accepts as a norm. Norm varies, at least to some extent, across different cultures and societies; hence people should possess the necessary knowledge of such norms for successful communication which is why it is crucial and beneficial to research pragmatic cross-cultural differences.

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) is the study that deals with the observance of non-native speakers' acquisition and use of linguistic action patterns in their L2 (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, eds., 1993: 3). Within interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research, pragmatic transfer is a widely discussed term.

Žegarac and Pennington (2000: 2) describe the pragmatic transfer as the transfer of pragmatic knowledge in intercultural communicational interactions. Odlin (1989: 37) defines transfer as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences

between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired." Their definition is in line with Takahashi and Beebe's (1987: 134), who define pragmatic transfer as the transfer of L1 sociocultural communicative competence into their L2. In addition, Beebe et al. (1990: 55) also state that transfer or interference has a significant role in the formation of interlanguage. According to these definitions, transfer reflects on the communicative knowledge of the speakers, and having such pragmatic knowledge can be an essential part of their communication.

Furthermore, other researchers also emphasize that pragmatic awareness is essential for the growth of pragmatic competence in L2 students (Csatlós, 2014; Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993). Pragmatic competence can be enhanced via explicit or implicit learning proving its importance in L2 learning and adaptability in foreign and second language teaching (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993).

Pragmatic transfer has two types: negative transfer and positive transfer. The first type, negative transfer, happens when learners apply their L1 pragmatic competence in their L2, but pragmatic knowledge differs in their L1 and L2, often resulting in miscommunication (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993: 10). The other type of transfer, positive transfer, is when pragmatic knowledge from L1 helps students with their L2 pragmatic competence due to their similarity and consistency (Kasper and Blum-Kulka, 1993: 10). In short, positive transfer resonates with facilitation, while negative transfer resonates with interference. Moreover, negative pragmatic transfer can result in imperfect pragmatic competence in L2, but this does not necessarily result in communicative failure (Žegarac and Pennington, 2000:3). Driven by the same logic, positive transfer will not necessarily help achieve successful communication (Žegarac and Pennington, 2000:3).

The primary purpose of this research is to study the communicative competence of Hungarian university students in their target language, English, and to see if there is positive or negative pragmatic transfer in the refusal strategies they apply.

2. Literature review
2.1. Taxonomy
Beebe et al. (1990) created their taxonomy for semantic formulas of refusals, becoming the most cited taxonomy within the field. Their taxonomy includes two main categories: direct strategies and indirect strategies.

Within the category of direct strategies, there are performative (e.g., "I refuse") and non-performative strategies. Non-performative strategies include two types that are as follows: (1) "No" and (2) negative willingness or ability.

Indirect strategies consist of several refusal strategies that are as follows: (1) expression of regret, (2) wish, (3) explanation or excuse, (4) offering an alternative,

(5) setting conditions for acceptance in the future or past, (6) promise of future acceptance, (7) statement of principle, (8) philosophical statement, (9) negative opinion or talking partner out, (10) acceptance that functions as a refusal or indefinite answer, and (11) evasion or postponement.

Aside from these two main categories, they also created a third category for the categorizing of refusal strategies, namely adjuncts. Adjuncts are often added to or combined with other strategies, including supportive opinion or agreement, empathy or sympathy, and gratitude or appreciation.

2.2. Significance of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research on refusals

Non-native learners of a target language need to possess pragmatic knowledge of the target language to be more successful in communication. Bándli (2014: 34) suggests the necessity of mediating between the learners' L1 and their target language (L2) regarding the differences or similarities in their communication; therefore, it is the instructor's duty to prepare the students for as many situations as possible. She also remarks that besides the instructors, authors of instructional language textbooks also have to make it possible for learners to learn about pragmatic differences between their L1 and L2, so they should include pragmatics in the language books. Chen (2009: 154) notes that foreign language learners' pragmatic proficiency is not necessarily at the same level as their linguistic one, meaning that regardless of the proficiency level of an L2 learner, their pragmatic proficiency might greatly vary. Chen (2009) adds that, for this reason, explicit teaching of pragmatics is crucial for language learners. Accordingly, Echeverria Castillo (2009) suggests that the primary goal of pragmatic instruction is to raise the pragmatic awareness of language learners since L2 learners show differences from native speakers, and even advanced learners' pragmatic knowledge on their L2 varies to great extents.

