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**PHD THESIS**

**COMMUNICATIVE ACT OF REFUSAL IN MULTICULTURAL  
PERSPECTIVE: LINGUOCOGNITIVE AND  
COMMUNICATIVE-PRAGMATIC PECULIARITIES**

(on the material of the Chinese, Japanese and Ukrainian languages)

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The PhD thesis contains the results of our research. The use of ideas, results, and texts of other authors is linked to the corresponding source.

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## АНОТАЦІЯ

*Цзян Цінчуань*. Комуникативний акт відмови в мультикультурній перспективі: лінгвокогнітивні та комуникативно-прагматичні особливості (на матеріалі китайської, японської та української мов). – Кваліфікаційна наукова праця на правах рукопису.

Дисертація на здобуття ступеня вищої освіти доктора філософії за фахом 035 Філологія – Київський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка, Міністерство освіти і науки України. – Київ, 2025.

Відмова як відповідь на прохання, пропозицію, запрошення мовця є комуникативним актом відмови (КАВ). КАВ як такий, що загрожує обличчю партнера по комунікації, є, по суті, неввічливим. У повсякденному житті люди неминуче стикаються з комуникативними ситуаціями, коли їм доводиться говорити «ні» у відповідь на запит, і, якщо відмову належним чином не вербалізувати, це може негативно вплинути на гармонію спілкування та міжособистісні стосунки. Тому необхідні певні комуникативні стратегії для запобігання можливості втрати обличчя адресантом та підвищення рівня ввічливості спілкування в цілому.

У дисертації розглянуто та класифіковано відповідні результати розвідок учених-лінгвістів для розуміння сучасного стану вітчизняних та зарубіжних досліджень КАВ з метою визначення подальших векторів наукового пошуку. Так, українськомовний комуникативний акт відмови, як з'ясувалося, майже зовсім не вивчений. Окрім того, опрацьований великий масив теоретичних відомостей з вивчення КАВ, що створило необхідну основу для його поглибленого вивчення. Сформульовано об'єкт і предмет дисертації, її ідеї, подано методи дослідження та джерела емпіричного матеріалу.

Проведено поглиблене вивчення важливих культурних чинників і лінгвоконцептів у трьох лінгвокультурах Китаю, Японії та України з метою інтердисциплінарної підтримки подальшого аналізу КАВ. Так, у рамках китайської лінгвокультури було досліджено основи конфуціанства та деякі важливі культурні концепти на кшталт 禮 (*lǐ*) (*етикет*), 人情 (*rén qíng*) (*послуга*), 面子 (*miàn zi*) (*обличчя*) тощо; у межах японської лінгвокультури були описані культурно заангажовані поняття «групової свідомості», «моноетнічного культурного менталітету», «甘え (*ame*) – менталітету», тощо; у рамках української лінгвокультури було досліджено поняття «козацька культура» та лінгвоконцепт *ВОЛЯ* тощо.

Для формування корпусу КАВ було проведено суцільну вибірку з літературних творів трьох лінгвокультур; частина з них була сформована за результатами опитувальника Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Анкета-опитувальник була розроблена за 10 сценаріями, які часто зустрічаються в житті, із урахуванням тем можливих запитів (прохання, запрошення, пропозиція), які могли б викликати комунікативну дію відмови. У дослідженні обидві частини емпіричного матеріалу використовувалися паралельно.

На першому етапі нашого дослідження комунікативні стратегії, які використовувалися в акті відмови, були поділені на поверхневі та глибинні, з подальшим поділом поверхневих стратегій на ті, що здійснюються за рахунок засобів лексичного або синтаксичного рівня. Назагал було вирізнено 21 стратегію. Далі, на другому етапі дослідження, було здійснено всебічний аналіз реалізації стратегій відмови на відібраному емпіричному матеріалі трьох мов. На третьому

етапі роботи комунікативні акти відмови у корпусах трьох мов було класифіковано і на основі арифметичних підрахунків представлені превалюючі тенденції вибору стратегії відмови у трьох лінгвокультурах. Були запропоновані культурологічно заангажовані пояснення саме такого, а не іншого, розподілу тенденцій вибору комунікативних стратегій відмови у відповідних лінгвокультурах.

Були зроблені такі висновки:

КАВ у різних лінгвокультурах зумовлені особливостями певної культури і мають свою специфіку. У висококонтекстних культурах, таких як китайська та японська, КАВи є більш евфемістичними та імпліцитними, мовці для передачі інформації більше покладаються на контекст, аніж на вербалізацію. У китайській та японській мовах контекст відіграє надважливу роль. Зокрема, японці широко використовують еліптичні речення, залишаючи адресатові заповнювати пропущені змістові частини відповідно до контексту. Натомість культури низькоконтекстні передають інформацію переважно через використовуваний мовний код. Оскільки українська культура належить до низькоконтекстних, це зумовлює такі характеристики українського КАВ, як транспарантність, зрозумілість та цілеспрямованість. Спілкування між українцями не ґрунтується на здогадках і припущеннях про справжні наміри одне одного.

У традиційній китайській лінгвокультурі, яка сформувалася під впливом конфуціанства, великого значення набувають такі культурні концепти, як 禮 (*lǐ*) (етикет), 人情 (*rén qíng*) (послуга), 面子 (*miàn zi*) (обличчя), що також суттєво позначається на специфіці вербального перебігу КАВ. Так, у китайській

лінгвокультурі існує унікальне явище - комунікативний акт уявної відмови (КАУВ). А в японській лінгвокультурі завдяки моноетнічності та географічному положенню острівної країни сформувалося поняття 甘え (ame) - менталітет, який реалізується вербально широким вживанням неоднозначних виразів і еліптичних речень. Східнослов'янська та козацька культури, успадковані Україною, зумовили віддзеркалення в мові духу прагнення до волі, неприйнятність порушення «червоних ліній», що постає у прямоті й щирості спілкування, у тому числі, і у відповідних особливостях реалізації КАВ.

Оскільки мова є носієм культури, комунікативний акт відмови у різних лінгвокультурах має свої особливості. В силу специфіки комунікативного акту відмови, який може загрожувати обличчю комунікантів і суперечити принципам ввічливості, необхідно зважувати на ті унікальні культурні чинники, що стоять за ним, детермінуючи його перебіг, особливо коли йдеться про міжкультурну комунікацію.

Здійснений у пропонованій дисертації інтердисциплінарний порівняльний аналіз відмінностей реалізації КАВ у межах трьох лінгвокультур – китайської, японської і української – сприятиме кращому усвідомленню лінгвопрагматичних нюансів відмови як особливого комунікативного акту в контексті міжкультурної комунікації.

*Ключові слова: мовна прагматика, комунікативний акт відмови, комунікативна тактика, етнічна мовна культура, китайська мова, японська мова, українська мова, літературний дискурс, культурні концепти, міжкультурна комунікація, фразеологія, когнітивна прагматика, мовні*

*маніпуляції*

## ABSTRACT

*Jiang Qingchuan. Communicative Act of Refusal in Multicultural Perspective: Linguocognitive and Communicative-Pragmatic Peculiarities (on the material of the Chinese, Japanese and Ukrainian Languages).*

Dissertation for obtaining the scientific degree of Candidate of Philological Sciences (Doctor of Philosophy) in Scientific Educational Program 37106 Philology. – Educational and Scientific Institute of Philology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, 2025.

In communication, the communicative act of refusing to respond to the speaker's request, suggestion, invitation, offer, etc., is a refusal communicative act (RCA). RCA as essentially a Face-threatening Act (FTA), which is impolite. In daily life, people will inevitably encounter situations where they have to say no to a response, but if not handled properly, it will usually affect the harmony of communication and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, some strategies are needed to remedy the situation, such as reducing the threat to the other party's face and increasing politeness. As an essential pragmatic topic, RCA is attracting more and more attention.

This thesis reviewed and sorted out the relevant research results of predecessors to understand the current domestic and foreign status of research on RCA and further find the new entry point for the research, which is that there is little research on Ukrainian RCA. In addition, the important theoretical framework required for the research was introduced and studied in depth. At the same time, the research object, research ideas, research methods, and corpus sources of this article were also explained.

The paper conducts an in-depth study of the important cultural factors and concepts in the three languages and cultural backgrounds of China, Japan, and Ukraine to support the subsequent analysis of RCA fully. Such as the Chinese cultural background of Confucianism, and some essential cultural concepts and notions as: 礼 (*lǐ*) (*etiquette*), 人情 (*rén qíng*) (*favor*), 面子 (*miàn zi*) (*face*), etc.; Japanese *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS*, “mono-ethnic cultural mentality”, “甘え (*amae*) Mentality”, etc.; Ukraine’s East Slavic cultural background, Cossack culture and cultural concept of *ВОЛЯ* (*volya*), etc.

The RCAs in the corpus are selected from literary works of three cultures, and part of them is obtained through the results of the Discourse-Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire. The dialogues between characters in literary works are close to life, with rich themes and scenes, complex psychological activities of literary characters, and context. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was designed with 10 scenarios often encountered in life, taking into account the topics of possible requests (request, invitation, suggestion, offer) to elicit refusal communicative acts. In the study, both sources of empirical material were used in combination and supported each other.

Firstly, language strategies are divided into superficial and deep strategies, while the superficial strategies are further divided according to the lexical or syntactic levels of their realization. There are 21 items in total. Based on this, combined with RCA corpora, the specific implementation and analysis of refusal strategies in RCAs in three languages were carried out. Subsequently, the RCAs in the corpora of the three languages were classified and counted, and the strategy selection tendencies presented

were interpreted and compared in combination with their respective cultural backgrounds. The conclusions are briefly as follows:

The RCAs in different cultures are influenced by their cultural backgrounds and present their own characteristics. In high-context cultures, such as Chinese and Japanese the RCAs are more euphemistic and implicit and rely more on the role of context than the language code to convey information. Context plays a significant role in Chinese and Japanese. The Japanese are particularly inclined to use elliptical sentences, so the omitted content needs to be filled in by the listener according to the context. However, in contrast, low-context cultures convey information primarily through language encoding. Therefore, since Ukrainian culture belongs to a low-context one, this also leads to such speech characteristics of Ukrainians as being concise, clear, and purposeful. Communication does not rely on guessing and speculating on each other's true intentions. Thus, if compared, the Ukrainian RCAs are more concise and clear.

Under the influence of traditional culture dominated by Confucianism, the Chinese attaches great importance to 礼 (*lǐ*) (*etiquette*), 人情 (*rén qíng*) (*favor*), 面子 (*miàn zi*) (*face*), which is also reflected in the appropriateness of language and the implicitness of expressions. In addition, due to the observance of etiquette, a unique phenomenon exists in Chinese culture – the Ostensible Refusal Communicative Act (ORCA). Due to its single ethnic group, geographical location as an island country, and the resulting 甘え (*ame*) mentality, the Japanese language is extremely ambiguous, especially in the part of widely used elliptical sentences. The East Slavic and Cossack cultures inherited by Ukraine have allowed the spirit of pursuing *FREE WILL* (*volya*)

to be passed down from generation to generation. People don't want their "red lines" to be violated, so their speech acts are straightforward and sincere.

Because of the difference between collectivist and individualistically oriented cultures, China and Japan, which belong to a collectivist culture, emphasize harmony with the overall situation in daily life, and people tend to hide their personalities. In particular, Japan's "group conscientiousness" makes its RCA more unique. Ukraine, located in Europe and influenced by Western culture, advocates pursuing personal freedom, which also makes its RCA authentic. However, as the world continues to develop and cultures continue to blend, there is an overall trend of rising individualism and declining collectivism. This can be supported to some extent by the results of the study the Chinese corpus.

From the perspective of social hierarchy, both China and Japan are deeply influenced by Confucianism, but combined with their national characteristics, great differences have been formed. China is essentially a hierarchical society, with certain requirements for respect and inferiority, and accordingly, speech acts must be appropriate. However, Japanese society is even more hierarchical, with a strong sense of hierarchy and extremely strict requirements for speech and behavior. Due to the characteristics of Japan itself reflected in the language, even different sentence structures have different levels of politeness. Therefore, when implementing a RCA that might damage the relationship between the two parties, the Japanese speech arsenal must be carefully considered and used with extreme caution. However, as a parallel society, Ukrainians are insensitive to social hierarchies, and the idea of "equality for all" permeates life. The freedom of individuality and freedom of thought

are highly advocated. Therefore, this leads to more straightforward interactions between people without too much caution to state out their opinions. On the other hand, Ukraine is a religious country deeply influenced by the doctrine of equality, friendship, and freedom. Therefore, interpersonal relationships are less complicated, and communicative acts if compared are much more straightforward.

Since language is the carrier of culture, speech communicative acts in different cultures have their peculiarities. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze them in combination with cultural factors to have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding. RCA, as a face-threatening act, may cause the break of interrelationship between the two parties and also be contrary to politeness. Therefore, to maintain the harmony of interpersonal relationships and to guarantee the smooth communication between the two parties, attention should be paid to the RCA in the context of corresponding cultural background.

This paper interprets and compares RCA in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian through essential cultural concepts and notions of the corresponding lingual cultures shaped by history, religious beliefs, and national mentality. Under the guidance of relevant theories such as Speech Act Theory (SAT) and “Face-saving” Theory (FST), etc., the research aimed to examine the RCAs of the three languages more comprehensively and clearly. The dynamic analysis of the three languages, the exploration of their pragmatic differences, and the cultural reasons behind them will help promote the success in cross-cultural communication.

*Keywords: lingual pragmatics, communicative act of refusal, communicative tactics, ethnic lingual culture, Chinese language, Japanese language, Ukrainian language,*

*literary discourse, cultural concepts, inter/crosscultural communication, phraseology, cognitive, pragmatic, language manipulation.*

## List of publications of the applicant on the topic of the dissertation

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1. Jiang Qingchuan, *SPEECH ACT OF REFUSAL IN CHINESE AND JAPANESE LINGUAL CULTURES: CONTEMPORARY THEORETICAL APPROACHES*. STUDIA LINGUISTICA, 2021. – Vol. 19 : 166-175.

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**b. Co-published articles:**

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9. *Jiang Qingchuan*. Pragmatics of Refusal Speech Acts in Chinese and Ukrainian Languages: A Comparative Analysis. *The Lingual Sphere of Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow*. КНУ. 2024. С. 158 – 159.

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## **Introduction**

The research is devoted to the investigation of linguocognitive and linguopragmatic peculiarities of direct, indirect, and implicit speech acts of refusal in contemporary Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian languages. The topic in focus will strongly relate to the language code of politeness category in every lingual culture.

Though the theory of speech acts has a long history of evolution and could be regarded as a developed one, there are still some white spots (lacunes) in the field of the variety of communicative tactics used when giving refusal, mode of their verbal/nonverbal realization (explicit/implicit; direct/indirect). We also see the **actuality** of the proposed topic in its essence for maintaining non-conflict speech communication in the process of which indirect and implicit speech acts play a very significant role.

The actuality of the proposed research is also determined by its anthropocentric vector, putting Homo loquens into the center of the researcher's attention regarding his/her language and speech arsenal, communicative and social competence, cognitive sphere, presuppositions, stereotypes of communication, cultural concepts and so on. Moreover, we plan to investigate verbal and nonverbal components of speech refusal communication in a contrastive vein, based on the speech activity of the bearers of the Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian languages. These languages are not genetically related and have absolutely different typological structures (root, agglutinative, and inflectional ones); the cultures that these languages embody are very far from one another in various social dimensions, though geographically, China and Japan are located relatively close to each other. Supposedly, it causes **sharp**

**cultural contrasts**, which could be studied in many ways: we are going to focus on different scenario frames within which communicative acts of refusals are taking place in the contrasted lingual cultures.

We are putting forward **a hypothesis** according to which communicative act of refusal in every lingual culture could be seen as a certain frame scenario with a certain set of communicative tactics and communicative steps, which are verbalized by lingual units belonging to different levels of language structure.

**The object** of our investigation is a communicative act of refusal, which is being realized within the dialogue unit of the text (initial – reactive utterance) and studied on the material of Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian drama pieces (XIX-XX-early XXI cent.). It serves a sort of regulator of interpersonal relations.

**The subject** of our research are verbal-semantic, cognitive, communicative-pragmatic, and linguocultural characteristics of refusal communicative acts in three lingual communities – Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian.

This work mainly aims to identify common and national specific features of refusal communicative acts of different types (direct, indirect, implicit) in three studied lingual cultures on verbal-semantic, cognitive, and communicative levels of lingual personality.

In accordance with the stated purpose of the study, we distinguish **the following tasks**:

1) to formulate theoretical foundations of the study in the context of the purpose mentioned above;

2) to propose the model of the refusal communicative act in terms of scenario

frame;

3) to give the classification of the possible types of refusal communicative acts (direct, indirect, implicit);

4) to establish the most typical lingual means for the modern Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian languages, mediating the realization of the direct, indirect, and implicit ways of refusing.

**The theoretical-methodological basis** of the research is formed by contributions developed in the field of Speech Act Theory (SAT); Face-saving theory; the Theory of communicative and pragmatic linguistics, and the Relevance Theory (RT).

**The scientific novelty** of the proposed research lies in the fact that the work, for the first time, will present the verbal-semantic, cognitive-communicative, and linguocultural formats of the investigated communicative act of refusal, its types (direct, indirect, and implicit) in comparative mode on the material of three languages having different genetics and typology.

**The research material** will be presented by about 1000 Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian dialogical units (for each language) selected by the method of continuous sampling from the works of fiction by Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian writers of the XIX-XX-early XXI centuries, as well as the corpus formed through questionnaire. The data of etymological, phraseological, and explanatory dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms, and encyclopedic electronic sources will also be used.

**Methodology of the research.** The study of empirical material will be carried out on the basis of **various methods and approaches**, which include the following

as main ones: verbal semantic analysis, component semantic analysis, context-situational (discourse) analysis; conceptual analysis; method of pragmatic interpretation, method of presuppositional-contextual analysis, interactional and intentional analysis, frame and scenario modeling, method of quantitative analysis.

**The theoretical significance** of the proposed work, as we see it, is in the development of the statements of the general theory of communication and Speech Act Theory (SAT); it throws light on the essence and patterns of constructing dialogical units of refusal in different communicative-scenario verbalizations determined by cultural specifics; contributes into research methodology of communicative-structural, communicative-pragmatic and cultural models of speech refusal, etc.

**The practical significance** of the proposed research is seen in the possibility of application of the obtained results when reading a course of lectures on general linguistics, in various special courses on linguistic pragmatics, discourse analysis, comparative linguistic culturology, hermeneutic interpretation of the text, etc.

The scientific data we obtained in the process of our research could find application in the compilation of textbooks of a new type, focusing on intercultural communication, as well as in teaching a practical course in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian as foreign languages in a part of developing and adequate communicative skill.

## **I. Theoretical And Methodological Basis of the Work**

### **1.1. Refusal and Refusal Communicative Act (RCA): Different Approaches to the Definition**

A. S. Hornby's Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary states "refusal" as follows: an act of saying or showing that you will not do, give or accept something (*A.S. Hornby, 2012:1280*).

In the "Modern Chinese Dictionary (5th)", "Refusal" is defined as: "Do not accept (request, opinion or gift, etc.)" (*Dictionary Editing Office of the Institute of Linguistics of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2005: 740*).

According to the Moji Japanese Dictionary, "refusal" means to decline, not being able to take the other party's offer (<https://www.mojidict.com>).

In J. C. Felix Brasdefer's opinion, refusals are "complex speech acts that require not only long sequences of negotiation and cooperative achievement but also face-saving maneuvers to accommodate the noncompliant nature of the act" (*Felix Brasdefer, 2008: 196*).

P. Mashiri states that the act of refusal "occurs when a speaker directly or indirectly says "no" to a request, invitation, offer, or suggestion" (*P. Mashiri, 2002:121*).

**According to Chinese studies**, in particular, Zhao Huaizhi refusal is a response behavior made by the speaker to deny the hearer's suggestion to participate in a particular behavior (*Zhao Huaizhi, 2009:193*).

Wang Fenglan defines that refusal means not to accept. In terms of language, refusal may mean not accepting other people's suggestions, opinions, or criticisms or

not accepting favors or gifts from others (*Wang Fenglan, 2003: 28*).

Su Lijing suggests that “Refusal” is a kind of “response negation”. The so-called “response negation” is a verbal reaction activity, which refers to the expression of negation, opposition, and disapproval in a broad sense of the opinions and attitudes expressed by the communicative party’s discourse content in communication. In a specific context, the communicator does not directly express this negative intention but in indirect ways (*Su Lijing, 2000: 1; 4*).

Feng Guiqin takes “Refusal” as a process in which the subject does not accept the “benefit” or “loss” of the object in interpersonal communication, a kind of behavior, and the transmission of relevant information. At the same time, it is also a way for the subject to change the attitude, belief, or behavior of the object by providing the object with an information source that reflects the subject’s “non-acceptance” idea so that the information sender and the information receiver cooperate to establish a consensus (*Feng Guiqin, 2006: 13*).

Ran Yongping regards the speech act of “refusal” as a kind of “non-cooperative” choice made by the speaker after the request, invitation, or suggestion of the other party (*Ran Yongping, 2006: 93*).

Luan Yimin gives the definition of the refusal speech act is the speaker’s rejection of the listener’s command behavior (*Luan Yimin, 2011: 36*).

Chang Shan considers the refusal speech act refers to that in the process of verbal communication, the passive party uses words to deny the request, demand, arrangement, invitation, suggestion, etc. put forward by the active party that can affect his behavior. The speech act process is called the refusal speech act (*Chang*

*Shan, 2014: 12).*

**Japanese researchers** Ozaki Yoshimitsu and Kiyoshiki Sugito state that “refusal” is “a speech act which conveys that you cannot meet expectations or favors” (*Ozaki Yoshimitsu et al., 2006: 89).*

Yamaguchi Kazuyo: “Refusal” is a speech act that has the risk of finalizing a situation where the listener is about to lose the balance due to a speech act such as making a request (*Yamaguchi Kazuyo, 1997: 39).*

**Ukrainian scholars** Oksana Maksyuk, and Natalia Maksyuk point out that the refusal acts, as polylocutionary units by their nature, reveal a wide functional variability of the speaker’s intention (*Oksana Maksyuk et al., 2017: 11).*

Nadiya Oleksyuk states that a refusal is a speech act of reaction that occurs when the interests of the speaker and the listener do not coincide. [Відмова – мовленнєвий акт реакції, який виникає при незбіганні інтересів мовця і слухача.] (*Nadiya Oleksyuk, 2005: 152)*

**In conclusion**, the definition of the communicative act of refusal in the thesis is “a communicative act of uncooperative response to a specific request (such as request, suggestion, invitation, offer, etc.)”.

## **1.2. Characteristics of Refusal Communicative Acts (RCA)**

### **1.2.1. Refusal is an essentially impolite communicative act.**

It is well known that politeness is a universal phenomenon in human communication. It can be found that “Politeness is best expressed as the practical application of good manners or etiquette” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politeness>). American linguist R. T. Lakoff defines politeness as “a system of interpersonal

relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange” (*G. Eelen, 2001: 2*). In interpersonal communication, one should satisfy others’ “expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement” (*Gu Yueguo, 1992: 245*).

However, some communicative acts can inevitably run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker. For instance, in the following situations: when a person cannot meet the needs or requests of another person or cannot provide help to the other person; when a person declines another person’s invitation or help; when a person rejects another person’s proposal or suggestion, etc. Refusal communicative act as an act against the other party’s will is a conflicting and offensive communicative act in terms of the relationship between communicators. The phenomenon of ostensible refusal communicative act in Chinese culture is a special case; on the contrary, it represents politeness. But generally speaking, “Refusal” can be considered essentially impolite.

### **1.2.2. Refusal is a Face-threatening communicative act.**

E. Goffman states: “Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants” (*E. Goffman, 1967: 5*). However, “Refusal” as an act against the other party’s will, carries the risk of hurting the other person’s self-esteem and damaging interpersonal relationships. As one of the essential behaviors in our daily life, one should be cautious with taking refusal communicative acts. According to P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, “Refusal” is a face-threatening act that essentially threatens the face of others (*P. Brown et al., 1987: 62*).

Therefore, in daily life, to maintain good interpersonal relationships and communication, it is necessary to use “refusal communicative acts” that are appropriate at a particular time and fit the situation as a whole. Because the characteristic given to this kind of speech act is “face-threatening”, the adoption of the right strategies in the situation of refusal is critically necessary: they will facilitate refusal when people encounter situations where they cannot avoid refusing other people’s requests or suggestions. If the appropriate strategies are not used during the refusal process, it is likely to cause communication failure, making the addressee feel uncomfortable and emotionally hurt.

### **1.2.3. Refusal is a strongly culture-relevant communicative act.**

It is well known that language is the carrier of culture. Different cultural backgrounds will inevitably lead to very different language expressions and communication methods. In addition, any ethnic language as a socially determined phenomenon, is a bearer of some social parameters, and its concrete realization in the communicative acts depends on the specificity of a certain social group. Therefore, there are many ways to express refusal by means of any ethnic language.

Since speakers are used to express their intentions, convey various information, and to produce speech, they are affected by the collective thinking style and the way the society conducts the speech processes. It also can be said that different structures of languages and their social/cultural backgrounds will inevitably lead to different characteristics of speech expressions. As far as the refusal communicative act is concerned, even if it is manifested in the same situation and has the same expressions, it might convey different meanings in different lingual cultures. Moreover, even the

same “refusal communicative act” could be questioned for its appropriateness due to differences in ethnicity, gender, affiliation, closeness, and even geographical differences. This is enough to prove that “Refusal” is a strongly culture-dependent communicative act.

#### **1.2.4. Refusal is a highly context-dependent communicative act.**

From the perspective of psychology, cognitive context refers to the consideration and involvement of context in all aspects of cognition, including language, reasoning, and memory (*H. C. Steven et al., 1995: 58*). The notion of cognitive context was proposed by French cognitive scientist D. Sperber & British linguist D. Wilson. In their *Relevance Theory*, “cognitive context” is a set of assumptions stored in a human being’s brain, communication is an ostensive-inferential process and language users abide by the principle of relevance. To the writer/speaker, communication is an ostensive process, that is, to present his/her communicative intention as clearly as possible. To the hearer/reader, communication is an inferential process. According to the ostensive behaviour of the speaker/writer, the hearer/reader achieves the communicative intention by combining the linguistic form with contextual assumptions (*Shen Lihong, 2013: 557*).

The cognitive context contains a variety of information, including not only specific contextual factors (context of the utterance during communication, immediate material environment), but also a person’s knowledge factors, such as information, facts, assumptions, beliefs, and a person’s cognitive abilities. For both parties in communication, differently structured cognitive contexts are being formed due to different understandings of the objective world in natural and social senses,

differences in the world knowledge or encyclopedic knowledge they might acquired. Communication is the process in which both the addresser and the addressee construct and choose the appropriate cognitive context for communicating successfully (*Shen Lihong, 2013: 562*). Whether the listener can recognize the speaker's purpose or intention, and whether the communication can be successful, all depends on their consensus on the cognitive context.

In terms of speech acts in E. T. Hall's "high-context culture", a large amount of information is not encoded into communication through language but is mainly understood by the communicators based on their context (*E. T. Hall, 1997: 99*). It emphasizes expressing thoughts, ideas, and communication content indirectly. Therefore, especially within the refusal communicative act, which carries the risk of hurting the other person's face, in "high-context culture", (China and Japan), indirect and vague expressions are usually adopted during communication. The words expressing refusal are often omitted, and the speaker's true intention — "to refuse"-requires the listener to make further inferences on his own based on the context.

According to the scholars' vision of communicative act of refusal: a. Rejections are dispreferred seconds (or dispreferreds) in the adjacency pairs<sup>1</sup> (*S. C. Levinson, 1983: 308*); b. Refusal is a competitive speech act, that is, refusing a request is contrary to the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity, so refusal is essentially impolite (*G. Leech, 1983: 104*); c. A refusal is a face-threatening act that essentially threatens the face of others (*P. Brown et al., 1987: 62*). The characteristics

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**1 An adjacency pair** is an example of conversational turn-taking in linguistics. An adjacency pair is composed of two utterances by two speakers, one after the other. The speaking of the first utterance (the first-pair part, or the first turn) provokes a responding utterance (the second-pair part, or the second turn).

of a refusal communicative act could be summarized as above in terms of the four aspects, that is, in other words, it is a speech act which is essentially impolite and face-threatening, with strongly culture-relevant and highly context-dependent feature.

**In conclusion,** there are four main characteristics of “Refusal” that can be pointed out. That is, first, “Refusal” is an essentially impolite communicative act; Second, “Refusal” is a Face-threatening communicative act; Third, “Refusal” is a strongly culture-relevant communicative act. Last, “Refusal” is a highly context-dependent communicative act.

### **1.3. Classification of Refusal Communicative Acts (RCA)**

For the research on the types of refusal communicative acts, different scholars have come up with different classifications based on different perspectives.

In her research, Tang Ling proposed that the sequence of refusal speech acts generally includes three parts: “the initial action”, “the auxiliary action”, and “the central action”. Based on the analysis of the questionnaire results, she divided refusal into “direct refusal”, “indirect refusal”; “strong refusal” and “implicit refusal”. In addition, Tang Ling explored the relationship between them and summarized the characteristics of the usage of refusal strategies (*Tang Ling, 2004: 117*).

According to the classification of Yan Xiaochun there are subjective and objective classifications: from the former classification, refusals can be divided into strong refusals and tactful refusals; the latter, they can be divided into direct refusals and indirect refusals (*Yan Xiaochun, 2007: 11*).

Based on the typology of Gao Xiao’an, RCAs in modern Chinese might be classified as sincere refusals and false refusals. Sincere refusals follow Yan

Xiaochun's classification, and false refusals are divided into three categories: procedural, purposeful, and joke (*Gao Xiao'an, 2010: 17*).

Chang Shan states that due to the different classification standards RCA might be classified this way: 1) according to the content of the proposition that the speaker wants to refuse, it is divided into the refusal of requests, requirements, arrangements, suggestions, invitations, etc.; 2) according to how the refusal is made, it can be divided into direct refusal, indirect refusal, etc.; 3) according to the tone of refusal, it can be divided into strong refusal and euphemistic refusal; 4) according to whether the rejecter really means to refuse or not, it can be divided into sincere refusal and false refusal (*Chang Shan, 2014: 12*).

Wu Yan mentions findings that show that refusal speech acts include direct refusal speech acts in incisive, self-abasement language and indirect refusal speech acts in self-deprecating, normative language (*Wu Yan, 2015: 319*).

According to Ma Jing: based on the analysis of the refusal content, it can be divided into direct refusal and indirect refusal objectively; sincere refusal and false refusal. Based on the refusal form, it can be divided into assertion class, instruction class, promise class, statement class, and declaration class (*Ma Jing, 2020: 9*).

Yang Jie notes that any speech act is completed by more than two speakers. Therefore, based on the perspective of different speakers, the speech act of refusal can be divided into different types. In her research, from the listener's perspective and according to the speaker's refusal, she roughly divides speech acts of refusal into five categories: direct refusal, indirect refusal, pretense refusal, vague refusal and rhetorical refusal (*Yang Jie, 2011: 13*).

**In conclusion**, through research on the types of refusal communicative acts, researchers have given different classifications based on various perspectives. There is no unified classification, nor is it possible to provide a single, prescribed classification. Because language is deeply rooted in cultural reality and people's living customs, "culture is frozen interpersonal communication, while communication is flowing culture" (*Wang Fengyan et al., 2004: 12*). Therefore, based on various cultural backgrounds, different cultural psychology, and diverse cultural perspectives, etc., researchers have different classifications of RCA in their studies.

#### **1.4. Speech Act Theory (SAT)**

Speech Act Theory (SAT) was proposed by English philosopher J. L. Austin who gave a series of lectures first at Oxford University in 1951-1954 and then at Harvard University in 1955. Later, J. L. Austin delivered the William James Lectures at Harvard, which were posthumously published under the title "*How to Do Things with Words*" (*J. L. Austin, 1962*). The theory expounded in these lectures challenged the "descriptive fallacy", a central doctrine of logical positivism that refers to reasoning which treats a speech act as a logical proposition, which would be mistaken when the meaning of the statement is not based on its truth condition (*Bunnin Nicholas et al., 2004*).

J. L. Austin believes that many statements are "pseudo-statements" because these "utterances which look like statements are either not intended at all, or only intended in part, to record or impart straightforward information about the facts" (*J. L. Austin, 1962: 2*). Therefore, J. L. Austin distinguished two major categories of

utterances: “constative” and “performative”. The constative utterance can be verified, that is, it is either true or false. However, the performative utterance cannot be verified, and it does not matter whether it is true or false. Because it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action and it is not normally thought of as just saying something used to perform an action (*J. L. Austin, 1962: 6*). J. L. Austin uses four famous examples to illustrate it:

a. “I do (sc. Take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife).” (as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony)

b. “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth.” (as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem)

c. “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother.” (as occurring in a will)

d. “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow.” (as occurring in a bet)

As in the examples above, when the speaker says these words, he is not making a statement or description but completing an action — marrying, christening, baptizing, betting. In addition, although these four examples are all utterances used in certain customary cultural activities, there are many situations where people can do things by saying, such as “I promise...”, “I apologize...”, “I welcome...”, etc. People are performing actions of “promise”, “warning”, “apology” and “welcome” by uttering words.

Here, the performative utterances have to meet the following three “happiness/felicity conditions”:

a. (i) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure includes the uttering of certain words by certain

persons in certain circumstances, and further,

(ii) The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.

b. The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely.

c. Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further must so conduct themselves subsequently. (*J. L. Austin, 1962:14*)

Correspondingly, J. L. Austin proposed two syntactic forms of performative utterances. One is the utterance with “the first person singular present indicative active”, such as “I agree...”, “I promise... ”; The other one is the utterance with “the second/third person (singular or plural) present indicative passive”, such as “Passengers are requested to cross the line by the bridge only.” Later, J. L. Austin claims that the explicit performatives can be reinforced by adding the adverb “hereby”. That is, after inserting the word “hereby” into the utterances that conform to the above syntactic forms, the meaning of the utterance is still unchanged and smooth, then it is seen as a performative utterance. Thus, “I (hereby) inform you...” and “Passengers (hereby) are requested to cross the line by the bridge only.” belong to performative utterances, while “I (hereby) play football every day” and “I (hereby) take a bath every day” are not. That is, “hereby” is a useful criterion that the utterance

is performative (*J. L. Austin, 1962:57*).

However, because of the complexity of the utterances, there are problems and confusion in the explanation of such linguistic phenomena. Therefore, J. L. Austin takes a different perspective and continues exploring it, abandoning the dichotomy between performatives and constatives. It is a shift from the dichotomy of performative/constative to a general theory of illocutionary acts of which the various performatives and constatives are just special sub-cases (*J. L. Austin, 1962:231*). J. L. Austin develops the performative utterances and comes up with the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts:

**A locutionary act** is roughly equivalent to uttering a particular sentence with a certain sense and reference, which again is roughly equivalent to “meaning” in the traditional sense. **An illocutionary act** refers to the utterances that have a certain (conventional) force, such as informing, ordering, warning, undertaking, etc.; **A perlocutionary act** refers to what we bring about or achieve by saying something, such as convincing, persuading, deterring, and even, say, surprising or misleading. (*J. L. Austin, 1962:108*). For example, if the locutionary act in interaction is the question “*Is there any salt?*” the implied illocutionary request is “*Can someone pass the salt to me?*”, and the perlocutionary act is “*To make the listener do what you want him to do, that is, pass the salt here.*” And J. L. Austin classified illocutionary acts into five types: verdictives, executives, commissives, behavitives and expositives.

Austin’s speech act theory was further developed by other scholars, particularly J. R. Searle, his American pupil at Oxford who later became a famous philosopher. J. R. Searle takes the term “speech act” to refer to what J. L. Austin calls an

“illocutionary act”. And J. R. Searle points out that “the basic unit of human linguistic communication is the illocutionary act” (*J. R. Searle, 1976: 1*). J. R. Searle’s 1965 paper ‘*What is a speech act*’ is based on the hypothesis ‘that the semantics of a language can be regarded as a series of system of constitutive rules and that illocutionary acts are acts performed in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules’ (*J. R. Searle 1972: 140*).

Based on Austin’s classification, J. R. Searle pointed out some deficiencies and gave clearer classification standards by identifying 12 dimensions of variation that differentiate speech acts, the three most important of which are: “the illocutionary point”, “the direction of fit” and “the expressed psychological state”. He further presented the new categories of illocutionary acts based on the above three dimensions, which are: “representatives”, “directives”, “commissives”, “expressives”, and “declarations”.

Another important classification of speech acts by J. R. Searle is that speech acts can be classified into direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. J. R. Searle defined indirect speech acts as “cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly by way of performing another” (*J. R. Searle, 1979: 31*). For example, when someone is drinking soup, he says: “This soup is not salty enough.” In the literal meaning of the sentence, this is a description of the taste of the soup, but in fact, the speaker wants others to pass him salt. Similarly, the speaker can request to open the air conditioner or close the window of the room just by saying “It’s cold.”

J. R. Searle points out that in these cases, two illocutionary acts are used simultaneously, that is, the primary illocutionary act and the second illocutionary act.

