*Full Length Research Paper*

# A cross-linguistic investigation of language apology speech act: A case of Persian and Kurdish Children

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This study aims at exploring the similarities and differences among strategies used in performing speech act of apologizing in Southern Kurdish (Kermanshahi Kurdish) and Persian children. The first goal is to find out whether Kurdish and Persian apologies are formulaic in pragmatic structure as in English apologies or not. The second goal of this study is to investigate the effect of the values assigned to the two context-external variables of social distance and social dominance on the frequency of the apology intensifiers. To this end, Kurdish and Persian apologetic utterances are collected via a DCT [Discourse Completion Test] and oral interviews. The research findings indicate that Kurdish and Persian children's apologies are formulaic in pragmatic structures and there are some significant differences between Kurdish and Persian. Furthermore, the values assigned to the two context-external variables are found to have a significant effect on the frequency of the intensifiers in different situations.

**Key words:** Apology speech act, socio-pragmatic, CCSARP, status, dominance, Kurdish/Persian.

## INTRODUCTION

Speech acts include real-life interactions and require not only the knowledge of language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture in order to minimize misunderstandings, especially, where the speakers' intent and sentence meaning may differ. In general, speech acts are acts of communication. To communicate is to express a certain attitude, and the type of speech act being performed corresponds to the type of attitude being expressed. For example, a statement expresses a belief, a request expresses a desire, and an apology expresses regret. As an act of communication, a speech act succeeds if the audience identifies, in accordance with the speaker's intention, the attitude being expressed (Austin, 1962).

In this cross-linguistic study, one type of speech acts

called apology speech act among children has been investigated. Sociological, sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies have greatly contributed to the study of strategies used in apologizing as well as the description of the linguistic means by which it is accomplished (Blum-Kulka, 1983). Much of the cross-cultural research into the speech act of apologizing has focused on the phenomenon of non-native communicative competence and less on cross-cultural data for their own sake (Blum-Kulka,1983). The present study is an attempt to analyze at a detailed analysis of a portion of data from both a corpus of Persian, and Southern Kurdish (Kermanshahi Kurdish) based on responses to a discourse completion test (DCT) and natural data. The main goal was to highlight possible differences in the realization of

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apologetic responses that would be found not only in the choice and in sequential arrangement of strategies but also in the content and in the choice of linguistic forms. In recent years, politeness has become central to the discussion of human interaction. The main tenets of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of avoidance-based negative politeness and solidarity-based positive politeness are well known and the importance of this framework to cross-cultural analysis cannot be neglected.

The significance of cultural values for pragmatic analysis of verbal behavior has been strongly advocated by many scholars (Wierzbicka, 1985) who argue that linguistic differences are due to "aspects of culture much deeper than mere norms of politeness" and are associated with cultural differences such as, spontaneity, intimacy, and affection vs. indirectness, distance and anti-dogmatism. From this perspective, politeness as a metapragmatic concept cannot be understood without defining its different folk notions, which can be as culture-specific as, for example, intimacy or tolerance. As such, it is hoped that a detailed analysis of the data will shed some light on what such culturally appropriate styles are in the examined language groups.

Regarding cross-cultural differences in English and Hebrew, Olshtain and Cohen (1983) pointed out that an apology in Hebrew is less likely to include the two strategies: *an offer of repair* and *a promise of forbearance* than in English. Clearly, substantive claims about the universality of pragmatic principles across cultures and languages should await further research applied in as many new contexts as possible. As Blum-Kulka and House (1989) point out, studies of speech acts need to move away from western languages and include as many non-western languages and cultures in their scope of study as possible.

The present study is a response to such a call. It intends to display whether the range of Persian and Kurdish children's strategies in the speech act of apologizing are as formulaic in pragmatic structures as English apologies have shown. According to CCSARP (Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project coding scheme), an apologizer may wish to intensify his/her apology by using a number of formulas. Therefore, this study intends to extract and categorize the range of strategies as well as the apology intensifiers.

## Research questions

The present study is an attempt to investigate following questions:

1. What are similarities and differences between native Persian and Kurdish children in terms of apologetic speech?
2. What is the effect of power/solidarity in the expression of apology in Persian and Kurdish children language?

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The participants of the study consist of 100 Persian and Kurdish children in Iran. That is, 50 Persian and 50 Kurdish children were selected, respectively. The age of the respondents ranged from five to nine years old.