Beebe et al. (1990: 56) highlighted the importance of studying refusals since they can cause obstacles or miscommunication in cross-cultural encounters. Therefore, in the case of refusals, both interlocutors need to possess the necessary sociocultural knowledge for their ensured successful communication.

A refusal follows an initiating act that can either be a request, an offer, a suggestion, or an invitation (Gass and Houck, 1999, cited in Demirkol, 2016: 793). Hussein (2017: 246) notes that what matters most is how the refusal is said, not simply the fact that it was uttered in the first place. Therefore, if language learners try to maximize their communicative success in their L2 or they want to lessen the probability of miscommunication due to cultural, pragmatical differences, they need to learn pragmatics and possess pragmatic interlanguage knowledge.

2.3. Relevant research in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) on refusals

The first influential works on interlanguage pragmatics in connection to pragmatic transfer and strategy use in refusals were by Takahashi and Beebe (1987) and Beebe et al. (1990). Both works compared the refusal strategy choice of Japanese vs. American speakers. American native speakers did not use empathy, while their Japanese counterparts did use this strategy type (Takahashi and Beebe, 1987: 140). In Beebe et al. (1990: 58), the researchers found that American native speakers tended to start their refusals toward those of unequal status with an adjunct expressing a positive feeling about the requester, followed by an expression of regret, finished with an excuse. In the case of status equals, Americans, similarly to Japanese speakers in English, started with first expressing regret or apology, then gave an excuse (Beebe et al., 1990: 58). Beebe et al. (1990: 56-58) found that pragmatic transfer exists in Japanese ESL learners' refusals regarding their frequency, order, and content of semantic formulas.

According to the Hungarian research within the field, in the Hungarian language, regardless of status, it is impolite to utter a refusal directly; and in order to avoid such a situation, Hungarians use indirect strategies such as giving explanations, excuses or we even combine different kinds of strategies of refusals (Szili, 2002: 204; Csatlós, 2014: 16). Szili (2002: 217) also notes that Hungarians tend to say no in a manner that the negative particle is not even present in their refusals when they talk to status equals or higher status interlocutors.

Guo (2012) found that both Chinese and American English interlocutors used mainly indirect strategies in their refusals and added that direct strategies occurred mainly in the case of intimate relationships. Similarly, Félix-Brasdefer (2008: 86) found that Americans' most frequently used refusal strategies are indirect ones, but in the case of intimate relationships, the usage of a direct strategy is relatively frequent as well. Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016: 58) found that the most frequently used refusal strategy of American English participants was an explanation/excuse, while the least used strategies were direct ones.

According to Csatlós (2014: 16), native speakers regard the pragmatic mistakes of advanced level non-native speakers in the target language as more serious than their grammatical errors. Moreover, native speakers believe that such pragmatic failures result from ignorance or rudeness (Csatlós, 2014: 16). Similarly, Al-Shboul and Huwari (2016: 50) note that in cross-cultural communication, non-native speakers tend to accidentally offend their interlocutors while performing a refusal if they do not possess the necessary pragmatic knowledge resulting in the loss of respect that can occur during refusals.

3. Methodology
3.1. Hypotheses
For this questionnaire study, three hypotheses were formulated. The first hypothesis is that the refusal strategies of American English native speakers and Hungarian English as foreign language (henceforth: EFL) learners would differ to some degree. The second hypothesis is that, similarly to other studies on Hungarian refusal strategy usage (Szili, 2002; Csatlós, 2014), Hungarian refusals would combine more strategies and be primarily indirect. Lastly, the third hypothesis is that pragmatic negative (L1) transfer could be observed in the refusals of Hungarian university students.

3.2. Research design and data collection procedure
The first part of the questionnaire for the 12 Hungarian students consisted of biographic data about their age, gender, and some questions concerning their language contact with English. In more detail, the students were asked whether they lived abroad and, if yes, for how long. The next question asked if they watch English movies or TV shows in English and, if yes, how frequently. The last question regarding their English language contact is whether they learned pragmatics or not. The first part of the questionnaire for the two American English native speakers consisted of their age, gender, and length of time in Hungary.