The primary illocutionary act refers to the actual means of the speaker, that is, “pass the salt”, and “open the air conditioner/ close the window”; The second illocutionary act is another illocutionary act performed in order to execute the primary illocutionary act, such as the statements of “This soup is not salty enough.” “It’s cold.” In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer (*J. R. Searle, 1975: 60*). The disparity between what is said and what is actually meant is the distinguishing feature of indirect speech acts.

Indirectness can function as a form of politeness (*G. Yule, 1996: 107*). People usually avoid using the straightforward imperative forms such as “Pass the salt!”, “Open the air conditioner!/ Close the window!” or a direct request with an explicit action verb: “I request you close the window!” Because these expressions appear presumptuous and impolite on many occasions. Just like J. R. Searle’s opinion “politeness is the most prominent motivation for indirectness in requests, and certain forms naturally tend to become the conventionally polite ways of making indirect requests.” (*J. R. Searle, 1975: 76*). Thus, politeness is the main reason for these conventionalized and idiomatically used indirect speech acts, for it can reduce the degree of imposition as well as the threatening of the other party’s face.

**In conclusion,** Speech Act Theory (SAT) is a theory of language philosophy proposed by British scholar J. L. Austin and developed by American scholar J. R. Searle. According to the SAT, people perform actions when speaking. Locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts might be performed simultaneously when

people speak. Later, American philosopher J. R. Searle systematically explained and developed SAT by further presenting the new categories of illocutionary acts and classifying speech acts, etc.

### **1.5. Politeness and Face-saving Theory.**

In the 1950s, American scholar E. Goffman proposed the concept of *FACE* from a sociological perspective, which is a person's positive self-image when interacting with others. E. Goffman defines "*Face*" as follows: "Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants" (*E. Goffman, 1967: 5*). And in each of these contacts, the participant tends to act out what is sometimes called a line — that is, a "pattern of verbal and non-verbal acts by which he [the participant] expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (*E. Goffman, 1967: 2*).

The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. The face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes — albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself (*E. Goffman, 1967: 5*).

E. Goffman believes that face is always involved in people's interactions as one of the norms of human behavior. If a person wants to avoid losing face, the safest way is not to hurt the face of others, because when a person's face is threatened, he/she will take action to save his/her own face. Therefore, in the process of

communication, people should try their best to save face for themselves and the other party to avoid embarrassment or deterioration of the relationship.

According to P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, “Face” is the “public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself” (*P. Brown et al., 1978: 66*). In the book “*Pragmatics*”, G. Yule also gives a series of term definitions: “*Face*” is that face means the public self-image of a person. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. In addition, G. Yule points out that:

Within their everyday social interactions, people generally behave as if their expectations concerning their public self-image, or their “*face wants*”, will be respected. If a speaker says something that represents a threat to another individual’s expectations regarding self-image, it is described as “*a face threatening act*”. Alternatively, given the possibility that some action might be interpreted as a threat to another’s face, the speaker can say something to lessen the possible threat. This is called “*a face-saving act*” (*G. Yule, 1996:60*).

J. B. Gleason and N. B. Ratner came up with the definition of “face”, which is the image that speakers want to present of themselves to others, a powerful emotional possession that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced in social interaction (*J. B. Gleason et al., 1998: 286*).

Politeness is a symbol of human civilization and an important criterion for human social activities. It is a code of conduct that has moral or ethical significance in daily life, including various efforts made by people to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. The linguistic activity as one social activity is also bound

by this criterion. Just like Branaman states that the main function of “face work” — interactional work oriented towards affirming and protecting the dignity of social participants — is to maintain the ritual order of social life (*Charles Lemert et al., 1997: 1*). In an interaction, politeness can then be defined as the means employed to show awareness of another person’s face (*G. Yule, 1996:60*).

The use of language is one of the main means of expressing politeness. So, what politeness is and how to express it has always been one of the important topics in pragmatics. G. Kasper states that politeness as a form of linguistic behaviour is conceptualized as a dependent variable determined by the values of the context (*G. Kasper, 2006:83*). Based on J. Holmes, the definition of “linguistic politeness” is a matter of specific linguistic choices from a range of available ways of saying something” (*J. Holmes, 2006:711*). In addition, according to J. C. Richards and S. Richard, linguistic politeness refers to “a) how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationships; b) how face works, that is, the attempt to establish, maintain, and save face during the conversation, how is it carried out in a speech community” (*J. C. Richards et al., 1985: 405*).

Based on H. P. Grice’s Cooperative Principle (CP), British linguist G. Leech believes that in some cases, politeness is more important than cooperation because adhering to the principle of politeness can maintain social balance or friendly relations in social interactions, and it is this balance or friendly relations that can ensure cooperation between the two parties in a conversation. Therefore, in 1983, he came up with the Politeness Principle (PP), which maximizes (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs; and minimizes (other things being equal) the

expression of impolite beliefs. And under these two general requirements, there are six specific maxims as follows: Tact maxim (in directives<sup>2</sup> and commissives<sup>3</sup>); Generosity maxim (in directives and commissives); Approbation maxim (in expressives<sup>4</sup> and representatives<sup>5</sup>); Modesty maxim (in expressives and representatives); Agreement maxim and Sympathy maxim ( *G. Leech, 1983:132*). It can be said that PP is the strategic expression of the Cooperative Principle (CP), which ensures the maximum benefit or minimizes the loss for all communicators. That is, the PP is a pragmatic strategy used by language users to achieve communication goals.

In 1987, British scholars P. Brown and S. C. Levinson conducted a systematic discussion on the face issue in politeness, borrowed Goffman's concept of "face" and proposed the Face-saving Theory to explain the phenomenon of politeness. From the point of view of P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, politeness is a variety of rational behaviors taken by the "Model Person" (MP) to satisfy the face wants. Meanwhile, the concept of politeness is essentially strategic, that is, the purpose of saving face for both parties in communication is achieved by adopting certain language strategies.

In the Face-saving Theory, the person participating in social activities is called a Model Person (MP), who is "a rational person with face wants" and has two qualities: "rationality" and "face". "Rationality" is the application of a specific mode of reasoning that guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy

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<sup>2</sup> **Directives:** Get the addressee to carry out some action. Such as: commands, request, dares, entreaties.

<sup>3</sup> **Commissives:** Commit the speaker to some future course of action. Such as: promises, threats, vows.

<sup>4</sup> **Expressives:** Indicate the speaker's psychological state or mental attitude. Such as: greeting, congratulating, thanking, apoloizing.

<sup>5</sup> **Representatives:** Represent some state of affairs. Such as: assertions, claims, descriptions.

those ends (*P. Brown et al., 1987:64*). “Face” is the “public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects: positive face and negative face.” (*P. Brown et al., 1987: 61*). Positive face refers to the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. Negative face is the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, and rights to non-distraction — i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition (*P. Brown et al., 1987*).

That is, a person’s positive face reflects his/her desire to be approved, respected, and appreciated by others. Meanwhile, a person’s negative face reflects his/her desire not to be held back, not to have opinions imposed, or his/her desire to make free choices. In simple terms, the positive face is the need to be connected, and the negative active face is the need to be independent (*G. Yule, 1996: 62*). Based on the Face Saving Theory, “face” is the basic need of MPs, that is, all MPs have both positive and negative face wants.

However, P. Brown & S. C. Levinson believe that some speech acts are inherently Face-threatening Acts (FTAs), that is, they are essentially contrary to the face wants of the speaker or the addressee by threatening the positive/negative face of the speaker/ addressee. In the book “*Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use*”, P. Brown & S. C. Levinson came up with distinctions of FTAs as follows, which are respectively from the perspectives of the kinds of face threatened and the threats to the addressee’s face versus threats to the speaker’s.

First distinction: Those acts that primarily threaten the addressee’s (H’s) negative-face want by indicating (potentially) that the speaker (S) does not intend to

avoid impeding H's freedom of action, include: a) orders, requests, advice, reminders, threats, warnings, etc.; b) offers, promises; c) compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, expressions of strong emotions toward H (hatred, anger, lust). Those acts that threaten the addressee's (H's) positive-face want, by indicating (potentially) that the speaker (S) does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants, etc. — that in some critical respect he doesn't want H's wants — include: a) expressions of disapproval, criticism, accusations, insults, disagreements, etc.; b) expressions of violent (out-of-control) emotions, irreverence, mention of taboo topics, including those that are inappropriate in the context, etc.

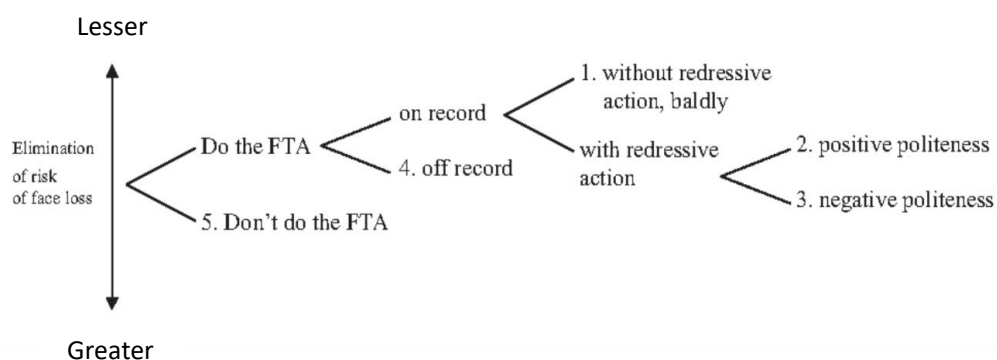
Second distinction: Those acts that offend S's negative-face mainly include: expressing thanks, acceptance of H's thanks or apology, acceptance of offers etc. Those that directly damage S's positive face include: apologies, acceptance of a compliment, confessions, etc. (*P. Brown et al., 1987: 65-68*).

P. Brown and S. C. Levinson believe that three factors influence face-threatening acts, that is, social distance (D), relative power (P), and absolute ranking of imposition (R) between the speaker and hearer. The degree of threat to face (W<sub>x</sub>) caused by a behavior depends on these three factors, which are expressed by the formula as follows:  $W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$ . Generally speaking, the degree of threat to face can be estimated by combining the values of each factor in this formula. In other words, the degree of politeness can also be estimated accordingly.

However, the universal feature of verbal communication is like this: the listener's self-image must be respected, the feelings should be considered, and the acts that threaten the listener's face (Face-threatening Acts, FTAs) should be avoided.

Therefore, when acts that threaten the listener’s face occur, the speaker must adopt some strategies to redress the listener’s face. Just like He Zhaoxiong’s statement, the choice of strategy is an “encoding” of the estimated offensiveness of the face-threatening act (*He Zhaoxiong, 2000:230*), by giving the example “I’m awfully sorry to bother you, and I wouldn’t but I’m in an awful fix, so I wondered if by any chance...” to show that the speaker’s speech act he is about to perform is definitely a speech act with a high degree of face threat.

According to P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, there are five redressive strategies that can be used to reduce the threat to the other party’s face: i) bald on record without a redressive strategy (e.g., Close your mouth while you are eating!); ii) positive politeness (e.g., Your teeth are beautiful. I just wish I didn’t see them when you have the hamburger.); iii) negative politeness (e.g., I know that you’re very hungry and the food stuff is ‘hot’, but I would really appreciate it if you would chew it with your mouth closed.); iv) off the record (e.g., The ice cream is nice.); and v) Don’t do the FTA (*P. Brown et al., 1987: 68*).



**Figure 1. Redressive strategies (P. Brown and S. C. Levinson 1987:60)**

The two categories of strategies are positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. According to G. Yule, the positive politeness strategy

emphasizes the close relationship between the speaker and the listener, so it is a solidarity strategy. The negative politeness strategy emphasizes the liberty of the listener, so it is a deference strategy (*G. Yule, 1996:5;60*).

P. Brown and S. C. Levinson listed 15 positive politeness strategies, such as “Notice hearer’s interests, wants, needs” (e.g., Goodness, you cut your hair! By the way, I came to borrow some flour.), “Exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with hearer” ( e.g., What a fantastic garden you have!), “Intensify interest to hearer” ( Use of the vivid or historical present (cf. Nessa Wolfson, 1979), e.g. I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see?), “Use in-group identity markers, including address terms, in-group language or dialect, jargon, slang, contraction, and ellipsis” (e.g. Come here, honey.), etc. (*E. N. Goody, 1978*), which might be divided into three categories. The first category is about showing that the speaker has common characteristics with the listener, such as the same category and having the same goals, values, or hobbies. The second category shows that the speaker is willing to cooperate with the listener by understanding his/her mood, needs, and desires. The third category is about meeting the listener’s needs through expressing liking, concern, understanding, and sympathy for the listener or giving the listener a chance to talk, which directly meets the listener’s positive facial needs.

A negative politeness strategy is a deference strategy. When implementing a negative face strategy, the speaker considers the negative face needs of the listener, expresses that he is unwilling to force the other party, and respects the listener’s autonomy. P. Brown and S. C. Levinson listed **10 negative face pragmatic strategies**, such as “Be conventionally indirect” (e.g., Can you please for a comb?), “Question

and hedge” (e.g., I hate to say this, but...), “Give deference” (e.g., I don’t think you ought to do that, Mr. President.), “Apologize” (e.g., I’m sure you must be very busy, but...) and “State the FTA as a general rule” (e.g., FAA regulations require that...) etc. (*E. N. Goody, 1978:103*).

**In conclusion**, the concept of “face” was proposed by scholar E. Goffman and others, which is the public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself. In interpersonal communication, people should strive for the following goals: avoid insults to the other party’s face, which is the essential content of Face-saving Theory. The behavior of saving the other person’s face and avoiding damaging the other person’s face is politeness. Subsequently, the Politeness Principle (PP) and relevant strategies were proposed.

### **1.6. Different Kinds of Competences.**

In the 1950s, in the book “*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*”, American linguist N. Chomsky proposed the concepts of “linguistic competence” and “linguistic performance.” N. Chomsky defines linguistic competence as an ideal language user’s grasp of his or her language-related knowledge, which enables the language user to have the ability to judge the acceptability of sentences; linguistic performance is defined as a person’s actual use of language. A difference is made between a person’s knowledge of a language (competence) and how a person uses this knowledge in producing and understanding sentences (performance) (*J. C. Richards et al., 1985*).

Obviously, Chomsky’s linguistic performance does not cover all the abilities that people must have in communication because a mere knowledge of language is not enough for communication. Language users should also know how to choose

different grammatical rules or language forms based on the environment or context in which the language is used. Otherwise, language communication cannot be carried out effectively without a specific cultural context.

In the late 1960s, the North American linguist and anthropologist, D. H. Hymes brought the role of context into the scope of verbal communication and proposed the concept of “communicative competence”. D. H. Hymes believes that in addition to linguistic competence, language users must also possess another ability — communicative competence. D. H. Hymes (1972) defined communicative competence not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations. Namely, it is the capacity to effectively communicate with people grammatically correctly according to different and appropriate social settings.

He suggests this framework for integrating linguistic theory with theory of communication and culture; and raised the following four questions on which his framework rests:

- whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
- whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of means of implementation available;
- whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate concerning a context in which it is used and evaluated;
- whether (and to what degree) something is done, actually performed, and what this doing entails. (*D. H. Hymes, 2001: 63*)

Therefore, communicative competence includes the language user's ability to use grammatical rules to form grammatical sentences and the ability to know how to use these sentences appropriately according to different contexts.

In addition, H. G. Widdowson (1983), a British applied linguist, made a distinction between competence and capacity and gave the definitions from the perspectives of pragmatics. That is, just like Vesna Bagarić stated in his article: "...competence, i.e., communicative competence, in terms of the knowledge of linguistic and sociolinguistic conventions. Under capacity, which he often referred to as procedural or communicative capacity, he understood the ability to use knowledge to create meaning in a language. Moreover, the ability is not a component of competence" (*Vesna Bagarić, 2007: 95*).

In the 1980s, Canadian applied linguists M. Canale and M. Swain took communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skills needed for communication. The concept of communicative competence, one of the theories of the communicative approach to foreign language teaching, is most widely used in M. Canale and M. Swain's model. In addition, pragmatic competence included in the models of communicative competence. Based on R. Ellis, pragmatic competence refers to the "knowledge of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior in a particular situation" (*R. Ellis, 2008: 956*).

According to them, communicative competence is a system composed of four parts. They are grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategies competence and discourse competence (*M. Canale et al., 1980*). Grammatical competence refers to the ability to speak, write, and understand based on the

knowledge of lexical items, as well as phonological, syntactic, and morphological forms of a language. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the language user's ability to use language appropriately in a sociocultural context. Strategies competence refers to the language user's ability to use verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies to solve problems in communication. Discourse competence refers to the language user's ability to combine language structures and language functions into a coherent and cohesive text.

Based on the lecture notes of "*Communicative and Pragmatic Aspects of Speech*", "communicative competence" usually means a specific set of both personal properties and capabilities, as well as linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge and skills that ensure a person's communicative activity (NTUU "KPI", 2015: 59). And it can be reduced to the following five levels:

- 1) Psycho-physiological features of the personality, which depend on the general mental type of the personality, including the apparatus of articulation, which is extremely important for successful communication;
- 2) social status and personality characteristics: origin, gender, age, profession, belonging to one or another social group, social role, which has a direct impact on the nature of speech act;
- 3) the cultural fund, background knowledge of the individual, his values – all this should coincide to one degree or another in the conditions of interaction since differences in the cultural fund can lead to communicative failures;
- 4) the language competence of an individual, which consists in the skill and ability to express a given meaning in different linguistic ways, to distinguish

homonymy and possess synonymy, choose from the entire diverse arsenal of linguistic means those that are most acceptable, appropriate, and suitable for achieving the illocutionary goal;

- 5) communicative knowledge, abilities, and skills consist of effectively forming a communicative strategy, using various tactical communication techniques, possessing communicative norms, and establishing and maintaining contact with interlocutors (*NTUU "KPI", 2015: 59*).

**In conclusion**, ever since American linguist N. Chomsky proposed the concepts of “linguistic competence” and “linguistic performance” in his book *“Aspects of the Theory of Syntax”* in the 1950s, the academic community has started discussing the topic of competencies. Later scholars such as D. H. Hymes, H. G. Widdowson, etc., proposed different concepts of competence from various perspectives and made distinctions between them. These achievements have increased the understanding of the concepts of communicative competence.

### **1.7. Relevance Theory (RT)**

As one of the most influential theories in the field of pragmatics, Relevance Theory (RT) was proposed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson in the 1980s, the core concepts in RT are “relevance” and “context”. RT holds that language communication is a purposeful and intentional activity. Language communication aims to express and recognize the intention of communication, rather than simply express and relay information. If the listener wants to acknowledge and understand the purpose and intention of the speaker’s words, then the language they use must have a certain relevance. In addition, the listener can understand the speaker’s

intention or purpose because they have a consensus on the context, that is, the cognitive context (the ‘virtual’ world in which both parties communicate).

The degree to which cognitive context is present is the degree of relevance. The relevance principle holds that the discourse is relevant when a discourse has a certain contextual effect in a specific context. In relevance theory, relevance is determined by two factors: contextual effects and processing effort. “The speaker must let the listener make appropriate processing efforts to obtain appropriate contextual effects. Once the listener makes processing efforts, he will obtain contextual effects; if he makes greater efforts, he will definitely obtain greater contextual effects.” (*D. Sperber et al., 1986:79*). In relevance theory, “context” is not fixed in the process of communication: it is a dynamic concept that is constantly changing. Sperber and Wilson believed that the context in discourse comprehension includes not only the information expressed and implied in the previous text but also the immediate situational factors and all the encyclopedic knowledge related to the old and new information (*D. Sperber et al., 1986: 135*). The greater the contextual effect, the greater the relevance; the greater the relevance, the less processing effort is required. When processing effort is minimized and the contextual effect is maximized, the utterance achieves “optimal relevance”.

Sperber and D. Wilson believe that this standard for understanding discourse is the cognitive assumption of human beings. When humans understand things, they always follow the Principle of Relevance: “Any explicit communication activity means that this activity has the optimal relevance.” (*D. Sperber et al., 1986: 158*). In communication, what both parties say must stick to the topic and be closely related to

what the other party said in the turn-taking<sup>6</sup>. People understand the speaker's intentions by grasping the information in the conversation. They also believe that the process of understanding discourse is not only a process of inference but also a process of ostensive inference. Therefore, the inferential model they proposed is called the "Ostensive-Inferential Model".

The Principle of Relevance follows the "Ostensive-Inferential Model" when interpreting language communication. That is, RT adds the crucial word "ostensive" to Grice's inferential model. D. Sperber and D. Wilson believe that to understand a discourse with multiple meanings, it is natural to use context, which they call a set of assumptions. However, sometimes even with context, without "explicitness", the listener cannot make inferences or accurately understand the discourse. Only when the speaker's words are "explicit" reasoning has direction and goal, the speaker's communicative intentions are accurately grasped and understood.

Language communication is an ostensive-inferential communication. In ostensive-inferential communication, people always process discourse and perceive things according to the relevance principle. D. Sperber and D. Wilson believe that the dominant form of inference used by people in language communication is deduction, "the logical method used spontaneously by the human brain is deduction" (*D. Sperber et al., 1986: 69*), while it is "non-demonstrative" at all. In language communication, it is not the specific situational factors that play a role in understanding discourse. Instead, the listener follows the principle of relevance, deals with relevant information (the connection and interaction between old and new

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<sup>6</sup> **Turn-taking** is a type of organization in conversation and discourse where participants speak one at a time in alternating turns.

information), and uses deduction to understand the speaker's intention based on the premises provided by the new and old information.

As we all know, language is a code system that makes the phonetic representation and semantic representation of sentences correspond to each other. However, there is a certain gap between the semantic representation of a sentence and the idea that the discourse expresses. The same sentence usually has different discourse meanings in different contexts. Semantic representation can only reflect the meaning of sentences but cannot explain the meaning of discourse. It cannot consider the non-linguistic factors involved in discourse in communication, such as the time and place of the discourse, the identity and intention of the speaker, etc. Discourse is not only used to express ideas but also to express the speaker's attitude towards the ideas expressed. In other words, discourse simultaneously performs "speech acts", and "illocutionary acts".

The RT was proposed in response to Grice's cooperative principle. However, relevance theory is not a simple inheritance of Grice's theory, but its revision and development. The theory also provides a relatively systematic explanation of ostensive-inferential communication from a cognitive perspective, arguing that language communication is an ostensive-inferential communication. In communication, people do not need to follow the principle of cooperation but are oriented towards relevance. Relevance is a concept that depends on cognitive context. Cognitive context is a psychological construct, a set of assumptions in the listener's brain, which may not be true. Also, the cognitive context of communicators is dynamic rather than fixed and will be constantly expanded and supplemented in

actual communication. The ostensive inference is guided by “explicitness” and is carried out between new and old information; the process of understanding discourse is the process of establishing relevance and finding the “optimal relevance.” Optimal relevance is the result that people expect to obtain in language communication.

**In conclusion,** D. Sperber and D. Wilson’s Relevance Theory (RT) is one of the most influential theories in the field of pragmatics. RT treats utterance interpretation as a cognitive process. With “relevance” and “context” as core concepts, RT acts as a framework for understanding discourse interpretation.

### **1.8. Review of Relevant Studies on RCA in China, Japan, and Ukraine**

As a pioneering researcher, J. Rubin, in the article “*How to tell when someone is saying ‘no?’ revisited*” summarized nine ways of refusing across several cultures, which can be seen as one of the early inspiring classification systems, which concludes “*Be silent, hesitate, show a lack of enthusiasm*”; “*Offer an alternative*”; “*Postponement*”; “*Put the blame on a third party or something over which you have no control*”; “*Avoidance; General acceptance of an offer but giving no details*”; “*Divert and distract the addressee*”; “*General acceptance with excuses*”; “*Say what is offered is inappropriate*” (J. Rubin, 1983). The study laid the foundation and guided a path for further research in this field with different languages and cultures.

**Chinese scholars’** study of the refusal communicative acts began in the 1990s, starting with rhetoric. Rhetoric is a subject that studies the rules and laws of how to improve the expression effect of language in communicative activities (Wang Xijie, 1996), to understand and improve interpersonal relationships. When studying euphemistic expressions in the field of rhetoric, as it comes to “refusal”, it should be

euphemistic and implicit, and expressed most suitably so that it fits the environment of speech communication and the social and cultural background (*Wang Xiaoxu, 2005*). Chinese scholar Feng Guiqin analyzed the strategy and means of “refusal” from the perspective of rhetoric in her thesis “*A Rhetorical Study of the ‘Rejection’ Event*”, and analyzed it in combination with some factors that affect the choice of “refusal” strategy (*Feng Guiqin, 2006*).

With the development of pragmatics and the increasingly frequent exchanges between China and foreign countries, a large number of books in translation and introduction to pragmatics have appeared in China, such as, “*Contemporary Pragmatics*” (*He Ziran et al., 2004*), “*New Outline of Pragmatics*” (*He Zhaoxiong, 2000*), “*Pragmatics Course*” (*Suo Zhenyu, 2000*), “*Contemporary Pragmatics*” (*Jiang Wangqi, 2003*) and so on. Since then, there has been an upsurge in the study of communicative acts of refusal, and some fruitful papers have emerged.

Chinese scholar Gu Yueguo was the first person to discuss the relationship between politeness, pragmatics, and Chinese culture, he came up with five politeness principles of Chinese culture (self-denigration maxim, address term maxim, refinement maxim, agree maxim, and maxim of virtue) (*Gu Yueguo, 1992: 10*), which made the foundation for the further researches on refusal communicative acts in Chinese lingual culture. Let us look into the pragmatic strategies of the Chinese Refusal Communicative Act, which Chinese linguists pointed out.

Research perspective focusing on refusal strategies. Chinese scholar Liao with co-researchers revealed 24 refusal strategies overall by calculating the average number of refusal strategies used by each survey subject: silence; hesitation; lack of

enthusiasm; offering an alternative; postponement; blaming a third party or something over which you have no control; avoidance; general acceptance without giving details; divert and distract the addressee; general acceptance with excuse; saying what is offered or requested is inappropriate; external yes, internal no; statement of philosophy; direct no; excuse of explanation; complaining or appealing to feelings; rationale (*Liao et al. 1996: 703*).

Ma Yuelan used pragmatic theory to summarize 11 refusal strategies through the inductive analysis of 5 refusal contexts, namely, avoidance strategy; diverting the requester's attention, deferring strategy; criticizing education strategy; suggesting strategy; false consent strategies; suggestive strategy; ambiguous expressions strategy; joke strategy; objective strategy; subjective strategy (*Ma Yuelan, 2000: 46*).

In Wang Fenglan's paper "*A Pragmatic Analysis of Chinese Refusal Strategies*", she expounded on the manifestations of refusal strategies and their manifestations in vocabulary and syntax (*Wang Fenglan, 2003*). In the article "*Analysis of the Surface Strategies of Chinese Indirect Refusal Speech Acts*", Tang Ling divides the surface strategies of Chinese indirect refusal acts into three categories: the use of quotations, the choice of words and the use of syntactic means (*Tang Ling, 2004*). Wang Xiaoxu's study discussed the achieved mechanism of the refusal speech act in Chinese, providing a theoretical basis for the study of refusal strategies (*Wang Xiaoxu, 2005*). Zhang Jingyu's research starts with the typical Chinese negation and refusal sentence pattern and is aimed at studying its usage conditions and semantic background (*Zhang Jingyu, 2008; Zhang Jingyu et al., 2010*). Jia Yuxiu's "*Analysis of Chinese Refusal Speech Acts and Its Pragmatic Strategies*" takes social distance as a variable

factor, examines the refusal methods adopted by friend relationships, general relationships, kinship relationships, and stranger relationships when carrying out refusals, and analyzes factors affecting the choice of rejection strategy (*Jia Yuxiu, 2013*).

Form the corpus research perspective. With the research deployment, several pieces of research appeared on refusal communicative acts based on the corpus of Chinese literary works. Wang Xiaojie systematically sorted out different types of refusals in “*A Dream of Red Mansions*” and established the classification standard. Meanwhile, from the perspective of pragmatics, she analyzed the refusals in the novel, focusing on the “cooperation principle” and “politeness principle”, exploring the deep conversational implications of refusal (*Wang Xiaojie, 2011*). Also using this novel as a source of data, Luan Yimin analyzed the mitigating devices of the Chinese refusal speech act in the first eighty chapters of this novel.

Meanwhile, Wu Yan conducted a pragmatic study on characteristics of refusal speech acts among family members in the first sixty chapters of this novel. Findings show that using external mitigating devices and internal mitigating devices can reduce the degree of face-threatening and demonstrate the influence of social power on the refusal speech acts (*Luan Yimin, 2012*). It was also shown that refusal speech acts have highly complicated characteristics that bear the cultural imprint of the corresponding era (*Wu Yan, 2015*).

Chang Shang used “*Revealing Original Shape in Officialdom*” as a corpus and conducted a statistical analysis of refusal strategies in it, with further discussion of the influence of social power, social distance, and degree of imposition on the choice

of refusal strategies (*Chang Shan, 2015*).

From a comparative research perspective, comparative studies on refusal communicative acts have emerged with the deepening of cooperation and exchanges between countries. It began with domestic English majors conducting a comparative analysis of refusal communicative acts in Chinese and English. In recent years, new research has gradually emerged based on comparing Chinese and other languages, such as the comparison between Chinese and Japanese, Chinese and Korean, Chinese and Russian, etc.

Yao Jun's research deals with designing different scenarios and investigating the usage of rejection strategies by Chinese and American college students. It was shown that Chinese and American college students use different strategies and frequencies when expressing rejection. These differences are essentially related to the differences in social values between Chinese and Western cultures (*Yao Jun, 2003*).

Wang Aihua with her co-researchers presented a survey of the relationship between social factors and refusals in Chinese and American English. The research found that the speech act of refusal is influenced and restricted by cultural factors, and there are both commonalities and differences in its use. The commonality is shown in the fact that they all use three levels of central speech acts (direct refusal speech act, negative ability, indirect refusal speech act), and they all tend to use indirect refusal speech acts. The difference is reflected in the fact that Chinese people are more indirect than Americans (*Wang Aihua et al., 2004: 66*).

Niu Shujie discussed the impact of different values in Chinese and English cultures on the choice of refusal speech act strategies and communication styles. Niu

Shujie mainly compared the different values in Chinese and English cultures from four major perspectives: individualism and collectivism, age, power gap, and the concept of time. It was pointed out that the difference in pragmatic strategies of refusal speech acts is mainly reflected in two types: direct refusal and social normative refusal (*Niu Shujie, 2006: 162*).

Xu Xiaoye and Luo Jiansheng conducted a comparative analysis of the Refusal Communicative Act in China and the United States based on the optimality theory. They pointed out that the internal hierarchical rankings of constraints are the same either in Chinese or English. Still, there are great differences between Chinese and English, which reflect the different culture values of the two countries (*Xu Xiaoye et al., 2009*).

Li Jiehong and Li Xiangkun pointed out in the article “*Understanding English and Chinese Cultural Differences from Speech Strategies of Refusal*” that there are some commonalities in the use of rejection strategies between Chinese and British, though there are also differences dealing with the degree of indirect refusal realization related to the national values and family values of Chinese and British (*Li Jiehong et al., 2013*).

Zhang Xiaoyin and Xiong Hongzhi focused on the “request-refusal” behavior, using the lines of Chinese and Japanese TV dramas as a corpus, starting from the perspective of discourse politeness theory, combined with semantic formulas to conduct a comparative analysis of Chinese and Japanese refusal behavior (*Zhang Xiaoyin et al., 2017*).

From the perspective of pragmatics, Wang Wei selected lines from Chinese and

Korean TV dramas as a corpus, compared and analyzed the rejection strategies used by Chinese and Korean when rejecting others, and explored the influence of different social relations on Chinese and Korean refusal speech act, pointing out the characteristics, similarities, and differences of refusal speech act within two lingual cultures (*Wang Wei, 2019*).

Using the prevailing international DCT<sup>7</sup> (Discourse Completion Tasks) questionnaire, Yang Jie researched the gender difference phenomenon in RSA. The research reveals that Chinese people, both female and male, tend to adopt indirect refusal first, then direct refusal. But when refusing someone of the same gender, men are more likely to use direct refusal, while they will be more likely to use indirect refusal to refuse women. Also, women are better at the integrated use of multiple refusal strategies, while men are more focused on elaborating reasons and expressing feelings directly (*Yang Jie, 2011: 13*).

From the perspective of ostensible refusal research, in recent years, as the study of refusal communicative acts has received more and more attention, several pieces of research focusing on the unique topic of Chinese ostensible refusal communicative acts have emerged. Such as Lu Zhifang's "*Research on Ostensible Refusal Speech Acts in Modern Chinese*" (*Lu Zhifang, 2003*); Wang Hui's "*Pragmatic Functional Analysis of Ostensible Refusal in Modern Chinese*" and "*Analysis of the Politeness of Ostensible Refusal Speech Acts*" (*Wang Hui, 2011*); Ran Yongping, Lai Huidi's "*Interpersonal Pragmatic Motivation Analysis of Ostensible Refusal Speech Acts*"

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<sup>7</sup> A **Discourse-Completion Task** (DCT) is a tool used in linguistics and pragmatics to elicit particular speech acts. A DCT consists of a one-sided role play containing a situational prompt which a participant will read to elicit the responses of another participant.

(Ran Yongping et al., 2014); Wang Hui's "Research on the Adaptability of Ostensible Refusal Speech Acts in Modern Chinese" (Wang Hui, 2015) and so on.

The researchers mentioned above studied both the typical environment and atypical environment in which ostensible refusal appeared, explored the external and internal factors of its realization, analyzed the characteristics of ostensible refusal communicative acts, and expounded its pragmatic functions. Ma Hongyan researched the adaptability of ostensible speech behavior of international students in China and concluded that there are three stages of adaptation to false speech behavior: the honeymoon stage, the frustration stage, and the adjustment stage (Ma Hongyan, 2022).

**Japanese scholar** Moriyama Takuro wrote an article "*Strategies for Saying No: Interpersonal Relationship Adjustment and Communication*" which analyzes Japanese people's refusal verbal behaviour from the perspective of strategies and classifies them into four types: "humility type," "lie type," "postponement type", and "deception type" (Moriyama Takuro, 1990: 59).

T. Takahashi with co-researchers (1990) examined how Japanese learners of English refused requests, invitations, offers, and suggestions by employing a DCT questionnaire. Their classification is divided into semantic formulas and adjuncts. Semantic formulas refer to the expressions used to perform a refusal; meanwhile, adjuncts are the expressions that accompany a refusal but which cannot by themselves be used to perform a refusal. According to them, semantic formulas can be divided into two types, which are two direct ones (Performative; Nonperformative statement) and eleven indirect ones (Statement of regret; Wish; Excuse, reason,

explanation; Statement of alternative; Set condition for future or past acceptance, etc.), as well as the adjuncts (Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement; Statement of empathy; Pause fillers; Gratitude/appreciation) (*L. Beeb et al., 1990: 55*).

Kumai Hiroko, in her studies on RCA analyzed foreigners' refusal expressions (*Kumai Hiroko, 1993: 266*). Suzuki Eriko researched refusal strategies used by Chinese Japanese language learners in China (*Suzuki Eriko, 2010: 78*).

There is also some comparative research done. For example, Baba Toshiomi and Uenaga Ai conducted research on the differences between Chinese and Japanese refusals (*Baba Toshiomi et al., 1994: 43*). Fujimori Hiroko compared the Japanese native speakers and Chinese Japanese learners' refusal from the perspective of restoring relationships (*Fujimori Hiroko, 1994: 5*). Ito Mieko investigated refusals to invitations by Javanese, Indonesian, and Malaysian speakers in Malay cultural sphere (*Ito Mieko, 2005: 15*). Kano Rikuto and Mei Shaolian studied the communication gap in Japanese — Chinese communication regarding the expressions used for the refusal implementation (*Kano Rikuto et al., 2002: 19*).

**Ukrainian scholar** Nadia Oleksiuk conducted a study which regards refusal as an independent speech act with pragmatic characteristics. In the study, she delineates the characteristics of the speech situation in which refusal is enacted and determines the organizational rules of this speech act.scholars (*Nadiya Oleksyuk, 2005*). Okcana Maksymiuk and Natalya Maksymiuk studied the functional and semantic parameters of the communicative act of refusal in the Ukrainian artistic discourse (*Oksana Maksyuk et al., 2017: 11*).

**In conclusion,** at present, from the overall review, the research on Refusal Communicative Act in China, Japan, and Ukraine has achieved great academic results and developments. There are many articles but relatively few related monographs. In addition, it can be found that the research perspectives, methods, etc., are constantly enriched. However, the research on refusal communicative act in the three countries is still limited to borrowing relevant Western theories, and it lacks a comprehensive study of theories and rules based on their own languages. Last, the research field needs to be further expanded, such as teaching the native language as a foreign language, business negotiations, online chat, etc.

### **1.9. Cultural and Cognitive Background of the Differences in RCA in the Three Languages**

As we all know, language and culture are inseparable. American linguist E. Sapir's explanation of the relationship between language and culture is as follows: "Speech is a human activity that varies without assignable limit as we pass from social group to social group because it is a purely historical heritage of the group, the product of long-continued social usage. It varies as all creative effort varies — not as consciously, perhaps, but as truly as do the religions, the beliefs, the customs, and the arts of different peoples. Walking is an organic, an automatic, function (not, of course, itself an instinct); speech is a non-instinctive, acquired, 'cultural' function." (*E. Sapir, 1921: 4*).