### Data collection

Researchers used a "Discourse Completion Test" (hereafter DCT) to determine the differences and similarities between children's apology strategies in these two languages.

The DCT in this study is a modified version of "Discourse Completion Test" used in CCSARP project (Blum-Kulka, 1982) and include 10 daily discourses which might happen for a child. Each situation consists of a brief description of the addressee's characteristics important to this study, namely, social distance (degree of familiarity between the interlocutors), social dominance (the relative degree of the social power the interlocutors over each other), and finally the offence being committed.

It is worth noting that most parts of DCT were based on the previous research conducted in terms of apology speech act in different languages (Blum-Kulka, 1983) . The researchers chose the situations that are more common to a child in everyday communication. In addition, in order to achieve more authentic data, 15 Kurdish and 15 Persian-speaking participants were interviewed regarding their perception of apology speech act strategies in relation to contextual factors.

### Data analysis

Social distance and social dominance of the study were assigned two (binary) and three values, respectively. Binary values of social distance include either interlocutors' close relationship (-distance) or lack of inter-locutors' acquaintance (+ distance). Three values of social dominance are: status equal, speaker dominance and hearer dominance.

For the combination of social distance and social dominance two situations were set up. Table 1 shows the distribution of item characteristics.

The collected data in this study were coded based on the coding scheme developed by CCSARP with some modification (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989).The utterance or sequences produced by the participants to complete the questionnaire items in DCT were the unit of analysis. Each utterance was then studied and analyzed in segments as follows:

1. Address term or alerter
2. Head act
3. Adjunct(s) to head act

This segmentation has been actually done to delimit the utterance(s) to that part of the sequence that might serve to realize the act under study independently of other elements. The following example illustrates the segments:

*John, I'm sorry, I had to go to the hospital.*

1. John (address term),

**Table 1.** The distribution of item characteristics.

| Setting | Dominance | Distance | Gender | Frequency |
|---------|-----------|----------|--------|-----------|
| street | +H.Dom | +Dis | S/D | 2 |
| street | +H.Dom | -Dis | S/D | 2 |
| street | +S.Dom | -Dis | S | 2 |
| school | +S. Dom | +Dis | S/D | 2 |
| Home | Dom.S+ | -Dis | S/D | 2 |

+H.Dom=Hearer Dominance; +S.Dom= Speaker Dominance; +Dis= Distance; -Dis= No Distance; S/D= Same and Different.

2. I'm sorry I'm late (head act),
3. I had to go to the hospital (Adjunct to head act).

According to CCSARP coding scheme, the linguistic realization of the act of apologizing can take the form of any of the five possible strategies available to the apologizer as follows (The Persian and Kurdish transliterations of the words and sentences are also provided, respectively):

i)  The way linguistic examples are presented is not quite clear to a reader, example,

(17) "Xeyli  motæsefæm" (P)
     "Xeyli mæzeræt xazem" (K)
      I am very sorry.

For this example, the following is suggested:

(17)    a. [*xeyli  motæsefæm*] (P)
b. [*xeyli mæzeræt xazem*] (K)
'I am very sorry'

It is common to transliterate from Farsi in italics, but we are not sure if the quotations marks are justified in any case and it might be worthwhile to mention which convention the transliteration is in. Whatever the option adopted by the author(s) with the Farsi or Kurdish sounds, they cannot go in both italics and quotations marks and the English glosses for expressions should be given in single quotation marks and this should be kept consistent within the text. For instance, in the *Results* section the gloss is in quotations marks and the original sounds in italics without quotation marks. Here are some examples of different annotations taken from the ms:

Mæzeræt  xazem, Mæzeræt mixam- "I apologize".

A couple of lines later we find still another notational strategy:

Mæzeræt, bebæxʃid (literally translated as *excuse me*).

And a third one: The IFID formula ʃærmændæm (I'm embarrassed).