The second part of the questionnaire adopted the discourse completion test designed by Beebe et al. (1990). In the discourse completion test (henceforth: DCT), there are 12 situations according to 4 stimulus types (request, invitation, offer, advice) and the status of refuser (lower, equal, higher). The participants were given these situations and asked to react to the situation and fill in a blank. The DCT was designed such that it would elicit refusals by participants. The Hungarian students were asked to fill in this DCT in English and Hungarian, while the American native speakers filled the same DCT in English.

3.3. Participants
There are 14 participants in this study: 12 Hungarian students who are English as a foreign language (EFL) learners and 2 American professors whose native language is English.

The ages of the Hungarian participants range from 21 to 29 years. Out of the 12 Hungarian participants, 7 are females and 5 are males. All the participants are university students from various faculties and majors, and 5 participants have visited foreign countries before. Most of these participants spent a couple of months abroad. In contrast, 7 of the participants have never been abroad. However, all of the students reported that they watch shows in English: 11 out of the 12 students reported

watching movies or a TV series in English weekly, and one person reported watching English shows once a month. Therefore, all participants had some kind of contact with the English language, either via visiting English-speaking countries or watching TV series in English. Participants were also asked whether they had learned pragmatics before; 7 answered "yes," while 5 answered "no." Consequently, the group seemed to be varying in terms of the possibilities for having cross-cultural pragmatic knowledge via language contact or implicit learning, at least to some degree, but this aspect was not measured by any means.

The two American native speakers in this study include a 33-year-old male and a 30-year-old female who are university professors at the English language department of the University of Szeged. Both have lived in Hungary for a couple of years. Despite the unequal number of the two groups, the Hungarian EFL students and the American English native speakers, the AE data was kept for comparison and did not solely rely on literature within the field on American English speakers' strategy choice. These two American English professors are the closest to the age of the Hungarian students, while other American English professors at the time of the research were in a different age group, and there were no AE native-speaking students at the university. Regardless of the inequality of numbers and differences in the social roles of the two groups, since the ages of the participants are relatively close, and the AE participants also show similarities with the literature conducted with AE speakers, the two groups were kept for comparison.

4. Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to observe the communicative competence of Hungarian university students in the target language (English) and to see if there is pragmatic transfer in the refusal strategies applied by them. For the sake of observing the transfer phenomena, the same 12 Hungarian students filled the questionnaire in both English and Hungarian, while the two native-speaking American English professors filled it in English only. Thus, in the tables below, the participants are represented them in three groups: American English (AE), Hungarian in English (HE), and Hungarian in Hungarian (HH).

This section presents the findings of the current 12-item DCT questionnaire. The first subsection deals with the main types of refusal strategies found in the participants' refusals. The second subsection proceeds by discussing the frequency of refusal strategies and sub-strategies employed by the participants. Finally, the third subsection demonstrates the positive and negative transfer phenomena found in the participants' refusals.

4.1. Distribution of strategies based on main types

The first hypothesis was that American English and Hungarian EFL students' refusal strategies would differ, at least to some extent. Table 1 shows the number of refusal strategies by the study participants to represent this slight difference in the frequency of preference of strategy choice. In the first column of Table 1, the main refusal strategy types by the two American English native speakers can be seen. The second column of Table 1 shows the 12 Hungarian participants' refusal strategies in English, while the last column presents Hungarian participants' refusal strategies in their native language, Hungarian.

Table 1. Number of refusal strategies based on main refusal strategy type

	AE (n=2)	HE (n=12)	HH (n=12)
Direct	11 (18%)	72 (21%)	67 (20%)
Indirect	35 (56%)	213 (63%)	213 (65%)
Adjunct	16 (26%)	55 (16%)	49 (15%)
Mean (strategy/person)	31	28	27

American English native speakers (AE, n=2) used a total of 62 (mean: 31) refusal strategies in the DCT, as opposed to Hungarian EFL students in English (HE, n=12) used 340 (mean: 28) refusal strategies, and Hungarian EFL students in Hungarian (HH, n=12) used 329 (mean: 27) refusal strategies.

Regarding the main types of refusal strategies, all three groups (AE, HE, and HH) used indirect strategies most frequently. For the AE group, 56% of the total (n=35) strategies used in the DCT are indirect. For the HE group, indirect strategies make up 63% of the total (n=213) strategies used in the DCT. For the third group, HH, 65% of the total (n=213) strategies are indirect.