Therefore, based on the close relationship between language and culture, one must be clear about the concept of culture when studying language. According to the statement in "*Cambridge Dictionary*", "culture" refers to "the way of life, especially

the general customs, and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-chinese>). In the book “*Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach*”, culture is defined as follows: “Culture is the customs, worldview, language, kinship systems, social institutions, and other everyday practices that we take for granted but that distinguish one group from another.” (Ron Scollon et al., 2011: 155).

British social anthropologist Malinowski believes language is deeply rooted in cultural reality and people’s customs. The meaning of language is inseparable from the language environment. To understand discourse, the key is to understand the speaker’s entire cultural background and lifestyle. Speech acts are subject to social culture just like other social acts of people. J. R. Firth, the originator of the London School, also pointed out: “The analysis of a word depends on the sentence in which it is located, the analysis of the sentence depends on the situation or context in which it is located, and the analysis of the context depends on the culture in which it is located.” (Jia Yuxin, 1997: 29).

Dutch psychologist G. Hofstede came up with the cultural dimensions theory and summarized the differences between different cultures into four basic cultural value dimensions: individualism & collectivism; power distance; uncertainty avoidance; sexism & feminism; long-term orientation (Confucian dynamism); indulgence vs. restraint (G. Hofstede, 1984: 81). G. Hofstede believes that culture is the mental programs people share in the same environment that distinguishes one group of people from the other. This proves the existence of differences between different cultures. “Culture is frozen interpersonal communication, while

communication is flowing culture” (*Jia Yuxin, 1997: 16*). Therefore, people will adopt different “Refusal Communicative Acts” under the influence of various cultural backgrounds.

### **1.9.1. Cultural and Cognitive Background of RCA in Chinese Culture**

#### *1.9.1.1. Chinese Cultural Values*

In modern psychology, “socialization” is defined as a process by which an individual adapts to and absorbs the culture of the society through interaction with society, becoming a qualified member of society (*Social Psychology Editorial Group, 1990: 44*). In Chinese culture, socialization can be explained by the word 做人 (*zuò rén*) (be a human being). Wang Fengyan and others mentioned in their book “*Chinese Cultural Psychology*” that 做人 (*zuò rén*) refers to “the process in which a biological individual (natural person) transforms into a social individual (social person) and becomes a qualified member of society through his own efforts.” (*Wang Fengyan, 2004: 11*). Chinese expressions such as 学做人 (*xué zuò rén*) (learn to be a human being) and 会做人 (*huì zuò rén*) (know how to be a human being) are also social norms that restrict people’s words and deeds in life.

Therefore, in interpersonal communication, people must have strong processing abilities and skills, especially when implementing speech acts such as refusal that seriously threaten the other party’s face, they must handle it carefully. To achieve the goal, minimize the harm to the other party’s face, do it just right, and avoid affecting the harmonious interpersonal relationships between each other. This is why Chinese people usually prefer indirect, euphemistic, and implicit ways of “refusal”.

Just like “individualism & collectivism” in G. Hofstede’s division of cultural

dimensions, China is a typical country that advocates collectivism. Triandis pointed out that collectivism emphasizes more on the following: the views, needs, and goals of the whole group rather than of the individual; social norms and responsibilities defined by the group rather than the pursuit of personal enjoyment; the beliefs shared by the group, rather than the beliefs of an individual who is different from the group; an attitude of readiness to cooperate with members of the group (*Triandis, 1990: 52*). M. Meyer notes that China belongs to a collectivist culture, and group behavior is a major feature of Chinese society (*M. Meyer, 1994: 54*). People in this culture attach great importance to establishing and maintaining stable and harmonious interpersonal relationships within the group.

In the Chinese ancient classic work “论语 (*lún yǔ*)” (The Analects of Confucius) it is stated that “己欲立而立人，己欲达而达人 (*jǐ yù lì ér lì rén, jǐ yù dá ér dá rén*)” (If a person wants to succeed, he also wants to make others successful), from which we can see that China’s collectivist culture has a long history. Y. Richmand with co-researchers stated that in a collectivist culture, individual needs and achievements are secondary to collective needs and achievements in comparison to the individualism of Western societies (*Y. Richmand et al., 1998: 2*). As one of the mainstream thoughts of traditional Chinese culture, Confucianism<sup>8</sup> takes “restraining oneself and restoring propriety” as its principle of conduct, that is, restraining one’s selfish desires and making words and deeds conform to etiquette. Confucianism

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<sup>8</sup> **Confucianism:** It also known as Ruism or Ru classicism, is a system of thought and behavior originating in ancient China, and is variously described as a tradition, philosophy (humanistic or rationalistic), religion, theory of government, or way of life. Confucianism developed from teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE), during a time that was later referred to as the Hundred Schools of Thought era.

believes that one must be in a reasonable and coexisting relationship with others.

As Wang Fengyan and Zheng Hong reported: “In Confucian culture, individuals generally do not have independence, but are just the sum of all social relationships. Individual behavior is just trying to complete their own roles, responsibilities, and obligations. Since the “self” is determined by others, self-realization can often only be achieved by relying on others.” (*Wang Fengyuan et al., 2004: 12*). Therefore, the Chinese advocate putting the family, country, and collective first in everything, and personal interests can be sacrificed when necessary. People must consider and pay attention to other people’s opinions and attitudes when doing things, thus forming such characteristics as indirectness and implicitness in words and deeds. G. Gao et al. pointed out that when faced with potential conflicts, individuals with a collectivistic cultural model are more likely to try their best to avoid conflicts and actively take measures to deal with them (*G. Gao et al., 1998: 202*). That is to say, when it is unavoidable to carry out the refusal communicative act, which is extremely face-threatening, we should strive to do our best to save face, be diplomatic in dealing with things, and follow the principle that peace is the most important thing.

#### *1.9.1.2. Chinese Cultural Concepts 人情 (rén qíng), 面子 (miàn zi)*

Lin Yutang once said: “ ‘人情 (rén qíng)’ (human feeling/favor), ‘面子 (miàn zi)’ (face) and ‘命运 (mìng yùn)’ (destiny) are the three goddesses that govern Chinese people’s lives.” (*Zhai Xuewei, 2013: 13*). A. Smith, in “*The Chinese Character*”, points out that the word 面子 (miàn zi) is the key to unlock many of the most important characteristics of the Chinese (*Yuan Yijin, 2016: 177*). Chinese people attach great importance to 面子 (miàn zi) (face), because “politeness” and 面子

(*miàn zi*) (face) are inseparable concepts. Based on P. Brown et al., “Face” is the “public self-image that every member of society wants to claim for himself (*P. Brown et al., 1978: 66*). Chinese scholar Zhai Xuewei elaborated on the face in Chinese culture, 面子 (*miàn zi*) (face) refers to the recognition of the importance of others, that is, the affirmation, envy, appreciation, respect, and admiration of others’ success, virtue, or good deeds. It is the psychological status formed in the minds of others due to the judgment of others after an individual makes a face behavior. It is a psychology and behavior that can be valued by others (*Zhai Xuewei, 2013: 155*).

People can gain or lose face through communication. For the Chinese people, the gain and loss of face are closely linked to social pride, honor, dignity, insult, shame, humility, trust, suspicion, respect, and authority (*G. Gao et al., 1998: 54*). 面子 (*miàn zi*) is the most important psychology and behavior of Chinese people, and it is the most delicate standard in social interactions. Thus, Chinese expressions such as 给面子 (*gěi miàn zi*) (show respect/for one’s sake), 留面子 (*liú miàn zi*) (save face), etc. can be seen as the requirement of social culture, governing people’s behavior. Under this requirement, interpersonal communication needs to consider the feelings, interests, and social image of both parties and the third party involved in the speech.

It is worth emphasizing that “in a collectivist culture (such as China), conflicts within a group or unit are seen as a loss of face and a disruption to harmonious social relations, and should be avoided to the greatest extent possible” (*M. S. Kim, 2002: 65*). Therefore, in a collectivist culture, 留面子 (*liú miàn zi*) (save face) between each other is more important than only valuing one’s own 面子 (*miàn zi*) (face).

The literal translation of 人情 (*rén qíng*) is ‘human feeling/favor’. However, it involves three layers of meanings: feelings between people, a person’s natural inclinations, and interpersonal resources (*K. S. Yang, 1996: 101*). Jia Wenshan states that “人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor) is the main driving force of face. The main feature of Chinese interpersonal relationships is the emphasis on 人情 (*rén qíng*) which is measured by face. 人情 (*rén qíng*) is an inseparable part of communication, also a product of communication.” (*Jia Wenshan, 2007: 55*). If you do more 人情 (*rén qíng*) in daily life, you will get more 面子 (*miàn zi*). On the contrary, if you don’t, you will not get 面子 (*miàn zi*) (*Zhai Xuewei, 2013: 213*). There are Chinese expressions such as 送人情 (*sòng rén qíng*) (do sb. a favor). 欠人情 (*qiàn rén qíng*) (own someone a favor), 还人情 (*huán rén qíng*) (return a favor), etc., indicating the regulations of Chinese personal relationships.

Chinese cultural concept 人情 (*rén qíng*) has a certain scope of application: 人情 (*rén qíng*) is mainly used between acquaintances and in non-economic relationships. Ancient Chinese society was mainly agricultural, which was an essential reason for the formation of social relationships inside it. Due to the immobility of land, people always had a relatively stable living environment, which consequently formed a society of acquaintances with a high degree of familiarity between people. Zhai Xuewei also holds that Chinese people’s 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor), is more or less a kind of personal relationship, which contains the meaning of exchange of benefits, but repaying kindness is a more important fundamental aspect (*Zhai Xuewei, 2013: 197*). Therefore, for this reason, Chinese

people are often alienated from strangers. Since there is almost no life intersection with the strangers, giving and returning 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor), will accordingly not occur.

On the other hand, China is deeply influenced by Confucian culture. Confucianism attaches great importance to the relationship between people and interpersonal communication. There is a sentence in the Chinese ancient classic work “礼记 (*lǐ jì*)” (“*The Book of Rites*”): “来而不往非礼也 (*lái ér bù wǎng fēi lǐ yě*)” which means that if one gets benefits from others, then he must find a way to repay them, otherwise it is not in line with 礼 (*lǐ*). The ancient 礼 (*lǐ*) here refers to a set of behavioral norms or rules recognized by ancient social customs. Feng Youlan believes that 礼 (*lǐ*) is a code of conduct defined on the basis of 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor) by people who accurately grasp the meaning of 人情 (*rén qíng*) so that people can act according to these rules and avoid thinking when encountering problems. This is the original meaning of 礼 (*lǐ*) (Feng Youlan, 1996: 24). It can be regarded that the formalization of 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor), is essentially the formalization of 礼 (*lǐ*) (Zhai Xuwei, 2013: 155). Therefore, it can also be said that a person who is truly polite and good at communication must be a person who understands 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor).

The main feature of Chinese interpersonal relationships is the emphasis on 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor), which is measured by face. Therefore, Chinese people go to great lengths to maintain face. They must not only protect and

strengthen their face but also protect the other person's face. When they have to get engaged in a speech act that damages other people's faces, they must avoid "speaking directly", and try to use a variety of implicit and euphemistic ways to express themselves indirectly, which is the P. Brown and S. C. Levinson's "off-record politeness". This way minimizes the conflict and softens the language, thereby maintaining the harmony of interpersonal relationships. "In general, words that express information most directly are often the least polite, while words that express information least directly are the most polite." (He Ziran et al., 2009: 107) Therefore, the Chinese people emphasize the application of polite principles and strategies in communication.

### 1.9.1.3. Chinese Cultural Concepts 和 (hé), 礼(lǐ)

The promotion of 和 (hé) is one of the important features of Chinese traditional culture. There is a famous Chinese expression — “礼之用，和为贵 (lǐ zhī yòng, hé wéi guì)” which comes from “论语 (lún yǔ)” (“*The Analects of Confucius*”), which means that the function of rituals is to make people's relationships more harmonious. It can be seen that China is a nation with a strong traditional thought of 和 (hé) (harmony/peace), which advocates that “the use of etiquette, harmony is the most precious thing”. The meaning of this expression is that to achieve the most fundamental requirement of 礼 (lǐ) (property/ritual, approximating contemporary politeness), which is the social moral norms, by taking 和 (hé) (harmony) as the standard.

礼 (lǐ) (etiquette) as a very important part of Chinese culture is a symbol of a

person's upbringing. The famous historian Qian Mu mentioned that 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) is the heart of Chinese culture (*Qian Mu, 1994: 34*). The Chinese concept of 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) governance began during the Yin and Zhou dynasties 3,000 years ago. In light of the lessons of the demise of the Shang Dynasty, the Duke of Zhou of the Western Zhou Dynasty proposed the principle of “rule of virtue” of diligence and love for the people and transformed it into an operational system. This effectively implemented the idea of moral governance at all levels of society. This epoch-making great event established the country's rules, regulations, and social ethical standards, and was the forerunner of Confucianism in later generations.

After the Western Han Dynasty, books such as “礼记 (*lǐ jì*)” (“*The Book of Rites*”), which were theoretical in form, were successively included in the official school curriculum. They not only became a must-read classic for ancient scholars but also became the basis for establishing rituals in successive dynasties, with a profound impact on Chinese culture and history. The “礼记 (*lǐ jì*)” (“*The Book of Rites*”) has the following detailed description of 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette): “礼也者, 理也 (*lǐ yě zhě, lǐ yě*)” (Etiquette are principles) and “夫礼者, 自卑而尊人 (*fū lǐ zhě, zì bēi ér zūn rén*)” (Etiquette means to humble oneself and respect others).

Etiquette is the social life norm formulated according to the requirements of moral rationality, ranging from the rules of the government to the regulations of interpersonal communication, the principles of personal self-cultivation, and even the way people get along with nature. All of them are within the scope of etiquette. Confucianism regards 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) as a symbol to distinguish civilization from barbarism. In interpersonal communication, Chinese people uphold the philosophy of

“respecting the elderly, being filial to parents, upholding good neighborliness, being humble and respectful to others, and adhering to harmony”.

This cultural background of 和 (*hé*) (harmony), 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) is largely reflected in language pragmatics, which requires both parties in communication to be polite and seek agreement in many aspects. During communication, it is not easy to express opinions that are different from others or accuse others of their mistakes. Otherwise, this may lead to “hard feelings”. It can be said that the “agree maxim”, which was proposed by Chinese scholar Gu Yueguo (*Gu Yueguo, 1992: 11*), is an important part of the “Principle of Politeness” in Chinese. Therefore, the combination of speech act and 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) leads to several important cultural concepts, which will be discussed in the next sections.

#### 1.9.1.4. Chinese Cultural Concept 得体 (*dé tǐ*)

In addition, using language politely is an important factor in using language appropriately (*He Zhaoxiong, 1989: 178*). According to the opinion of Qian, appropriate speech is the highest pragmatic principle in communication, which requires people to speak the right words to the right people at the right time and on the right occasion (*Qian Guanlian, 1997: 183*). Appropriate speech is not a matter of grammar or rhetoric, nor of language symbolism. It is restricted by various factors in the contextual system related to people. When making a speech act of refusal, different context systems determine different speech expressions.

In Chinese, 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness) came from the encyclopedia “辞海 (*cí hǎi*)”: “礼记 (*lǐ jì*)”: ‘官得其体’, 孔颖达疏: ‘谓设官分职, 各得其尊卑之体’ 后谓言语行动恰合分寸为‘得体’... (*‘guān dé qí tǐ’, kǒng yǐng dá shū: ‘wèi shè guān*

*fēn zhí, gè dé qí zūn bēi zhī tǐ' hòu wèi yán yǔ xíng dòng qià hé fēn cùn wéi 'dé tǐ' ...)*” (“*The Book of Rites*”: ‘Officials have their own appropriateness.’ Kong Yingda explained: ‘It means that officials are divided into duties according to their ranks, and each has his own dignity and inferiority.’ Later, take the appropriateness of words and deeds as ‘得体 (*dé tǐ*) ...’. Therefore, it can be seen from this that the Chinese 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness) originated from the strict hierarchical system in ancient times. The high and low status of officials requires that their actions should be completely consistent with their status: the high ones should be dignified, and the lower ones should be humble. This means having 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) in words and deeds. This “etiquette” is not equivalent to “politeness”: it is a broader code of conduct and social norms implementation.

Under the constraints of 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette), people are required to speak and behave appropriately; that is, they need to pay attention to the communication objects, the time and occasion, and the norms of words and deeds during communication. Therefore, 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness) is different from the “Tact Maxim” listed by G. Leech under the politeness principle but is closer to G. Leech’s “Rhetoric” because both 得体 (*dé tǐ*) and “Rhetoric” emphasize the effective use of language in communication. In conclusion, it must be said, that 得体 (*dé tǐ*) has been a very general principle in communication since ancient times in China.

From a diachronic perspective, the social and cultural norms within a nation or community are constantly changing, which correspondingly determines the change in speech acts people use. The ancient Chinese 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) is very different from today’s “politeness”, it changed a lot. However, certain traditional moral norms, such

as humiliating oneself and respecting others, advocating peace, etc., are still inherited as fine national traditions and serve as today's social and cultural norms in China. On the other hand, from a synchronic perspective, there are spatial differences in social culture. Languages cannot exist without cultures, and different cultures have different requirements for "appropriateness". For example, Eastern culture requires humiliating oneself and respecting others, while Western culture requires respecting others without humiliating oneself. Chinese people often use indirect expressions and strategies, especially when performing refusal communicative acts to avoid hurting the other party's face. Just like Maley summarized this type of Chinese speech acts as the "evasive replies" (*Hu Wenzhong, 1988: 67*).

"Appropriateness" can be regarded as a very critical principle of language use. Therefore, the appropriateness principle has actually become a pragmatic principle that Chinese and foreign scholars attach great importance to. Just as D. H. Hymes' (1972) theory of communicative competence mentioned that one should follow the principle of propriety and adapt one's speech to the context, including the timing and occasion of speaking, the person to whom one speaks, the content of the topic, the way of expression, the emotional state of the listener, and the relationship between the listener and the speaker. In China, there are certain studies on language appropriateness based on the characteristics of the Chinese context, such as the chapters on the aspect principle of language in the books "*General Theory of Rhetoric*" by scholar Wang Xijie (1996) and "*On Pragmatic Principles*" by Feng Guangyi (2009), as well as Zheng Rongxin's monograph (2014) *The Art of Language Appropriateness*.

It is worth noting that there are typical refusal methods with distinctive cultural characteristics in Chinese culture, such as “Let’s talk about it (later)”, “I’ll consider it” and other expressions with conventional social significance. Meanwhile, there is also a large number of non-conventional expressions. However, according to previous studies, there is a unique speech act phenomenon in Chinese culture, called the ostensible refusal communicative act (ORCA). However, this kind of speech act does not threaten the other person’s face but is a sign of politeness. As G. Leech proposed in *“Politeness: Is There an East-West Divide?”*, Chinese people often launch “battles of politeness”, and a tug-of-war pattern will appear when inviting: invitation – refusal – invitation – refusal – invitation – acceptance (G. Leech, 2005: 9). Therefore, a good understanding of the culture behind the language is a key point to ensuring the successful communication and avoiding pragmatic mistakes.

#### 1.9.1.5. Chinese “High-context” Culture with the Cultural Concept 含蓄 (hán xù)

The Chinese language emphasizes the beauty of 含蓄 (hán xù) (implicitness). The too straight forward expressions will provoke a superficial and uncomfortable feeling in Chinese culture. As we all know, China has a long history and culture. The poems and even dialogues in Chinese classical literature that express the feelings of human beings are the best representatives of 含蓄 (hán xù) (implicitness). The core characteristic of the beauty of 含蓄 (hán xù) (implicitness) lies in its hidden, not evident nature. This kind of beauty does not attract the eye by publicity or exposure, but through rich inner connotation and simple external expression, allowing people to feel the power of beauty in silence.

Also, it can give people beautiful associations and a sense of mystery, which is an important principle in Chinese artistic creation and aesthetic pursuit. As the Chinese aesthetician Zhu Guangqian said in his book *“Twelve Letters to Young People”*: “Words are used to express ideas, but ideas can never be fully expressed in words because words are fixed and have signs, while ideas are ever-changing and elusive. Words are fragmented, while ideas are mixed and integral. Words are finite, while ideas are infinite. To express ideas with words is like drawing an object with intermittent dotted lines; one can only get an approximation.” (Zhu Guangqian, 2019: 48). It can be said that the beauty of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) in Chinese culture is not only an aesthetic pursuit but also a cultural expression that embodies the restraint and depth of Eastern culture. Implicit beauty is particularly prominent in Chinese culture and is reflected in many ways, such as language, poetry, music, clothing, and emotions.

The beauty of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) is one of China’s numerous aesthetics. The beauty of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) means holding back, and it does not mean no expression but expressing in a certain way. In other words, implicitness is a skill of expression. It emphasizes that when expressing emotions or thoughts, one should not express them directly, but rather use obscure and restrained ways to allow the audience to feel the deeper meaning and beauty in their appreciation. This kind of beauty is not expressed through straightforward language or behaviour, but through a technique that is implicit but not revealed, allowing people to experience the existence of beauty in their thinking and association.

Chinese scholar Bao Zhiyuan stated that 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) is a basic

characteristic of literature and also a characteristic of Chinese culture (*Bao Zhiyuan, 2013: 78*). The beauty of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) is not only a manifestation of self-cultivation and taste but also an expression of charm and art. It requires the expresser to adopt a more concise, general, and memorable expression method without compromising the essence of objective things and reducing the appeal of the image, thus creating an “implicit” artistic conception. In short, in Chinese culture, 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) appears to be not only a form of artistic expression but also represents a kind of cultivation, a taste, and a charm. If one lacks implicitness, he or she will be regarded as a person who lacks cultivation, and taste, and in addition, is superficial.

In terms of speech acts, Confucianism advocates the use of implicit rather than explicit language. The way of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) in communication advocated by Confucian philosophy is based on considerations of 和 (*hé*) (harmony) and 面子 (*miànzi*) (face) in Chinese culture. People often express their demands implicitly rather than directly. “Confucian culture advocates considering others and building harmonious interpersonal relationships, consolidating the interaction model of “saving other people’s face”. “The way of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) of communicating helps avoid the embarrassment of being refused or criticized” (*Cho Youngmee Yu, 2000: 70*).

In addition, the Chinese are highly dependent on the environment due to the influence of traditional culture. As Chinese scholar Li Xia pointed out in her research, if compared with the rigorous morphology and clear connotation of English, the Chinese language is vague, implicit, and has a profound artistic conception (*Li Xia,*

2007: 13). An interesting idea is displayed in the book “*Chinese Language and Literature*”: “When we speak, it is often the case that part of the meaning is conveyed by the language, and part of the meaning is supplemented by the environment” (*Lin Baoqing, 2000: 167*). A lot of information is in the environment, or the “unspoken” condition and understanding is an important means of decoding information.

It is precisely because of this important characteristic of Chinese that T. Hall classifies Chinese culture into “high-context” culture in his book. In the “high-context culture”, information transmission largely depends on context. Utterances do not carry a lot of information for communication. It is necessary to accurately grasp the context and background culture of the communicator, infer and process the information after reaching a consensus between the two parties, and finally derive the speaker’s true intention. The indirect ways of expressing ideas and communicative content are the most iconic features in “high-context culture”. Meanwhile, it is considered to be the responsibility of the listener to manage and figure out the true implications hidden beneath the surface of words, not the speaker (*E. T. Hall, 1997: 99*).

In Chinese daily life and communication, when people want to express a strong inner desire, they often resort to 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness). In social situations, people are more likely to accept things if they are said more vaguely, more generally, and to the point where it is just right.

Summarizing the above, the Chinese cultural tradition of attaching importance to 和 (*hé*) (harmony) and 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette), paying attention to 面子 (*miàn zi*) (face), emphasizing 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness) and 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness)

determines the diversity of indirect ways of speech acts in Chinese, and the variety of indirect expressions which also provide the deployment of politeness requirements. Compared with direct expression, indirect expression is implicit and tactful. Therefore, when conducting the refusal communicative act in Chinese, one should not use direct expressions but leave a certain buffer zone for the other party. Indirect expressions convey a certain polite message, which maintains good interpersonal relationships and provides specific communication purposes.

**In conclusion**, in terms of the cultural and cognitive background of RCA in Chinese, there are five main aspects that need to be mentioned. China is deeply influenced by Confucian culture and highly advocates collective socialism. Individuals are just the sum of all social relationships, and self-realization is achieved by relying on others. Therefore, a series of very important cultural concepts have been condensed, such as 人情 (*rén qíng*) (human feeling/favor), 面子 (*miàn zi*) (face), 和 (*hé*) (harmony), 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette), 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness) and 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness). Chinese speech act cannot be interpreted clearly without these cultural concepts.

### **1.9.2. Cultural and Cognitive Background of RCA in Japanese Culture**

The speech acts exercised in different cultural environments bear the cultural imprint of the nation's mentality. Chinese scholars Fan Zheng and Yu Guiling, who were dedicated to studying Japanese culture, once proposed that the Japanese like to use euphemistic and implicit expressions. This is closely related to the Japanese traditional "rice-growing culture" characterized by "collective work and common order", the historical background of attaching importance to "Confucianism", the

natural conditions of a small land area, a large population, and an island country surrounded by the sea, the hierarchical system of a “vertical society”, and the cultural psychology of “situational determinism” (looking at the world from the perspective of one’s peers) and “interdependence” at the behavioral level (*Fan Zheng et al, 2002: 2*). In addition, Chinese scholar Xie Fang also noticed in her research: “The hierarchical feudal system and the relationship between generations in the feudal era of Japan, the island culture and collectivism are important factors that affect the Japanese people’s verbal expression in communication.” (*Xie Fang, 2007: 3*). Therefore, especially when implementing the refusal communicative acts, which threaten the other party’s face, it is even more important to fully consider the characteristics of the Japanese cultural background.

#### *1.9.2.1. Japanese Cultural Concepts 和 (hé), 礼(lǐ)*

The spirit of 和 (hé) (harmony) is a state that the Japanese people admire and pursue (*Li Xia, 2007: 13*). This is the important influence of Chinese culture represented by Confucianism on Japanese culture and the theories and ideas of Confucianism are still deeply rooted in Japan. Japan has organically integrated the Confucian concept of 和 (hé) (harmony) into its own traditional concepts, making it a coordinate for ethnic identity, a treasure for national development and personal self-cultivation.

On the other hand, Japan is essentially a religious country. After Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced from the Asian continent, Japan established its own official religion — “Shintoism”. The Japanese believe that all natural phenomena, animals, and plants possess divine powers; they call it 神 (*kami*) in Japanese. It is

generally believed that Buddhism was introduced to Japan from China via Korea in the middle of the sixth century. It has a history of more than 1,500 years. The implementation of Buddhism has brought extensive and profound influences to Japan (*Wu Jingxia et al., 2003: 91*). Its main ideas were believed by the rulers of the time and spread among the general public during the Heian period (794-1192) and Kamakura period (1192-1338) of Japan. Buddhism advocates the idea of harmony and peace. Thus, this idea is reflected in the fact that the Japanese care a lot about the relationship between both parties in communication and attach great importance to the idea of harmony.

In the 7th century AD, Prince Shotoku of Japan promulgated the first constitution of Japan (which is different from the constitution in the legal sense of today's usage but is more like a moral code). The Constitution absorbed the ideas of Confucianism and Buddhism and elaborated the spirit of the new social policy. The original text of the first article is as follows: “一に曰く、和を以て貴しとに為し、忤ふこと無きを宗と為す (*Ichī ni iwaku, wa o motte tōtoshi to ni nashi, sakafu koto naki o muneto nasu*)” (*Li Zhaohui, 2005: 137*). It means respect for peace and the pursuit of a harmonious political system. 和 (*hé*) means harmony between the upper and lower classes in Japan, which is the foundation of world peace. It imposed strict ethical requirements on its government officials, which gradually developed into Japan's unified moral standards.

This standard presents two ideological principles: “harmony is the most valuable” and “harmony between superiors and subordinates”. This has also led to a gradual change in Japanese verbal communication and expression habits, forming the current

language expression style. The Japanese regard 和 (*hé*) (harmony) as an important principle for all social interactions.

Another important cultural concept is 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette). The Japanese nation is a country with many 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette). Behind this phenomenon of etiquette lies the Japanese people's important value system — hierarchy. Japan's class system has a long history. In 645 AD, Japan's ruling class learned from the advanced system of the Tang Dynasty and launched the Taika Reform Movement, which divided the powerful and wealthy into eight levels based on family background and political status, and initially formed a system of noble and humble status. Since then, this hierarchy has profoundly impacted Japan's development.

The strict hierarchy is an important feature of Japanese society. It permeates every corner of social life and has an inviolable authority. “Without the concept of hierarchy, Japanese social life will be chaotic, because hierarchy is the norm of Japanese social life” (*Nakane chie, 1983: 31*). Whether it is the flow of interactions between classes, the hierarchy of family members, or the etiquette norms of interpersonal relationships and the rules of workplace communication, hierarchy and privilege concepts exist. It can be said that the Japanese's reliance on hierarchy is fundamental in their entire concept of relationships between people, between people and the country, and even between countries.

American scholar Ruth Benedict mentioned in her book *“The Chrysanthemum and the Sword”*: When the Japanese put forward the creed of “Everyone takes his own social status,” they also resorted to a certain code of life. Those social codes have long been deeply rooted in their hearts through their own life experience.

Inequality has been the norm of organized life for centuries; in those respects, these norms are most foreseeable and accepted. The habitual thinking that recognizes hierarchy is as natural to them as breathing. (*Ruth Benedict, 2011: 28*)

After the Meiji Restoration, although Japan had already launched a Westernization movement, it remained an aristocratic society. The differences in social status between people need to be expressed through 礼 (*li*) (etiquette). On the other hand, Japan's 礼 (*li*) (etiquette) is not only to demonstrate social hierarchy, it also has profound spiritual connotations. In the book "*Bushido, The Soul of Japan*", Japanese educator Nitobe Inazo specifically explained 礼 (*li*) (etiquette). That is, the so-called 礼 (*li*) (etiquette) is to show the attitude of caring for others' feelings in a visible form, which should be respected as the laws of things (*Nitobe Inazo, 2009: 315*). Nitobe Inazo believes that 礼 (*li*) (etiquette) is indispensable for social interaction and that people should learn specific rules, such as how to be polite to others, because elegant behaviour can accumulate inner strength. It is precisely because of the emphasis on 礼 (*li*) (etiquette), respecting others and maintaining a humble attitude that has become the standard and goal of the Japanese to cultivate their moral character.

Under the guidance of 和 (*hé*) (harmony) and 礼 (*li*) (etiquette), Japanese speech acts are deeply influenced. In daily communication, Japanese people tend to avoid using direct ways of expression that are seen as rude and instead choose more indirect and euphemistic speech behaviours that are seen as more polite. Therefore, the Japanese are characterized by strong ambiguity. That is one of the reasons why the Japanese language is considered an "ambiguous language" worldwide. Especially

when performing refusal communicative acts that threaten the other party's face, strong euphemistic expressions would be used to minimize the harm to the other party.

#### *1.9.2.2. Japanese Cultural Concept GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS*

The distinctive feature of Japanese culture is the spirit of *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS*. *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS* means that the Japanese have a kind of consciousness presupposing that they are a part of a whole, and this whole refers to a community of interests or even a community of life. They are closely related to this whole and share the same fate (*Shen Ce, 1986: 10*). The formation of a nation's culture has much to do with its geographical environment. Living conditions on the Japanese island are relatively poor, the arable land is small, and it is a country prone to earthquakes. The Japanese need to rely on collective strength to fight the harsh environment. In addition, Japan's main crop is rice, and rice planting also requires coordination among people, so the spirit of *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS* is cultivated.

During the Yayoi period (3rd century BC – late 3rd century AD), the Japanese started an agriculture of rice cultivation. As recorded in the book "*Japanese History and Culture*": "From the Yayoi period to recent years, paddy rice farming has always been the basic feature of rural Japan. The characteristic of paddy rice farming is that once the fields are developed, they can be used forever if properly managed. The development of farmland has strengthened people's settlement. The Japanese built houses and lived in the same place for generations, thus forming a home that transcends individual life and death. However, a family cannot exist in isolation, so several neighboring families combined to form a village ... The village's joint

development has transcended the production and life of each family, but it has also constrained the villagers' actions.” (*National Museum of History and Folklore, 1985: 106*)

They have the habit of helping each other, farming, irrigating, and harvesting together. This custom is the product of collective labor and common order for a living community. Over time, a “collective consciousness” has been formed, and it has become a typical mentality among the Japanese. After the 7th century AD, with the introduction of Buddhism and the establishment of the feudal system, the *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS* of the Japanese people surpassed individual will. Especially after the Edo period, the strict hierarchy system and the morality of loyalty and filial piety became widely spread. There was a strict division between the nobility and the common people.

Moreover, there are strict social class divisions between the nobility and the common people, and no one is allowed to cross them. This clear class system left a deep mark on modern Japan. When greeting, different words, and language expressions must be used depending on social status, kinship, age, and generation. The strict class system and affinity/hierarchy relationships in the feudal era are external social factors that influence Japanese social relations and language expression. Due to their strong sense of *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS* and strict class system, Japanese people tend to be very careful about their language when interacting with others. Especially when conducting the refusal communicative act, one should be more considerate based on the intimacy and hierarchical relationship with the other person to maintain interpersonal relationships.

The Japanese have a strong sense of *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS*, and every individual exists as a member of the collective. *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS* constrains one's words and acts in social life. Individuals must maintain the harmony of the group in their actions and survive in the group with "harmony". That is, to cultivate the ability of one's own "individuality" and the group's "commonality" to be interdependent through the harmonious psychology of the self and the tolerant attitude of the group and to form a principle that harmony is above all else (*Jing Huanru et al., 2013:175*). The competition between groups complicates the relationships between people. Japanese scholar Nakane Chie pointed out that "it makes the Japanese very clever in their speech, behavior, expressions, and gestures when interacting with each other. They are ambiguous and unpredictable. This cleverness is to conceal hostility, avoid confrontation, and protect themselves. They flatter and smile, but at the same time do not reveal their true intentions, to gain benefits." (*Nakane Chie, 1983: 113*). It can be said that indirect refusal is a typical expression of *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS* in the Japanese language. The Japanese are good at using some implicit expressions to express their intention to refuse, that is, they are trying their best to repair the damage to interpersonal relationships that might be caused by their refusal, which is a kind of maintenance of collective interests.

### *1.9.2.3. Japanese "Mono-ethnic Cultural Mentality"*

Japan is an island country that has never been ruled by foreigners of representatives of different cultures. Its people have long lived in a society with similar national identity, race, religion, language, and lifestyles. This unique objective environment has enabled the Japanese nation to form a highly unified Japanese

culture in the long process of historical development. Although people have differences, their overall understanding of nature, society, and culture is similar. Moreover, since the Japanese people can understand each other pretty well, their moral and traditional standards are relatively consistent. In such a social group composed of a single ethnic group, simple communication has never been challenging. Using language as a medium, not emphasizing the self, and maintaining interpersonal relationships through “以心伝心 (*Ishindenshin*)” (heart-to-heart communication without using letters or words) with vague and humble expressions — this is the state that Japanese people pursue when interacting with each other.

Therefore, as an island country, Japan has language characteristics that are different from the culture of mainland countries. In addition, due to its single nation, single language, etc., a unique language environment has been formed, which gives the Japanese an essential advantage in exchanging ideas through language so that they do not need to say much to each other and can understand each other's thoughts just by using ambiguous and euphemistic words. The Japanese have more acute observation skills and a strong ability to understand the other party's psychology because of the unity of the Japanese nation and the “group consciousness,” which is characterized by identity and unity.

Interestingly, sentences with complete subject, predicate, and object are rare in Japanese language expression, but some omitted and ambiguous expressions are often. In Japanese, there is a unique phenomenon of omission where a word replaces a sentence. For instance, words like やはり (*yahari*) and 一応 (*ichio*), etc. which have characteristics of rich connotations. With the implicit and ambiguous functions, it

weakens the subject's consciousness and plays the role of a complete sentence in terms of meaning. Especially when implementing the refusal communicative acts, which threaten the other party's face, the Japanese are more inclined to use indirect, ambiguous, and implicit expressions.

#### 1.9.2.4. Japanese “甘え (amae) Mentality”

The word 甘え (amae) (pampering) comes from the verb 甘える (amaeru), is a word that is unique to Japanese. Therefore, it is difficult to find an equivalent translation in other languages. The definition of this word in the *Japanese National Language Dictionary* is: “Expecting the other party's permission and taking actions that exceed the limit.” (Kindaichi Kyosuke, 1991: 30). The word 甘え (amae) (pampering) exists as an everyday expression for passive love and is an indicator of Japanese society and culture. In Chinese, it is usually roughly translated as “撒娇 (sā jiāo)” (behave in a spoiled manner) or 娇惯 (jiāo guàn) (to spoil), and the word 依爱 (yī ài) which is more common in Taiwan. However, in English, it is directly transliterated as the word “amae”.