This notational variegation should be eliminated.
ii) For the results section the author concentrates on particular words. It would be better to highlight this word for the reader somehow. There is a convention to translate, apart from the meaning of the sentence, word-for word. Here is an example of presenting linguistic data from other linguistic papers:

(8) Examples of left-headed compounds with lenition in conditions (i) and (ii)

1. Condition (i) bliainfem bhisigh 'leap year'
                    year of-increase
2. Condition (ii) e´isc mhara 'sea-fish (plural)'
                    fish ( pl.) of-sea

As can be seen, the authors provide literal translation of the grammatical forms in their examples below the original and on the right they give English glosses. Another example is where authors use phonemic transliteration in square brackets:

(17) a. Kikongo b. Ndonga
m-[bud-idi] 'I hit' [pep-el-a] 'blow towards'
tu-[kun-ini] 'we planted' [kun-in-a] 'sow for'
tu-[nik-ini] 'we ground' [nik-il-a] 'season for'

An expression of an apology with the use of IFDI (head act=apology expression):

  (1) "*Mæzeræt mixam*". (P)
     "*Mæzeræt xwazem*". (K)
      I apologize.
 2. An acknowledgement of responsibility (RESP)
    (expression of fault)
  (2) "*Tæqsire mæn bud*". (P)
     "*Moqæserem*". (K)
      It was my fault.
 3. An explanation or account of the situation (EXPL)
    (adjunct to head act= explanation of situation)
  (3) "Motæsefæm, otobus dir kard". (P)
     "Mæzeræt, otobus dir hat". (K)
      I'm sorry, the bus was late.
 4. An offer of repair (REPR)
    (expression of compensation)
  (4) "Pule CD-e ʃekasteh ro midam."(P)
     "*Pile CD ya demæt*".(K)
      I'll pay for the broken CD.
 5. A promise of forbearance (FORB)
    (expression of refraining)
  (5) "*Dige tekrar nemiʃe*". (P)
     "*Qol dem axer bar bi*". (K)
      This won't happen again.

The first formula in the list of apology strategies is an "*expression of apology*" which happens via an explicit Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) (Searle, 1969).
    An acknowledgment of responsibility (RESP) is the second formula which is offered as an apology when the speaker recognizes his/her responsibility for the offence. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) claim the universality of this formula too. According to CCSARP coding scheme, this formula is further categorized into sub-formulas from strong self-humbling on speaker's part to a

**Table 2.** The sub-categorization of acknowledgement of responsibility formula.

| Acknowledgement of responsibility | |
|---|---|
| **Explicit** | **Implicit** |
| Self- blame | Lack of intent |
| | Justifying the hearer |
| | Statement of the offence |
| | Expressing self deficiency |
| | Concern for the hearer |

complete denial of responsibility. In fact, this categorization actually includes sub-formulas which do intend to set things right but are rather used to reject any kind of responsibility on the part of the speaker towards the offence that has taken place. Therefore, in the present study, it was decided to reduce the original formula to only include the sub-formulas through which the apologizer, whether explicitly or implicitly, acknowledges his own responsibility towards the offence being committed. Thus, the category of " an acknowledgement of responsibility" in the present study included six sub-formulas as follows:

Explicit self blame

6) "Tæqsire mæn bud". (P)
    "Moqæser menem". (K)
    I was guilty

b. Statement of the offence
(7) "Chai ro rixtæm!".(P)
    "Chaia reʃanem".(K)
    Oh, I split the tea.
c. Lack of intent
(8) "Mænzuri nædaʃtæm". (P)
    "Qæsdi naʃtem". (K)
    I did not do it on purpose.
d. Justifying the hearer
(9) "Hæq  ba ʃomast".(P)
    "Tu rast iʃi". (K)
    You are right.
e. Concern for the hearer
(10) "Omidvaræm beheton sædæmeh næzædeh baʃæm". (P)
    "Enʃala chizi nia". (K)
    I hope I did not hit you.
f. Expression of self deficiency
(11) "Gij budæm". (P)
    "Gij biim". (K)
    I was confused.

The first three sub-formulas are all shared in CCSARP (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) in their coding system of apologies and are entitled under slightly different headings. The fourth sub-formula, that is expressing self-deficiency was only shared by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Trosborg (1987), and Olshtain and Cohen (1983) coding system. The last two sub-formulas in the above list, that is, concern for the hearer and statement of the offence were hypothesized to fit the category of taking responsibility as well (Blum-Kulka, 1983). The sub-formula "concern for the hearer" has been repeatedly considered in the literature as an external intensifier (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) whereas the offender's concern for the offended party seems to be the natural consequences of one's sense of guilt or responsibility for

the damage caused. Therefore, this sub-formula may itself, if used alone, stand as an indirect apology rather than an external intensifier. Similarly, the offender's statement of the offence that seems to have been ignored in the literature, may equally act as an indirect apology. To elaborate, in the related literature, the following utterances: (*12) I'm sorry, (13) I'm sorry for knocking into you,* (Olshtain and Cohen*,* 1983) have been evaluated as equal direct statement of apology, whereas, stating of the offense by the apologizer seems to convey indirectly his/her sense of guilt for the damage caused. Table 2 illustrates the sub-categorization of the main formula of an acknowledgement of responsibility used in this study.