The second most favored main refusal strategy type for the AE group is adjuncts, with 26% (n=16) of the total refusal strategies. Meanwhile, for the HE and HH groups, the second most favored main refusal strategy type is the category of direct strategies: HE used 21% (n=72), while HH used 20% (n=67) of the total refusal strategies in the DCT.

The last, least favored category for the AE group is the category of direct refusal strategies, making up 18% (n=11) of the total strategies in the study. The least favored category for both the HE and the HH group is adjuncts: HE used 16% (n=55) adjuncts in the DTC, while HH used 15% (n=49).

It can be concluded that indirect strategies are the most favored by all three groups. This result is in line with previous research (cf. Szili 2002, Félix-Brasdefer

2008, Guo 2012, Csatlós 2014). However, there are some differences in the frequency of direct strategies and adjunct use by the AE vs. HE and HH groups.

4.2. Frequency of strategies
In the previous section, the frequency of the main types of refusals (direct, indirect, and adjuncts) was presented in order to highlight the differences between American English (AE) and Hungarian (HE and HH). In this section, the frequency of the sub-categories of those three main categories of refusals is presented in order to better compare the American English (AE) vs. the Hungarians in English (HE) vs. Hungarians in Hungarian (HH) refusal strategy use.

In order of the frequency of use, the AE group used 7 refusal strategy types that are as follows: explanation or excuse (19.3%), direct strategy (17.7%), expression of regret (12.9%), adjunct: gratitude or appreciation (11.3%), negative opinion or dissuading interlocutor (9.6%), evasion or postponement (4.8%), and wish (1.6%).

I the second group, HE used 13 types of refusal strategies that are in the order of the frequency as follows: explanation or excuse (26.4%), direct strategy (21.1%), expression of regret (12.6%), adverse opinion, or talking partner out (11.2%), adjunct: gratitude or appreciation (9.7%), evasion or postponement (5.6%), adjunct: positive opinion (5%), offering an alternative (3.2%), adjunct: empathy or sympathy (1.5%), statement of principle (1.2%), promise for future acceptance (0.8%), setting condition for acceptance in the future or past (0.6%), and wish (0.3%).

The last group, HH, used 11 types of refusal strategies in the DCT that are in the order of frequency as follows: explanation or excuse (25.8%), direct (20,4%), expression of regret (15.2%), negative opinion or dissuading interlocutor (10%), adjunct: gratitude or appreciation (9.4%), evasion or postponement (6.4%), adjunct: positive opinion (4.3%), offering an alternative (4%), statement of principle (1.5%), adjunct: empathy or sympathy (1.2%), and setting condition for acceptance in the future or past (0.6%).

Comparing the frequency of the refusal strategies between the three groups (AE, HE, and HH), it can be concluded that the three most frequent strategies used in the DTC (explanation or excuse, direct strategy, and expression of regret) are the same and they are in the same order of frequency in all three groups. In addition to this, the 8 most frequent refusal strategies used by the Hungarian participants in both cases (HE and HH) are the same. Moreover, they are in the same order of frequency: explanation or excuse, direct strategy, expression of regret, negative opinion or talking partner out, adjunct: gratitude or appreciation, evasion or postponement, adjunct: positive opinion, and offering an alternative.

Table 2 presents a more detailed distribution of the refusal strategies used in the DCT by the participants of the study, highlighting the strategies used in case of status

differences (higher, equal, and lower status) among the interlocutors. In the DCT, following Beebe et al.'s (1990) DCT, there are 12 situations: in 4 situations, the refuser's status is higher than their interlocutor's, in another 4 situations, the refuser's status is equal with their communication partner, while in the last 4 situations the status of the refuser is lower than their interlocutor's.

In the present DCT questionnaire, altogether 14 subtypes of refusal strategies can be distinguished based on Beebe et al.'s (1990) categorization, that are as follows: direct strategy, expression of regret, wish, explanation or excuse, offering an alternative, setting condition for past/future acceptance, the promise of future acceptance, statement of principle, negative opinion or dissuading interlocutor, acceptance that functions as a refusal, evasion or postponement, and adjunct that are distinguished into three subgroups (supportive opinion or agreement, empathy or sympathy, and gratitude or appreciation).