The “甘え (amae) theory” was derived by Japanese psychiatrist Kenro Doi based on case analysis (Shang Huipeng, 2021: 73). In the book “*Japanese Love — Psychological Analysis of Japanese ‘Dependence’ Behavior*”, 甘え (amae) (pampering) originally refers to the feelings that a normal baby has towards his mother: dependence, coquettishness, that is, the passive need for love. The baby spiritually desires to snuggle up to the mother, indulge in the indulgent maternal love, is unwilling to leave the warm life circle of mother-child and immerse himself/herself in objective reality. This feeling gradually develops and prolongs, extending into

adult life and forming a person's attitude towards others and the real world (*Doi Takeo, 2007: 113*). To put it simply, the Japanese idealize 甘え (*amae*) (pampering) and regard the world dominated by “pampering” as the real human world (*Li Zhaohui, 2006: 3*).

The formation of the Japanese dependence mentality may be due to the relatively closed family norms. Since a strong family is of great survival significance to the Japanese, raising offspring becomes an important part of survival. Because of the “closed family norms”, the parent-child connection becomes the basis of “cohesion” within the family, and dependence becomes the most core psychological characteristic (*Yu Dehui, 1994: 22*). Therefore, certain characteristics of Japanese are a reflection of the “甘え (*amae*) mentality” (pampering mentality) deep in the hearts of the Japanese. Therefore, the simplicity, ambiguity, and emphasis on the implied meaning of Japanese can be said to be a reflection of the Japanese people's “甘え (*amae*) mentality” (pampering mentality), that is, the Japanese people have a strong dependence on the other party who listens to them, and expect the other party's understanding and care.

American scholar John Hinds studied the phenomenon of 甘え (*amae*) (pampering) in Japanese, and he distinguished between “speaker-responsibility” and “listener-responsibility” in conversation. Research shows that when communicating in Japanese, traditionally, the behaviours considered to be well-educated and polite on the listener's part include at least the following: a. Do not interrupt the other person or interject in the middle of the conversation; b. Frequently use words to echo the other person's words to show you are paying attention to the speech. However, the

requirements for the speaker are relatively not strict. The speaker as the party in the communication, even if there are inadequate speech acts, the other party (listener) can be expected to supplement them. This kind of dependent behaviour is allowed (*Ikegami Yoshihiko, 2000: 262*). As a result, the Japanese discourse style gives the speaker a strong sense of dependence, that is, dependence on the listener's consideration and perception. Therefore, when implementing the speech act of refusal, the content of the rejection is often left to the other party to guess.

#### *1.9.2.5. Japanese "High-context" Culture*

The "*Longman Dictionary of Linguistics*" defines context as follows: the content that appears before and after a word, phrase, or even a longer speech or text. Context contributes to the understanding of the specific meaning of a word or phrase. Context also refers to the wider social environment in which a language item is located (*J. C. Richards, 1983: 72*). To successfully communicate, the role of context cannot be underestimated. Context in a broad sense includes not only the environment and conditions of the communication but also cultural connections. According to E. T. Hall (1976), Japanese is a "high-context" language, in which information and meaning are derived primarily from context (culture, background, etc.). Japanese is a language that is highly dependent on context.

In his study, Ono Yumiko et al. pointed out that "Japanese people reflect the characteristics of a high-context communication style (indirect, relationship-oriented, recipient-oriented, and personal-oriented)" (*Ono Yumiko et al., 1998: 106*). The reason why communication among Japanese people can be understood is that they rely on the long-standing cultural context that they share. A typical common Japanese

expression for this is “空気を読む (*Kukiwoyomu*)”, which means ‘to feel the atmosphere, gauge the mood, and read between the lines’.

#### 1.9.2.6. Japanese Language’s Characteristics

It is widely known that the Japanese language is characterized as an agglutinative one. There are peculiar lexical and grammatical features in Japanese. Japanese is considered a language with highly developed indirect speech behavior. Japanese people are accustomed to speaking in a roundabout way, often hoping that the other party can understand their implicit meaning. Many things are not said directly for fear of hurting the other party’s face. Therefore, by using Japanese lingual forms such as continuation particles, final particles, and interrogative sentences, the listener can be allowed to reconsider his or her opinion. Its function is to leave the criteria for judgment to the other party and reduce the degree of face violation (*Chen Xiuying et al., 2017: 91*).

In Japanese, auxiliary words such as が (*ga*), けど (*keredo*), けれども (*keredomo*) and others are often used at the end of utterances in conversations, which have no lexical meaning, but they fulfill a pragmatic function. Such as: “別に予定はありませんが。 (*betsuni yotei wa arimasennga*)” (I have no other appointment); “少しでもご希望に沿い申し上げたいのですが。 (*sukoshi demo go kibō ni soi mōshiagetai nodesuga*)” (I would like to follow your wish); “助けたい気持ちも少しあるんですけど。 (*tasuketai kimochi mo sukoshi aru ndesukeredomo*)” (I want to help you). These auxiliary words が (*ga*), けど (*keredo*) and けれども (*keredomo*) in the sentences have no actual literal meanings. However, they hide the real intention of the speaker, and the hidden (omitted) content usually has the opposite meaning to

the first part of the sentence.

In addition, some symbolic adverbs have a negative lexical or grammatical semantic function, that is, they might be followed by negative content which is usually in opposition to the other party's expectations. For example, the adverb ちよつと (*chotto*) means “a little, slightly”, but from the pragmatic point of view, it seems to reveal the speaker's slight psychological activities of “embarrassment”, “withdrawal”, and “inability to do what one wants”. That is, it actually conveys a real message — a tactful refusal (*Li Xia, 2007: 12*). There are many words in Japanese, such as: やはり/ やっぱり (*yahari/ yappari*), どうも (*domo*) and あまり (*amari*), etc. In addition to their literal meanings, these words also have rich connotations.

Coupled with the semantic or grammatical functions of these kinds of words, the whole meaning of the sentence will not be so easy to grasp only through the superficial meanings of the written words. When facing the invitation: “お茶とか飲みましよう (*ocha toka nomimashou*)” (Let's go have tea or something?), the answer (to refuse): “ちよつと (*chotto*)…” (Well...) is one of the good examples of its classic usage.

**In conclusion**, as for studying refusal communicative act in the Japanese cultural context, it is necessary to focus on several important aspects of Japanese culture. Firstly, due to the influence of Chinese Confucian culture, 和 (*hé*) (harmony) acts as an essential part of Japanese culture. In addition, the unique cultural background of *GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS*, “mono-ethnic cultural mentality,” and “甘え (*amae*) Mentality” in Japan have a profound impact on language. Meanwhile, Japan represents “high-context” culture, and the Japanese language owns its

characteristics. These cultural aspects are intertwined and provide a unique framework for language study.

### **1.9.3 Cultural and Cognitive Background of RCA in Ukrainian Culture**

#### *1.9.3.1. Ukrainian People's View of Religion*

Historically, Ukraine is a religiously diverse country with a relatively high level of religious freedom and a somewhat religious population. Within a regional scope, Ukraine might be described as one of the most religious countries in Europe (*Gennadiy Druzenko, 2001: 719*). Religious beliefs are widespread in Ukraine. Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Eastern Catholicism, and Roman Catholicism are the three most widely practiced religions. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is the largest in the country. The second largest church is the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which follows the Byzantine rite but is in full communion with the Holy See.

According to the country's Constitution, church and state are separated from each other. More than 90% of religiously active citizens are Christian. On the territory of the Old Rus in Kyiv, Christianity became the dominant religion since its official acceptance in 989 by Vladimir the Great (Volodymyr the Great), who brought it from Byzantine Crimea and installed it as the state religion of medieval Kyivan Rus (Ruthenia), with the metropolitan seat in Kyiv. Since those times, the territory of Ukraine has been known for its magnificent churches and cathedrals.

Although separated into various Christian denominations, most Ukrainian Christians share a common faith based on Eastern Christianity. This tradition is represented in Ukraine by the Byzantine Rite, the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches, which have been closely aligned with Ukrainian national self-identity and

Byzantine culture at different historical times. The head of the Kyivan Patriarchate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC-KP), Filaret, argues that “The soul of our people is Orthodoxy,” he also emphasizes: “If this soul ceases to exist, so too will Ukraine.” (*Patriarch Filaret, 1995: 20*)

According to Anatoly Kolodniy, orthodoxy was fortunate in Ukraine-Rus in that Rus’ princes supported its establishment in the tenth through the twelfth centuries. Since Christianity did not provide Ukraine’s ancestors with an understanding of contemporary life, the surrounding natural environment, and agriculture, they continued to comprehend these phenomena through pagan traditions. Christianity and ancient beliefs together coalesced in the collective consciousness of Ukraine. Ancestral worship was preserved, as were beliefs in house, forest, and water gnomes. The worship of traditional deities was only reluctantly supplanted by Christian patron saints that functioned similarly. This history shaped the traits of Ukrainian religiosity: openness, syncretism, and tolerance (*Anatoly Kolodniy, 2000: 2*).

The core of the Orthodox faith is the salvation of Jesus Christ and the truth of the Trinity. The Orthodox Church emphasizes the salvation of the human soul and the path to holiness, guiding believers through faith, the Bible, and the Holy Tradition. It emphasizes connecting with God through faith and rituals, pursuing the truth, and spreading God’s teachings. The Orthodox Church also actively participates in social affairs, focusing on the spread of social justice, peace, and love. The ritual customs of the Orthodox Church embody a cultural value of respect and enthusiasm.

### *1.9.3.2. Ukrainian People’s East Slavic Cultural Background*

It is well known that Slavic culture has a long history, and its language, art, and religion are major components of European culture. The Slavic peoples are distributed in Southern Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Far East. The Slavs are an independent cultural and political community with rich resources and great potential.

Among the many ethnic groups and cultures in Europe, the Eastern Slavs are one of the ethnic groups with a unique history, language, and traditions. Their history can be traced back to ancient times, and they originally lived in this vast Central and Eastern European land along the Baltic Sea, the Vistula River, and the Dnieper River basin. This region has been a battleground for various political, cultural, and religious forces in history. Still, the Eastern Slavs have tenaciously survived and multiplied on this land, forming their unique national characteristics and becoming the ancestors of the later Ukrainians, Russians, and Belarusians.

Ukraine is the birthplace of the Eastern Slavs, who established the first unified monarchy in Kyiv and its surrounding areas in 882 AD, namely Kyivan Rus. As Chinese scholar Zhao Yun wrote in his book: “Kyivan Rus, the first state of the Eastern Slavs, rose in the second half of the 9th century AD in a vast area centered on the Dnieper River. It soon became one of the politically and economically developed countries in Eastern Europe.” (*Zhao Yun, 2004: 9*) In 988 AD, Kyivan Rus accepted Eastern Orthodoxy and made it the state religion. Orthodoxy not only effectively promoted the unity of the East Slavic community but also greatly promoted the progress of East Slavic civilization.

The Slavic culture emphasizes “self-preservation” and “maintaining

independence”. Throughout the long history and life of the Slavs, they have had to constantly face invasion and integration from powerful foreign forces. Therefore, they maintained a strong sense of independence and national consciousness. Many literary and artistic works are related to liberty and freedom in Slavic culture, such as the Ukrainian folk song “Yakby ya mala kryla orlyni” (If I had the wings of an eagle).

In addition, Slavic culture has humanistic and ideological characteristics. Slavic culture shows strong religious beliefs and cultural traditions. In the cultural traditions of the Slavs, Christianity plays an important role. As envisioned by Father Erasmus, Christian humanism is “the replacement of ignorance and fanaticism by an inner and intellectual piety manifested through a virtuous life according to the example of Christ.” (*R. Olson, 2003: 390*) This cultural tradition is reflected in music, art, literature, and other aspects, giving Slavic culture distinct humanistic and ideological characteristics.

Also, it is reflected in the national character: focusing on spiritual things and despising material things. Stephen Shulman believes that it is often emphasized that Ukrainians prefer emotions over reason and spirit over material things (*Stephen Shulman, 1999: 22*). Some people believe that Ukraine’s literary and intellectual history is full of emotional appeals (*Feng Shaolei, 2005:19*). Ukrainian nationalists point out that tolerance is usually a manifestation of the Ukrainian community’s respect for others. As Ukrainian scholar Kostomarov said: “Tolerance is the spirit, not national arrogance.” (*Mirchuk Ivan, 1948: 265*).

The historical and cultural roots of all national characteristics can be traced back to the ancient village communal life of the Slavs (characterized by labor union mutual

assistance, primitive justice, and equality) and also the aggregation of Orthodox Christianity (freedom and unity based on love). All these factors are reflected in the Ukrainian speech acts, which show that equal, free, and direct communication is valued. The communicative style appears to be more laconic, sincere, straightforward, and more message-oriented than form-oriented due to the specifics of Ukrainian culture. As for the refusal communicative acts, they usually adopt a realistic attitude to complete sincere communication with the other party. Also, there is an emphasis placed on sensitively delivering information. However, for instance, the vague refusal strategy is rarely used.

### *1.9.3.3. Ukrainian People's "Cossack Culture"*

The Cossacks are East Slavic Orthodox Christians, originally from Eastern Europe, who once lived in the Zaporizhia Sich in the heartland of Ukraine. They played an important role in the development of Ukraine and are, therefore, deeply rooted in Ukrainian folklore and history. Many Ukrainian fairy tales and folk songs are related to the theme of Cossack heroes. It can be said that as a unique cultural and political phenomenon, Ukraine's history is inextricably linked to the Cossacks. Important historians and geographers of the 16th-18th centuries referred to Ukraine as "UKRAINA TERRA COSACCORUM" (Latin) – Ukraine – the land of the Cossacks" (<http://lvyoul68.cn/odessatourism/cossacks.aspx>).

Chinese scholar Zhao Yun mentioned in his book *"Ukraine: The Heavy Footsteps of History"*: "The Cossack phenomenon, which has been recorded in history books since the 1470s, emerged as a "free man" who resisted tyranny. Later, as they wandered in remote areas and fought against foreign races, they gradually

formed a special military organization that was both for soldiers and farmers and adopted a primitive democratic system. During hundreds of years of war, they have left a glorious mark in Ukrainian history and even in world history with their distinctive characteristics of bravery and freedom.” (*Zhao Yun, 2004: 16*) The Cossacks’ unrestrained and free-fighting character has left a deep mark on the historical life of Ukraine.

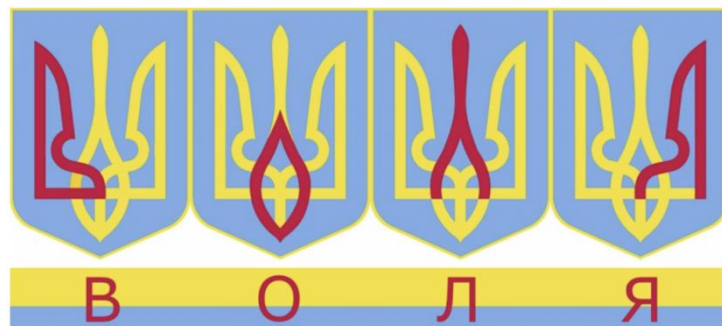
The book “*History of Rus*”, a historical work on the Ukrainian Cossacks, is generally attributed to the 18th-century Orthodox Patriarch Konisky. The book portrays the Cossacks as unique and celebrates Cossack history through stories of Ukrainian Cossack leaders’ heroic deeds, battles, and deaths on the battlefield. In the 1830s, this work became popular in the former Cossack State, turning a history of the Cossack social class into an account of an emerging national community, taking an extremely important step in shaping the modern Ukrainian nation. The Cossack state that once existed provided the building blocks for the modern Ukrainian nation – a key historical myth, a cultural tradition, and a language (*Serhii Plokyh, 2019: 217*).

Therefore, the Ukrainian national mentality is based on individual dignity and rights, love of democracy and freedom. As early as 1949, Ukrainian exile scholar Ivan Mirchuk said: “Their entire mental process, their moral standards and legal norms are more rooted in individualism than their actual behavior; any restriction on individual rights, including such restrictions under the requirements of community interests, is regarded as a violation of free will.” (*Mirchuk Ivan, 1948: 268*) Stephen Shulman believes that in the eyes of Ukrainian nationalists, the pursuit of self-management and political equality is a prominent feature of Ukrainian traditional

culture (*S. Stephen, 1999: 253*). The specific symbol of this feature is the “Cossack phenomenon” in Ukrainian history.

The national pursuit of “free will” can also be reflected in the following aspects: the hidden meaning of the Ukrainian national emblem is “freedom”. Ukrainian symbols – the trident and the hryvnia coin have survived in present-day Ukraine since the days of Kyivan Rus. The “Horodnitsky Treasure” is an image of two tridents from a set of 38 coins from the Ukrainian-Kyivan Rus period. They probably appeared between 1010 and 1019. What’s more, the national emblem of Ukraine, whose shape elements form the word *ВОЛЯ* (*volya*), which has the meanings of “freedom”, “will” and “wish”.

[\(https://war.ukraine.ua/zh/articles/10-faktiv-yaki-potribno-znati-pro-ukrayinu/\)](https://war.ukraine.ua/zh/articles/10-faktiv-yaki-potribno-znati-pro-ukrayinu/)



(Photo: Mezha Media)

Moreover, according to Ukrainian folk beliefs, it comes that “free will” is more valuable than money or even life itself:

*Хоч і спина гола, аби своя воля* (пор. з рос. Свитка сера, да воля своя, Хоть хвойку жую, да на воле живу); *І золота клітка для пташки неволя* (пор. з рос. Воля птичкє дороже золотой клетки, У коня овса без выгребу, а он рвѣтся на

волю); *В клітці є пуди, їсти і хороше сісти, та немає волі; Лучче птиці на сухій гілці, чим ся в золотій клітці; Хоч за три дні перед смертю волі побачить; Життя не має ціни, але воля дорожча життя* (пор. з рос. Вольность всего лучше. Воля – свой бог). (in Iryna Golubovska et al., “Communicative Act of Refusal in Ukrainian Lingual Culture: Pragmatic and Cognitive Peculiarities”, 2023: 29)

Therefore, based on the cultural background, allegedly, the reflections on the Ukrainian refusal communicative act would be in exercising negative politeness in the communication process, which might be actualized by the significant adoptions of implicit refusal strategies such as avoiding direct answers, changing the topic, and using interrogative sentences, etc. It can be explained by the Ukrainian people’s care for their “free will” and not tolerating violence against it.

#### *1.9.3.4. European Cultural Impacts on Ukrainian Culture*

Borys Krupnytskyi (1955), a prominent émigré historian, argues that the Europeanness of Ukraine resulted from the strong political and dynastic ties between Kyivan Rus princes and the European powers; the permeation into Ukraine of Western humanism, the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation; and the long period of time when Ukraine was part of Poland, which itself claims to be part of the West (Ivan Mirchuk, 1948: 263).

In addition, Harvard University Professor Serhii Plokhly once pointed out in his book “*The Gates of Europe*” that for Ukraine its claim to independence has always been pro-Western, which is the product of Ukraine’s historical experience: as a country, Ukraine is located on the dividing line between the East and the West. This is

the dividing line between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, between the Central European and Eurasian empires, and between the different political and social practices of these empires. This location of being located at the intersection of several major cultural spaces makes Ukraine a contact zone. (*Serhii Plokhy, 2019: 490*)

Historically, in different historical periods, the mainstream culture of Europe has undergone significant changes. For instance, Western culture, with democracy, freedom, civilization, and progress as its core, has been the mainstream culture of Western society since modern times, which is completely different from the European culture dominated by Christianity in the Middle Ages (*Yu Jinyao, 2022: 2*).

Since Ukrainian culture and spirit are rich in liberalism and democracy, which are core parts of European or Western culture. Therefore, many scholars believe that Ukraine belongs to European or Western culture. Just like scholar Oksana Pakhlovska described in the 1920s and 1930s the Ukrainian élite came to underscore the ‘European foundation of the Ukrainian cultural mentality’, believing ‘that which is truly national, inevitably also is European’ (*Oksana Pakhlovska, 1994: 114, 116*).

Also, scholar Stephen Shulman mentioned in his study that Ukrainian culture is part and parcel of European culture — the Ukrainian ‘Our’. It was underlined how for many centuries, beginning with the ancient Kievan Rus’ state, much of Ukrainian land had either maintained close economic, political, and dynastic ties with Europe or been incorporated into Central European states, such as Poland and Austria-Hungary. As a result, Western humanism, the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation allegedly permeated the Ukrainian worldview (*Stephen Shulman, 2004: p. 40*).

On the other hand, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen declared in an interview on 27 February 2022 that Ukraine is ‘one of us and we want them in the European Union’ (Euronews 2022). Later, with stronger stress on common values, von der Leyen reiterated this position in the Commission’s opinions on the EU membership applications by Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, when she argued: ‘Ukraine has clearly demonstrated the country’s aspiration and the country’s determination to live up to European values and standards.’ This is also can be proved by a study of Ukrainian values, Plamen Akaliyski and co-researcher found that the new generation of Ukrainians is more supportive of EU values (*Plamen Akaliyski et al., 2024: 529*).

From another essential perspective, namely, Europe’s religious culture, religion in Europe is not only about etiquette, rituals, or social ethics and responsibilities, but more importantly, it has penetrated into every aspect of life. It can be seen that there are many cathedrals and small churches, and literature, music, language, and philosophy are all shrouded in religion. The remnants of religious influence can be seen in Europeans’ sense of guilt, fear of death, attitudes toward animals and pain, appreciation of art, money and saving, toward war and politics (*Alan Macfarlane, 2022: 67*).

Therefore, based on the above scholars and literature, due to the geographical and historical relations between Ukraine and other European countries, Ukrainian culture is considered to be deeply influenced by European culture. As Grzegorz Górny pointed out in his article “*The Battle for Ukraine’s Soul*”, the Ukrainian people chose freedom, not despotism.

### 1.9.3.5. Ukrainian Cultural Concept of ВОЛЯ (*volya*), ДОЛЯ (*dolya*)

There are some symbolic and important cultural concepts in Ukrainian, such as *ВОЛЯ* (*volya*) (free will) mentioned above, which stands for a dream cherished by the people about a free life worthy of a person. Just like great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko wrote: “За святу правду – волю (*Za svyatu pravdu – volyu*), Розбійник не стане... (*Rozbiynuk ne stane...*) Не розіб’є живе серце (*Ne rozib’ye zhyve sertse*), За свою країну (*Za svoyu krayinu*)” (*Taras Shevchenko, Холодний яр, 1845*). According to Ukrainian folk beliefs, it comes that “free will” is more valuable than money or even life itself: Лучче птиці на сухій гілці (*Luchche ptytsi na sukhiy hiltsi*), чим ся в золотій клітці (*chym sya v zolotiy klittsi*) (It is better for a bird to live on a dry branch than in a golden cage); Хоч за три дні перед смертю волі побачить (*Khoch za try dni pered smertyu voli pobachyt’*) (Even if three days before death, he’d like to see freedom); Життя не має ціни, але воля дорожча життя (*Zhyttya ne maye tsiny, ale volya dorozhcha zhyttya*) (Life has no price, but freedom is more precious than life).

The history of the ancient national liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people “for freedom and happiness” confirms the Ukrainian people’s love and pursuit of freedom. Their powerful inner impulse to freedom “... convincingly testifies to the primacy of the Cossack basis of the Ukrainian spirit” (*B. Khramova, 1992: 18*). The Ukrainian national mentality is based on individual dignity and rights, love of democracy and freedom. In Ukrainian culture, the concept of *ВОЛЯ* (*volya*) has historical-psychological characteristics: *Cossack and will are a person’s destiny*.

The Ukrainian word *ДОЛЯ* (*dolya*) (destiny) is related to Proto-Slavic “*dolja*”

—“частина (part)”, which in turn corresponds to the meaning “ділити (to divide)” (*Jaroslav B. Rudnyckyj, 1983: 107*). The inner form of the word reveals the Ukrainian view that there is a superpower that grants each person a happy or unhappy life. This can be reflected on the Ukrainian idioms and proverbs, such as “То Божа воля, чи щаслива, чи нещасна доля (*To Bozha volya, chy shchaslyva, chy neshchasna dolya*)” (It is God’s will, or happy or unfortunate fate); “Своєї долі і конем не об’їдеш (*Svoyeyi doli i konem ne ob’yidesh*)” (You can’t get around your fate with a horse).

Through some literary examples, it can be found that Ukrainians subconsciously recognize the positive value of the Ukrainian word *ДОЛЯ (dolya)*. In addition, according to Slavic mythology, *ДОЛЯ (dolya)* is the name of a spirit, who grants wealth and success to humans. Thus, When describing a person who is trapped in a miserable life, the word *ДОЛЯ (dolya)* is often preceded by a negative adjective, such as “*лиха (lykha) / гірка (hirka) / чорна (chorna)*” (calamity/ bitter/ black) (*Голубовська І., 2004: 122*).

Based on the persistent pursuit of “free will”, the Ukrainian national spirit of “free will” has been passed down from generation to generation and has penetrated every aspect of life. They tend to express the idea clearly and do not want to do things against their will. Ukrainian people do not allow their red lines to be crossed. Meanwhile, according to a beautiful and positive expectation of destiny, Ukrainian people show great love for life and enrich it with songs, dances, art, folklore, etc. They pursue equal, friendly, and harmonious coexistence among people.

These background cultural elements are reflected in speech acts. Ukrainian

language is seen as concise, clear, and purposefulness, and the words that express refusal are frequently taken as a sign of being sincere and respectful, as well as the manifestation of “free will”. On the other hand, in order to comply with the politeness principle, some refusal strategies are also used during communication to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships.

In conclusion, since language is the carrier of culture, the study of the Ukrainian refusal communicative act needs to be combined with its religious cultural, and historical background. The East Slavic cultural background and the Cossack cultural background, as critical historical existences, have an important impact on speech acts. Besides, European culture has also had a great influence on Ukrainian culture. In addition, there are essential cultural concepts in Ukrainian cultural heritage, that is, *ВОЛЯ (volya)* (free will), *ДОЛЯ (dolya)* (destiny), which also play an important role in interpreting the characteristics of Ukrainian refusal communicative act.

#### *1.9.3.6 Ukrainian “Low-context” Culture*

Low-context culture is a term coined by anthropologist E. T. Hall in his 1976 book *“Beyond Culture”*, as opposed to “high-context” culture. “Low-context” culture is also called weak context culture, which means that in the process of communication, most of the information is expressed clearly, and the environment and the speaker do not play a major role (*E. T. Hall, 1997: 99*). In “low-context” culture, the purpose of communication is to convey information to each other, so the speaker has the responsibility to let the listener correctly understand the content of his language expression. Therefore, in “low-context” culture, people

speak directly, and the real meaning of the conversation is clearly contained in the words without concealment.

Chinese scholar Jia Yuxin once pointed out that Eastern culture belongs to “high-context” culture, while Western culture belongs to the “low-context” culture (*Jia Yuxin, 1997: 33*). Members of a “high-context” culture, influenced by circular logical thinking and relationship orientation, develop a non-confrontational attitude towards conflicts. Therefore, in “refusal” incidents, people often use euphemistic and indirect communicative behaviours. However, members of a “low-context” culture, influenced by linear logical thinking and work-oriented orientation, develop a habit of resolving conflicts directly and are more inclined to use direct refusal communicative acts.

The Ukrainian languages is seen as concise, clear and purposeful. In Ukrainian, individual initiative and independence are emphasized, and expressions are direct. People value clarity and despise circumlocution, believing that words should be used to express their intentions and that people should state what they mean clearly. Therefore, when Ukrainian people are unable or unwilling to meet the other party’s requests or expectations, they are more willing to express their refusal directly and clearly, and often accompany it with more polite communicative acts such as “apologizing” and “expressing gratitude”, etc. The vague expressions are rarely chosen.

### **1.10. Research Frame of The Work**

The research subject of this thesis is the refusal communicative act (RCA) in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian. The entry point is the communicative act of

refusal (RCA). The thesis focuses on analyzing the RCA that appears in the literary works in the three languages and is realized with the help of communicative strategies. It deploys on this or that cultural background that affects the choice of them. The rules that RCA should follow in different cultures are explored on this basis. Through the mode of refusal communicative acts actualization in literary texts, we tried to reveal some principles of refusal communicative acts realization in the “general context”, so that these principles can guide refusal communicative acts in real communication.

**Introduction part** briefly introduces the theoretical basis, corpus source, research methods, theoretical and practical significance of the present work for the study of RCA.

The empirical material of the study consists of two parts: the first one is presented by the texts of popular novels and other literary works in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian. This is mainly because although these corpora come from written language, their roots are in oral language. The second part was obtained by designing a DCT questionnaire, in which the refusal communicative acts are adopted in four contexts: request, invitation, offer, and suggestion, with the relationships of “inferior, equal, and superior”. By analyzing the refusal strategies chosen by the rejecters and the frequency of using various strategies, it can be found out which refusal strategies the rejecters belonging to different lingual cultures tend to use oftener when refusing others, and what concrete combinations of various strategies they usually apply.

The thesis mainly adopts the method of literature analysis, that is, to conduct specific literature analysis on the selected literary works, identify, extract, summarize,

and systematically analyze the RCAs therein. At the same time, the data analysis method is also used, and it is aligned with quantitative processing through mathematical statistics and proportion calculation. The former is a research method to examine “quality”, the latter is about “quantity”. The combination of “quality” and “quantity” is more conducive to the accurate analysis of language phenomena. In addition, comparative analysis methods, theoretical hypothesis methods, etc., are adopted in this research.

**Chapter I** of the thesis begins with the definition of RCA, description of its nature, characteristics and possible classifications, all given in order to provide a deeper understanding of this kind of communicative act. The theoretical background framework of the research is being introduced, consisting of four main parts: Speech Act Theory (SAT), Politeness and Face-saving Theory (FST), Communicative competence (CC) and Relevance Theory (RT). Through the literature review of the research on RCA in China, Japan, and Ukraine, the current status of research on RCA in the three languages was sorted out. Finally, the background characteristics of the three lingual cultures and the important cultural concepts that influence RCA are systematically explored.

**In Chapter II**, a discussion on RCA and the refusal strategy selection is being discussed in detail. The RCAs in the literary works of three languages (Chinese, Japanese, Ukrainian) are specifically analyzed according to different hierarchical and classified refusal strategies.

**As for Chapter III**, it discusses a type of RCA that is unique to the Chinese cultural context, which is essentially a manifestation of politeness – ostensible refusal

communicative act (ORCA). This part reviews the current research status of ORCA, analyzes its relationship with politeness and the cultural background in which it originated, and introduces its pragmatic functions in communication.

**For Chapter IV**, there is a comparison of the RCAs realization in the three languages (Chinese, Japanese, Ukrainian) made with the help of RCAs statistics demonstrating which strategies people tend to choose within this or that lingual culture.

**The conclusion** briefly summarizes the theoretical and practical outcome of the work, its novelty, the shortcomings of the thesis, and the prospects for future research.

## **II. Communicative Strategies of RCA in Terms of Superficial and Deep Strategies**

M. Stubbs, in his “*Discourse Analysis*” (1983) highlighted the deep and the surface level of the text. He pointed out that the discourse surface level refers to the lexical and syntactic means that can predict and mark the speaker’s purpose. The depth of discourse refers to the indirect degree of speech, that is, it does not express the real purpose of the speaker on the surface but relies on pragmatic principles to deduce his real intention. Drawing on this point of view, we divide refusal communicative strategies into two types: superficial and deep.

### **2.1. Strategies of RCA**

#### **2.1.1. Superficial Refusal Strategies**

Superficial refusal strategies mainly refer to lexical strategies and syntactic strategies.

##### *2.1.1.1. Lexical Sub-strategy*

There are six main lexical sub-strategies used to implement the speech act of refusal: a) words expressing the meaning of refusal, b) parentheses or insert structures, c) salutations, d) adverbs of degree, e) interjections, and f) idioms.

#### **a) Words expressing the meaning of refusal**

There is a large number of words that express rejection in Ukrainian, Japanese, and Chinese. If it is due to subjective reasons, the speaker usually expresses the intention to refuse with words that deny his own ability to fulfill the speaker’s request and unwillingness to do what is requested. When negating ability, such modal verbs, negative particles and other lexical means are being used: “не можу”/“できない”/ “不

能” (can't), “しない”/ “не буду” “不会” (wouldn't), “だめ”/ “Hi”/ “不行” (don't), “ね”/ “ない”/ “.....不了” (...not), etc., which means that the speaker cannot meet the requirement. Use of “не хочу”/ “したくない”/ “不愿意” (unwilling to do), “не планирую”/ “するつもりはない”/ “不打算” (do not plan to do), “відкидаю”/ “断る”/ “我拒绝” (to reject) demonstrate the unwillingness to do what is requested. On the other hand, words such as “не дозволено”/ “許可されてない”/ “不允许” (not allowed), “не повинен”/ “すべきではない”/ “不应该” (shouldn't) and “неможливо”/ “無理だ”/ “不可能” (impossible) are often used to express the limitations of objective factors. For example:

*Chinese:* 潘信诚识破他的心思，便顺水推舟，说：“这次非阿永去反映不行。” ...

冯永祥走前一步，双手直摇，笑着说：“我不行，我不行。这个问题很大，非信老亲自出马不可。” 《上海的早晨》

[Pan Xincheng saw through his thoughts, so he followed suit and said, “This time Ayong must be the one to report it.” ...

Feng Yongxiang (Ayong) took a step forward, shook his hands, and said with a smile: “I can't do it, I can't do it. This problem is huge, and a qualified person like you has to take action personally.”]

In this sentence example, Feng Yongxiang refused Pan Xincheng's proposal due to a lack of appropriate qualifications.

*Japanese:* 秋吉「飯でもいっしょに食べようか。」

麻生環「だめ、今日デートがある。」 《ニュースの女》

[Akiyoshi: “Shall we have a meal together?”

Tamaki Aso: “No, I have a date today.”]

This was a conversation between TV station colleagues Qiuyoshi and Asohuan. At the same time, they are also good friends in private. Asohuan directly rejected Akiyoshi’s invitation because she had an appointment with someone else, and clearly explained the reason.

*Ukrainian: «Забирай собі всі гроші з украденого в мене у туалеті гаманця, ти, зрештою, чесно їх набігав. Але віддай мені квиток, мій авіаквиток, віддай мені квиток з моїм прізвищем. Там моє прізвище, січеш? Яка тобі з нього користь, дєда? Там моє прізвище ясно тобі, ти, х (...) темний! — **Нє-а.**— Чому, поясни мені, ти, коню циганський? — Бо я здам єво в любую касу і гроші получу, — цинічно пояснив барон». «Ю. Андрухович, Московіада»*

[“Take all the money from the wallet that was stolen from me in the toilet. You, after all, ran into them honestly. But give me the ticket, my plane ticket, give me the ticket with my name on it. My last name is there, you see? What good is it to you, old man? There, my surname is clear to you, you, the dark x (...)!” “**No.**” “Why? Explain to me, you horse gypsy?” “Because I’ll give it to any cash register, and I’ll get the money,” explained the baron cynically.]

The baron directly refused to give the ticket back with the word “**Нє-а**” (No), because he thought he could obtain the sum of money when he gave it to the register.

## **b) Insert structures**

The use of parentheses or insert structures can play a role in easing the tone, making the expression of refusal intentions tactful and subtle, which is aimed to avoid hurting the other party’s face. In Chinese, parentheses such as “ти знаєш”/ “知

っているか”/ “你知道” (you know), “розумієш”/ “いいかい”/ “你看” (you see), “скажи”/ “教えて”/ “你说说”, “на мою думку”/ “私なら”/ “我看” (in my opinion), “здається”/ “たぶん”/ “看样子” (looks like) often appear to relieve the embarrassing atmosphere caused by refusal.

*Chinese:* 陈尔力: 行了, 都到这份儿上了, 你就别再抵赖了。认罪吧!

赵二姐: 哎! 你看, 该说的话我都已经说过了, 再一遍遍地重复没意思。不管你怎么问我, 我还是那句话, 我什么都不知道! **依我看**, 你们还是别在我身上浪费时间了! 《行动》

[Chen Erli: Okay, now that we have reached this point, stop denying it. Confess your crime!

Zhao Erjie: Hey! You see, I've already said everything that needs to be said, and it's pointless to repeat it over and over again. No matter how you ask me, I still say the same thing, I don't know anything! **In my opinion**, you should stop wasting your time on me!]

In this case, after Zhao was arrested, she refused to tell the story of her crime, and she was unwilling to have a confrontation with the police, so she used parentheses such as “you see” and “in my opinion” to ease her tone.

*Japanese:* 貴之はビールを飲み、顔を歪めてた。貴之: “よくそんな面倒臭いことに何年も付き合ってるな。”

雄治「これも人助けた。面倒臭いからこそ、やり甲斐がある。」

貴之「俺なら、勝手にしろと書くな。」《ナミヤ雑貨店の奇蹟》

[Drinking beer and having a grimace on his face, Takayuki says: “How could you be able to deal with such troublesome things for years.”

Yuji: “This is also about helping people. It’s worth doing because it’s tedious.”

Takayuki: “**If I were you**, I’d say do whatever you want.”]