Definition of the other apology formulas, namely, "*an explanation or account of the situation* (EXPL)", "*an acknowledgement of responsibility* (RESP)" and "*a promise of forbearance* (FORB)" are similar to those presented in the CCSARP coding system. The CCSARP coding system also provides us with a categorization of apology intensifiers. However, the CCSARP's coding system of intensifiers seems not to be satisfactory and needs some modification.

According to Afghari (2007), the sub-formulas of the category "*an intensifier within an IFID*" may as well appear outside an IFID expression. Consider the following examples:

(14) Oh, God*,* I'll pay for the broken CD*.*
(15) The bus was *really* late*.*
(16) I *do* promise not to be late again.

Moreover, some new sub-formulas exist in Kurdish and Persian data. The external apology intensifier or concern for the hearer might be regarded as an indirect apology formula rather than an intensifier. Having the above-mentioned considerations in mind, a modified version of the CCSARP coding system of intensifiers was used in this study as follows:

1. Internal intensifiers (within direct or indirect apology formulas)
2. Supportive intensifiers (the use of multiple-strategies)

The following list is then a combination of CCSARP's internal intensifiers and the researchers' hypothesized new-formulas. In other words, the categories of internal intensifiers used in this study include:

1. Intensifying adverbials.
   (17) "Xeyli  motæsefæm". (P)
    "Xeyli mæzeræt xazem".(K)
    I am very sorry.
2. Emotional expressions
   (18) "*Vay   xoda*". (P)
    "*Ay    xoda*". (K)
    Oh, God.
3. Double intensifier
(19) "Xeyli, xeyli  motæsefæm". (P)
    "Xeyli,xeyli mæzeræt xazem".(K)
    I am very, very sorry.
4. The word "Please"
(20) "Xaheʃ mikonæm mæno bebæxʃid".(P)
    "Xaheʃ kæm bewæxʃ". (K)
    Please forgive me.
5. Hope for forgiveness
   (21) "Omidvaræm mæno bebæxʃid". (P)
    "Omidwarem bewæxʃitæm".  (K)
    I hope you would forgive me.
6. Oath-taking
(22) "Qæsæm  mixoræm yadæm  ræft". (P)
    "Qæsæm  xam yadem ney". (K)

**Table 3.** Frequency distribution of the five main apology head act formulas produced by Persian children in 10 situations.

| IFID | EXPL | RESP | REPR | FORB | Total |
|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1508 | 122 | 119 | 49 | 2 | 1800 |
| 83.8% | 6.8% | 6.6% | 2.7% | 0.1% | 100% |

**Table 4.** Frequency distribution of the five main apology head act formulas produced by Kurdish children in 10 situations.

| IFID | EXPL | RESP | REPR | FORB | Total |
|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1262 | 129 | 359 | 47 | 3 | 1800 |
| 70.15% | 8.2% | 17.87% | 3.48% | 0.3% | 100% |

I swear I forgot.

The first four formulas in the above list are the sub-formulas shared by CSARP coding scheme. The last two sub-formulas, namely, "*hope for forgiveness*" and "*oath-taking*" are, however, the new formulas held by the researchers to be intensifiers used in Persian apology expressions.

As mentioned before, the category of internal intensifiers in this study may also be broadened in scope, that is, the internal intensifiers might appear not only in direct and indirect head acts but also in direct and indirect adjunct acts. Consider the following example:

(23) *Please*, forgive me. I *really* did not see you.

In the example above, two internal intensifiers have been used. One is used within a direct apology formula offered as head act, that is, *Please* and the other one is used in an indirect apology formula offered as an adjunct act, *really*.

As for supportive acts, according to Olshtain and Cohen (1983), people often combine two or three apology strategies together to intensify their apology speech act. In other words, people may choose to apologize by the use of an IFID plus taking the responsibility and offering a repair for the damage they have caused. A typical example for the use of multiple-strategies would be:

(24) I'm sorry, it was my fault. I promise to buy you a new one.