The AE group, regardless of their status compared to their interlocutors, preferred using direct strategies and evasion to a similar degree. However, when they were of a higher status than their interlocutors, they preferred using expressions of regret, explanation, promise, supportive opinion, and empathy. In contrast, when they were of a lower status than their communication partner, they preferred using a statement of principle, and talking partner out. When they were in equal status with their interlocutors, they preferred to use wish, offer an alternative, and show gratitude.

Table 2. Number of refusal strategies according to status of the refuser

	Higher status			Equal status			Lower status		
	AE	HE	HH	AE	HE	HH	AE	HE	HH
Direct	4 (36%)	21 (29%)	23 (34%)	4 (36%)	33 (46%)	33 (49%)	3 (28%)	18 (25%)	11 (17%)
Expression of regret	4 (50%)	11 (26%)	20 (40%)	1 (13%)	16 (37%)	15 (30%)	3 (37%)	16 (37%)	15 (30%)
Wish	0	0	0	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	0	0	0	0
Explanation or excuse	5 (71%)	29 (53%)	28 (47%)	2 (29%)	26 (47%)	0	0	0	31 (53%)
Offering an alternative	1 (34%)	2 (18%)	3 (23%)	2 (66%)	5 (45%)	6 (46%)	0	4 (37%)	4 (31%)
Setting condition for past/future acceptance	0	0	0	0	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Promise of future acceptance	1 (100%)	2 (66%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0	0	1	1 (50%)
Statement of principle	0	4 (100%)	4 (80%)	0	0	1 (20%)	1 (100%)	0	0
Negative opinion or talking partner out	0	15 (40%)	9 (27%)	0	11 (30%)	14 (42%)	1 (100%)	11 (30%)	10 (31%)
Acceptance that functions as a refusal	0	0	1 (50%)	0	2 (100%)	1 (50%)	0	0	0
Evasion or postponement	1 (33%)	5 (26%)	8 (38%)	1 (33%)	6 (32%)	4 (19%)	1 (33%)	8 (42%)	9 (43%)
Adjunct: supportive opinion or agreement	4 (50%)	8 (47%)	7 (50%)	1 (12%)	3 (18%)	3 (21%)	3 (38%)	6 (35%)	4 (29%)
Adjunct: Empathy or sympathy	1 (100%)	5 (100%)	3 (75%)	0	0	1 (25%)	0	0	0
Adjunct: Gratitude or appreciation	1 (14%)	3 (10%)	2 (6%)	4 (57%)	15 (45%)	13 (42%)	2 (29%)	15 (45%)	16 (52%)

When they were in a higher status than their interlocutor, the HE group preferred using explanation, promise, statement of principle, talking partner out, supportive opinion and empathy. However, they preferred using evasion and gratitude when they were of a lower status than their speech partner. In contrast, when they were both of equal status, they preferred using direct strategy, wish, alternative, acceptance that function as a refusal and expression of gratitude.

When the last group, HH, were of a higher status compared to their communicational partner, they mostly used regret, statement of principle, supportive opinion and empathy. In contrast, they preferred explanation, evasion, and expression of gratitude when they were of a lower status than their interlocutor. Moreover, in case of equal status, they preferred using direct strategy, offering an alternative, talking partner out, and expressing gratitude.

According to the findings of this research, both American English and Hungarian (HE and HH) used a combination of more than one strategy in all cases; therefore, the second hypothesis was correct. Moreover, the Hungarians used more strategies combined, and their American English counterparts have shown this pattern in their preferences. The second hypothesis also stated that Hungarians would prefer to use

indirect strategies, which also proved to be the case. Furthermore, Hungarians and American English have the highest occurrences of employing indirect strategies in their refusals.

To conclude this section, it can be concluded that both the first and second hypotheses were correct. There are some differences between American English and Hungarian refusal strategies, yet they would both employ more strategies combined and prefer indirect refusal strategies over the other two main types of strategies.

4.3. Pragmatic transfer

Following the findings of the previous section, this section reflects on the transfer phenomena found in the study. It provides specific examples of positive and negative transfer occurrences from the DCT questionnaire I conducted to provide more insight into the findings concerning the third hypothesis.

4.3.1. Positive transfer

The third hypothesis was that in the refusals of Hungarian EFL students, (L1) negative transfer could be found. In this study, there were several instances of pragmatic transfer phenomena. As suggested, negative transfer was visible in the refusals of the university students, and even positive transfer occurrences could be observed in the data. Although negative transfer occurrences were more prominent in number, there are some cases for the positive transfer phenomena as well.