Behind this dialogue is a letter from a strange unmarried pregnant woman, seeking advice and expressing her hesitation about whether she should give birth to her child or not. Yuji told Takayuki to seriously think about the woman’s true thoughts and responsibly try to analyze the pros and cons to help her. But Takayuki thought this was a very troublesome matter and he declined the advice coming from Yuji. Takayuki explained his point of view that if he was responsible for replying to the woman, he would tell her just to make her own decision.

*Ukrainian: «— Моє авто стоїть припарковане відтоді, як я приїхав. — Тоді яким чином той хлопець міг опинитися в багажнику? — не хотів відчепитися Немирич. — **Знаєте**, — децю роздратовано почав доктор, — то не є така проста справа. Мені часами тяжко зрозуміти, що тут у вас діється. Я є громадянин Швейцарії. Я не все розумію у вашому житті. Ми перебуваємо в різних соціальних системах, до того всього у нас конфедеративний устрій, а у вас — унітарний. Що кому більше подобається.» «Юрій Андрухович, Рекреації»*

[“My car has been parked since I arrived. Then how could that guy end up in the trunk?” Nemyrych did not want to unhook. “You know,” the doctor began somewhat annoyed, “it’s not such a simple matter. Sometimes it’s hard for me to understand what’s going on here. I am a citizen of Switzerland. I don’t understand everything in your life. We are in different social systems, moreover, we have a confederal system, and you have a unitary one. Which one is better?”]

Faced with questions from Nemilic who pretended to be unaware of what was happening, the doctor was a little annoyed and refused to explain the situation, instead, the doctor started with “you know, ...” to soothe the tone and take over the subsequent speech content.

### c) Salutations

Salutations include respectful titles, nicknames for each other, and modest titles for oneself. When implementing the communicative act of refusal, respectful titles to the other party can elevate the other party’s identity; nicknames to the other party can narrow the distance between the two parties; modest titles to oneself can belittle one’s own identity. The use of salutation is a polite strategy, which can make the relationship between the two parties more harmonious, and alleviate the threat to the other party’s face.

*Chinese:* 唐铁嘴: “听说后面改了公寓, 租给我一间屋子, 好不好?”

王利发: “唐先生, 你那点嗜好, 在我这儿恐怕.....” 《茶馆》

[Tang Tiezui: “I heard that the back of this place has been converted into an apartment. Can you rent me a room?”

Wang Lifa: “**Mr. Tang**, I’m afraid your hobbies would be...”]

Tang Tiezui heard that Wang Lifa’s teahouse could be used as a rental apartment, so he wanted to live there and asked for that. Knowing Tang Tiezui’s habit of smoking opium, Wang Lifa looked down on him. He was afraid that he would not be able to pay the money, and he was afraid that his habit would affect other customers of the teahouse, so he decided to refuse. Therefore, he rejected Tang Tiezui without making him feel ashamed. He used the address “Mr. Tang” to make the other party

feel respected and then politely refused without getting him embarrassed.

*Japanese: 竹中さんのおっしゃることはもっともですが、私は賛成しかねます。(Fan Zheng et al., 2002: 97)*

[What **Mr. Takenaka** says makes sense, but I can't agree with it.]

The refuser uses the address “Mr.” and the honorific form of the verb “to say” to show respect for Mr. Takeda, and expresses appreciation and affirmation for Takeda’s suggestion. Then the refuser uses words or sentence patterns with negative meanings to euphemistically express the intention to refuse.

*Ukrainian: «— Проби! Не чіпайте! Шановна пані, змилуйтеся! — ренетує Копиленко, боронячи свої скарби. — Це не сміття, це майбутні каталізатори добра! Не додавайте мені зайвої роботи!» «Емма Андієвська, Роман про добру людину»*

*[“Please! Do not touch! **Dear lady**, have mercy!” Kopylenko repeats, defending his treasures, “This is not garbage, these are the future catalysts of goodness! Don't give me extra work!”]*

Here Kopylenko refused the lady’s request to touch the invention, politely using the respectful address “Dear Madam”, thus achieving the purpose of refusal while reducing the threat to the other party’s face.

#### **d) Adverbs of degree**

When using refusal language, some adverbs are often used to modify action verbs. The adverbs of strengthening degree are: “дуже”/ “とても” “很/非常” (very), “насправді”/ “本当に”/ “真的是”(really), “надзвичайно”/ “非常に”/ “极其”(extremely), “дійсно”/ “確かに”/ “的确” (indeed), etc. It can show sincerity and

make the reasons for rejection more authentic and credible so that the receiver can feel the sincerity of the rejecting party and it is easier to accept the rejection. Similarly, the adverbs of lessening degree are: “трохи”/ “少し”/ “稍微”(a little), “кілька”/ “約”/ “有些”(some), “порівня”/ “かなり”/ “相对”(comparatively), etc. By these means the tone can be softened to make the expression of refusal more tactful, thereby reducing the threat to face.

*Chinese:* 倩彤笑了起来: “你算呢! 别沾染那种为赋新词强说愁的德性了。”  
“别说了, 我真的累。明天要上班, 改天再谈吧!” 我拿着挂断了线的电话, 一直在黑暗中坐了很久。 《风云变》

[Qian Tong laughed: “Whatever! Don’t be tainted by the virtue of forcing yourself to talk about your worries for writing new poems.” “Stop talking, I’m really tired. I have to go to work tomorrow, let’s talk another day!” I held the disconnected phone in my hand and sat in the dark for a long time.]

Here “really tired” emphasizes that the speaker’s reasons for refusing to continue the conversation are real and credible, thereby reducing the threat to the face because of the refusal.

*Japanese:* 麻生環「うちのチャンネル2に出演していただきたいんです。」

北原「申し訳ありません。あのう、あなたの申し出をお断りするのは本当につらいんですけど、テレビだけはイヤです。」 《ニュースの女》

[Tamaki Aso: “I would like you to appear on my Channel 2.”

Kitahara: “I’m sorry. Um, it’s really hard to decline your offer, but I don’t want the TV.”]

Faced with Aso Tamaki’s invitation to participate in a TV show, Kitahara

politely refused and used the adverb of degree “really” to express that she did not refuse the invitation hastily, implying her gratitude for the invitation.

*Ukrainian: « — Ви не зауважили, що майже всі злі люди сантиментальні? — продовжував Дом. — Я не знаю. Я не замислювався над цим. У мене не так багато дозвілля. Я заклопотана людина, ви навіть не уявляєте, скільки часу поглинає антикваріат! Я хотів би вас лише попросити, аби ви дали мені адресу ...» «Емма Андіївська, Герострати»*

[“Haven’t you noticed that almost all evil people are sentimental?” Dom continued. “I do not know. I haven’t thought about it. I really don’t have much free time. I’m a busy person, you even have no idea how much time antiques take up! I would only like to ask you to give me the address...”]

Here the antiquarian refuses to continue discussing the topic of human nature with Dom. He just wants to get the address information from Dom as soon as possible, so he explains that he “really” has no time, and uses the adverb “even” to emphasize that the intensity of his busyness is something Dao Ma cannot imagine.

### e) Interjections

When implementing the communicative act of refusal, the use of interjections can make the other party mentally prepared to listen to the “unexpected second part”, thus playing a buffer role. The use of modal particles can convey emotions such as hesitation, which to a certain extent, reduces the threat of refusal to the interlocutor’s face. Therefore, the superimposed use of interjections and modal particles can enhance the effect and effectively help the speech act of refusing to be implemented smoothly. Interjections in Chinese include: “Hy”/ “ほら”/ “唉” (well), “Oй”/ “おっと”/

“哎呀” (Oops), “Боже мій”/ “ああ、神様”/ “我的天啊” (Oh My God), “Ого”/ “ほお”/ “喲” (Hoo), etc.; the modally colored interjections include: “啦”, “Ox”/ “おお”/ “哦” (Oh), “Ax”/ “よ”/ “啊” (Ah), etc.

*Chinese:* “叔叔！报仇啊……是南头子害的！报仇啊！叔叔……” 仁义心如刀绞，眼瞪得那样可怕。母亲刚生过孩子三天的身子，虚弱得风能吹倒，抱着还没见世界的婴儿，急忙上前，扑到他身上，哭着说：“不能啊，他爹！看看这群孩子！你是去送死啊！……不行啊！我的天哪！万万不行啊！” 《苦菜花》

[“Uncle! Revenge... It was Nan Touzi who did the harm! Revenge! Uncle...” Renyi’s heart felt like it was being strangled by a knife, and his eyes were so scary. The woman, who had just given birth to a child three days ago, was so weak that the wind could blow her over. Holding the baby that had not yet seen the world, the woman hurried forward, threw herself on him, and cried, “No, The child’s father! Look at these children! You are going to die! **No way! Oh my God! No way!**”] (The same as above, the translation can only express the meaning of the sentence, but there is no equivalent modal particle at the end of the sentence.)

In this example, to prevent her husband from taking revenge, the wife used a lot of modal particles and interjections, which not only expressed her pleading feelings but also conveyed her intention to stop her husband and make him give up revenge.

*Japanese:* “誘ってくれてありがとう。その日用事があるけん、ごめんね、また今度ね。”  
(Wang Yanhong, 2007: 40)

[Thank you for inviting me. I have something to do that day, sorry, see you next time.] (In English expressions, there is no modal particle used at the end of the sentence, so the translation can only express the meaning of the sentence, but there is

no equivalent modal particle at the end of the sentence.)

When refusing an invitation, the rejecter adds interjections at the end of the sentences to make the tone more tactful.

*Ukrainian: «Дай сюди (гроші)! – Еге, не можна – мамка битимуть» (М. Коцюбинський). (in Оксана Максимчук. et al., “Functional And Semantic Parameters of the Refusal Communicative Act in Ukrainian Literary Discourse”, 2017: 13)*

[Give here (money)! – Er, I can't - mom will beat you.]

Here the interjection indicates the “unexpected second part” which is refusing to hand over the money. The adoption of the interjection “Еге” plays a buffer role between the addresser and addressee, which can reduce the threat to the other party’s face, to some degree, avoiding the escalation of conflict.

#### **f) Idioms**

Idioms are fixed language expressions with a reinterpreted lexical-grammatical composition, the general meaning of which does not coincide with their internal form. With the help of the idiom structure, the tone of rejection can be eased and a relaxed and humorous atmosphere can be created, thereby reducing the threat of rejection to the listener’s face.

In Chinese, there are idioms like: “愧不敢当 (*kuì bù gǎndāng*)” (Literally: ‘The praise or gift you gave is too much for me.’ meaning ‘You thought highly of me, but I am actually unable to respond to your request, etc. That is, to refuse through a self-deprecating statement.’), “心有余而力不足 (*xīn yǒu yú ér lì bù zú*)” (Literally: ‘It describes the intention to do something but objectively (such as the body) does not

allow it.’ meaning ‘Subjectively, I’d like to do it, but due to some objective reasons I have to refuse it.’), “天机不可泄露 (Tiān jī bù kě xiè lòu)” (Literally: ‘The information obtained through the supernatural power of foreseeing the future cannot be disclosed to ordinary people in advance until the time comes.’ meaning ‘Using exaggeration and metaphor to emphasize the importance of the information, and you have to keep it secret and stop the other party’s asking, etc.’), “我也是泥菩薩过河，自身难保 (wǒ yě shì ní pú sà guò hé, zì shēn nán bǎo)” (Literally: ‘I am just like the mud Bodhisattva crosses the river’ meaning ‘I even cannot protect myself now, how can I help you?’), etc.

In Japanese, the idioms such as: “急がば回れ (Isogabamaware)” (‘Literally: When you are in a hurry, rather than choosing a shortcut or a dangerous method, you will ultimately get to your destination quicker by taking a detour that is more reliable and safer.’ meaning ‘To persuade others not to violate the rules and pursue blindly, and fail to achieve the goal.’), “馬の耳に念仏 (Umanomimininenbutsu)” (‘Literally: It is no use trying to make a horse recite chanting prayers.’ meaning ‘It is completely useless to give your opinion.’), “明鏡も裏を照らさず (Meikyōmōurawoterasazu)” (‘Literally: Even a clear mirror cannot see the reverse side of things.’ meaning ‘No matter how wise a person is, there are some things that they cannot see.’), “触らぬ神に祟りなし (Sawaranukaminitatarinashi)” (‘Literally: If you don’t offend the gods, they won’t punish you.’ meaning ‘If you don’t get involved in something, you won’t encounter any trouble), etc.

Here are some idioms expressing refusal in Ukrainian, such as: “(по)ставити хрест” (‘Literally: Put a cross on somebody.’ meaning ‘Stop pinning your hopes on

someone, something; or to lose hope in someone, for some reason’), “умити руки”, (‘Literally: The expression became widespread in connection with the Gospel story about how the Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate, having delivered Christ to crucifixion at the request of the crowd, “washed his hands in front of the people and said: ‘I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man’.” meaning ‘To evade participation in any matter, to remove responsibility from oneself’, “повернутися спиною” (‘Literally: To turn one’s back (shoulders, etc.) to someone.’ meaning ‘Show contempt, indifference, etc. to someone, something, to neglect someone, something.’

*Chinese:* “你管我擦给哪个闻？我的事你们管不到！”陈姨太挣红了脸骂道。“我偏要管！你不要凶，豆芽哪怕长得比天高，总是一颗小菜！”王氏跺着脚回骂道。《春》

[“It is not your business to care about whom I wearing perfume for, isn’t it? You have no right to control my affairs.” Mrs. Chen blushed and scolded.” “I want to interfere with this! Don’t be fierce, **even if the bean sprouts grow taller than the sky, they are still a side dish!**” Wang scolded back, stamping her feet.]

Mrs. Wang refused the other party’s request that she should step back because she has no right to interfere in this matter. Thus, she quoted an idiom to despise the other party, using bean sprouts as a metaphor for the other party, which means nobody.

*Japanese:* 田辺「いや、このあたりが潮時だ。」

関田「あれだけ準備して、もう、やめちゃうんですか？」

田辺「八億でなんとかする。無理すれば、元も子もない。」《カンパニー》

[Tanabe: “No, it’s high time around here.”

Sekita: “After all that preparation, are you just going to give up?”

Tanabe: “I’ll do whatever I can do to prepare with the 800 million. If I can’t make it, **we’ll lose everything.**”]

Sekita said the above after learning about the stock sale from Tanabe and others in the office. Tanabe believes that a lot of preparations have been made and that the sale of stocks should not be stopped now. However, Sekita cited an idiom “元も子もない” (refers to losing everything), he believes that continuing to sell stocks will have serious consequences.

*Ukrainian: «А що ж на вас вони скажуть? Знаю вашу славу! **Поглузують, покепку-ють, та й кинуть під лаву.**» «Т. Шевченка, Гайдамаки»*

[And what will they say about you? I know your glory! They mock, tease, and throw it under the bench.]

In T. Shevchenko’s poem “*Haydamaki*” in meaning “викинути що-небудь як непотрібне, забути” (“to throw something away as unnecessary, to forget”), is conveyed with the help of the idiom “кинути під лавку” (literally “to throw something underneath the bench”) which also transmits the implicit emotional value “to not respect, to not pay attention to”.

#### *2.1.1.2. Syntactic sub-strategy*

Implementing the communicative act of refusal requires not only the use of lexical strategies but also the use of syntactic strategies. There are five main syntactic strategies used in RCA implementation: a) interrogative sentences, b) rhetorical questions, c) elliptical structures, d) repetitive structures, e) subjunctive hypothetical

sentences.

### a) Interrogative sentences

An interrogative sentence refers to expressing the meaning of refusal by employing additional questions, which can provide the hearer with a suggestion. It can not only show respect for the other party, reduce the degree of offending the other party, and make him/her accept rejection decently, but also give people a sense of intimacy.

In Chinese, we often use declarative sentences + “добре?”/ “いいですか?” “好吗?” (Is it okay?), “можно?”/ “どうですか?”/ “可以吗?” (Is it possible?), “Те подobaется?” / “気に入ってますか?”/ “你看好吗?” (Do you like it?), “Що ти думаєш?”/ “どう思いますか?”/ “你看怎么样?” (What do you think?), “你同意吗?” (Do you agree?), etc., to ask for the other party’s opinion and show respect for his/her wishes, thereby reducing the threat to the face due to the refusal.

*Chinese:* “二小姐，我们太太请你就过去打牌！王家舅太太来了，”倩儿看见淑英专心看书的样子，忍不住噗嗤笑了一声，便提高声音再说一遍... 淑英把两道细眉微微一皱，推辞说 “怎么喊我去打？为什么不请三太太打？” 《春》

[“Miss Shuying, my hostess invites you to go over and play cards! Uncle Wang’s wife is here,” Qian’er saw Shuying concentrating on reading and couldn’t help smiling, then raised her voice and said again. Shuying slightly frowned her slender eyebrows, and declined, “Why asked me to do it? Why not ask Mrs. Zhang to play the cards?” ]

Shuying hated playing cards, so she didn’t want to participate. After hearing the invitation, she took interrogative sentences to express the meaning of refusal.

Meanwhile, she suggested inviting Mrs. Zhang to participate in playing cards to reduce the threat to the face.

*Japanese:* すみませんが、今こっちの仕事で手がせませんので。誰かほかの人にお愿いしたらどうですか? (Fan Zheng et al., 2002:95)

[I'm sorry, but I can't help with your? work right now. **How about asking someone else?**]

The refuser declined the other party's request but meanwhile suggested an alternative with the help of an additional question which showed politeness and gave the interlocutor a sense of intimacy.

*Ukrainian:* «Коротко казавши, я ходжу до тієї молодиці, що мешкає поруч з Домом, — Ти до неї ходиш? — Так, ходжу. — Виключена річ! — **Як так, виключена річ?** » «Емма Андієвська, Герострати»

["In short, I will go to look for the young lady who lived next door to Dom's house." "Are you going to look for her now?" "Yes, I'm going." "It's impossible!" **"How can it be impossible?"**"]

Although he had been rejected by the lady, he still had some fantasies, so he refused his friend's dissuasion that he should not go to meet the young lady with the interrogative question "How can it be impossible?".

## **b) Rhetorical questions**

“Хіба не...?”/ “もしかして…?”/ “难道...?” (could it be...?), “Ви вже не...?”/ “...ではないでしょうか?”/ “你不是已经...了吗?” (Haven't you already...?), “Чи не...?”/ “...ではありませんか?”/ “不就是...吗” (Isn't it...?), and other rhetorical questions to implement the RCA:

*Chinese:* “四弟，你放了它吧。人家好好的飞着，你为什么一定要把它捉来关起？”淑英不愉快地对觉英说。“那不行。这样好的鸽子，哪个舍得放走!”觉英固执地答道。 《家》

[“Brother, let it go. He is flying well, why do you have to catch it and lock it up?” Shuying said to Jueying unhappily. “That’s not right. Such a good pigeon, who is willing to let it go?” Jueying replied stubbornly.]

In Chinese, rhetorical questions do not require an answer from the addressee: it has a negative meaning. Jueying refused to accept her sister’s suggestion to let the pigeon go. The rhetorical question does not presuppose getting an answer from the sister but expresses the refusal.

*Japanese:* 馬さん「あした、買い物に行かない。」

友達「いいんじゃない？」 (Li Zhaohui, 2005:135)

[Mr. Ma: “I won’t go shopping tomorrow.”

Friend: “**Why not?**”]

Xiao Ma wanted to invite a friend to go shopping together, and the friend answered “いいんじゃない?” (“**Why not?**”) which is an attempt to decline. But it should be noted here that this sentence does not mean refusal in all contexts.

*Ukrainian:* «Віддай, — кажеш безкомпромісним голосом. Што ти, мальчик? знизує плечима злодійський барон. **Много випіл, да?** Підійти на два-три кроки ближче. Тоді можна буде дістати його ногою. Бити по яйцях і тільки по них це жорстоко, але певно. Торба в руці трохи заважатиме, але й її можна буде використати досить цупка, із жорсткого замінника шкіри. Віддай, повторюєш металеву, зробивши кілька кроків уперед». «Юрій Андрухович, Московіада»

[“Give it back,” you say in an uncompromising voice. “What are you doing, boy?” the villainous baron lowers his shoulders. **“You are drunk, aren’t you?”** Taking two or three steps closer, then you can get him with your foot. Beating the balls — is cruel, but it is possible. The bag in the hand will be a bit of a hindrance, but it can also be used — it is quite thick, made of hard leather substitute. “Give it back,” you repeat metallicly, taking a few steps forward.]

The baron refused to give the money back, and he threw out a rhetorical question, of which he sarcastically asked the young man if he had drunk too much for daring to make such a request.

### c) Elliptical structures

The ellipsis structure is a syntactic strategy for the rejecter to omit part of what he said, to avoid directly uttering the content containing the refusal part, leaving a buffer zone for both parties.

*Chinese:* 五婶故意说：“小的一点都不少！就再说个十四五的吧？反正比你的孩子大！”老婆说：“老嫂子！不要说笑话了！我要是愿意要十四五的，还用得搬您这么大的面子吗？”五婶说：“**要大的可算再找不上了.....**” 《登记》

[The old lady said deliberately: “The younger ones are no less! Let me introduce a fourteen-year-old or fifteen-year-old girl for you, shall I? Anyway, she is older than your boy!” My wife said: “My sister! Please stop joking! If I am willing to introduce a girl aged 14 or 15 to be my daughter-in-law, do I need to bother you and invite you to take charge of this?” The older lady said: **“It’s really hard to find someone older...”**]

The old lady who specializes in matchmaking wants to recommend Ai Ai, but the wife doesn't want Ai Ai to be her daughter-in-law so she makes a suggestion for someone older. But the old lady replied that it's hard to find one elder using an ellipsis structure. This means that the only one who meets the standards of a daughter-in-law so far is Ai Ai, otherwise, there will be no one else. The old lady omitted the following words to avoid threatening the other party's face and worsening the relationship between the two parties by directly refusing her.

*Japanese:* 寿明の言葉に、岡崎実奈子は怪訝そうに眉をひそめた。「でも、よく覚えておられないのですよね。それでは、いくら頑張っても、思い出せないですか。」「あ、いや、あそうなんですが……」彼女の疑問は尤もだった。がんばって思い出せるものなら、とうの昔にそうしていなければおかしいのだ「じつを言いますと、少し話が違うんです。」《クスノキの番人》

[Minako Okazaki frowned suspiciously at Toshiaki's words and said: "But you said that you barely remember it. So I think that no matter how hard you try, you still cannot recall it, right?" "Ah, no, It's ..." Toshiaki thought her suggestion was understandable because if you decided to try hard to remember something, it's strange why you didn't take action a long time ago. "Actually, the story is a little different." ]

Facing Okazaki Minak's questioning and suggestions about the incomplete music score, Touaki refused to take it, but at the same time he also could not give a clear explanation, so he adopted an omission strategy here. Because the whole thing is complicated, this music score was obtained with the help of some superpowers, so he doesn't want to explain it at first.

*Ukrainian: «Ти пишеш біографію людини, якої не знаєш? — Так, я пишу. — Як же ти можеш писати біографію людини, якої ти не знаєш? — Я сам не знаю. — Чого ж ти погодився писати його біографію? — **Так склалися обставини, і я не міг ...** — Ти не міг? Ти не міг? — Вже сама ця інтонація — Ти не міг? — Ні, ліше брехати, вигадувати, які завгодно нісенітниці, тільки не наводити її на слід мого відвідувача. — Я не знаю, що вам на це відповісти, — вимовив я. — **Я почувваю себе дуже незручно ... Я вам зараз поясню ... Оправа в тому, що мені конче треба ... Я мушу вам сказати ... Справа в тому ... Ах, Боже мій, я шукаю клієнта і хотів би про нього ...**» «Емма Андієвська, Герострати»*

[“Are you writing a biography of a person you don’t know?” “Yes.” “How can you write a biography of a person whom you do not know?” “I don’t know myself.” “Why did you agree to write his biography?” **“Circumstances turned out like this, and I couldn’t...”** “You couldn’t? You couldn’t?” in this intonation “You couldn’t?” No, it would be better to lie, make up some nonsense, and just not lead her to track my visitor. “I don’t know what to say to you”, I said, **“I feel very uncomfortable ... I will explain to you now ... The point is that I really need to ... I have to tell you ... The point is ... Oh, my God, I am looking for a client and I would like to know about him ...”**]

Faced with a series of questions from the lady, the paleontologist did not want to reveal any information about his client, so he used a lot of elliptical sentences to achieve the actual purpose of refusal, which is, refusing to answer the lady’s request for any details.

#### d) Repetitive structures

The repetitive structure includes the addressee's repetition of the initial utterance of the addresser's request, also the addressee's own repetition of the denying party utterance (part or all of the utterance), to alleviate the harm to the other party's face caused by refusal.

*Chinese:* 小女人在厨房门口说：“鹿相，你稍微等一下儿，饭凉了我给你热一下再吃。”黑娃有点紧张，只剩下他一个人就有一种莫名的紧张，装出无所谓<sup>1</sup>的口气说：“不怕不怕，不用热了不用热了！这热的天，吃凉饭才好哩！”小女人却说：“天热倒是热，冷饭还是不敢吃。你甭急，稍等一下下儿...”《白鹿原》

[The little woman said at the door of the kitchen: “Lu Xiang, please wait a moment. The rice is a bit cold, and **I'll heat it up** for you before eating.” Hei Wa was a little nervous. He felt inexplicably nervous when he was alone. He said in an indifferent tone: “**Don't worry, don't worry, don't need to heat up! Don't need to heat up!** On this hot day, it's better to eat cold rice!” But the little woman said: “It's hot, but I still don't dare to eat cold rice. You won't be impatient, just wait a moment ...”]

Faced with the hostess's (the little woman) offer to help heat the meal, the laborer (Hei Wa) didn't want to cause trouble to the hostess so he quickly refused the offer. However, the repeated pattern of refusal here makes the expression full of flattering and grateful emotions, thus making the refusal more gentle and reducing the threat to the other party's face.

*Japanese:* 富岡「ああ、あの店ね。いいよ。いつでも。いつがいい。」

晴美「あの、できれば営業時間外がいいんですけど。」

富岡「営業時間外？」

晴美「はい。スタッフの方たらのお話とかききたいんです。店の舞台裏なんかも見たいし。」

途端に富岡の顔が暗くなった。「それはちょっと、どうかなあ…」《ナミヤ雑貨店の奇蹟》

[Tomioka: “Ah, that store. Ok. Anytime is ok. When is it convenient for you?”

Harumi: “Well, if possible, I would like to visit the store during the non-working hours.”

Tomioka: “During the non-working hours?”

Harumi: “Yes. I would like to hear about the staff and see what goes on behind the scenes at the store.”

Immediately, Tomioka’s face darkened. “Emm, I don’t know...”]

Harumi said that she wanted to visit the store during the store’s non-working hours. However, Tomioka believed that going to the store during the store’s non-working hours would cause a lot of trouble to the store. Therefore, he repeated Harumi’s request to express his intention to refuse because he had no right to accept the request without the consent of the store’s owner.

*Ukrainian: «— Заткайся і слухай! Ай хев е пропозиин. Забирай собі всі гроші... — Какіє гроші, какіє гроші, о чом шепчеш, сенок? — залопотав він. — Забирай собі всі гроші з украденого в мене гаманця. — продовжував ти. — Какова гаманця, шоти гоніш? тримався барон». «Юрій Андрухович, Московіада»*

[“Shut up and listen! I have an offer. Take all the money ...” **“What pennies? what pennies? what are you whispering about, boy?”** he muttered. “Take all the money from the wallet you stole from me.” you continued. **“What wallet, what are you saying?”** the baron insisted.]

The baron used the repetitive sentences to refuse the proposal of the boy to pretend he didn't know what was going on, and avoid admitting the fact of his stealing the wallet.

### e) Subjunctive hypothetical sentences

Using such a syntactic form in the RCA can make the expressed words of refusal more tactful and implicit, making it easier for the receiver to accept refusal, enabling receiver to get emotional compensation, and is conducive to the smooth progress of communication.

Most of the subjunctive hypothetical sentences in Chinese are guided by subjunctive words such as “якби”/ “もし”/ “假如” (if), “якщо”/ “仮に”/ “要是” (what if), “у випадку”/ “ならば”/ “万一” (in case), “як тільки”/ “一度…と”/ “一旦” (once), etc.

*Chinese:* 方科长: “走走走, 一起去吃饭, 今天咱们要好好祝贺祝贺 ……”

护士长: “你要是早点告诉我就好了, 我就不去了, 我吃过了, 而且我还得值班呢。” 《平淡生活》

[Section Chief Fang: “Let's go and have dinner together. Today we want to congratulate each other ...”

Head nurse: **“If you had told me earlier, I wouldn't have gone.** I've eaten already and I have to be on duty.”]

The nurse used the subjunctive hypothetical sentence to reject the chief's invitation, which meant that she could agree to celebrate together if invited in advance, but she was not informed properly, so he had already had her meal, that is why she refused the invitation.

*Japanese:* 仮に君の言い分が本当だとしても、それは言い訳にはならない。《国語辞典》

[**If what you say is true**, there is no excuse.]

The subjunctive hypothetical sentences can make the RCA more tactful, hidden and acceptable to the other party.

*Ukrainian:* «I свій шлях широкий, — додав він. — Памагі, слухай, землячок, витягни мене, — все ж йому доводилося добряче напружувати голосові зв'язки, аби перекричати вирування страхітливих вод під собою. — **I як би я, по-твоєму, мав це зробити?** — поцікавився ти, щоб трохи його збадьорити перед смертю». «Юрій Андрухович, Московіада»

[“And your path is wide,” he added, “Pamagi, listen, fellow countryman, pull me out,” still, he had to strain his vocal cords to shout over the roaring of the terrifying waters below him. “**And how, in your opinion, what should I do?**” you asked, trying to cheer him up a bit before dying.]

Faced with the old man's request to rescue himself from the water, the young man used the expression with the subjunctive mood here to release the intention of refusal.

### 2.1.2. Deep Refusal Strategies

Deep refusal strategy refers to the use of implicit and euphemistic discourse to

express the intention of refusal in such a way that the other party can deduce its “implicit meaning” from the discourse information.

Deep refusal strategy has always been the focus of Chinese and foreign scholars’ research. Based on previous research results, we can outline the following nine deep refusal strategies in Chinese: a) reason sub-strategy, b) apology sub-strategy, c) thanks sub-strategy, d) praise sub-strategy, e) empathy sub-strategy, f) suggestion sub-strategy, g) avoidance sub-strategy, h) false consent sub-strategy, and i) vague expression sub-strategy.

#### **a) Reason sub-strategy**

People usually give reasons for rejection when they reject others. Refusing someone without giving a reason might appear insincere and unconvincing. Reasons for refusal can be both real and unreal.

*Chinese:* “对了，明威，我跟我妈还住在原来的地方，你要不要跟我一起回去看看？”邓冰婷说道。狄明威神情微微黯然，随即微微一笑，婉转说：“改天吧！我今天还有事。” 《十七岁的纯情》

[“By the way, Mingwei, my mother, and I still live in the same place. Do you want to go back with me and have a look?” Deng Bingting said. Di Mingwei looked slightly sad, then smiled and said tactfully: “Let’s go another day! **I have something else to do today.**”]

This is a conversation between friends. Faced with Deng Bingting’s proposal to go home together, Di Mingwei refused, stating the reason, “I have other arrangements today.”

*Japanese:* 田島「奥さん、しばらくここで働かせてもらえませんか。一週間でも二週間

でも、もっと長くてもいいです。」

民子「そりゃ、人手は欲しいけど、一応農協を通して雇うことになってるし、それに家は零細農家だから、あまりお金は払えないし…」《遥かなる山の呼び声》

[Tajima: Ma'am, could you let me work here for a while? It can be a week, two weeks, or longer.

Tamiko: Well, I need some labor, **but I have to hire people through the agricultural cooperative. Besides, my family runs just a very small farm, so I can't pay you an ideal salary...**]

Minzi politely rejected Tajima's request to stay and work on the farm by explaining the reasons why hiring people had to go through the agricultural cooperative and that she could not afford to pay ideal wages.

*Ukrainian: «— Що, знову на два фронти? У гуртожитку! Уже домовився на сьогодні? Так? — При чім тут це? Ти ж знаєш, я пишу роман у віршах... — Я дам тобі папір, ручку. Пиши його тут. Я буду зовсім тихенька, нічим тобі не заважатиму. Ти ляжеш у теплу постіль і писатимеш хоч до ранку... — **Це неможливо, Галю. Це дуже тонкі речі, тонкі матерії. Це справа мого життя. Я не можу тобі так просто це пояснити, але мушу піти.** Словом, я піду, так?»* «Юрій Андрухович, Московіада»

[“What, again on two fronts? In the dormitory! Already made an appointment for today? Yes? ” “What does this have to do with it? You know, I'm writing a novel in verse...” “I will give you a paper and a pen. Write it here. I will be very quiet, I will not disturb you. You will lie down in a warm bed and write at least until the morning...” “**This is impossible, Galyu. These are very thin things, flammable**”

**substances. This is my life's work. I can't explain it to you that easily, but I have to go.** In short, I will go, yes? ”]

Here, Galya's request is refused with the help of the reason sub-strategy, which is “I am busy writing a novel in verse, and it belongs to flammable materials”. So Galya's request to stay here and write until the morning is not acceptable.

### **b) Apology sub-strategy**

The apology sub-strategy means that the speaker expresses his inner apology and guilt before refusing, to reduce the threat to the other party's face.

*Chinese:* 赵二姐: 朱三管我叫姐, 我也把他当弟弟看, 他现在进局子了, 咱们不能坐视不管, 凑凑钱吧, 怎么着都要把他捞出来。

牛振: 二姐, 对不住了, 他栽了是他自己不小心, 这钱我不出。不好意思啊! 我这人说话直。 《行动》

[Sister Zhao: Zhu San calls me sister, and I regard him as a younger brother. Now that he has been arrested, we can't just sit idly by and do nothing. Let's chip in and save him no matter what.

Niu Zhen: Sister Zhao, I'm sorry. He was in trouble because of his own carelessness. I won't pay for it. I'm sorry! I'm a straight talker. ]

Niu Zhen refused Sister Zhao's suggestion that he did not want to pay for the ransom and believed that the man was in jail because of his own fault. However, to maintain the interpersonal relationship with sister Zhao, he first apologized and then expressed his views.

*Japanese:* わたし「高瀬さん、今度の土曜、一緒に町へ行かない？」

高瀬:「ごめん、行きたいんだけど、ちょっと約束があるから…またぜひ誘ってください。」

## 《結婚できない男》

[Me: “Mr. Takase, would you like to go to town with me next Saturday?”

Takase: “**Sorry**, I’d like to go, but I have an appointment... Please invite me again.”]

Facing the invitation, Takase first adopted the sub-strategy of apologizing and then stated that the reason why he could not accept the invitation to go to the town together was that he had already made a date with someone else in advance, to minimize the threat to the other party’s face.

*Ukrainian: «– О Кассім! Ти скажеш мені, що це була за річ, ще страшніша, ніж Джігад, котру ти бачив на свої власні очі! Я вірю тобі, о Кассім, що ти скажеш мені правду! – Все окріч того скажу, о радісна мати принца! А того не можу сказати, **вибач вірному слугі падишаха і свому!** ». (О. Назарук) (in Оксана Maksimyuk et al., “Functional And Sematic Parameters of the Refusal Communicative Act in Ukrainian Literary Discourse”, 2017: 13)*

[“Oh Kassim! You will tell me what kind of thing was even more terrible than Jigad, which you saw with your own eyes! I trust you, O Kassim, that you will tell me the truth!” “I will say everything except that, oh joyful mother of the prince! And I can’t say that, **I’m sorry, please forgive the faithful servant of the king and yours!** ]

### c) Thanks sub-strategy

The thanks sub-strategy is generally used in the situation of refusing the invitation, suggestion, or help of the other party, which can show respect for the other party and play a role in easing the tone.

*Chinese:* 贺涵：“子君，你听着，我爱你。除了你，我不会娶其他任何女人。你可以走，可以去任何地方，但是只要你想回来，任何时候我都会在这里等着你。只要我有清醒的意识，我都会拿我的所有迎娶你，和你一起度过我们的后半生。”

罗子君：“谢谢你，贺涵。谢谢你对我说的这些话，谢谢你为我做的一切。这么长时间以来，我的想法从来没有改变过，我爱你，可是我们不能在一起。贺涵，再见！” 《我的前半生》

[He Han: Zijun, listen, I love you. I will not marry any other woman but you. You can leave, you can go anywhere, but as long as you want to come back, I will be here waiting for you at any time. As long as I am conscious, I will spend everything I have to marry you and I want to spend my entire life with you.

Luo Zijun: **Thank you, He Han. Thank you for these words you said to me, thank you for everything you have done for me.** For such a long time, my mind has never changed. I love you, but we can't be together. He Han, goodbye!]

In this case, He Han confessed his love to Luo Zijun. Luo Zijun first thanked him for everything he had done and then refused him. The thanks sub-strategy used here can not only express Luo Zijun's sincere feelings for He Han, but also pave the way for the next step to express her refusal intention.

*Japanese:* 昭子の兄が一升の栓壇を抜いて、それに注ぎ、まず坊さんにすすめた。  
「いかがですか、お寒いですから。」

「喉から手が出るほど頂きたいのですが、車を運転して来ましたんで」若い僧は屈託のない顔でそう断りを言い、数珠をしまった。」 《恍惚の人》

[Akiko's elder brother pulled out a 1-liter wine bottle, and poured some wine

into the glass, then offered it to the monk first. “How about one glass of wine? It’s cold today.”