In the example above, the most direct apology formula (IFID) is considered as the head act, and the other two indirect apology formulas offered, namely, an acknowledgment of responsibility and an offer of repair ( the adjunct acts to the head act), are considered as supportive intensifiers. However, there were no direct apology formulas in the apology utterance offered; the first indirect apology formula offered in the utterance would be considered as apology head act and the other indirect apology formulas in the utterance are categorized in the list under supportive intensifiers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, the present study strived to answer the following questions:

1. What are similarities and differences between native Persian, and Kurdish children in terms of apologetic speech?
2. What is the effect of power/solidarity in the expression of apology in Persian and Kurdish children languages?

Overall analysis of the data collected through the DCT questionnaire and the natural data (Participants' interviews) showed that Kurdish and Persian apologies were as formulaic in semantic structure as English apologies. In other words, in Kurdish and Persian like other languages studied in the CCSARP project, people apologize either directly or by using one of the performative verbs such as *Mæzeræt xazem*, *Mæzeræt mixam*, that is, "I apologize" or indirectly by accepting the responsibility for the offence or finally promising the forbearance of the offense to ever happen again.

The most frequent apology formula used in Kurdish and Persian, as in the other languages studied (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) was an IFID or the most direct apology formula. As shown in Tables 2 and 3, out of the total 1800 number of different apology formulas produced by Persian participants as head acts, 1508 or 83.8% included the use of a direct Persian apology offered via an apology reformative verb. In addition, an IFID expression=1262 or 70.15% included the use of a direct Kurdish apology offered via an apology verb or an IFID expression.

Of the different performative verbs or IFID expressions revealing the direct act of apology, the most frequent one used by both male and female participants was found to be the formulaic expression, for instance Mæzeræt, bebæxʃid (literally translated as *excuse me*).

The frequency of the expression ʃærmændæm (I'm embarrassed) offered as a head act suggests that in Kurdish and Persian this expression can function as a direct formulaic expression of apology rather than an indirect apology formula.

The low frequency of the last two IFID formulas, that is, "*puzeʃ mixam* and *æfv konid*", may be attributed to the fact that these two IFID formulas are highly formal and are usually used in formal conversations or in written materials. Thus, as illustrated in Table 3 and 4, in terms of the first apology formula (IFID) there was little difference between Kurdish and Persian responses (See Appendix A for an explanation of the abbreviations).

In case of the second apology strategy, that is, "*an acknowledgement of responsibility*" (RESP), there was a significant difference between Kurdish and Persian apology strategies: Persian participants rarely took responsibility for the offence being committed. As presented in Table 3, out of 1800 number of apology formulas offered as head acts only 119 or 6.6% included the formula taking responsibility, whereas Kurdish participants mainly took responsibility for the offence being committed. In other words, out of 1800 number of

**Table 5.** The mean frequency of intensifiers observed in groups of situations with shared values of context-external factors (social distance and dominance).

| Group. sit | M. Intensifier |
|---|---|
| 1–6 | 92.75 |
| 2–8 | 75.00 |
| 3–9 | 41.87 |
| 4–7 | 65.12 |
| 5–10 | 58.12 |

apology formulas offered as head acts 359 or 17.87 % included the formula taking responsibility.

As far as the internal intensifier's sub-formulas, the adverbial and the emotional intensifiers in the participants' apology utterances made up the highest frequency of the internal intensifiers. The third most frequent intensifier was found to be the sub-formula hypothesized by the researchers as a possible internal intensifier at least in Kurdish and Persian, that is, "*hopes for forgiveness*". Similarly, the other sub-formula of internal intensifier's category suggested by the researchers as a possible internal intensifier in Kurdish and Persian was oath-taking which was also found to be as frequently offered as the other sub-formulas developed by CCSARP projects. Among the apology formulas used as supportive intensifiers, the acknowledgement of responsibility (RESP) was the most frequent formula in the apology utterances.

As it is suggested by Trosborg (1987), the two formulas IFID and RESP are the most frequent apology formulas in Kurdish and Persian as well as in English. Among the sub-formulas of the IFID formula, offered as supportive intensifiers, the IFID *bebæxʃid* (excuse me) was the most frequent one (44.75%). The IFID formula *ʃærmændæm* (I'm embarrassed), as anticipated, was the third most frequent IFID formula offered as a supportive act (16.75%). As discussed before, the DCT questionnaire designed and administered in this study consisted of 10 situations constructed based on the combination of the values of the two context-external factors, that is, the perceived social distance and dominance perceived between the interlocutors. In other words, situations one and six are similar because the interlocutors in two situations are close friends and know each other (-distance) and none of them has dominance over the other (-dominance).