In this subsection, an excerpt from the findings demonstrates positive transfer in Table 3. The first row of Table 3 illustrates a salesman inviting the participant to a restaurant to sign a contract. The answer to the salesman's question is left blank for the participant to fill in. To guarantee that this situation elicits a refusal, as designed by Beebe et al. (1990), in the end, the salesman responds to the participant's answer by saying *Perhaps another time*. For this situation, one of the AE participants responded first with an expression of regret (*I'm very sorry*), then explained their refusal (*but I already have an engagement that night*), and finally offered an alternative (*Perhaps another time?*). For the same situation, one of the Hungarian EFL students in English (HE) responded with a similar pattern: starting with an expression of regret (*Unfortunately*), followed by explaining (*I have other plans for now*). Even though HE did not give an alternative as their AE counterpart did, signs of positive transfer can be observed in this case's choice and order of refusal strategies. The same Hungarian EFL student's Hungarian refusal for this situation also included a direct refusal strategy (*nem tudok* 'I cannot') after the initial expression of regret (*Sajnálom* 'I am sorry').

Table 3. An example for the presence of positive transfer in the current study

DCT situation#3	Salesman: We have met several times to discuss your purchase of my company's products. I was wondering if you would like to be my guest at Tiszavirág restaurant in order to firm up a contract? You: ………………………………….. Salesman: Perhaps another time.
AE	I'm very sorry, but I already have an engagement that night. Perhaps another time?
HE	Unfortunately I have other plans for now.
HH	Sajnálom, de nem tudok most időt szakítani erre. 'Sorry but I cannot find the time for this right now.'

This example for the third DCT situation proves that positive transfer exists in the refusal strategies of the Hungarian EFL participants. It is fascinating to see that in all cases, however, there were more refusal strategies used. HE employed indirect strategies only, while HH used a direct refusal combined with another strategy.

4.3.2. Negative transfer
As mentioned in the previous subsection, negative transfer occurrences were more frequent than positive transfer in this study. Regardless of having some pragmatic knowledge, or the extent of language contact either directly (visiting foreign English-speaking countries for a period of time) or indirectly (via watching TV shows or movies), participants tended to show signs of negative transfer in their utterances.

Table 4 shows an excerpt for negative transfer. In the first row of Table 4, the situation itself can be seen where a fellow student asks for the participant's notes. Then a blank is left for the participant to complete, and to make sure a refusal is elicited here as well, following Beebe et al. (1990) DCT, classmate's answer is included after the interaction, saying that they will ask someone else. In the second row of Table 4, an AE refusal is presented. The AE participant first employed a negative opinion, more precisely a criticism (*You keep missing class and then asking for my notes. I feel like you're mooching off of me.*), then offered an alternative that also seemed like an indirect criticism in the form of an alternative (*Why don't you come to class and take your own notes?*). In the next row, one of the Hungarian EFL student's English refusal (HE) for this situation can be seen. In the English version (HE), the Hungarian student starts with employing an expression of regret first (*I am really sorry mate*), then uses a direct refusal (*but not this time*), then uses an explanation (*I need to study too, and cannot spare my notes right now.*), and lastly gives alternatives (*I have lent them [my notes] to you before, so you must have them somewhere. Or...try to find someone else who could give theirs to you.*). It can be seen that it is different from the AE refusal in terms of the number of refusal

strategies combined and the order of these semantic formulas. In the last row of Table 4 the Hungarian version (HH) of the refusal can be seen by the same Hungarian EFL student. Similarly, to its English (HE) version, the participant in the Hungarian (HH) version starts with using an expression of regret (*Bocs* 'Sorry'), then employs a direct refusal (*de most nem* 'but not now'), and lastly gives an explanation for the refusal (*nekem is készülnöm kell* 'I have to prepare too'). Even though in the HH version, the Hungarian EFL student employs one less refusal strategy than the HE version, the type and order of the first three refusal strategies match in both HE and HH versions. Therefore, it is a clearly negative transfer from Hungarian to English (HE).