“**I am so grateful for the wine**, but I drove here.” The young monk said ‘no’ with a carefree face and put away his rosary beads.]

The monk came to read sutra for the deceased (Akiko’s mother-in-law) when it was snowing. Faced with the toast from Akiko’s elder brother, he politely refused by first expressing his gratitude and then telling him that he was driving.

*Ukrainian: « — Прошу намітити кандидатуру на голову даного зібрання. — Семена Яковича! — скрикнуло одразу кілька голосів. Головний начальник (Семен Якович) поправив свою краватку, мило усміхнувся й розвів руками: мовляв, не можу! **Дякую, тисячу разів дякую за таке зворушливе довір’я**, але — не можу!».* (М. Хвильовий) (in Оксана Maksymuk et al., “Functional And Sematic Parameters of the Refusal Communicative Act in Ukrainian Literary Discourse”, 2017: 13)

[“Please nominate a candidate to be the head of this meeting.” “Semyon Yakovych!” shouted several voices at once. The head chief (Semen Yakovych) straightened his tie, smiled sweetly and spread his hands, he said: “I can’t! **Thank you, thank you a thousand times for such a touching trust**, but I can’t!]”

Here, Semen Yakovych declined some people’s proposal for nomination and attached a very polite thank-you sub-strategy to make his refusal less damaging to the other party’s face.

#### **d) Praise sub-strategy**

The praise sub-strategy can reduce the threat to the other party’s face by

expressing recognition and affirmation of the other party.

*Chinese:* 朱先生听了一笑, 说: “你不知道我这个人不成器, 做点文墨文字的事还可以滥竽充数, 一当起官来自个心里先得怯惶惶, 日里不能食夜里不得眠。生就的雀儿头带不起王冠—你饶了我吧!” 郝县长根本不信: “这话不实。单是这次赈灾, 先生所作所为无论朝野有口皆碑。卑职以为兹水不乏有识之士, 当今最缺乏的却是清廉之人。” 《白鹿原》

[Mr. Zhu smiled after hearing this and said: “You don’t know that I am not a person of great ability. I can just do some writing and calligraphy. Once I became an official, I would first feel terrified. I could not eat during the day or sleep at night. I am born with a sparrow head and cannot wear a crown - please spare me!” County head Hao didn’t believe it at all: “This is not true. Just from the situation of this disaster relief, **Sir, what you have done is well-known by both the government and the public. I think there is no shortage of knowledgeable people in the local area, but what is most lacking today is a knowledgeable and honest person like you.**”]

Mr. Zhu did not want to take an official position, so he declined the request through humility and suggested County head Hao to find someone else. However, County head Hao disagreed with Mr. Zhu’s view. He refused to accept the suggestion that highly characterizes Mr. Zhu’s performance in disaster relief charity activities. He expressed his appreciation for Mr. Zhu’s performance and noble moral character and believed that Mr. Zhu is very capable of serving as the leader of the National Education Section.

*Japanese:* 「俺たちも聞きに行きましょう。曲が作らる過程には、クスノキの祈念が大き

いに関わっているんです。番人としては責任を感じるし、何よりどんな曲ができたのか気になります」すると千舟は口元を緩め、意味ありげに細めた目を鈴斗に向けてきた。「何ですか？俺、変なことをいいましたか。」いいえ、と彼女は顔を左右にを動かした。「いつの間にやら、一人前の人間に近づいてきたなあと思ったのです。これならクスノキを任せても大丈夫だなど。」 《クスノキの番人》

[Reito said: “Let’s go and listen too! This matter is closely related to the prayer activities. As the guardian of the sacred tree, I feel this is my responsibility. Most importantly, I really want to know what kind of song it is.” Qianzhou smiled and looked at Reito with squinted eyes full of deep meaning. “What’s wrong? Did I... say the wrong thing again?” “No.” Chifune shook her head, “I just suddenly felt that you have grown up and become as mature as an adult already. I can hand over the task of guarding the scared tree to you without any hesitation.”]

Chifune used here sub-strategy of praise to refuse Reito’s request for giving some criticisms and corrections about the advice above. Instead, she praises Reito for his rapid growth and his high sense of responsibility for the guardian tree. Chifune is happy about it because she believes that Reito will become a qualified successor in the matter of guarding the tree.

*Ukrainian: « — Всем выходить, строиться на улице, — коротко сказал лейтенант. — Це загалом гарна ідея, друже, — погодився з ним Мартофляк, — але за яким таким хріном ми туди підемо ...». «Юрій Андрухович, Рекреації»*

["Everyone gets out, on the street," said the lieutenant briefly. **"It's generally a good idea, friend,"** Martoflyak agreed with him, **"but what the hell are we going there for..."**"]

Martoflyak first praised the order to let everyone out and then asked the reason for doing so, which was essentially a very polite way of refusing. The praise sub-strategy can reduce the other party's face threat degree caused by subsequent rejection and ease the relationship between the two parties. Because it is no good to have a conflict with a lieutenant.

#### e) Empathy sub-strategy

It is also known as "empathy", which in pragmatics refers to the emotional communication between the two parties in verbal communication and the ability to imagine and understand the other party's intentions. The purpose of using the empathy sub-strategy when implementing a RCA is mainly to express sympathy, understanding, and care for the other party, to give the other party emotional compensation, and to narrow the distance between the two parties.

*Chinese:* “三妹，你说话要小心点，省得又惹是非。” 觉新看了淑华一眼，提醒她道。

“我倒不怕，得罪人也不要紧。四妹可怜，五婶就这样整天折磨她，也没有人出来说一句公道话!”淑华气愤地顶撞道。 《秋》

["Sister, be careful of what you say, otherwise you will cause troubles again," Juexin glanced at Shuhua and reminded her.

"I'm not scared, it doesn't matter if I offend anyone. **My little sister is pitiful, aunt keeps torturing her every day, but no one comes out to say a fair word!**"

Shuhua retorted angrily.]

Shuhua refused her brother Juemin's well-intentioned suggestion. Here, Shuhua narrowed the emotional distance between her brother Juemin and herself, by expressing sympathy for her little sister's terrible experience and trying to wake up his sense of justice. The empathy sub-strategy is used to mitigate the threat to the addresser's face.

*Japanese:* しかし訪問者は、そうはしなかった。ドアから少し離れて立っているらしく、姿が見えなかった。「お気持ちはよくわかりますから、このままの状態でお話ということでしたら従います」感情を押し殺した声で男はいった。「しかしほかの住民の方が通りかからない保証はなく、会話の一部が耳に入ってしまうことは大いに考えられます。私は構いませんが、あなたがお困りになるのことはないですか？部屋に上がり込むつもりはありません。せめてドアの内側に入れていただくと、お互い気兼ねなく話せると思うのですが。」《白い鳥とコウモリ》

[But the visitors didn't do that. He seemed to be standing a little far from the door, so I couldn't see him. "**I understand exactly how you feel, so if you want me to stay like this, I will do so.**" the man said, his voice devoid of emotion. "**However, there is no guarantee that other residents will not pass by, and it is very possible that some of the conversation may be overheard. I don't mind, but don't you think it would be a problem for you? I have no intention of going into the room. I think if you could at least let me in, we could have a comfortable talk.**" ]

The visiting man is a reporter who wants to follow up on a murder incident. He came to the suspect's son's home and tried to communicate with him. First of all, he declared his understanding of the situation and the mood of being a member of the

suspect's family, and he showed respect for the individual's privacy and was not willing to enter the room forcefully take an interview. In addition, trying to protect the privacy of the conversation, he proposed that the conversation should at least be held on the porch of the house to avoid being heard by passersby, which might cause trouble to the family.

*Ukrainian:* « — Синок, ну не подихать же мне, а? В гамне, синок? А? — перейшов він до благань. — У всякого своя доля, — зітхнув ти.» «Юрій Андрухович, Московіада»

[“Boy, don’t let me die, huh? In a ruckus, boy? A?” he continued to plead. “Everyone has his own destiny,” you sighed.]

According to the ancient world outlook, an individual's status and experience in the real world are determined by fate and cannot be changed. Many literary works beginning from ancient times allude to the unchangeable nature of fate (*Zhao Zhihao, 2020: 114*). The young man refused to pull the baron out of the water, just stating that everyone has his own destiny and showing sympathy for the baron, whose destiny was to drown.

#### **f) Suggestion sub-strategy**

A suggestion sub-strategy is a supplementary strategy designed to move things more positively.

*Chinese:* 郝县长再开不得口，钦服而不无遗憾地陪朱先生出门，又提出开头的话来：“那……你还是择空儿抽一天时间咱们聚聚，我也好代饥民向诸位先生说一句谢承的话呀？”朱先生笑着却很果断：“不必了。你有这心意，把那笔款子余成粮食，分给街头路口那些乞丐吧。他们的年饷还没过哩。” 《白鹿原》

[County Magistrate Hao couldn't speak anymore, and accompanied Mr. Zhu out with respect and regret, and came up with his previous invitation: "Then... why not take a free day for having a nice dinner together! I would like to represent the refugees to express my gratitude to you all participating in the charity?" Mr. Zhu smiled but answered decisively: "Not necessary. **If you have such good intentions, you can use the money to buy food and distribute it to the beggars on the streets instead. Their period of disaster is not over yet!**"]

Mr. Zhu declined Magistrate Hao's invitation to have a meal, with the suggestion that the money from the treat could be used to buy food for the beggars on the street.

*Japanese:* 一平「社内で…とかなんとかって騒いでいるそうだが、…君もかつがれてるのかね？」

秋子「私はよく…。他のかたにお聞きになってください。」 《結婚》

[Ippei: "It seems like there's been a lot of talk about...in the company recently, but...are you getting involved too?"]

Akiko: "I don't know... **Please ask someone else.**"]

Ippei and Akiko are company colleagues. Akiko was very unhappy when Ippei asked about this, so she refused to answer. Akiko said that she didn't know that clearly and suggested that Ippei ask other people.

*Ukrainian:* «Уявляєш, я спав у якомусь автомобілі, тобто в багажнику, а потім мене з нього викинули... — А куди ти йдеш? Веди мене до готелю! — **Та нащо тобі той готель? Ходімо краще до Марти.**» «Юрій Андрухович, Рекреації»

[“Can you imagine, I was sleeping in some car, that is, in the trunk, and then I was thrown out of it...” “And where are you going? Take me to the hotel!” “**Why do you need that hotel? Let’s go to Marta.**”]

In this dialog, Bilinkevich asked Martoflyache to take him to the hotel, while Martoflyache refused the request by suggesting going to Marta.

### **g) Avoidance sub-strategy**

The avoidance sub-strategy refers to not responding positively to a specific request made by the other party but choosing to avoid it. Usually, the method of changing the topic is often used to introduce the other party to another topic and divert his/her attention, to achieve the purpose of rejection.

*Chinese:* 大娘不服气地说：“你找不到一个好对象，是娘的一块心病。当初娘说胡文玉不好，你还不爱听。现在怎么样？”许凤急得叫道：“娘！娘！得啦！得啦！一提这事我心里就烦死！**还是说说你的工作吧，怎么样，顺利吗？**”《战斗的青春》

[The old woman said unconvinced: “It’s a big worry of mine that you can't find a good partner. When I said Hu Wenyu was not good, you didn’t like to hear it. What about now?” Xu Feng shouted anxiously: “Mother! Mother! Come on! Come on! I feel so annoyed when I mention this! **Let’s talk about your work, how is it, is it going well?**”]

*Japanese:* 「あなた私の気持ち分かる？」と、駒子は今しめたばかりの障子をさっとあけて、窓に体を投げつけるように腰かけた。

島村はしばらくしてから、「**星の光が東京とまるでちがうね。いかにも宇に浮いてるね。**」《雪国》

["Do you know how I feel?" asked Kazuko, quickly opening the window she had just closed and sitting down, throwing herself against the window.

After a while, Shimamura said, "**The starlight is completely different from Tokyo. It seems like it's floating in the sky.**"

Shimamura came to the northern mountain village again and met the local geisha Kazuko whom he had met and fell in love with. Faced with the questions she raised, Kimura gave an irrelevant answer to avoid getting engaged into the argue.

*Ukrainian: «Ти нікуди не підеши, — відповідає Галя. — Я пропоную, щоб ти нікуди не йшов. Ти справді маєш високу температуру. Я зараз приготую яєчню, а ти лягай. Тобі треба вилежати. Ти не можеш зараз нікуди йти — надворі дощ. Я не заважатиму тобі, ти просто поспиши. Я наллю тобі ще горілки, але ти мусиш обов'язково лягти, інакше горшка не подіє. Ти можеш преспокійно лишитися тут до завтра, бо тобі обов'язково треба відігрітися і зосереджено полежати. Завтра ж неділя. Ти будеш лежати сам. Я маю розкладачку, я буду поруч, просто я буду поруч, просто я буду подавати тобі те, що ти схочеш. Я можу принести з аптеки яких-небудь ліків. Ну не йди, добре? ...— **Знаєш, Галю, після горілки, мабуть, не варто вживати ніяких ліків,** — починаєш замислено, але вона перебиває.» «Юрій Андрухович, Московіада»*

["You're not going anywhere," replies Galya. "I suggest you don't go anywhere. You really have a high temperature. I'll cook scrambled eggs now, and you go to bed. You need to lie down. You can't go anywhere now" "It's raining outside. I won't disturb you, you just sleep. I will pour you more vodka, but you must lie down, otherwise the pot will not work. You can stay here calmly until tomorrow because

you definitely need to warm up and lie down with concentration. Tomorrow is Sunday. You will lie alone. I have a menu, I'll be there, I'll just be there, I'll just serve you what you want. I can bring some medicines from the pharmacy. Well, don't go, okay?... ” “You know, Galya, after vodka, you probably shouldn't take any medicine,” you begin thoughtfully, but she interrupts...]

Regarding Galiya's suggestions and offers, an avoidance sub-strategy was adopted here, that is, the topic was changed from “whether to take the advice of staying in the house to rest” to “whether it is allowed to take medicine after drinking alcohol”.

#### **h) False consent sub-strategy**

False consent sub-strategy means that when faced with a specific request from the other party, the rejecting party cannot find a suitable reason for the refusal at the moment, and time is delayed by employing a “superficial promise. However, such promises are often temporary and mere in verbal form, and the possibility of fulfillment is low.

*Chinese:* 郑彬彬一直在旁边注意他们的态度，这时凑过来解释：“陈老师，我其实.....就是想跟你们聊聊天儿，最近我特烦.....”薛非看着陈一平那为难的样子，又看见柜台外老向在向他挤眼睛，眉头一皱，也改了主意：“哦，我想起来，今天晚上还真有点儿要紧的事情要办！明天吧，小郑，明天中午休息时候，怎么样？”说完，跟着老向去了厕所。 《冬至》

[Zheng Binbin had been paying attention to their attitudes, and now he came over to explain: “Teacher Chen, I actually... just want to chat with you. I've been very annoyed recently...” Xue Fei looked at Chen Yiping's embarrassed look and seeing

Lao Xiang winking at him outside the counter, he frowned and changed his mind: “Oh, I think about it, there are really some important things to do tonight! **Tomorrow, Xiao Zheng, let’s talk during the lunch break tomorrow. Is that okay with you?**”

After saying that, he followed Lao Xiang to the toilet.]

*Japanese:* 美令は倉木和真から聞いた、「あすなろ」の浅羽母娘を助けるために倉木達郎は一九八四年の事件を自分の始業だと告白したのではないか、という仮説を話した。「時効になった事件だから罪に問われることはない。だったら自分がやったことにして、やっぱり冤罪だったと世間に認めさせようと考えた。いかがでしょうか。」佐久は、ふーっと息を吐き出した。「**大胆な発想ですね。**」《白い鳥とコウモリ》

[Mirei told Kazuma Kuraki about the theory to her lawyer Sakumon, which is Tatsuro Kuraki may have confessed to the crime in 1984 to protect the mother (Yoko Asaba) and her daughter, who now run a small restaurant named “Asunaro”. “Because the statute of limitations has expired, and the perpetrators of the case will not be held accountable anymore, so Tatsuro Kuraki wanted to take it upon himself to make public opinion think that the case was unjust. Please tell me about it.” Sakumon let out a long breath and said: “**That’s a bold idea.**”]

This was a conversation between Meiling and her lawyer Sakumon. Meiling put forward a new point of view on the case and hoped that Sakumon would agree. However, Sakumon used a strategy of pretending to agree by giving a positive evaluation on the surface, that is, she thought this was a bold speculation. However, she refused the rationality of such speculation.

*Ukrainian:* « — В цьому я не сумніваюся. Все, що говориться, десь колись чулося. Люди не винахідливі. — Ні, я інакше. — Ну, про інакше зараз не варто.

*Краще ловімо рибу. — Алеж у мене немає вудлища! — з жалем показав я йому порожні руки.» «Емма Андіївська, Герострати»*

[“I do not doubt that. Everything that is said has been heard somewhere. People are not resourceful.” “No, I’m different.” **“All right, it’s not worth talking about anything else now.** It’s better to catch fish.” “But I don’t have a fishing rod!” I regretfully showed him my empty hands.]

The man held an attitude of refusing to acknowledge the other party’s opinion, so he didn’t want to continue the conversation. However, he didn’t directly show his refusal to accept. Instead, he adopted a very mild sub-strategy of false agreement. It also can be seen that later he didn’t continue to have an in-depth conversation on this topic, instead, he shifted the focus to another point — fishing.

**i) Vague expression sub-strategy.**

When implementing RCA, vague expression sub-strategies often serve as a means of mitigation, and seemingly ambiguous answers express the speaker’s refusal attitude in a tactful and roundabout way.

*Chinese:* 孙市长: “马书记, 这是我刚印好的关于加快招商引资步伐的新提案, 你帮我看看, 提提意见, 再完善完善, 我好提交常委讨论啊!”

马书记: “孙市长, 我恐怕完善不了什么呀!”

孙市长: “你就别谦虚了, 这方面你是有能力的。”

马书记: “**那我先看看, 学习学习再说!**” 《使命》

[Mayor Sun: “Secretary Ma, this is a new proposal I just printed on accelerating the pace of investment promotion. Please help me look at it, make suggestions, and improve it so I can submit it to the Standing Committee for discussion!”

Secretary Ma: “Mayor Sun, I’m afraid I can’t improve anything!”

Mayor Sun: “Don’t be modest. You are capable in this regard.”

Secretary Ma: “**Let me take a look first and study later!**”]

Facing Mayor Sun’s asking for help with refining the contents of a proposal that he came up with, Ma won’t give the suggestions because Mayor Sun is at the upper level. However, the direct refusal would be impolite and would break the personal relationship between them, so he takes the vague expression strategy without a particular promise but a vague answer.

*Japanese:* 「本当のことが明かされていません。あたしは真実が知りたいんです。刑事さんは、そうは思わないんですか。一所懸命捜査して、嘘のままで解決しても平気なんですか。」「**嘘だと決まったわけじゃー**」「嘘ですっ」美令は鋭い口調で言い、テーブルに置いた書類を指した。「嘘じゃないというのなら、これについて納得できる説明をしてください。」五代は黙りこむしかなかった。説明などできない。《白い鳥とコウモリ》

[“The truth is not revealed. I want to know the truth. Police officer, don’t you think so? Is it okay for you to do your best to investigate and settle the matter with lies?” “**We’re not sure it is a lie or not...**” “It’s a lie,” Mirei said sharply, pointing to the books on the table. “If it is not a lie, please give me a convincing explanation for this.” Goudai couldn’t explain, so he could only fall into silence.]

Here, Mei Ling questioned the case of her father’s murder. She believed that the facts were stated by the perpetrator with lies, so she asked the police officer Godai to investigate the truth further. Faced with this request, Godai gave a vague expression of refusal. However, Wu Dai fell into silence under Mei Ling’s series of sharp questioning.

*Ukrainian: «Гриць Штундера і Юрко Немирич уже майже годину простояли голосуючи коло дороги на виїзді з Коломиї, але жодне падло не хотіло спинятися й підбирати їх, хоча всі тримали курс на Чортопіль. І от, коли запас прокльонів та сигарет було вичерпано, а перспектива запізнитись на свято наростала, як загроза громадянської війни, з'явився фантастичний «крайслер-імперіал» із закордонними номерами, і приємний, з сивою борідкою, добродій у картатому кепі й сірому дорожньому вбранні, ласкаво пригальмувавши, запросив їх сідати. Говорив доброю українською, зрештою, теж передвоєнного зразка, з чого Немирич відразу зробив висновок, що добродій у кепі— емігрант. — Як вам живеться у Швейцарії? — перебив йому Гриць. — Знаєте, то нелегко так відразу відповісти.» «Юрій Андрухович, Рекреації»*

[Hryts Shtundera and Yurko Nemyrych had already been standing for almost an hour voting near the road on the way out of Kolomyia, but not a single carrion wanted to stop and pick them up, although everyone was heading for Chortopil. When the supply of curses and cigarettes was exhausted, and the prospect of being late for the holiday loomed like the threat of civil war, there appeared a fantastic Chrysler Imperial with foreign plates, and a pleasant, gray-bearded gentleman in a checkered cap and gray road jacket dressing, gently slowing down, invited them to sit down. He spoke Ukrainian very well, and of the pre-war style, from these reasons, Nemyrych immediately concluded that the good man in the cap was an emigrant. “How do you like life in Switzerland? ” Hryts interrupted him. **“You know, it’s not easy to answer it right away.”**]

The gentleman didn't want to continue the topic, so he adopted a vague expression strategy to avoid answering Hryts' question.

**In conclusion,** the communicative strategies of RCA in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian are very rich and various, and many linguistic materials can be found to support them from the division of superficial and deep strategies. The diversity of the refusal strategies shows the commonalities of the three languages and reveals the differences. Moreover, the support of their respective cultural backgrounds is the key to interpreting the application of the strategies.

### III. Chinese Ostensible Refusal Communicative Act (ORCA)

#### 3.1. The Introduction of ORCA in Chinese

The ostensible refusal communicative act (ORCA) in Chinese is a unique linguistic phenomenon in the research field of refusal communicative act. Usually a ORCA is a kind of refusal communicative act with the superficial verbalized “refusal”, but with the implicit meaning of “willingness to accept” beneath words. That is, this kind of refusal does not really mean to refuse, but is directed to represent politeness in Chinese culture.

The ORCA in Chinese lingual culture has four main features:

**a) Falsity.** Refusal frequently occurs in people’s social life. Most refusals that have attracted widespread attention from scholars in the East and the West are sincere refusals coming from the heart and meaning what they mean. However, the ORCA’s refusal is just on the surface and goes against people’s true thoughts. It’s not a refusal but a “false”, “ostensible” one. The essential difference between a false and genuine refusal lies in its falsehood.

**b) Consensus.** In terms of ORCA, consensus is the premise that both parties can understand that this is a “false”, “ostensible” one. If the two parties in communication cannot reach a consensus on the falsity of the ORCA, then the speech act cannot be successfully implemented. To reach a consensus, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the context and accumulate knowledge about the cultural background. It is a huge challenge, especially for both parties, in cross-cultural communication.

**c) Contradiction.** It refers to the psychological contradiction of the refuser

when adopting ORCA. Since the person does not want to refuse in heart, but due to the social etiquette norms in China, which require people to decline favors from others before accepting them. Accepting favors directly is considered rude and superficial. The addressee must first refuse to avoid being impolite and maintain a good self-image. Therefore, the latter is contradictory when they conduct the ORCA.

**d) Stylized expression pattern.** In Chinese culture, “invite – refuse – invite again – refuse again – persistently invite – accept the invitation...” is the classic communicative pattern process of implementing the refusal communicative act. During this communicative pattern process, there are distinct expression patterns of Chinese culture: expressing feelings from the perspective of being considerate of the other party, minimizing or avoiding causing trouble to the other party, emphasizing the cost of the other party’s time, money, or labor, etc. For instance, “*This is too much trouble for you, ...*” is one typical stylized expression pattern.

### **3.2. The Previous Studies of ORCA in Chinese**

As to the Chinese research, Lu Zhifang conducted a study on the false refusal communicative act in modern Chinese, which mainly discussed the environment in which the false refusal occurs, the factors that produce it, and the strategies of false refusal (*Lu Zhifang, 2003: 1*). Liu Bao studied the politeness side of sincere and ostensible refusals in Chinese, made the comparison between sincere and ostensible refusals on the background of their features summarizing (*Liu Bao, 2006: 1*). Yao Ying in her article expounded the features of ostensible refusal speech acts, its performance conditions, pragmatic functions, and related cultural factors (*Yao Ying, 2012: 31*).

The study of the interpersonal pragmatic motivations of ostensible refusals was conducted by Ran Yongping and Lai Huidi, who aimed at verifying Isaacs & Clark's (1990) interpretation of the ostensible speech act and uncovering the explanatory deficits of Grice's Cooperation Principle and P. Brown and S. C. Levinson's politeness theory in Chinese cultural context (*Ran Yongping et al., 2014: 65*). Wang Hui conducted an analysis of the pragmatic functions of ostensible refusals in Chinese and found out that ostensible refusal has the pragmatic functions of concealing the true intention, testing the attitude of the other party, and promoting the harmony of interpersonal relationships (*Wang Hui, 2014: 101*).

### **3.3. The ORCA and Politeness in Chinese**

Regarding the study on politeness in Chinese, Chinese scholar Gu Yueguo was the first linguist to research the relationship between politeness/pragmatics and Chinese culture. His article also traced back the historical origin of the modern Chinese politeness concept, and the author came up with five politeness principles of Chinese culture, which are the self-denigration maxim, address term maxim, refinement maxim, agree maxim, and maxim of virtue (*Gu Yueguo, 1992: 11*). In the article it is also emphasized that politeness is an important factor which puts certain restrictions on pragmatics. In addition, politeness and pragmatics have obvious cultural characteristics.

#### **3.3.1. Chinese Traditional Culture**

Confucius and Confucianism deeply influence the formation and development of Chinese culture. Based on the brief introduction on Wikipedia, Confucianism is a system of thought and behavior originating in ancient China and variously could be

described as tradition, a philosophy, a religion, a humanistic or rationalistic religion, a way of governing, or simply a way of life (*Yao Xinzhong, 2000: 38*). The 仁 (*rén*) and 礼 (*lǐ*) which were advocated by Confucianism have had a significant impact on the development of Chinese culture and society 仁 (*rén*) as the highest moral principle, moral standard, and moral realm. 礼 (*lǐ*) is the code of conduct to maintain the current social inequality. With time flow, the modern 礼 (*lǐ*) (closer to politeness than etiquette) has changed based on the ancient 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette). Nowadays, politeness is no longer used as the code of conduct to maintain the current social inequality but as a behavioral code in people's daily lives. The social function of modern politeness is to maintain harmony in the relationship between people, eliminate conflicts, and promote cooperation (*Gu Yueguo, 1992: 11*). In interpersonal communication, people generally appear humble and courteous, trying to be considerate of others and reduce or not cause trouble to each other, which has already become a social norm in Chinese culture.

### **3.3.2. Chinese “Collectively-oriented” Social Culture**

Based on the theory of social regulation and face preservation, L. R. Mao proposed “the relative face orientation construct” after comparing the differences between the English and the Chinese cultures (*L. R. Mao, 1994: 45*). According to P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, the concept states that ‘face’ is a public self-image that every member of the society wants to claim for himself/herself (*P. Brown et al., 1978: 66*). This public self-image indicates a potential politeness orientation. Politeness points either to the ideal social identity or to the ideal individual autonomy. In a particular society, one of these two orientations appears to be prominent. Politeness in

Chinese culture refers to the ideal social identity. China is a collectively-oriented society; therefore, maintaining interpersonal relationships is a top priority. Therefore, the phenomenon of establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships in the “polite tug-of-war” within communicators appears. So, the Chinese ostensible refusals serve as the embodiment of politeness in the Chinese communicative process.

#### **a) The “Polite tug-of-war” communicative process of ORCA**

As for the refusal communicative act research, there is a unique linguistic phenomenon, that is, the Chinese ostensible refusal communicative act. The reason for this linguistic phenomenon is that according to traditional Chinese etiquette and courtesy when someone sincerely offers an invitation or help, immediate acceptance is regarded as very superficial and impolite behaviour. Therefore, people usually conduct the act of pretending to refuse the proposal one or more times before finally accepting the other’s kindness. Therefore, in Chinese culture, the classic communicative pattern process of “**invite – refuse – invite again – refuse again – persistently invite – accept the invitation...**”, is often adopted to ultimately achieve success in interpersonal interactions.

#### **b) Formulaic expressions of ORCA**

On the other hand, such refusal communicative acts are always accompanied by some formulaic expressions, such as “*I don’t want to bother you,*” “*This is too much trouble for you,*” or other comments emphasizing the cost of the other party’s time, money, or labor. In the context of Chinese culture, such discourse expressions do not mean the end of the communication activity. On the contrary, it often represents the

completion of the initial stage of the Chinese-style conversation. The addressee's negative response in reply is just the beginning of expressing that he or she is willing to continue the negotiation and shows politeness to the addresser in Chinese culture.

P. Brown and S. C. Levinson believe that the refusal communicative act is a kind of verbal behavior that threatens the face of the communicator, so it might be called the Face-Threatening Act (FTA) (*P. Brown et al., 1987: 68*). However, ostensible refusal communicative act in the Chinese culture is not aimed at damaging the face of the recipient, on the contrary, it highlights the politeness of the speaker.

### 3.3.3. The Pragmatic Functions of Chinese ORCA

Inspired by the previous research results, this paper will discuss and analyze Chinese ostensible refusal acts from the point of view of two main pragmatic functions.

#### **a. Observe the principle of politeness and maintain interpersonal relationships.**

罗：“嗨，贺主任请等一下。（进房取出一兜千层饼）给，拿上。”

贺：“哎，不要不要，你这是商品，咋能随便拿呢？”

罗：“这是咱自家打下的。”

贺：“自家打的也是商品嘛。”

罗：“见外了吧，这要在乡下，就是贺主任瞧不起我老罗哇。”

贺：“噢，好好，我拿一个。”

罗：“都拿上。”

贺：“不行，绝对不行。... 好好，最多再拿一个，小本生意不容易。”

《西京故事》

[Luo: Hey, Director He, please wait a moment. (Goes into the room and takes out a bag of lasagna) Here, please take it.

He: Oh, no, no, this is a commodity, I can't just take it without paying.

Luo: The lasagna is homemade.

He: Even if it is homemade, it's still a product to be sold.

Luo: It doesn't matter. If this happens in the countryside, you don't take it, it means you look down on me.

He: Oh, okay, I'll take one.

Luo: Take them all.

He: No, absolutely not. ... Well...Okay, I'll take one more at most. It's not easy to run a small business.]

In Chinese culture, 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) plays an extremely important role. 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) is not only a social and political norm but also a norm of ethics and morality, a norm of personal behavior (*Xiao Li, 1998: 16*). The aspects of it might range from political diplomacy to daily meetings, even to every word said and every action made. Everything should be done in line with the requirements of etiquette. As one of the rules of polite behavior, the direct acceptance of other's kindness or benefits is seen as poor-educated and impolite in Chinese culture.

“Shop owner Luo” presented “Director He” with a bag of lasagna when “Director He” passed by the shop. However, since the direct acceptance of other's kindness or benefits is seen as poor education and impoliteness in Chinese culture, people will first refuse it. Therefore, “Director He” politely refused the proposal immediately, using the excuse of “it was a commodity”. According to Chinese

scholar Gu Yueguo, the principles of politeness are based on the characteristics of Chinese culture. A “maxim of virtue” refers to minimizing the cost paid by others and maximizing the benefits for others in terms of behavioral motives. “Director He” did not accept the proposal immediately but refused because he did not want to cause losses to the other party. This way, “Director He” can maintain his good image by observing etiquette.

However, it was not a real refusal, but a stylized refusal in correspondence with Chinese etiquette and the socially adopted norm of politeness, which says: in interpersonal communication, try not to cause any trouble to others. Then “Shop owner Luo” offered “Director He” for the second time, and “Director He” refused it again. This kind of speech act still shows that “Director He” is very considerate because he wants to save “Shop owner Luo’s” time, money, and labor. Finally, “Director He” accepted the offer, and emphasized that only two portions of lasagna were enough, and there was no need for the whole bag. He is still in the position of provider “Shop owner Luo”, trying to minimize the trouble and losses caused to others.

**b. Test the other person’s attitude and give each other a buffer zone.**

On the other hand, “Director He” is also trying to confirm whether it is a sincere offer from “Shop owner Luo”, that is why he did not directly accept “Luo’s” proposal. In addition to “observing social etiquette”, the latter two ostensible refusals by “Director He” are made to simultaneously test the authenticity of the inviting party’s attitude. Because if an ostensible offer is made, “Shop owner Luo” would not insist on it, and then “Director He” could finish the communication in time to avoid

embarrassing situations. In Chinese culture, there exists not only the speech act of ostensible refusal but also the speech acts of ostensible invitation — the invitation is given without the expectation that it will be accepted, which is also just a speech act realized for social etiquette.

Therefore, confirming the other party's true intentions is necessary to avoid unnecessary embarrassment. According to the analysis of the above-given dialogue, it can be found that the communicational mode between “Shop owner Luo” and “Director He” is a tug-of-war of “offer – refuse – offer again – refuse again – offer the third time – accept the offer.” Through practicing the ostensible refusal communicative act, “Director He” can make sure that the offer is sincere, and finally accept it.

Therefore, the ostensible refusal communicative act needs to be actualized to test the person's attitude, whether he or she really wants to invite or not. If the other party does not insist on the offer/invitation, etc., it is not sincere. “Director He's” ORCA is regarded as a very typical “Chinese politeness model” in Chinese culture. This kind of communicative act of accepting in the heart while refusing on the surface is a unique linguistic phenomenon in China.

Scene: “A” and “B” are a couple in love. “A” originally asked “B” to go to the movies together at night, but he had urgent work to do, so he could not watch the movies as planned. “B” was very unhappy, but she didn't show it. Later, when A finished, he wanted to ask “B” to eat out.

A: “终于忙完了，这么晚了，没有合适的电影看了吧，要不要出来一起吃东西，加班饿死了。”

B: “我就不去了，你饿了自己去吃吧。”

A: “真的不去？”

B: “嗯，不去，很晚了，我先睡了，晚安。”

A: “那好吧，晚安。”

B: “...”

[A: I've finally finished my work. It's so late. There is no suitable movie to watch. Do you want to come out to eat together? I'm starving to death after working overtime.

B: I won't go. If you are hungry, you can eat something.

A: You really don't want to eat, do you?

B: Well, no, it's very late; I'm going to bed now, good night.

A: Well, good night.

B: ...]

*(Gui Wenchun, 2019: 165)*

According to the above-given conversation, it is evident that the girl (“B”) is not happy at all with the cancellation of the date. When “A” came up with the proposal to eat out later, “B” did not directly express unhappiness, because although the date was suddenly canceled, she treated it as excusable. Because “A” had not done it on purpose, only because of some critical job affairs. While dating failed after all, “B” took the ostensible refusal communicative acts to hint at her dissatisfaction. However, “A” did not realize it, just thought that “B” gave a sincere refusal. Then “A” did not offer his invitation again, just asking the girl to confirm she really didn't want to eat out with him. This made “B” very angry.

As it was stated above, the ostensible refusal communicative act can test the speaker's attitude. Specifically, it can test whether the invitation is true or not and check if it is sincere enough. As in the context above, the date was ruined because of "A's" reason. If "A" really wanted to make up for the cancellation of dating, he needed to invite more times to show the genuineness. And "B" would get back in a good mood through several ostensible refusals but then finally accept the invitation. If "A" could clearly understand "B's" true thoughts and intentions, their conversation would end differently.

This example also reflects one of the distinguishing features of ostensible refusal: its "high-risk" of inappropriate identification, misrepresentation, or misunderstanding of the true intent of the invitee's refusal; furthermore, there is also the possibility of treating the provider's offering as insincere one (*Ran Yongping, Laihuidi, 2014: 67*). Therefore, while implementing or perceiving the ostensible refusal communicative act, one should be careful and attentive to avoid pragmatic errors in speaker-listener collaboration.

In conclusion, the ORCA is a unique linguistic phenomenon in Chinese culture. People express refusal on the surface of utterances, but in fact, they want to accept it in their hearts. However, this kind of refusal communicative act is not regarded as a face-threatening act that destroys the relationship between the two parties in Chinese culture. On the contrary, it turns out to represent politeness. ORCA is often accompanied by a tug-of-war mode of "refusing two or more times, then accepting at the end". Therefore, this type of speech act is complex and requires more attention, otherwise, it is likely to lead to pragmatic failure.

The main content of this section has been explained in the publication of the paper (*Jiang Qingchuan, 2022, Ostensible Refusal Speech Act in The Chinese Lingual Culture: Linguopragmatic Analysis, Мова. Література. Фольклор, 2022, Vol. 2. No. 8: 64-70 <https://doi.org/10.26661/2414-9594-2022-2-8>*).