Similarly, situations 2 and 8 are similar because in these two situations, the interlocutors know each other (-distance) and the addressee has dominance over the apologizer (+hearer dominance). Situations 3 and 9 are also similar because in both situations, the interlocutors hardly know each other (+distance) and are both children

(-dominance). Situations 4 and 7 are similar because the interlocutors in both situations do not know each other (+distance) but the addressee (a high-ranking university staff) has dominance over the apologizer (+hearer dominance).

Finally, in situations 5 and 10, the interlocutors are family members (brothers or sisters) with no social distance between them (-distance). However, the age of the speaker makes him/her socially dominant over his/her addressee (+speaker dominance).

Table 5 illustrates the mean frequency of the intensifiers extracted for each group of situations. As shown in the table, the highest mean frequency of intensifiers (92.75) has been expressed in the combination of situations 1 and 6. In other words, the highest number of intensifiers has been used to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer in both Kurdish and Persian groups.

The second most intensified group of situations was situations 2 and 8 with the mean intensifier of 75 (+hearer/+dominance). Situations 4 and 7 were the third group of situations in case of intensification. Situations 5 and 10 were the fourth group of situations in terms of intensification. The least number of intensifiers had been offered to strangers with no dominance over the apologizer (situations 3 and 9).

The most intensified apologies are offered to friends and the least intensified apologies are offered to strangers. In addition, the addressee's dominance over the apologizer seems to result in a higher intensification of the apology. As for the situation of specific analysis of the data, Tables 5, 6 and 7 display the frequency distribution of each category of apology formulas and intensifiers in each situation. As presented in Table 7, the IFID expressions were the most frequent apology head acts offered in all situations. The indirect apology formula, RESP (an acknowledgement of responsibility), EXPL (an explanation or account of the situation), and REPR (an offer of repair) were presented as head acts only in a few situations (Table 7). The formula FORB was only used once in situations 6 and 10. Regarding the apologies offered as supportive intensifiers, the formula RESP was almost equally frequent in all situations. The other formulas, namely, EXPL and REPR seem to be situation specific. In other words, as illustrated in Table 7 in situation 5 the frequency of the formula REPR was 48.35% and the frequency of the formula EXPL was 9%; whereas, in situation 8 the results were completely reverse; that is, the frequency of the formula REPR was only 0.82% and the frequency of the formula EXPL was 38.11%. Thus, different situations seem to require different apology formulas to be offered as supportive intensifiers. Concerning the average mean of intensifies offered by each subject in each situation, the highest mean of the intensifiers was observed in situations 1 (2.00) and 6 (1.71).

**Table 6.** The frequency distribution of internal and supportive intensifiers used by participants in different situations.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Hearer | +Dist | 41(20.5%) | 159 (79.5%) | 200 | 2.00 |
| 2 | Hearer | +Dist | 44 (14.96%) | 250 (85.04%) | 294 | 1.47 |
| 3 | Hearer | -Dist | 47 (33.57%) | 93(66.43%) | 140 | 0.7 |
| 4 | Hearer | -Dist | 47(19.5%) | 194 (80.5%) | 241 | 1.20 |
| 5 | Speaker | -Dist | 54(20.4%) | 211(79.6%) | 265 | 1.32 |
| 6 | Speaker | -Dist | 36(21.05%) | 135(78.95%) | 171 | 1.71 |
| 7 | Speaker | +Dist | 87(31.07%) | 193(68.93%) | 280 | 1.4 |
| 8 | Speaker | +Dist | 6(20.26%) | 244(79.74%) | 306 | 1.53 |
| 9 | Speaker | -Dist | 49(25.13%) | 146(74.87%) | 195 | 0.97 |
| 10 | Speaker | -Dist | 34 (17%) | 166(83%) | 200 | 1 |
| | | Total | 501 | 1791 | 2292 | 10.0 |