Table 4. An example for the presence of negative transfer in the study

DCT situation#2	Classmate: Oh God! We have an exam tomorrow but I don't have notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes once again? You: ……………………………. Classmate: OK, then I guess I'll have to ask somebody else.
AE	You keep missing class and then asking for my notes. I feel like you're mooching off of me. Why don't you come to class and take your own notes?
HE	I am really sorry mate, but not this time. I need to study too, and cannot spare my notes right now. I have lent them [my notes] to you before, so you must have them somewhere. Or...try to find someone else who could give theirs to you.
HH	Bocs, de most nem, nekem is készülnöm kell. 'Sorry but not now, I have to prepare too.'

To sum up this subsection of this study, it is clear that negative (L1) transfer is also present in the refusal strategy choices and order of the semantic formulas found in the refusals of Hungarian EFL students.

5. Conclusion
In conclusion, this questionnaire was an attempt to contribute to interlanguage pragmatics research by collecting data on how Hungarian EFL university students formulate their refusals compared to their American English counterparts via an adaptation of a 12-item DCT, designed by Beebe et al. (1990). The questionnaire included two parts: the first part included the participants' biographical data, and for the Hungarian students, it included some relevant questions concerning their contact with the English language. The second part contained the 12-item DCT: the

American English native speakers filled out this questionnaire in English only, while the Hungarian university students filled it out in both English and Hungarian to observe if there is any transfer present in their refusals. The other primary purpose of this study is to observe the students' communicative competence in the target language, which is English. The results show that both American English participants and Hungarian EFL learners tend to combine more refusal strategies and prefer indirect refusal strategy use; however, Americans use more adjuncts in their refusals than their Hungarian counterparts use either in English or in Hungarian. Another important finding of the current study is that both positive and negative transfer can be found in the refusals of Hungarian university students. This study, therefore, provides some insight into the preferences of refusal strategies of Hungarian EFL learners and highlights the presence of the transfer phenomena in the refusal strategies of Hungarian EFL students.

References

Al-Shboul, Yasser & Huwari, Ibrahim. (2016). A comparative study of Jordanian Arabic and American English refusal strategies. *British Journal of English Linguistics* 4(3). 50–62.

Bándli Judit. (2014). A pragmatikai kompetencia fogalma a nyelvoktatásban. [The definition of pragmatic competence in language teaching] *A Magyar nyelv és kultúra tanításának szakfolyóirata*. 34-43.

Beebe, Leslie M, Tomoko Takahashi & Robin Uliss-Weltz. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (November). 55–70.

Chen, Yuanshan. (2009). Learner perceptions of instruction in L2 pragmatics. *English Language Teaching* 2(4). 154-161.

Csatlós Krisztina. (2014). Az angolul tanuló magyar hallgatók pragmatikai hibái – egy empirikus kutatásról. [Pragmatic errors of EFL learners – an empirical study] *Economica* 4. 13–24.

Demirkol, Tuba. (2016). How Do We Say "No" in English? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232(April). 792–799.

Echeverria Castillo, R. E. (2009). The role of pragmatics in Second Language Teaching. *MA TESOL Collection.* Paper 479.

Félix-Brasdefer, J. Cesar. (2008). *Politeness in Mexico and the United States*. John Benjamin Publishing Company.

Gass, S. & Houck, N. (1999). *Interlanguage refusals: A cross-cultural study of Japanese-English*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Guo, Yinling. (2012). Chinese and American refusal strategy: A cross-cultural approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 2(2). 247–256.

Hussein, Tamer Mohammed Hussein. (2017). Strategies of Refusal in American English and Egyptian Arabic Discourse. *Occasional Papers in the Development of English Education* 63(1). 243–270.

Kasper, Gabriele & Blum-Kulka, Shoshana. (Eds.). (1993). *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Odlin, Terence. (1989). *Language transfer: Cross-linguistic influence in language learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Szili Katalin. (2002). Hogyan is mondunk nemet magyarul? [How do we say no in Hungarian?] *Magyar Nyelvőr*. 126 (2). 204-220

Takahashi, Tomoko & Leslie Beebe. (1987). The development of pragmatic competence by Japanese learners of English. *JALT journal* 8(2). 131–155.

Žegarac, Vladimir & Martha C. Pennington, (2000). Pragmatic Transfer in Intercultural Communication. In: Helen Spencer-Oatey (ed), *Culturally Speaking. Managing rapport through talk across cultures*. London: Continuum (165 – 191).