#### **IV. Comparative Quantitative and Qualitative analysis of RCA Communicative Strategies in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian Lingual Cultures.**

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the corpus for this study was selected from 600 refusal communicative acts per language in literary works in three languages and 600 refusal communicative acts per language in questionnaires in three languages. As for the corpora in literary works, the examples of RCA examined statistically stand for 1586 in Chinese, 1259 in Japanese, and 1201 in Ukrainian. As for the corpora gathered through questionnaires, there are 1463 examples in Chinese, 1882 in Japanese, and 1219 in Ukrainian. The specific statistical results are shown in the tables below:

<b>Superficial Refusal Strategies</b>			
<b>Serial number</b>	<b>Lexical sub-strategy</b>	<b>Serial number</b>	<b>Syntactic sub-strategy</b>
1	words expressing the meaning of refusal	7	interrogative sentences
2	parentheses or insert structures	8	rhetorical questions
3	salutations	9	elliptical structures
4	adverbs of degree	10	repetitive structures
5	interjections	11	subjunctive hypothetical sentences
6	idioms		

Serial number	Deep Refusal Strategies		
12	reason sub-strategy	17	suggestion sub-strategy
13	thanks sub-strategy	18	avoidance sub-strategy
14	apology sub-strategy	19	false consent sub-strategy
15	praise sub-strategy	20	vague expression sub-strategy
16	empathy sub-strategy	21	ORCA (sub-strategy)

**Table 1. The serial number of each strategy**

		Chinese		Japanese		Ukrainian		
		Serial number	Statistics (1586)	Percentage	Statistics (1259)	Percentage	Statistics (1201)	Percentage
Superficial Refusal Strategies	Lexical sub-strategy	1	281	17.72%	42	3.34%	91	7.58%
		2	1	0.06%	25	1.99%	37	3.08%
		3	83	5.23%	24	1.91%	87	7.24%
		4	38	2.40%	54	4.29%	30	2.50%
		5	79	4.98%	206	16.36%	92	7.66%
		6	11	0.69%	2	0.16%	8	0.67%
	Syntactic sub-strategy	7	75	4.73%	124	9.85%	153	12.74%
		8	125	7.88%	45	3.57%	28	2.33%
		9	30	1.89%	76	6.04%	22	1.83%
		10	62	3.91%	34	2.70%	43	3.58%
		11	111	7.00%	66	5.24%	44	3.66%
Deep Refusal Strategy		12	360	22.70%	307	24.38%	323	26.89%
		13	16	1.00%	13	1.03%	4	0.33%
		14	5	0.32%	20	1.59%	6	0.50%
		15	5	0.32%	7	0.56%	4	0.33%
		16	39	2.46%	13	1.03%	20	1.67%
		17	169	10.66%	95	7.55%	131	10.91%

	<b>18</b>	56	3.53%	34	2.70%	34	2.83%
	<b>19</b>	8	0.51%	21	1.67%	21	1.75%
	<b>20</b>	25	1.59%	51	4.05%	23	1.92%
	<b>21</b>	56	3.53%	0		0	

**Table 2. The statistics of refusal strategies in literary works in three languages**

From table 2 above, it can be found that the order of the number of refusal strategies used from most to least is:

In Chinese: “reason sub-strategy” (22.70%), “words expressing the meaning of refusal” (17.72%), “suggestion sub-strategy” (10.66%), “rhetorical questions” (7.88%), “subjunctive hypothetical sentences” (7.00%), “salutations” (5.23%), “interjections” (4.98%), “interrogative sentences” (4.73%), “repetitive structures” (3.91%), “avoidance sub-strategy” (3.53%), “ORCA (sub-strategy)” (3.53%), “empathy sub-strategy” (2.46%), “adverbs of degree” (2.40%), “elliptical structures” (1.89%), “vague expression sub-strategy” (1.59%), “thanks sub-strategy” (1.00%), “idioms” (0.69%), “false consent sub-strategy” (0.51%), “apology sub-strategy” (0.32%), “praise sub-strategy” (0.32%), “parentheses or insert structures” (0.06%).

In Japanese: “reason sub-strategy” (24.38%), “interjections” (16.36%), “interrogative sentences” (9.85%), “suggestion sub-strategy” (7.55%), “elliptical structures” (6.04%), “subjunctive hypothetical sentences” (5.24%), “adverbs of degree” (4.29%), “vague expression sub-strategy” (4.05%), “rhetorical questions” (3.57%), “words expressing the meaning of refusal” (3.34%), “repetitive structures” (2.70%), “avoidance sub-strategy” (2.70%), “parentheses or insert structures” (1.99%), “salutations” (1.91%), “false consent sub-strategy” (1.67%), “apology sub-strategy” (1.59%), “thanks sub-strategy” (1.03%), “empathy sub-strategy”

(1.03%), “praise sub-strategy” (0.56%), “idioms” (0.16%).

In Ukrainian: “reason sub-strategy” (26.89%), “interrogative sentences” (12.74%), “suggestion sub-strategy” (10.91%), “interjections” (7.66%), “words expressing the meaning of refusal” (7.58%), “salutations” (7.24%), “subjunctive hypothetical sentences” (3.66%), “repetitive structures” (3.58%), “parentheses or insert structures” (33.08%), “avoidance sub-strategy” (2.83%), “adverbs of degree” (2.50%), “rhetorical questions” (2.33%), “vague expression sub-strategy” (1.92%), “elliptical structures” (1.83%), “false consent sub-strategy” (1.75%), “empathy sub-strategy” (1.67%), “idioms” (0.67%), “apology sub-strategy” (0.50%), “thanks sub-strategy” (0.33%), “praise sub-strategy” (0.33%).

Based on statistical comparison, the application of each strategy in the three languages (Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian) is discussed and analyzed as follows:

**In terms of Strategy No. 1 — “words expressing the meaning of refusal”,** the statistics show that this strategy is most commonly used in the Chinese context, which is far from what was expected in the study. Because China is a collectivist society, and in a collectivist culture, maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships is of vital importance. Especially under the influence of Confucianism, in pragmatics guided by 礼 (*li*) (etiquette), which emphasizes the implicit expression. Thus, the use of Strategy No. 1 should be less so as to be consistent with the connotation of it. In Eastern culture, the concept of *FACE* is extremely important. However, “words expressing the meaning of refusal” will pose a significant threat to the other party’s face and are not conducive to maintaining good interpersonal relationships.

This strategy is widely adopted because, with the increase of international exchanges, people have been exposed to and deeply influenced by Western ideas such as “rational freedom, personal freedom, and freedom of speech”. The Chinese people’s “ownership consciousness” has awakened. Therefore, when they encounter some occasions where they have to refuse, they no longer choose to compromise but become more courageous to express their own opinions and think more independently. It can be said that this is also a sign of progress for one’s own growth and psychological development.

It is worth mentioning that some studies on changes in cultural values have consistently shown that individualism is on the rise and collectivism is on the decline. T. Hamamura found that individualism was rising and collectivism was falling in both Japan and the United States (*T. Hamamura, 2012: 24*). S. K. Yang mentioned that “many traditional collectivist values of the Chinese are declining, including modesty, obedience, self-control, etc., while individualistic values, such as freedom and competition, are rising” (*S. K. Yang, 1996: 498*). R. Inglehart and W. E. Baker, studying the changes in values in 38 countries, also found that people’s values tend to change from traditional to secular, from survival to self-expression (*R. Inglehart et al., 2000: 51*).

In Ukrainian, the use of this strategy ranks 5th among all other strategies. It ranks lower than Chinese and higher than Japanese in a horizontal comparison. Because the Orthodox doctrine advocates that everyone is equal before God and all people in the world are brothers and sisters, this doctrine deeply influences Ukrainians, and the idea of equality for all is deeply rooted in the people’s hearts.

Therefore, in communication, people do not consider status, social class, etc., too much but treat each other as equals. Accordingly, when performing a refusal communicative act, if the speaker cannot meet the specific requirements raised by the other party or cannot meet certain expectations of the other party, he or she will explicitly refuse the other party. This frankness and honesty in speech also show respect for the other party.

The 10th-ranked adoption of the “words expressing the meaning of refusal” in Japanese context is the least among the three languages. Because in Japanese culture, people tend to avoid expressing their opinions directly, especially when their opinions differ, many will choose not to express their views. Even Japanese people who are willing to express their opinions will try to avoid using direct expressions such as “いえ、私はそうは思いません。(ie, watashi wa so wa omoimasen)” (No, I don’t think so.), “断ります。(kotowarimasu)” (I refuse.), etc. Since the Japanese are a nation that attaches great importance to group consciousness and social hierarchy, in order to maintain harmonious relationships within the collective, when dealing with people, they pay more attention to the other person’s feelings and tend to use vague and ambiguous expressions.

**Strategy No. 2 — “parentheses or insert structures”** ranks 9th in Ukrainian context ranks, 13th in the Japanese context, and 21st in Chinese. Parentheses are usually used to express the speaker’s attitude and opinion, emphasize or attract the other party’s attention, change the topic or explain the reason, etc. In communication, Parentheses play an essential role. They are inserted into speech and can serve as a means of expressing additional subjective modal meanings, such as love and hate,

praise and criticism, surprise, confusion, worry, speculation, certainty, uncertainty, euphemism, etc. that is, it can provide sentences with various additional subjective modal meanings.

In particular its speculative meaning is significant when performing the refusal communicative act. That is, it expresses that the speaker is not completely sure about what he or she is saying, which can make the tone of the speech softer, less absolute, and less confident. Therefore, it is seen as a form of euphemistic polite expression. Implementing a refusal communicative act can soften the tone and reduce the threat to the other party's face.

In terms of the characteristics of the language itself, Ukrainian appears to be an inflectional language. In Ukrainian, syntactic relationships, such as the relationship between words and phrases, are expressed by inflection at the end of the word. Sometimes in Ukrainian, only one word with an inflected ending is enough to convey the meaning. In Ukrainian, this type of parenthesis like “думаю (*dumayu*), ...” (I think ... ), “здається (*zdayetsya*), ...” (it seems ...), “знаєш (*znayesh*),...” (you know ...), is very common in daily conversation, and frequently used when performing refusal communicative acts.

In addition, as an agglutinative language, Japanese requires particles and auxiliary verbs to connect independent words. Therefore, the use and function of particles in Japanese are highly developed and flexible. Parentheses in Japanese are a common language phenomenon used to insert extra information or exclamations into a sentence to enrich the language expression, which can be in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and even sounds. The particles such as “だから (*dakara*)” (as a

result), “*そこで* (*sokode*)” (that’s why), etc., are frequently used in Japanese; therefore, the form and application of parentheses are relatively flexible.

As for Chinese, it is an isolating language. The sentence is composed of independent and complete words that are merely added together. Generally, the grammatical function is not expressed through the change of the word’s form but through independent function words and fixed word order to express grammatical meaning. A complete subject, predicate, and object are usually required to express the correct meaning. Therefore, in Chinese, when performing a refusal communicative act — which is an unpleasant act, it is wise to end this adverse situation as soon as possible, that is, avoid overly complicated elaboration and simplify the expression components, which is conducive to the maintenance of the relationship between the two parties. This can be seen as the reason why the adoption of the “parentheses sub-strategy” ranks last in Chinese.

**Strategy No. 3 — “salutations”** ranks 6th in Chinese and Ukrainian contexts. Meanwhile, it ranks 14th in Japanese. A salutation is an address that people use to greet each other in person. Appropriate and polite address demonstrates the speaker’s good etiquette and respect for the participants. It helps to strengthen communication, enhance friendship, and achieve the best speech communication effect. In Chinese, “surname + title or position” etc., for example: “王经理 (*Wáng jīnglǐ*)” (Manager Wang); In Ukrainian, “name + patronymic”, such as: “Марина Петрівна (*Maryna Petrovna*)” (Maryno Petrovna). In Japanese, “surname + ‘*さん* (*san*)’ (Mr./ Mrs./ miss)”, etc., such as: “木村さん (*Kimura san*)” (Mr./ Mrs./ miss *Kimura*). Therefore, salutations, as a basic part of social etiquette, often appear as a strategy when a

refusal communicative act is performed to show politeness.

The reason why the frequency of using address words when conducting refusal communicative acts in Japanese is much lower than that in Chinese and Ukrainian may be as follows. In addition to being polite, address words also serve the purpose of “drawing attention, expressing emphasis, changing semantics, and distinguishing levels, etc.” (*Li Zhan, 2015: 78*). “Refusal” is an unwelcome part of the entire expression, so avoiding reinforcing the other party’s attention when implementing the refusal communicative act can reduce the tension between the two parties. Because “Japan is a society with a differential structure, it adheres to a strict hierarchical identity system” (*Jing Huanru et al., 2013: 175*). People attach great importance to the relationship between superiors and subordinates and pay attention to the superior being respected and the subordinate being humble. If the social class gap between the two parties is highlighted through address words, the subsequent refusal part will be more challenging to carry out. Meanwhile, it will have a worse impact on the relationship between the two parties.

**Strategy No. 4 — “Adverbs of degree”** ranks 7th in Japanese, 11th in Ukrainian, and 13th in Chinese. Adverbs of degree also play an auxiliary role in implementing the communicative act of refusal. There are two categories of adverbs of degree: adverbs of intensification and adverbs of reduction. Adverbs of intensification can show sincerity and make the reason for refusal more genuine and credible so that the other party can feel the speaker’s sincerity and be more likely to accept the refusal. Similarly, adverbs of reduction can also help the refusal communicative act to be successfully implemented. Adverbs of reduction can soften

the tone, make the refusal more euphemistic, and thus reduce the threat to face. It is used frequently in all three languages, especially in Japanese. This is due to the cultural background of Japan, such as the distinct hierarchical social culture. When Japanese people refuse others, they will be very cautious and consider a lot. They try to minimize the embarrassment or harm caused by the refusal and maximize save the other party's face. Therefore, the frequency of degree-based adverb use is higher.

**Strategy No. 5 — “Interjections”** ranks 2nd in Japanese, 4th in Ukrainian, and 7th in Chinese. Interjections can express different feelings and emotions, such as joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness. It has no specific meaning and cannot constitute any sentence component in the sentence, but it is related to the whole sentence, so it is an independent component. Although interjections have no semantic content, they can imply a tone of refusal to attract the other party's attention and thus implement a refusal. At the same time, it can also weaken the utterance's harshness, reduce the refusal's sharpness, and alleviate the other party's face threat.

In Chinese and Japanese, interjections can appear at the beginning of a sentence and be used separately with punctuation marks or attached to the end of a sentence. However, interjections can only appear at the beginning of a sentence and can be used separately with punctuation marks in Ukrainian. Because interjections act as a buffer, preparing the other person psychologically for an unwanted response (refusal), using interjections is a very natural and welcome strategy when performing a refusal communicative act in three languages.

However, it should be noted that in Chinese, when interjections are added to the end of a sentence, in addition to weakening the sharpness of the expression, some

interjections also have the effect of making the overall expression present other emotional effects, such as creating a coquettish and cute tone. This tone of expression is extremely inappropriate when used to address someone you are not close to or in formal conversations. For instance, this tone can be used if a girl refuses her mother's proposal, but it would be inappropriate for the girl to reject the proposal of one of her male teachers.

Therefore, Chinese people are cautious about using interjections, especially when using interjections at the end of sentences, for the following two main reasons. First, the refusal must be formal because "formal" can be seen as giving deep thought to the other party's proposal and showing respect for the other party. Second, to avoid the situation where the tone is ambiguous and the other party misunderstands.

**Strategy No. 6 — "Idioms"** ranks 17th in Chinese and Ukrainian and 20th in Japanese. Idiom is a phrase or sentence that has been used by people for a long time and has a basic fixed structure with profound historical and cultural roots. It often uses satire, humor, etc., to make people think deeply, inspire people's thinking, or serve as a warning. The refusal communicative act can also be implemented with the help of idioms. Sometimes, with the help of idioms, the tone of rejection can be softened, and a relaxed and humorous atmosphere can be created, thus reducing the face threat caused by refusal.

However, due to convention, idioms are relatively fixed in form and content. Although their form and meaning might change in some specific contexts, their overall meaning will not undergo significant leaps. Because idioms are a product of history and time, the meaning they contain will not have much flexibility and change

in a short period of time. Therefore, the scope of the context in which they are used is minimal, as people must use them appropriately according to their specific meanings. As a result, adopting “idioms” ranks low in all three languages.

**Strategy No. 7 — “Interrogative sentences”** ranks 2nd in Ukrainian, 3rd in Japanese, and 8th in Chinese. Interrogative sentences express the meaning of refusal by adding questions, which can give the listener room for choice. This shows respect for the other party, reduces the degree of offense to the other party, and gives the interlocutors a sense of intimacy. For instance, in Ukrainian, “Гаразд?(*harazd*)/Добре? (*dobre*)” (Good? Ok?), etc., are used to ask for the other party’s opinion to show respect for his or her wishes, thereby reducing the face threat caused to the other party by the refusal. Respecting the other party’s opinions and wishes aligns with the “free will” that Ukrainian people value.

In Japanese, there are honorifics and humble words, honorific sentence patterns, and humble sentence patterns. In addition, negative interrogative sentences can express respect more, so using them together will produce rich, polite expressions. For instance, the question “Could you please...?” can be expressed in different forms in Japanese, depending on the degree of respect: “...いただけますか (*itadakemasu ka*)”, “... いただけますでしょうか (*itadakemasudeshou ka*)”, “... してもらえますか (*shite moraemasu ka*)” “... してもらえませんか (*shite moraemasen ka*)”, “... くださいませんか (*kudasaimasen ka*)”, “... ていただけませんか (*te itadakemasen ka*)”, etc. In Japanese, interrogative sentences are frequently used because they not only show respect by asking for the other party’s opinion but also take advantage of the rich honorific sentence patterns, which further increase the politeness of the language.

In Chinese, speakers often use interrogative sentences to express refusal in daily conversations. Sometimes, it is to provide the other party with a choice, to express refusal in a negotiating tone, to reduce the intensity, and to maintain the face of both parties, especially with an interrogative phrase to express inquiry at the end of the sentence, such as “好吗? (hǎo ma)/ 可以吗? (kěyǐ ma)” (Is it okay?) etc. However, in Chinese, interrogative sentences are sometimes used to express a direct and firm refusal. Therefore, people need to pay attention to the tone when using interrogative sentences to avoid using a stiff tone which may cause the other party to mistakenly interpret it as a strong refusal, thus causing conflict and damaging the relationship between the two parties.

**Strategy No. 8 — “Rhetorical questions”** ranks 4th in Chinese, 9th in Japanese, and 12th in Ukrainian. A rhetorical question is a question asked deliberately even though the answer is known, expressing affirmative or negative meaning as a question. Speakers use rhetorical questions to strengthen the statement’s tone or force when conducting the refusal communicative act. In particular, in some language environments, rhetorical questions are equivalent to declarative sentences in terms of their expressive content.

In Chinese, rhetorical questions can be used to “express dissatisfaction” or “modestness and politeness.” (*Zhao Lei, 2000: 26*) and are usually used between people of equal status. Generally speaking, rhetorical questions can be divided into three categories due to their pragmatic functions: one category is mainly to make the amount of information equal and promote the dialogue, which is accompanied by a higher level of politeness. In addition, the speaker uses some rhetorical questions to

suggest that the other party's behaviour is unreasonable, representing accusation, sarcasm, or rebuttal. The last category is a rhetorical question about common sense, which obviously blames the other party for not knowing or not noticing this and is, therefore, the most impolite. Hence, rhetorical questions are frequently used when conducting the refusal communicative acts. In most cases, a refusal through a rhetorical question is intended to be a firm and non-negotiable refusal; this is also proportional to the high frequency of use of Strategy No. 1 — “words expressing the meaning of refusal”.

In Japanese, in addition to the pragmatic functions of the rhetorical question, it is also necessary to point out the influence of the characteristics of the Japanese language itself on its polite use. As mentioned in the previous section of “interrogative sentences”, Japanese has honorifics and humble words, honorific sentence patterns and humble sentence patterns. These undoubtedly enhance the politeness of rhetorical questions, even when they are used to express accusation, sarcasm, rebuttal, or even blame. Therefore, given that there is a certain degree of control over the level of politeness, rhetorical questions in Japanese are often used in the refusal communicative acts.

In Ukrainian, the rhetorical question also has its own characteristics. The inner emotions of rhetorical questions can be increased and interpreted through aspects such as syntax, wording, rhetorical tone, etc. For instance, in Ukrainian, rhetorical questions can be asked by changing sentence structure and word order or by using exaggeration or humor to create a dramatic effect and make the listener think more. “Ми справді маємо це зробити? (*my spravdi mayemo tse zrobyty?*)” (Do we really

have to do this?), “Ти це серйозно? Хіба ми на Марсі? (*ty tse seryozno? khiba my na Marsi?*)” (Are you serious? Are we on Mars?). In addition, tone is an important aspect of expressing emotion in Ukrainian rhetorical questions. “Хто не століття був знайомий з тугою, хто в житті гірких сліз не лив? (*khto ne stolittya buv znayomu z tuhoju, khto v zhytti hirkykh sliz ne luv?*)” (Who has ever known melancholy, who has never shed bitter tears in life?). In Ukrainian, rhetorical questions reflect the speaker’s emotions and attitude more. Their primary function is to question, refute, and deny rather than to obtain some new information.

**Strategy No. 9 — “Elliptical structures”** ranks 4th in Japanese, 14th in Chinese and Ukrainian. The languages in “high-context” cultures pay more attention to the internal matching of meanings rather than pursuing the neatness of sentence structure and the consistency of syntactic and semantic structures. Therefore, the phenomenon of elliptical structures is particularly prominent. As a representative of high-context culture, Japan uses a large number of elliptical sentences in its language. Due to Japan’s “Mono-ethnic cultural mentality” and its island geographical environment, people’s cognition is very similar, and they can understand each other well without too much effort. In addition, the unique “甘え (*amae*) Mentality” of the Japanese is also one of the reasons why elliptical sentences are used so frequently. This mentality manifests itself in communication as a strong dependence on the other party; that is, the other party is considered to be responsible for filling in all the omitted content. It is very common to use an elliptical sentence with only one adverb to express refusal, such as “ちよつと... (*chotto*)” (a little).

In Chinese, although it is also a “high-context” culture, using elliptical sentences

is not highly recommended to avoid the risk of omitting information and causing the communicative purpose of “refusal” not to be achieved. Moreover, omitting too much information in a sentence will give people the impression that the speaker is perfunctory and insincere, which is inconsistent with the 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) of Chinese culture and will cause dissatisfaction on the other side and damage the relationship between each other. Therefore, overall, this strategy is less frequently used in refusal communicative acts.

Based on Ukraine’s cultural background — the unremitting pursuit of “free will”, it can be known that Ukrainian people tend to express clear intentions with a matter-of-fact attitude, which manifests sincerity, respect, and politeness. Therefore, it also forms the characteristics of Ukrainians as “concise and purposeful.” Compared with the form, Ukrainian pays more attention to the content of communication (the purpose of communication). Ukrainian conversations are very brief, and the messages are clear so that both parties can understand each other’s communication purpose through their speech act without much guesswork. Therefore, using elliptical structures is likely to cause the other party to have an inaccurate understanding or misunderstanding and fail to achieve the purpose of communication. This strategy is less frequently used in refusal communicative behaviours.

**Strategy No. 10** — “**Repetitive structures**” ranks 8th in Ukrainian, 9th in Chinese, 11th in Japanese. Repetitive structure includes the speaker repeating part or all of the other person’s words, as well as the speaker’s own words. When performing a refusal communicative act, by using repetitive structures, speakers can buy time to think about how to respond better and prepare for subsequent words or expressing a

sense of hesitation, which is seen as a prelude to refusal. In addition, the speaker can emphasize and convey the attitude by this structure.

In Ukrainian, It is worth noting that when performing a refusal communicative act, it is common to see the repetitive structure of “Hi, Hi (*ni ni*)”. For instance, “Hi, ni! Дорогий Іване Дмитровичу, Бог мені свідок, досі я ніколи від вас нічого не просив. Однак сьогодні попрошу, і то дуже: крутніть для мене ваше колесо долі! (*ni, ni! Dorohyy Ivane Dmytrovychu, Boh meni svidok, dosi ya nikoly vid vas nichoho ne prosyv. Odnak s'ohodni poproshu, i to duzhe: krutnit' dlya mene vashe koleso doli*)” (No, no! Dear Ivan Dmytrovych, God is my witness, until now I have never asked you for anything. However, today I will ask, and very much: spin your wheel of fate for me!) (*Emma Andijewska, “A novel about human destiny”*). This repetitive use does not always express a strong and direct refusal. Still, sometimes, it is more like a friendly and colloquial usage rather than a severe, cold, and very formal refusal. It can be seen as a way to express a friendly attitude to the other party.

In Chinese, repetitive structures are also often used to implement refusal communicative acts. The frequent use of repetitive sentences takes advantage of the high-context culture of Chinese because whether it is the repetition of the other party’s words or the repetition of one’s own words, it is just a repetition of known information without generating new information. This violates the Cooperative Principle (CP) of communication by not meeting the informativity and clarity for the sake of politeness. By interpreting this kind of repeated stagnation context, the other party will receive a negative signal and be mentally prepared for “being refused” in advance.

In Japanese, the frequency of adopting repetitive structures in refusal communicative acts is lower than in Chinese. Although context plays a significant role in the two cultures, Japanese people's unique “甘え (amae) Mentality” makes them more inclined to adopt Strategy No. 9 — “elliptical structures”. This is consistent with the research findings that the strategy of “elliptical structures” is highly ranked in the implementation of refusal communicative acts.

**Strategy No. 11 — “Subjunctive hypothetical sentences”** ranks high in all three languages, ranking 5th in Chinese, 6th in Japanese, and 7th in Ukrainian. In terms of the word *hypothesis* in Chinese, it can be true or false. According to the “*Modern Chinese Dictionary (7th)*”, it has three meanings: 1. To tentatively assume; 2. To make a fiction; 3. To make up an assumption about objective things in scientific research. The hypothesis must be based on facts and become a theory once it is proven to be correct through practice (*Dictionary Editorial Office of Language Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016: 599*). “Virtual” has two meanings in “*Modern Chinese (6th)*”: 1. Not in accordance with, or not sure to be in accordance with, the facts; hypothetical: subjunctive mood; 2. Fictitious. (*Huang Borong et al., 2017: 355*) The “subjunctive hypothetical sentence” is a euphemism that contains cultural implications. The subjunctive hypothetical sentences are used to express an assumption or speculation that exists only in the speaker's imagination rather than an event that actually occurred in objective reality. It expresses doubt, worry, speculation, imagination or wish, etc.

Overall, this is an evasive attitude towards the situation at that time. The use of “subjunctive hypothetical sentences” can add substantial subjective and emotional

factors to the original objective expression of the situation, which is obviously different from the objective expression of declarative or imperative sentences. In addition, some clear demonstratives can help subjunctive sentences produce pragmatic effects outside of context, such as: “如果... (*rúguǒ*)” (if), “要不是... (*yào bùshì*)” (if not) “若非... (*ruòfēi*)” (if not) etc. in Chinese; “もし... (*moshi*)” (if), “...たら (*tara*)” (if), “...なら (*nara*)” (if), etc. in Japanese; “якщо (*yakshcho*)”, “якби (*yakby*)”, etc. in Ukrainian. Therefore, since “subjunctive hypothetical sentences” can make verbal expressions euphemistic and implicit and are easier for the other party to accept and obtain emotional compensation, they are often adopted when implementing refusal communicative acts in their languages.

**Strategy No. 12 — “Reason sub-strategy”** ranks 1st in Chinese, 1st in Japanese, and 1st in Ukrainian. It can be found that the “reason sub-strategy” is the most commonly used one in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian. That is to say, regardless of the language and culture, it can be seen that the “reason sub-strategy” is consistently regarded as politeness. If the speaker does not give a reason when refusing someone, it will appear insincere and unconvincing. Therefore, in order to achieve the communication purpose of “refusal” and reduce the threat to the other party's face, people usually give explanations and reasons for their rejection, making it easier for the other party to understand and accept.

However, the reasons for refusal can be either true or false. The former may be due to subjective reasons or some uncontrollable objective factors that force the speaker to refuse; the latter may be an excuse for the speaker's subjective unwillingness to meet a certain request, making the refusal seem reasonable and

well-founded in order to gain the other party's understanding. Generally speaking, there is a "reason" and an effort to save face by "giving the other party a way out". Therefore, when people say "no" to someone, they usually give a reason for their refusal.

**Strategy No. 13** — **"Thanks sub-strategy"** ranks low in all three languages, ranking 16th in Chinese, 17th in Japanese, 19th in Ukrainian. "Thankfulness" is universally regarded as one of the most frequently used polite communicative acts. People will be thankful when they get help or benefit from others. The refusal communicative act is often used to refuse an invitation, offer, or suggestion. It is essentially an act against the other's will or goodness. Generally, after a speaker refuses the other party, in order to reduce the damage to the other party's face, the speaker will often take the form of gratitude to make up for the discomfort caused by the refusal.

However, the "thanks sub-strategy" is one of the most commonly used polite speech acts, but in the statistics of the refusal communicative act corpus in this study, it was found that its frequency of use ranked low in the three languages. In China, influenced by Western ideas of democracy and freedom, and breaking free from the oppression of feudal hierarchical society, people entered a new chapter in history. People began to indeed be the masters of their own lives and, therefore, strongly advocated the control of their own lives and destiny, without the need for others to dictate and manipulate their lives. Even if the other party's invitation, proposal, or suggestion is well-intentioned, it is still an imposition on the speaker himself, especially some proposals that will cause trouble to the speaker himself. Therefore,

compared with the “thanks sub-strategy”, speakers are more likely to choose other refusal strategies to show politeness and maintain the relationship between the two parties.

In Japanese, more emphasis is placed on hierarchical relationships, such as the relationship between the old and the young in the family, seniors and juniors in school or in the company, etc. Generally speaking, the scope of application of the “thanks sub-strategy” will be limited according to the hierarchical relationship between the two parties, etc. For example, the “thanks sub-strategy” is often used in “lower-to-upper” relationships but not in “superior-to-lower” relationships. Therefore, as mentioned in the example, due to some implicit but important pragmatic rules in the Japanese cultural context, the frequency of using the “thanks sub-strategy” in the refusal communicative acts is significantly reduced.

In Ukrainian, the reasons are just like those analyzed in Chinese. Ukraine is a part of Europe, and advanced Western ideas have profoundly influenced Ukraine since ancient times. Ideas such as “independence, democracy, and equality,” as well as the “free will” passed down from generation to generation by the Ukrainian nation, have made Ukrainians pay attention to equality between people in life and respect each other’s privacy and rights. In addition, according to religious teachings, “everyone is a brother or sister”, the relationship between people is more straightforward, and more equal. When they cannot meet the expectations of others, they will speak frankly and sincerely without too much strategic decoration. This habit of not having to use too many programmed “thanks sub-strategies” when implementing a refusal communicative act can not only ensure that one’s “free will”

is not violated but is also be a manifestation of sincere and elegant politeness.

**Strategy No. 14** — “**Apology sub-strategy**” ranks low in all three languages, ranking 16th in Japanese, 18th in Ukrainian, and 20th in Chinese. “Apology” also can be universally regarded as one of the most frequently used polite communicative acts. Usually, people will apologize when they do something impolite or make a mistake. They aim to eliminate conflicts and maintain good interpersonal relationships between the two parties. The refusal communicative act is against the other’s will or goodness, threatening the other’s face. Therefore, when people have to conduct the refusal communicative act, an “apology” is usually taken.

Because of the emphasis on hierarchy in Japanese society, language use will be more cautious, and the rules will be abided by to pursue the ultimate politeness in its cultural background. The use of apology is more common. In addition, in Japanese, there is a unique language phenomenon that often uses an apology in places where gratitude is expressed. For instance, when someone gives up his seat to a Japanese person on the bus, the response will be “すみません(*sumimasen*)” (Sorry). Because “すみません(*sumimasen*)” (Sorry) is more, strictly speaking, an expression of gratitude with an apology. Japanese people are reluctant to cause trouble to others, so sometimes when someone does something for them, they use “すみません(*sumimasen*)” (Sorry) to express gratitude, implying an apology for causing trouble to the other person by doing something for them. It can be said that Japanese people are used to apologizing and are more concerned about negative face.

In Ukraine, since “independence” and “freedom” have always occupied an important position in Ukraine’s history and culture, the Ukrainian people’s spirit of

“free will” has been passed down from generation to generation. They are unwilling to do things that go against their will and tend to express their ideas bravely. At the same time, due to the influence of their religious culture, people pursue equality, harmony, and freedom. Therefore, in the implementation of a refusal communicative act, there will be a situation where the strategy of “apology” is used in combination. However, as mentioned above, apologies occur when people do something impolite or make mistakes. However, when the speaker cannot meet the other party’s request or expectation, from another perspective, it is also a normal defense of the speaker’s own “free will”. Therefore, this does not require an apology to others.

Regardless of the intimacy between the two parties, Chinese people are not inclined to “apologize”, which is consistent with the research results of Zhang Xiaoyin and his co-researcher Xiong Hongzhi (*Zhang Xiaoyin et al., 2017: 63*). Especially for refusing family members, close friends, and colleagues, using “apologies” will make the other party feel alienated and is a sign of a lack of intimacy with the other party. It may even undermine the sound development of the relationship between the two parties. This is in line with the psychological habits of the Chinese people and is also a manifestation of paying attention to a positive face.

**Strategy No. 15 — “Praise sub-strategy”** ranks very low in all three languages, ranking 19th in Chinese and Japanese, and 20th in Ukrainian (which is the last in the strategy ranking). In the three cultures, “praises/compliments” are generally divided into real ones and formal ones. In relation to indirect speech acts, formal compliments are used very widely. However, compliments are sometimes used to express sarcasm and irony, and this is the same in any country (*Otaki Toshio,*

1996: 47). Therefore, especially when implementing a refusal communicative act, to avoid the other party's misunderstanding of the "compliment", intensifying the conflict and making the situation worse, this strategy is rarely used.

In addition, as for the use of "praise", there are some pragmatic requirements for the object of it, especially in Eastern culture. It is usually more widely used when praise is given to objective things rather than people. Praise for people often appears in situations where elders praise younger people, superiors praise subordinates, etc. otherwise it would be inappropriate in pragmatics. Therefore, the scope of use of "praise" is relatively limited.

**Strategy No. 16 — "Empathy sub-strategy"** ranks 12th in Chinese, 16th in Ukrainian, 18th in Japanese. It is manifested by "putting oneself in other people's shoes", which is seen as the ability to interweave rationality and sensibility. It is a way to actively understand the other person's situation and then feel it by perceiving the other person's true emotions and situation.

"Empathy" means that both parties have an emotional connection and can imagine and understand each other's intentions.

Therefore, when implementing the refusal communicative act, the "empathy sub-strategy" is used to build an emotional connection by expressing sympathy, understanding, and care for the other party. In this way, to give the listener a kind of emotional compensation and narrow the distance between the two parties. Through emotional connection, it is more conducive to the other party's acceptance of the part of "being refused" without generating dissatisfaction or even anger, which helps to maintain a good relationship between the two parties.

From the perspective of the culture, it is reported that collectivism emphasizes the relationship between individuals and others and the interdependent self-construction (*H. R. Markus et al., 1991: 22*). Collectivist culture is conducive to the cultivation of personality traits related to collectivism, such as modesty, empathy, obedience, etc. (*Huang Zihang et al., 2018: 2068*). Therefore, in Eastern cultures, such as China and Japan, empathy is very common in interpersonal communication.

In Western culture, first of all, the Christian creed of benevolence played a role in people's lives. Later, Enlightenment thinkers such as F. Hutcheson and H. Hume appealed to the natural human nature and attached great importance to the concept of "empathy" (*Li Wei, 2023: 32*). With the help of Enlightenment thought, "empathy" found a space to express itself. Therefore, in Ukrainian culture, which belongs to the European cultural circle, it is also deeply influenced by these. Therefore, "empathy" is often used as a strategy in the refusal communicative act.

**Strategy No. 17 — "Suggestion sub-strategy"** as the 3rd most commonly used pragmatic strategy in both Chinese and Ukrainian, and the 4th most commonly used in Japanese. When people cannot meet the other party's expectations, in order not to damage the interpersonal relationship, they will actively give other suggestions or alternative plans to show their consideration for the other party's interests. Although they cannot "accept" it, they can ease the relationship between the two parties and avoid embarrassment by showing an attitude of caring for the other party. This strategy reflects that the speaker considers the problem from the perspective of the person being addressed and shows concern for the person being rejected, thus can win good "consequences" for the refusal communicative acts in three languages.

**Strategy No. 18** — “**Avoidance sub-strategy**” ranks 10th in Chinese and Ukrainian, and 12th in Japanese. In communication, avoidance and ineffective responses can be adopted for something the speaker cannot or is unwilling to answer clearly. The answers may seem irrelevant to the topic, but they can subtly convey a message of rejection to the other party. Therefore, from the speaker’s perspective, when faced with an unacceptable proposal or invitation etc., the speaker can refuse by not responding directly to a specific topic raised by the listener and choosing to adopt an evasive attitude. Specifically, the speaker often changes the subject, or deliberately “talks about something else”, to lead the listener to another topic and divert his or her attention, thus achieving the purpose of refusal.

In addition, from the listener’s perspective, most people can understand this case and will not continue to dwell on the original topic to avoid causing an awkward situation for both parties. However, although this strategy can be used as an indirect way of refusal, it is necessary to pay attention to the relationship between the two parties when using it. For example, in a conversation between the younger and the elder, or between a student and a teacher, it is very impolite to interrupt the older’s / teacher’s topic and forcefully insert a new one, especially in a social culture like Japan that emphasizes hierarchy. Therefore, in Japanese, the frequency of use of this strategy ranks lower than in Chinese and Ukrainian.