**Table 7.** The frequency distribution of apology supportive intensifiers used by participants in different situations.

| Sit. no | IFID | RESP | REPR | EXPL | FORB | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 48(30.19%) | 34(21.4%) | 32(20.12%) | 43(27.04%) | 2 (91.25%) | 159 |
| 2 | 29(11.6%) | 39(15.6%) | 93 (37.2%) | 88(35.2%) | 1(0.4%) | 250 |
| 3 | 51(54.85%) | 35(37.6%) | 6(6.45%) | 1(1.1%) | 0(0%) | 93 |
| 4 | 49(25.25%) | 73(37.6%) | 60(30.95%) | 4(2.6%) | 8(4.14%) | 194 |
| 5 | 8(3.79%) | 81(38.38%) | 19(9%) | 102(48.35%) | 1(0.48%) | 211 |
| 6 | 31(22.98%) | 58(42.96%) | 37(27.4%) | 5(3.7%) | 4(2.96%) | 135 |
| 7 | 68(35.25%) | 76(39.37%) | 3(1.55%) | 46(23.83%) | 00% | 193 |
| 8 | 70(28.7%) | 76(31.14%) | 93(38.11%) | 2(0.82%) | 3(1.23%) | 244 |
| 9 | 61(41.78%) | 67(45.9%) | 16(10.95%) | 2(1.37%) | 0(0%) | 146 |
| 10 | 3(1.8%) | 63(37.95%) | 8(4.85%) | 87(52.4%) | 5(3%) | 166 |
| Total | 418 | 602 | 367 | 380 | 24 | 1791 |

The common context-external factors involved in these two situations are that both are distance and none of the interlocutors has dominance over the other. The lowest average mean of intensifiers was observed in situations 3 (0.7) and 9 (0.97). In these two situations, the interlocutors hardly know each other (+distance) and none of them has dominance over the other one (equals). It should be noted that there was not any significant difference between Persian and Kurdish participants' responses in terms of using frequency distribution of each category of apology formulas and intensifiers in each situation. Furthermore, there was not any significant difference between Kurdish and Persian responses in terms of internal and supportive intensifiers.

From the overall analysis of natural data collected from participants' interviews some salient points would be concluded:

1. The first conspicuous difference was the use of some intensifiers that reveals Kurdish's tendency to exaggerate in their expression of apology in order to play on the victims' sympathy.

(25) "*Motæsefæm*". (P)
    "*Zur Mæzeræt*". (K)
    I'm very sorry.

That is to say that Kurdish children used the word Zur (very) in order to emphasize their apology towards the victim.

2. The second difference lies in situations where the Kurdish will promise not to repeat the offence.
(26) "Dige  tekrar  nemiʃe". (P)
    "Bare axer bi". (K)
    This won't happen again.

A suggestion (with adjusted spacing):

(26)    1. (P) [Dige  tekrar  nemiʃe] gloss:
                    'This won't happen again'
        2. (K) [Bare axer bi] gloss.

This would be attributed to the fact that the  Kurdish  tend

to compensate their victims by not repeating offense since they do all in their ability to get the forgiveness they are seeking while Persian tended to compensate the victim in the easiest possible way.

3. Use of proverbs and sayings by Kurdish participants was another conspicuous difference where it seemed that Kurdish participants utilize them in order to mitigate the effect of their offence. It is worth explaining that this is by no means a wish for harm to befall the victim again since Kurdish children wish the victim better luck in the future use of this.

4. In addition to the above differences, Kurdish children used God's name. That is to say, the wrongdoer invokes God's name in order to remind the victim that bad things happened and to ask God to repay the victim for whatever injury befall him. Some of their responses are:

(27) "Be Xoda æmdi næbud".(P)
   "Væ Xoda qæsdi naʃtem". (K)
   It was against my will.
and (28)
"Be Xoda mænzuri nædæʃtæm". (P)
 "Væ Xoda qasdi naʃtem".(K)
 I did not mean it.

5. Furthermore, Persian children asked the victim not to be angry as a part of the apology supplied for the situations at hand. They beseeched the victim not to be angry in the given situations:
(29) "Omidvaræm ke narahæt næʃude baʃid". (P)
   "Omidvarem ke narahætet nækerdema". (K)
   I hope I did hurt you.

6. Persian children castigated themselves and criticized themselves for their wrong behaviors.
 (30) "Midonæm ke eʃtebah kærdæm". (P)
   "Zanem tæqsire me bi". (K)
   I know that it was my fault.