**Strategy No. 19** — “**False consent sub-strategy**” ranks 15th in Japanese, and Ukrainian and 18th in Chinese. The “false consent sub-strategy” is a kind of acceptance in the literal sense, but in the context of the time, it was a kind of refusal. People first accept it with an affirmative answer and then further restrict it with

limiting words from which the other party can understand the meaning of “refusal”. “False consent” is used to save the other party’s face on the surface of the discourse by hiding the true meaning of “refusal” in the limiting words. As for whether to accept or not, the listener may not know clearly until the last moment. In most cases, the listener can tell that this is not a real consent and understands the meaning of “no”.

However, honesty is a virtue pursued by all humanity. In any culture, honesty and trustworthiness are the basic principles of being a human being. In China, there is a saying of “与朋友交，言而有信 (*yǔ péngyǒu jiāo, yán ér yǒu xìn*)” (When making friends, keep your word) comes from “*The Analects of Confucius*”, which means that when making friends, you must keep your word, be honest and honor your promises. In Japan, there is an expression of “*武士に二言なし (Bushininigon'nash)*” (A warrior never takes back what he has said.) shows the meaning of valuing good faith and keeping promises. In Ukraine, there is a proverb of “*Хто не додержує свого слова, той сам себе зневажає (Khto ne doderzhuye svoho slova, toy sam sebe znevazhaye)*” means that the person who does not keep his word despises himself).

It can be seen that honesty is highly advocated in the cultures of China, Japan, and Ukraine, so the “false consent” is less frequently used in people’s daily lives. Although this strategy can be used to avoid threatening the other party’s face directly, excessive use of words that go against the speaker’s inner thoughts will give the other party a sense of unreliability and dishonesty, which is not conducive to people maintaining a good social image.

**Strategy No. 20 — “Vague expression sub-strategy”** ranks 8th in Japanese,

13th in Ukrainian, and 15th in Chinese. G. Leech believes that in most cases, people do not use such discourse that expresses concepts without precise boundaries unintentionally but rather do so out of some motivation to achieve a “win-win” situation for both parties in the conversation (*Gao Bo, 2015: 47*). As mentioned in the section discussing “words expressing the meaning of refusal” that in Japanese culture, people tend to avoid expressing their opinions directly. Therefore, a notable feature of Japanese is that it does not focus on expressing things strictly and accurately but tends to use vague expressions. As Japanese scholar Toyama Shigehiko pointed out that “Japanese people don’t like to use language explicitly. They keep the veil on it” (*Toyama Shigehiko, 1993: 178*).

The Japanese prefer to use euphemistic and vague utterances to express their refusal intentions. Such as “*そうかもしれませんね。(so kamo shiremasen ne)*” (That may be true.) “*まあ、それはちよっと… (ma, sore wa chotto)*” (Well, that’s a little…), etc. Just like American scholar W. B. Gudykunst stated that all subtle “messages” in “high-context” cultures are “communicated in indirect and implicit ways” (*W. B. Gudykunst, 2003: 2*). This suggests that the Japanese are trying their best to repair the damage to interpersonal relationships that may have been caused by rejection because “the Japanese overemphasize overall harmony” (*Li Zhaohui, 2005: 77*).

Although Chinese and Japanese cultures belong to the same “high-context” culture, in which most information needs to be transmitted through context rather than utterance itself, the listener must infer the speaker’s true intention based on the contextual information. However, Chinese emphasizes the implicitness of language and does not emphasize the use of ambiguity in language as much as Japanese does.

This strategy is less adopted to reduce the risk of communication failure due to the speaker's intention not being correctly understood by the other party due to the overly vague language.

On the other hand, Ukrainian culture belongs to a “low-context” culture, in which the utterance contains most of the information to be conveyed, and the context and the conversation participants do not imply much information. People's real meaning of the conversation is contained in the words without concealment. Thus, from a pragmatic point of view, the Ukrainian language is concise, clear, and purposeful. In contrast to people in “high-context” cultures who believe that conflict in communication is essentially harmful, has no benefit, and should be “handled with caution and tactics” (*S. T. Toomey, 1997: 253*), this is not the case with people in low-context cultures.

### **Strategy No. 21 — “ORCA (sub-strategy)”**

ORCA usually refers to the speaker expressing refusal on the surface, but the speaker does not really mean to refuse it in his/ her heart. ORCA, as a unique linguistic phenomenon, is widespread in Chinese culture. Being a speech act of refusal and also serves as a politeness strategy. Under the cultural concepts of 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette), 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness) and 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness) advocated by Confucianism in China, it is uncultured and rude for a person to immediately accept the “good for oneself” proposal made by the other party, such as making an invitation or offering help, etc. In other words, the ORCA in Chinese culture, which pretends to refuse the other party's help or request, is to meet the needs of social etiquette. Therefore, it should be noted that although ORCA is a kind of

refusal communicative act, it does not damage the other party's face. On the contrary, it is a kind of politeness in Chinese culture.

In addition, the statistics of the use of refusal strategies in refusal communicative acts collected based on the questionnaire results are presented in Table 3 below. Combining the questionnaire results is necessary to fully support the analysis of the previous content. After the study, in combination with the statistical results of the questionnaire (in Table 3), it can be found that most of the strategy usage tendencies in the statistical results of the questionnaire in three languages are consistent with those in the literary works corpus. However, certain differences are briefly discussed here due to the relatively simple scenario design of the questionnaire and the simple group that filled out the questionnaire (college students).

		<b>Chinese</b>		<b>Japanese</b>		<b>Ukrainian</b>		
		Serial number	Statistics (1463)	Percentage	Statistics (1882)	Percentage	Statistics (1219)	Percentage
<b>Superficial Refusal Strategies</b>	<i>Lexical sub-strategy</i>	<b>1</b>	125	8.54%	79	4.20%	224	17.55%
		<b>2</b>	21	1.44%	33	1.75%	57	4.47%
		<b>3</b>	142	9.71%	132	7.01%	6	0.47%
		<b>4</b>	31	2.12%	111	5.90%	37	2.90%
		<b>5</b>	132	9.02%	175	9.30%	23	1.80%
		<b>6</b>	9	0.62%	6	0.32%	0	0.00%
	<i>Syntactic sub-strategy</i>	<b>7</b>	36	2.46%	69	3.67%	22	1.72%
		<b>8</b>	12	0.82%	13	0.69%	0	0.00%
		<b>9</b>	5	0.34%	125	6.64%	1	0.08%
		<b>10</b>	14	0.96%	23	1.22%	8	0.63%
		<b>11</b>	45	3.08%	56	2.98%	37	2.90%
		<b>12</b>	477	32.60%	465	24.71%	360	28.21%

<b>13</b>	65	4.44%	49	2.60%	83	6.50%
<b>14</b>	138	9.43%	236	12.54%	151	11.83%
<b>15</b>	20	1.37%	14	0.74%	22	1.72%
<b>16</b>	16	1.09%	38	2.02%	63	4.94%
<b>17</b>	119	8.13%	149	7.92%	109	8.54%
<b>18</b>	11	0.75%	19	1.01%	0	0.00%
<b>19</b>	18	1.23%	31	1.65%	8	0.63%
<b>20</b>	27	1.85%	59	3.13%	8	0.63%
<b>21</b>	—	—	—	—	—	—

**Table 3. The statistics of refusal strategies in questionnaires of the three languages**

Take the comparison of the Two Corpus of Chinese, for example. In general, the tendency to use most of the refusal strategies is consistent. Such strategies No. 1, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 7, No. 8, No. 12, No. 17, and No. 11 are frequently used. Meanwhile, the low frequency of strategies No. 6, No. 16 is also very consistent. Other strategies that use slightly more significant ranking differences are mainly due to the limited number of scenario designs in the questionnaire and their simplicity. In addition, the group that filled out the questionnaire was comprised of extremely single college students. Although some roles and relationships between the two parties were set up, the college students who participated in filling out the questionnaire could only rely on their imagination and try their best to answer the questions by fitting certain set characters, which would result in some limitations.

There is no complex and rich context like in literary works, nor are there rich social roles, complex interpersonal relationships, hidden psychological activities, and other factors among characters. Therefore, relative differences in data statistics can be found. However, after a brief analysis, it can be found that when the above-mentioned

limiting factors are taken into account for analysis, it does not essentially contradict the analysis results of the first part of the corpus.

First, because the characters of the party being refused in the scene design, such as parents, teachers, and bosses, appear more often, it is better to express refusal indirectly to show respect, and it is necessary to use the appropriate title when responding to an elder for showing politeness. Therefore, strategy No.1 ranks slightly lower, and strategy No. 3 ranks somewhat higher. Also, to increase the politeness of language expression and soften the tone, the strategy No. 4, No. 5 rank slightly higher, and No. 13, No. 14 rank much higher.

The use of strategy No. 2 has been dramatically improved. It can be seen that although “ending the refusal situation as soon as possible” is generally suitable for both parties, in intimate relationships (such as conversations with parents and classmates in scene design), it usually does not cause extreme embarrassment to both parties, so there is no need to rush to end the conversation. Thus, the speaker is not very economical when using interjections.

The use of strategy No. 6 ranks a little lower because idioms require context to match their meaning; their scope of use is limited. However, the scenarios in the questionnaire are limited.

There is almost no change in the ranking using strategy No. 7, so its discussion is omitted here.

The use of strategy No. 2 has been significantly reduced. The main reason is that rhetorical questions are impolite when the other party is an elderly person. Therefore, considering the design of the questionnaire scenario (such as parents, teachers, bosses,

etc.), the use of rhetorical questions in the statistical results is significantly reduced.

Strategy No. 9 ranks lower, mainly because the scenario setting of the questionnaire is simple and direct, without much context to draw on. The communicator can only rely on the verbal information between both parties. Therefore, elliptical sentences are not suitable for use in this situation.

The use of strategies No. 10, No. 11, No. 16, and No. 18 rank lower, mainly because the scenario setting of the questionnaire is simple and direct. When faced with a “very easy to refuse” scenario, it does not require too complicated mental activities to think and conduct the refusals.

The use of strategy No. 13 ranks higher. From an emotional perspective, praising the other party’s suggestions, etc., will make the relationship between the two parties closer. which will be more conducive to subsequent rejection. Generally speaking, if the object of praise is a person, it is usually the elders to the younger ones, the superiors to the subordinates. If it is the other way around, it would seem a bit arrogant and inappropriate. Therefore, it is often used to praise objective things, reducing the restrictions of the hierarchical relationship between the two parties and making the expression more appropriate. Judging from the questionnaire results, the focus is mainly on praise for clothing and the excellence of the paper topic, which is in line with the pragmatic rules.

The use of strategy No. 19 has been greatly improved. The context of the questionnaire is elementary, and the communication between the two parties is unambiguous. Even if false consent is given, it is usually followed by other suggestions, so it is easy for the other party to know that this is a false consent

strategy and will not cause trouble.

The use of strategy No. 20 has been a little improved. In general, ambiguous expressions such as “*I’m afraid.../maybe...*” are always common in Chinese culture for not avoiding the indication of a strong refusal.

At last, the use of strategy No. 21 is not found in the questionnaire because ostensible refusal communicative acts essentially imply “acceptance”, therefore, it does not match the requirement of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire results in Japanese and Ukrainian are also consistent with the overall trend of the refusal strategy adopted in their literary works corpus. Just like the analysis of the two Chinese groups, even if some data appear to be different, it is found that they are not contradictory in essence after in-depth analysis. Therefore, no further analysis will be made here.

**In summary**, by specifically counting the number of RCA statistics in the literary works corpus of Chinese, Japanese and Ukrainian, as well as the corpus of questionnaire surveys, the study found that the strategies for tendency use in each language have their own characteristics. In addition, by analyzing the statistical results with the supercritical and the deep-seated factors behind them, it can be clearly found that as a super-complex communicative act, the implementation of refusal depends not only on the pragmatic level of the refuser but also on cultural background, social psychology, interpersonal roles, and other factors. However, culture is the unique customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social system and other daily practices that people are accustomed to but distinguish one group from another. Therefore, it is necessary to combine cultural peculiarities and

appropriate politeness norms with the analysis of RCA based on a holistic multicultural perspective.

## V. Conclusion

Based on J. L. Austin and J. R. Searle's Speech Act Theory (SAT), P. Brown and S. C. Levinson's Face-saving Theory, the Relevance Theory (RT), and related theories of pragmatics, this thesis summarizes the superficial strategies and deep strategies for implementing the refusal communicative act through the sorting and analysis of the communicative acts of refusal in Chinese, Japanese and Ukrainian. Further, it examines the influence of cultural factors on people's refusal communicative act in countries with "high-context culture," such as Japan and China, and "low-context culture," such as Ukraine, thus finding the deep cultural roots for the differences in refusal communicative act implementation among the three language cultures. A brief summary of this paper is made as follows:

(1) Based on the previous research results, this thesis defines a refusal communicative act (RCA): a communicative act of uncooperative response to a specific request (such as a request, suggestion, invitation, offer, etc.). The RCA is collected through the corpora of particular literary works and the corpus of a questionnaire survey in the paper research. Specifically, the large number of RCAs obtained in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian are analyzed and classified, and the refusal strategies adopted are divided and discussed from the superficial and deep levels.

(2) In this paper, quantitative and qualitative research was conducted on the corpus of literary works in three languages: Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian, as well as the corpus of questionnaire surveys. There are 1586 (in the corpus of literary works ) and 1463 (the corpus of questionnaire surveys) in Chinese, 1259 (in the

corpus of literary works ) and 1882 (the corpus of questionnaire surveys) in Japanese, and 1201 (in the corpus of literary works) and 1219 (the corpus of questionnaire surveys) in Ukrainian. There are 21 refusal strategies in total, of which 11 are superficial (lexical level (6), syntactic level (5)), and 10 are deep refusal strategies.

(3) As politeness is ubiquitous worldwide, and refusal is a potential face-threatening act that needs to be remedied with some politeness strategies, strategies may vary in different cultures. The direct refusal communicative act is seen as a very face-threatening speech act in Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian lingual cultures, and it is often accompanied by some refusal strategies to increase politeness. From data statistics, the deep refusal strategy of the “reason sub-strategy” is the most frequently used in all three language contexts. In addition, to achieve better results of politeness, different strategies are usually combined rather than just a single one.

(4) Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian languages tend to use indirect refusal communicative acts, especially in Japanese. Many strategies were found by combining the corpora in three languages. The thesis studies the corpus of literary works and questionnaires on refusal communicative acts in three languages and gives the frequency ranking of different refusal strategies based on statistics. It can be found that there are certain differences in the specific strategies used at the lexical and syntactic levels, etc.

(5) Since strategies are adopted to meet the requirements of politeness, the unique cultural characteristics closely related to the use of strategies need to be taken seriously. By studying a large number of literature and books on Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian cultures and sorting out some important cultural concepts in the

respective cultures, this thesis finds that there are deep cultural roots behind the differences in refusal communicative acts in the three languages, which are mainly reflected in historical background, religious beliefs, values, social structure and national psychology, etc.

(6) China is deeply influenced by Confucianism, and has inherited the Confucian traditional cultural concept of 礼 (*lǐ*) (etiquette) as the core, which is a system of constraints on ethics and personal behavior in daily life. This has led to the fact that Chinese society is essentially a hierarchical society, which emphasizes hierarchy and requires people to pay attention to the 得体 (*dé tǐ*) (appropriateness). When conducting the refusal communicative act, Chinese people usually take care of 面子 (*miàn zi*) (face) of the other party, and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships between both parties.

(7) There is a unique speech phenomenon in the Chinese cultural context – the Ostensible Refusal Communicative Act (ORCA). Although it is a kind of refusal communicative act, it does not threaten the other party's face. On the contrary, it is a manifestation of politeness. Therefore, ORCA in Chinese exists as a politeness strategy that can be found in the corpus of refusal communicative act, while it does not appear in the other two language contexts. A tug-of-war mode usually accompanies it. However, because it is highly context-dependent, the risk of communication failure is also high. Therefore, attention should be paid to it, which cause the frequency of use to be affected and reduced. Especially in cross-cultural communication, as a complex strategy with unique Chinese cultural characteristics, in order to avoid communication failure due to misunderstanding, communicators are

better off using it less.

(8) The Japanese are also deeply influenced by Chinese Confucianism. At the same time, combined with its own unique history and culture, the society has formed a rigorous hierarchy and differential treatment. An individual's social status, responsibilities, and obligations are apparent. According to the needs of the social hierarchy, every member of society must abide by the code of conduct that is consistent with his or her role status. In addition, due to its "Mono-ethnic Cultural Mentality", "甘え (*amae*) Mentality", Japanese refusal communicative act is known for its extreme ambiguity and euphemism. The extremely extensive use of "elliptical structures", a syntactic sub-strategy of refusal found in the study, is one of the most representative characteristics of the refusal communicative act in the Japanese context.

(9) Ukraine has an important historical and cultural background, including Slavic culture and Cossack culture. The Ukrainian people's pursuit of *ВОЛЯ* (*volya*) (free will) has been passed down from generation to generation. As a result, the Ukrainian people have formed the character traits of pursuing equality and freedom, and being straightforward and sincere. Ukrainian society is a parallel society that is rather insensitive to social status and hierarchy. Language focuses on purpose rather than form and is used very freely without too many restrictions and without being overly cautious. Correspondingly, the refusal speech is concise, direct, and sincere. Therefore, taking the "vague expression sub-strategy" as an example, its frequency of use in the Ukrainian context is significantly lower than in the other two language contexts. This finding is sufficient to prove the influence of cultural factors on the

characteristics of its speech acts.

In addition, China and Japan are collectivist countries that emphasize collective interests, but individual interests can be ignored in the face of collective interests. In a collective culture, people usually do not advocate expressing opinions that differ from the public to avoid causing destruction and practice 和 (*hé*) (harmony) in the overall situation. Therefore, the communicative act needs to obey the requirement of 含蓄 (*hán xù*) (implicitness). Further, the unique Japanese “Group Consciousness” makes its refusal communicative act even more distinctive and complex. Therefore, the overall usage of the refusal strategy in the corpora of the Chinese and Japanese contexts is relatively large.

(10) Ukraine, first of all, due to its geographical location in Europe, is deeply influenced by advanced Western thought and culture. Therefore, advocating individualism and pursuing freedom of thought have taken root in people’s minds, which has led to more straightforward interactions and contacts between people. At the same time, Ukraine is a religious country. Most Ukrainians are devout Orthodox Christians. The religious doctrines of “fraternity, equality, etc.” have long been permeated into people’s lives. This is also reflected in conducting the refusal communicative act; that is, while clarifying the purpose, they also attach some polite strategies. While ensuring that their “free will” is not violated, they also try their best to maintain a harmonious and friendly relationship. Thus, the overall number of uses of the refusal strategy in the corpus of Ukrainian contexts is relatively smaller than in the corpora of Chinese and Japanese contexts.

(11) The research results also support, to some extent, the view that a basic

trend of cultural change and public psychology change worldwide in the past few decades is the rise of individualism and the decline of collectivism. This coexistence of tradition and modernity, as well as the symbiosis of local culture and foreign culture, is in line with the current trend of multicultural coexistence that is prevalent worldwide. This might also explain why the frequency of lexical sub-strategy “words expressing the meaning of refusal” usage in the Chinese context is so high due to the corpus data statistics.

Overall, language is the carrier of culture, and people’s communicative acts are closely related to their cultural background and are affected by cultural differences. The main cultural factors mentioned above profoundly impact the implementation of the refusal communicative act and the adoption of refusal strategies by the Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian people. It is impossible to fully and correctly interpret the implementation of the refusal communicative act without considering its cultural background.

With the continuous development of international economic, political, and cultural exchanges in today’s world, the number of exchanges between people from different countries is also increasing. It is significant to deepen the cultural understanding and exchanges among China, Japan, and Ukraine, which can continuously consolidate and strengthen friendships. The study of refusal communicative acts among Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainians can help reduce the negative impact and pragmatic failure caused by lingual or cultural factors and ensure the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication among the peoples.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that, according to the literature search,

although there are some studies on the Japanese Refusal Communicative Act in China, there is no relevant research on the Ukrainian Refusal Communicative Act so far. Therefore, to open up a space and gain attention for the study of Ukrainian refusal communicative act and its cultural characteristics in Chinese academic research, the practical significance of this study can be considered highly significant. In conclusion, the refusal communicative act among Chinese, Japanese, and Ukrainian is very worthy of study.

This thesis has attempted to shed light on the refusal in communicative behavior and has achieved specific results. However, due to the limitation of the research material sample, the lack of richness of the questionnaire scenario setting, and the single group of questionnaire recipients, the research results cannot cover the overall characteristics of the RCA in the three lingual cultures. Furthermore, some points may not be discussed and analyzed sufficiently.

In future research, the deficiencies found in the thesis will be taken into consideration and made up. The relevant research will be continuously improved by collecting materials more widely, studying the literature more deeply, expanding the scope of the corpus, enriching the questionnaire design, and conducting more comprehensive discussions. It is hoped that further improving the relevant research on the refusal communicative act in China, Japan, and Ukraine, on the one hand, might enrich the research in related fields and, on the other hand, could further promote the mutual exchange and understanding among different cultures and deepen and enhance the friendship among the three peoples.

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## APPENDIX I. LIST OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS

### UKRAINIAN:

**Андієвська Емма (Andiyevs'ka Emma) ( Andievska Emma):**

«Роман про добру людину» (*Roman pro dobru lyudynu*) (*A novel about a good person*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Герострати» (*Herostraty*) (*Herostratus*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Казка про Бика та Метелика» (*Kazka pro Byka ta Metelyka*) (*The tale of the Bull and the Butterfly*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Казка про пихатість» (*Kazka pro pykhatist*) (*A tale of arrogance*),

«Казка про упиреня, що живилося людською волею» (*Kazka pro upyrenya, shcho zhyvylosya lyudskoyu voleyu*) (*A tale about a ghoul that fed on human will*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Говорюща риба» (*Hovoryushcha ryba*) (*Talking fish*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Казка про гадюку й орла, або невдячного приятеля» (*Kazka pro hadyuku y orla, abo nevdyachnoho pryvatelya*) (*A tale about a viper and an eagle, or an ungrateful friend*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Казка про Галайла» (*Kazka pro Halayla*) (*The tale of Galail*),

«Казка про блискавку» (*Kazka pro blyskavku*) (*A fairy tale about lightning*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Джалапіта» (*Dzhalapita*) (*Jalapita*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**Юрій Андрухович (Yuriy Andrukhovych) (Yuriy Andruhovych):**

«Рекреації» (*Rekreatsiyi*) (*Recreation*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Московіада» (*Moskoviada*) (*Moskoviad*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**Пилип Капельгородський (Pylyp Kapel'horods'kyu) (Philip Kapelhorodskyi):**

«Шурган» (*Shurgan*) (*Screw*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**Юрій Винничук (Yuriy Vynnychuk) (Yuriy Vinnychuk):**

«Танго смерті (уривок)» (*Tango smerti (uryvok)*) (*Tango of Death (excerpt)*),

<https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

«Місце для дракона» (*Mistse dlya drakona*) (*A place for a dragon*),

**Степан Васильченко (Stepan Vasyl'chenko) (Stepan Vasylchenko):**

«Приблуда» (*Pribluda*) (*Stray*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**Володимир Винниченко (Volodymyr Vynnychenko) (Volodymyr Vynnychenko):**

«Федько-халамидник» (*Fed'ko-khalamydnyk*) (*Fedko-halamidnyk*),

<https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**Володимир Винниченко (Volodymyr Vynnychenko):**

«Момент» (*Moment*) (*Moment*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**Валентина Вздутьська (Valentyna Vzduľ's'ka) (Valentina Vzdulska):**

«Потяги» (*Potyahy*) (*Trains*), <https://www.ukrlib.com.ua/books/>

**CHINESE:**

**巴金 (bājīn):**

《家·春·秋》 (jiā chūn qiū) (*Family Spring and Autumn*), Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2018.

《雾·雨·电》 (wù yǔ diàn) (*Fog, Rain and Lightning*), Chengdu: Sichuan Literature and Art Publishing House, 2016.

《第四病室》 (dì sì bìngshì) (*Ward No. 4*), Chengdu: Sichuan Literature and Art Publishing House, 2016.

**王朔 (wángshuò):**

《一半是火焰, 一半是海水》 (Yībàn shì huǒyàn, yībàn shì hǎishuǐ) (*Half Flame, Half Sea Water*), Beijing: Beijing October Literature and Art Publishing House, 2015.

《致女儿书》 (zhì nǚ'ér shū) (*Letter to My Daughter*), Beijing: Beijing October Literature and Art Publishing House, 2015.

《看上去很美》 (kàn shàngqù hěn měi) (*Looks Beautiful*), Beijing: Beijing October Literature and Art Publishing House, 2015.

《知道分子》 (zhīdào fēnzǐ) (*Knowledgeable Molecules*), Beijing: Beijing October Literature and Art Publishing House, 2015.

**钱钟书 (qián zhōng shū):**

《围城》 (wéichéng) (*Fortress Besieged*), Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2012.

**陈忠实 (chén zhōngshí):**

《白鹿原》 (báilùyuán) (*White Deer Plain*), Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 2018.

**陈彦 (chén yàn):**

《西京故事》 (*xījīng gùshì*) (*Stories of Xijing*), Beijing: Writers Publishing House. 2020. etc.

## JAPANESE:

### 東野圭吾 (Keigo Higashino):

「悪意」(*akui*) (*Malice*), Tokyo: Kodansha, 2022.

「クスノキの番人」 (*kusunoki no bannin*) (*Guardian of the Camphor Tree*), Tokyo: Jitsugyo no Nihon Sha, 2023.

「白鳥とコウモリ」 (*hakucho to komori*) (*Swans and Bats*), Tokyo: Gentosha Literary Publication, 2021.

「正月の決意」 (*shogatsu no ketsui*) (*New Year's Decision*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2011.

「十年目のバレンタインデー」 (*junenme no barentainde*) (*Tenth Valentine's Day*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2014.

「君の瞳に乾杯」 (*kimi no hitomi ni kanpai*) (*A toast to your eyes*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2014.

「今夜は一人で雛祭り」 (*konya wa hitori de hina matsuri*) (*Tonight I'll celebrate Hinamatsuri alone*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2013.

「レンタルベビー」 (*rentarubebi*) (*Rental Baby*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2013.

「壊れた時計」 (*kowaretatokei*) (*Broken Clock*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2016.

「サファイアの奇跡」(*safaia no kiseki*) (*The Sapphire Miracle*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2015.

「クリスマスミステリ」 (*kurisumasumisuteri*) (*Christmas Mystery*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2012.

「水晶の数珠」(*suisho no juzu*) (*crystal beads*), Tokyo: Kobunsha, 2015.

### 川端康成 (Yasunari Kawabata):

「雪国」 (yukiguni) (*Snow Country*), Tokyo: Kodansha, 1948.

*etc.*

## APPENDIX I. DCT QUESTIONNAIRE (IN CHINESE)

### 附录一 DCT 调查问卷

您好！本调查问卷用于研究日常生活中汉语的拒绝行为。请阅读以下场景的描述，并在空白处写出**拒绝回答**，同时请你考虑情境中说话人的地位，年龄，关系亲密程度等因素来做相应调整。回答请尽量接近日常生活中口语交谈的形式。对于问卷内容及结果我们将严格保密，感谢您的合作！

例：你朋友邀请你去她家吃饭，可是你不喜欢他的男/女朋友，不想去。

朋友：周日来我家吃饭吧。

你：不好意思，我周日和别人有约了，去不了。

1. 你是一家印刷品公司的老板，纸厂的销售员想请你吃饭。

销售员说：“我想请您去香格里拉大饭店吃顿饭，顺便确定一下我们的合作问题。”

你：“\_\_\_\_\_”

”

2. 你是一名老师，你的学生想晚一些交论文。

学生说：“老师，这次的论文我可不可以晚一些交啊？”

你：“\_\_\_\_\_”

”

3. 你正在买衣服，服务员向你推荐一款衣服，但是你并不喜欢衣服的颜色。

服务员说：“你可以试一下这件，这是我们当季最新款。”

你：“\_\_\_\_\_”

”

4. 有一名男/女生对你有好感，并表白于你。但是你想拒绝他/她。

他/她：“自从第一眼看见你，我就很喜欢你，我们能试着交往一下吗？”

你：“\_\_\_\_\_”

”

5. 你刚回到家，发现你的钟点工很沮丧。

清扫工说：“真是对不起。我扫地的时候撞到桌子上，把你的陶瓷花瓶打破了，但我一定会赔偿你的。”

你：“

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”

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6.你的父母帮你找到一份薪水很高的工作。但这份工作十分无聊。你不想去。

他们说：“帮你找到一份工作。薪水很高，而且甚至加薪都很快。”

你：“

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”

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7.老师让你放学后留下。可是你有太多事情要做不能留下。

老师说：“今天下午我们要准备迎接新生，你留下吧。”

你：“

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”

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8.你今年大三。你从不缺课，笔记也得很认真。而你同学却经常缺课，今天他向你借笔记。

你：“

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”

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9.你是一家公司的职员，由于月末的结算工作老板希望你周末加班。

老板说：“如果没什么事的话，周六来把剩下的结算都做完吧。”

你：“

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”

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10.你正在准备毕业论文，老师向你推荐一个题目，但是你有自己更感兴趣的课题。

导师：“这个题目值得研究，我认为可以作为你的毕业论文。”

你：“

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”

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## APPENDIX II. DCT QUESTIONNAIRE (IN JAPANESE)

### 付録 II DCT アンケート

こんにちは！ このアンケートは、日常生活における日本語での拒否発話行為を研究するために使用されます。次のシーンの説明を読んで、空白スペースに拒否回答を書き留めてください。同時に、話者のステータス、年齢、関係の親密さ、その他の状況の要因を考慮して、対応する調整を行ってください。日常生活での口頭での会話にできるだけ近い形でお答えください。アンケートの内容と結果は厳重に秘密として扱われます。ご協力ありがとうございます！

例: あなたの友人があなたを彼女/彼の家夕食に招待しますが、あなたは彼のボーイフレンド/ガールフレンドが好きではないので行きたくないです。

友人: 日曜日に夕食を食べに私の家に来てください。

**あなた: 「ごめんなさい、日曜日は他の人と約束があるので、夕食に行くことができません。」**

1. あなたは印刷会社の上司で、製紙工場の営業マンがあなたに夕食をご馳走したいと考えています。

製紙工場の営業マン: 「レストランにお食事にご招待したいのですが、ついでに協力の確認もさせていただきます。」

あなた:

「 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 」

2. あなたは教師で、生徒がレポートを遅れて提出したいと考えています。

学生: 「先生、今度は後で提出してもいいですか？」

あなた:

「 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 」

3. あなたは服を買っていて、店員があなたにドレスを勧めましたが、そのドレスの色が気に入りませんでした。

店員さん: 「これは最新のデザインです。ぜひお試しください。」

あなた:

「 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 」

4. 男の子/女の子があなたに恋をし、告白します。しかし、あなたは彼/彼女を拒否したいと思っています

す。

彼/彼女：「初めて会った時からあなたのことが好きだったんですが、付き合ってみてもいいですか？」

あなた：

「  
\_\_\_\_\_」

5. あなたが帰宅すると、時給労働者が落ち込んでいるのを見つけました。

時給労働者：「ごめんなさい。掃除中にテーブルにぶつかってしまい、あなたの大切な花瓶を割ってしまいましたが、必ずお金は返します。」

あなた：

「  
\_\_\_\_\_」

6. 両親はあなたが高収入の仕事を見つけるのを手伝ってくれます。でも仕事は退屈だ。あなたは行きたくないのです。

両親：「私たちはあなたに仕事を紹介しました。給料も良く、昇進も早いです。」

あなた：

「  
\_\_\_\_\_」

7. 先生はあなたに放課後残るように言いました。でも、やるべきことが多すぎて、そこにいるわけにはいきません。

先生：「今日の午後から新入生歓迎活動の準備をするので、残って手伝ってください。」

あなた：

「  
\_\_\_\_\_」

8. あなたは今年大学3年生です。授業を欠かさず、真剣にノートを取ります。でも、あなたのクラスメイトはよく授業を休むので、今日はあなたからノートを借りました。

あなた：「ああ！明日試験なんです。申し訳ありませんが、ノートを貸してもらえませんか？」

あなた：

「  
\_\_\_\_\_」

9. あなたは会社員で、上司から月末の精算業務のため、週末に残業をしてほしいとされています。

上司：「他に何もなければ土曜日に来て、残りの和解を終わらせてください。」

あなた:

「 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 」

10. あなたは卒業論文を準備していて、先生からテーマを勧められましたが、あなたにはもっと興味のあるテーマがあります。

先生:「このテーマは研究する価値があるので、卒業論文として使えると思います。」

あなた:

「 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 」

## APPENDIX III. DCT QUESTIONNAIRE (IN UKRAINIAN)

### Додаток III. Анкета DCT

Привіт! Ця анкета буде використана для вивчення комунікативних актів відмови українською мовою, як це відбувається у повсякденному житті. Будь ласка, прочитайте опис наступної сцени та запишіть **відмову: прохання РОЗЛОГО відповідати в порожньому полі**. При цьому, будь ласка, враховуйте статус співрозмовника, вік, інтимні відносини та інші фактори ситуації, щоб внести відповідні корективи. Будь ласка, відповідайте якомога ближче до форми усної розмови в повсякденному житті. Ми збережемо зміст та результати анкети строго конфіденційно, щиро дякуємо за співпрацю!

Приклад: Ваш друг/ Ваша подруга запрошує вас до себе додому на вечерю, але вам не подобається його дівчина/ хлопець, і ви не хочете йти.

Друг/подруга: Приходь до мене додому на вечерю в неділю.

**Ви: «Вибачте, у мене зустріч з кимось ще в неділю, тому я не можу піти на вечерю».**

1. Ви начальник друкарні, а продавець паперової фабрики хоче пригостити вас обідом.

Продавець каже: «Я хотів би запросити вас пообідати в ресторан і, до речі, підтвердити нашу співпрацю».

**Ви:«** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **».**

2. Ви вчитель, і ваші учні хочуть здати роботи із запізненням.

Учень каже: «Учителю, чи можу я здати роботу пізніше?»

**Ви:«** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **».**

3. Ви купуєте одяг, і продавець рекомендує Вам екземпляр одягу, але вам не подобається його колір.

Продавець каже: «Ви можете спробувати це. Це наша остання модель цього сезону».

**Ви:«** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **».**

4. Є хлопець/дівчина, які закохані у Вас і зізнаються Вам у цьому. Але ви хочете йому/їй

відмовити.

Він/вона: «Ти мені подобаєшся з того моменту, як я вперше тебе побачив/побачила, ми можемо спробувати зустрітися?»

**Ви:**« \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_».

5. Ви щойно прийшли додому, а Ваш погодинний працівник засмучений.

Погодинний працівник каже: «Мені дуже шкода. Коли я підмітав, я нашттовхнувся на стіл і розбив Вашу коштовну вазу, але я обов'язково поверну Вам гроші».

**Ви:**« \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_».

6. Батьки допомагають тобі знайти високо оплачувану роботу. Але робота нудна. Ти не хочеш йти.

Ваші батьки кажуть: «Влаштуйся на роботу. Оплата хороша, і є навіть можливість швидкого кар'єрного просування.».

**Ви:**« \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_».

7. Вчитель попросив Вас залишитися після уроків. Але Ви дуже зайняті, і Ви не можете залишитися.

Учитель каже: «Ми збираємося підготуватися до заходів, щоб зустріти нових учнів сьогодні вдень, будь ласка, залишіться та допоможіть».

**Ви:**« \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_».

8. Ви - школяр. Ви ніколи не пропускаєте заняття і дуже ретельно конспектуєте. Але Ваш однокласник часто пропускає заняття, і сьогодні він хоче позичити твої конспекти.

Ваш однокласник каже: «О! У нас завтра іспит, вибач, я можу позичити твої конспекти?»

**Ви:**« \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_».

9. Ви є співробітником компанії, і начальник хоче, щоб Ви працювали понаднормово у вихідні дні, тому що є нагальна необхідність.

Начальник каже: «У нас немає виходу. Приходьте в суботу і закінчіть роботу».

**Ви:**« \_\_\_\_\_

».

10. Ви маєте писати диплом, і викладач рекомендує Вам наукову тему, але Вас цікавить інша тема.

Викладач: «Ця тема варта того, щоб її вивчати, і я вважаю, що її можна взяти як тему дипломної роботи».

Ви:«

».

### Discourse Completion Task Design

<b>Stimulus type</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>DCT item</b>	<b>Refuser status (relative to interlocutor)</b>
1. Request	Handing in the paper later	2	Higher
2. Request	Class note borrowing	8	Equal
3. Request	Asking to work overtime	9	Lower
4. Request	Reception of new students	7	Lower
5. Invitation	Bribe	1	Lower
6. Invitation	Date	4	Equal
7. Offer	Pay for the broken vase	5	Higher
8. Offer	High salary job	6	Lower
9. Suggestion	Graduation thesis topic	10	Lower

10. Suggestion	Recommending clothes	3	Higher
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