 7. Persian children showed lack of intent on harm doing. They tried to show that whatever happened was accidental and not at all intentional.
(31) "æmdi næbud, nemidonestæm". (P)
   "Qæsdi naʃtem". (K)
   It was not on purpose.

 8. And finally, Persian participants brushed off the incident as non-important. The wrongdoer asked the victim to forget the incidence that took place:
(32) "Færamuʃeʃ kun". (P)
 "*Bi xial*".(K)
   Take it easy, let bygones be bygones.

Generally speaking, most of the socio-pragmatic studies seem to be both geographically and culturally restricted to western societies and cultures (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). This study tried to expand the scope of such studies to include a non-western culture. In other words, by studying the realization of apology speech act patterns in Persian, the findings of the previous studies carried out

on apologies in western languages can be tested against the data collected in a non-western language and culture for assessing the universality of such findings.

 The findings of this study indicate that in Persian and Kurdish – as in the other languages in western societies (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984), apologies generally fit within the framework of the categories explored and discovered by such western studies. In addition, a direct expression of apology and an acknowledgement of responsibility were found to be the most frequent apology formulas offered across the majority of the apology situations.

Finally, the investigation of the possible effects of the two context-external variables, that is, the social distance and dominance between the interlocutors, on the frequency of the apology intensifiers revealed that – as also suggested by the previous studies – the most intensified apologies were offered to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer and the least intensified apologies were offered to strangers with no dominance over the apologizer (situations 3 and 9).

The most intensified apologies are offered to friends and the least intensified apologies are offered to strangers. Similarly, the addressee's dominance over the speaker also seems to result in more intensified apology utterances.

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that in Kurdish and Persian children – as in the western societies (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984), apologies generally fit within the framework of the categories explored and discovered by such previous studies but there were some significant differences. Furthermore, a direct expression of apology and an acknowledgement of responsibility were found to be the most frequent apology formulas offered across the majority of the apology situations. The EXPL and REPR formulas, whether used as head acts or supportive acts, were found to be highly frequent in this study. The apology formula FORB was rarely used as an apology head or supportive acts. This study came across some new sub-formulas at work in the expression of apology formulas and intensifiers. As for the RESP apology formula, ''the statement of the offense'' was the new sub-formula observed under this category. In case of the intensifiers, the scope of the internal intensifiers was broadened. In other words, it was argued that internal intensifiers could also appear outside IFID expressions. Moreover, two more new sub-categories of internal intensifiers specifically observed in Kurdish and Persian children's apology utterances were added to the CCSARP's coding scheme of internal intensifiers. These two were "*hope for forgiveness*" and "*oath-taking*".

Furthermore, the investigation of the possible effects of the two context-external variables, namely, the social distance and dominance between the interlocutors, on the frequency of the apology intensifiers revealed that (as also suggested by the previous studies) the most intensified apologies were offered to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer (Table 3; situations 1 and 6) and the least intensified apologies were offered to strangers with no dominance over the apologizer (situations 3 and 9).

Finally, overall analysis of natural data of this study revealed that whereas Kurdish participants used some intensifiers, God's name, promise not to repeat the offence, proverbs in their speech, Persian participants asked the victim not to be angry, castigated and criticized themselves, showed lack of intent and brushed off the incident as non-important in their communication.

## Notes

1. The Kurdish language collectively refers to the related dialects spoken by the Kurds. It is mainly spoken in those parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey which comprise Kurdistan. Kurdish holds official status in Iraq as a national language alongside Arabic, is recognized in Iran as a regional language, and in Armenia as a minority language. The Kurdish languages belong to the Northwestern sub-group of the Iranian languages, which in turn belong to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family.

2. Parsi or Persian was the language of the Parsa people who ruled Iran between 550 - 330 BCE. It belongs to what scholars call the Indo-Iranian group of languages. It became the language of the Persian Empire and was widely spoken in the ancient days ranging from the borders of India in the east, Russian in the north, the southern shores of the Persian Gulf to Egypt and the Mediterranean in the west. Over the centuries Parsia has changed to its modern form and today Persian is spoken primarily in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan. Although the name of the language has been maintained as Persian or Parsi or its Arabic form Farsi (because in Arabic they do not have the letter P) the language has undergone great changes.

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## Appendix A. List of abbreviations

CCSARP: Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project
EXPL: An Explanation or Account of the Situation
Forb: A promise of Forbearance
IFID: Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices
REPR: An Offer of Repair
RESP: An Acknowledgement of Responsibility